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## IMPORTANT CORRECTION:

Due to an error on page 6 of the previous issue in the article "Kosovo Today" in the third paragraph an annoying misprint occurred. It should read: "at the battle with the Tatars on Kulikovo Pole, Russia remained under the Tatar yoke..." and NOT as erroneously stated, "also fell under the Tatar yoke." We apologize for our error!

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CHURCH NEWS  
639 Center Street  
Oradell, NJ, 07679-2003 USA  
Tel: 201-967-7684

## "RUSSIAN EXCAVATIONS" IN JERUSALEM IN DANGER

The so-called "Russian Excavations" in Jerusalem, which adjoin one of the walls of the Holy Sepulchre Church and whose main holy place is the "Threshold of the Judgement Gates" from the day of its founding belonged (and still belongs) to the Orthodox Palestine Society. This is the threshold of the gates over which Our Lord stepped on His way to Crucifixion. According to the law of that time, the execution of any convict could be stopped if there was a witness who demanded another trial. As we know, the Saviour of the world had no such one.

From 1965 to 1986 this building served as the administrative center of the OPS and the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem. It was in such good shape that the Chief of the Mission did not hesitate to hold there receptions for foreign consuls and various religious representatives in Jerusalem twice a year: on Pascha and Christmas. At that time it was necessary to have the support of their governments during a court case filed against the government of Israel which in 1948 confiscated property of the REM and OPS and handed it over to the USSR as a token of gratitude for being the first state to recognize the state of Israel. These receptions became very popular, being the only neutral place in all of Israel where representatives of the Israeli government, Arabs and representatives of various religious denominations (from the Jerusalem Patriarchate to several Western churches in the Holy Land) freely mixed and had productive discussions. This action of the Chief of the Mission resulted in visits by various consuls (the American especially) who then would drop in to attend the court hearings and express their interest in this case.

After the repose of Metropolitan Philaret and the election of the new First Hierarch of the ROCOR, Metropolitan Vitaly made a number of administrative reforms, not only inside the Synod, but also in the REM in Jerusalem. Not only did he dismiss the Chief of the Mission, Archimandrite Anthony (Grabbe) who had held this position for 18 years and won the court case, he also had made an effort to bring the traditionally independent lay people's organization into obedience to the Synod of Bishops. To counter-balance the central OPS branch of Jerusalem, he created his own organization with the same title in New York. The Palestine Society sector in the Holy Land refused to accept the legality of the demands of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR. This resulted in litigation which cost the Synod a great deal of money, seemingly paid out of funds received by the Synod through Archimandrite Anthony as compensation from the Israeli Government. Nevertheless, the Jerusalem sector of the OPS won the case. The result of this extremely unsuccessful action on part of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR was very regrettable not only for general church work in the Holy Land, but also in particular for the "Russian Excavations" building.

During an entire period of 13 years no one lived in this building, the members of the OPS visited it from time to time during weekly visits, but they had not the funds necessary to make urgently needed repairs.

Just recently the President of the Jerusalem sector of the OPS, Bishop Anthony, managed to persuade a self-sacrificing Russian who with his wife's approval in America agreed to live in "the Russian Excavations" for 2 months in the hope of finding a permanent custodian for this property.

According to his report the building is in a very bad shape and needs some very urgent repairs not only of the roof, but also of the windows and doors.

Using the excuse that for all these years no one had lived in this building, local Arabs became very bold and in the last year built public toilets next to the Excavations wall. In spite of protests made to the Israeli police, Arabs not only would not remove the toilets, but also put in a door and metal fence, making a little yard. Then the Arabs hung on Excavation wall a huge portrait of one of their heroes, which had to be taken down by members of OPS. Yet, just a few days ago, the same Arabs, removed a board 3 feet long which was on the roof. To climb up, requires a long ladder, but still they managed to do it. This event forced the members of OPS urgently to place additional locks and to reinforce the main entrance door. The condition of some of the walls inside the building is such that in some places horizontal boards were put up to prevent stones from falling out of the walls.

According to the same self-sacrificing member of the OPS, the Arabs constantly make trouble, like breaking windows, throwing garbage on the street in front of the entrance and recently they offered \$100 to be let in, which was flatly refused.

Unfortunately, the "OPS" created by the Synod of Bishops for all these 13 years, despite that it is officially collecting money for upkeep of holy places in Jerusalem which belong to our Church, which certainly includes also "Excavations" -- not once forwarded any funds for it's upkeep, although the building for a long time has been in danger of collapse if necessary repairs are not done soon. First, all the window frames have to be replaced. The cost of this work was estimated at \$1000. The repair of the roof certainly will cost much more.

Yet, the situation at present is such, that the last pilgrimage of 70 people from the Synod members, who visited the Excavations, not only didn't leave a penny for the St. Alexander Church there, but even didn't pay for candles taken at the candlestand!

All those who would be willing to help cover the cost of the repairs to the Excavations may send their donations to "Church News" and we would be happy to transfer them immediately to Jerusalem. Donations should be marked "For the Russian Excavations."

## UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY IN "RUSSIAN EXCAVATIONS" IN JERUSALEM

The temporary custodian of the building belonging to the OPS known as "The Russian Excavations" in Jerusalem reports that on the feast of the Great Martyr St. George using rope he descended into crypt of the building (about 20 feet deep) and finally resolved the speculations of many years about what is located there.

As he discovered, in the crypt there are several tunnels which ages ago were connected with the Holy Sepulchre, but after a fire some of which were closed.

Now we know that under the Russian Excavations there is a very big and beautiful hall, which seemingly was used by the Crusaders, whose church was on the ground. This hall with a beautiful ceiling and walls resembles inside an castle. Although the hall is dry, water is leaking into one of the adjoining rooms from a restaurant built above it on the ground level. According to descriptions this hall is about 20m long and about 10 m wide, "really beautiful and if one were to build a stairway, it would make a wonderful museum." In the hall there were found several vases 3 to 3 ½ feet high. A clerk of the city who works with antiques thinks the vases are at least 200 years old, if not even 400.

