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METROPOLITAN VITALY ABOUT THE LAST COUNCIL OF BISHOPS OF THE ROCOR

The bulletin "Vertograd-Inform" (published in Russia) in issue # 7 (40) for July published an interview given by Metropolitan Vitaly on May 16th, 1998, to Radio Canada International .

In reply to a question about the main subject before the Council, Metropolitan Vitaly answered that it was the "hot issue" of ROCOR's relationship with the Moscow Patriarchate.... "This is the main thing, because among our people there are those who are for rapprochement, others against, but the majority, of course, is against. Among the clergy there is a lack of understanding, a lack of knowledge.

We have decreed the following. Not on the episcopal level, nor on the parochial level, nor on the level of monasteries may there be any dialogue with the Moscow Patriarchate. This is our decree... In addition there were minor issues, which always exist, but which are of little interest. There was one other matter -- the election of two candidates to the episcopacy. One for Siberia and another for Argentina."

Further, the Metropolitan noted that Archimandrite Alexander (Mileant) was appointed for Argentina and for Siberia was elected Archimandrite Bartholomew (former chief of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem). "He has been elected for Siberia and soon will be consecrated here."

The consecration to the episcopacy of Archimandrite Alexander has already taken place, but the consecration of Archimandrite Bartholomew is still "up in the air." The candidate decided to refuse the appointment to Siberia, as he is a former citizen of the USSR, although now a Canadian citizen, and his role in defense of the Monastery at Abraham's Oak in the Holy Land is sufficiently known that he fears persecution by the Moscow Patriarchate in very the remote conditions of provincial Siberia. It is expected that he might be appointed to Chile.

When answering the reporter's question about how the Council of Bishops reacted to dialogues of the Diocese of Germany with the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Vitaly answered: "Very simple. In our official address to the faithful of our Church we said: the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad **has absolutely no dialogue with the Moscow Patriarchate. And about Archbishop Mark -- this is simply a personal accident within our Church. It is not some rapprochement of the two Churches; it is just a minor case within our internal life. We even did not mention it in our address. Who knows what can happen and what kind of jumps and leaps can happen within our midst internally, by single priests and even by hierarchs? This is a private matter and is of concern to no one(?!). To be sure, the agitation grew to such proportions among our parishioners. But in our address to all believers it is clearly stated that we have had no dialogue. And Mark -- this is our internal matter, we have settled it and that is all.**" (All emphasis by "Ch.N.")

The reporter expressed interest in hearing a reaction to these opinions of Archbishop Mark, to which the Metropolitan Vitaly assured him that "he has fully agreed, all hierarchs submit to the Council. He started it all and now has to finish."

Not without reason "Vertograd Inform" recalled an interview which Archbishop Mark gave to Radio "Radonezh." It was published by "Church News" in # 6 (73) the June-July issue and it makes it quite obvious that Archbishop Mark has no thought of ceasing his dialogues. He only believes that there is a need "*to strive to transfer the discussions onto Russian soil.*" (from an interview given to the magazine "Vozvrashcheniye" ["Return"] # 11) and in another interview given by him to Radio "Radonezh" soon **after** the closing of the Council: "*...for the time being... to abstain in some manner and very carefully bring to common knowledge information about what is actually going on.*"

It seems that this policy has been accepted by the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR (since 1986) and the newspaper "Rus Pravoslavnaya" ("Orthodox Russia") in the article by G. Alexandrov, entitled "Sad Parallels" quite justifiably remarks that "the secrecy of the Councils of Bishops of the ROCOR, about which it is practically impossible to obtain even the slightest first hand information, and which painfully remind one of the old Soviet times of general secrecy. Say what you like, but nowadays the Moscow Patriarchate today is much more open to any one who is interested in her matters than the Synod Abroad with its evident unwillingness to share information about what happens within the ROCOR with any one."

The Metropolitan tries in vain to present the dialogues of the Diocese of Germany with the Moscow Patriarchate as some unexpected and merely private "jumps and leaps" of Archbishop Mark. The Epistle of the Council of Bishops of 1994, quite clearly states that "the time has come to seek living links with all parts of the Russian Orthodox Church, separated due to historical circumstances." In another words, Archbishop Mark does not exaggerate when he insists, that he received a blessing from the Council of Bishops to start his negotiations with the Moscow Patriarchate.

When explaining to the journalist why he personally removed Archbishop Mark from membership in the Synod, Metropolitan Vitaly clarified this by saying that now he is again a member of the Synod. "Everything has calmed down and everything is back in place. I have told him: **You have erected a huge enterprise and we cannot destroy it. The further it goes -- the more difficult it will be.** He has told me: I do submit myself to the Council. I am a conciliar bishop."

The reporter also raised a question about the motion to call a diaspora-wide Council in 2000 and asked if this matter had been discussed.

Metropolitan Vitaly answered positively, but... "There is still time. You see, in order to convene such a diaspora-wide Council, there must be among the clergy and lay-people candidates for membership in such a future Council, who would be people churchly-minded enough not to **just sit there and listen, but to step forward**. There are very few such. **I simply do not know whom to select from among the lay people**. During the last Council there were very many churchly-minded people, who lived within the Church, understood the Church, understood her teaching. And now there are very few such among the lay-people. Among the white (married) clergymen, who have to participate, maybe one can find qualified people who would be able to be participants of such an diaspora-wide Council."

In former times, the delegates for participation in the diaspora-wide Councils were elected by the parishes and approved by the local Diocesan administrations, so, Metropolitan Vitaly does not have to be concerned with the selection of delegates. A Preliminary Committee would only set the number of delegates from each diocese, but in no way influence who was chosen.

