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STATEMENTS MADE BY METROPOLITAN NIKODIM.

It seems that never before has Metropolitan Nikodim lied so categorically and so obviously as during his interview with a correspondent of the magazine "DRUM" in Nairobi. To the question: "Is it true that there is no freedom of religion in the Soviet Union?" the Metropolitan answered: "This, as you may have realized by now, is a lot of nonsense. If there was no freedom of religion in the Soviet Union, I would not have been in Nairobi, attending the conference of the World Council of Churches. There are 20 million Christians in the Soviet Union and all of them are faithful followers of Jesus Christ. The Russian Orthodox Church is recognized throughout the world as a member of the Christian community. We also believe in the Ecumenical movement. All religions have one thing in common-- they preach the love of God and of humanity. Jesus was neither Communist nor Capitalist."

To the question referring to the memorandum by Fr. Gleb Yakunin, the Metropolitan said: "Yes, I saw the memorandum about the so-called persecution of the Christians in the Soviet Socialist Republic. What I can say is that there is no atheism as such in the Soviet Union. There are believers and non-believers, but all go their own way. Christians have their own churches, the Jews have their own synagogues. We even have Muslims with their own mosques. But the over-riding philosophy of the Soviet Union is Marxism-Leninism. Everyone is expected to be a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. There are some dissidents, of course. These are people who would like to be left alone to do their own thing. We have these people all over the world. But there is no ban on Christianity or Christian worship in my country."

To the question about ecumenism, Metropolitan Nikodim answered: "We all welcome any move that can bring all Christian denominations together. We all preach the same thing and there is, therefore, no reason why we cannot work together."

STATEMENT MADE BY METROPOLITAN YUVENALY.

The lion's share of lies concerning the condition of religion in the USSR, during the Nairobi Conference, happened to become the responsibility of Metropolitan Yuenaly. He was also the one who proclaimed purely Communist propaganda. In the Paris newspaper "Russkaya Mysle" of February 19th, 1976, a part of his statement is published. On November 29th, 1975, among other things he said: "When there was a discussion about what is the place of a state power, then I was thinking, that the Russian people, poor or rich, were the first to show, a few decades ago, how to become liberated and how to build their lives on a just basis. By today there is a whole brotherhood of such people (nations) which are united in a socialistic fellowship, and I would like to say that the matter is simple when we discuss the problem of equality in labor, relief from poverty, because it has already come true in the life of our countries. When I listened today to the dreams expressed during the morning sessions, about the liberation of women in capitalistic countries, it became clear to me that this liberation is a reality in our countries." All the other addresses made by members of the Moscow Patriarchate were in the same uneclesiastical style and in accord with the spirit of Communist propaganda.



**Synod of Bishops
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Outside of Russia.**

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Very Reverend Archpriest George Grabbe, Director
Public and Foreign Relations Department

April 10th, 1976

TO THE RECIPIENTS OF OUR NEWSLETTER:

For some time now, the Department of Public & Foreign Relations of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia has published its Information Bulletin, which is mailed to all the Venerable Hierarchs of our Church, all Reverend Rectors of the parishes in the U.S.A. as well as abroad, to several prominent public servants, the Russian press, to former members of the All Church Council, etc. This amounts to some 400 addresses. This same Information Bulletin, translated into English, is being sent to all the religious press and to private individuals who have expressed the desire to receive it. This makes an additional list of some 300 addresses.

Our Information Bulletin has become quite popular, and major parts of it are reprinted by the Russian as well as the foreign press. We are constantly receiving requests to publish it more often. Yet the constant rise in postal rates and the price of paper, as well as subscription rates for numerous publications in several languages, which are a must for our own publication, have so far made it impossible for us to do so.

The Synod of Bishops has found it difficult to secure sufficient funds to support this activity of the Public and Foreign Relations Department. In order to continue and to develop this project, we have been given permission to ask the Parish Rectors and private individuals for donations which would enable us to make this Bulletin into a monthly publication. Every mailing costs between \$100.00 and \$150.00.

Your generosity will enable us, not only to continue this very worthwhile project, but to expand it as well.

Thanking you for your cooperation, and wishing you all the joys and blessings of the coming Holy Paschal Season, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

ARCHPRIEST GEORGE GRABBE, Director
Department of Public & Foreign Relations

HUNGERSTRIKE OF A PRISONER

Gabriel Superfin, an inmate of Vladimir Prison near Moscow, declared a hunger strike because Christian literature, including a Bible and a Prayerbook, were taken away from him by the jail authorities. At the time of his sentencing, the judge permitted him to have some books. Yet, on January 14th, the authorities demanded that he give them up. He refused and they were taken away from his cell while he was absent. Superfin is known for his wide erudition. Before his arrest, he was Solzhenitsyn's literary secretary and was gathering the material for his book "August 1914". It seems that he became a Christian. His friends think that he was baptized while in the labor camp. He was arrested in 1973. Already while imprisoned, he participated in various demonstrations and protests and because of this was transferred to the more severe conditions of Vladimir Prison. His poor health makes one apprehensive.