The discovered rooms have to be cleaned and dried out, and by all means, there should be built a stairway into crypt. Also the entrances should be closed, since Arabs from time to time try to dig under the building, in order to prevent damage and possible thefts from this.

The informant appealed to Russian youth organizations of the scouting type as he is a old scout instructor to help him "complete his survey", which in this case would benefit the Church and Russian culture.

Certainly, "Church News" would be happy to transfer to Jerusalem any donations for this as well.

## A BIT MORE ON KOSOVO

In connection with the over 6 week long continuous bombing of Serbia by NATO, led by the USA, the representatives of all the Orthodox Churches have demonstrated a seldom seen unanimity and officially protested to President Clinton and demanded the stop to the slaughter of the defenseless peaceful population.

The protests were made literally in name of all the autocephalous and autonomous Orthodox Churches, it seems with the exception of only the Jerusalem Patriarchate. They were joined by numerous Old Calendar groups of various canonicity.

The Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR at its meeting on April 16/29, 1999, made a declaration regarding the military action protesting against "the barbaric assault on the defenseless populace of Orthodox Serbia," signed by the First Hierarchy of the ROCOR and the participants of the meeting: Anthony, Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America; Laurus, Archbishop of Syracuse and Troitsa; Mark, Archbishop of Berlin-Germany and Great Britain; also Bishops Kyrill of Seattle, Ambrose of Vevey, Gabriel of Manhattan and Michael of Toronto.

This declaration, so far published only in English on the Internet and broadcast in Russian by Canadian Radio, was made "to a vacuum." It became known only to computer-owners, which in large part excludes the clergy of more advanced age in the USA and certainly all the dioceses abroad which do not use English. At any rate, this is not a great loss, since the text of the declaration is rather colorless.

A very passionate and well articulated "Declaration regarding missile-bomb attack of the NATO army on Yugoslavia" (again addressed to no one and to nowhere) was published by the magazine "Pravoslavnaya Rus" in # 7 (1628) for April 1/14, 1999, signed by Bishop Evtikhy, bishop of the Ishim and Siberian dioceses of the ROCOR.

His Grace Evtikhy, while expressing his passionate sympathy for the Serbs and the Serbian Church, makes an important error when he states that "In no way is it possible to pass over in silence the truth that the Serbian nation is the most visible preserver of the Orthodox Christian faith on the European continent."

Bishop Evtikhy did not take in consideration (and may be didn't know) that from beginning of the 60's the Serbian Church has been very active member of the WCC and its Patriarch German was for a rather long time a President of this impious Masonic organization. The Serbian Church to this day remains in the WCC and actively participates in it with all the other "Orthodox Churches." Certainly, this should not prevent the compassion of the Russian people for the Serbians as such, but between compassion for fellow Slavs and the assertion that they are "preservers of Orthodoxy" there is a very great difference.

From the very first days of the bombing the Moscow Patriarchate protested to America and NATO in the person of Alexis Ridiger, who even went to Belgrade in hope of solving the Balkan problems by diplomatic means.

In America a similar protest was made by the representatives of the so-called Standing Conference of Canonical Bishops in America. Their declaration, published by the newspaper "Orthodox Observer" on April 20th (the official publication of the Greek Archdiocese) was addressed to President Clinton and signed by Archbishop Spyridon, Chairman of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in America; Metropolitan Philip, Vice-Chair, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese in America; Metropolitan Joseph, Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church; Metropolitan Nicholas, of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Diocese in the USA; Metropolitan Theodosius, Orthodox Church in

America; Archbishop Victorin, Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada; Metropolitan Christopher, Serbian Church in the US and Canada; Metropolitan Constantine, Ukrainian Orthodox Church in USA and Protopresbyter Ilia Katre, Vicar General Albanian Orthodox Diocese in America.

It is worth noting that in this declaration all the Hierarchs express sadness that all the diplomatic efforts failed and speak of being deeply concerned about "the lives of this nation's noble sons and daughters, many of whom come from our parishes and communities, who are also now at a great risk for their lives."

According to the bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of April 21, a number of religious organizations, including the WCC, protested to the UN pointing out that the NATO violated all laws and aiming for peace, creates destruction and with its bombs is terrorizing peaceful citizens while the United Nations could solve this problem with diplomacy. Noticeably, the UN has not declared itself in this conflict.

We have learned through telephone conversations with Yugoslavia, during one of bombing raids the Russian Holy Trinity Church in Belgrade suffered light damage. There used to be many military banners of the Imperial army kept there which were saved from the Bolsheviks as well as a grave of one of the "white leaders," General Wrangel, who was the only monarchist among the generals of this movement.

It is quite certain that the American media carefully hides from its people the number of victims of this undeclared war. All that has been reported so far was the loss of an airplane, which crashed "for unknown reasons" and two helicopters, without mentioning the number of victims. And all this, while the newspapers constantly report that Milosevic has a sophisticated, up to date, modern defense system!

#### FROM LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

In December 1996 in the city of Kineshma a St. Nicholas parish in the cemetery of Zatenki was registered with the authorities. With the blessing of the local Archbishop Ambrose and agreement of the city administration, the parish received a plot of land to build a small chapel. A wealthy member of this parish, a certain P. A. Orekhov, helped the parish financially. However, later he tried to gain legal possession of this church. The parish objected to this move. Orekhov managed to get support from the Archbishop and wrote a letter to the municipal authorities asking them to revoke the registration of St. Nicholas Church and to annul their registration in the roster of legal entities. The city's administration took the side of the parish. Then, aided by the same Moscow Patriarchate Archbishop, in this city of Kineshma another parish was quickly established dedicated to St. Sergius of Radonezh. Orekhov became one of the new trustees.

St. Nicholas parish, seeing that no requests made to the Ivanovo diocese were ever answered nor acted upon, without even receiving an acknowledgment of receipt, decided at a general parish meeting on January 29, 1999 to approach Archbishop Valentine of Suzdal and Vladimir and was received by him.

