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CONTENTS:

MEETING OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE AUTONOMOUS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
DECLARATION OF METR. VALENTIN REGARDING THE SEIZURE OF HOSTAGES IN MOSCOW
FOUNDING OF A KHABAROVSK DIOCESE OF THE ROAC
SERGIANISTS BY THEIR OWN REPERTOIRE...
TYPICAL SERGIANISM
PICTURES FROM THE LIFE OF "GLOBAL ORTHODOXY"
IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL FIND
FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS

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**MEETING OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE AUTONOMOUS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
ON October 5/18th, 2002**

The meeting of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church opened on October 5/18 and lasted for 3 days. Present were: The president of the Synod of Bishops, Metropolitan Valentin; Theodore, Archbishop of Borisovo and Sanino; Seraphim, Archbishop of Sukhum and Abhasia; Anthony, Bishop of Yaransk; Timothy, Bishop of Orenburg and Gregory, Bishop of Denver.

The Metropolitan in his report on the general situation of the Church at present stressed that the persecutions of the "alternative" Orthodox Churches continues. The state officials are trying to establish the Moscow Patriarchate as the sole Orthodox Church and even are ready to return to her the pre-Revolutionary church-owned land and objects of economic significance.

The First Hierarch also reported that "of late several clergymen of the Moscow Patriarchate have approached us with the request to be admitted into the bosom of the ROAC, but after conversations with them, their requests were denied".

"In Suzdal itself, under the patronage of Mayor Ryzhov and members of administration the attacks on the ROAC and her First Hierarch continue. Rumors are spreading that it will survive only until January 1st of 2003. Unfortunately, to our great regret in Suzdal and in the Vladimir region the civil rights of the faithful of ROCA are being violated: namely, the local and regional authorities have spread propaganda against our Church; court cases are arranged against our First Hierarch, buildings belonging to the Suzdal Diocese are subjected to legal actions. Our sub-deacons are beaten up, fires are started in churches, monasteries and houses belonging to our Church: windows are broken in the churches and Synod Building, threats of financial sanctions and even murders are made. Each time the police, prosecutor's office, the courts have been informed, but all our appeals are ignored".

The most significant event of the meeting was the discussion of the "God's Name" heresy, advocates of which are the Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie) and his opponent is Vladimir Moss.

At the meeting His Grace Bishop Anthony of Yaransk said that: "...he is outraged by the opinions of Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie) about the heresy of 'Name Worshiping and God's Name' by which he is sowing scandal in the minds of believing Orthodox".

Bishop Gregory of Denver noted that "the propaganda of Reader Vladimir Moss against Fr. Gregory (Lourie) forces some faithful to leave the ROAC, and Reader Vladimir Moss declares that they are acting properly. It gives the impression that Vladimir Moss is trying to make people join another jurisdictions".

"His Grace Anthony also stated that Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie) did not treat the decision of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Autonomous Church seriously, and ignored the exhortations and warnings of Metropolitan Valentin, Archbishop Theodore and Archbishop Seraphim, who on several occasions have had conversations with Fr. Gregory asking him to retract his alluring pronouncements on the Internet. Bishop Anthony proposed the application of strong measures to suspend Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie) until he repents."

Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie) was summoned by the Synod of Bishops to explain his actions. It is known that at the meeting the question was raised about whether to defrock him. Hieromonk Gregory submitted to the Synod of Bishops the following statement [in his own English text as presented to the Synod. He speaks English.]:

"Most Reverend Vladyka Metropolitan, Reverend Vladykas;

With this report I express my deep regret for my public statements about Name-Worshipping and *Imyaslavie* that have caused disturbance in our Church.

I keep the teaching of the Holy Fathers and do not profess any heresy about the name of God that was condemned by the previous Fathers and Councils. I also follow the statement of the All-Russian Local Council of 1917-1918 that was confirmed by two statements of the Synod of our Church, according to which the decision regarding the essence of the *Imyaslavie* issue is within the exclusive competence of the Local Council of the Russian Church.

I repeat that I repent of my public statements on this topic and I promise not to make such statements any more.

October 18th, 2002

The servant of the Hierarchal Synod

Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie)"

As is stated in the minutes "In light of the submitted explanations by Fr. Gregory (Lourie), the Vladyka First Hierarch said that '...Jesus Christ, the Son of God came into the world to save the world, not to let it perish. There is nothing easier than to 'suspend' and 'defrock', but in this manner we are not going to solve the problem. It is necessary to apply the maximum force to correct a person, to lead his actions into the right path, which might bring forth positive fruits. Father Gregory is an educated person; he is a scientific employee on the Moscow Institute of General History RAN, a member of the editorial staff of RAN magazine 'Christian East', has a deep knowledge in theology, but unfortunately, like many scientists, he has submitted to the temptation to introduce his own contribution into the cause he is devoted to. In this, unfortunately, is revealed the pride, the imperfection of a person. An archpastor is to strive to correct a person and to lead him to the right path. I believe, that after some time passes, he will understand he is wrong and mistaken.

"I would ask you, my beloved in God archpastors to be little more patient and to give Fr. Gregory time to comprehend and correct himself. If Fr. Gregory does not arrive at the necessary conclusion himself and continues to defend the ideas which he has followed and which were unacceptable to the All-Russian Council of 1917-1918 and if he will not improve

before the new year of 2003, than it will be appropriate to determine a punishment according to the canons of Holy Fathers of the Church."

According to the paragraph # 3 of the minutes: "Archbishop Seraphim suggested that Fr. Gregory put the text of his repentance on the Internet".

Paragraph # 4 of the minutes states that "Bishop Timothy suggested to require Fr. Gregory to no longer engage in any polemics regarding 'Name Worshiping', including on the Internet. If Hieromonk Gregory violates this prohibition, that he be suspended; and if, after the repentance of Hieromonk Gregory, the subject of the God-name is raised by Reader Vladimir Moss, the latter should be excommunicated for a period of one year".

Regarding the case of Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie) the Synod of Bishops **resolved**:

"To accept the suggestion of the President with the hope that Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie) will correct himself and with the wish that he always remember the words of the St. Apostle Paul: 'See then that you walk circumspectly' and 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ'.