THE SERBIAN CHURCH AND THE PATRIARCHATE OF ALEXANDRIA

The Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church made a very categorical protest to the Patriarch of Alexandria for accepting under his patronage, the defrocked Bishop Dionysius Miloshevich, and also Archimandrite Irineus Kovachevich, who was ordained by the Ukranian autocephalists. The Serbian Church declared this act uncanonical and invalid.

AFTER THE NAIROBI CONFERENCE.

Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon, senior member of the Constantinople Synod, in his interview with a member of the Ecumenical Press Service, expressed his satisfaction with the results of the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches. He said that discussions will take place among the Orthodox Churches which were represented at the Assembly. He personally considers the Fifth Assembly to be better than the previous ones, due to the active part taken in the debates by the Orthodox and Roman Catholics. "Prior to Nairobi" said the Metropolitan, "the Orthodox felt somewhat isolated within the WCC. But at the Fifth Assembly I observed that they felt that they were now a vital part of the fellowship." "But", he observed, "the Orthodox will continue to give priority to "verticalism", in other words, as a live Confession of the Faith, and a move forward to the final goal of the Ecumenical movement - the unity of the Churches." Questioned about his recent meeting with Pope Paul VI, Metropolitan Meliton stressed that the close relations between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church is a "theological reality.... it is not a question to be discussed, but a concrete reality."

MEETING OF THE GREEK BISHOPS IN WESTERN EUROPE

The Bulletin "Episkepsis" informs us that in Chambesi (Switzerland), from Feb. 1st to 3rd, there was a meeting of the Greek Bishops of Western Europe under the Chairmanship of the Dean of the Constantinople Synod, Metropolitan Meliton. Eight Bishops met, among them one Russian, the Exarch of the Constantinople Patriarchate, Archbishop Gregory of Paris. The Conference recommended the change of Paschalia in order to celebrate Pascha on a fixed day together with the Western Confessions, but postponed further discussions until this question could be decided by all the Orthodox Churches. The Conference passed quite renovationist resolutions, permitting second marriage of the clergy, with each individual case to be presented for judgement to a local Metropolitan. The same Conference discussed the serving of a Liturgy in the evening. The question was also raised about the establishment of a high-level theological school in Chambesi, in order to prepare candidates capable of leading the ecumenical dialogues with the heterodox.

TOWARD DISCUSSIONS WITH THE VATICAN

Patriarch Demetrios, in his interview with representatives of two of Athens' newspapers, "Katimerini" and "Vradini", expressed his opinion about negotiations with the Roman Catholics. He said that "the dialogues are on their way, and it cannot be otherwise. Our great predecessor Athenagoras I and his Holiness Pope Paul VI have reestablished and strengthened the dialogue of love. This dialogue was accepted by all the Orthodox during the third Conference on Rhodes in 1964. Now we note one more step forward...e.g. from the dialogue of love we move to the dialogue of theology.....We are happy to inform you that the suggestion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate was accepted with pleasure by all Orthodox Local Churches and soon there will be published a list of the members of the Commission, because, in order to start its work, it must be assembled as soon as possible. It goes without saying that His Holiness the Pope will be officially notified about it, so that the Roman Church will be able to act in the same manner."

PATRIARCH DEMETRIOS ABOUT THE NEW PASCHALIA.

In the same conversation with the Athens' correspondents, the Patriarch Demetrios stated that the question of simultaneous celebration of Easter by all Christians was raised by his predecessor Athenagoras I. Patriarch Demetrios expressed the hope that all Christians will decide to celebrate Pascha at the same time, but on the condition that it must first be accepted by all the Orthodox Churches. This is why the Patriarch was against the discussion of this question in Nairobi. In the opposite vein, the Moscow Patriarchate saw no obstacles in the way of such a discussion and went into this question even further than Constantinople.

THE SUCCESSES OF SODOMY

According to information given by the Newspaper "The Philadelphia Enquirer" of Dec. 1975, Paul Murr, the Episcopalian Bishop of New York declared that many priests in his Church were homosexuals. He spoke about the ordination to deaconhood of a known Lesbian as a sign of a healthy change. Referring to this case, he stated: "Historically speaking, many of the best clergymen in our Church have had such a personal orientation, but it is only recently that the social climate has made it possible to talk about it openly." He noted that Deaconess Barrett openly spoke about herself and that such openness is a "healthy development in our culture and our Church." One can't help being sorry for a Church in which the Bishops openly express pleasure in the open sin of their clerics.