But, in the very beginning of February, a Priest-monk Vitaly and P. Orekhov, representing St. Sergius parish with the blessing of Archbishop Ambrose, broke into St. Nicholas Church, forcing the locks, replaced them with their own and put a guard at the door to let no one in.

Archbishop Valentine immediately sent Protodeacon Dimitry Krasovsky to Kineshma, who together with the newly appointed rector Fr. Alexander Kochnev arrived at the church. As was reported by the protodeacon to Archbishop Valentine, both fathers, Alexander and Dimitry, learned from the watchman that the doors of the church were broken in by Priestmonk Vitaly and Orekhov in the presence of the police.

Fr. Alexander went inside the cemetery to make photographs of event to come and Protodeacon Dimitry with a small group of parishioners began a dialogue with the usurper priest monk, who under no condition would let them inside their own church. When Fr. Dimitry had gone some 200-300 feet away from the church 2 cars arrived from which there jumped several people in khaki uniforms who cried out "stop" and shot twice into the air. They are clearly heard on the cassette we recently received from Suzdal. Orekhov with a rifle in hands ran after defenders of the church, pushed Fr. Dimitry into the snow and fired two more shots which missed him.

On the way to the police the rector of the church joined Protodeacon Dimitry. While they walked, at an intersection they barely escaped being hit by another car, which already was by the chapel occupied by several people in uniforms. Six of them jumped out of the car (among them Orekhov) and started to beat up Fr. Alexander. Bandits dragged both clergymen into the car and drove around for some time, threatening either to kill them or to put them into a barrel of acid. Then they brought them back to the cemetery where patriarchal priest monk demanded that they hand over to him the antimention and holy vessels if they want to be released. The clergy of Archbishop Valentine had no alternative but to accede to their demands.

Then the bandits removed a cassette from Fr. Dimitry's tape recorder and film from Fr. Alexander's camera, which they opened in the light and then let them go. The parishioners, frightened by this event and seeing their total defenselessness before the local authorities, suggested that Fr. Alexander leave, since he already had been beaten up by "unknown persons" including Orekhov himself.

After making an official complaint at the police, the rector of this parish left for good with his matushka and protodeacon and returned to Suzdal.

At present we know nothing about the fate of this parish or their priest. In any case, this story clearly demonstrates how far are removed the bishops and clergy of Moscow Patriarchate from any Christian conception of behavior.

#### POCHAEV LAVRA GIVEN TO UNIATES

According to information received by the newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") the president of Ukraine, Kuchma, by his order dated March 18 handed over to the Uniates the main church of Pochaev Lavra, her Dormition Cathedral. In it is enshrined the miraculous icon of the Pochaev Theotokos and the impression of Her foot in the cliff, from which flows a healing spring. This church covers the top of the hill and in order to venerate this impression, one has to bend down to the floor. For very important visitors there is a special entrance, leading to the top of the cliff.

In the same Lavra rest the incorrupt relics of St. Job, renown for his zealous opposition to Catholics. Are not these relics in danger of being destroyed by the Orthodox-hating Uniates?

During the Soviet occupation the monastic brotherhood was evicted from the Lavra and their living quarters turned into a mental hospital. Up to 1939 the Lavra had more than 400 monks.

A declaration made by the "Union of Orthodox Brotherhoods" published in the same paper points out to this outrageous act of Ukrainian President and stresses that since the government has already invited the Pope to visit Ukraine, this unprecedented act of handing over this Orthodox cathedral to Uniates will "inflammate the already very stressful religious situation that exists, even more" in this area. It also has been reported that we may expect the resignation of Archbishop Jonathan, the administrator of the churches in Ukraine for the Moscow Patriarchate. According to descriptions given of him by the Brotherhoods, he is very steadfast on Orthodox positions especially energetically opposing the defrocked "Patriarch" Philaret Denisenko. For a number of years the Moscow Patriarchate "kept its eyes closed" to the fact that Metropolitan Philaret Denisenko kept a mistress who bore him 2 sons and a daughter. Both sons, looking very much like him, even served as his subdeacons! But the MP defrocked him after he got involved with the Ukrainian separatists.

The members of this United Brotherhoods plead with Metropolitan Vladimir and the other hierarchs of Ukraine to give Bishop Jonathan all possible support and in no way to yield to the enemies of Orthodoxy.

It seems that the Union of the Orthodox Brotherhoods when mentioning a heated up situation happened to be prophetic. The chancery of the "Kievan Patriarchate" stated on the Internet that on April 30 at 9:00 AM during the service of blessing of the cross for newly restored church in Mariupol (Donetsk Region), Denisenko and his companions were attacked.

The self-ordained (samosviaty) state that the "combatants of the Muscovite Patriarchate attacked Denisenko and his entourage with iron rods and started to beat up his clergy and faithful. "Abbot" Dimitry Rudiuk was critically injured, and lost consciousness suffering a concussion from a blow, but Denisenko himself was not injured severely.

These contemporary Brotherhoods are descendants of those Brotherhoods who for centuries were the sole defenders of Orthodoxy against Catholics and Uniates in the western lands of Russia, even when their entire hierarchy and aristocracy betrayed Orthodoxy. It is a consolation to see that in this difficult time the zeal of the Brotherhoods to preserve Orthodoxy has not diminished.

At present, Uniates almost totally wiped out the Lvov Diocese, which previously had a few more than 1,200 parishes of which now less than 40 remain!

#### REGARDING THE POPE'S VISIT TO ROMANIA

The official publication of the Greek Archdiocese in the USA (Ecumenical Patriarchate) "Orthodox Observer" in its issue of April 5 reported that the visit of the Pope to Romania was made in response to an invitation from the Romanian Church issued after strong pressure from Prime Minister Radu Vasile, has met with a number of difficulties. This visit was set to take place in May.

According to Radu Vasile, the Pope wanted to visit some provinces of Romania, especially Baku, in which Catholics and Uniates live. When speaking of obstacles to this visit, the Prime Minister did not mention the Orthodox Church but the journalists had no doubt that he meant the Church and especially the conservative elements of this Church.

