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CONTENTS:

FIRST HIERARCH OF AUTONOMOUS RO CHURCH METROPOLITAN VALENTIN IN USA
PREPARATION OF HOLY CHRISM IN SUADAL
OPPRESSION OF CLERGY OF AUTONOMOUS RUSSIANCHURCH BY BRIANSK MP DIOCESE
SITUATION OF JERUSALEM PATRIARCH IRINEOS MORE AND MORE COMPLICATED
PASCHAL EPISTLE OF ALEXANDER, BISHOP OF BUENOS AIRES & SOUTH AMERICA
SOMEWHAT NEW IN THE UNIFICATION OF THE ROCOR(L) WITH THE MP
VICTORY DAY: THEIR JOYS AND OUR GRIEFS
MOSLEM MOSQUES IN MOSCOW
ABOUT 30 SATANIC SECTS IN MOSCOW
FALLING AWAY FROM CHRISTIANITY IN EUROPE
DARWIN'S THEORY ON TRAIL IN KANSAS
ROMAN CATHOLICS AND THE RUSSIAN "ORTHODOX CHURCH" OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE
SITUATION OF MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE IN UKRAINE
INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS IN NORFOLK
FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS

CHURCH NEWS
639 Center St.
Oradell, NJ 07649
Tel./Fax (201) 967-7684
E-mail: churchnews@optonline.net

FIRST HIERARCH OF AUTONOMOUS R O CHURCH METROPOLITAN VALENTIN IN USA

On May 5/18th 2005, the First Hierarchy of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church, the Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir Valentin arrived in the USA and was met at Kennedy Airport and went straight to the home of Protopresbyter Fr. Vladimir Shishkoff.

On Friday May 20th Vladyka visited Bishop Anthony (Grabbe).

On Saturday, the Metropolitan attended the vigil service in the home chapel of Fr. Vladimir and the following day, on Sunday May 9/22nd served the Divine Liturgy. Abbot Andrew (Maklakov) and Priest Fotios Roseboro concelebrated with the Metropolitan. Vladyka Metropolitan awarded him with epigonation (nabedrennik) and kamelavka. Fr. Fotios came from Virginia with his Matushka and three children.

Fr. Vladimir, despite not feel well assisted in singing with the choir.

After the Liturgy, Fr. Vladimir and his Matushka invited all present to a festive meal.

On Thursday, May 11/24th the Metropolitan went to the cemetery of Novo Diveyevo convent, where he served a panichida at the grave of Bishop Gregory (Grabbe) and the same day visited St. Barbara's Monastery, whose abbot is Archimandrite Ephraim. The Metropolitan was welcomed with the Russian traditional bread and salt and then inspected the monastery's premises and the new chapel.

PREPARATION OF HOLY CHRISM IN SUZDAL

Suzdal's Diocesan Herald # 7 of April 29th, 2005 reports: "In the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church for the first time since the Revolution the rite of preparing Holy Chrism was performed. On December 12/25th, 2004 the Synod of ROAC due to an inadequate supply of Holy Chrism decided to perform the preparation of Chrism during Holy Week, the traditional time for such. On Great Monday, with the blessing of the First Hierarchy, His Eminence Metropolitan of Suzdal and Vladimir, the Synod church of the Iveron Icon of the Holy Virgin, the cooking of the Chrism was begun which lasted without stop until Holy Wednesday. On Holy Thursday, before the Divine Liturgy, the newly prepared Chrism was solemnly carried by the clergy to the Tsar-Constantine Cathedral, where His Eminence, concelebrating with Theodore, Archbishop of Bjrsovo and Otradno and Archbishop of Sums and Aphasias Seraphim and the assembled clergy, consecrated it.

"The Catacomb Church in the USSR never prepared chrism but used the Holy Chrism which remained from pre-Revolutionary times.

"The Russian Church Abroad, after being driven out of the Soviet Union initially received Chrism from the Serbian Church, and after 1950, when the Synod of Bishops came to the USA, prepared Chrism in Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville. Until 1994 the AROC received Chrism from the ROCOR Synod of Bishops".

The Internet publication Vertograd # 518 adds that "Chrism is made from olive oil, wine and thickening tars (basically, stiraxa), and about 30 aromatic oils, herbs and roots, many of which grow only in the Mediterranean Sea or in the Near East. The necessary plants were provided to the AROC by the friendly assistance of a botanical garden".

OPPRESSION OF CLERGY OF AUTONOMOUS RUSSIAN CHURCH BY BRIANSK MP DIOCESE

Suzdal Diocesan Herald # 9 of May 19th, 2005, reports:

"The clergy of the persecuted Autonomous Russian Church in Briansk are being subjected to abuse, defamation and slander. At the end of 2004 three priests, Fathers Michael Doodarev, Victor Zemliakov and Oleg Yevseyev, left the Briansk Diocese of the MP, due to the transgressions which are happening there and have joined the Tula and Briansk Diocese of the AROC. But as is usual in such cases, the MP initiated severe pressure.

"After Fr. Michael filed the [usual] petition at the Justice Ministry to register the parish in the AROC, he was visited by a member of the Council for Religious Affairs of the governor of the Briansk Region, S. A. Gavrikov. He began by saying that he had received reliable filth about the AROC and her First-hierarchy, and then declared that although this Church is legally registered, it is 'outside the law, and is being attended to by the FSB' [Federal Security Service]. (All underlining by "Ch. N."). His main argument was that after leaving ROC MP and joining the 'American' Church these priests have joined those who long ago look to forces who want to destroy and dismember Russia by destroying the Russian Church, primarily in the USA, that they work for Z[bigne]v Brzezinski [the Polish Nat. Security advisor under President Carter] and so on. Seeing the unbending resolution of the priests, Gavrikov started to threaten them by saying if the clergymen do not 'rethink' their decision, then the FSB will take care of them. (previously known as the KGB). 'You do not understand whom you are up against,' the representative told them. 'Theofilact (a bishop of the MP) is well received in the President's offices, he will crush you. You should think about your children'. (Fr. Michael has three children and Fr. Victor four). He has promised them documents from the FSB and the old case against Metropolitan Valentin.

