

## Metropolitan Sergi Stragorodsky: The Case of the Representative Individual\*

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### Introduction

In May and June 2005 the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) came to historic agreements marking the closing of a bitter conflict which had lasted nearly 80 years. The nub of the disagreement between the two churches lay in their attitude towards the state, and in particular towards the Soviet communist state which actively persecuted religion in the name of Marxist-Leninist atheism. For the ROCOR and its like-minded followers within the USSR any deal with the Soviet government was anathema. For the ROC accommodation with the regime was at a certain time and to a certain degree a pledge of the church's continued existence. The publication of Metropolitan Sergi (Stragorodsky's) Declaration of Loyalty in July 1927 was the immediate cause of the split. In the recent *Commentary on the Joint Document of the Commissions of the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, 'On the Relations between Church and State'* (one of the four documents produced in joint session by the Commissions of the Moscow Patriarchate and of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) for negotiations concerning their mutual reconciliation, and released to the press by the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate) Metropolitan Sergi's 'Declaration' is referred to as 'one of the most tragic phenomena of recent Church history', 'a morbid, tragic compromise'. The *Commentary* notes, however, that the 'Declaration' 'was written under unprecedented pressure from the militantly atheistic state which threatened to completely eliminate all legal forms of Church life' and moreover that 'the policies of Metropolitan Sergius enabled the re-establishment of Church life during and after the Second World War' (Documents, 2005).

It was Metropolitan Sergi's destiny to be the visible representative of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) during the Stalinist years when the church and all forms of organised religion were being destroyed before his eyes. His Declaration of Loyalty in

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1927 split the ROC, some seeing it as a betrayal, others agreeing with him that it was the only way to maintain the ROC in some kind of public existence. In 1930, at a time of heightened persecution, Sergi made the shocking announcement that there was no religious persecution in the USSR. Many questions arise about Metropolitan Sergi and his motivation. Was he just a Soviet stooge? Did he betray the ROC or save it? Was he a faint-hearted conformist, or a living martyr? In this paper I refer to recent scholarship on Sergi with the aim of contributing to an up-to-date assessment of this central personality in the twentieth-century history of the Orthodox Church, a bridge figure whose career spanned the old regime and the Soviet years and culminated in his election as patriarch under Stalin in 1943.

### **Sergi's Early Career**

The future Patriarch Sergi (Ivan Nikolayevich Stragorodsky) was born in Arzamas in 1867 into a family whose members had been provincial parish priests for several generations, but young Ivan Stragorodsky showed exceptional promise and opted not for the 'white' clergy – the married parish priests – but for the 'black' clergy, the monastics who could hope to rise to be bishops. He had a meteoric career, becoming rector of the Russian embassy church in Athens by the time he was 27 and serving in the Japan Orthodox Mission before returning to teach at the Theological Academy in St Petersburg. In 1901 he was appointed rector of the Academy, the top teaching post, and the same year was consecrated bishop. He was still only 34.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Religious-Philosophical Meetings**

In that same year of 1901 his name became more widely known to the general public in St Petersburg when he was appointed chairman of the newly formed 'Religious-Philosophical Meetings'. These famous meetings, which were set up on the initiative largely of Dmitri Merezhkovsky and his wife Zinaida Gippius, became for nearly two years the forum where members of the intelligentsia who were seeking to explore their faith could meet representatives of the ROC for discussions in an attempt to bridge the 'cultural abyss' which separated them.<sup>2</sup> It was the first time ever that the official representatives of the ROC had deigned to meet the intelligentsia in such a way. Bishop Sergi is described at this time as follows

[T]his gentle cleric with his long red hair and pale, puffy face was well-qualified for his task, being possessed of a subtlety of mind and breadth of vision without which the debates must have reached deadlock or fallen foul of the State long before they did. Nevertheless his appearance was strange, and the opening speech must have sounded somewhat forbidding. (Pyman, 1984, p. 198)

Zinaida Gippius, in a fit of frustrated pique, referred to the church representatives at the meetings as 'little-cultured half-Buddhists, barbarous ill-tempered ascetics of thought ... thorough-going positivists' (Pyman, 1984, p. 201); but Bishop Sergi himself seems to have won the admiration of the company and at the very least kept the meetings going over 20 sessions.<sup>3</sup> His official biographer comments, 'Of all the clergy participants at the meetings Bishop Sergi held to the most radical position, admitting in principle freedom of conscience and the need to separate the church from the state' (Savich, 1947, p. 26), and goes on to recount how at the end of the

sessions the members rose to their feet to express their warm gratitude to him, saying

