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TREASON OF THE ROCOR FINALIZED

In the last issue of "Church News" we expressed the assumption that the official unification of the ROCOR (L) with the MP probably will be finalized in about two years. Unfortunately, however, we have to state that the period we estimated seems to be too long. The former Church Abroad, led by Metropolitan Laurus is rushing with gigantic steps toward the abyss.

Here below, we republish an interview given by Metropolitan Laurus to the Moscow newspaper "Commersant" only emphasizing his most important statements.

"The Internet publication in Russia 'Mir Religii/Sobytiya' (World of Religions/Events) on December 8th, 2003 reported that Metropolitan Laurus gave an interview to the newspaper 'Commersant' in which he stated that 'At present, the government of Russia does not oppose religion, at the head of the government stand believing and sincere people, and it seems there are no obstacles for union'.

"Our comment: If one is to trust the words of Metropolitan Laurus, then why is it that the members of Catacomb Church in Russia are still hiding and the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church is under constant attack on part of the government and more discretely, by the Moscow Patriarchate. Over less than two and a half years the instances of obvious acts of persecution have already exceeded 100!

" 'Actually,' declared Metropolitan Laurus, 'the Russian Church is one and the most obvious expression of this unity is shown by the ecclesiastical conscience. The existing separation is an abnormality, which it is desirable to overcome.'

"However, the Metropolitan, according to his words 'would never take upon himself such responsibility' considering that such a decision can be taken only by the conciliar mind, that is by the Council of Bishops.

"When speaking about the conditions for uniting, the head of the ROCOR has expressed the opinion that in any case there can be talk about administrative unity... 'This is impossible even practically,' he has added. **The most we can talk about is – a relationship and concelebrations'.** (?!)

" 'And concerning myself personally,' Metropolitan Laurus has admitted. 'I am happy and grateful to God that He enabled me to live to this time and be a witness and the participant in these days of destiny – which is the return of the Russia from abroad back to the homeland, and the unity of the Russian people around Orthodoxy.'

"Considering that the present 'Russian civil conscience no longer identifies itself with the pre-Revolutionary Russia' the Metropolitan has expressed the opinion that 'the mission of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad in Russia is at present to return to Russia the spiritual inheritance of Orthodox Russia in the way we have preserved it... It will be our deposit into the spiritual revival of the society, thinks the First Hierarchy of ROCOR.' "

Concerned with the regulation of church affairs in Russia, even only few months after the start of WWII and with the occupation of a significant part of USSR by German armies, Metropolitan Anastassy on October 1st, 1941, wrote from Belgrade to Metropolitan Seraphim of Berlin: "Until the fate of Metropolitan Kyrill and the other senior hierarchs of the Russian Church in Moscow will be revealed, it is necessary to convene a Council from the present Bishops of the Russian Church who have not compromised themselves by collaboration with Metropolitan Sergius, and especially by participation in his Synod, chaired by the most senior among them and to create a Temporary Ecclesiastical Administration, which later would convene the All-Russian Council in order to restore the Patriarchy and hold deliberations about the future arrangements within Russian Church in accordance with the conditions which will be existing then". (M.V. Shkarovsky. "Policies of the Third Reich in view of Archive Materials" p. 158)

Yet now, the ROCOR is negotiating union with the very same direct heirs of those hierarchs of the MP who "have compromised themselves by collaboration with Metropolitan Sergius, and especially by participation in his Synod"!

In his report to the Council of Bishops for an inter-conciliar period (1950-1953), Metropolitan Anastassy stated that, "the Council has to deliberate upon very important matters. Our relationship toward the official Russian Church is to be outlined, in particular, toward her present leadership with which is in communion the Eastern Churches. Besides this Church, *there is the Catacomb Church, which is hiding in the souls, in the depths of Russian people and which preserves in all purity the Apostolic tradition* [Emphasis by "Ch. N."]. **We remain with her and we will be of one mind with her. But with the official Church, which is in a total submission to the Soviets, who became their shameful tool, we can have no communion what so ever.** Earlier we could believe that she was under pressure, but now that the great tyrant has died, it was even more revealed that there is a disgraceful sympathy, and not merely a peaceful coexistence, with the civil authorities. She had various means to express herself after the death of Stalin, but her representatives not only in the person of Metropolitan Nicholas stood with the red honor guard, but also have decided to serve a memorial service for Stalin, in fact turning the prayer into a great blasphemy. Although it is said that the Soviet government has now changed its relationship toward the Church and permits itself several relaxations, we know that this is only a temporary tactic and she still believes religion is the opiate of the people. This should alert us to stand fast in our non-reconciliation toward the official Church in Russia and with that our flock is of one mind with us" (1953, # 1 Minutes of the Council)

In the Regulations of the Council of ROCOR Bishops on October 6/19th 1956 (Minutes #15, p.5), regarding the Moscow Patriarchate it was also stated: "It is very sad to read the servile declarations, which were made, obviously due to coercion, by the representatives of the hierarchy in the name of the Russian Church; it is hard to learn about such deeds as the blasphemous memorial service praying for the rest with the righteous of the soul of the greatest persecutor of the faith in history, Stalin, about the desecration of Holy Trinity Lavra..." "...The Russian Orthodox Church Abroad does not want to be part of it in any, even the smallest, way. **Therefore, she has no relations with the present Moscow**

Patriarchate; even more, she does not recognize the canonical validity of the election of Patriarch Alexis and his predecessor, which was done on the orders of the godless government and in violation of the canons and the rules for the election of a Patriarch".