"Then everything went according to the usual scenario: the registering office would not accept for registration the standard by-laws while the local press started an energetic campaign of blackening and slander against the AROC and those clergymen. At the direction of the diocesan administration the local regional newspaper "Voshod" published several articles containing slander and insults of these priests of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church and her First

Hierarchy. When Fr. Michael went to the editorial office and demanded that his response to these crude attacks be printed, the Editor in Chief Beliavtseva categorically declared that the only legitimate Church is the Moscow Patriarchate, and therefore, the newspaper will support only it and will publish nothing else. After that Fr. Michael was shown to the door.

"The Briansk Diocese also was not asleep. On several occasions priests and lay people were sent to these priests with offers to return to the 'mother church' and promises of awards – gold crosses and the rank of archpriest. When this didn't work, the MP priests and Bishop Theofilact himself started to preach from the ambo about schismatics and their American masters, the enemies of Russia, stating that these priests were defrocked and damned. For his zeal, the rector of the church in the regional center Surozh was even promoted to the rank of archpriest. 'The Briansk Diocesan Herald' published slanderous articles. The Abbot of Svensk Monastery, Archimandrite Nicodim sent the local media a special letter for publication in which he stated that the former Priest-monk Oleg Yevseyev was looking for shelter in the Catacomb Church and pleaded that no one help him and in this way not strengthen the 'schism'.

"Very strong pressure was put on the chief of the regional administration V. N. Kovalenko to make him give up impartiality and join the bacchanalia of persecution by the God-displeasing MP clergy.

"Meanwhile, the Justice Ministry repeatedly returned the by-laws demanding they be corrected for punctuation. All the while, the priests were forced to go as far as 200 km, spending their own time and money. Nevertheless, by a miracle of God, in April of 2005 Fr. Michael managed to register his Church of the Holy Entrance into the Temple in the village of Dalitsy. All together, the registration cost the community 7,000 rubles – a very substantial amount of money for this persecuted parish.

But even so their troubles weren't over. The extreme pressure and intimidation were applied toward those priests who might have followed the example of Fr. Michael and Victor and left the MP. Gavrikov has declared that this registration of the AROC parish in Briansk – is the first and last and that he is declaring a quarantine in the Surozh region as a 'schismatic zone'. Meanwhile, the Briansk Diocese of the MP has some reason to be concerned: about 20 priests from this diocese are unlawfully suspended by Bishop Theofilact only because they could not pay on time the tax he has established. In Briansk Diocese, as also throughout the MP, corruption is the rule. The clergy is obliged to live by the principle: If you want to serve you pay, if you have not paid get out and go to the devil.

"Important support for the persecuted priests was given by the Deputy of the regional Duma S. A. Kurennaya who tragically perished in February 2005. She was helping morally and materially, publicly defending zealously the principle of equality of the powerful and the weak before the law and an unshakeable supporter of a secular state. "The agencies of the authorities, as well as the civil powers of the state in general in Russia, should not be gofers of the Moscow Patriarchate" – this was her principle. When the Briansk Diocese forwarded to the regional Duma a demand to stop the registration of parishes of the AROC in the Briansk Region and to do whatever possible to cut off its activity, she managed to explain the illegality and unconstitutionality of this demand. Because of that she had to suffer a three hour long conversation with the advisor to the governor for Religious Affairs Gavrikov and two officers of the FSB.

"At present there are in the Briansk Region 6 communities of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church and they are ministered to by three priests of the Briansk-Tula Diocese of the AROC. The churches are located in the private homes of the parishioners or the priests."

Irinarkh (Nonchin) is the Bishop of Briansk and Tula of the Autonomous Russian Orthodox Church.

SITUATION OF JERUSALEM PATRIARCH IRINEOS MORE AND MORE COMPLICATED

The Internet agency "Portal CreDO.RU" of April 15th, 2005 has reported that in the days approaching the feast of Holy Pascha, again there were conflicts between the Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarchate and the monophysite Armenian heretics about the matter of descent of the Holy Fire on the Sepulchre of Christ on Holy Saturday.

According to ancient tradition, the room with Christ's Grave is entered only by the Jerusalem Patriarch who afterwards hands burning candles to the Armenian patriarch.

In 2001, when Irineos I became the Patriarch of Jerusalem, he slightly changed the ritual: he not only forbade the Armenian to come out with the burning candles, he himself extinguished them. After that he has forbidden the Armenian to enter the so-called "kouvuklia", or Holy Sepulchre. As a result, the matter was presented to the Israeli court and it will be decided by the minister Nathan Scharansky, a former Soviet citizen, who is in charge of "matters concerning the Jerusalem Diaspora".

The bulletin "Ecumenical News International" of April 20th has reported that the Israeli government considered the election of Patriarch Irineos to be illegal and was insisting upon a reelection, although the Patriarch only learned of this from the local press. Only in 2004 did the Israeli government finally agree to recognize the legality of the election of the Patriarch!

The situation is very delicate for the Patriarch, because the Jerusalem Patriarchate is one of the biggest land owners in the Holy Land and even the Israeli Parliament is located on land which belongs to the Jerusalem Patriarchate.

The scandalous sale of the land near the Jaffa Gates to an Israeli citizen, living abroad, by the financial adviser to Patriarch Nikos Papadimos, who is already under the investigation by the courts – did not help the situation. Now, a whole number of clergymen in Athens are demanding the resignation of the Patriarch. The protesters in Greece were joined by Palestinians who have sent to Greece a similar demand. They have declared that: "All church property belongs to the

Greek Orthodox community. The Patriarch has no right, no jurisdiction and no legal mandate to sell it". The Palestinians went so far in their demand to remove the Patriarch that they have stated that they want to "expel the Greek Patriarch and appoint an Arab Patriarch".

The Arabic Internet agency ALJAZEERA.NET of May 7th reported that the Patriarchate's secretary Aris Tarchos has told journalists that, "We have completed the process of removing Irineos as Patriarch".

On Friday May 6th, on demand of 2/3 of administration of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Patriarch Irineos officially left his status, and packed his belongings under the watch of the Israeli police and left the patriarchal building.