The spirit of the shepherd rested on the flock and determined the happy and quite unexpected success of the meetings ... We expected nothing but misunderstandings, irritation and cross-purposes ... Instead of a hierarch and a chairman we saw before us a Christian ... and so an exceptional atmosphere was created for the sincere exchange of ideas. (Savich, 1947, pp. 26–27)

Dixon comments on Sergi's contributions to these meetings:

Sergii's contributions to these assemblies not only marked him out as an exceptionally articulate spokesman for his faith, but also served to intensify his sense of belonging to a church under pressure. The transcript of the eighth session, on freedom of conscience, testifies to the young bishop's outlook on issues that were soon to overshadow his reign in Finland. 'We are not so naïve as to confuse religion with nationality [*natsional'nost'*] ... But he went on to say that 'faith has contributed so much to Russian nationality that if a Russian ceases to be Orthodox, then he loses so much of his inner content that he ceases to be Russian.' (Dixon, 2004, p. 54)

If the immediate outcome of these meetings was inconclusive, seeds were sown and in later years in emigration and at home many of the participants from the intelligentsia were to become adherents of the ROC (to mention only Rozanov and Berdyayev among the best known).

### The Last Years of the Tsarist Regime

Bishop Sergi's skills in diplomacy and negotiation were apparent also in his ability to play 'ecclesiastical politics' – how to get on both with the formidable arch-conservative, the Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, Konstantin Pobedonostsev, and with the reformist Metropolitan Antoni (Vadkovsky) of St Petersburg, his immediate superior, friend and ally. He is described by Firsov as 'an ideal churchman of the Russian Orthodox Church in its Petrine model' (Firsov, 2002, p. 23), that is, a churchman brought up on the principles of obedience to the state, and probably without much conception of what freedom of the church from the state might in reality be like. But he had a lively mind and formed his own judgments. His belief in the piety of the Russian people led him at one time to take up the cause of Rasputin, seeing in him an example of a popular *starets*. Later he became disillusioned with Rasputin and thereby incurred the hatred of the tsarina and the dislike of the tsar, factors which at a certain moment may have cost him the nomination to the post of metropolitan of St Petersburg, a position to which one might have expected his talents would have led him.

In October 1905, however, Bishop Sergi was consecrated to the prestigious post of archbishop of Finland and Vyborg.<sup>4</sup> In 1911 he was appointed to the Holy Synod, the governing body of the ROC, and in 1912, most significantly for the future, he became chairman of the commission to prepare for the long-awaited Local Council, though this was not convened until after the fall of the monarchy five years later. His was a voice to be reckoned with in the upper ranks of the church authorities.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Local Council (*Pomestny Sobor*)**

As things turned out, the fall of the monarchy, the collapse of the Provisional Government, the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks and the opening of the Local Council created entirely new circumstances for which little in Bishop Sergi's experience could have prepared him.

The Local Council immediately introduced the principle of election (to the consternation of most of the bishops). Although he had been one of the chief organisers of the Local Council, Bishop Sergi was not popular in spite (or perhaps because) of his prominence under the old regime. In the voting for patriarch he received only four votes out of 309: the lot fell to Tikhon. He also failed to be elected metropolitan of Petrograd (that post went to Veniamin) and gained only the lesser position of archbishop of Vladimir, though soon becoming a member of the new Holy Synod.

### **The First Soviet Years**

By an irony of history, the advent to power of the Bolsheviks coincided with first moment of freedom of the ROC from state control for over two centuries: the opening of the Local Council in December 1917 led to the election of Tikhon as patriarch and the introduction of many long-overdue church reforms, including the election of bishops. But this newly liberated church immediately faced the enormous problems of adaptation and survival under the Soviet regime.

The Local Council was forced to close in September 1918. We have no precise account of Bishop Sergi's activities over the next few years. There is evidence that he clung to his belief in negotiation in dealing with the local soviets. Perhaps his successes with the wilder fringes of the Silver Age intelligentsia, as with the old church hierarchy, led him to believe that negotiation was possible with all manner of people. Besides which, he no doubt failed at first to realise the full implication of Bolshevik atheist ideology, and if he did take note of the ideology in the general maelstrom of ideas that the Revolution whipped up, he almost certainly failed to comprehend the physical ruthlessness with which that ideology would be applied against churches, their treasures, and church people. For instance, he urged his people to cooperate with, and not resist, the local soviets when they came to seize valuables.<sup>6</sup> Firsov comments: 'In my opinion this was very typical of him: he always tried to win a "tactical" victory which often did not result in a "strategic" success and often turned out to be pyrrhic' (Firsov, 1999, p. 48).

