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A DECLARATION OF VALENTIN, METROPOLITAN OF SUZDAL AND VLADIMIR, REGARDING A PROPOSAL TO ERECT A MONUMENT TO THE EXECUTIONER DZERZHINSKY ON LUBIANKA PLACE

The new initiative of the Moscow government authorities, who intend to put up at Lubyanka Place a monument to the executioner and theomachist Dzerzhinsky in the very heart of our ancient capital, evoked a response of pain and revulsion in the hearts of truly Orthodox Christians, the clergy and laity of the Autonomous Orthodox Church in Russia.

For the conscience of our Holy Church – the Church of the New Martyrs and the Catacomb Christians persecuted by theomachists – the name Dzerzhinsky is connected with the most vicious and bloody page in the history of persecutions of the Orthodox Faith. After creating the Soviet penal agency – the VCHKA [the first Soviet secret police] – Dzerzhinsky unleashed the most horrible terror against the Russian people, especially against the clergy and lay people of the Orthodox Church. The blood of the thousands of New Martyrs shed by this executioner cries to Heaven, as once did the blood of innocent Abel.

What are the contemporary “zealots for the memory” of this blatant theomachist – the founder of the CHEKA -- thinking? Do they really believe that a monument to someone who destroyed the order established by God in Russia, someone who trampled upon truth and justice, should symbolize state order and state security? With such initiatives they risk staining their hands with the blood of the New Martyrs; they fall under the anathema of Saint Patriarch Tikhon, proclaimed in 1918 and which applies to the persecutors until this day. It is our duty to warn them of this mindless deed that might predetermine their eternal fate.

Our Church, as the legal successor and heir of the Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia and the persecuted Catacomb Church of the Soviet period, must raise her voice against reestablishing the theomachist idol on Lubyanka Place. We appeal to the authorities of Moscow and the Russian Federation to put up at the very same place where once there stood the ill-omened figure of “Iron Felix” a **monument to the memory of all the victims of the “Red Terror” and theomachist persecutions of the XXth century. It should be a memorial to all the saintly New Martyrs of Russia, by whose intercession alone the Russian land still stands, a monument to the defenders of the true, divine-human order, which the bloody fighters like Dzerzhinsky tried to eradicate. We suggest making this memorial in the form of a memorial alarm bell, made from the very same metal from which was made the monument to Dzerzhinsky.**

Not so long ago, our blinded forefathers threw bells from the bell towers and melted them into the tools of death. Now it is time to according to the ancient Prophet “to gather the stones”; in the same manner as the ancient Christians melted pagan idols into Christ’s Crosses, we should melt the statue of Dzerzhinsky into a memorial bell. This historic act would be the beginning of a genuine revival of the spiritual bonds from times that so many different political powers like to speak about.

The Lord calls upon us: “Turn ye not to idols, nor make to yourself molten gods. I am the Lord, your God” (Lev. 19: 4),
September 19th, 2002
+ **VALENTIN**, Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir
Primate of the ROAC

According to our latest information, the Moscow authorities, in the person of President of the Committee of the Moscow State Duma, F. Kroutov are ready to discuss the Metropolitan’s proposal after receiving from him the official proposal and then “the Committee will examine it from all points of view”.

The Moscow Patriarch Alexis Ridiger has approached the restoration of the monument to Dzerzhinsky from a very different point of view from that of the Primate of the ROAC. Alexis II believes that “this might break the fragile accord within Russian society”!

ROBBERIES AND ATTEMPTED ROBBERIES IN SUZDAL AND VICINITY

According to news received from Suzdal, during the night of August 26th to 27th an effort was made to rob the Tsar Constantine Cathedral. A nun, Eudocia, who came to church around 4 AM in order to prepare the communion bread for the Liturgy, noticed the lower lock was damaged. While she was checking the damage, she noticed a man watching her. The nun followed him and saw that from the adjoining building that she had just left – another young man grabbed his jacket and jumped over the fence. The nun noticed that a window of the church was broken and the bars on it cut with special tools. The police were called and found military gloves and a pack of cigarettes.

The criminal was discovered before he stole anything.

So far, the reports submitted by Metropolitan Valentin with complaints to the police and law enforcement authorities about setting fire to church buildings and break-ins at the churches remained unanswered. In not one instance has there been any reaction and police reports nor any follow up investigations.

During the night of September 15th to 16th there was a robbery in St. Basil’s Church in the village Borisovskoye (in the vicinity of Suzdal). This is a cathedral of Archbishop Theodore, the Secretary of the Synod.

The criminals cut the metal bars of a window, got inside the church and stole some 20 valuable icons from the XIXth century. All were ripped from their frames. These were donated by parishioners for their church that had been restored from its ruins.

This time the police drew up a report and started an investigation.

Just recently in the city of Vladimir several kiosks belonging to members of the ROAC, were destroyed.

APPEAL OF THE RESIDENTS OF THE LAYING OF THE GARMENT CONVENT IN SUZDAL REGARDING NEWSPAPER PUBLICATIONS ABOUT THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX AUTONOMOUS CHURCH

Dear Sirs;

We would never have thought that after living the major part of our lives, granted us by God, that we would appeal to you with sincere love, compassion and wish to warn you of the inevitable Judgment of God. The Judgment of God, like the earthly judgment is merciful and forgiving but also sternly calls one to account and punishes; but the difference between it and the earthly judgment is that it is fair and righteous, because "in equal dignity" "the king and the warrior, the rich and the poor" stand before it.