The election of a new Patriarch was scheduled for the next week.

Those who were protesting against Patriarch Irineos believe that the sale of land to an Israeli business man was a sort of kick-back for the recognition of his election by the Israeli government.

However, the Patriarch who constantly denied to multi-million sale of land with two hotels on them, (by another version, he didn't sell it, but only "rented it" for 99 years) finally admitted that he gave the powers of attorney to his financial advisor Nikos Papadimos, who has disappeared and who is being sought by the police for stealing \$800 thousand of church money.

The Athens government believes that Patriarch Irineos secretly sold the church property and plans to start an official investigation.

At any rate, the ENI of April 29th reported that the Patriarch didn't show up for the Good Friday services and observers believe that this is a result of more pressure upon him to retire!

The well informed Internet agency Portal CReDO.RU on May 5th reported that 13 bishops and 25 archimandrites have issued an epistle in which it is declared that Patriarch Irineos I is deposed and that the "Orthodox Christians in Israel welcome it".

The epistle of the bishops and archimandrites was handed to the Patriarch, and as well forwarded to the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I because the authors requested that the Patriarch take part in the resolution of this conflict.

The Foreign Ministry of Greece has appealed to the Patriarch to "take responsibility" for the explosive scandal. The Patriarch until recently refused to retire, stating that he was elected to this post for life.

Despite the internationally known financial scandal in the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Patriarch Irineos still received the Holy Fire. However, the newspaper "The Jewish Press" of May 6th reported (without stating the date of the event) that the protests of Palestinians against the Patriarch have reached such a level that the police had to lead the Patriarch from the church during the service of the Divine Liturgy (Great Thursday?) "for his own safety", while another detachment of police kept the rebellious Palestinians under control.

According the agency Vertograd # 205, in order to resolve the crisis in the Jerusalem Patriarchate, on May 23rd a "Great Council" of official Orthodox Churches under presidency of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos was scheduled. At the same time it was reported that Patriarch Irineos, escorted by the Israeli police has entered the throne room for the Synod meeting with several hierarchs who sympathize with him.

"The New York Times" of May 25th reported that at the meeting of the "Great Council" in Constantinople, having representatives from Russian, Bulgarian, Greek and "other Orthodox nations" Patriarch Irineos was officially declared to be a "persona non grata" in the Church, but nevertheless, he refused to retire.

Patriarch Bartholomew I declared that "we wanted him to retire on his own, but unfortunately we were forced to make this decision".

PASCHAL EPISTLE OF ALEXANDER, BISHOP OF BUENOS AIRES & SOUTH AMERICA

The Paschal Epistle by His Grace Alexander, Bishop of Buenos Aires and South America was published in the magazine "Pravoslavnaya Rus" ("Orthodox Russia") and, judging from its contents, it has a historical and personal rather than theological character. At any case, during the long lasting history of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia this is the first such an "original" hierarchical Pascal Epistle. It extends to four full pages of the magazine, but the very last is dedicated to obvious propaganda for the benefit of the Moscow Patriarchate. In the first three pages are mentioned the dubious witness of contemporary "elders" of the fall of Communism and the future spiritual revival of Russia.

"When one observes the spiritual transfiguration," writes Bishop Alexander, "which is going on in Russia, one is convinced with all certainty that the power of the Resurrected One has not lessened in our time. Also in our days there are many Russian believers who lead a righteous life, there are many self-sacrificial pastors and wise archpastors of the Church. Of course, one can always find a dark side, but still, in Christ's Church there prevails the light of the Resurrected One.

"The Russian elders predicted the post-Communism spiritual renewal and not only of the Russian people but of the whole Church, which consists of the faithful people, presided over by the Church's hierarchy. (Underlined by Ch. N.). The principle of freedom does not allow us to separate these spheres into independent parts. Therefore we are extremely saddened by the attack by those Church politicians who dare to criticize the entire Russian Church by pointing out obvious or supposed failures of this or that of her pastors. There exist also such critics who dare to call the Church in Russia – is awful to repeat this – 'the whore church'. These blinded people do not realize that by this curse they abuse the Holy Spirit Himself! After all, in this Church there are miracles of myrrh-streaming, and new miraculous icons constantly appear...".

Among those critics "of the Holy Spirit" clearly the first that needs to be mentioned is Metropolitan Philaret the former First Hierarch of the ROCOR, whose relics are incorrupt, and who on many occasions publicly characterized the Moscow Patriarchate as "the whore church" and a "graceless society".

It seems that Bishop Alexander has never read the last book of the Bible and the predictions of the Holy Fathers about the last period of the world's existence, when antichrist will perform many false miracles and will even make fire come from heaven in order to confuse the remnant of Christians! However, Bishop Alexander believes that before the appearance of antichrist "Russia must revive, if but for a short period".

Then he writes "It is important to consider the negotiations about the rapprochement of the Russian Church Abroad and the Russian Church in the homeland". Of course, one is not to accelerate the rapprochement and, glory to God, the negotiations proceeding in a peaceful way with the consideration of the most important matters. Our main difficulty, and I apologize for repeating myself, is that we have very much complicated the matter of rapprochement. After finding out that between us there are no dogmatic differences and that the conflicts over canonical matters can be eliminated by brotherly discussions of them – in the first place liturgical communion should be restored – at least partially, "on a case by case basis" when the circumstances are favorable for it. After all, in the future, life itself will suggest what to do further in this direction".

His Grace Bishop Alexander, it seems, does not know such an elementary truth that "Eucharistic communion" can happen **not before** the existing problems are resolved, but only **as the result of their elimination!**

Liturgical communion has never existed between the ROCOR and the MP therefore it cannot be "restored."

It seems that Bishop Alexander so seldom visits his diocese that he is unfamiliar with the excellent attitudes of his clergy critical of the Moscow Patriarchate and which fully agree with the principles of many decades of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad.

If these clergymen in Bishop Alexander's opinion "commit criticism of the Holy Ghost" – then he, as their archpastor, should urgently take the appropriate canonical measures against these "transgressors". But the problem is that his clergymen understand something that is beyond the understanding of their archpastor and they see in the Moscow Patriarchate not a church, full of Grace, but a heretical assembly.