We know also the will/testament of Metropolitan Anastassy in which he requests that there should be no relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate, even on an everyday level! However, all these declarations of an outstanding hierarch of the Russian Church (Archbishop Anastassy at the election of the Patriarch in 1917-1918, despite his relatively young age for a bishop – 44 years – received 77 votes) – are represented by the supporters of union with the MP as only his "personal opinion" !

INTERVIEW BY PATRIARCH ALEXIS II ABOUT RELATIONS WITH ROCOR (L)

An Internet source "Information Portal Religions" on December 2003 has published an interview with Patriarch Alexis regarding various matters. The Patriarch answered questions put to him by teachers, and post-graduate students regarding the Church Abroad, relations with the Vatican and others. From this extended interview we take quotations only about matters important to our publication: the relationship between the ROCOR(L) and the MP.

One inquirer said: "We know of the great efforts by the ROC and you personally to overcome the existing separation with the ROCOR. At present, as one can judge by the publications in the press, there appears to be a hope for healing this separation.

Alexis Ridiger answered: "Two days ago I met with the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, which for the first time officially came to Russia on order to go through two rounds of these negotiations.

When starting these negotiations, meeting with three bishops of the Russian Church Abroad, who were representing dioceses of USA, Germany and Australia, I began by quoting part of my letter, written in 1991, as an answer to a letter sent to me and simultaneously to Metropolitan Vitaly (Oustinoff) by the Congress of Russian Compatriots, which was held in August of 1991. In my answer I said that it is necessary to meet and look each other in the eye, because when a vessel is broken into small pieces, firstly is necessary to gather together those pieces and only then one can use this vessel.

We consider the negotiations that took place as a first meeting and a getting acquainted. These negotiations proceeded in the spirit of mutual understanding. We also have in view the following plans: **at the beginning of next year the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, Metropolitan Laurus will come to Russia and then an agreement will be signed** (all emphasis by "Ch. N"). In December there will be a Council of Bishops at which there will be the deliberations regarding the dialogue between us.

Unfortunately, in the Church Abroad so far there is no unanimity in the matter of uniting with the Mother Church. This is quite natural, because for more than 70 years the clergy and believers have come too much the under influence of propaganda against us. All these years the Russian Church Abroad attempted to justify its existence outside the borders of the Mother Church [?!]. Therefore, they will have a Council in December. And we, in our turn will have (probably in October) a Bishops Council which will have on its agenda the matter of reinstating eucharistic communion which has not existed for 85 years.

We have also established committees to work on the problems, which exist today and which prevent our union. First of all, the fact must be stressed that the Russian Church Abroad has created parallel parishes in the territory of Russia and the republics of the former USSR, and in this way, the schism carried over unto canonical territory of the MP. Therefore, this matter is to be settled too.

I want to note that on the part of the Russian Church Abroad a request was already expressed for forgiveness for those harsh expressions addressed to the Moscow Patriarchate which previously had been made. I believe that the path to rapprochement has started, but it is not that simple and will require from us time and patience".

When asking pardon from the Moscow Patriarchate "for all the harsh expressions", Archbishop Mark stressed that he did so as just a private person, but all who are familiar with the official protocols, know very well that all declarations made by the head of a delegation, are customarily considered to be not personal, but namely the declaration of that delegation. From the last remark of Ridiger it is obvious that he has accepted the "repentance" of Archbishop Mark as official and not just personal.

This declaration of Ridiger's part has revealed quite a bit, but certainly far from all of that the traitors of the Church Abroad have negotiated behind the scenes, otherwise, there would be no necessity for Metropolitan Laurus to **sign** (a final one?) **agreement with the MP!**

PRESIDENT PUTIN IN SUZDAL

According to the Internet agency Vertograd/razsylka # 417 of January 15th, President Putin decided this year to spend the Nativity feast in the ancient city of Suzdal. His visit until the very last moment was kept secret.

President Putin was in the modest church in Suzdal of the Sign for the Nativity service. The service was performed by Archbishop Eulogy of Vladimir and Suzdal, of the MP of course. The small church was able to accommodate only the clergy and entourage of the President. It is interesting, that among this clergy concelebrating was Dimitry Krasovsky, a former proto-deacon of Metropolitan Valentin. When he left after being suspended from serving and joined the Moscow Patriarchate, it was then common knowledge that he serve only in the capacity of a junior altar boy, but in no way a

clergyman, because he had married a former nun Sophia, who used to be in a MP convent. Following this wedding, the MP priest who performed it was strongly reprimanded and tried to justify himself by saying that he was not aware the bride was a former nun. As is now known, Krasovsky nevertheless became a priest! The former nun was married in the church to Sophia (her monastic name) and not Olga!

According to the same information, President Putin officially visited the church of Steven the First Martyr in the village of Kideksha in which the former Archpriest Andrew Osetrov, formerly an active colleague of Metropolitan Valentin and a Secretary of the Synod of Bishops of the ROAC, is serving and who upon being retired from this position immediately started the slanderous attacks against his former First Hierarch.

The St. Stephan church was restored from ruins by funds of the Suzdal Diocesan Administration and by law is the legal property of ROAC, which in court has protested the right of Osetrov to serve in it. President Putin promised to give his support. It is not difficult to guess how!

To many Russians, who are not familiar with canonical and dogmatic matters, Suzdal is a "center of schismatics", or at best an "Alternate Church".