Archbishop Theodore reported that "with each year there are more and more requests from believers who are disappointed with the deeds of the archpastors of the MP and who want to leave the MP, addressed to the ROAC with petitions to be admitted into the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church".

"The believers ask us to organize communities for them and to appoint clergy for them, so they may come and pray in peace. According to our resources we try to comply with these requests. However, there are difficulties for the archpastors in ministering to these believers. It would be necessary to have many more bishops so that they will be able to visit them at least once a year and therefore there is a need to consecrate new bishops".

There were nominated as possible candidates several clergymen, and the first named was Archimandrite Irinarch (Nonchin), who already has several times refused episcopal rank.

Archbishop Theodore also reported: "As of late, almost everywhere registrations of parish by-laws are stopped. The local justice departments who do not refuse to register certain parish statutes, hold up the decisions for several months, and then return the parish documents claiming supposed defects and then refuse the registration. And yet our parish by-laws are typical and were approved by the Justice Ministry of the Russian Federation".

In response the Synod **resolved** the following:

"If the agencies of the local justice administration refuse registration, the faithful should not be discouraged. God will hear their prayers just the same. In cases of persecution of the community and refusals of registration, it is permitted to go into extra-legal existence, as it used to be previously – into the Catacombs".

Of the less important decisions of the Synod of Bishops were, at the suggestion of the First Hierarch the position of the Secretary of the Synod of Bishops was abolished, and Archbishop Theodore of Borisovo and Sanino was appointed as Manager of the Synod.

Gratitude was expressed to Archpriest Arcady Makovetsky for his work in the position of the temporary secretary to the Synod of Bishops, while keeping him as assistant to the Synod manager.

The referent to the Synod is to be Hieromonk Theophan (Areskin).

Also, according to Archbishop Theodore, the former vicar bishops His Grace Timothy was elevated to the rank of ruling bishop with the title of Orenburg and Kurgansk, and Bishop Gregory was granted the title of diocesan bishop of Denver and Colorado.

It was pointed out at this meeting that not all parishes observe the tithing rule to benefit the central administration.

Also the question was raised of summoning the Council of Bishops. The Metropolitan pointed out that it will involve substantial cost and the funds for this have to be collected in advance.

Mr. Moss has already responded through the Internet to the resolution of the Synod of Bishops he dislikes, regarding the case of Hieromonk Gregory (Lourie) and to a high degree he misrepresents the facts.

When there is a meeting of any sort, the members express various opinions. One would think that Mr. Moss is acquainted with such elementary regulations for all meetings. In the case of a disagreement with some regulations of the Synod or the Council, each hierarch has the right to present his arguments in a "separate opinion" which is included in the minutes, and the minutes themselves in such case are signed, but with references to the "separate opinion". However, to speak of "disagreements" between the members of the Synod of Bishops after a resolution is accepted and signed by all of them is a deliberate misrepresentation of the facts.

Reader V. Moss does not say how he will react to the suggestion of Bishop Timothy that "...If however, after the repentance of Hieromonk Gregory the matter of God's Name is raised by Reader Vladimir Moss, he is to be excommunicated for one year".

It is obvious, that Mr. Moss displays "zeal not according to understanding".

DECLARATION OF VALENTIN, FIRST HIERARCH OF THE AUTONOMOUS RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, REGARDING THE SEIZURE OF HOSTAGES IN MOSCOW

This misfortune came to our house and every decent person feels utter horror about what is happening. This is felt not only by believing persons, but by everyone, whose conscience is alive and can feel the difference between good and evil.

The cruel war, lasting for a number of years, in Chechnya has opened a second front on the streets of the Russian capital. Now it is obvious to anyone that the present war and the wars of 21st century differ from the "classical" wars in that there are no precise front lines. From the very beginning it was clear that the theatre of military actions would not be restricted to Chechnya. The appearance of the second front should have a sobering effect on those who indifferently observe someone's misfortune, who all these years looked at the perishing of peaceful citizens and Russian soldiers in the North Caucasus.

The fate of the hostages is hard and they are in need of our special prayerful assistance and protection, in our ceaseless appeal to the Lord for their health and salvation. Yes, these people went to the House of Culture for the sake of vain entertainments. But at present, it is hardly likely that any of them remembers that. Standing face to face with death, a person inevitably experiences a spiritual rebirth.

What is happening in Moscow is also a reminder for every Orthodox Christian that it is necessary to be spiritually vigilant and pray ceaselessly, to be ready for any test. It is not known when and in what form this next war will remind us of this. Everyone may become a victim of terrorist acts and, indeed, at the very same moment when we least expect it. And the Lord warns us: "In that state I will find you in that I will judge".

Preserving spiritual vigilance and sobriety we should not succumb to panic and provocations. A very special responsibility weighs upon the clergy these days. The believers of the Russian Autonomous Church were sincerely shocked when they found out that at the first night of the tragedy not one of my brothers in the clergy went to the House of Culture, except for a single priest of our Church. And this terrorist act was happening in the center of Moscow, in the midst of a multitude of majestic churches and monasteries. I cannot understand how the "serene life" can continue in these monasteries when within only one kilometer people find themselves in a hell. The duty of the clergy is not only to double their prayers, but to go to the place of tragedy, console the relatives of the hostages gathered there, bring with them icons, before which those present could pray. It is in these critical moments that we know who zealously and unhyprocritically fulfills his pastoral duty, and who "seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep and fleeth".

The terrible event now happening once more brings to our attention the complicated situation of inter-religious relations in Russia as well as in the world. We know that contemporary terrorists and their 'collaborators' cover themselves with the flag of Islam. We also hear the declarations of the Muslim religious leaders that Islam does not approve of such terrorist activities and of appeals not to allow inter-religious differences. We have no reason not to believe these religious leaders of Islam, but also, one cannot close one's eyes to the fact that millions of Muslims throughout the world still justify terrorism, salute it and consider it a religious war – jihad. The official Islamic leaders, unfortunately, do not fully control the moods of regular Muslims who approve of cruel murders and even commit them.

In what manner can our Christian world oppose the "zeal, not according to understanding" of these Islamic radicals?