A Romanian representative in the Vatican was under the impression that Pope will restrict his visit to only the national capital of Bucharest. Yet, to the quite obvious displeasure of the Romanian minister the Pope declared that he wants to serve masses in the airports of Transylvania, Baku and Moldavia regions, the main location of the Uniates.

Romanian government was very eager to invite Pope in the hope that it will help Romania join NATO which for some reason is not in a hurry to see this done.

"The Pope's visit is 70% the result of my personal efforts and many people have said nothing about this," lamented Vasile who personally handed to Pope the invitation. "I have done my duty. In May 1999 the Pope will visit Romania and his presence will offset Romania's failure to be admitted to NATO."

The Pope's visit arranged by Radu Vasile is considered to be a diplomatic coup for the government of President Constantinescu. The popularity of those two politicians is very low due to declining living standards of the majority of the nation.

The Romanian residents openly discuss the material profits which will come from this visit. So, a certain Andrew said, "I think maybe this could attract new investors." While a retired clerk noted, "The Pope has now seen that we are all Christians together. And we Romanians see our country has the approval of the Western world, including an important international organization like the Vatican."

Until this happened the Romanian Orthodox Church opposed a Papal visit insisting that real-estate difficulties needed first to be settled between it and the Uniates. Yet the Patriarch, in spite of such opinions was forced during first days of April to send the Pope the official invitation in the name of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Under government pressure both clergies, Orthodox and Uniate, pledged to restrain themselves from mutual insults and arguments about the properties.

According to the press, despite all the obstacles, the Vatican dream came true. On Friday May 7th the Pope arrived to Romania for a three day visit. At the airport he was met by Patriarch Theoctist and both clergymen dressed in white exchanged kisses. At this meeting the Pope said to Theoctist: "I kissed the ground with great emotion, grateful most of all to God who in his benevolence allowed me to see this desire realized... It is the first time that Divine Providence offered me the possibility to make an *apostolic* [italics by "Ch N"] trip to a mainly Orthodox country." Romania has a population of 23 million and 90% of them are Orthodox.

Theoctist and the visibly frail and aged Pope, (assisted by President Constantinescu) went to the Pope's "popemobile" and after a 7 mile trip went to the Bucharest's cathedral where there was a short service, probably a thanksgiving. In the cathedral two identical thrones were placed side by side. The difference was only in the carved coats of arms on the back supports.

As per "The New York Times" of May 8, the Pope could not restrain his joy over visiting Romania. This was the first visit of a Roman Pope to an entirely Orthodox country since the official date of separation of Roman Catholicism from Orthodoxy in 1054. Yet the joy of this Catholic was slightly dampened by unwillingness of government to let him go to Transylvania, where the main concentration of Uniates live. The Romanian government did its best and it seems it succeeded in restricting the Pope's visit to Bucharest.

Theoctist offered to make with the Pope an effort to end the war in Yugoslavia. He said: "You fight against the spirit of secularization and you work for the reconciliation of peoples, and this is why we hope the presence of your Holiness will be a good occasion to bring a common testimony to the drama of Yugoslavia -- a territory placed in the middle of Christian Europe -- by asking together for an immediate halt to the war."

It is worth while noting that Theoctist didn't find it necessary to mention that the war is being led against a predominately Orthodox population. Then he expressed a hope that the Pope's visit to Romania will serve as a reason for deepening of dialogue between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Theoctist said to reporters that "this moment represents one effort among others" [to unite Catholics and Orthodox, "Ch. N."], but "theologians always complicate things."

"The New York Times" of May 10th reported that on Sunday, May 9th, in Bucharest **the Patriarch served a Liturgy, while the Pope stood next to him.** This outrageous open air event was attended by more than 100,000 people.

The very same thing happened at a Mass held by the Pope with the "Patriarch" standing next to him. This spectacle attracted double the number of "praying" spectators. No protests by Orthodox were heard over the common prayer of an Orthodox hierarch and a heretic Pope. The news media does not state that there was an actual concelebration, but whether or not is not of great importance, since "If anyone pray in company with one who has been excommunicated, he shall be excommunicated himself" (Apostolic # 10, 45 and a number of similar canons).

At the end of the 80's Theoctist had to resign because of his close collaboration with the Communists, but after 3 months he returned to his throne.

The newspapers underline the cynicism of Romanians in this case and state that the matter is not so much about Ecumenism as about utilizing this opportunity "from the perspective of Mammon." Perfidious Romanians hoping to be admitted to Masonic NATO (which has already refused them a couple of times) went so far as to offer bases for airplanes to bomb their fellow Orthodox Serbs! Romania was also one of the few countries who offered to participate in NATO's oil embargo against Yugoslavia.

It seems that the loss of all principles by the Romanians has paid off: English Prime Minister Tony Blair already promised his intercession in admitting Romania into NATO.

## TREACHEROUS ACTIVITY OF MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

The newspaper "Russkii Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") in issue # 10-11 reported on the Moscow Patriarchate's Synodal meeting on March 31 and April 1. Included with the published information about it are decrees concerning Kosovo, postponement for undetermined period of the negotiations which were to be held in Italy between the Patriarchate and the Catholics due to military actions in Yugoslavia, a proposal that the episcopate present a draft of an icon of the New Martyrs and some own administrative measures, there are also quite Ecumenical themes, such as "Basic principles of relations of the Russian Church toward heterodox."

The most important decree is that made after a report of Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk, which in a very brief manner declares: "...To approve the position of the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church which participated in the Pan-Orthodox Committee to prepare for the Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church. (Geneva, March 1-2, 1999)."

What the Moscow Patriarchate terms a "Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church" in reality is nothing but a future "Eighth Ecumenical Council," of such a renovative character and of supposed necessity that there have been deliberations for at least of 3 decades now. The Ecumenists in their publications on number of occasions published the subject matter of papers which were to be deliberated on during this council's meetings. All of them repeat in full the agendas of the Russian renovationists, The Living Church, which proposed the total annihilation of all the fasts, liturgical "reforms" (abbreviation of all the services to a minimum), a married episcopate, the annihilation of monasticism, second marriage for clergy, introduction of the Gregorian calendar and establishment of a fixed date for Pascha! In the 20's the Russian renovationists did not dare to go as far as the contemporary "Orthodox Churches" do now.