In this ancient capital of Russia there are 19 churches belonging to ROAC. Four bishops and more than 10 priests permanently reside there.

As Vertograd reports – "due to the tremendous popularity of Metropolitan Valentin (Russantsov) among Suzdal's residents nearly all the Orthodox citizens of Suzdal are parishioners of the ROAC. There is about the same number of churches belonging to the MP, but services are conducted only in 3 of them due to the lack of parishioners"

When discussing the Orthodoxy of President Putin and his significant participation in the matter of the union between the ROCOR and the MP, Vertograd reports that the meeting of Metropolitan Laurus with Patriarch Alexis II which was scheduled for January **has been postponed until March!**

An Internet report by NEWSru.com on December 22nd 2003 published the declaration made by the Secretary of German Diocese, Archpriest Nicholas Artemov, who said that, **"The visit to Moscow of the First Hierarch of the Church Abroad, Metropolitan Laurus, might take place during Great Lent"**. In his words **"At present, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexis II and Metropolitan Laurus are consulting in order to define the optimal date of the visit"**.

Is not this the reason why Metropolitan Laurus answered those who questioned him about the trip to Russia that he is not going. However, for how long can one play the "seek and hide game" after "gratefully accepting" the invitation and the giving a promise to come to the President of a country and its Patriarch?

HOW THERE ARE FIVE PRIESTS OF THE AROC IN BULGARIA

According to Internet information made available by the Vertograd/razsylka # 414 of December 29th, four more priests have joined the Russian Orthodox Church centered in Suzdal. The first was Fr. Ludmil Petrov, who was followed by Fr. Radoslav (Harlambos) Ivanov, who came from the Greek Metropolitan Cyprianos (Koutsumbas), Fr. John Latkovsky, who will be the assistant of Fr. Ludmil as well as Fathers Steven Vassiliev and Roman Konstantinov.

Priest Radoslav graduated from the Theological Academy in Sofia and is working on a master's degree. After obtaining his diploma, he plans to move to city of Kroomovgrad (southern Bulgaria) where he wants to build a church in honor of St. Harlambos.

Priest John Latkovsky also graduated the Theological Academy in Sofia and is also working on his master's diploma.

Fr. Basil is an experienced carpenter and electrician. He already is building a church in the city of Razgrad, while Fr. Roman Konstantinov has built a chapel in his birthplace Sylistra (on the border of Bulgaria and Rumania) and has gathered a small flock. Both of these priests were previously in the church of the Greek Bishop Kallinikos and have left him because he has accepted a Bishop Gervassy, known to have ecumenist sympathies.

Since there are now 5 priests of the Russian Orthodox Church in Bulgaria, Fr. Ludmil has agreed to travel to Switzerland and have regular services there, probably in Geneva. There is already a group of some 40 people, who eagerly await his arrival. Fr. Ludmil, of course, can serve in Slavonic and speaks Russian and French.

These priests were accepted by His Grace Bishop Gregory of Denver and Colorado.

EXISTENCE OF ST. OLGA PARISH IN ZHELEZNOVODSK IN DANGER

The information agency Vertograd/razsylka 410 of December 22nd 2003 has reported that "the rector of St. Olga's church belonging to the AROC in Zheleznovodsk (Caucasus) Archpriest Anatoly Novakovsky on December 20th received a warning from the RF Ministry of Justice of the Stavropol Region which states that supposedly in the annual report on the activities of the parish the "location of the religious organization" was "improperly" listed.

Each registered AROC community is forced annually to send reports about "continuation of it's activity" (the MP does not have to do so) to the local justice administration, in accordance with the law of "freedom of conscience" accepted in 1997. Is there not great freedom in the contemporary RF?!

"The warning of the Administration of the Justice Ministry states that the community, beginning on October 3rd, was denied the land on which the church is located, of which the community has not informed the Justice Department within

three days. The community has to immediately send an "explanation of said facts" before the end of December. The letter was signed by Deputy Minister of Justice, G. K. Kutepov.

In this demanded information "about the continuation of the religious organization", which was sent out by Fr. Anatoly on October 29, "the location of the parish" was not listed. However, the employees of the Justice Department in their warning state that St. Olga's community is registered as located on Karl Marx St. # 34, while the mayor of Zheleznovodsk Anatolia Zubzov in his decree # 891 of October 3, 2003, annulled "the secured land" for the church and in this way has illegally deprived the community of the land on which it built its church in 1989.

There are more than 2 thousand parishioners in the community not only from Zheleznovodsk, but also from other regions of the Caucasus, from Kislovodsk and Yessentuki. All of them are greatly alarmed by the impending persecutions, but intend to defend their church.

NUMBER IN "CHRONOLOGY OF PERSECUTIONS" AGAINST AROC RAPIDLY INCREASES

The Suzdal "Diocesan Herald" # 15 (2003) published a chronology of persecutions against the Russian Orthodox Church, starting with 2001 to mid 2003. Over this period there were almost 100 instances and the number continues to increase. Vertograd # 409 of December 15, 2003, reports that "During recent months in Suzdal the terrorist group "Nashe Delo" (Casa Nostra) has again become active. The novices of the Monastery of the New Martyrs of Russia were beaten up by members of this revolutionary guard just because they live and work "for Valentin".

Informing the police never brings any results: the criminal cases of beatings and threats are never investigated... The number of such complaints against these people has already reached 50.

The First Hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Eminence the Metropolitan Valentin on many occasions has received threats by telephone of physical harm.