We may assume also that he did not fully grasp the deliberate intention of the Bolshevik government to destroy the church, and with it the authority of the patriarch, when in 1922 it created the anti-patriarchal splinter group, the so-called Renovationists. To everyone's surprise (both at the time and to historians today) Sergi immediately joined this schismatic group, thereby lending it greatly added authority. Perhaps with the arrest of Patriarch Tikhon in May 1922, and his year-long imprisonment, not to mention the show trial and execution of Metropolitan Veniamin of Petrograd in the summer of 1923, Sergi thought the Renovationists held the secret of accord with the new civil authority, and anyway by the end of 1923 the canonical patriarchal church seemed barely to exist (See Firsov, 1999, p. 80, quoting Krivova, 1997). Whatever the reasoning that made him join – and it was an action that was held against him in some quarters for the rest of his life – Sergi changed his mind and was reconciled to Tikhon once the patriarch was released

from prison at the end of 1923. The scene of the reconciliation is described in a recent popular book on the Patriarch:

Metropolitan Sergi of Vladimir and Shuisk, that brilliant theologian and canon lawyer, following whose example hundreds of bishops and priests have become Renovationists, stands on the *amvon*, stripped of his archiepiscopal cope, mitre, *panagia*, and cross. He bows low to Patriarch Tikhon, acknowledging his submission and his guilt, and in a voice trembling with emotion he recites the confession. He prostrates himself on the floor . . . Slowly the patriarch hands him back his *panagia* and the cross, his white mitre, his cope and his staff. The patriarch, who all this while has been looking at him sternly and sorrowfully, breaks into a smile, teasingly takes the penitent by his beard, and shaking his head, says, 'You too, old boy, you too broke away from me.' [*I ty, stary, ot menya otkololsya*']. Thereupon the two old men, no longer containing their emotion, weep and embrace each other. (Vostryshnev, 1997, pp. 274–75)<sup>7</sup>

### The Patriarchal Succession

Sergi was rewarded with the bishopric of Nizhni Novgorod and from this time onwards he became the embodiment of the patriarchal principle of church government, the individual who represented the canonical church against all the numerous splinter groups, pro-Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik, pro-patriarchal and anti-patriarchal, that sprang up at home and in the emigration. But above and beyond that he was the one representative of the ROC who was most committed to reaching an accord with the existing civil authority. His principles were to be tested to the limit.

In early 1925, Patriarch Tikhon, in poor health and fearing for the patriarchal succession, nominated three senior bishops to succeed him as *locum tenens* in the event of his death and until such time as the next Local Council could be convened. For some reason, presumably because of his recent apostasy, these three did not include Sergi. Two of the three nominees (Metropolitans Kirill and Agafangel) were already in exile. The third, Metropolitan Petr (Polyansky), aware of the cat and mouse game being played by the authorities against the church, in his turn nominated Sergi to be his deputy. When Patriarch Tikhon died in March 1925, Metropolitan Petr took charge of the church as *locum tenens*, but in December of the same year he too was arrested. So it came about that from the end of 1925 Bishop Sergi as deputy *locum tenens*<sup>8</sup> became canonical head of the church for the next 18 years.

### The Struggle for Legal Recognition

The ROC, inasmuch as it existed at all at this period, existed on a 'semi-legal' basis. In the circumstances of the time, it was impossible to convene a Council: Bishop Sergi himself was confined to Nizhni Novgorod, many of the hierarchs were in prison or exile, communication between them was barely possible. Bishop Sergi believed that his prime task was to get the central authority of the church legally recognised so that it would have the right to convene a Local Council at which the next patriarch could be elected. At that time both the Renovationists and another splinter group, the Grigorianists, had legal status. To achieve this aim Bishop Sergi was prepared to make concessions. In the months that followed he entered into negotiations with the security

services, which were in fact controlling church affairs at the time while fomenting splits and rivalries between the various hierarchs (Tsy-pin, 1997, pp. 127ff.). Sergi had to deal in particular with the head of the Sixth (religious) Section of the OGPU/NKVD, a certain Yevgeni Tuchkov. Tuchkov, who was in his early thirties, had had virtually no formal education: he had risen up through the party organisation from the industrial town of Ivanovo-Voznesensk. He was one of new iron men of the Bolshevik party, determined to use all his skills and cunning to undermine the church and to eradicate all trace of the opium of the people. What, one might wonder, had led such a young man to be concerned with the church? The archives recently opened have revealed that Tuchkov's nickname in the force was 'Igumen', that at this period he was living with his deeply religious mother at the Moscow branch-house on Pervaya Meshchanskaya street of the Diveyevo convent (the community founded by St Serafim of Sarov), where a few sisters remained. Thanks to Tuchkov's presence the house remained open longer than other monastic branch-houses in the capital (Firsov, 1999, pp. 201–2).