It seems that when Metropolitan Vitaly gave his interview to Radio Canada International, unfortunately he either wrongly evaluated the interview Archbishop Mark had held with the newspaper-radio "Radonezh", or, was not up to date about it and therefore naively believes that Mark will cease his "discussions" and that "there is still time" to prepare plans for convening a diaspora-wide Council. This is exactly what Archbishop Mark and his collaborators will find useful (who will feel there is shortage of time for plans for a Council they conceived of long time ago) and they will arrive with appropriate reports, agendas and even with their own carefully selected clergy and lay people, while Metropolitan Vitaly for some reason does not see any faithful among the Church clergy and lay-people to counterbalance them! And yet the last Council of Bishops demonstrated that not only many clergymen revealed themselves, but also lay-people, to whom Church matters are an integral part of their lives.

ILLNESS OF BISHOP DANIEL

His Grace Daniel Bishop of Erie, known for his service in the cause of preserving the Old Rite, served the Liturgy on the Feast Sts. Peter and Paul in Erie, PA, but the next day, after suffering a serious stroke, was rushed to the hospital.

Temporarily Vladyka lost his ability to speak and move the left side of his body. And only with the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos did he return home. His ability to speak has returned, but he can walk only with the help of a cane. Probably, a long period of therapy will be required, before he will be able to serve again. Vladyka Daniel is a very approachable person in character and, according to the rector of the Erie parish Fr. Pimen Simon, he will be delighted to hear from people. His telephone number is: (814) 452-0845.

"AS THE RECTOR PERMITS"

The church term "as the rector permits" is familiar to many church oriented people and by it is meant that the rector may have preferences in observing this or that saint's day, or, due to his own devotion to a saint to celebrate the particular saint's day with an especially festive service (with polyeleion), and no more than this. But this matter is viewed quite differently in one of the vicarates of the Archbishop of Western Europe, Seraphim.

Our editors have received a schedule of services from the parish "Lausanne-Vevey" whose rector is His Grace Bishop of Vevey, Ambrose (Prince Cantacuzen). From it we learn that the **Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos was transferred from Friday, August 15/28 to Saturday, August 16/29 and the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, for some unknown reason will be celebrated not on Monday, September 8/21, but twenty four hours earlier -- on Sunday, September 7/20!**

It is well known that in the Western-European Diocese even while Archbishop Anthony (Bartoshevich) was alive, several unauthorized events took place (he prided himself on being a liberal) and the days of some saints were transferred to another day according to rector's wish or at the convenience of the parish, but it seems that this is the very first time that a Bishop-rector has transferred the celebration of one of the "twelve major feast days" a day earlier or day later than those celebrated by the Universal Church! It would be interesting to know whether this "renovationist" act known to the First Hierarchy of the ROCOR?

DIOCESAN CONVENTION OF THE CLERGY AND LAY PEOPLE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX FREE CHURCH

From July 2/15 -to 6/19 in Suzdal specially festive services were conducted for Holy Imperial Martyrs and the Righteous Evfimiy of Suzdal, who is also celebrated on July 4/17th and who's relics are laid out in the cathedral. Wishing

to make these holidays more festive on the occasion of 80th anniversary of the murder of the Imperial Family, Archbishop Valentin convened at the same time the 9th Convention of clergy and lay people of Russian Orthodox Church.

Four Bishops, about 40 priests and more than 150 delegates participated in the sessions. All were housed in the diocesan guest house and also among local residents.

85 years ago (16/29 of May, 1913) in connection with celebration of the tri-centennial of the Romanov Dynasty, the Tsar and his daughters visited Suzdal. The bishop at that time blessed the future Martyr Tsar with the icon of St. Evfimy. Now Archbishop Valentin has ordered a huge icon of the Imperial Martyrs, which along with another very large icon of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, was blessed in the Tsar Constantine Cathedral, after which there was a molieben served before the relics of St. Evfimy and then a procession with the saint's shrine went to the Cross and Nicholas Church, where a vigil was served, after which people processed back to the cathedral.

According to Suzdal usage, established in 1990, on July 3/16 at 11 PM (time of the murder of the Imperial Family) in the Tsar Constantine Cathedral a vigil service was celebrated. The huge icon of the Imperial Martyrs, standing in the sanctuary right behind the altar, was clearly visible to all present. In spite of the dark night, people stayed for a long time after the service was finished: under the arches of the church could be still heard spiritual hymns, which the Russian people have managed to compose about the Imperial Martyrs and the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.

On July 4/17 at dawn in the Synodal church, dedicated to the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, a Divine Liturgy was served.

The later Divine Liturgy was served in the Tsar Constantine Cathedral by 4 Bishops, 32 priests and numerous altar servants. According to a participant of this amazing holiday, "festively and harmoniously Suzdal's two choirs sang together with a third from Zheleznovodsk (South Russia) conducted by the Nun Antonia. After the Liturgy populous procession went to the Dormition Church. The icon was carried out through the royal gates with life-sized images of the Imperial Martyrs and then a very large icon of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia was carried in the front of the procession. The Imperial Martyrs depicted on the icon re-traced the path they once made while visiting Suzdal in 1913. During the procession a blue sky started to cover with clouds and there began a quite rain without a wind. "These are the tears of the Martyrs", "The Tsar crying over Russia" the faithful quietly observed. Observant citizens of Suzdal noticed that for eight years now on this day there is a thunderstorm and rain. And indeed when people entered the Dormition Church where the icon of the Imperial Martyrs would be permanently placed, it started to thunder and a strong but brief rain fell. Yet, with the return to Tsar Constantine Cathedral and the Church of Holy Virgin, Joy of All Who Sorrow in which a meal was served, the people were met by bright sunlight and rain-washed streets."

In this manner Suzdal marked the 80th anniversary of the murder of the Imperial Family. In their own manner and on different levels the day was observed also in other places in Russia: in some places there were served moliebens and in parishes of Moscow Patriarchate an order to serve panikhidas was issued.