It seems that the publication of the topics for the future "Council" and their distribution among various Churches was too premature for the Ecumenists, because the Orthodox faithful became alarmed when the news about the aims of the future "Council" started to leak outside the narrow Ecumenist circles. The renovationists in the 80's had to publicly admit that contemporary Christians are not yet ready to painlessly accept the renovationists' plans and therefore, they are to be postponed for a while. And indeed, the Ecumenists kept silent about it for at least a decade, but now they are forcing this matter again in the hope of realizing their plot by the year 2000.

In the same newspaper a very good notice was published about the "Pan-Orthodox Council" signed by the "Russian Line."

It reports that the "Communications service of the Department of External Relations distributed the information about a meeting of the Pan-Orthodox Preparation Committee for the Pan-Orthodox Council, which was held on March 1st in Chambesy, near Geneva."

It is worth noting that in the decrees published by the Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate this same meeting in Switzerland is described as happening in Geneva, while actually the meeting was in Chambesy! Is not this "inaccuracy" a result of the fact that the city of Chambesy long ago became odious to every Orthodox and mention of it involuntarily puts him on guard?

The information in this report then tells us that the meeting in Chambesy happened to be quite unexpected for all those who follow current Church events and that no details were ever published about this meeting. Only from the communiqué of the Pan-Orthodox Preparation Committee do we learn out that "due to the present festive circle, during this meeting there was not enough time to settle the questions of today's agenda."

As the "Russian Line" points out quite correctly, "The clumsy explanations about lack of time says only that the participants are afraid to expose their plans to the general public. But the main thing is quite clear. The Preparation Committee feels it is necessary to accelerate the preparation of the Pan Orthodox Council in order to have it convoked in time for the beginning of the third millennium."

It seems to us that the authors of this article hold out a naive hope of possibly convoking a Local Council of the Russian Church before year 2000 in order to finally settle the matter of this Pan-Orthodox Council. But it is very doubtful that the Patriarchate would take the risk of convening it, considering that the Orthodox "low level" people have begun to realize in what sort of abyss the Moscow Patriarchate is dragging them into. As we already noted the report of "Rus Pravoslavnaya" in "Church News" for March-April # 2 (78), the Moscow Patriarchate "as a result of long deliberations behind the closed doors decided not to hold a planned Local Council for year 2000 of the Russian Orthodox Church."

According to the Russian Line, the Council's aim is "to express in the best manner the Orthodox witness before the contemporary world..."

"And who will be witnessing and what?" quite reasonably ask the authors of this article and then continue: "Our Church will be represented by the Department for Foreign Relations of the [R. O.] Church chaired by Metropolitan Cyril. The department which made history scandalously with the so-called Balamand Union with the Catholics and the Chambesy Union with the Monophysites. What kind of union is in preparation by the Department of Foreign Relations this time?"

To answer the question put by the authors of this excellent article, we would say that most probably this union will be made with the Satan, the deceiver, himself, resulting in the obvious apostasy of Christ's Orthodox Church.

## RUSSIAN NEWSPAPERS ABOUT MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE HIERARCHS

Recent newspapers published in Russia have begun to report more and more often of misbehavior and heretical acts of some of the Moscow Patriarchate hierarchs. It should be explained first of all that the "sinless" "sacred authority" of the Moscow Patriarchate for months, if not years, has stubbornly ignored countless complaints by clergy and lay people concerning outrageous deeds and declarations by a number of their bishops. After losing any hope of finding justice from their "sacred authorities," people have lost patience and have begun to turn to the media, hoping in this way to stop the preaching of heresy or this scandalous behavior. The second reason for media appeal we see in the fact that a large number of the most well known hierarchs of the Moscow Patriarchate, being former agents of KGB and having agent code names, are used to a total impunity even now and since they retain their former positions while being chaired by the KGB agent "Drozdov"/ Ridiger, they have no fear of anyone and anything whatsoever.

Quite a bit of information in this regard comes from the very well documented and in the most cases impeccably compiled (from the religious and canonical points of view) newspaper "Rus Pravoslavnaya" ("Orthodox Russia").

So we read in issue # 1 (19), 1999 a letter signed by "Monk Dionysios" from the city of Verkhoturys:

He begins his letter to the editor with the sentence: "I have to write to you about events which have happened in our diocese and which need to be published immediately. Perhaps the publication of this will bring some people to shame." Undoubtedly this is a very naive hope!

He reports that, a delegation, accompanied by a priest from Yekaterinburg, consisting of Jewish rabbis, Catholics, Protestants and "some woman dressed as nuns" as well as number of other "exotic" personalities visited Verkhoturys. The abbot of a Verkhoturys monastery greeted them and opened for them the shrine with relics of Righteous Symeon of Verkhoturys. Then the abbot in his private quarters treated his "honorable" guests to food and then left the monastery with them all. But these troubles as is described by the zealous "Monk Dionysios" were not over. The local ruling Bishop Nikon of Yekaterinburg (who became well known for a public burning in 1998 of heretical books by Russian Diaspora theologians: Schmemann, Meyendorf, Bulgakov and others) led through the Royal Doors of St. John the Baptist Cathedral a Roman Catholic cardinal. To make the matters worse, he even lent his own mandia to him!

The Newspaper "Mestnoye Vremia" ("Local Time") in the issue of April 15th, 1999, and which has a circulation of more than 28,000, there is given additional information about this hierarch: he was accused by the faithful of homosexuality, embezzlement of diocesan funds and willfulness.