SOMETHING NEW IN THE UNIFICATION OF THE ROCOR(L) WITH THE MP

The connections of the former Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, now led by Metr. Laurus, with the Moscow Patriarchate are getting more frequent and more obvious.

Thus, the Internet agency Portal CReDO.RU of April 14th reports that "the representatives of the ROCOR(L) are participating in courses on pilgrimages organized by the Moscow Patriarchate". It reports that "over two weeks those who take the courses will get acquainted with the history and the contemporary situation of Orthodox pilgrimages, their organization, financial and legal matters".

Then we find out that the "the Holy Synod of the ROC MP, as early as last year, welcomed steps toward rapprochement with the ROCOR(L), recommending that the relations between the representatives of the both Churches be encouraged to widen. In particular, it was planned to make common pilgrimages, conferences, and create publishing activities".

The Internet agency "Mysli o Rossii" ("Thoughts about Russia") of April 10th, has reported on the recent Moscow "Worldwide Russian Council".

Among the participants: "Their Eminences Archbishops Mark of Berlin and Germany, President of the Committee for the Rapprochement with the Moscow Patriarchate, Hilarion of Australia and New Zealand, Kirill of San Francisco and Western America, as well as Archpriests George Larin and Alexander Lebedev".

On March 10th, on the official website of the MP there appeared the "Conciliar Statement of the Ninth Worldwide Russian People's Council". It is almost entirely dedicated to the "Great Victory in the Great War for the Homeland [the Soviet term for The Great Patriotic War or WW II]".

In festively celebrating the end of the Second World War the majority of Russians have totally forgotten that this was at a cost of 20 million Russian lives and it resulted in a half century of Communist slavery for almost half of Europe. We are led to believe that "Communism fell" more than a decade ago, but at the parade in honor of this victory we see again regiments marching under the Red flag, while the so-called "democratic" President Putin just recently and publicly called the fall of Communism to be "the greatest geo-political catastrophe".

In this way the representatives of the ROCOR(L) who participated in this Council have been celebrating the victory of Communism.

VICTORY DAY: THEIR JOYS AND OUR GRIEFS

by Serge Suvorov

During the past Great Lent, one of the main TV channels reported that several provincial priests were preparing a gift for the veterans for Victory Day. The priests were editing a DVD with military songs which they themselves performed. It seems that the correspondent felt the combination of cassocks, guitars and microphones to be strange (all this happened, I repeat, during Great Lent) – but the ministers of the cult quickly explained that the Great War for the Homeland [The

Great Patriotic War or WW II] was "a holy war, the war of prayers". And this means that they are on the right path and are doing what they should be doing. In front of the camera they performed even the well-known song "Sometimes I feel that the soldiers who didn't come back from the bloody fields, didn't come to rest sometimes in our soil, but have turned into white cranes". Such is an Orthodox reincarnation... Unfortunately, in our times in general it is not customary to think about the meaning of words, actions or symbols. It is easier for people to repeat the old lie than to break with tradition. So the MP long ago included May 9th in the church calendar and never stops praising "the union of all the peoples of the country in the face of the aggressor" and "the victory of the powers of light over the powers of dark." "Patriarch" Alexis even believes that the common people sacrificed themselves "...for the homeland and her spiritual freedom". Well, spiritual liberty is, for sure, a holy matter. It seems that the MP has even conquered it! On our part we should mention that Stalin and the Soviet regime were praised by the absolutely "spiritually free" church hierarchs.

But no matter whether one calls the victory holy, her cultus comes more and more to resemble a pseudo-religion. It has its own "saviours" – Zhoukov and Stalin. They are forgiven all their crimes, because supposedly, without them the country would not have been able to win, or in general exist. The sacred texts of this religion describe great miracles. For example, one of the Moscow newspapers reported about two soldiers who destroyed 120 Germans with an ice-axe... In general, the military "hagiography" is very rich. It was composed during the era of the guidance of political advisors, and often one finds invented personages (like the 28 Panialovtsy). Also, the followers of this new "religion" keep a sort of holy relics: the remains of the "unknown soldier" under the Kremlin Wall, over whom, instead of a vigil light there blazes the flame of the "everlasting" satanic pentagram.

The sermons of this religion without God are very complicated: "We exist only because we have won. And if this is so, then the victory is ours and the war is ours". In these words there is not a simple pride in some else's labor, in them is a subconscious assurance that every one participated in the heroic deeds of the forefathers. Previously this was noticeable among the military (something one can understand), but now it is fast spreading far and wide. And it is not important that the bones of the victors still lie bleaching in the woods, that the majority of those who happen to be alive, in their old age are struggling to survive, that some 10 years ago the prisoners of war were officially considered to be traitors... For the living positive emotions are needed and the anniversary date gives a lot of reasons to have them. Someone on this day gets so enthusiastic that it seems he fled in order to attack. When he returns – at least give him a decoration! Probably, this explains the strange fashion of putting on George ribbons [the St. George Decoration is from pre-Revolutionary times] with which the people have decorated their cars, clothing and hair. But the order's ribbon is a sign of a particular reward, and it cannot be interpreted in other ways. But what can one say about it – even shiny placards assured the residents of the capital that "grandfather's victory – is my victory". Certainly such were the thoughts on May 9th of the youngsters who were marching in the streets in quasi-military uniforms and the school children from the youth movement "Nashi" ("Ours") whom the veterans gave the "relay batons" made of old empty gun cases... The proud words "Russia's glory", pronounced by the President from the podium on Red Square, certainly resonated in many hearts. Modesty is in general not fashionable... And all around there were exclamations: "Glory to our people!" How familiar it all is... Only, where did the word "Soviet" disappear to?!