Unfortunately, events occurred quite differently in the parishes of the ROCOR. The feast day of the Imperial Martyrs this year fell on Friday and it is very doubtful that (with the exception of monasteries and Synod Cathedrals where there are daily services) this day was observed in any manner.

According to accidentally received information by us, there was no liturgy on July 4/17 even in the memorial church to Imperial Martyrs in Brussels. Not trusting immediately such a possibility, we wrote to the rector of this church, Fr. Nicholas Semenoff, asking him to inform us: was there indeed no service on feast day of Imperial Martyrs in his church, or, had there been some misunderstanding? We even enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope, but **after three weeks, no answer has been received!** . . .

During the intervals between the festive and moving services in Suzdal, there were business meetings at which several reports heard and discussed.

The Most Reverend Archbishop Valentin addressed the Assembly with report on the current situation of the Church and also presented a draft of an epistle, which was unanimously approved after some changes and additions. We publish it below.

The Convention with great sympathy heard the report of His Grace Bishop Viktor of Daugavpils and Latvia, who noted that present Latvian government is very unfriendly toward the Latvian Orthodox Church and he experiences a lot of difficulties in the matter of registering his diocese, which has been denied for several years now. His Grace must get documentation certifying that the Moscow Patriarchate is not a legal heir of the pre-revolutionary Russian Church and therefore has no right to a privileged status in the Latvian government. He was promised such documentation.

There were also reports made by Bishop Theodore, Archimandrite Irinarkh, Fr. Nicholas Kobychiev. Most certainly, reports were heard also from various parish delegates who attended this Convention.

From the report of the Diocesan Administrative Secretary, Archimandrite Irinarkh, those present were informed that the clergy of the Diocese had been increased by several recently ordained clergymen. "The majority of these priests are from other dioceses and even some from the Moscow Patriarchate have begun to seek admission to our Church individually, without their parishes. Some were refused. Three were accepted under the omophorion of Archbishop

Valentin." The speaker also reported that the legal suit for retaining the church in the village Pavlovskoye was successful. After filing two suits in Vladimir, the church still remains in the diocese. In the city of Yakutsk a religious community was admitted and gained their registration. They were accepted with two other communities, but so far they have no registration. Fr. Irinarkh noted the terrible animosity of the clergy and parishioners from the Moscow Patriarchate against the Suzdal-Vladimir Diocese. Patriarchal agents not only print and disseminate slanderous material and foment bitterness against the Russian Orthodox Free Church, but do not hesitate to stain the church doors with obscene inscriptions. They are not bothered by the existence of various sects and cults, but only by the Russian Free Church.

The Bishops of the ROFC during the current year made a number of pastoral visits to distant parishes. Thus, Archbishop Valentin served in Yaroslavl. Bishop Theodore visited Zheleznovodsk in the Stavropol Region, a parish in the Rostov area, parishes in Ukraine in the region of Lugansk. Bishop Seraphim regularly visited numerous Catacomb parishes in Russia, Abhasia and Ukraine.

The ROFC must undergo registration in compliance with the new law on "Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations." Most certainly, the Moscow Patriarchate will do everything she can not to permit this registration of the Church she violently hates. Concluding his report, Fr. Irinark stressed that under the pressure of hatred on part of the Moscow Patriarchate, "Truly, our faithful are undergoing a test of their faith; they experience a firming up of the perseverance of their convictions. Only those strong in spirit and faith remain."

This convention also approved a list of five candidates for episcopal consecration in the ROFC and decreed "...under the present conditions required for hierarchical consecration and holy Canons to perform together with members of the Synod of Bishops their ordination at Tsar Constantine Cathedral in city of Suzdal at a convenient time."

THE EPISTLE OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX FREE CHURCH
to pastors, monastics and all faithful children

July 6/19, 1998

Beloved in the Lord, fathers, brothers and sisters, faithful children of the Church of God!

In connection with the 80th anniversary of the martyric triumph of the Imperial New Martyrs, it is our duty, the duty of the Church, which took upon herself the responsibility to continue the course of St. Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy New Martyrs to utter a simple but, maybe for some an impartial truth: whether the remains found in Ekaterinburg are genuine or not, the glory of the Holy Imperial New Martyrs will not grow dim. And even the presence or absence of the relics cannot influence their veneration by those anxious to please God, no matter who they are, be they the Imperial Family or the other Saints.

Considering that the matter of the authenticity of the relics is a matter not dependent upon men, but upon God, we turn the attention of all faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church to the fact that this matter was raised by circles foreign to the Church in order to reach a goal of known to them alone and, we may suppose, far from the goals of faith and Christian love.

We are at the threshold of the 21st century, whose beginning too many powers in the world connect with the arrival of the "new order." As we were told by the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, this era will be signed with the rule of the sovereign of this world and the establishment of his monolithic kingdom.

We have no reason not to trust the Holy Apostle, who gives us the key to resolving many contemporary and earlier secrets. Constant appeal to monarchy's power on the one hand and on the other, the insistence on the bankruptcy of the idea of national monarchies must, according the heralds of the "new order," gradually lead nations to a readiness to accept the worldwide dominion of Antichrist.

There is also another aspect: the direction of the activities of the Moscow Patriarchate during former decades as well as this one, what her spiritual fathers did even under monarchy, when they aided revolution and sectarians in Russia, are very much different from what the murdered members of the Imperial Family wanted to do for Russia. To canonize the Sovereign Emperor and his August Family into the ranks of the Saints means to renounce the entire legacy of Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodsky. This would be a step beyond the strength of those who bound themselves for life with [KGB] agent code names. But they precisely, who exchanged their monastic and Christian names for agent code names, are the ones, who determine and, it seems, will determine for a long time the "face" of the Moscow Patriarchate.