Unfortunately, only with religious indifference, which has become the norm for contemporary Christian society. And if it were different, Russia could oppose the threat of terrorism not only with her army and special units, but with the toughness of a genuine churchly spirit and true hope in God's help and the protection of the Holy Theotokos and the protection of the Saints.

Alas, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord cometh".

October 25th, 2002

+ Metropolitan Valentin

FOUNDING OF A KHABAROVSK DIOCESE OF THE ROAC

The history of Khabarovsk diocese began with the establishment of a parish in the town of Nikolayevsk-on-Amour. The rector of the parish, Fr. Nicholas Spizhevsky originally served in the diocese of the Moscow Patriarchate. He opened a parish over there, built a church and enjoyed the love of his parishioners.

In the middle of the 90's in Russia there was a period when people did not receive their salaries for as long as half a year or even much longer. During that period a group of young people came to Fr. Nicholas, who had been drafted and about to be sent to war in Chechnya. They asked him to baptize them, but at the same time told him that they were not able to pay him for this service. This priest agreed to baptize them for free and some 40 young men came to receive the sacrament of the Baptism.

When his bishop found out about it, he said to Fr. Nicholas: "If you can not receive money – go get groceries and bring those to me" and as a punishment transferred him to another place to repent as a junior priest. With the passing of time, Fr. Nicholas realized what the essence of the MP is and wrote a report to his bishop informing him that he did not recognize the canonicity of the MP and was severing his relations with it. Not knowing of the existence of the ROAC, he went back to his secular job and became the director of a department of the Khabarovsk Local Art Museum.

Upon finding out that there was a priest of ROAC (Father Ambrose, later bishop) he approached him and Metropolitan Valentin appointed him to the parish in Nikolayevsk-on-Amour.

When this became known to the MP bishop he immediately anathematized him, although Fr. Nicholas was not even suspended.

After the departure of Fr. Nicholas, the MP bishop ordained his sub-deacon for the parish in Nikolayevsk-on-Amur, who found the parish salary and income too small, so he decided to start a commercial business: **he opened several kiosks**

in the city and started to sell in them nothing less than pornographic video cassettes and literature, purchased in Khabarovsk at the low prices [emphasis by "Ch. N."]. Nikolayevsk is a town in a remote place and isolated from the larger central cities. The local authorities as early as the 20's had destroyed the churches there and they were the first ones in Russia to inform Stalin that they had finished with religion. The youth was raised in the Communist ideology and naturally, had no understanding of Christianity. But at the same time, the modern propaganda of perversions (except for TV) has not reached there yet. It is no wonder that under such circumstances these products of the MP priest are in big demand. Instead of preaching salvation he became busy with the commercial preaching of perversion, although this is a place where the seeds of Christianity could fall upon rich soil.

After observing all this, the parishioners turned to their former rector for help. In this way, all the parishioners came to the parish of the ROAC, while the MP has only irregular visitors.

In spite of all this, the Patriarchal diocesan priest is considered one of the best because he does not baptize any one for free and regularly brings the money to his bishop.

The parish church remained with the MP and the parishioners so far are praying in private homes.

This parish is dedicated to St. Gennady, the heavenly protector of Nevelsky. The discoverer the Amur River and founder of Nikolayevsk-on-Amur. St. Gennady was renown for his struggle with heretics, namely the heresy of the "Judaisers".

Fr. Nicholas Spizhevsky is a man of advanced age; he has a large family and therefore is unable to leave his civilian job. He specializes in the history of the Far East and ethnography of Far Eastern peoples. His works were published in Russia as well as abroad. He was the first to establish ecclesiastical-archeological science as such.

The history of this priest and the parish he has established is very characteristic of a whole number of hierarchs and clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate!

SERGIANISTS BY THEIR OWN REPERTOIRE...

by Archpriest Michael Ardov

Newspaper "Moskovskii Tserkovnyi Vestnik" ("Moscow Church Herald") in issue 14-15 (243-244) published the "Complete Text of the Seminar on Relationship of the Russian Orthodox Church and the government of Russia in the 20's and 30's". This seminar was held in May of 2002. Presiding was Philaret, Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk (code name in KGB "Ostrovski", Ch. N.), the Chairman of the "Synod's Theological Committee" and on July 18th this "document" was approved by a decision of the "Holy Synod". The reason why the above seminar was held and the "Complete Text" appeared was, as was explained to us, "the continued difficult dialogue of the Russian Orthodox Church with the ROCOR".

The publication takes up a whole newspaper page. The text has a foreword, 16 paragraphs and a conclusion.

If I were to examine in detail all the innuendos and false statements (actually, the whole "document" consists of such) it should result in an entire treatise and therefore I have decided to restrict myself only to the most important remarks.

The main object of the "Complete Text" is the defense and justification of all (including the most outrageous) acts by Metropolitan Sergius (Stragorodsky). For example, nothing is mentioned about how he usurped power in the Church, that he exceeded his authority and that the locum tenens Metropolitan Peter (whose locum tenens was Sergius) in no way approved the policy of collaboration with the godless authorities.

In paragraph 3 of the "Text" we read: "The establishment of the normalization of relations with the government cannot be interpreted as a betrayal of the Church's interests. It was accepted previously by Patriarch Tikhon and has also found expression in the so-called 'Epistle of the Solovki Bishops' issued in 1926, in another words, a year before the publication of the 'Epistle of the Locum Tenens of the Patriarchal throne and the Temporary Patriarchal Synod.' The essence of the change in the position of Church's administration consisted of recognizing at first the legality of the new government, established after the Revolution of 1917, and then, as a consequence of the consolidation of this power, the Church had to accept it as the government and establish two-sided relations with it. This position is not reprehensible: historically the Church on several occasions found herself to be in a situation when she was forced to collaborate with non-Orthodox rulers, (for example with the Golden Horde [the Tatars] or with the Muslim Ottoman Empire)."