What can one do: except for May 9th it is true, there are no common ideas, dates, around which the government can begin unifying the people. It is another question to ask: is it possible for true Christians to participate in such festivities? If one says: yes, this is my war, this is my victory – then immediately follows questions about the responsibility for the start of the war, how it was conducted and how it ended. We know that it was not on June 22nd [1941, the date of Hitler's initiation of Operation Barbarossa – the invasion of the Soviet Union] that the Red Army entered into the fight. But can one today, with a clear conscience be happy with the "liberation march" into Poland, Bessarabia, and Bukovina, the "counter-attack" upon Finland? And the occupation of the Baltic countries? Was this not cruelest of terrors, organized in 1940, which forced the residents in a less than a year's time to greet the Germans as liberators? [The author is referring here to the events committed under the Nazi-Soviet Pact of Ribbentrop and Molotov which allowed Hitler to invade Poland, start the War while Stalin grabbed everything east of that.] Can we forget about the military deeds of the SMERSH [(short for *SMERT' SHpionam* (СМЕРТЬ ШПИОНАМ), or "Death to Spies") the name of counterintelligence internal security agencies in the Soviet Union formed during the Great Patriotic War, to secure the rear of the active Red Army, and on the front to arrest "traitors, deserters, spies, and criminal elements"] which was taken up by the Hitlerites as an example of a barbaric way to wage war? Can one with peace of mind sit at the table with the "guerillas" who, at the direction by the Party, provoked the enemy to punish peaceful residents? And finally, what is the price for "liberation" of the Eastern Europe, where until now, for some reason, the "liberators" are more hated than the occupiers? Then there is the other matter of those who decided to fight Communism at any price, even on the side of Germany. Hundreds of thousands of people had the possibility to decide personally whose dictatorship was worse. "Let us reckon with Stalin, then we will deal later with the Germans" – we used to say at that time. And the columns of refugees (with whom the Germans in most cases sympathized) leaving the Soviet paradise stretching toward the West, also didn't testify to the general wish of the people to defend the "Soviet homeland". The blood of these people, who were handed over to the Soviets for execution [after the War], can never be washed from the clothes of the Western "democracies". The majority of our compatriots who served in the Wehrmacht, had never been Nazis. Simply, for them the defense of the homeland, houses and relatives – was the struggle against Stalin. But this sacrifice was easily offered by the Old World to the most bloodthirsty tyrant of all times to persuade him to limit his winnings to half of the Europe. At present there is a desire to put up a monument to

participants of the Yalta agreement, but the Orthodox should never forget the price paid for it by their brethren who dared to oppose the godless Communism.

In this jubilee year we often hear the appeals to forget all that was evil and be joyful about the victory over the Nazis. But the Communists and their heirs have forgotten nothing and forgiven nothing! That's why until present, the participants of anti-Bolshevik struggle are considered to be traitors and those who hung them on iron hooks – heroes. No one is remembering in these “anniversary” days of the white officers and Kazaks [Ukrainian peasant farmers] who were shot, about the children, whom their mothers threw under the tracks of British tanks and into the fast streams of the Drava River, only to save them from the Red hell, about the Serbian Chetniks, who with the Titoites on May Days filled the Bosnian mass graves... But we cannot peacefully shake hands with the Chekists who in Leningrad were destroying the secret communities of Josephites [members of the Catacomb Church, Ch. N.], we cannot embrace the “Allies” who overturned the altar in the portable church during the extradition of the Cossaks from Lienz [Austria]. The Blood of Christ, spilled at that time from the chalice on the ground, will never let one say, that on May 9th “the powers of good and light have won over the powers of darkness”. [This refers to a terrible incident in the repatriation after the War in accordance with the Yalta Agreement by the British and American forces at gunpoint. All of those who survived were either shot or sent to the Gulag upon their arrival back in the Soviet Union.]

It is considered that on this day we are supposed to be joyful because the country was delivered from the threat of annihilation. This assertion is at least not controversial. But it can be quietly discussed only when the deeds of Communism will be put onto the exact scales, and Femida would take from the first one, the sword which fell there by accident. At any rate, the triumph of Communism meant for Russia only new grief and more blood. As was expected, the homeland under the leadership of the Bolsheviks didn't gain happiness and prosperity.

In general, Victory Day is an extremely politicized holiday. Inevitably we should compare it with the Patriotic War of 1812. At that time, the expelling of Napoleon from Russia became a national holiday. It was honored by church services, and as distinguished from May 9th, it had a Christian content: there was gratitude to the Lord for saving us from disaster. Then it was understood by all: the enemy was beaten, and the population was not interested in the politics and problems of the Holy Alliance (the alliance of Prussia, Austria and Russia against Napoleon). Now, let someone explain: what was mostly motivating the Soviet commanders, who were destroying hundreds of thousands of soldiers by incompetently storming the Zeelov Heights, Breslau, doomed Berlin – was it the defense of the Homeland, or a hunt for honors and a competition with the Allies? The German army group “Kurland” for the last time was trying to win on the morning of May 8th. The attack was costly, but it was beaten back, and at 2 PM the enemy quietly surrendered!

But today, when seeing the soldiers marching in Red Square under the Red rags with Lenin's portraits with cannibalistic slogans, one grows cold involuntarily. After all, these people believe that this is their war, their victory and all connected with it is sacred. But the Christians have real sacred objects. And while the lie is celebrating, while “victory” in the eyes of statesmen justifies all crimes, and all victims, we simply cannot be joyful on this day. The lie of Sergius' “Declaration” was built in the similar manner. If all that were requested from the Church was only to sympathize with one's “civil homeland” – no one would have demanded any kind of oaths of loyalty. But the Chekists really wanted us to rejoice with the godless government. But, can we share all their joys and sorrows? May the Lord preserve us from descending to the same level with the persecutors of Christians!

MOSLEM MOSQUES IN MOSCOW

The agency Portal CReDO.RU of May 23rd reports that in the regions around Moscow, despite four mosques already in existence, an additional eleven more will be built!

The Moslem representative in Russia has announced that “We are planning to built 11 mosques in eleven regions of Moscow, and in this task we will need the help of the Muslim world, including Iran. According to this Moslem, “this would assist in increasing religious culture and eliminate ignorance and illiteracy in the religious sphere. The central mosque will be built on the Prospect of Peace [or world the old fashioned orthography would be very useful in this case]. It is projected that the new central mosque will be twice as big as the former one.