Today we witness how the anti-Orthodox powers combine. How difficult is our path is obvious from the condition of the Moscow Patriarchate and the tragedy of the Church Abroad.

Today, the Synod of Bishops of the Church Abroad and her President are unable to keep its balance under the pressure of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The ambiguity of the most recent declarations of the President of the Synod of Bishops of the Church Abroad, ambiguity of her positions -- permitted his enemies to cause a split among the hierarchs of the Church Abroad creating parties and impelling them towards a struggle to dismiss Metropolitan Vitaly by retirement. This struggle is not at its end, but it is already clear that in the nearest future there is in preparation a merging of the Church Abroad with the Moscow

Patriarchate, but to put it more accurately: a swallowing up of the Church Abroad and of its sinking into the murky waters of Sergianist heresy.

If one studies attentively all the minutes, decrees and epistles of the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR, starting with 1992, then even with an unpracticed eye it is evident that they proceeded to act under the attentive control of pro-patriarchal hierarchs, who had only one goal in mind -- to reestablish Eucharistic communion with the Moscow Patriarchate and unite with it.

At the same time, God the Lord decided, according to His Divine Providence, to call to the ministry of the Church of God and her glorious and God-loving people in diaspora Archbishop Lazarus and, later, Bishop Valentin. But this was opposed by evil people and listening to the slanders of the Father of Lies, these Russian Bishops were dismissed from the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR and retired by those adhering to the uncanonical suspensions about which there is public talk among the clergy and faithful of the Church Abroad.

The events of later times clearly showed that the Lord, not wishing the death of a sinner, but that he repent and live, pointed with His finger to the loss of the Cathedral and Abraham's Oak in Hebron, the disappearance in Montreal in flames and ashes of a cathedral and all the relics it contained, the loss of the Myrrh-gushing Icon of the Theotokos and the criminal murder of the custodian of this sacred object. Is not all this proof that it is time not only to demand repentance, but also to repent themselves?

Willing the salvation of the Church of God, the Lord in a visible manner teaches His people in diaspora and so to say, says that He is generous, long-suffering and merciful but is at the same time just and will render to each his due. He did not abolish His Church, but only uncovered the plans of theomachist genius, which was manifest before the Church in all its nakedness and shamelessness.

If the Synod of Bishops of the ROCOR does not want to proceed down the path of evil genius, it has to convene an extraordinary Council of the ROCOR and abolish all decisions regarding contacts with the Moscow Patriarchate, Greeks and Rumanian Old Calendarists. This would help the Russian Diaspora to return to the path of undefiled Holy Orthodoxy, along which the ROCOR walked in a triumphant manner in former years.

With the acts of such an extraordinary special Council of Bishops, the Church Abroad will be able to correct its mistakes and shortcomings and deprive the adherents of unification with the Moscow Patriarchate of any possibility of manipulation using references to earlier decisions which were put into the minutes of Synod meetings by those who were eager to justify their rapprochement with the Moscow Patriarchate. Due to their trustfulness, the other members of the Synod signed these, by which they supported the fulfillment of the plans of the enemies of the Church Abroad.

We believe that within the ROCOR there are still hierarchs, God's priests, deacons and people with sound minds, who love the purity of Orthodoxy, who could offer their strength to the altar of God's Church and lead the Church Abroad on the right path, so that she would rise up and begin to shine with the same light by which she was illumined during those 74 years, as a radiant star, in which Russian people would have no doubts and would not retreat.

Our position and our path of the Russian Orthodox Church may not become double. The irredeemability of the hierarchy of the Moscow Patriarchate is too obvious to us. Before everything, we have to fight for the ideal of God's Truth.

In view of what is said above, we, who took upon ourselves the responsibility to preserve genuine Orthodoxy, today lay out the following goals:

1. To ceaselessly persevere in instructional work in order to show that the Moscow Patriarchate is not the genuine Orthodox Church, the Church of St. Patriarch Tikhon and the Holy New Martyrs.
2. To specially direct the attention of pastors and parishioners to the harmfulness of Sergianism as the main contemporary enemy of the Orthodox faith [in Russia].
3. With all means to support the veneration of the Holy Imperial Martyrs and New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, explaining, that the matter of the authenticity or non-authenticity of the remains found near Ekaterinburg was raised in order to distract attention from the grace-giving and salvific veneration of the Imperial Martyrs.
4. To bring to light for church-minded people facts proving that the Moscow Patriarchate inalterably adheres to the course of Sergianism, which is nothing more than a betrayal of Orthodoxy and therefore also of Russia.

We have to be steadfast in Orthodoxy, persevere in the Truth, according to Christ's commandment, regardless of earthly goods and deprivations, of earthly losses. May prayer not leave our hearts and may our mouths speak the Truth.

Let each of us confess the Truth not only by mouth, but also with our lives and that would be the best witness to the Truth of Orthodoxy.

May the Lord and God help us to acquire the spirit of Truth and humility and reasoning, the spirit of love and mercy for the sake of Orthodoxy and the salvation of souls!

President of the Synod of Bishops Valentin, Archbishop of Suzdal and Vladimir

Members of the Synod of Bishops:

Chancellor of the Synod of Bishops, Bishop Theodore of Borisovo and Sanino

Seraphim, Bishop of Sukhum and Abhasia

Viktor, Bishop of Daugavpils and Latvia

"ARGUMENTS AND FACTS" ON THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE CONCERNING "THE BURIAL OF THE REMAINS"

In connection of burial of relics of the Holy Imperial Martyrs, the newspaper "Arguments and Facts" in # 30 published an article entitled "Meditation at the Coffin of the Emperor."

