

sent in the name of the Politburo about the temporary halt on confiscating the valuables, should not be countermanded: It is to our advantage as it gives our enemy the impression that we are hesitating, that he has succeeded in frightening us (our enemy will of course soon learn about this secret telegram, for the very reason that it is secret).

One of the most energetic, intelligent and capable members of the VTsIK or other representatives of the central power should be sent to Shuya (one person would be better than a few). He should be given oral instructions by one member of the Politburo. The gist of these instructions should be that he arrest in Shuya as many representatives of the local clergy, the petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie as possible, no less than a few dozen, on suspicion of having participated directly or indirectly in forcibly resisting the VTsIK's decree on the confiscation of church valuables. After this work he must at once come to Moscow and personally give a report to a full meeting of the Politburo or before two members of the Politburo delegated for this task. On the basis of this report, the Politburo will issue a detailed decree to the judicial authorities, also orally, that the trials of the Shuya rebels, who have resisted helping the starving, be carried out with maximum speed, culminating in the shooting of a large number of the most influential and dangerous Black Hundreds in the town of Shuya, and if possible not only in this town but in Moscow and a few other spiritual centres.

I think it expedient not to touch Patriarch Tikhon himself, although he undoubtedly stands at the head of this revolt of slave-owners. In relation to him a secret directive should be given to the GPU [secret police] so that at this particular juncture all the contacts of this activist are observed and exposed as accurately and in as great detail as possible. Dzerzhinsky and Unschlicht are to

be instructed to make weekly reports personally to the Politburo.

At the Party Congress a secret conference on this should be held, to include all or nearly all delegates with the leading members of the GPU, NKYu (People's Commissariat of Justice) and the Revolutionary Tribunal. At this conference a secret decision of the congress should be taken to the effect that the confiscation of valuables, particularly those of the richest monasteries and churches, should be carried out with ruthless decisiveness stopping at nothing, and in as short a time as possible. The more representatives of the reactionary bourgeoisie and the reactionary clergy that we manage to shoot the better. Now is the time to teach the public such a lesson that for many decades they will not dare even to think of any sort of resistance.

So as to supervise the execution of these measures in the quickest and most successful way, a special commission must be appointed at the congress, i.e. at its secret conference. The participation of comrade Trotsky and comrade Kalinin is essential. This commission must not be publicized so that the subordination of all operations to it is ensured and is done not in the name of the commission, but according to all-soviet and all-Party procedure. The best and most reliable workers must be appointed to execute these measures in the richest monasteries and churches.

LENIN

I request that comrade Molotov try to send this letter round to all members of the Politburo this very evening (without making a copy) and to ask them to return it at once to the Secretary after reading it, with a brief note as to whether each member of the Politburo agrees with it or whether the letter provokes any disagreement.

LENIN

Young Soviet Christians Form Seminar

Alexander Ogorodnikov (27 years old), author with Boris Razveev of the following document, began organizing a seminar for people interested in exploring the Christian faith in September 1974.

In a letter to Dr Philip Potter, General Secretary of the WCC, dated 27 July 1976 (see RCL Vol. 4, No. 4, pp. 45-7) Ogorodnikov described some of the harassment which he and his friends ex-

perceived from the authorities as a result. Below he explains how he and his friends came to join the Russian Orthodox Church (he was converted in 1973) and why they felt it necessary to organize a seminar. According to Keston News Service (No. 61, 6 December 1978) Ogorodnikov was arrested on 20 November 1978 after being warned that he would face charges of "parasitism" - being without recognized employment - if he did not find employment by 16 November 1978. On 10 January he was tried and sentenced to one year's imprisonment (Le Monde 12 January 1979).

Russian culture today, while pushing its way out from under the rubble of terror, lies and delusions, has given birth to an intellectual ferment which neither we ourselves nor the world in general expected. As it emerged from the chaos of underground life, misunderstood and undervalued by the world and sometimes regarded with hostility, it was at first just a cry of pain, a desperate attempt to escape from the spellbound spiritual captivity of ideology. After tearing the mask off the state myth, this movement made itself known to the world, asserting only its zealous rejection of that myth and its single-minded thirst for freedom. As part of our critical approach, we proceeded to overthrow all idols, to suspect all ideologies in principle, and we ended up in the ontological void of this world. This world, once so near and dear to us, suddenly lost its dimensions, its mapped-out height and depth, and was deprived of meaning and perspective.

We found ourselves in a new blind alley. Having begun our rebellion in the name of human freedom, we had eliminated the human element: in emphasizing the abstract individual, we had removed all concrete meaningful aspects of his individuality, and had exposed him naked to the world. As a result we could offer the world nothing except our nihilism and a proud assertion of our own individuality. Having taken man as the measure of all things, we had thereby deprived man of any standard by which to measure himself. Modern non-religious humanism, in declaring man to be the highest and only standard of value, ends up by justifying all his actions, even the evil he has

done in history. And we experienced for ourselves the wholly relative nature of humanist morality, transformed into a terrible attempt to devalue the human personality, which without God becomes merely a "social animal" or a pattern "moulded" by the social system.