Let us try to look at this passage. Yes, St. Tikhon and the "Solovki bishops" wanted to establish sort of a concordat, which would secure for the Church a legal existence. But the Bolsheviks had another goals: they wanted to enslave the Orthodox Church, make her an obedient tool in their bloody paws. This is testified to now by many declassified documents. In particular a "Report of the Supervisor of the 6th Section of SOOGPU about the Work among the Faithful and Sectarians during 1923", offered by Eugene Touchkov of sorry memory sent to "the Deputy President of OGPU [regional GPU, which later became the KGB -- Ch. N.] Comrade Menzhinsky". I quote from the collection of "Religion and Democracy" (Moscow, 1993, p.193). It is stamped "Top Secret" and it states that the Tchekists' aim was "to create a network of informants... and through that to guide the whole Church". And further "...to guide the Church in the direction we need...."

And here is one more document — "the Reports of the Assistant Representative to the Secret Department of V-CH-K about the Agency's Intelligence Work among Clergy during 1921" ("Izvestiya," #18, Jan. 23rd, 1992). Here, particular attention is called to the following paragraph: "The material interests of this or that informer among the clergy are a must,

so that the financial and grocery grants will, without doubt, tie them more to us also in another respects, namely they will be perpetual slaves of the CHEKA, who will be afraid to disclose their activities”.

To this I would like to add an important testimony. In 1980 I happened to meet with a remarkable person – Michael Nikolayevich Yaroslavsky, in his younger days he was a senior sub-deacon of Seraphim, Archbishop of Uglich. In 1983 I tape-recorded what Michael Nikolayevich remembered about this remarkable New Martyr hierarch. Among other things, M. N. related to me the following:

“For 100 days Vladyka Seraphim happened to rule the whole Russian Orthodox Church. This was in 1926. Metropolitan Sergius was incarcerated; all were incarcerated.... And so, he was put in charge. Vladyka told me that at that time the authorities offered him, as the Primate of the Church, a Synod of bishops. He did not agree and immediately received 3 years in Solovki Camp. But he did not betray the Church, but he wrote, or said, that he declared the autocephaly of each diocese, since the Primate of the Church was another candidate for jail. And after that he was immediately released. Soon after, Metropolitan Sergius was released. He created the Synod out of all those members which the authorities suggested to Vladyka Seraphim.”

Therefore, it was wrong for the first “Sergian” Synod to call itself “Patriarchal”. In truth it was “GPU” and one can guess that it consisted of the “perpetual slaves” of the CHEKA. The level, from the very beginning, of dependence of Metropolitan Sergius and his collaborators to the masters of the Lubyanka [the prison HQ of the KGB] may be demonstrated by such a significant example. This is the testimony of the renown ecclesiastical writer Protopresbyter Michael Polsky in his book “The Situation of the Church in Soviet Russia” (St. Pet., 1995, p. 58). (The subject is the events of 1929).

“Certainly, Metropolitan Sergius was the first to reap the results of his union with the state. Before the beginning of a liturgy, he received a telegram from Petrograd (St. Petersburg) about the death in jail of Bishop Hilarion [Troitsky -- M. Ardov]. The Metropolitan wept. But after the liturgy when he was asked to serve a panikhida for the reposed, Metropolitan replied: ‘The order has not yet been received’.”

Paragraph 4 of the “Complete Text”: “One of the main objects of the critics of the actions of Metropolitan Sergius as the Locum Tenens are the transfer of hierarchs and the suspension of the clergy. The transfer of ruling bishops can be considered as a measure of necessity, done in cases of economia and to the benefit of the Church, in this case that there existed a prohibition by state authorities against residence in a cathedral city. Such a practice was usual in the pre-Revolutionary Synodal period. The suspensions which were imposed by the Metropolitan Sergius did not have the character of ecclesiastical trials but were pre-trial decisions, effective only in connection with canons prior to trial, and that was confirmed by the later canonization of some of those suspended, also including the ‘non-commemorating’ persons.”

Every word here is a lie. The Chekists through the hands of Sergius and his collaborators (of the “GPU Synod”) not only “transferred bishops” but also imposed on them illegal suspensions. And this, when, according to the canons, without a trial during which there must be followed numerous formal conditions, a bishop cannot be subjected to any punishment.

(References to the practice during the “Synodal period” are not correct, because this same Synod, which was established by Peter the First, was itself altogether uncanonical).

The statement that supposedly the “suspensions which were imposed by Metropolitan Sergius did not have the character of ecclesiastical trials” is also deceptive. Here is a quotation from the “Actions of the Locum Tenens and a Temporary Patriarchal Synod under him” dated March 16th, 1928. (I quote from the book of “Acts of His Holiness Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, the Latest Documentation and Correspondence about the Canonical Succession of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Power,” Moscow, 1994):

“Bishops Victor (Ostrovidov), Dimitry (Liubimov), Sergius (Druzhinin), Alexis (Buy) and others have been suspended from serving by the Council of Bishops of the temporary Patriarchal Synod....

“The above named bishops, including Metropolitan Agathangel (Preobrazhensky) and Joseph (Petrovykh)... according to ecclesiastical custom should be deprived of their priestly rank and are to be not only suspended, but defrocked as apostates, who have created a schism.”

And yet, the members of the Patriarchal seminar call such decisions “pretrial”!

In their “Complete Text” there is even not one single attempt to answer the central question: who was right, the Bolshevik’s servant Metropolitan Sergius or those who, on orders from the Chekists, he was “suspending” and “defrocking”, calling them “apostates, who created a schism”?

The fact that at the Patriarchal “Council” of 2000 the “suspended apostates” were canonized without any hearing on the trial, only once again testifies to the lack of principles among the “Sergianists” and their absolute disregard for the existing Orthodox canonical rules.

At this “council” the direct successors of Metropolitan Sergius sang the glorification hymns to those who preferred persecutions and martyric deaths imposed according to the dictates of the godless rather than be in communion with them... And this makes us remember the angry words of Christ:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous, and say If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourself that you are the children of them which killed prophets.” (Matt. 23: 29-31)

Paragraph 7: “The breach of communion between the Moscow Patriarchate and the part of the Russian Church which was abroad happened at the period of the political confrontation between the Bolshevik regime in Russia and other

governments on whose territory a multitude of Russian Orthodox people had found refuge. The decisions of the ecclesiastical Councils in the 1920's were also politically colored. In all the temptations which were the fate of the Russian Church during the past century, there was a political factor present which has to be considered in an ecclesiastical-historical analysis".