The same Vertograd reports that during the night of 23-24 December the St. Symeon the Stylite church was robbed in the village of Omutskoye, a suburb of Suzdal. The thieves stole two 19th century icons and the church donation box.

According to Vertograd "During the current year the churches of the AROC have been robbed on several occasions. As a rule the local authorities pay no attention to such cases if the victims are the members of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church.

LETTER OF ROCOR PRIEST IN ROME

A letter was sent to us via the Internet, addressed to "Fr. Steven" and signed "Priest Andrew, Bari".

Upon looking through the address book of hierarchy and clergy of ROCOR, listed under Rome location was Fr. Andrew Trufanov. The last name of "Fr. Steven" was not indicated and this name is not the only one in the list.

In view of the negotiations of the ROCOR about unity with the MP we thought it worthwhile to publish this letter.

"Dear Fr. Steven,

Thank you for your interest toward our parish in Bari, although, I understand that this interests you just because it stands on the way of the new course of merging with the MP.

Our church had no problems with water until at the request of the rector of the MP parish the town council has partly restricted our use of water in order to fully satisfy the flow of the water needed for MP parish. Now, everything is functioning fine at the MP, while with us they have shut off the fountain for the pilgrims in the yard, the toilet for pilgrims and the water for the garden. Now the pilgrims have no place to wash and go to the toilet; the nearest toilet is 1 km away.

It is a year now since the heat was turned off, because we didn't want to pay for the gas and heat used by the MP parish while there were no separate gas meters. The MP has gas. My children and myself have to sleep well dressed, however, this is a little matter, because the winters in Italy are warm. But to prepare meals for the pilgrims became much harder.

I want to remind you that the mayor of the city has illegally moved in a priest of the MP into the apartment belonging to the ROCOR priest, and he and his family were evicted to a place not suitable for that purpose. The MP has illegally occupied the upper church and other church lodgings. The court in its first hearing has confirmed the ROCOR's rights to use the entire church and priest's apartment. At present, the ROCOR case against the mayor is in the court's II instance.

This is not a problem of "old pipes," as you happened to joke, but is the problem of the impudent violence of the Soviet church against the ROCOR, when ever they can apply KGB methods. Being in Bari I have had opportunity to be convinced of that on several occasions. The clergy of MP abroad is in no way simple and kind people of Russian village churches. It is good that they have not reached your parish, I do wish and hope that you and other ROCOR priests will be able to escape it.

Respectfully Priest Andrew, Bari"

This description of the relationship of ROCOR and the MP on the threshold of the total unification very much reminds me of the situation when the "Orthodox Church in America" was receiving its "autocephaly", recognized by no one. During the negotiations about the timing of receiving a "Tomos" from the MP, it was suing the OCA in court and seizing some of its parishes!

THE "SPIRITUAL FEAT" OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

On January 13th, on TV a German documentary film "The Divine Train" (Ein Goettlicher Zug) was shown describing a "church on wheels", which travels into the depths of Siberia, which does not have any MP churches. In one of the "special trains" there is a car in which there is a church. Other cars are sleeping cars for clergy and servers and also a restaurant "trapeza". All the expenses connected with this train are fully paid for by the government of the RF. The Moscow Patriarchate pays absolutely nothing, as was stated in the movie, although it receives a large sum of money paid by the faithful for regular and special services. The "campaign train" was organized by the RF administration just shortly before the presidential elections, therefore, besides the church services the clergy are occupied also with the election campaign for the present ruling party.

Since the movie was made in the West, the producers gave not only some of the clergy of the MP a chance to speak up, but also some local residents who are critical of MP. One of them declared that "the Moscow Patriarchate is not a Church, but a total lie".

At the end of this movie the leader of this propaganda brigade, a priest of the MP, Fr. Igor (his last name is not revealed), when answering the reporters' questions about the significant number of MP clergymen who collaborated with the KGB, declared: "These priests have accomplished a spiritual martyric feat (podvig) in collaborating with the KGB" since, supposedly, while initially they hated communism, nevertheless, they had to work for them. (Underlined by "Ch. N.")

For any outsider the train of thought of Fr. Igor is impossible to understand, but to look for logic in the MP is a vain task.

Andrew Dubrow, Vienna

ORTHODOX SERVICE IN CATHOLIC WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL

A British newspaper "The Times" of January 16th reported that "for the first time in the history" of the Roman Catholic Westminster Cathedral Great Compline was to be performed prior to the feast of the Epiphany. This service was conducted by the temporary Administrator of the Moscow Patriarchate's diocese in England, Bishop Basil of Sergiyev, who began administering this diocese after the death of Metropolitan Anthony Bloom.

Observers considered this service a "significant step forward in the relations between the Catholic and the so-called "Orthodox" Churches.

At this "historic service" representatives of other Orthodox Churches were to be present, and the head of the Greek Thyatiera diocese in England, Archbishop Gregorios – to preach during the Catholic Mass.

Bishop Basil has said that, "We have to make a fairly clear distinction between relations between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics in this country and the situation that applies in Russia and parts of Eastern Europe. I would consider the situation to be completely normal here. In other parts of the world, relations are strained, but that is a result of local situations".

In his turn, the senior Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster and the member of the diocese's ecumenical commission, the Rt. Rev. James O'Brien said: "I am quite delighted that the Russian Orthodox community in London has decided to celebrate a vespers in Westminster Cathedral".