It would be interesting to find out how many Moslems now live in Orthodox Moscow, such that 11 new mosques are needed to satisfy their religious needs.

ABOUT 30 SATANIC SECTS EXIST IN MOSCOW

An Internet website Mir Religii (The World of Religions) on March 25th reported that at sessions of the Moscow Duma (city council) the president of the Committee for Health and Preservation of Public Health, Ludmila Stebenkova announced that at the present time there are some 30 satanic sects in Moscow.

According to her statement “Right now in Moscow there are about 30 satanic groups with 2,000 members. These groups fall into about 20 different categories”.

Stebenkova also warned that she believes it is necessary to work out measures against such disruptive movements in collaboration with religious organizations and the law-enforcement agencies, “so that this problem later would not fall on us like an avalanche”.

The participants of these lectures have established that there exist many laws which prohibit the destruction of historical and cultural monuments, the desecration of bodies of the deceased person, the cruel treatment of animals, hooliganism, vandalism and organizations of "an extremist character".

FALLING AWAY FROM CHRISTIANITY IN EUROPE

The media more and more often reports on the falling away from Christianity. Thus, "The New York Times" of April 19th published an extensive article with the title "Europeans Fast Falling Away from Church" with the sub-title "Crisis of the Faith".

The article is mainly concerned with the Roman-Catholics in Europe, and in particular in France.

A catholic seminary in the suburbs of Paris is actually almost empty. The recently deceased Pope John Paul II was in 1980 in the seminary of St. Sulpice and at that time, sharply criticized Catholics who have en mass deserted their church. Right now in this seminary only 52 seminarians are enrolled, while just a year ago the number was twice that much.

The Pope has on numerous occasions visited European countries trying to persuade Catholics to return to their church, but he was greatly disappointed: among Catholics only 10% Dutch, 12% French, 15% Germans and Austrians, 18% Spaniards and 25 % Italians go to church every week. This obvious falling away by Europeans even has gotten the name "The European Apostasy". When addressing the French people, the Pope exclaimed: "Eldest daughter of the Church, what have you done with your baptism?".

The dean of the seminary, Rev. Jean Luc Vedrine has told a reporter: 'We would welcome more than 200 seminarians if they wanted to come', but "today there are young people in France who have never seen a priest".

In 1966 566 priests were ordained in France and this year only 90!

In comparison with European Catholics, the American Catholics seem to be more zealous, although they are much more ready to accept various sexual deviations.

The Dutch, including also France, Denmark, Belgium, Norway, Suisse and Finland, already recognize same sex marriages in one way or another. Some countries, including Spain, Belgium, Germany, Swiss and Denmark have legalized the euthanasia of hopeless patients by doctors.

The growth in the number of Christians on the European continent is attributed to immigrants from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Philippines, but not only of Catholics, but of Pentecostal groups.

The magazine "U. S. News & World Reports" of May 30th 2005 in an article "European, not Christian" with the sub-title "An aggressive secularism sweeps the Continent", also devoted two pages to this subject.

DARWIN'S THEORY ON TRIAL IN KANSAS

"The New York Times" of May 6th has reported that in Kansas there was a meeting regarding the matter of teaching Darwin's evolution theory about the origin of the world in the schools. This is already the second such hearing in court. The last was in 1999, when the state Board of Education demanded that besides the Darwin theory of evolution the opposite theory be included, called Creationism, in other words, the belief in the divine creation of the world.

The conservative members of the Board of Education simply ignored the order of the supreme educational administration and the Darwin theory was simply omitted. Because of that the following year opponents of the evolution theory were fired from their jobs.

Now, 6 years later, this matter has been raised again and there is the hope that this demand would be approved this summer, because there are 6 clerks in the state administration at present who believe in the anti-Darwin theory. A similar situation has developed in Ohio.

It is interesting that defenders of Darwinism have refused to testify at the court hearings on this matter, which were arranged by the State Board of Education. The defenders of the Darwin theory, however, sent their lawyer to this hearing, who tried to question the Darwin opponents, but he was obviously afraid that a critique of Darwinism might instill in the students the idea that God is the Creator of the Universe. In Alabama and Georgia, a law has been passed that teachers are allowed during classes to criticize Darwin.

ROMAN CATHOLICS AND THE RUSSIAN "ORTHODOX CHURCH" OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

The relations between Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican are of an extremely double-faced character: on one side, the Moscow Patriarchate is very much interested in close relations with the Roman Catholics (being especially concerned about their usual propagation of their heresies, and this is connected with loss in the western part of Russia of many churches and parishes already seized by the Uniates), and on the other – not to reveal their political cards to their own parishes in the homeland.

For the funeral of Pope John Paul II the Moscow Patriarchate sent a delegation, headed by Metropolitan Cyril ("Mikhailov" in KGB) of Smolensk, head of the Foreign Relations Department of the MP, who the very next day was received by the new Pope, Benedict XVI.

The magazine published in Rome "Inside the Vatican" on April 27th reported that Patriarch Alexis has already stated that "Pope Benedict XVI enjoys great authority, has a broad outlook and a powerful intellect and is fearlessly defending

traditional Christian values from the people who are trying to depart from them, trample them under foot or disregard them. This has won the new Pope respect in the Christian world, including in the Orthodox Church”.

After the meeting of the Pope with Metropolitan Cyril, the latter said that “both sides have expressed a willingness to create interrelations”.

Metropolitan Cyril has informed the media that he has known the present Pope as Cardinal Ratzinger since 1974 and that he is “open for dialogue”, but at the same time the Moscow Patriarch has also said that a visit of the Pope to Russia is not to be expected soon, and that it would be possible only if the Pope will show in this matter sufficient desire and “tact”.

At the audience of Metropolitan Cyril, the new Pope sent through him a “brotherly greeting” to the Moscow Patriarch, and has “expressed agreement about the necessity to develop the collaboration between both Churches in order to defend Christian values”.

Pope Benedict has stressed the importance of the Eastern theological and liturgical traditions and expressed his respect for the Russian Orthodox Church, her mission and ministry.