It was at this point that a revision of our moral values became necessary, and we began to strive openly for self-realization within the flow of history and thought. Expelled from academic circles by the will of history, driven off the pages of books by censorship, expelled to the night-watchman's room, aspiring Russian thought matured in agonizing disputes (sometimes lasting for weeks), which opened up to us the truth of Russian religious philosophy. Khomyakov, Dostoevsky, V. Solovyov, Fr S. Bulgakov and G. Florovsky brought us up to the threshold of the Church and set us before its doors.

And our ailing souls heard at last the quiet call of GOD. The world was transformed, it acquired wholeness and integrity. Bursting out of the "solitary cell of one's own soul" (Mihajlo Mihajlov), overcoming the temptation of modern culture, we came to the firm conclusion that only the Orthodox Church and roots in the national communality of the church body can save a man, confirm him in the Truth and bestow meaning and purpose on his personal and social life. Only the Church, in its revelation of the God-Man and its universal experience, can bring the Word into the chaos of contemporary dispute and confused aspirations, calm our doubts and soberly verify our intuitions.

New problems awaited us within the sacred portals of the Church. On the one hand, our involvement in the Church was hindered by a pagan element of intellectual pride, on the other, by the lack of a flourishing religious community life within the Russian Orthodox Church, which deprived us of the opportunity to serve the Church actively, while the official hierarchy made no response to our appeals. However, the most unbearable aspect of the situation was that our desire to live a full-blooded church life constantly came up against the discriminatory practice of criminal prosecution. All this forced us to try and solve our problems ourselves.

We began our religious seminars in

September 1974. Our reasons for doing so were:

- the thirst for a living Christian fellowship of love,
- the clearly-recognized need for theological education, which we could not obtain by any other means,
- a duty to carry out missionary work.

In this we see the real efficacy and truth of our Orthodox activities, as we try to build a bridge between our membership of the Church and the world, for we realize and accept our responsibility for the fate of the Church and the course of our history.

These are the kind of problems which we discussed, or were about to discuss, at our seminars:

1. The Church and the industrial world today.
2. The Body of the Church (*The Spiritual Foundations of Life* by V. Solovyov).
3. Orthodoxy (the church fathers, V. Lossky).
4. The individual and the community of the Church (Khomyakov, Solovyov, Prince Trubetskoi, S. Frank).
5. The attempt to construct an Orthodox view of the world.
6. Spiritual organization (putting into practice the idea of Russian Orthodoxy).
7. The Russian idea (Khomyakov, Dostoevsky, Solovyov, Berdyaev).
8. Christian teaching on the personality, and the theory of personality in modern psychology (*On Personality* by L. Karsavin).
9. Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism (Neo-Thomism. The encyclicals of Pope Paul VI. The Second Vatican Council. P. Tillich's *Protestant Era*. Official Orthodoxy. *The Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*. Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic*).
10. The pattern of Russian sanctity. Saints and the State. (The Blessed Sergi of Radonezh, the Sainly Prince Alexander Nevsky, St Philip of Moscow, Fr John of Kronstadt.)
11. The distinctive qualities and ways of the Tver saints in the historical body of the Orthodox Church (St Arseny Tverskoi, Sainly Prince Mikhail Tverskoi, St Anna Kashinskaya, St Savvaty Orshinsky, the Blessed Nil Stolobensky).
12. The Sermons of Fr Dmitri Dudko. Fr Dmitri as the model of a pastor in the modern secular world.
13. The origin and meaning of the Russian concept of national church life.
14. The revival of Russian religious consciousness from Khomyakov to our own times.
15. Modern neophytes and the Church. The acceptance of the neophyte experience.
16. What is truth? *Plato's Concept of Truth*, by M. Heidegger. The unconcealed nature of the Church's Truth.
17. Freedom and necessity (The ideas of Kant and Berdyaev. The mystery of personality).
18. The mystery of the new European scientific world-view (Maritain's *Dream of Descartes*, L. Karsavin's *Giordano Bruno*, Shchedrovitsky).
19. A. Bergson: *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*.
20. The new ontology of N. Hartman (N. Hartman's *New Path of Ontology*).
21. Husserl: *The Crisis of Modern Science*.
22. The modern left-wing consciousness (Adorno, Habermas, Marcuse, Fromm, Horney, Sullivan, MacLuhan, Sartre, Camus, Garaudy, counter-culture).
23. The fate of modern humanism.
24. The problem of God-Manhood in V. Solovyov.
25. A. ——— (?): *Homo Ludens*.
26. Pop culture in Russia (hippies, psychedelic music, narcotics, eros).
27. The Russian religious experience of the world (based on examples from Russian literature).

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