

Statement by Metropolitan Yuvenaly

Metropolitan Yuvenaly is head of the Foreign Relations Department of the Moscow Patriarchate. The Metropolitan's statement was recorded for the BBC on 26 January 1975 when he was in England representing the Moscow Patriarchate at the enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Metropolitan criticizes "the tendency among certain circles in England, supported by some officials of the Anglican Church to present a biased and one-sided picture of Russian Orthodox Church life". The CSRC and its journal RCL have always aimed at presenting a balanced view and it is for this purpose that we print Metropolitan Yuvenaly's statement in full. We in the Centre want above all to make the spiritual revival in the Russian Orthodox Church widely known in the West. We welcome the Metropolitan's words on this subject. We wonder whether he is fully informed about what is already being done in this connection, but agree that more should be done. Unfortunately it is not always easy to obtain the kind of spiritual literature which could convey to Western readers the strength of that Light which burns at the heart of the Orthodox faithful in the USSR today. We appeal once more to Metropolitan Yuvenaly and his Church to send us more material about the spiritual and inner life of the Church.

Metropolitan Nikodim is the new Exarch for Western Europe while still remaining in his See of Leningrad. He replaces Metropolitan Anthony of Surozh who resigned from that post while remaining the bishop of the Moscow jurisdiction resident in London.

The Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad was established in the early 1920s by a group of Russian bishops in exile, who claimed to be the true governing body of the Russian Orthodox Church in exile.

It was my duty, with the blessing of His Holiness the Patriarch and the Holy Synod, to be present at the solemn enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Donald Coggan; the Archbishop also received me the next day in Lambeth Palace, and during this meeting we discussed relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Church of England. The Archbishop of Canterbury listened with great understanding to all I had to say on the difficulties which until now have hindered the further development of these relations.

I brought with me, as a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church, a desire to show our brotherly love for the new Archbishop of the Anglican Church and the Christians of England. On the other hand, we wanted to take this opportunity of explaining to the Primate of the Church of England some of the problems which, over the last few years, have impeded the development of relations between us. One of these problems was the tendency among certain circles in England, supported even by some officials of the Anglican Church, to present a biased and one-sided picture of Russian Orthodox Church life.

This kind of information, which to some extent poisoned inter-church relations, unfortunately presented only the dark side of Russian Orthodox Church life and did not allow people to see the whole wealth of religious life, witnessed by everyone who comes into contact with our Church.

This is not an uncommon attitude. When certain events take place in the life of our Church, people who are responsible for passing on information often do it in

such a way as to present the Church and its leaders in an unfavourable light. We ourselves have come up against this attitude when *The Times* refused my request to publish a certain document. Likewise, when the new Exarch of Western Europe, Metropolitan Nikodim, asked the newspaper *Russkaya Mysl* to publish his pastoral letter addressed to his flock in Western Europe, the paper refused to do so. We also hear that in the religious broadcasts of the BBC to the Soviet Union, events in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church are either not fully reported, or distorted. This deprives the Christians and the broad public circles in those countries, where they listen to your broadcasts and read your papers, of the possibility of having a complete picture of Church life, of the spiritual and devotional life which brings blessing to our believers.

This would be understandable if Church events in the West and in the Soviet Union were treated alike. Unfortunately, this is not what we see. Let me quote one instance: in his letter to the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, Solzhenitsyn stated that it was strange how Church organizations and Church institutions could allow such a degree of hostility as to forbid fellowship between the representatives of the Church Abroad and the Russian Orthodox Church (or, as we are often called, "the representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate"); to this Metropolitan Filaret (of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad) replied that such things do not happen, even though we know that written instructions to this effect have been published. Nevertheless, this sad state of things was not mentioned by any newspapers, nor broadcast over the BBC.

In one broadcast there was a discussion in which various views were expressed as to what would be the policies of the new Exarch of Western Europe. I feel that his two pastoral letters – the first published on the Feast of the Icon of Our Lady of the Sign, 10 December, 1974, and the second last Christmas – speak for themselves in testifying to the spirit in which he began his term of office. I would like to answer these questioning remarks with the words of that first letter in which Metropolitan Nikodim says: "In addressing myself to those who at this time find themselves separated from us in the homeland, I wish to say that I regard with love the faithful children of the Mother Church, and that I look with love also on those who may not wish to receive my blessing or my brotherly kiss in Christ, for I believe and hope that the hardness of heart, which still persists, will pass away sooner or later."

People are often perplexed: why do we not answer every accusation, every harsh word? To that we can only say that our basic aim, as we see it, is to lead our faithful children in the ways of salvation: that our Church was, is, and will remain with her people, blessing their labours, working out their salvation. And I would like everyone everywhere to remember that what today exists in the Russian Orthodox Church – what our friends and brothers in the West rejoice over, what even those who are perhaps unsympathetic to us must mention when speaking of religious life – is a spiritual revival; and that this has been the priceless achievement of the humble and unknown pastors of the Church who have devoted their whole lives to the service of Christ and His Church.

Harassment of Pentecostals

Michael Rowe's article (pp. 16-18) gives some background to the following Pentecostal documents from the USSR. Like other denominations, the Pentecostals suffered in the 1920s and 1930s. But in 1945 when they accepted the AUCECB