While describing the solemnities, the author of this article which was signed with the initials V. S. only, reports that "In all those who were present at the burial there arose spontaneously a hostile feeling toward our Church. We saw that the singing was by a **secular choir and not one from church** (emph. "CH. N."). The senior hierarchs never showed up. Immersed in political games, they with all their might displayed their KGB past. And if the churchocrats think that they have saved face, saved the Church from some sort of schism, in fact the opposite has happened. They stained their faces, because they acted like worst of materialists. Since when did the Church speak about scientific tests? And this is the very same Church which is based on idealism! Greater hypocrisy is hard to imagine."

Further, this newspaper, but in issue #29, published a very interesting interview by Geliy Roabov, who with his colleague Alexander Avdonin began the excavation on Koptiakov's Rd. in 1979 where the remains of the Imperial Martyrs were buried. At that time in Russia only a strictly select circle knew of this (including Riabov himself, Avdonin and four others) and at that time the Synod of Bishops of ROCOR was informed that it had to take very urgent measures in order to secure any possibility of receiving a portion of those relics before this find would turn into a national sensation and there would be no chance to get them. The correspondence of Bishop Gregory with Russia was carried out in the most secretive manner and about this find it was reported to Metropolitan Philaret and one or two other hierarchs, with whom there was assurance that they will not accidentally reveal this secret. At that time, even typewritten letters from Russia were copied on Synod's typewriter to be reported on Synod meetings in order to avoid somehow putting the authors in danger. Unfortunately, during those years it was impossible to get the relics.

Among a number of other questions, the reporter asked Geliy Riabov about the authenticity of the so-called "Yurovsky note." Riabov answered: "The psychology of this note, the expressions in words and turns of phrase, do absolutely verify its authenticity. But we can postulate that in the thirties, Comrade Stalin ordered Yurovsky: 'Let us shoot, just in case, 9 people and put them under the little bridge. Who knows what might happen'. Then one can refute everything."

Asked what is the opponents' target, who receive no money for it, Riabov said: "Ideological contests do not have in mind a reward. They are a contest of spirit and anti-spirit. I do not blame the opponents. In the majority they are sincere. They just err. They are lacking scope of viewpoint. A breadth of view assumes the absence of any partiality."

Riabov also expressed his regret that Yeltsin, who finally appeared for the ceremony, did not walk barefootedly behind the royal coffins and regarding the general reaction of people, he said that "people do not understand that an sovereign anointed by God is a mystical reality. And one may not judge them -- they lived under a system which turned them into clinical idiots. All that is mystery now, God's Providence will later become manifest... We will bury the Romanovs in the earth and it is good to do it well... Let us bury the last Russian Emperor and stop the war at least on the mystical level. And God will grant what He will; it will be finished in reality. God's ways are inexplicable."

"And what if these bones are, nevertheless, not their bones?" asked the reporter. "Then the war will not come to an end either on the mystical nor on the reality level," answered Riabov.

When describing the St. Petersburg solemnities (#30), the author of the article writes: "One would not like to use crude words, but a close relative to Nicholas II, Leonida, simply took a false step. Here in Russia many are fussing over her, but she did not come to Petersburg, did not take her place amongst the family. And the members of the family, several tens of them, added immense status to the funeral. To see the descendants of the throne in one place and in such multitude -- was an unparalleled experience. There were boys and girls. There were also white-haired elderly. A most touching moment. All around the Peter and Paul Fortress and along all the surrounding streets, stood residents of St. Petersburg. They sincerely greeted the relatives of the Tsar. It was obvious these were not prescribed cheers. The buses with Romanovs went through a corridor of applause. In this way the inhabitants of the city demonstrated their feelings about this event."

The newspaper "Russkaya Mysl" ("Russian Mind") published in France also reacted to events of the funeral in issue # 4232 (July 23-29) with a long article by Michael Meilakh, who reported that Prince Nikolai Romanovich (it was the custom previously when mentioning the names of grand dukes and princes of royal lineage to omit the last name of Romanovs -- it was just understood) when coming for the funeral expressed his disappointment that the Moscow Patriarchate refused to participate in this historic event. Prince Nikolai Romanovich, who is a member of the ROCOR also noted that he does not understand "the position of the Church Abroad. There is no solid reason not to recognize genuineness of the remains. Why is everybody now an expert?"

This article also pointed out the unfortunate behavior in this case of Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna, who had the imprudence to send a written declaration-protest to St. Petersburg regarding the appearance at the funeral "of several morganic relatives of the Imperial House, who do not belong to it... and who seek to turn the burial of the

alleged remains of the Tsar's Family into a political farce by attempting to create an impression of reality for their false titles and imaginary rights"! By the way, not one of the members of the House of Romanov until now never and nowhere mentioned any dynastic rights.

The bulletin "Vertograd Inform" in its editorial article relates in detail the burial the "remains" and the protests organized against the ceremony by a number of protesters. Among them was a protest made in the name of the ROCOR! According to the bulletin, "When the remains were carried into Peter and Paul Fortress, the President of the Brotherhood of New Martyr Hilarion of Vereisk, Serge Kanayev, held up a sign: 'The Russian Church Abroad is against blasphemy'. He managed to give several interviews to numerous reporters at which he stated the opinion of the ROCOR regarding the remains. His demonstration was agreed to the day before by the ruling Bishop of St. Petersburg, Bishop Michael of Toronto, who gave his blessing for this action. When the guards intervened, Serge Kanayev was removed from Peter and Paul Fortress."

A "MAN OF THE CHURCH" IN A BLUE COVER

by Fr. Michael Ardiv

I have before me a newly published book in a glossy blue cover printed on exceptional paper and containing many illustrations. This tome has a lengthy title: "A Man of the Church -- On the Occasion of 20 years after the Death and the 70 year Anniversary of the Birth of the Right Reverend Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod NIKODIM, Patriarchal Exarch of Western Europe." The compiler and author of the foreword is Metr. Juvenaly of Krutitsky and Kolomensky. In addition we are told this is a "Publication of the Moscow Patriarchate, 1998" and it has the "Blessing of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Alexey II."