We happened to read with tears and heart rending pain the articles in "Russkii Vestnik" ("Russian Herald") in which we are called "vampires" and "alternativists" as well as in the newspaper "Completely Secret". In the first case some committee members wrote, and in the second – a reporter Kislinskaya. And while this woman wrote about us, the nuns of the Laying of the Garment Convent, located on Vasilyevskaya Street in the city of Suzdal, we had never seen her before and did not have the honor of meeting her. And thank God, for He has delivered us from this meeting. If without knowing us, she has used our name to slander the good reputation of our dear Vladyka Valentin, what then would she write about us if she were to meet us and talk about our needs? We are ready to say that Ms. Kislinskaya does not need to complain because we have nowhere to go and, supposedly, this is the reason why we are ready to tolerate excesses and immorality, which supposedly happened in our convent. It seems she has mixed up our Church and our convent with the Moscow Patriarchate, so dear to her, which indeed does rob its nuns, demanding that upon entering the convent, they sell their apartments, furniture and deposit it in convent accounts; they take away their pensions which are received by aged nuns. We know of this from communicating with Patriarchal nuns and their relatives. Every one of us has a house, relatives, some have children and if we stay in Suzdal it is because all the other convents belong to the Moscow Patriarchate. Our departed parents, clergymen, bishops have left us the legacy of not to entering into any relations with it. And if there were any reason to, we would long ago have left Suzdal and would have had no relations with Metropolitan Valentin, just as we not have none with the Moscow Patriarchate. But we remain with our Vladyka in order to carry the cross of profanation, humiliation and slander.

You are absolutely right, Reporter Kislinskaya, that God's Judgment will come and it will be for every one and upon Metropolitan Valentin in particular, but you have forgotten to mention that God's Judgment will come upon reporters and upon you in particular. Probably not! According to your writings you have not thought about this at all. After all, you have no mercy on anyone: neither young nor old. You have slandered even the poor boy Andrew Smirnov. The boy who was beaten up by Krasovsky at the demand of Osetrov and was sent to the hospital just because he would not agree to slander Vladyka. But Vladyka was put on trial and not these hooligans. You write about 54,000 rubles (while actually Kislinskaya insisted they were dollars) which were stolen from Vladyka by Andrew, but it seems you have mixed up this event or have purposely distorted it: the money was stolen from the abbot of Vasilevsky Monastery of the Moscow Patriarchate, from Fr. Avraamy. And the "victim" Eugene Kutsik was raised in the Vasilyevsky Monastery of the Moscow Patriarchate where, according to his own statements, he was approached by Fr. Avraamy as well as by other residents. So why have you not written about this? You have slandered and disgraced a boy and he has to live with this. You may disgrace us, who are old and helpless; we cannot sue you, but why did you have to slander children?

We appeal to everyone who writes and takes upon himself the responsibility of presenting the news. Do it according to conscience and the honor of professional obligations, regardless of sympathies or antipathies.

Appealing to you through this letter, we want to remind all of you about the Terrible Judgment — that it will be not only upon us and Metropolitan Valentin, but also upon **you**, the journalists. Temptations will come and go, but "woe to those through whom they come." You have not in any way humiliated Vladyka; in fact you have elevated him to being a passion bearer and a martyr. He has repeated the podvig of St. Athanasios of Alexandria, the Righteous Maximus the Confessor, Righteous Dula, the Passionbearer of Egypt, St. John of Suzdal and others.

We write and appeal to you with pity and maternal love.

Schema-abbess Euphimia

This letter was signed also by 6 tonsured nuns, 4 rasophor nuns and 3 novices.

A NEW YEAR OF PASTORAL-THEOLOGICAL COURSES IN SUZDAL

Vertograd-Razsylka # 303 reported that on September 9th the first classes of the current school year began.

The students in the first and third levels will attend religion classes. In addition, for interested townspeople a catechism school has also been opened with evening classes twice a week. The director of these scholarly projects is Priestmonk Theophan (Areskin).

The participants of the first level will have lectures on church service regulations, dogmatic theology, the history of the Russian Church and Old and New Testaments.

Canon law will be studied in the third level.

A SHAMEFUL HISTORY IN A CONTEMPORARY VERSION

One of the readers of our English edition has sent us a xerox copy of the first page of the magazine "Canadian Orthodox Herald" and the article in it by Michael Schardt-Kupchevsky, entitled "The Elder of Zagreb". The front page indicates (in Russian and English) that this is a "bi-monthly publication of the Canadian Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia" and is "printed with the blessing of the R. Rev. Bishop Kirill of San Francisco and Western America" who for the time being is entrusted with governing the Canadian diocese.

"The elder of Zagreb" turns out to be the spiritual father of the author (at that time a 19 year old young man), Archbishop Hermogen, about whom he writes with great sympathy and compassion. However, unfortunately the life of Archbishop Hermogen in no way deserves any prizes.