Through 1926 and the first months of 1927 Sergi's duel with Tuchkov ran its course: the one-time prince of the church, erudite, loaded with honours, face to face with the uneducated Bolshevik tough guy half his age. But Tuchkov had force on his side. Sergi was taken periodically into custody (some sources say four times, others twice), and he was allegedly threatened with the life of his sister, a nun, and with the lives of other bishops and priests (at that time 117 Orthodox bishops were in prison). In the end agreement was reached and the Declaration of Loyalty was released in July 1927.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Declaration of Loyalty**

Bishop Sergi, it seems, had won legal recognition for the central authority of the ROC, and hence the right to existence of the Synod of Bishops. So now, Sergi addressed his flock:

We want to be Orthodox and at the same time recognise the Soviet Union as our civil motherland, whose joys and successes are our joys and successes, and whose failures are our failures . . . While remaining Orthodox we remember our duty to be citizens of the Union 'not only by fear . . . but by conscience'. (Romans 13.5)<sup>10</sup>

The text continues:

Many people thought that the establishment of Soviet power was a mistake, a chance occurrence, and as such would not last long. People forgot that for the Christian there is no such thing as chance, and that in what is happening here, as everywhere and always, the Hand of God is at work.

It was an illusion, he continued in a reference to the catacomb church, to think that 'a vast society such as our Orthodox Church . . . could continue to exist peacefully in a state while hiding itself from the authorities' (Patriarkh, 1947, pp. 61–62).

The Declaration did not tell the full story. Sergi had conceded the right of the authorities to control the appointment and placement of all bishops, that is in fact for the security services to have control of the most central of all church matters (Mitrofanov, 2002, pp. 389–90). He may have appeared to have averted the takeover of the church as an institution from within, which since 1922 had in fact been the

objective of the state security organs (Firsov, 1999, pp. 72–73), but in reality he had yielded on this very point, giving the security services power to control all decisions in church life.<sup>11</sup>

Even to those who did not know this hidden agenda, the Declaration was widely regarded as a sell-out. It split the ROC immediately into those who followed Bishop Sergi and remained above ground and legal, and those who went underground and continued a hidden existence as the catacomb church. Could Sergi have anticipated what was to come? The Declaration gave the church a bare two years' breathing space: in 1929 all church activity except for the celebration of the liturgy was banned. In 1932 came the First Five Year Plan of Atheism. These were the years of *likholetiyе*, of immense social upheaval, of famine, of fear. By the time of the outbreak of war in 1941 the church had suffered two devastating waves of persecution (1929–32 and 1935–38). Only four senior clergy were left at liberty and one of them was Sergi. It is hard (even impossible) to imagine how Sergi survived those years and what his inner feelings were. In 1930 he made a humiliating public announcement that there was no religious persecution in the USSR, though there is some evidence that he was forced to make this announcement under threat of the mass arrest of all the remaining bishops.<sup>12</sup>

But his spirit was not destroyed. When the Germans invaded in June 1941, and Stalin panicked and remained silent, it was Sergi who issued a call to the faithful to defend their country. His reward was to come in September 1943 when he and two other old and broken clerics were summoned to the Kremlin and ordered to restart the church.

### **The Revival of the Patriarchate in 1943**

Stalin's motives for the reestablishment of the Patriarchate in the summer of 1943, at a moment when the tide of war had turned in favour of the Soviet Union, were complex. The regime needed a centralised church authority ('a Vatican of sorts' as Stalin is supposed to have said to Metropolitan Sergi) in order to deal with the reconquered western lands of the Soviet Union with their many churches, in order to give authority to the Russian Church over the autocephalous churches of the adjacent countries, and in order to bolster western support for the war effort. In particular a delegation from the Church of England, led by the Archbishop of York, was due to arrive in Moscow in September.

Metropolitan Sergi had been evacuated to Ul'yanovsk in the autumn of 1941. The conditions there were harsh: a photograph of him in July 1943 shows him sitting with Metropolitan Aleksii, both old men gaunt and hollow-cheeked (Patriarkh, 1947, photograph facing p. 240). But his fortune was about to change dramatically.