The composition of the authors is striking: among them are four patriarchs, nine metropolitans, ten archbishops, several archimandrites and proto-presbyters. They all share with the reader their recollections of a man who created a whole epoch not only in the history of the Moscow Patriarchate, but also in the life of other Christian confessions.

But, alas, there are some definite difficulties awaiting those who want to understand the personality of Metropolitan Nikodim. Maybe among the members of the Moscow Diocese there was not a literate editor to be found or maybe the compiler felt uncomfortable correcting the distinguished authors, but their style quite often makes us wish for something better. Here are some examples [which we must translate awkwardly as in the original Russian]:

"During the period of his fruitful archpastoral service, an unusual talent was granted to him by God, which was no small use during the "Cold War" and helped to unite all peace loving powers stand against the evil powers and unite Christian Churches into a fraternal cooperation in the search that "all would be one" (Jn.17:21), for me with those difficult administrative problems which befell our Holy Church at that period, there was no other person, beside Metropolitan Nikodim of blessed memory, with whom I could share my worries and ask for wise advice" (the Metropolitan of Kharkov, Nikodim, p. 281).

"That time was a very difficult one for the clergy: priests were not registered, I would sit for days in the reception room of the appropriate authority and he would not see me, although he could see my distress -- after all, I came from Kislovodsk to Petrozavodsk, from the lovely south to the northern lands: movement was very difficult and on top of that it was a cold winter, and it is March."

"On my consecration was present also my pious birthgiver, elder Matrona, who made a prostration before Vladyka and in the Russian manner kissed his feet" (These are memories of Metropolitan Gideon of Stavropol, pp. 286-287). I feel obliged to note, that "kissing the feet" of a hierarch is not so much a Russian custom as a Vatican one.

Well, the last passage of this kind of thing, is in the memories of the Metropolitan of Lydda, Timotheos (p. 200).

"Those who knew him he daily attracted with his unusual personality, his dazzling love, apostolic instructions, friendliness and kindness, love of church services, care for the smooth functioning of the Theological Academy, desire to enlarge the number of monastics in his diocese and by his service to enrich the Russian Church, which constantly showed its witness among various difficulties on the frontier with secular society and was met by the cold and often incomprehensible behavior and suspicions by close and distant brothers."

But it is not only the turgid prose of some memorialists which confuse the reader who wants to get a true understanding of the character of Metropolitan Nikodim. In almost all the authors of this collection we find some sort of failure to mention something. With one voice they testify that the dead hierarch was not only a "man of the Church", but also a "patriot."

"Vladyka Nikodim never separated his service to the Church from his fiery and loving service to his nation, his Fatherland" (p.40).

"...he was fortunate in being able to fulfill his duty as a citizen and a Christian, before his Homeland and the Holy Church" (p. 230).

"Verily, he was a true patriot, a true son of Russia and the Orthodox Church" (p.375).

But we very well remember that during the era of Metropolitan Nikodim to use word "Russia" was almost a crime, the Communist and atheist Soviet Union had pretensions to being "our Homeland." And the genuine "sons of the Orthodox Church" were driven underground into catacombs, were in jail or, at best, in exile. And involuntarily there arises the question: how did the metropolitan manage to serve "two masters"? Alas, we will not find an clear explanation of that.

But nevertheless, one of the memorialists does express himself a bit clearly: from the Archbishop of Tver we read:

"At present many are capable of accusing the former [clergy] of supposed collaboration with the KGB, including Vladyka Nikodim. But there was no other way out: the Church had to live somehow. Therefore there came into being a special mode of acting in order not to permit a total destruction of the Church" (p. 360).

"The church-minded people of my generation very well remember in which manner this 'special mode of acting came into being.' We could not hear without shame the Patriarchal Paschal epistles in which not as much was said about the risen Lord as about American aggression in Vietnam. In those years "The Journal of Moscow Patriarchate" was simply monstrous. In it they loudly "fought for peace" (i.e., the world wide dominion of Communism), cunning articles were published which conclusively demonstrated the identity of Christianity with Marxism, it categorically denied the Bolshevik persecution of Christians and the New Martyrs and Confessors were labeled as political criminals.... And all this blatant lying testifies that the Moscow hierarchy just played the role of a voiceless servant of the godless and brutal regime.

"A Man of the Church" is an amazing book. It clearly demonstrates that the disciples and protégés of Metropolitan Nikodim, just like the French Bourbon, "have learned nothing and forgotten nothing." And therefore, all the appeals for repentance which come from the Church Abroad, and also from within Russia itself, go uncomprehended and never will be heard by these people.

If to suppose that the late Metropolitan Nikodim indeed was a "man of the Church," then inevitably the question arises: what sort of Church it is which is able to spread lies and crawls before atheists? By all means it is not the Church which the Apostle Paul calls to be "a pillar and ground of the Truth" (I Tim. 3:15) -- by all means not the one which "has neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing" (Eph. 5: 27). And one can state with certainty that "the Church of Metropolitan Nikodim" is that of the very same "vain persons" from which the Psalmist so decisively separates himself saying, "I have hated the congregation of evil doers; and will not sit with the wicked." (Ps. 26: 5)

A HERETOFORE UNHEARD OF AND UNSEEN "ORTHODOX TRADITION"

The magazine "Orthodox Tradition," which is issued by the group of Old Calendarists under Archbishop Cyprianos of Fili (with whom the ROCOR, unfortunately never severed her relations), in its # 2-3, 1998, published information about "the enthronization" by Archbishop Chrysostom of Etna of Abbess Elizabeth. The article is accompanied with a number of amazing photographs.