When, due to the occupation by the German army, the Yugoslavia created by King Alexander I broke into its constituent parts, very quickly the "independent state of Croatia" formed and was ruled by Pavelich. Some Orthodox Serbs remained in Croatian territory as well as a small Russian community. Eventually, Pavelich murdered some 800 thousand of these Orthodox Serbs when they refused conversion to Roman Catholicism. The atrocities of the Croats of that period shocked even the Germans (who recognized the "independent Croatian state") and they would shoot at the Croatian border troops in order to cover the Serbs swimming across the river to Serbia.

During the period of the creation of this "independent Croatian state" it was learned in Belgrade that the Croats offered Archbishop Hermogen the leadership of the Orthodox Church in their country with the title of Patriarch!

Soon Archbishop Theophan of Kursk and Oboyan received a very brief telegram from the "Patriarch" which amounted to: come here and there will be money, servants and a car. Archbishop Theophan categorically refused to participate in such an adventure.

The Synod of Bishops, presided over by Metropolitan Anastassy immediately suspended Archbishop Hermogen and arranged the beginning of an ecclesiastical trial to have him defrocked. The German authorities, who were looking for ways to destroy the good relations of the ROCOR with the Serbian Patriarchate, did not permit this ukase to be published under the pretext of a shortage of paper. At that time, any publications had to have the permission of the occupying authorities. Therefore, the Synod ukase was read only in the few Russian parishes in Serbia. The copy of this ukase was immediately sent to the Serbian Patriarchal Deputy, Metropolitan Joseph, since the Patriarch, Gabriel, at that time was a prisoner in a German concentration camp. The postal service was hardly functioning and the Secretary to the Synod of Bishops sent the envelope with one of the members of his family, as a messenger.

Archbishop Hermogen was eventually shot, it is not clear by whom: the government of the independent Croatia or the Communist guerillas. This was the pitiful end of this unlucky "Patriarch". It is also obvious that the title of Metropolitan, as used in the article, was never granted by the ROCOR Council of Bishops to Archbishop Hermogen.

CANONICAL CHAOS WITHIN THE FORMER ROCOR CONTINUES

As we have previously informed our readers in our Paschal issue, Bishop Varnava managed to get the cancellation of permission given in a private letter of Metropolitan Vitaly to Archbishop Lazarus to start episcopal consecrations and to create his own Synod of Bishops.

Since the new resolution gotten with pressure from Bishop Varnava was written in a rather abrupt manner, Archbishop Lazarus demanded a formal apology from him and threatened that he would use the Metropolitan's permission and begin to create a Synod of his own.

As might be expected, Bishop Varnava did not apologize and thus opened the way for the continuation of the development of canonical chaos.

Vertpgrad.Razsylka # 295 published the letter of Metropolitan Vitaly to Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin with the following content:

"Your Graces!

News has reached me that you have consecrated three new bishops. If this is really so, then I, as First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, do officially declare these ordinations to be uncanonical. All the more so since the names of these priest-candidates have not been presented for consideration by all the bishops. As you know, in the ordination of new bishops, their titles and the establishment of new dioceses can be decided upon only by the Council of Bishops.

I appeal to you to restrain yourself from future mistakes. Of the date of the upcoming Council of Bishops you will be additionally informed and during that a final decision about the priests newly ordained by you will be made, but without their participation.

The sincere wishes for your salvation in Christ + Metropolitan Vitaly

Seal -- August 7/20, 2002

At the same time, on August 8/21, 2002 Metropolitan Vitaly sent to Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin a "Resolution" regarding the ordinations performed by them.

It states: "It has come to our attention that their Graces Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin have recently completed a fourth consecration.

This was done without the approval and knowledge of the Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Such actions are subject to the Church's condemnation.

Careful investigation of the circumstances which led to this sad event, permit one to give the exact characteristics of the aims and the development of future acts of the separate episcopate created in this way.

As early as January, their Graces Lazarus and Benjamin approached Metropolitan Vitaly with a request to give them a blessing to create an autonomous administration in Russia. Naturally, such a petition would be subject to Conciliar decision.

These Hierarchs have acted according to the original direction and, seemingly, recognizing the legal power in our Church only in the Vladyka Metropolitan and obtained from him a written permission for creating a sort of a parallel Synod. Consequently, the deeds of the second Voronezh pastoral Conference (April 17-18) created in this manner a new Church body in Russia. And only the reaction of Archbishop Varnava toward the accepted new course and the reaction of Bishop Vladimir, who declared this document about completing the ordinations and the establishment of the Autonomous Church with only one signature of the Metropolitan to be illegal, stopped the realization of the intended goal.

When Bishop Benjamin asked Metropolitan Vitaly about the meaning of the blessing received on March 11th, the Metropolitan responded regarding this as a matter of extreme importance and as needing Conciliar resolution.

The resultant situation should have been discussed at the upcoming Council of our Church, for whose convening Archbishop Varnava was entrusted to create a committee (on June 24th, 2002). Their Graces Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin have been informed of that.

Consequently, the performed ordinations are a blatant violation of the statutes of the conciliarity of the Church.

Even more, the unauthorized increase of bishops subject to their Graces Lazarus and Benjamin, displays their intention to force our Church to give the requested autonomy.

We, the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia do declare that we do not accept these anti-conciliar ordinations nor the coercive measures used to gain such autonomy.

In addition, their Graces Lazarus and Benjamin and the bishops ordained by them, in no way evoke the agreement of all our clergy in Russia, which we have, according to our sacred duty, made every effort to promote.