Well, let us begin such an analysis.

It is commonly known that the Church Militant, which means that which exists in this world, cannot avoid being to a certain degree involved into politics. The bishops who happened to be abroad, as did all people with common sense, understood that the power in Russia had been seized by a political gang and that the Bolsheviks physically exterminated and spiritually mutilated the subdued nation. As early as 1921, the Council in Sremski Karlovci appealed to members of the Genoa conference and in particular said:

"Nations of Europe! Have pity upon our good, open hearted and noble Russian people, who have fallen into the hands of world criminals. Do not support and strengthen them against your children and grandchildren! Give better help to honest Russian citizens. Put into their hands weapons, give them your volunteers and help them to drive the Bolsheviks — this cult of robbery and blasphemy — out of Russia and the whole world" (ROCOR, NY 1968, vol.1, p. 32).

Up to the most recent times the Russian Church Abroad was non-compromising regarding the theomachist and immoral Bolshevik regime, has loudly exposed the lies and cruelty of the "Soviet regime".

And Metropolitan Sergius, his collaborators and successors, following dictates from the Lubianka, justified completely the godless persecutors and corrupters of the Russian peoples, kept silent about and denied the Bolshevik crimes and, in addition, spread their cynical theory that the cannibalistic ideology of Communism is supposedly related to Christian teaching.

In 1949, the bloodiest tyrant of all humankind, Joseph Stalin, was 70 years old. In the # 12th issue of the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate" for that year there was published the most servile, flattering letter in which the contemporary "Sergianist" bishops congratulated this main persecutor of the Church and the homeland. This congratulation is, perhaps, the most disgraceful document in the entire history of Russian Orthodoxy. For clarity, let us quote the beginning and end of this letter:

"Much esteemed and dear Joseph Vissarionovich!

"On the day of your 70th birthday, when the feelings of love and gratitude to you, our leader and teacher and friend of workers, have reached special power and intensity — we, in the Church, feel a moral need to add our voice to the mighty choir of congratulations and express to you those thoughts and wishes that make up an especially valuable part of our spiritual heritage.

"As citizens of the great Soviet nation and also Faithful children of our people, first of all we venerate the podvig of your fruitful life, dedicated without end to the freedom and happiness of peoples and we acknowledge in this podvig the special selflessness of your spirit. We especially appreciate that in your deeds, directed to realize the common good and justice, the entire world observes the triumph of moral principles opposed to anger, cruelty and suppression, which are dominant in the obsolete system of civilized relations...

"And now, feeling in every step of our ecclesiastical and civil life the good results of your wise statesmanship, we can not hide our desire to offer to you in the name of the Russian Orthodox Church, dear Joseph Vissarionovich, on the day of your 70th birthday our deep gratitude and, warmly greeting you on this day significant for all of us who love you, we pray for the strengthening of your powers and send you a prayerful wish for many more years of joy and happiness for our great homeland with a blessing upon your podvig of service to her and being inspired ourselves by your podvig."

To be frank, in the Patriarchal seminar I would not have included paragraph # 7 in the "Complete Document".

There is an old English proverb that applies here: people who live in the glass houses should not throw stones.

The very same saying comes to mind when reading paragraph # 10:

"The accusations by representatives of the Church Abroad of collaboration with anti-religious governments, can be sort of "balanced" if we recall the collaboration of the bishops residing abroad with the Nazi regime, special services for various governments and so on. However, in seeking a fruitful dialogue of the Russian Orthodox Church with those representatives of the Church Abroad who seek the ways to reunite with the Moscow Patriarchate, one should not accentuate attention to similar facts, in order to avoid a dead-end situation of mutual accusations. At the same time, these facts should not be forgotten, since otherwise a 'double standard' starts to act."

And how can we not remind the Patriarchate of the Gospel parable about the "beam" and the "mote" (Matt. 7:3-5)? Sergianists are quick to "balance" the "beam" in their eyes with the "mote" in the eyes of "those abroad". No concrete facts about a direct collaboration of the hierarchs and clergy from abroad with the Nazis and "special services for other states" were ever published. Another point is that many true Russian patriots at some time or other put their trust in the Germans. They supposed that with their assistance our people might throw off the godless and bloodthirsty Soviet government. It is not the fault of these worthy people that their hopes never came true due to the cruelty and stupidity of Hitlerism.

But the "facts" of the total submission of the "Sergianists" to the godless Bolsheviks and their secret police now is known quite well. Let us recall 1992, when a committee of the Supreme Council of Russia published secret documents from the archives of KGB. Here are some illustrative examples:

"Through agents 'Kuznetsov' and others there was prepared a letter of Patriarch Pimen to the President Reagan of the USA. The letter was published in the newspaper 'The New York Times', reprinted in 'Izvestiya' on April 11th 1983 and forwarded for publication in their newspapers".

"To Vancouver (Canada) at the seventh Assembly of the World Council of Churches 47 agents of the KGB were sent with the religious delegation of the SSR among the members of religious agencies, clergy and technical personnel".

From the "Report of the 4th section of KGB of the SSR: "...together with PGU KGB SSR measures were taken to discredit the head of the so-called Karlovci Church, Archbishop Vitaly" ("Izvestiya," # 18, Jan. 23, 1992).

As we can see, the atheists coped quite well with the challenging task "to direct the Church toward the path which we need".

On March 18th 1996 the Estonian newspaper "Postimees" published an article "A Shadow Hangs over Patriarch Alexis". This contained excerpts from the KGB reports of the Estonian SSR preserved in the local state archives. In particular is the following:

"Agent 'Drozdov', born in 1929, a priest of the Orthodox Church, has a higher education, a degree in theology, perfectly speaks Russian, Estonian and limited German; he enlisted on February 28th 1958 out of patriotic feelings in order to expose and drive out the anti-Soviet elements among the Orthodox clergy, with whom he has connections, which present an overriding interest to the KGB agencies. At the time of enlistment it was taken into consideration that in the future (after securing his practical work) he would be promoted through available channels to Bishop of Tallinn and Estonia. In the period of his collaboration with the organs of KGB, 'Drozdov' has proved himself in a positive manner, is accurate in his reports, energetic and sociable. He understands theological matters and international situations well. Is eager to fulfill tasks given him by us and has already presented a number of worthy materials.... After securing the agent in practical jobs for the agencies of state security concretely worked out, we intend to use him to further our interests through sending him into the capitalistic countries as a member of ecclesiastical delegations".