SITUATION OF MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE IN UKRAINE

The situation of the Moscow Patriarchate in the so-called “Ukraine” is getting more and more complicated. Beside it there also exists a “Kievan Patriarchate”, headed by the defrocked former Metropolitan Philaret Denisenko, but now there also claims on part of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew!

The newspaper “Ruskii Vestnik” (“Russian Herald”) in # 8 issue published an article by Yury Yegorov, President of the “St. Alexander Nevsky Brotherhood, the Russian Movement in Ukraine”.

A recently elected president of Ukraine Yushchenko (the Western media believes that the election came about with the assistance of the USA) on April 8th, because of death of the Pope, declared the “entire nation is mourning throughout the whole land.” Theoretically Youshchenko is Orthodox!

The author of this article, not without reason, complains that the dead Pope served 4 masses in Kiev, “the mother of Russian cities”, despite protests by the Moscow Patriarchate. The author writes that, “The ignoring of the rights of the Orthodox people of Ukraine by the Catholics has gotten stronger over the past few years. The Roman Catholics and Uniates have been practicing active proselytizing in Ukraine at the end of the 80’s the beginning of 90’s, when three Orthodox dioceses were crushed in the Lvov, Ivano-Frankov and Ternopol Regions. In Kiev, the Uniates illegally were given three, from time immemorial Russian, churches... The declaration of mourning in whole territory of Ukraine in connection with the death of the head of the Vatican, not only in the three dioceses with a majority Catholic population, documents very well the annihilation of the myth of the Orthodoxy of President Yushchenko. Ignoring the religious and historical tradition of the majority of his own people he has announced the mourning for a head of the Catholic Church, which is the main tool of the West against Orthodox Ukraine”.

Regarding the relations with the Ecumenical Patriarch, here also the matter is still boiling. According to information published by the same Herald from the publication “RIA News” the “religious situation in Ukraine has become more strained in connection with the canonical pretenses upon this territory on part of the Ecumenical Patriarch, which was expressed by his representative, the Archbishop of Scopellos Vsevolod.

“The Mother-Church – the Constantinople Patriarchate (as is stated in an official declaration by Archbishop Vsevolod) – believes that her daughter, the Moscow Patriarchate has a canonical territory, which existed before 1686. The submission of Kievan Metropolia to the Moscow Church was carried out by Patriarch Dionisii without the agreement and affirmation of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Great Church [i.e. Constantinople] of Christ”!

However, a member of the Foreign Relations Dept. of the MP, Archpriest Nicholas Balasjov has declared that, “The Ukrainian schismatics in their efforts to sow disagreements between the Constantinople and the Moscow Patriarchates, have also previously insisted that, supposedly, the Constantinople Orthodox Church considers Ukraine to be her canonical territory”. But, according to his words, namely to stop these misunderstandings, the Sacred Synod of the Constantinople Patriarchate on August 2000, published the official declaration in which these fabrications are called “completely false” and the reprints from these publications – “are based on false information”.

Besides, according to Archpriest Balashov, Patriarch Bartholomew himself in 1993 officially declared that the “Ecumenical Patriarch acknowledges only one canonical metropolitan of Kiev – Vladyka Vladimir, Metropolitan of Kiev and All Ukraine”.

But, not trusting the new version of Archbishop Vsevolod, the Moscow Patriarchate has questioned Constantinople regarding this matter, but an answer has not yet been received.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS IN NORFOLK

An internet publication, on part of EducationGuardian.co.uk dated April 11th has composed a whole series of instructions for teachers in Norfolk, England. According to this instruction, teachers are to avoid several terminologies. To start with, the ancient term “Holy Ghost” is to be replaced with the newer one, “Holy Spirit”, because the ‘Holy Ghost’ sounds “too spooky”. This corresponds to our Orthodox concept of unclean spirits.

One is also to avoid mentioning the "Old Testament" because it makes the Bible sound old fashioned! Also, the mentioning of "Body of Jesus" or the "Blood of Jesus" is not to be used because "it suggests a cannibalistic consumption of human flesh".

One is also not to refer to the "Wailing Wall" in Jerusalem with that term because "it implies that Jewish prayer is negative and moaning".

The secretary of the National Union of Teachers, Tony Mulgrew said: "I just think it's a bit daft to suddenly change the name of the Old Testament. They shouldn't be messing about with the names of things. It's modernism gone mad".

Philip May, head teacher of Costessey High School in Norwich said: "If a few words are no longer accessible to young people, I would rather lose the word than those people".

Each school in the county will get this instruction. A member of the Norwich city council Howard Cooke said that, "It isn't an easy subject in this modern age to teach several religions to young people".

When speaking of Moslems one is not to associate them with terrorism.

The instructions also mention several Buddhist and Hindu sects.

FROM THE UNPUBLISHED WORKS: Letter of Bishop Gregory to Archbishop Anthony of Geneva, December 5/18 1990

Your Eminence, dear Vladyko!

In the pre-holiday period the postal service in America goes crazy, especially the regular mail, which does not follow any regularity. Therefore, just in case, I want to greet you with approaching holidays of Christ's Nativity and the Epiphany, wishing you will be able at that time to improve your health, which I hear it is not too good. May the Lord give you strength to perform the consecration of Fr. Valentin, which is so necessary for our affairs in Russia which the devil all the time tries to put the brakes to.

Of all hierarchs I have come to know him most intimately and he insistently has been asking me to come and participate in his ordination, promising to send me the ticket for it. You know that I do not move freely, but nevertheless, I have promised him to comply with his request. A trip to Belgium at present does not cost too much and it is easier for me than going to Russia during the holiday frosts.

You must have heard about the changes in the Synod planned by the Metropolitan. As often happens now, one cannot disagree with the need for changes, but it is much more difficult to find good replacements.

If on your part there is no objection to my appearance in your diocese for the ordination of Fr. Valentin, I fear that my relatives and guardians will not let me go on this long trip by myself without Maria [his younger daughter, "Ch. N."]. I hope, she will find in Brussels a place to stay and will not be burdensome.

I will be happy to see you, if with the God's help and your agreement I could come to the consecration.

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

+ Bishop Gregory

Letter of Bishop Gregory to Vasili I. Alexeyev of December 28th/ January 10th, 1990

Dear Vasily Ivanovich!