We can only come to the conclusion that, by their illegal actions, their Graces Lazarus and Benjamin have put themselves outside of the Russian Orthodox Outside of Russia. [emphasis by "Ch. N."]

This resolution is signed by: Metropolitan Vitaly, Archbishop Varnava, Bishop Sergius, Bishop Vladimir and Bishop Bartholomew.

According to a report in Vertograd, on 15/28 July, 2002, there followed the reaction of the "Conference" of two bishops of the ROCOR (Vitaly) regarding the ordinations performed by them. The published "Conference" has an extremely official form and begins with

Present: President of the conference Archbishop Lazarus and Bishop Benjamin.

Discussed: the situation arising in the dioceses of the RTOC (Russian True Orthodox Church).

As a result of:

1. The situation in Russia after the Council of Bishops in 2000 and 2001, the church's situation (schism within ROCOR and the disorganization of church administration and parochial life),
2. The joining the Odessa-Tambov diocese of parishes and deaneries in the Central Russia, Siberia, Kazakhstan and so on (after bishops Evtikhy and Agathangel became schismatic) and the impossibility of Archbishop Lazarus visiting such a large diocese,
3. The danger of governing the Church in Russia with only two hierarchs during the possibly renewed persecution of RTOC,
4. The order of Metropolitan Vitaly to Archbishop Lazarus of February 27th/March 11th of this year about performing ordinations and the creation in Russia of a self-sufficient 'Synod of Bishops which would not be in agreement with our Synod',
5. Considering his warning (in the Christmas Epistle of 2001) 'we live in such times when... in my name there will be ones who would persuade you... Believe only my living voice' -- in other words, an order to fulfill only his free and unforced decisions,
6. And upon discussing the candidate Priestmonk Dionissy (Alferov) nominated by Metropolitan Vitaly at the Council of Bishops of ROCOR in 1996, Archimandrite Iriney (Klippenstein) nominated by Archbishop Lazarus, Abbot Hermogen (Lounikov), nominated by Bishop Benjamin, Priest monk Tikhon (Pasechnik) nominated by Archbishop Lazarus

Decreed:

1. To fulfill direct obedience to the legal First Hierarchy of ROCOR, Metropolitan Vitaly, and to consecrate as bishops the above mentioned persons as vicars to Odessa-Tambov and Chernomorsko-Kuban dioceses,
2. Make the above mentioned persons members of the Conference of Russian hierarchs, subject to the First Hierarchy of ROCOR, Metropolitan Vitaly
3. To perform the ordinations in the cathedral of St. John of Kronstadt (Odessa): Hieromonk Dionissy, appointed as bishop of Borovichi (Novgorod region); Archimandrite Iriney appointed as Bishop of Burnen (Kazakhstan); Abbot

Hermogen appointed as bishop of Zhlobino (Byelorussia); Priest monk Tikhon, appointed as bishop of Shadrinsk (Siberia).

4. In connection with the confusing situation within the church, to consider fulfilling only the first part of the Decree of Metropolitan Vitaly, regarding hierarchical ordinations.

The fulfillment of the Decree of the First Hierarchy about the creation in Russia of an independent Synod of Bishops to be postponed until the authoritative Council of Russian Bishops and Bishops Abroad who recognize Metropolitan Vitaly as First Hierarchy with all the fullness of his authority.

- + Archbishop Lazarus
- + Bishop Benjamin

After studying this amazing document – one does not know whether to laugh about the effort to officially justify the lawlessness or to cry about this tragedy, the creation in Russia of one more, the 4th, jurisdiction by now!

THE DEFENSELESS SITUATION OF SERBIAN HOLY SITES IN KOSOVO AND METICHIA

According to Internet information from the Rashka-Prizren Diocese of July 19th, Bishop Artemije received a letter from the Brigadier General Wolf-Dieter Skodowski, who is head of the international forces in the regions of Kosovo and Metochija, that he will not provide the security for the restoration of the church in the Monastery of Zochishte and he will not be responsible for anything that might happen in this area. General Skodowski quite openly proposed that Bishop Artemije give up efforts to reconstruct the churches that are located on the territory that is under his jurisdiction. The Albanians, who still are not disarmed by the Western “protectors,” have so far destroyed no less than 20 Serbian churches. Since the German troops were deployed, not one of the criminals responsible was arrested. Among the destroyed churches there were some built in 13th and 14th centuries.

The true reason for this policy is that the KFOR does not want to risk a conflict with the Albanian extremists!

According to this information: “Such behavior of a leading KFOR general shows that stories of the alleged readiness of the international community to support Serb return and reconstruction of their homes and holy sites is nothing but cheap propaganda. Threatening the bishop with suspension of the protection of other monasteries and churches is a behavior which reminds one of the methods used during the Second World War and is a very harmful to the moral reputation of the KFOR peacekeeping mission”.

Judging from the name of this general, he is probably of Polish origin and most probably a Roman Catholic, who fanatically hates the Orthodox Church.

The official newspaper of the Serbian Patriarchate “Pravoslavje” (“Orthodoxy”) in the issue of 1-15 August reported that on the day of Saints Kosmas and Damian (in the Rashka-Prizren Diocese) on July 14th Bishop Artemije was serving a liturgy in the church which was undergoing restoration in the Zochishte Monastery. During the service the Albanians (called by Serbs the Arnauts) in the presence of a large number of German units sent to secure peace and order in Kosovo territory, yelled loudly and tried to provoke the Serbs, gathered for prayer, to make a response. As soon as the Orthodox left and the German units departed elsewhere – the Albanians again set the church on fire!