As we know, "Patriarch" Alexis Ridiger on the one hand refuses to deal with Catholics in Russia and even objects to the fulfillment of the Pope's dream of visiting Russia due to Catholic proselytizing, and on the other, is under obvious pressure from President Putin who (with minor reservations) has himself invited the Pope to Russia. At the same time, the Russian local newspapers believe that in view of the approaching presidential elections a visit of the Roman Catholic head might be a profitable political move.

Certainly, very few in Russia will find out about the service of the "Orthodox" bishop in the Roman Catholic cathedral, while in England there are several churches belonging to the Moscow Patriarchate and the declaration of the representative of the Patriarch of his "delight" about the "normal" relationship between the Catholics and the "Orthodox" in England!

CHRISTMAS IN AMERICA IN 2003

The celebration of Christ's Nativity in 2003 in the USA was significantly different from the celebrations of previous years. Certainly, the sales in the major stores went forward "full blast", however, except for Christmas tree decorations – nothing specifically for the Christmas holiday was noticeable. No longer was there carol music, which used to greet customers entering the doors of big stores. The usually scheduled TV performances of carols and Christmas stories for children also were gone this year.

The newspaper of the "Orthodox Church in America" (OCA) "The Path of Orthodoxy" for December published an article with the title "New York City Ban on Nativity Scenes to be Challenged". According to the Internet WorldNetDaily.Com in November a decree was issued according to which it is permitted to display Jewish menorahs (vigil lamps commemorating the miracle that occurred in the Jerusalem temple during the Maccabee's war when the oil lasted for a longer time than was expected), and Muslim symbols, "because they have a secular dimension, but Christian symbols, such as Nativity mangers are 'purely religious'."

According to this Internet report someone by the name of Robert Muise will challenge the school policy at a federal court hearing in Brooklyn insisting that, "The birth of Jesus is a historical event which served as the basis for celebration of Christmas... it's of importance for both Christians and non-Christians".

Muise lodged his complaint with the Michigan-based Moore Law Center and demanded a temporary restraining order on the city's ban on Nativity scenes. It states that the New York policies to "promote the Jewish and Islamic faiths, while conveying the impermissible message of disapproval of Christianity is in violation of the US Constitution".

In Michigan we learn that in one of the schools a principal reminded his teachers to bring to the school the "religious symbols" of the Islamic and Jewish religions, but failed to mention Christianity. The school's corridors were decorated with permitted menorah's, but the students were forbidden to bring in any Christian Nativity symbols.

Kate Ahlers, communications director for New York City Legal Department declared that "schools can use things that a secular, like menorahs [?!] and snow flakes", but Nativity mangers are an expression of religion and therefore forbidden. In 2002 in Sacramento, CA one teacher revealed that a principal forbade her to use the word Christmas. However, it is permissible to celebrate the "Day of the Dead" by creating altars in honor of deceased loved ones or... family pets!

ISRAEL MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR CHRISTIANS TO GET VISAS TO HOLY LAND

The bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of December 3rd 2003 reports with great concern that the Israeli government raises many obstacles to receiving and even extending visas for employees of various Christian institutions in the Holy Land. In several cases, the employees of schools or even charitable organizations have received a warning that their visas will no longer be extended.

Thus, the head of the World Federation, Craig Kippels has reported that "I had a problem at the end of the last year getting a (new) and was basically here for couple of months in limbo, not knowing whether I could get a work visa". Only after long and difficult negotiations did he receive his visa.

In another case, the minister of the Church of Scotland, which has a school in Jaffa (south of Tel Aviv) Clarence Musgrave has said that he has applied to extend his visa at the beginning of last year, but "these have still not been dealt with" until now.

Rev. Musgrave quite reasonably states that the number of Christians residing in Israel will be gradually reduced and that all the governments abroad should loudly protest such measures on part of Israel government. The local Christians already are leaving this country because of the constant violence. At the same time, those Christians who want an exit visa to be able to participate in some conferences in USA or Germany are refused such a visa.

Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Church in Palestine, living in the Holy Land, believes that all the international communities have to put pressure upon Israel and bear the responsibility for supporting of Christians living in the Holy Land, otherwise will be impossible to continue working there.

Since Israel for some time has ignored all the suggestions on part of the US government and the UN – to hope for a success in this situation it is very unrealistic.

ARREST OF SERBIAN BISHOP IN MACEDONIA

According to the Internet report of "Forum 18" from Oslo, Sweden, on January 11th of this year, during the service of the Divine Liturgy, served in a private home, Serbian Archbishop John and 13 people with him were arrested by the Macedonian police for a second time. Among the 30 people present in the church, located in the house of Archbishop John's father, there were also representatives of 4 monasteries which were planning to join the Ohrid diocese of the Serbian Church, which the Macedonian government claims is "non-existent in Macedonia".

All the arrested were held in custody for 24 hours and were questioned by the judge about what he called an "alleged service". At one time Archbishop John was arrested for baptizing a relative of one of the members of the Macedonian Church, but was released. This time he was arrested for a second time and held in custody for 30 days, on the pretext of an investigation by the Macedonian Interior Ministry. Also a Bulgarian student was arrested and banned from ever entering Macedonia again.

The Deputy Prosecutor charged Archbishop John with "dissemination of national, racial and religious hate, disorder and segregation", according to paragraph 319 of the law. The spokeswoman for Macedonian Interior Ministry, Marijana Konteska said that those arrested have "defended themselves by silence".