The biographical information of this document permits us to assert with confidence that agent "Drozdov" and the contemporary Patriarch Alexis II are one and the same person.

Let us note that the "Sergianists" never in any way make [negative] comments about such publications. And the only conclusion is that they are verily "the eternal slaves of the CheKa".

Paragraph 11: "While discussing the possibilities and forms of the reunion of the two parts of the Russian Church it has to be considered that the contemporary situation is radically different from the situation of 1920-1930. At present, in contrast to 1920-1930, the Russian Orthodox Church lives in freedom. The Moscow Patriarchate is the largest Local Orthodox Church, its life is built upon the canonical tradition and statutes accepted by the Councils, recognized by the fullness of the Church. The Primate of the Russian Church is freely elected by the Local Council and he remains in communion with Primates of the Local Churches...".

And this again is a lie. If the "Moscow Patriarchate" indeed would build its life upon the "statutes accepted by the Councils", then its administrative system would be quite different. The Synod would be elected, and not self-appointed, there would be a Supreme Ecclesiastical Council as was decided at the last legal Council of 1917-1918. And also the primate would be, as was prescribed by that Council, chosen by casting lots from among three candidates. But the Moscow Patriarchate continues to live according to the statutes which were worked out for her in the TsK VKP(b) in the Lubyanka and then approved at the so-called "Local Council" in 1945.

A few words about the most important silence [of this document]. We know that the 20's and 30's was a time when the "Catacomb Church", started her existence but you will not find a word about it in this "document". And the "catacombniki" [members of Catacomb Church, "Ch. N."] still exist in our days, and they remained intact, despite the most cruel persecutions on part of the CheKists, who favored the "Sergianists". By the way, already in the 80's some "catacombniki" managed to unite with the Church Abroad. In our jurisdiction (of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church) there are about 200 "catacomb" parishes, also three of our bishops are former "catacomb" priests. Some branches of the "Catacomb Church" still exist independently.

So why the "Sergianists" do not address them with a parallel appeal, such as that addressed to "those abroad"? So to say, to return to the bosom of the Mother Church (this is how the Moscow Patriarchate refers to herself). There are two reasons for this. First, the "catacombniki" live side by side with the "Sergianists" and, as opposed to the naïve émigrés, they cannot be lured by TV pictures presenting pompous "Patriarchal services" or "renovated monastic communities". The "catacombniki" know the value of the cynical chatter about a supposed "spiritual revival". And secondly, they are of no interest to the Patriarchate since they live in poverty and pray in private homes and apartments... After all, the "Sergianists" are not "fishers of men", since they have little interest in living souls. They are hunters after property. In regard to the Church Abroad, this was manifested very obviously. Right after the War, the Patriarchate appropriated the Resurrection Cathedral in Berlin, which was built only by the émigrés. In 1948 with the assistance of the Israeli government, the "Sergianists" obtained all the property of the ROCOR that happened to be within the territory of the Jewish state. And just quite recently Yasir Arafat helped them to seize the monasteries in Hebron and Jericho. And now, the time has come when the Moscow Patriarchate is ready to swallow the Church Abroad with all her property – movable and immovable.

And now, let us turn to the "Complete Text". It happens that the agents of the Patriarchate dislike being called "Sergianists". In Paragraph 1 we read: "the term 'Sergianism' is used in the course of polemics by the representatives of the Church Abroad with the Moscow Patriarchate and expresses a negative relationship toward the actions of

Have a fear of God, gentlemen! If 75 years after the publication of the disgraceful declaration of Metropolitan Sergius you are not ashamed to publish "complete texts" very much in harmony with it, what then do you want us to call you?

NOTE:

Despite the absolutely irrefutable documentation published in Estonia from the archives of the KGB accidentally left there that the present Patriarch Alexis II (in the KGB, Agent "Drozdov") in 1988 even received a special award for his "fruitful" activities – the spokesman for the MP, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin just this September flatly rejected such a possibility, although he could not present any facts to defend his Patriarch!

TYPICAL SERGIANISM

In addition to the excellent article of Fr. Michael Ardov on the Internet (<http://patriotica.narod.ru/history/dudko>) there appeared information, entitled "Dimitry Dudko. From Thoughts of a Priest about Stalin".

It is, unfortunately, nowhere indicated when the "Thoughts of a Priest" were publicly expressed. But, since he boldly discusses the pluses and minuses of democracy and despotism, one can presume that his opinions were published after the Yeltsin revolution.

Fr. Dudko declares, that "at present statehood is considered to be sort of defect, a crime", and therefore, "now the time has come to rehabilitate Stalin. Yet, not he himself, but the concept of statehood. Today we can see for ourselves what a crime is non-statehood and what a blessing is statehood! No matter how many cry that in Soviet times many perished in the camps, but how many are perishing now, without trials and investigations, without punishments and being innocent. These cases have no comparison with the former ones. All robbed and deceived people now to the love sickness: if Stalin were here, there would not be such a collapse. But this rehabilitation is from the human point of view, but I have to (speak) from spiritual point of view, since I am a priest" (Underlined by "Ch. N.")

It is more than strange to compare with the present situation the horrible years of the martyred life of the Russian people during Stalin's reign, when literarily there was not a family in the whole of Russia which did not suffer from this tyrant. Certainly, the former Communists who over a few days and nights have become "democrats" and remained in their former administrative positions and can allow themselves lawlessness (specially in provinces), but to speak now of the all over the country terror – is definitely incorrect.

Fr. Dudko admits that "during Stalin's despotism everything was wrapped in atheism. Atheism was everywhere", but at the same time, using a quotation from Berdiayev, he tells us that "Atheism is a "back entrance to God!"...