It is quite obvious that the Westerners who were supposed to protect the Serbian residents from the Albanians and Muslims quite openly favor the latter.

NEW HEAD OF “THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA”

According to the newspapers “The Patriot News” of July 24th and “The New York Times” of July 25th, a convention gathered in Florida of clergy and lay people of “The Orthodox Church in America” elected as their new leader the Metropolitan Herman Svaiko who was a hierarch of a Pennsylvania diocese in this Church. The majority of the convention voted for Seraphim, Bishop of Ottawa and Canada. But he did not get the required 2/3 vote. Then the Synod of this Church appointed Metropolitan Herman. His official installation was held in St. Nicholas Cathedral in Washington in September.

One can expect that he will develop missionary activity among émigrés from the Middle East and Europe and will preside over the financial enterprises needed to collect funds for this project.

When the OCA parish in Mayfield (Pennsylvania) joined the ROCOR and the parish in order to defend itself from the former Metropolia underwent court litigation, Bishop Herman then was a witness in this case. He showed himself to be totally ignorant about church history in America. On the trial it was stated that Bishop Herman was a teacher of church history in a seminary. When answering the questions by the Synod’s lawyer, Bishop Herman found himself to be in a very uncomfortable situation, since he did not know of the existence of Metropolitan Anthony, the founder of the ROCOR!

NEW HEAD OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

The newspaper “Christian News,” at the end of July has reported that Episcopalians in England have elected a new head to replace the retiring Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey.

The new Archbishop, the 52 year old Rowan Williams, is the author of 14 books (2 of them are of his poetry) and is well known for his modernism. His parents were Presbyterians, but converted to the Anglican Church.

The new Archbishop has a doctorate in theology and philosophy from Cambridge and Oxford Universities. According to Anglican regulations, the new Archbishop is elected by a special committee and is approved by the Queen and the Prime Minister.

It is already known that he will try to end the dependence of the Church on the government.

Nearly all leaders of various dominations in England greeted his election with joy. Priest Richard Kirker, a general secretary of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, expressed very special joy. He declared: "For the first time lesbian and gay Anglicans can feel they have a real friend at Lambeth [the official residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury, "Ch. N."] Under his leadership, homophobia will be challenged and intolerance rooted out".

In accordance with the newly revived ancient British tradition, the new head of the "Christian" Anglican Church went through a long ceremony of receiving the blessing to his new post from the ancient pagan order of Druids.

Probably, encouraged by the modernism of his new leader, the Anglican Bishop Richard Haries of Oxford declared that the "cannibalistic language of the Eucharist" is part of the reason Christianity is declining in England. As the example, Haries has quoted the "Prayer of Humble Access" which reads in part: "Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood".

This prayer, if literally translated into modern Russian, sounds very blasphemous. The very same idea that is found in the Protestant text, if put into Church Slavonic, would read very differently. The translation of this prayer into a contemporary language gives us an example of how many prayers would sound if Russians were to bend to the renovationist demand to translate the services into modern Russian. However, the rich Russian language can be to a certain degree to ennoble, while the English lacks this possibility.

DIFFICULTIES FOR THE JERUSALM PATRIARCHATE

According to a report by the agency Portal-credo,Ru of September 3rd, the Jerusalem Patriarch Ireneos is having more and more difficulties with the Israeli government which still (after nearly 2 years) refuses to register the Jerusalem Church. As reported previously, all the bank accounts of the Patriarchate are frozen and the Patriarch's signature has no legal force. Only once was the Patriarch invited to an unimportant reception at Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's and, it is suspected, not without pressure from outside.

Then, a confidential representative of the government visited the Patriarchate and asked that the Patriarch sign over a number of buildings in exchange for registration. The Jerusalem Patriarchate is the largest real estate owner in Jerusalem and some of the buildings are occupied by various Israeli ministries.

Shortly after this visit of the Israeli government representative, something inexplicable happened. The letter with the signature of Patriarch and with the official seal started to circulate in Israel, Palestine and Greece. The Patriarch not only refused to recognize his supposed signature, but said it was a forgery and even filed a complaint in court.

At the same time, the Arabs also have declared a war on the Patriarch because they believe he has sold out Palestinian interests. Patriarch had to retire his representative, Bishop Atalla Hanna, when he gave a TV interview in which he expressed approval of the terrorist-kamikazes. This interview sparked many angry protests. It was also rumored that Patriarch is selling land to Jews. As it is, the Arabs for a long time have accused the Patriarch of mismanaging the real estate donated to the Church by their ancestors. Besides, Hanna accused the Patriarch of wanting to dilute the Arabic flock with immigrants from Russia. One definitely can not envy the Jerusalem Patriarchate!

CLEVER PROPAGANDA FOR MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE MEMBERS

The journal "Orthodox Life" published by Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville recently to Russians some newly discovered "heroes of piety", without mentioning that they are actually the members of the Moscow Patriarchate.