Archbishop John was a member of the "Macedonian Church" but in 2002 united with the Serbian Orthodox Church and appointed by Patriarch Paul to be his exarch.

The Macedonian Church was established in 1958 at the command of the communist Tito and the Serbian Church under that pressure even granted them the status of autonomy. However, it was not satisfied with that and has demanded autocephaly, which has not been recognized by any Local Churches.

The Serbian Church has voiced a strong protest over the arrest of Archbishop John and Patriarch Paul has requested a personal meeting with the Macedonian president. The hatred against Archbishop John was resulted from the fact that nearly half of the monasteries in Macedonia have followed the Archbishop in leaving the "Macedonian Church".

Macedonian Bishop Timothy has declared that, "All churches and monasteries on the territory of Macedonia are part of Macedonian Orthodox Church... Monks are free to join anybody, but monasteries and their properties belong only to the

Macedonian Orthodox Church", and in a radio interview given to Forum 18, Anna Kostic-Dimitrievska said: "Three monasteries joined the Serbian Orthodox Church, some sources say four, and this was the reason for all the upheaval in the Macedonian Church and Macedonian government."

Sounds like something typical of the Moscow Patriarchate! Unfortunately the future of Archbishop John as yet is not clear.

CARDINALS AND RABBIS

"The New York Times" of January 20, 2004, reported that a delegation of Roman Catholic cardinals from the US and abroad held a conference at the Museum of Jewish Heritage. The aim of the conference was "to simply build relationships and familiarity, not to resolve policy matters".

The Conference wanted to secure the continuation of the friendly relationship between Catholics and Jews, established by Pope John II due to his badly failing health. As is stated in this article, "No Pope has done more than John Paul II to try to bring Christians and Jews closer and Jewish leaders want to make sure that the work of reconciliation continues".

Among the participants of this conference were: Jean Marie Lustiger (a baptized Jew) from Paris, Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn of Vienna and Theodore McCarric of Washington. One of the main rabbis at this Conference suggested that the meetings will not result in the concrete changes. Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz said: "They are not negotiating anything in particular. A meeting like this doesn't signify a breakthrough. However, the opportunity for cardinals and rabbis to speak face to face is valuable and it is a part of the process in which we can talk to each other in a friendly way".

A Catholic representative, Priest Patrick Desbois stated that the purpose was simply to build relationship and familiarity, not to resolve policy matters. We are completely outside of diplomacy".

The authors of this article stress that Cardinal Lustiger brought his colleagues to the Jewish religious school (yeshiva) and it was interesting to observe how closely the yeshiva students mingled with the cardinals. However, the yeshiva's administrator, rabbi Norman Lamm has admitted that some Jewish Orthodox believers have condemned the invitation of Catholics to a yeshiva.

"Some would condemn me, and some would praise me, so I might as well do the right thing".

The main rabbi of Brazil Henry Sobel suggested that Catholics should become the intermediaries in the dialogue between the Muslims and Jews. "We need to convert the dialogue into a tri-ologue", he said.

Just a few days after the end of conference, the Pope met with two main rabbis of Israel and then attended a concert marking the relations between Jews, Muslims and Protestants!

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE

The Internet bulletin of the Three Saints parish in Garfield, NJ reported an Episcopalian priest, John Flora, upset about the consecration of the openly gay Robinson as bishop, has decided with his community to join "Orthodoxy".

His community in Wichita, Kansas, has at present 40 members and decided to attend services in the St. George Cathedral of the Antiochean "Orthodox" church, one of the most modernist jurisdictions in America!

According to Flora, when he found the Episcopal Church in college and established his parish, he hoped that "this will be something that was connected to the ancient church and is going to remain steadfast" but after staying with the Episcopalians for 31 years, he became very disappointed. Now he plans to establish in Kansas a St. Michael's parish and use the Western rite services in the Antiochean Church.

According to this report, Flora is happy that the Divine Liturgy in his new church will be similar to that of the traditional Anglican Book of Common Prayer "with some additions to make it conform to Orthodox theology". Flora hopes to become an "Orthodox priest" on Pascha. He admitted that it was very hard for him to leave the 2 million 400 thousand member Episcopal Church, but it was a decision "I felt I had to make".

Can one believe after such declarations that Flora has "joined the Orthodox Church"? Considering the modernism of Antiochean Church, it is quite possible that this Episcopalian not only will not be baptized and chrismated, but just admitted in his present Episcopalian rank!

"The New York Times" of January 20th reported that there was a two day long conference of conservative Episcopalians in which 12 Anglican bishops participated in the name of 12 dioceses and as representatives of some 235 thousand lay people who have declared that they are establishing a "church within a church", thus not leaving the Episcopal religion and so are not to be considered schismatics. Their "adherence to principles" (according to the newspaper) has a very prosaic explanation: Conservative parishes do not want to officially leave their church because under secular law they would probably have to surrender their real estate to this denomination!

BLASPHEMOUS BIBLICAL FALSIFICATIONS

One of the very popular American magazines "Newsweek" of December 8, 2003, published a several page long article (without the author's name) entitled "The Bible's Lost Stories". In this article, the feminists of all colors are prominent: Catholic, Protestant and even Jewish.

For contemporary feminists, the main hero of the New Testament is Mary Magdalene, who from the new "historical" evidence is presented as "Christ's spouse," the first woman Apostle, or a harlot, although the Gospel mentions only that "the Lord cast "seven demons" out of her. We dare not repeat the "relationship" between Christ and Mary Magdalene described in this article, as being disgustingly blasphemous. In this article, though, all the women of the Old Testament are praised, among them even a whore Raab!