According to the newspaper, in December of last year the abbots of The All-merciful Saviour and St. Nicholas Monasteries in Verkhoturys, Abraham and Tikhon, at a reception given by the Patriarch, personally informed him of misbehavior by their bishop and a few days later they sent him a folder of documents to substantiate their complaint. Then, as a follow up, they sent to Moscow a letter which was signed by 108 people, of which 52 were clergy. An investigating committee came from Moscow and heard all the complaints about Bishop Nikon (including witnesses about "sexual contacts"). As a result of this "investigation" Nikon was fully acquitted under the pretext that all his accusers were bribed and all the accusations were invented by those who wished him ill. On top of this, the "guilty" Abbots Abraham and Tikhon were deposed from their positions, and a third participant of this action, Priest Vladimir Ziayev was strongly reprimanded. All the accusers were counter-accused of being debauchees, drunkards and thieves.

Abbot Abraham was replaced by a man named Alexis, cannot leave his cell being afraid of round the clock "vigils" by faithful who, taking turns, will not leave the monastery property in effort to defend their former rector.

This forced rehabilitation by the Moscow Patriarchate of Bishop Nikon known for scandals who from the very first days of his appointment to Yekaterinburg brought nothing but trouble to the Yekaterinburg Diocese which has resulted in nothing but deep bitterness by clergy and lay people who witnessed the abominations of this hierarch. Quite a few clergymen have already suffered from his psychic abnormality which often turns to petty tyranny.

The newspapers provide another outrageous story.

The President of the Theological Committee of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk Philaret (KGB agent "Ostrovsky") for a number of years has relentlessly adhered to a policy aiming at unification with Catholics, Uniates and Monophysite-Monophysitists.

In "Rus Pravoslavnaya" # 2 (20), 1999, an as yet unfinished long series of very well documented articles, has appeared written by the priest of Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the MP, Peter Bodak, who entitled his articles "We Have Different Faiths."

Priest Bodak states that he has severed Eucharistic communion with Metropolitan Philaret for "his heretical zeal in Minsk, in May of 1998, under the sponsorship of Belorussian Exarchate of the ROC." After 'theological' conversations with the Papists, Metropolitan Philaret invited the delegation headed by Cardinal F. Vetter for Saturday vigil service in Minsk's Holy Spirit Cathedral on May 16th and during the polyeleon declared: Today with us were praying the

representatives of the Catholic Church with whom in our theological conversations we were discussing matters common to both our Churches, so that later on, after we have put aside some misunderstandings, we will be able to approach a common Chalice. After that the cardinal preached from the ambo and Latin 'clergymen' were anointed in a priestly manner with the oil." According to statements of Priest Bodak, similar common prayers occurred a week later and in the same cathedral but this time with Protestants.

While pointing out a number of such outrageous acts of Metropolitan Philaret, Fr. Bodak informed him that, in accordance with a number of canons which protect the faithful from Communion with heretics, he is leaving the bishop's diocese not wishing to wait for a "common Chalice," but at the same time he is not leaving the "Mother Church," because "leaving for another jurisdiction would not be good for the Church." Here, Fr. Peter, despite his outstanding theological and canonical erudition, does not disclose to his readers the secret of how one can leave one's ruling bishop because of heresy while not joining another jurisdiction, and thus still remain in a heretical "Mother Church." Doesn't he, with all his outstanding education, not notice the very same Ecumenism in the fold of the MP which in the person of Metropolitan Cyril of Smolensk heading towards the very same criminal Ecumenist actions as Metropolitan Philaret with whom he "has severed his Eucharistic Communion"? His change to another diocese of the MP would in no way change his situation which he trying to escape.

The same newspaper reports another very troublesome event.

As it turns out, in December of last year in Kiev (the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the MP) there was held a council with the participation of clergy and lay people. Complaining that for some reason "this Council did not get sufficient publicity," the author of this report, George Fedorov from Crimea, states that the main object for convening this council was a proclamation of autocephaly by the Ukrainian Church and the election of a patriarch.

A first meeting was held on December 22 in Kievo-Pecherskaya Lavra and at that "the Council was convoked very quickly and almost secretly." Despite this when the faithful realized what was threatening their Church, they immediately organized from 10 AM to 4 PM protest pickets outside the Lavra walls. The placards were very explicit with very plain slogans: "Autocephaly is the way to hell"; "Moscow-Kiev -- one Orthodox faith"; "Archbishop Lazarus to a monastery to repent" and a number of similar sentiments.

Early in the morning the dean of Kievan Ecclesiastical Academy and a Deputy Abbot of the Lavra, Bishop Paul, approached the demonstrators. Both demanded that the crowd disperse. Bishop Paul did not hesitate to spit on the pickets and yell at them. Someone called the police, but the pickets did not move: they just stood there with the Pochayev Icon of the Theotokos and an icon of the Resurrection of Christ and ceaselessly sang some prayers.

Seeing that the Orthodox would not leave, Bishop Paul at the end of the day came out to them and announced that the Council decided against the autocephaly and again demanded that they leave. But the pickets wanted with their own eyes to see the members of Council leave. When the procession of the members of the Council were leaving, Archbishop Lazarus of Crimea roughly approached the demonstrators from Crimea, standing with their placards, and threatened them: "Just wait! When we return to Crimea, I will excommunicate all of you!"

A second meeting was held in the building of the Committee for Religious Affairs. At this time the pickets were standing directly in front of the entrance of the building.

Fedorov reports that the Orthodox demonstration also received a favorable reaction from some Council members when they were leaving after a meeting. Archbishop Sergius of Pochayev even blessed the pickets. The next morning, Dec. 23rd, right after the beginning of the meeting the demonstrators started to walk around the building and the police not only did not interfere, but even directed their movements. But the President of this Council, Metropolitan Vladimir, very strongly reprimanded the pickets for their unwanted "initiative."

On December 24th, 11 representatives of the Crimea Diocese lodged a written complaint with Metropolitan Vladimir about Archbishop Lazarus. Metropolitan accepted the document, but refused to meet with those delegates and promised to send his reply, which never came. But Archbishop Lazarus did carry out his threat and very cruelly took the law in his own hands against the "slanderers."