"Now I want to remind you, how our Patriarchs, especially Sergius and Alexis called Stalin a God-given leader. There were others, let's say such a renown scientist and theologian as Archbishop Luke Voino-Yasenetsky, who by the way was incarcerated in Stalin's times, but this did not prevent him from calling Stalin God-given. Yes, Stalin was given us by God, he created such a state that no matter how they try to mess it up, they still can not do so completely...."

"Stalin, an atheist when looking from outside – (as per some time renown all over Russia and abroad priest) – is actually a believer and this could be proved by facts if not for the space limitations of our article. It is not without reason that in the Russian Orthodox Church when he died, there was sung to him 'eternal memory.' This could not have happened accidentally in the most "godless" period... But, nevertheless, the main thing is that Stalin took care of the people in a fatherly manner. And therefore, at least for me, Stalin legitimately stands next to Suvorov...!"

The entire article of Fr. Dudko which is dedicated to praising Stalin has absolutely nothing spiritual in it, although in the matter of "the rehabilitation of the most horrible persecutor of the Church ever known by the Christian history," he claims to speak as a priest.

Even the contemporary Patriarch Alexis Ridiger "Drozdov", even he has stated that it is impossible to glorify at the same time the killers and their victims.

Is it possible that Fr. Dudko did not know that it was namely Stalin who killed the huge hosts (counted by millions) of the New martyrs and Confessors of Russian Church. As for the typical Sergianist – the most important thing for him is 'statehood'. For this it is possible to sell out the beauty and glory of the Russian Church – her New Martyrs and Confessors.

Since the MP had under the pressure of the faithful to 'glorify' these New Martyrs and Confessors, one should think, Fr. Dudko is serving them the moleben, but it is doubtful that he ever thinks about how it was his idol Stalin who was the main cause of their martyric deaths.

It is amazing that Fr. Dudko has fully forgotten his own incarceration for zealous preaching of Christianity under Stalin himself and then the successors of Stalin, as well as his shameful "repentance" after which he was released from jail. However, now 11 years have passed of the strange freedom in Russia. How can a Christian of any faith, not to say that the praises come from an Orthodox priest addressed to the greatest persecutor of Christ's Church ever known to history, and even to admire him?

PICTURES FROM THE LIFE OF "GLOBAL ORTHODOXY"

The Internet publication Orthodoxy & World News Daily on October 15th published a communiqué that announced a symbolic mutual hug in the Vatican on October 13 between the Pope and the Romanian Patriarch Theoktist. In May 1999

The Internet publication Orthodoxy & World News Daily on October 15th published a communiqué that announced a symbolic mutual hug in the Vatican on October 13 between the Pope and the Romanian Patriarch Theoktist. In May 1999 the Pope paid a visit to Bucharest and now Theoktist has made one in return. The Romanian Patriarch spent a whole week as a guest of the Vatican.

The Joint Declaration states: "Our meeting must be considered as an example: Brothers must meet again to make peace, to reflect together, to discover the way to reach agreements, to expose and explain one another's reasons. We are in agreement in recognizing the religious and cultural tradition of all peoples as well as religious freedom. Evangelization can not be based on a spirit of competition but of reciprocal respect and cooperation, which recognizes the freedom of each one to live according to his own convictions, in respect of his/her own religious affiliation".

At the same time the Pope has offered to establish "a solid institutional structure" which would serve for the "communication and regular and reciprocal exchange of information" between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. The Joint Declaration went so far as to appeal for concrete means of dialogue that would lead to the "visible and total unity of all disciples of Christ".

The very same publication, based upon information from the Serbian Orthodox Church on October 4th report that for the 50th anniversary of St. Sava Parish in London Dosithey Bishop of Great Britain and Scandinavia came to London. The parish has also invited Patriarch Paul, who "gladly accepted the invitation" and came to England in the company of Laurus, Bishop of Shbac-Valjevo and several prominent priests. The Patriarch was met at the airport and immediately proceeded to St. Sava Church where a moleben was served.

Since the Patriarch was also invited by the Anglican Bishop of London, Dr. Richard Charters, the Patriarch went to the Anglican St. Paul's Cathedral. Bishop Charters met him at the eastern doors and in a procession led him into the altar. After a welcoming speech, the Patriarch was seated on the throne of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop escorting him sat at the right hand of the "Orthodox" Patriarch. Archpriest Milan Kostic read the Epistle at the steps of the altar.

After the end of the service there was a reception in St. Paul's Cathedral house and then the Patriarch visited Zion College.

The Patriarch also visited a Birmingham parish (300 miles north of London) and some other parishes. It is reported that during all the patriarchal services there were present "a multitude of Russians, Anglicans, Copts, Armenians and other" members of the "churches" and there were many communicants. Since in the Serbian Church the confession of the Orthodox Faith does not exist (with extremely rare exceptions) no doubt that the Patriarch gave communion to all the heretics present too.

The newspaper "National Catholic Reporter" of October 18th published an extensive article with a large photograph of Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk with the title "Unexpected Détente in Italy".

Metropolitan Kirill (code name in KGB "Mikhailov"), the head of the Foreign Relations Department of the MP and second in rank after the Patriarch, arrived in Italy on September 30th and remained there for 3 days. The purpose of this trip, according to the newspaper, was a Conference called "Sanctity and Charity in Christianity of East and West" organized by the Catholic community in Terni, located 1 hour north of Rome. Kirill, "known as a hawk in Catholic-Orthodox relations" stopped in Rome to participate in a prayer service in the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, which was held in October 2nd. Besides various the speeches of the Catholic clergymen, Kirill also spoke words of reconciliation and said: "The Holy Spirit is moving in the churches of the East and in the churches of the West. This is a fact, and whoever doesn't see it is blind".

The newspaper also reported that "In fact, Vatican sources say that the Patriarch of Moscow, Alexy II, has sometimes sent messages through back channels telling the Vatican to disregard some of his inflammatory public statements about the Catholic church, because they were designed to appease hardliners in his own Orthodox Synod", those who not always approve of his policies.

Some analysts on the Catholic side regard Kirill as a leading figure among these hardliners. This however did not prevent Kirill from coming forward at the conference with spirited speeches about the necessity of "bilateral relations between Orthodox and Catholics" and "collaboration before the world of today".

