

Department of Foreign Relations SYNOD OF BISHOPS of the RUSSIAN ORTHODOX
OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

ON THE PATH TO A UNION (Between the Greek and the Roman Catholic Church)

In honor of the 10th anniversary of the lifting of the mutual anathemas of 1054 by Patriarch Athenagoras and Pope Paul VI, the Pope and Metropolitan Mileton concelebrated in the Vatican. The particular kind of "ecumenical" Mass served was not announced, but it some sort of divine service since photographs show the Metropolitan in lesser vestments; a mantle, epitrahil, and small omophorion. After this service, Metropolitan Meliton declared that the Patriarch of Constantinople Dimitrios had appointed a committee of representatives from the Orthodox Churches which would enter into negotiations with Rome on the issue of unity. Apparently, this step was prepared for by a conference of Orthodox and Catholics in Vienna, held in the Summer of 1975. In the Catholic press, this Conference was regarded as a great step forward towards union. After Metropolitan Meliton's declaration, the Pope unexpectedly bowed to the ground and kissed the Metropolitan's foot. This gesture provoked a sensation. The Pope looked very happy, enthusiastically predicting that, in the not too distant future, both Churches would serve the Liturgy together. He said that the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches have already entered into such deep communion that very little remains to revert a concelebration of the Divine Eucharist. He also said that he highly values Constantinople's initiative and "declared that we are predisposed to do the same on our part, to move further towards full communion". This so-called new union, which would split the Orthodox world, is now an impending possibility.

THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA IN AMERICA - Until now an agreement existed between the Eastern Patriarchs, that all the Orthodox Greeks in North America would be under the jurisdiction of Constantinople only. That is why the appointment of the Bishop of Alexandria to North America by Patriarch Nicholas evoked so much surprise. Archbishop Iakovos immediately protested sharply against this act. The newspaper "The Hellenic Chronicle" of December 4th, 1975, informs us that the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs is taking measures to stop this action. In the recent past, under Patriarch Melitos, the Church of Alexandria had its own Exarchate in America, but since his death, no one has as yet filled his post.

THE CHURCH OF ALEXANDRIA AND ORTHODOX SERBS - Another unexpected act of the Patriarch of Alexandria was the acceptance under his protection, of the Diocese of the deposed Bishop Dionysius, at present headed by Bishop Iriney. This group presently has at its head Bishop Iriney, who was ordained by the autocephalous Ukrainian Bishops Gregory and Gennadyi, who are recognized neither by our Synod of Bishops nor by the Serbian Church, as Bishops with God's grace. The question of the possibility of a petition by Bishop Iriney for unity or of his recognition, being received by the Russian Church Outside of Russia, was connected with the probable necessity of the new ordination. However, the Synod of Bishops issued a declaration of non-involvement in the internal affairs of the Serbian Church. The Patriarch of Alexandria Nicholas has now received Bishop Iriney into his jurisdictional protection and has sent Bishop Pheoklitosos, his representative, to deliver to Bishop Iriney, an edict, on December 12th, 1975, accepting him and his churches under the protection of the Church of Alexandria. We expect that the Serbian Patriarch will not remain indifferent to such an action.

ORTHODOXY IN AFRICA - The Patriarchate of Alexandria, being in charge of the mission in Africa, has opened four Episcopates there, to which Negroes have been appointed. There is a danger that growing black nationalism and the insufficiently implanted Orthodoxy of the newly converted Africans, may lead the latter to serious temptations, especially as a result of the artificially inflamed chauvinism of the black race.

A CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN NAIROBI - An Assembly of the World Council of Churches took place in Nairobi, Kenya. This place was chosen to show ecumenical interest in Africa, thus supporting the Communist slogans about colonialism and giving a religious tone to Communist propaganda. The Conference was opened at the end of November and lasted 18 days. Representatives of the so-called "Third World", the Socialist clergy, under influence of the Moscow Patriarchate, succeeded in passing greater concentration of political and social programs than ever before. Observers have noted a certain similarity to what occurs in the United Nations, where multitudinous representatives of newly-formed governments, formed out of former colonies, acquire a disproportionately large influence. After the Assembly held in 1968, the World Council of Churches spent 1.5 million dollars supporting the "liberation" movements in Africa, including terrorist movements. The main report on these questions was made by Prime Minister of Jamaica, M. Manley, who called for a

"workers democracy" to replace capitalism. "If capitalism is a weapon which raised man to a new level of economical and technical progress," he said, "it was simultaneously the graveyard of its moral purity." This and other calls for an "anticapitalist theology" disturbed many western delegates, if not from a principled point of view, then by the consideration that the trend towards Socialism could reflect negatively upon the donations from Western Protestants, who cover the lion's share of the budget (three million dollars annually). The appearance of the pro-Communists was so impressive, that a group of Anglican and Western delegates demonstratively walked out of one of the meetings of the Committee. Anglican Bishop Graham Leonard expressed that, "apparently there exists such uncontrollable utopianism in the Council of Churches, that its goal is that all the existing structures should be rejected and destroyed in order to create God's kingdom on earth." However, there were also statements by conservative Protestants and several Orthodox delegates, objecting to the revolutionary activity of the Council of Churches and the use of force as a means of attaining social change. These statements, and the lecture of the General-Sectary of the Council of Churches, Potter, who, in spite of his own leftism, tried to somewhat soften the impression created by the political direction of the Council. He did not change anything, although the exchange of opinion often reached a level of sharpness unusual for the Council of Churches. An attempt by several American delegates to hinder the election of Metropolitan Nikodim to the post of one of Chairmanships of the Council of Churches, was unsuccessful.