Thank you for your holiday greetings, which on my part I return also to Ludmila Vassilievna. May the Lord keep you from all the disorders which will start with the beginning of the "New Age" long in preparation, about which the President now speaks.

Thank you for information that you have sent out the anniversary anthology to people necessary. My article in it was met with good response. Vladyka Laurus has agreed to publish it as a separate book, but is slow to get it out, referring to technical reasons which I do not grasp due to my technical backwardness.

In Russia, our principles meet with sympathy from many and the number of our parishes is gradually growing. It would be considerable, even without the dragging out the ordination of Suzdal's archimandrite. The other two bishops in Russia are of the catacomb mind-set. One of them, occasionally shows up, but very undecidedly, and the only one (besides another in Siberia who is waiting for ordination) due to the thoughtlessness of some of our hierarchs is stalled. Yet, in Suzdal our diocesan center is registered. And of the members of the MP hierarchy, not one has appeared ready to join us. The number of priests, sympathetic with us (not to mention the lay people) is quite a few, but still, it is hard to expect the creation over there of more than "the small flock". Certainly you are right regarding the knowledge of history, not to speak about the Faith over there, and the extreme lack of funds to take care of even a small amount of the needs. This is why I with an interest wait for coming out and feel sorry that you are working in such a distance from the historical life in Russia.

It is amazing, how much ignorance of history the Communists have managed to instill. And it seems that they have managed to considerably re-educate the hierarchy. After all, not one bishop from Patriarchate in all this time has expressed an understanding of our positions. That is why it is so important to have in Russia our own episcopate. And time is short. [Thus] fairly soon there might be a clear reestablishing of former policies.

Unfortunately, some of our hierarchs do not take into consideration such dangers. Therefore, they have missed two convenient opportunities to ordain Archimandrite Valentin. Now we have to wait for him to travel to Western Europe. Father Alexander Kisselev, unfortunately rather openly and principally sits between two stools, keeping up his former closeness with Patriarch Alexis from his youth. How will it affect the Conference?

Greetings to Ludmila Vasilievna and my blessing to both of you.

+ Bishop Gregory

Letter of Bishop Gregory to Vasili I. Alexeyev of August 24th/September 6th, 1991

Dear Vasili Ivanovich!

Thank you for your letter of September 1st. The Patriarch was indeed in hiding, but when it became known that the putsch had failed then he surfaced. While they could not find him, at Yeltsin's request from the balcony a meal was served by three of our priests.

I am sending you my article about the Patriarch, which reveals how un-Orthodox a character he has. I have sent it to Russia. I hope someone will be able to publish it there.

For quite a while I wanted to write this, but was waiting for Alexis to speak up, and he did. After all that he said, even about the New Martyrs is simply stupid. And Fr. Alexander [Kisselev, "Ch. N."] got confused at the meeting with émigrés in Moscow and the Metropolitan has suspended him. I write a separate article about our sad-peacemakers in the clergy ranks. Besides Kissilev there is also [Fr. Metrophan Znosko, later made a bishop!] and [Fr. Victor] Potapov.

Certainly, for Russians "peacemakers" are always attractive, but from time immemorial they exposed heretics and did not enter into rapprochements and agreements with them.

Our parishes in Russia have gradually gotten organized even in Diocese of Suzdal and Far East. Vladyka Valentin is still here, expecting the arrival of other bishops from Russia. Unfortunately, with Bishop Lazarus it is not that simple. He listens to bad advisers and sometimes is inclined to do stupid things.

It seems, that our conference will not happen. Fr. Alexander spends most of his time in Russia now, where he is comforted with his closeness with the Patriarch, with whom he had close relations in his youth.

It is too late to change our policies in Russia, especially since a secret bishop has surfaced and there were ordained two more. But we have a challenge -- their cooperation, which is not very easy to regulate.

Where your article will be printed is not that important. It can even be in "Novoye Russkoye Slovo" ["New Russian Word", a Russian language Jewish newspaper, "Ch. N."]. Will they reprint it in Russia? Where? I don't know. There might be a shake down of the publisher. I do not know where to get the book by Fr. Herman [Ivanov-Trinadzaty, "Ch. N."]. I enclose his address.

May the Lord preserve you and your family,

+ Bishop Gregory

Letter by Bishop Gregory to N. P. Churilov of December 19th/January 1, 1993

Dear Nikolai Pavlovich;

Thank you for the holiday greeting. In return I greet you on the feast of Christ's Nativity and Epiphany and wish that they bring you joy. Also I wish you all the very best in the approaching New Year. May you familiarize with the local situation and residents, for example my niece (Sophia) Schidlovsky and her husband. They live in Glen Head. They might have a chance to travel to New York and from it, there might be some one going. Close by there live some of their children, my nephews, more youthful in age. At any rate, try to get in touch with people connected with me. I do not know what is your physical situation and what means you have for traveling.

I myself am reaching the age of 91 and unfortunately am not too sharp. I not walk too well; they try not to let me travel alone, which is rather hard on my relatives, who are also not in their first years of youth. Still, after Pascha I plan to go to the Council in France. My ears do not work too well: I hear only with a hearing aid. In other words, I am not in invalid status just because of the stubbornness of my character, but at the same time I am a burden to others.

And in the world (and this should affect our situation) the "beginning of illnesses" is more obvious, as it is described by the Evangelists. In Russian only one of our hierarchs is active. He has 43 parishes, and the other two still don't know how to break with the catacomb situation. Parallel with the activity of this one bishop [Valentin, "Ch. N."] the work of his enemies is growing (obviously Party agents) who are trying to spread slanderous rumors about him. Just now our priest came from Russia, escorting a charity shipment. But I will see probably him after the first days of the holidays. He has just informed me that he has returned and is planning to visit me.

Recently a parish in Zheleznovodsk joined us with two priests.

There is information that my books in Russia are enjoying great success, but are already sold out.

That's all I can tell you at present, but in general there is internal fermentation going on in the Patriarchate, but whether will it bring good results is hard to say.

May the Lord's blessing be with you,

+ Bishop Gregory