In this case the Vatican demonstrated more consistency: not a single of its representatives came to the conference organized by Dominicans and Franciscans as a protest for the denial of visas by the Russian government to several Catholic clergymen, including Jezy Mazur.

"Orthodox Observer," the newspaper of the Greek Archdiocese in USA, for October reported that on September 30th there was a prayer service in which the members of Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA) and the Standing Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches (SCOOC) – the Monophysites participated.

The service was sponsored by the UN. The service (it is not mentioned which service was conducted) was performed by the monophysite Archbishop Khajag. He said that "Our churches have ancient histories and many things in common... But only in recent times, on the shores of this great country, we have been able to give physical expression of our unity...."

The prayer service was held in the monophysite cathedral of St. Vartan. Present were the "Oriental Orthodox hierarchs" Syrian, Coptic, Ethiopian and Armenian; also the "Orthodox" Greek Archbishop Demetrios, Metropolitan Herman of the OCA and also bishops from Rumania, Ukraine, Metropolitan Philaret and Bishop Mercury of MP, Greek Bishop Demetrios from Greece and a number of members of the UN staff.

IMPORTANT THEOLOGICAL FIND

"The New York Times" of October 22nd published an extensive article by John Noble Wilford about a limestone chest that was found in the suburbs of Jerusalem with the inscription in Aramaic: "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus".

The archeologists believe that such chests were used by Jews until the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and that it dates from about the year 63 of the Christian era.

Information about the discovery of this chest was recently published in the magazine "Biblical Archeological Review." This find immediately stimulated a number of the most contradictory reactions from various scientific archeologists, mainly because of the mention of the name of Christ. However, they unanimously agreed that there is no reason to believe that the inscription was tampered with, was forged and somehow damaged. This did not prevent the skeptics from immediately insisting that name of Joseph, James and Jesus at that period were extremely popular and therefore there might be dozens of coincidences.

Hershel Shanks, editor of the magazine, noticed with satisfaction that "this is the first appearance of Jesus in the archeological record".

Dr. Joseph Fitzmyer (professor emeritus of New Testament at Catholic University in Washington) declared that if one is to acknowledge that this find is really a chest for the bones of the Apostle James and that it really does refer to Jesus of Nazareth, "That would be a new extra-Biblical attestation of his existence and there are so few extra-Biblical things that do.... My reaction is, it is possible, but I hesitate to say probable. I don't see how anybody can say any more". Some scientists have criticized the magazine for publishing the information about an object which was probably stolen.

There were also some who insisted that the genuineness of the chest with the name of Christ although possible, yet is dubious.

The magazine "U.S. News & World Report" of November 4th reported that the chest was found some 15 years ago and was purchased at an auction by an unknown collector. The French archeologists stated that they do exclude the possibility of forgery in this particular case.

It is understandable that also "theological" controversies arose: The Orthodox and Catholics have no doubt about the virgin birth of Christ from the Theotokos and teach that the mention in the Scriptures of his "brothers" refers to children of the Righteous Joseph from his first marriage. But Protestants, who categorically reject Holy Tradition, insist that the Saviour indeed was given birth by the Virgin Mary, but, supposedly, had other children by the Righteous Joseph!

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS

(letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco, September 7/20, 1994)

Your Eminence, Dear Vladyko;

I am afraid that you do not respond to my letters in accordance with the wishes of the Metropolitan, but I do hope that you have not totally stricken me out of your loving heart.

I don't know, dear Vladyko, if you realize that the actions of our Metropolitan at present create more and more the impression that they are dictated by abnormality, of which his family has a history. His father committed suicide, one of his half sisters, Julia (from the first marriage of his mother) lived in Nyack and in the 60's she was treated with electric shocks. I heard that his second sister, living in Canada, is also abnormal and that she was ordered not to acknowledge that she is related to the Metropolitan.

At present his abnormality is visible in such hostility toward me personally, which I have never observed from any of the reposed Metropolitans. Among us here our best priests distance themselves from him. From the day he started to rule our diocese, we have not had a single diocesan meeting [8 years, "Ch. N."]. He has appointed as secretary of the Diocesan Council an absolutely ecclesiastically illiterate woman – L.D. Rosniansky. I do not know of a precedent for such a thing.

The newest temptation is putting the diocesan property on sale including the church for a laughably low price (\$600,000 for a large mansion which stands on the 4 acres land) without any concern for the health and good of the parish. Metropolitan doesn't want to speak about it to anybody. I have heard that the parishioners are looking for help from the ecclesiastical public.

In regard to the general church affairs of the parishes in Russia, Bishop Valentin has been systematically persecuted, when he has already gathered more than 100 parishes that have left the Moscow Patriarchate. He has been subjected to suspicion, in violation of the canons of the Ecumenical Councils and in absolute disregard for any thought for how thousands and thousands of parishioners will save their souls. This is not a gathering in, but a dispersing of the flock that has been entrusted to the Synod.

Regarding this flock the Metropolitan wants to give the orders all by himself, ignoring the directive of St. Patriarch Tikhon, about whom I will soon forward my article to you. At present this is the only means for me to speak out, since I have been crossed out of life.

Vladyka Hilarion has told me that he is forbidden to give me any information regarding the resolutions of the Council. Such is the attitude toward me, the most senior member of our Church administration (since 1931). In addition, the Metropolitan personally decides everything in violation of the rules of administration of our Church.

Vladyko, from the meeting with our clergy I see how low the authority of our church administration has fallen. Our Church begins to fall apart, the ferment among clergy gets stronger. I can do nothing but pray, be grieved and bother you and Vladyka Laurus. Regarding the latter, I heard that he is very seriously ill. Pretty soon I will die, but at present I still can appeal to others.

I hope that with your love for the Church you will help to put her back on the rails to rebirth.

The start of the decomposition, is not this a result of lack of attention to the instruction of Patriarch Tikhon of November 7/20, 1920? Will not the lack of attention to it also fall upon your responsibility?

Asking for your holy prayers I remain truly your brother in Christ,

✝ Bishop Gregory

Copy to Archbishop Laurus.

There was no response to this letter from either Archbishop Anthony or Archbishop Laurus.