The attempt to move the Council of Churches towards a decisive resolution against the persecution of the Faith in the USSR had somewhat of a success at first. The letter of Father Gleb Yakunin and Regelson, asking for such a declaration, was printed in local papers and produced a great impression on many delegates. Metropolitan Nikodim the Baptists from the USSR decisively declared that even if misunderstandings sometimes arise among the faithful with the Soviet authorities, there can still be no mention made of persecution. The representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate tried to blacken Father Gleb Yakunin and Regelson. Metropolitan Yuvenaly declared that if the laws of religion should be violated sometimes, on one side or the other, these instances are decided by the Council on Church Relations in "the most benevolent manner." A similar declaration was also written by four representatives of Russian Baptists. The Assembly had intended to pass a statement expressing great anxiety concerning the "limita-

tion of religious freedom" in the USSR. But although it was supported by an enormous majority, it was set aside on the technical basis that no resolution was previously proposed and no vote taken about the ending of the discussion. The matter was handed to a Committee and, as a result, a mild general statement was accepted about the necessity for religious freedom, without naming the country where it was violated.

During the discussion, an Episcopal priest from Scotland, Richard Holloway, supporting the first resolution said: "I have noticed that there is an unwritten law in the World Council of Churches, according to which the USSR may never be publicly accused." According to some information, Soviet representatives threatened to walk out of the Assembly if the resolution proposed first should be accepted. The triumph of the Moscow representatives at the Conference was already obvious when Metropolitan Nikodim was elected as one of the Presidents of the World Council of Churches. An attempt to avert this was unsuccessful. All the political resolutions condemning capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, racism and Militarism, were accepted. Only on the question of ordaining women did the Orthodox delegates declare a categorical disagreement with the majority.

AN ECUMENICAL PRAYER IN BRAZIL FOR A DEAD JEW - Archbishop Cardinal Evaristo Arns of Sao Paulo performed an ecumenical commemorative service for Vladimir Gerzog, a local Jewish journalist. The service was performed by the Cardinal with the participation of two Rabbis and a Protestant pastor. According to Brazilian authorities, Gerzog died in prison, where he committed suicide. He was considered a political criminal because of his extreme Left convictions. Thus, the service in his memory was accepted by Leftist circles as a political demonstration and attracted many people. The Cardinal, in his speech, obliquely accused the government of murder in the death of Vladimir Gerzog.

ON ALLOWING WOMEN TO ENTER THE CLERGY - At a meeting of representatives of Roman Catholics and Anglicans in Washington, as the National Catholic Reporter of Nov. 14th, 1975 informs us, theologians of both faiths recognized that even if the Anglicans should allow women into the clergy, this situation would not stop the work of uniting both churches. This was recognized one week before Canadian Anglican Bishops decided with a great majority, to allow women to enter the clergy after Nov. 1st, 1976. The Catholic hierarchy is still against this reform, but the question is discussed in the Catholic press.

Just as with the Episcopalians, public opinion is gradually preparing them for a decision on this question. For example, during Nov. 1975, Catholics held a conference in Detroit, dedicated to this question. It was attended by 1200 people, among whom was a large number of nuns. In addition there were up to 100 Catholic priests, several representing seminaries. All the Catholic Bishops in America were invited but only two were present as guest-observers. The Conference lasted two days. The New York Times of Dec. 1st, 1975 writes: "Although no one is visibly hoping for quick triumphs, the general impression, after three days of reports and discussions, was that the beginning of a movement has been established." With the acceptance of this tendency by the innovators of all faiths, Prof. Roiter said that "The basis for not allowing women into Church leadership existed in the patriarchal society, which strictly excluded women from professional social life and justified this with an ideology of a congenital lesser position of women." There was a phenomenon in Brussels, August 1975, which was even more radical than in Detroit. There in a Jesuit chapel, was held a service of mutual communion during the liturgy, which was performed by a woman-pastor of the Lutheran Church in Cambridge, Mass., assisted by a Catholic laywoman and a nun, with two Catholic priests and a married Catholic Deacon serving with her. The service was organized by a Catholic organization called "Pro Vita", the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran Universal Federation and three other Catholic organizations.

NEW PERSECUTIONS OF FATHER DIMITRY DUDKO - When Father Dimitry Dudko moved, on Dec. 21st, to a church outside of Moscow, in the village of Kabanovka near Orehovo-Znevka, to perform a Divine Service, the elder of the church declared that he could not allow him to serve because the RAISPOLK had ordered him to dissolve the contract. Father Dimitry demanded a written confirmation of this order from the church elder but was denied. Father Dimitry was given an order to appear at the GORISPOLK, but as this was also done verbally, Father Dimitry did not consider himself obligated to go. Information about further developments in connection with this new persecution of Father Dimitry Dudko is not yet available. The above information was received from Moscow by N. I. Tetenoff, a former spiritual child of Father Dimitry, now living in the U.S.A.