An example is the issue # 6 in which Archbishop Seraphim (Sobolev) is declared to be a "good pastor of Christ's flock" The magazine reports that "The Bulgarian Old Calendar Church [a group of Cyprianites, "Ch. N."] which is a spiritual skeleton of the disciples of St. Seraphim and which is in full canonical communion with the Russian Church Abroad". On the first page there is printed the troparia and kontakion to this newly proclaimed "saint". Also the magazine "Pravoslavnaya Rus" #14 (1707) published an editorial article entitled: "One of the Host of Archpastors of the Russian Church Abroad".

The article is stated that "he was faithful to the end of his days to the ideals of our Church. After the end of the Second World War being under the rule of the theomachists he fearlessly continued to preach these ideals".

Meanwhile, the editors do not mention that after finding himself under the Communists, Archbishop Seraphim recognized the legality of the Moscow Patriarchate and, one must think, on orders from them suddenly started to sharply criticize the Dogma of Redemption by Metropolitan Anthony, something he never did before the seizure of power by the Soviets. A strange sort of, even termed "fearless," preaching of "the ideals" of the Church Abroad!

Number 8 of "Orthodox Life" is totally dedicated to Elder Tavrion and the article about him is titled "Holy Confessor Archimandrite Tavrion" with the remark on the back cover "continuation follows".

This "holy confessor" in 1927 (the year of the Sergian Declaration of evil memory) was appointed by Sergius Stragorodsky to Perm.

Over a number of years he indeed was subject to many arrests, as were at that time almost all the Sergianists at the end of 1930. At one point he even joined the Catacomb Church, but, as the magazine reports "...when in 1956 the repressions were lifted, batiushka was facing the problem: to remain in Catacombs or to return to public ministry? Being a true pastor, he chose the latter...". (Underlined by "Ch. N."). In another words, once he was given a free choice – Archimandrite Tavriion preferred to be in the fold of the Moscow Patriarchate and not the persecuted Orthodox Church!

The Synod of Bishops for quite a while has quietly been preaching the ideals of the Moscow Patriarchate, which are not at all the genuine "ideals of the Church Abroad"!

MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE AND THE CATHOLICS

For a number of years there have been strained relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and Vatican.

At the beginning it was for purely mercenary reasons, especially in the western regions of Russia where the Catholics demanded the return of the churches taken from the Uniates after the end of the Second World War which were given to the Moscow Patriarchate, but then, they began to simply take majority of the Orthodox churches.

Probably, feeling a sort of discomfort for seeing problem only in the material matters, the Moscow Patriarchate started to protest about the missionary work of the Roman Catholics, specially after they have opened 4 own dioceses in Russia.

The Moscow Patriarchate decided to act, but at the same time is pretending she has nothing to do with them. Thus, in a very short period of time, 5 Catholic clergymen, including also Jezhi Mazur, who had a legal visa and had gone on a vacation – were not permitted to return.

So, the head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate Metropolitan Kirill declared that he is "very sorry that recently the representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Russia allow themselves to make unjustified remarks about the Moscow Patriarchate". However, it is no secret that between the Moscow Patriarchate and President Putin a very close relationship exists!

A German newspaper "Die Welt" ("The World") on July 23 published an article by Gernot Facius under the title: "The Pope is waiting – Putin is silent".

From this article it is obvious that the Pope asked Putin to explain for what reason the Catholic bishop of Irkutsk, Jezhi Mazur was not permitted to reenter Russia, but the President made no response. However, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk has forwarded to the Vatican a thick folder of cases of Catholic proselytizing, pointing out the names of parishes to whose names have been added "missionary".

The Nezavisimaya Gazeta ("The Independent Gazette") on July 7th reported that "The Vatican has approved the sending to it of the 'information.' For quite a time we have been asking the Russians to give us concrete cases of so-called proselytism and now, since they have named these examples, we can discuss this situation," said cardinal Walter Casper.

The author of this article, Oleg Nedoumov, believes that both parties immediately started to debate and he doubts that they will come to any resolution, because there are a multitude of private cases in question.

However, the Moscow Patriarchate is hardly ending contacts with the Vatican. Thus, on July 11th Ridiger received a delegation of a Catholic diocese from the city of Trent, headed by their bishop Luigi Bressan. At the meeting the matter of relations of the MP with the Vatican was discussed. A while before that, Ridiger received a Catholic delegation from the Verona diocese and in March, a group of Catholics sent Ridiger a letter which supports the establishment of Catholic dioceses in Russia.

The report published by SMI.ru on September 6th stresses that "John the II, when he wrote a letter to Putting, has put the President in an embarrassing situation. The Pope is a head of a state, has addressed a President of Russia, the head of another state. But John Paul is also the head of very big world denomination, at least in the diplomatic sense, with another biggest confession of the world. In this situation, for Putin, who is not a stranger to Alexis II is obvious not convenient to make some decisions overlooking the head of the Orthodox Church... Putin does not know what to answer to the Pontiff, also maybe he knows, but cannot make up his mind".

Alas, the Moscow Patriarchate on the one hand definitely wants to get rid of the Catholics, who very generously act as benefactors (a typical method of Catholic missionizing), and on the other – cannot get away from the ecumenical policies of "global Orthodoxy", even more so, since the cases with Catholic clerics in Russia have begun to create an international scandal.