As is clear from an article entitled "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" (unsigned) another serious problem is brewing in the midst of the Moscow Patriarchate: the Metropolitan of Poltava, Theodosios (Dikun), is working very energetically to create 3 "patriarchates", Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian, proposing to have a "Patriarchal Council in order to solve on that level... global matters"! He was strongly supported by Archbishop Lazarus (Shvets) of Crimea.

Honor and glory to the faithful in Ukraine who through their zealous participation in the church life for the time being (but for how long?) have prevented their separation from the Russian people!

## THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ORTHODOX MOVEMENT IN THE SERBIAN CHURCH

Professor Basil Lourie of St. Petersburg, Russia, sent on the Internet a short statement in Serbian about the establishment within Serbia of a first parish of the new "True Orthodox Serbian Church."

This statement (translated by "Church News") says:

"Conditions for organization of the first True Orthodox parish in Serbia, after number of decades, became necessary in the 1995 due to the fact that three Serbian schema-monks from the Holy Mountain [Athos], because of the visit of the Ecumenical Patriarch to the Roman Pope severed Communion with the Serbian Church and found refuge under omophorion of his Beatitude Archbishop of Athens, Chrysostomos II.

Father Akakios, ordained to the priesthood, came to Serbia in 1997 and his first Divine Liturgy was served in the Spring of that year in a kellion dedicated to St. John of Shanghai on Frushka Gora (this mountain has dozens of small monasteries, Ed.) near Novi Sad. Later, with the blessing of the Holy Synod, Sts. Cyril and Methodios, the Equals to the Apostles were named the protectors of this kellion.

In middle of 1998 in Prachina in central Serbia another parish was opened with the church dedicated to St. Mark of Ephesus. Both communities hold services in the basements of private homes.

So far the church of True Orthodox Serbs has attracted some 40 faithful. All those who were baptized according to canonical norms (unfortunately, almost all were baptized in the "official" Serbian Church through sprinkling or pouring) were baptized again through triple immersion and those who were baptized correctly were just chrismated. During the services Archbishop Chrysostomos is commemorated and the services are conducted only in Church Slavonic (while in the Serbian Church the services are conducted almost exclusively in Serbian).

At present on the Holy Mountain there are 2 Serbian monks: Fr. Daniel whose cell is in Karullia and Fr. Symeon in the Monastery of Esphigmenu, while in a convent of Taxiarchis there is a novice, Christina. The plan is to ordain two married priests.

Fr. Akakios publishes a magazine "The Adherent to Orthodox Piety." So far already 7 issues have been published. "The Adherent" took for a model the first page of a magazine with the same name in Barnaul Diocese (in Russia! Ed.). In the first special issue a short history was published of the True Orthodox Church of Greece with additional information on the schism of 1937.

The True Orthodox Church in Serbia so far has not been persecuted, but Fr. Akakios and several persons were summoned for trial by the Serbian Church (which he ignored) and they are considered to be "deluded sectarians."

In our confusing times there are, unfortunately, literally innumerable so-called "True Orthodox Christian Churches" of all sorts, manner and traditional Orthodox nationalities. The Greeks illegally crept into the territory of the Russian Orthodox Church, although since 1991 she has a canonical hierarchy, established according the decree of Patriarch Tikhon (Nov. 20, 1920 # 362). According to all accounts there are now no less than 6 groups which are not in Communion with one another. Through the group of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili they crept not only into Russia, but also into Bulgaria and Romania. Now, the Greeks have managed to penetrate also Serbia!

To make matters worse, a countless number of confused and misled Orthodox who have no knowledge of the Holy Canons because of the spread of the Sergian heresy in Russia also is covered with a whole network of countless catacomb groups who call themselves "True Orthodox Christians" who have no Communion among themselves.

In our troubled times there is good reason for a soul in search of salvation to become desperate!

## AN ORTHODOX-CATHOLIC DIALOGUE IN AMERICA

The official publication of the Greek Archdiocese in America, "Orthodox Observer," of April 20 reported that in Maryland on June 7th there will open the first International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue of Orthodox with the Catholics to be held in America. The meetings are planned to last ten days.

The participants are to represent the Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch Jerusalem, Moscow, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia and the autonomous Churches of Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Finland and Estonia. Delegates from around the world will represent the Roman Catholics.

From this roster it is obvious that instead of preaching to the heretic Catholics the Truth of Christ, the whole "fullness" of the Orthodox Church will be compromised!

As is well known, the pre-condition to any dialogue is the following principle: both interested parties, on an equal footing, present their points of view about this or that matter and then both parties agree on some kind of compromise.

Baltimore's Cardinal Keeler declared that on June 6th a group will arrive by air which will gather at Mt. St. Mary's College and Seminary for a first press conference. The cardinal said that he is very flattered that the Orthodox Archbishop Spyridon will also come from New York, head of the Greek Archdiocese in America.

Keeler also declared that "We are able to say today that the commission will, in addition to its private working sessions, participate in several public events," amongst which is "a colorful ecumenical service at the Basilica of the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (a Catholic church, Edit.); an Orthodox vespers in the Orthodox Annunciation Cathedral in Baltimore, a "Catholic Eucharistic Celebration" at the Basilica of the National Shrine (the main Catholic cathedral in the USA) and a Divine Liturgy in the St. Sophia Cathedral in Washington which will be presided over by Archbishop Spyridon, who is also a chairman of the SCOBA in America.

Then the Cardinal explained that the "actual relations are proving more extensive and diversified. They provide for reciprocal participation in particular events in the life of our Churches, such as certain celebrations, liturgies, ecclesial assemblies and discussions. Nor are they limited to official relations alone."

Archbishop Spyridon responded to these words by stressing the unusual hospitality of the Catholic cardinal and his personal relationship with him and said that America is at the forefront of Ecumenism and as the world's preeminent multicultural society, it is only right that the dialogue between Orthodox and Catholics is to be officially opened in the Catholic Cathedral of the Ascension.