However, this article mentions the results of the new "scientific discoveries". Alas, a 26 year old Catholic female Frances Garcia has become a Baptist because she was very much disturbed that, "Women's contributions to early Christianity were suppressed by church leaders". On her own she began more research and later stated that "her faith was shaken" but "it has made her a better Christian."

Another example is no more interesting. A Harvard University student by the name of Bernadette Brooten, after she completed a course on theology believed that she knew everything about women in the Bible. However, after she became a professor in the university, and after reading quite a few older editions of the Bible, she made a "historic discovery" (always known by the Orthodox Church), that Junius, mentioned by the Apostle Paul — was a woman Junia. (Epistle to the Romans 16:7) and she found out about it from the New Standard Revised Version of the Bible, published in 1989!

The feminists have gotten to the point that they insist that the humiliation St. Mary Magdalene is as a result of fear by men of female control and that she was, in their opinion, a rival to St. Apostle Peter as leader of all the Apostles!

Undoubtedly, this is not the only news we are to hear on the feminists' part, who are now studying all sorts of Gnostic "Epistles" in order to prove that the women in the early Church were unfairly humiliated.

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS (report of Bp. Gregory to ROCOR's Synod of Bishops on July 19/August 1, 1989)

I have received from the Office of the Synod of Bishops a copy of a letter of the president of the Foreign Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate Metropolitan Philaret of Minsk for a response. The Department informs our Synod of the forthcoming celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Patriarchate in the Russian Church. Moscow would like our Synod to send a representative and a speaker about the Church Abroad. The question is: how to react to this?

First of all, it is proper to recall that the resolutions by the Moscow Patriarchate about our Church Abroad in the past have been quite "unfriendly" and were made in the form of suspensions to which, it is true, no one in the Orthodox world has paid any attention. After the end of the war, the suspensions were forgotten and there were efforts to involve us in some sorts of communications. [This 1989 offer means that efforts by the MP to communicate with the Church Abroad were made as early as 14 years ago! -- "Ch. N."]

In considering the matter of the Moscow invitation, one has to have in mind, that **any form of acceptance of an invitation presumes that between those who invite and those who accept an invitation, there already exists some kind of relation. Therefore, our agreement to send a representative to the Moscow Council would mean, in some way, that we acknowledge the legality of its existence, in opposition to past and present resolutions of our Councils, which denounced Sergianism. Also, it would be the beginning of relations with the Moscow Patriarchate.** (All emphasis by "Ch. N.")

Experience has proven that there should be extreme caution in this matter. At the last Council in New York, after the reports of various persons who attended the Moscow Council, there was raised a question: in what capacity did they appear there. The presence of Fr. Victor Potapov, as a radio correspondent, was quite clear. Of special concern to the Council members and their consideration was a report by G. Lukianov. There were no indications that he could be considered a representative on part of the Church Abroad. It seems, however, that for some reason, the Soviets expected that, due to some maneuvering, in some capacity one of our bishops would come. Archbishop Anthony Bloom said in England after the Council of Bishops (for unknown reasons), that **the Patriarchate expected the arrival of Archbishop Laurus**. However, I cannot pin point what reason would give rise to such rumors. Archbishop Bloom writes that "at" and "around" the Council there were observers from the Church Abroad, but he didn't have a chance to meet with any of those "observers". I am afraid, that one of those "observers" gave false information, because, in the words of Archbishop Anthony Bloom, **"all came with the permission and approval of Metropolitan Vitaly"**. From what we heard at the Council, it was obvious that such an initiative or even permission never actually existed. This shows how careful we must be in order that the KGB through their agents not spread rumors alarming to our faithful.

Therefore I believe, that our negative answer to the Moscow invitation should be published not in the form of a letter, but in the form of a short resolution by the Synod of Bishops, a draft of which is attached to this report.

Synod of Bishops' humble servant,

+ Bishop Gregory

Draft of the Synod decree:

Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad on (date):

Here is the letter of June 26, 1989, addressed to the President of the Synod of Bishops, signed by the President of the Foreign Relations Department of Moscow Patriarchate, with an invitation to send a representative of the Russian Church Abroad to the international scholarly conference dedicated to the 400 anniversary of the establishment of the Patriarchate in Russia.

Resolved: Keeping in mind the former resolutions of the Councils of Bishops, **since they all were in agreement with the guiding testament of the lately reposed First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, Blessed Metropolitan Anastassy, and which has not lost its significance even now, we want to recall his words:** "And regarding the Moscow Patriarchate and her hierarch, since they are in close and active friendly collaboration with the Soviet government, which openly confesses its total godlessness and seeks to instill atheism in the Russian people, the Church Abroad, preserving her purity, should have no canonical, prayerful and even social relations with them, leaving everyone of them to the final judgment of the future free Russian Church".

In addition to those reasons of our separation, also is added the violation on the part of the Moscow Patriarchate **of the doctrine of the unity of the Church and a number of canons due to the ecumenical prayerful communion with the heterodox**, which is unacceptable according to our canons. Following the Creed, we confess the belief in one Orthodox Church, which is, according to the 68th canon of the Council of Carthage, the "...sole Mother of Christians, in whom all the sanctifying gifts, soterially everlasting and valid, are received, which however inflict upon those persisting in the heresy the great punishment of damnation" (In "The Pedalion" this is Canon 66)

As became customary after Bishop Gregory was ousted from the ROCOR Synod, this report was not considered worthy of any response on part the Chancery of the Synod of Bishops, and certainly the offered draft was never published!