The Moscow Patriarchate, which "protests" Catholic propaganda in Russia, according to Internet information just recently permitted in the Novo-Devichy Convent an exhibit of religious art from St. Catherine Cathedral in Holland.

The author of this information, Vladimir Sokolovsky, describes this exhibit in very favorable tones. It turns out that "in a large entry hall on a big screen there is a video with pictures of Novo-Devichy Convent, the interior of main cathedral of the Dormition of Holy Virgin. The film shows also fragments of a church service, presided over by Metropolitan of Krutitca and Kolomna, Juvenaly. This means that the viewing of Catholic relics is preceded by an accompaniment of Orthodox hymns. In the Dormition church, near Irene palace where the exhibit is, one can see a beautiful sculptured wooden crucifix and the church has a lot of gilded sculptures. Therefore, the impression the exhibit gives is that it has become part of Novodevichy Convent and allows one to speak of the forms of art common to the Orthodox and the Catholics".

If this is not propaganda for Catholicism by the Moscow Patriarchate – then what is?

NEW DECLARATION OF SOME “CHRISTIAN” SCIENTISTS

The newspaper “Christian News” and Boston’s “Star Legend” on September 23rd published a declaration of 21 participants in a scientific Christian conference which targets the good relations with representatives of the Jewish faith. The declaration consists of 10 points and actually undermines all the basics of Christianity as such. It seems that this declaration was a response to a Jewish appeal to their fellow people in “Dabru Emet” in 2000 to reassess their relations with Christianity. It is also connected with the joint declaration signed by Roman Catholics and Jews at the conference of Catholic Bishops in the USA and the National Congress of Synagogues. According to the report in the newspaper “Catholic Reporter,” in mid-August Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore was quoted as saying: “A deepening Catholic appreciation of the eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people, together with a recognition of a divinely given mission to Jews to witness to God’s faithful love, lead to the conclusion that Jews are already dwelling in a saving covenant with God, and campaigns that target Jews for conversion to Christianity are no longer theologically acceptable” in the Catholic Church.

At the opening of the conference in Boston College on September 5th, there was proclaimed the declaration of 10 points, called “The Sacred Obligation”. The members of this group consisted of representatives of 7 various Western denominations.

On the opening speech Joseph Tyson (a Methodist) said: “We know that there has been a long tradition of anti-Judaism within that that Christian Tradition. It is based on certain misperceptions of history and it’s theologically invalid... We are convinced that a rethinking of Christian attitudes toward Jews is central, indispensable and sacred”.

This declaration is based upon Jewish beliefs that supposedly the covenant of God with the Jewish people remains still irreversible, while the New Testament that Christ the Savior has brought to the world can be totally ignored.

The declaration of this conference was very enthusiastically met by Jews, which stressed the 10th point, that “Christians should not target Jews for conversion”.

Rabbi Gilbert Rosenthal, executive director of the National Council of Synagogues said in the joint statement: “Yet another step in turning new page in the often stormy relationship between the Jewish people and the Roman Catholic Church. Neither faith group believes that we should missionize among the other in order to save souls via conversion. Quite the contrary: we believe both faith groups are beloved of God and assured of his grace”.

The newspaper “National Catholic Reporter” of August 30th published Baltimore’s Cardinal William Keeler, a moderate in Catholic Jewish relations in which he stated that the resolution of this conference is “a significant step forward in the dialogue between the Catholic church and the Jewish community in this country”.

Judging by the article published in newspaper “The Jewish Press” of September 29th, the problem of possible conversion of Jews to Christianity, at present is a rather threatening problem for Israel.

So the author of the article, Steven Plout, a writer and professor of economics in Haifa University bitterly complains about the secularity of residents in Israel. When in one of the Israeli public schools the principle introduced in the program basic information about Jewish religion and their prayer book – this resulted in an uproar from many parents and some even stopped sending their children to the school in order to prevent them from becoming religious. Many Israeli residents are openly anti-religious. The author of this article reports that there is “a venomous hatred of religion and the religious... The elimination of nearly every mention of Judaism and Jewish tradition from the state school curriculum is one manifestation of these leftist secularists. Those children who object to being forced to learn the Bible are in fact seeking to detach themselves from all Jewishness”.

Further it is reported that in some Israeli schools the Bible is considered to be a myth, which resulted from fantasies of some people and one should pay no attention to it.

This Jewish professor, speaking from his own point of view, is absolutely correct when he states that the Bible is for a Jew (even a non-believing one) a national and cultural heritage. The loss of such a concept presents a danger to the existence of Israel. Very often, sowing on barren ground unexpectedly brings forth very rich harvests!

AN ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT

The newspaper “The Jewish Press” of October 4th published information that the Jewish Committee to Prevent the Destruction of Temple Mount Antiquities has recently sent the police to destroy a floor illegally put in by the Muslims. The police action was not interrupted by the Muslims.

A part of the Southern Wall is leaning outward near its eastern edge – a result of the illegal Muslim construction work in the Solomon’s Stables area on the Temple Mount.

Chaim Klein, Director-General of the Public Security recently told a group from the Public Security Ministry, that despite Muslim objections and threats, there is no reason not to open the Temple Mount to Jewish visitors.

Klein has pointed out that the GSS has agreed to the opening of the Temple Mount to Jews, and that the Prime Minister Sharon himself said several months ago that he had plans to change the status quo on the Temple Mount.