In one of them, the newly installed Abbess stands in... an archimandrite's mandia with richly embroidered four tablets on her flower decorated "throne" (closely resembling a bishop's stasidia).

The published photographs gave readers a glimpse of still another new "tradition" for America: after the installation of the Abbess (called in the magazine "enthronement" during which the present sang to her "axia" -- there was a festive banquet. A cake was served, made in the manner of American multiple layer cakes served at weddings. A standard American cake on its top has figurines of a bride and groom standing under a canopy. Newlyweds simultaneously together cut this cake, treat one another to a piece and then the cake is cut and served to guests. But this time, on top of the cake was a figurine of a... nun!

The magazine does not inform us who cut the cake this time: maybe Archbishop Chrysostom together with Abbess Elizabeth?

It is very sad that in observing this unheard of "tradition"(a nun in an archimandrite mandia) Bishop Kirill of Seattle participated, who in the church handed her the abbess' staff and during the banquet forwarded to her greetings in the name of Archbishop Anthony of San Francisco.

How is the participation of a Bishop of ROCOR in such an unheard of Orthodox "tradition" to be explained?

FROM LIFE OF THE LATVIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

On July 3rd in Daugavpils an agreement was reached between representatives of the Latvian organization "Tautas kopa Briviba" and ten church communities, which desire to be united into a Latvian Orthodox Free Church, and also representatives of other organizations who support the legal registration of any Orthodox Church independent of the Moscow Patriarchate.

The meeting was initiated and sponsored by the Latvian Tautas kopa Briviba: the Deputy of the 6th Latvian Saem Mr. Gundars Valdmanis, a governing member Mr. Svirina and others. The Latvian Orthodox Church was

represented by priest-monk Philaret. The agreement has 6 paragraphs. In the course of an exchange of information it was post factum decided that "not all Orthodox in Latvia agree to be under the canonical jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, which adheres to a church structure unchanged from the era of the totalitarian regime: the very same people and the same repressive actions." (p. 3)

"The Latvian Organization Tautas kopa Brivada" and LOFC believe that the inclusion in the civil law 'On Religious Organizations' of the sovereign Latvian government (p. 10, section 3) of church canons and regulations, as they are understood and interpreted by the Moscow Patriarchate, contradicts the dignity and conscience of the Orthodox, who refuse to be part of a church structure, created by the Bolshevik regime in 1943." (p. 4)

The above mentioned Latvian organization assured representatives of the LOFC that it will consider it their goal to get legal registration by way of ratification by the VIIIth Saem of Latvian Republic of a "declaration on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based upon religion or persuasion" which had been adopted into law on May 4, 1990.

This agreement was also supported by the President of the Society of the Politically Oppressed in Daugavpils, Mr. A. Valums.

FROM LIFE OF THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

"Pravislavlje" an official newspaper of the Serbian Patriarchate relates that according to a decree of the Serbian Council of Bishops, convened in May, the following New Martyrs among the clergy martyred by Croatian Catholics and godless Communists were glorified: Peter (Zimonjic), Ioanniky (Lipovica), Sava (Trljaic), Platon Jovanovic), Branko Dobrosavljevic, George Bogic, Confessor Dositej (Vasic) and Martyr Vukashin. All were bishops or priests, except the last who was a layman.

The newspaper published photographs of these martyrs of the Serbian Church along with their short biographies and descriptions of their martyrlic podvig.

The Serbian Church informs the world about her difficult situation through the Internet, mainly from the famous monastery Visoki Dechani. From this information we are aware of an open letter by Bishop Artemije to the American Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who came to Prizren ostensibly on a peace mission but visited only the Albanian Muslims. The bishop asks: how is it possible to achieve a peace "by contacting one side in the conflict only" while not hearing the Orthodox Serbian side?

"Is it possible that you have overlooked the fact that there are also Serbs who live in Kosovo and Metohija and not only Albanians? How can we understand and explain the fact that you were in Dechani and did not visit Dechani Monastery which is only two kilometers from the town...?" "...It is painful to learn that your mission and mighty America have missed this point."

Bishop Artemije closed his letter with a "wish that the next time you show more understanding for the pain and cries of the Kosovo and Metohija Serbs."

On July 22nd Bishop of Rashka and Prizren Artemije stated on the Internet that on July 21st, the Albanian "Kosovo Liberation Army" attacked the Monastery of Sts. Kosmas and Damian in Zochishte. The attack by light artillery and machine guns lasted for 45 minutes. Seven monks, one nun and a small group of refugees ran and hid in the church. The Albanians stormed the monastery, searched for the monks who surrendered with no resistance and brought them into an Albanian village. After several hours all 35 people were very timely liberated by a Red Cross representatives. The monastery was seized by the Albanians who would not permit the monks to take either their personal belongings or sacred objects from the church. They had to settle in Grachanica Monastery near the city of Prishtina. This event greatly disturbed the Church, which she sees as a very dangerous precedent. It is quite obvious that contemporary politicians all around the world support the Muslims against the Orthodox.

THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE IN AUSTRALIA.

Recently on the Internet information was passed that as result of a Judeo-Christian dialogue five American Christian "churches" renounced Christianity ("Jewish News," of Melbourne, Australia, issue # 43, of July 26th, 1996). A participant on the Internet asked if anyone can tell him which denominations they were. Although this information was published about two years ago, it is of more than abstract interest. Recently a book of primary documents was published in Moscow in Russian translation "Contemporary Dialogue between Jews and Orthodox Christians" in which there are published documents of "The Third Academic Encounter between Orthodox and Jews."