A letter of A. S. Schatiloff to Archbishop Mark of 14/27 February, 1997

Your Eminence;

Please find enclosed a letter received by me from a Serbian, who came to America for a few days as a tourist. It speaks for itself.

A few years ago, after reading your letter to Fr. Artzimovich (because of which, I, as a Russian, felt chills of disgust), I wrote to you right away to think of this slap in the face of the entire Russian nation. Truly a German, you have "promoted" us from being sub-humans into homo-soveticus. At least that's an improvement – because in your eyes we have become some sort of "human being"! After reading my letter to you, my father [Bp. Gregory] forbade me to mail it to you: it is still in the folder of my father's correspondence with you.

And now it happens that after only a few short years (keeping in mind that all the KGB "Drozdovs, Abbats, Adamants, 'Mikhailovs" and others, who were anathematized by Patriarch Tikhon and the Catacomb Church, the close collaborators with the executioners of the Russian people have retained their former positions) you happened to notice "great movements" in a positive direction and therefore, have become a Judas of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Mainly thanks to you the restoration of a canonical hierarchy in Russia was almost killed off. Thanks to you, the Russian Church Abroad stained her garments by entering into communion with the Greek Bishop Cyprianos. As far as I know from dependable sources, all are now trying somehow to get rid of him, but it is hard to wash tar out of white fabric! Keep in mind that your treason will not be forgotten by Russian patriots and simple Orthodox people. You evidently imagine that all the people around you are some sort of idiots (including the Metropolitan) who do not understand the essence of your treason.

Unfortunately, the Metropolitan has given in to your pressure, while according to the rules of the Statutes of the ROCOR, as well as the canons, he should have suspended you for concelebrations with a hierarch with whom our Church has no communion: he should have placed you before an ecclesiastical court to be defrocked, and yet you are still a member of the Synod of Bishops! Shame on you... And may the Lord Himself be your just judge for laying the groundwork for schism within our Church Abroad.

I hear that you and Archbishop Hilarion have published a "warning" to all your critics. Do not bother to mention to me the 55th Apostolic Canon; As far as I am concerned, as well as my father, the Church Abroad "died" when Metropolitan Philaret reposed and has moved to Suzdal. A short while before his death, my father told me "I have totally crossed out our whole hierarchy"!

You have also verified the observation: there is no disturbance in the national organization of the Church without the NTS!

Note: the NTS (National Workers Union) organization was founded in middle of the 30's and by the end of the same decade was already heavily infiltrated by the KGB.

Report to the Council of Bishops by Bishop Gregory of April 15/28th 1993

In the "Herald" of the German Diocese # 1 of 1993 an article was published "The Ecclesiology of Archbishop Andrew of Ifima, Prince Ukhtomsky."

It prompts one to seriously question: can one consider Archbishop Andrew a holy New Martyr?

When the roll of the New Martyrs was prepared before their canonization, we had a guiding principle: has the person suffered for the faith and did not accept the declaration of Metropolitan Sergius. Even then we realized that these rolls are not complete and much information about the New Martyrs is lacking.

The Holy Trinity Monastery with all possible accuracy tried to gather information and do some possible selections. Quite naturally there were some errors and probably in the future some more will be found. Thus, Fr. Paul Florensky happened to be included among the New Martyrs, who preached some heresies. Our Synod in the magazine "Church Life" published an excellent article from Russia with a critique of Florensky's teaching and the statement that he was depicted on the icon of New Martyrs due to an error on the part of the iconographer.

In 1991 in Moscow a book was published (Probably not seen by Vladyka Mark, -- by M.L. Zelenogorsky "The Life and Activity of Archbishop Andrew (Pr. Ukhtomsky)" of more than 300 pages and a very rich biography. In this book a number of official declarations by Archbishop Andrew were published [in particular his enthusiastic greeting of the communist Revolution of 1917, "Ch. N."]

He himself states that he has united with the *beglopovovtsy* (run-away schismatic priests), has accepted their chrismation and then illegally consecrated several bishops for them.

For that he was suspended by the New Martyr Metropolitan Peter of Krutitsa, but he ignored this suspension. For the second time, and for the same reason, he was suspended by Metropolitan Sergius in 1926 and also ignored this suspension.

He very sharply criticized St. Peter and accused him of machinations in order to get a high position. He wrote the very same about Metropolitan Sergius (this time for valid reasons). He despises the "Nikonians" and considers them to be heretics.

Archbishop Andrew is a very controversial person and was considered to be such even before the Revolution, but after the Revolution he chose an uncanonical path and continued to serve despite two suspensions; he has chrismated himself with a schismatic's myrrh and illegally ordained several bishops for them.

I believe that Archbishop Andrew, under such circumstances in no way can be considered a St. New Martyr and the Editors of the "Herald" should publish an explanation of this.

The humble servant of the Council of Bishops + Bishop Gregory

Note: During the Council Bishop Gregory talked with Archbishop Mark, who promised the necessary corrections will be made. However, **no correction in the Herald was ever made, despite a memorandum to the Council of Bishops and not the Synod. In the recently published calendar by Holy Trinity Monastery for 2004 -- in the rolls of the New Martyrs Archbishop Andrew (Pr. Ukhtomsky) is listed!**