The Temple Mount is the most sacred place in the world for the Jews. The remnants of the Western Wall of the former Temple can be visited by the Jews, but only in certain places. Most rabbis do not recommend visiting the Temple Mount,

because to do so is connected with a number of rules and requirements. On the day of Pentecost, some 350 thousand visited the Western Wall.

The main sacred object of the Temple was the Ark of the Covenant. Its actual fate is not quite clear: according to one source ("The Theological Encyclopedia") the Ark because of the unfortunate war with Palestinians was taken out of Temple and returned into it only after the reconstruction of Solomon's Temple, but was burned down at the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. According to another, the contemporary version of Jewish scholars (in the Commentary for September) – the Holy of Holies already prior to the coming of Christ was empty.

"CANONIZATION" PSYCHOSIS IN RUSSIA

For the last few years in Russia there has been going on, in the full meaning of the word, a new compulsive psychosis to canonize people who are in some way renowned in history.

At a visit to the bookstore of the Moscow Patriarchate, the customer will find the life of Gregory Rasputin, even his icons and a service, icons of the already canonized Admiral Oushakov (for the invincibility of the fleet under his command and his faithfulness to his oath). Now in line for being canonized are Ivan Sousanin and even Ivan the Terrible, who was married 7 times, in anger killed his only son and ordered Maliuta Scouratov to kill St. Metropolitan Philip, who was publicly denouncing him.

It is true that quite correctly Alexis Ridiger has objections against those three candidates for saints (Sousanin, Ivan the Terrible and Rasputin).

While at Valaam and giving an interview there to the agency ITAR-TASS, the Moscow Patriarch said that "the spread of icons of the Tsar and the "elder" – is the next effort to introduce disagreements among the faithful." According to him Rasputin "did help the heir of the Throne to overcome his severe sickness of hemophilia. But he discredited the Monarchy and the last Russian Emperor and that was used by the enemies of the Homeland".

Regarding the Ivan the Terrible, the Patriarch said: "one may not glorify both those who were murdered and the murderers".

It seems, that the preparation of the minds of public is in progress of glorification of such an odious personality as Marshal Zhoukov! There already exist his "lives" in which his fervent, but hidden piety is related! Military history knows him as a careerist, who went in battles no concern for the lives of the soldiers under him.

It looks like the main reason behind this canonization psychosis is an urge to glorify the outstanding patriots of the Homeland, regardless of their moral qualities!

Maybe, not wishing to stay behind the Moscow Patriarchate in matters of "glorifications" – at present there is being conducted strong propaganda within the ROCOR (Laurus) about the Priest-monk Seraphim Rose, "an exceptional theologian and struggler", whose letters were recently published in the magazine "Pravoslavnaya Rus." There are books about him also in the bookstores of the Moscow Patriarchate.

His popularity is mainly based on propaganda by Herman Podmoshensky, who was defrocked during the tenure of Metropolitan Philaret on the basis of complaints about him by Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco. For unknown reasons "Pravoslavnaya Rus" as well as the Moscow Patriarchate in his writings about Seraphim Rose nowhere mention that he was defrocked and keep calling him Priestmonk Herman!

More knowledgeable in theology matters Orthodox Americans regarded the "theology" of Rev. Seraphim Rose with more than reservations and believed that his fascination with Buddhism has left noticeable traces on his thinking.

Interesting, that even such a well-informed Internet organ as portal-credo.ru has advertised him and even reproduced his icon!

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS (a letter of Bishop Gregory to V. I. Alexeyev of May 15/28, 1986)

Dear Vasily Ivanovich;

Thank you for your letter of May 23rd. Certainly, it is self explanatory that living so far away from the headquarters it is difficult for you to use your influence. However, each church activist and writer has a certain weight and people somehow take this into consideration. This is why I believe it is worthwhile to have you informed.

Of course I knew that among our hierarchs there were persons who had negative feelings toward me, but under the cover of civility, turned to me for advice and so on. I didn't know how prepared the revolution of the opposition was. Even while Metropolitan Anastassy was alive, I knew of various proposals for reforms, even up to transferring the headquarters to Europe or San Francisco, so that I would in this or that manner removed from having an influence. The obstacles were in the persons of the metropolitans who considered my work useful and took a realistic approach to our life. The critics of the administration are always divided into the conscientious (when there were errors in administration) and the ill intentioned. The conspirators did not have enough connections in the headquarters until they were increased by Bishop Hilarion in the position of my helper, who behind my back started to organize the revolution, basing it on actual and invented defects in Jerusalem. All of this, in bypassing the Synod and the Metropolitan, have introduced into the Bishops' Council widespread propaganda. The efforts of the Metropolitan and me to bring this case into legal channels have failed, especially after the repose of the Metropolitan. The case was led in a form of propaganda and all the omissions and the weakness of the dying Metropolitan, also some errors, they have ascribed to my responsibility, already in a form of certain

Russia is being strengthened and developed. The activity of the Jewish organization in this irreversible process always was and remains known and constructive.

The state in the future with all its powers will also counteract all the manifestations of extremism and anti-Semitism. I am convinced that only by relying upon the principles of democracy and religious tolerance we can secure for Russia a dignified future".

It seems that such a similar Jewish Congress last happened only with the famous Basel (Switzerland) Congress of 1897!