"Dialogues" between Orthodox and Jews started as early as 1972, but information about it was revealed only to a rather small circle of people -- participants in the Ecumenical movement themselves and those interested in contemporary theological currents. The above mentioned book has a list of participants of "meeting." Listed are 26

distinguished Jewish rabbis and those for the "Orthodox" are: Protopresbyter Vitaly Borovoy, Vice President of the Department of Foreign Relations in **Moscow Patriarchate**, Archpriest Alexander Kozha, who is in charge of the inter-religious contacts of **the Moscow Patriarchate** and representatives of **the Jerusalem, Georgian, Ecumenical, Bulgarian, Serbian and Rumanian Patriarchates and also the Greek Orthodox Church**. Beside these, also a group of Armenians and representatives of various "theological" universities and colleges, altogether 22 persons participated. All discussions can be summarized as it is necessary not to forget the past and also aim toward the bright future of humanity, which must live in peace, harmony and close cooperation. Concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ -- the Orthodox, if they mentioned Him at all, spoke very vaguely. Jews, on their part, restrained themselves from making any insulting attacks against our Saviour. In other words, both parties in name of "the bright future of humanity," very carefully hid their real feelings and convictions.

In this case, the frankness of Rabbi Dr. Pinchas Hayman, who represented Bar Ilan University, by all means deserves respect. He had enough honesty and courage to say frankly what we know without him. Dr. Hayman is also an active participant in Judeo-Christian dialogues. He said that Christians should make a choice:

"Either to retain their present belief system and be anti-Semitic or to form a partnership with the Jewish people. As long as Christians keep Jesus as God, they will be anti-Semitic because that belief must lead them to believe that those who reject Jesus, reject God." This is one time when it would be good for Christians to listen to a rabbi! The rabbi also recommends that Christians return to their Judaic "roots" and live according to Noah's seven laws, which consist of the most primitive rules which are obligatory to Gentiles only (forbidding murder, violence, adultery and so on).

ANTI-MISSIONARY LAW IN ISRAEL

During the past few years the Israeli government has been greatly influenced by the extremist Jews, called "Haredim." These extreme religious zealots are greatly concerned by the missionary activity of various Western Christian denominations. In spite of the popular opinion that the Jewish people are monolithic, this by no means correct. This is especially clearly demonstrated by the contemporary Israelis, and is true also on the political level. A vast majority of immigrants came from Russia, who were raised outside of any religious conditions, if not with overt atheism. They refuse to agree with Haredim demands to stop any traveling and that airports be closed from Friday evening to Saturday evening as well as all sorts of entertainment and business activity. Yet, the immigrants from Russia have gained a significant influence within the Israeli government, for example, Shcharansky or Edelstein who is Minister of Religions. At the same time, the Haredim have also gained considerable weight in the government. They are mostly concerned that the Western sectarians will exploit the religious vacuum among Russian Jews and begin disseminating their propaganda. Along with them there is very energetic activity by a Jewish sect, "Jews for Jesus" with, unfortunately, very Protestant characteristics. As result, the Haredim and other supporters of the purity of the Jewish Confession have passed in the Knesset a law forbidding all missionary activity in Israel.

The Jewish newspaper "The Jerusalem Post" reported in May that "In recent years missionary activity has increased to worrying proportions. This is particularly evident among youth and new immigrants."

The American weekly newspaper "The Jewish Press" in three successive issues discussed the missionary problem. The law, already passed by the Knesset, still has to be approved by the Judicial Committee of 120 members of the Parliament.

A very alarmed article appeared in the newspaper "The Christian News" on August 10th which quotes a paragraph from the proposed legislation which in translation from Hebrew reads: "Whoever possesses contrary to the law, or prints or copies or distributes or shares or imports tracts, or advertises things in which there is an inducement for religious conversion is liable for one year imprisonment." An amendment adds: "Any tract of advertisement to religious conversion will be confiscated."

A Christian group "Bridges for Peace" which unites various denominations feels that these government measures are leading a point where it will be dangerous to own a New Testament as an article which is easy to interpret as being missionary propaganda. One member of this group said: "I see these kinds of laws as a great threat to the Jewish State and to democracy."

The Prime Minister of Israel Netanyahu has just recently sent out a letter addressed to Christian nations and also to the Anti-Defamation League in New York assuring them that his government will not support legislation which restricts missionary activities in Israel. This letter, on the other hand, provoked a furious reaction among those who hope to have his legislation approved. In its very latest version, the law foresees a three year of imprisonment and a fine of \$15,000 against those "convicted of preaching with the intent of causing another person to change his religion."

The situation for Netanyahu is rather difficult one: he is indebted to the Haredim who in abundance gave their votes to him in the last elections, yet on the other hand, Israel to a certain degree still has to look toward the West.

THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE'S LIE ON THE INTERNET

The Moscow Patriarchate stated through "News of the ROC" on the Internet that her delegation was in Bari between May 6th and 10th because of the holiday of St. Nicholas and that supposedly the local mayor (a Communist, by the way) handed over to the Vice President of the Foreign Relations Department, Archbishop of Kaluga and Borovsk Klement, the church of St. Nicholas and a part of a hostel for pilgrims which are property of the ROCOR. According to the Patriarchate, the Mayor of Bari and Klement of Kaluga in a festive circumstances' signed minutes about handing this property rent free to the Moscow Patriarchate.

In truth, there was no transfer of property and legally could not be. The church is still under the jurisdiction of the ROCOR. Services are regularly conducted there and the rector is a clergymen of the Church Abroad, Fr. Isaiah (Pavlovich). At present, the church is being renovated and the wall paintings are under restoration.

It is no secret that the Moscow Patriarchate "dreams" of seizing the church property under the supervision of the ROCOR, but why so bluntly lie about this to the whole world? However, the habit of constantly lying has doubtlessly become "second nature"!