BROAD LIMITS OF ECUMENISM

In Portugal, as well as in many other countries, information about the Nairobi Conference was used during the prayer meetings devoted to the Octave of Christian Unity. In Lisbon, during one of these Octave of Christian Unity meetings, not only Catholics participated, but Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Muslims as well. The Koran was read on the same level as the Bible. In New York, in the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine, an ecumenical service was conducted on Feb. 1st by an Episcopalian priest and a Rabbi. The readings were from the Books of the Prophets Isaiah, Zephania, Jeremiah, and also from the Psalms. Nothing was read from the New Testament. Between readings, Sharon Gwatkin sang Israeli folk songs and the Ruth Goodman Dance Group performed ancient Israelite dances.

THE SUFFERING OF THE ETHIOPIAN CHURCH.

For some reason the West ignores the fact that Communist power actually rules in Ethiopia and that this very strongly reflects upon the Church. Recently the Primate of the Ethiopian Church, Abuna Theophil,

was arrested and his future fate is unknown. Communist-Socialist laws are introduced which completely destroy the life of the Church. The churches are not as yet confiscated, but the Church is losing all its income-producing property, the revenues from which were primarily maintaining the Church institutions. The agrarian reforms affected 600 monasteries. Thousands of monks and nuns, as a result of these reforms, are losing their means of support.

PRIESTHOOD OF WOMEN.

The Anglicans are preparing the Christian world for the fact that by next year they will have women priests. The Roman Catholics are being involved in this discussion. Irenicon #4 for 1975 informs us about a meeting of Catholic and Anglican theologians in Cincinnati, Ohio, during June of last year. The Catholic theologians did not agree to admit women to the priesthood, but in a form not too definite, according to our opinion. "In reference to the Roman Catholic Church," writes Irenicon, "the official statements do not foresee any change in this respect in the NEAR FUTURE. (Capitals ours, G.G.) During discussions, some of the Roman Catholic members felt that "all the aspects of the problem were not sufficiently studied in order to make it possible to accept a definite position." These words allow a future discussion of this problem.

Meanwhile, the supporters of women's equality have reached already a blasphemous nonsense, trying to exclude any masculine expression in reference to God. In one of the new drafts of the Nicene Creed for Catholics, the word "Father" is substituted with words such as Mother/Father, so that it reads "and sitteth on the right hand of the Father/Mother". Instead of the word "God", there is the tendency to use such expressions as "Provider", "Redeemer", "Saviour", and so on, which in English are not necessarily masculine.

THE DECLINE OF CHURCH LIFE BY ANGLICANS.

The magazine "Newsweek" gives information of how much religious life in England has fallen. In London, not far from the residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the 130 year old church of All Saints is falling apart. There are some 13,000 registered parishioners, but Sunday worship is attended by only less than 20 persons. The church is going to ruin and yet there are no funds available for its restoration. This is a common occurrence. The number of people attending services during the last 20 years has dropped from 3 million to 2 million. Also the number of clergy dropped by 2,500 in 1969 and by 1980 is expected to drop by 3,000 more. The parish rectors who were very well provided for before, are now forced to look for outside jobs and to rent the rooms in the parish houses. The new Canterbury Archbishop Kogan has tried to raise the moral level of his flock by his lectures and he is pleased when he is able to make the people discuss religious problems. However, his initiative is also criticized by some people because he does not devote more attention to social problems. Some priests are inviting famous actors to give lectures, even the famous Violinist Jehudi Menuhin. Such gatherings happen to be crowded, but the attendance of church services does not increase.

FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE WCC.

In spite of the fact that the churches increased their dues for the support of the staff and various manipulations of the World Council of Churches, the latter has financial problems due to inflation. For example, the churches in America have raised their dues 16%, but because of the devaluation of the dollar, the WCC receives instead of 2.5 million, only 1.7 million Swiss Francs. Nevertheless, it seemingly will be able to find some new sources for replenishment of its funds, since it did not reduce its activities and financial support to revolutionary organizations in Africa and other countries.

CATHOLICISM AND MASONRY.

In 1968 there was a change in relations between Roman Catholicism and Masonry. Some time ago, membership in the Masons by a Catholic was strongly forbidden and lead to excommunication from the Church. This year, the news media was informed that this sanction has been dropped. In 1968 a meeting of Masons and Knights of Columbus was made possible. Now one step more is made. On March 28th, Cardinal Cooke of New York appeared at a meeting of some 3,000 Masons and declared that: "What happened in the past should not stand between us and the future." The highest representative of the Catholic hierarchy ever to address such a large masonic gathering "lamented" past estrangement with Masons and called his appearance "a joyful event" on the "road to friendship" between the Church and the fraternity.

One must assume that Cardinal Cooke, holding such a high position in the Catholic hierarchy, could not make such a responsible statement without consulting the Vatican beforehand.

Just prior to his appearance at the Masonic conference, Cardinal Cooke attended a service at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, a Presbyterian Church on 55th St., and a Synagogue on Second Ave. After services, the faithful of the aforementioned churches joined together, and in a common procession went to the Masonic meeting at the Hilton Hotel. The change of the Catholic Church's policy toward Masonry in that way was also witnessed by an ecumenical demonstration of different denominations which are close to it.