"With the International Joint Commission for Theological Dialogue coming to St. Mary's College and Seminary, the dialogue of East and West comes for the first time to the shores of our beloved nation, whose principles are founded upon the ideals of freedom and liberty," said Archbishop Spyridon. Then he briefly touched on the events in Kosovo and returned to the immediate theme of this wretched "dialogue."

Archbishop Spyridon declared that "In the contemporary era, we seek to move beyond these bitter memories [the historical troubles with Constantinople, Ed.] toward a new understanding and respect. We have achieved very much in this regard. I am confident that we shall achieve very much more. His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His Holiness Pope John Paul II have committed themselves to a dialogue of openness and honesty. They have acknowledged the disagreements we still face as well as the deep font of our common heritage of faith and doctrine."

To conclude his speech in responding to the Cardinal, Archbishop Spyridon repeated again the long worn out cliché which expresses the wish of the Ecumenical Patriarch of the later days to commune from one Chalice with the heretics.

## CATHOLICS AND JEWS

"The New York Times" of April 14 reported that in one of the Vatican gardens, in front of the Pontifical North American College of Rome, the Jews in agreement with the Vatican established a permanent monument to the victims of "the holocaust" which is to remind Catholics of the Jews who perished during the Second World War and at the same time bear witness to better relations between Catholicism and Judaism.

According to the newspaper "The Christian News" of May 3rd, the agreement about installation of the Jewish monument on the property of the North American College sponsored by the Vatican, also envisioned the widening of the academic program of this institution, which includes added regular lectures on Judaism, an increased number of books regarding this religion and the dissemination among Catholics of literature regarding "the holocaust." Cardinal Cassidi called this new agreement a "new agenda" for a Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

A Catholic Priest Hoeckman, the Secretary for the Committee for Dialogue with the Jews at the moment of installing the monument said that "the speakers at the menorah dedication were religious Jews, very interested in sharing a common agenda" while the "secular organizations that pretended to be the sole representatives of World Jewry, as far as we are concerned, are not valid partners. They are campaigning against the church. Whatever we do, whatever we say, it will never be enough."

Cardinal Cassidi said to the press that "this is another very positive sign how far the process of dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people has come... Even just a few years ago we could never have imagined such an event would happen." Cassidi chairs the papal committee for dialogue with the Jews.

On the other hand, he also noticed the "insensitivity" on part of some Jewish groups and in particular the Wiesenthal Center in regard what Vatican is doing toward relationship with Jews.

The installation of the monument backfired in some Jewish organizations: The Jewish World Council and the Anti-Defamation League, who were not consulted before the start of this action. They continue to complain that in their opinion the Catholics didn't do much during World War II to help the Jews and even now they will not open to them their Vatican archives regarding this period.

Someone, by the name of Lawrence, who initiated this idea to have a monument for the victims of Nazism said: "We are taking something very Jewish and putting it on Vatican ground. Surely everybody can unite on that."

The monument consists of 6 candlestands 4 feet high and supposed to symbolize the 6 million Jews who perished. However, by now even some Jewish researchers of the World War II period are willing to admit a much lower figure.

But, the above quoted Priest Hoeckman complained that the Jewish leaders "do not yet understand that more and more Catholics, who were opening up, now are fed up" with their constant demands.

The Jews, who managed to get their way in installing the monument, were cunning, because the monument in the Vatican is officially termed "a menorah" which is a religious object used by Jews throughout the world during their winter holiday "Hanukah." But it should have 8 not 6 candles!

## CRUCIFIXES ARE IN THE WAY

According to "The New York Times" of April 22nd the German Federal Court decreed that the Crucifixes which were displayed in every classroom are to be removed from all the schools in the largely Catholic Bavaria. The reason for this outrageous decision was a suit on part of a Chinese couple living in Germany.

As per a previously existing regulation of 1995, there should be a Crucifix in all the classrooms, except only in cases when "parents have a serious and well-founded reason for objection."

A Chinese man insisted that for his daughter the figure of Christ nailed to the Cross was a symbol degrading man. The School Administration and the Bavarian High Court characterized the parent's demand as unfounded, but the Federal Court still required that the Crucifixes be removed.

The very same Court has refused to decide a similar case. The members of the "Green Party" and a number of parents since 1986 have attempted to have Crosses removed from the classrooms.

It is worth noting, that the Crosses are removed from classes of all the schools in Bavaria only because of demand of 2 pagans, who live in the most Catholic part of Germany. It seems that the population did not make any objection before the Federal Court regarding this decision.

## CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN ARABS AND JEWS IN NAZARETH

The Hebrew and Russian language newspapers report that there was a heated confrontation between Arabs and Christians because the Muslim Arabs wanted to build a large mosque in front of the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth while Christians wanted to have at the same location a hotel for pilgrims in preparation for the year 2000. Christians strongly objected to the Muslim plan and that resulted in a confrontation of the 2 parties. Thirty cars were severely damaged and the Israeli police arrested 11 instigators.

At this point the Vatican intervened and threatened that if this question is not properly resolved, all the Catholic churches in Israel will be closed and the Pope himself will not visit Jerusalem. He called on the Israeli government to "take upon itself the responsibility to restore the order and preserve the sacredness of the city" in which the Annunciation took place. The Israeli government faces a dilemma: it fears major disturbances by Muslims, who are majority in this region and, on the other hand, it recognizes the danger to the tourist industry if a million Catholics refuse to come for the millennium Jubilee year.

According to the Russian language newspaper "Novoye Russkoye Slovo" ("New Russian Word") of April 13, the Pope invited the minister for Foreign Affairs, Ariel Sharon, to the Vatican for April 26th and it was known that the discussion of the Nazareth situation was central at this meeting.

For some reason the media have kept total silence about the results of this meeting.

## BY WAY OF AN EXCEPTION...

*Usually "Church News" does not include any commercial advertisements. But this time we must make an exception.*

*In our days when books are published in a cheap manner and mainly as paperbacks, no one is concerned with bookbinding and the profession of the bookbinder has almost disappeared. Nevertheless there are existing valuable books, which need either repairs to their binding or even a new one. The first place in line belongs to the Church service books.*

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