In July 1943, apparently unknown to him, the head of the NKVD, Merkulov, advised the Party that he should be returned to Moscow in order for him to maintain control of the churches now being liberated in the west (Miner, 2003, p. 124). In August Metropolitan Sergi and his staff returned to Moscow. At some point that same summer, Stalin, Molotov, Beria and Malenkov took the decision, without apparently consulting any of the church hierarchs, that the Patriarchate should be restored (Miner, 2003, p. 124). On 4 September Stalin held a special meeting with the NKVD colonel Grigori Karpov to question him about the church and its personnel and to establish the formation of a Council to control the church. Two hours later Karpov telephoned Sergi to ask when he could come to a meeting with Stalin. Sergi answered 'today', and so Sergi together with Metropolitan Nikolai (Yarushevich) and Aleksii

(Simansky), were driven that evening by limousine to the Kremlin and ushered into the presence of Stalin for a momentous meeting that lasted just under two hours (Pospelovsky, 1997, pp. 140–41).<sup>13</sup> Together with Stalin in the room were Molotov, the foreign secretary, and Karpov. It seems that Sergi had had no previous meeting with Stalin,<sup>14</sup> but from the readiness with which he put his demands it seems that he must have had some inkling of what was to come, and certainly his wits were about him.

Stalin invited his guests to say what the needs of the church were. Sergi answered that the most urgent matter was to convene a Synod of bishops which could elect a patriarch (Pospelovsky, 1997, p. 141 and n.5).<sup>15</sup> In order to hasten matters (Sergi suggested it would take a month to convene the Synod) Stalin offered aeroplanes to bring the hierarchs to Moscow so that the Synod could take place on 8 September. Sergi refused Stalin's offer of finances. The metropolitans then asked for theological courses to be reopened, to which Stalin responded by offering the right to open a theological academy and seminaries. This the hierarchs rejected, saying they did not have the personnel. Sergi then asked for permission to publish a journal. Stalin answered, 'You may and you must publish a journal.' Sergi asked for the right of local bishops to approach local authorities for permission to reopen churches. Stalin approved this too. Metropolitan Aleksii asked for the exiled and imprisoned hierarchs to be released. Stalin said, 'Give us a list and we will consider it.' In fact of the list of 24 names eventually submitted a considerable number had already been liquidated by the NKVD, a fact which the metropolitans obviously did not know (Pospelovsky, 1997, p. 142).<sup>16</sup> The conversation touched on various other practical matters (candle-making factories, finances and the rights of parish priests). Stalin offered patriarchal office premises in the former German ambassador's residence, together with cars and special rations. Having repeatedly asked the hierarchs if they had any further requests, Stalin then informed them of the formation of a Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church which would be headed by Karpov. Karpov records the following exchange:

'How do you react to that?' [asked Stalin]. All three declared they reacted very positively to the appointment of comrade Karpov to that position ... Then turning to me [Karpov], comrade Stalin said '... but just remember firstly that you are not a procurator general, and secondly that you must do all you can to underline the independence of the church.' (Zapiska, 2003, p. 262)

There is a story, not recorded by Karpov, that Stalin said to the metropolitans, 'Where are your personnel? Where have they got to?' Sergi is said to have looked Stalin in the eye and rejoined, 'We lack personnel for several reasons, one of which is we train a man to be a priest, but he becomes a marshal of the Soviet Union.' Having thus won Stalin's sympathy, at the end of the meeting Sergi was so exhausted that Stalin himself helped him down the stairs (Miner, 2003, pp. 125–27). Karpov merely concludes his notes of the meeting with the laconic words, 'This meeting was a historic event for the church and the great effect it had on Metropolitans Sergi, Aleksii and Nikolai was plain to all who knew and saw Sergi and the others in those days' (Zapiska, 2003, p. 263).

On 8 September an extraordinary Council (of a mere 19 hierarchs) did indeed assemble, from which a Holy Synod was formed, and the Synod in its turn, on 12 September, elected Sergi patriarch of Moscow and all Rus'. Perhaps after all this it is

not surprising that a bare eight months later Patriarch Sergi died quite unexpectedly of a stroke.

Most of what Stalin promised was never fulfilled. The hierarchs themselves were deeply sceptical about the government's motives and with good reason. The church had been called back into existence largely for foreign propaganda purposes, and in this respect the visit of the Archbishop of York, Dr Cyril Garbett, later that September, was an outstanding success: Dr Garbett enthused over the splendours of Orthodox worship and the crowded churches, and went home to tell the world of the freedom offered to believers by the Soviet regime (Miner, 2003, pp. 264–70).

Taking the longer view it is clear that Sergi did save the ROC, by being its representative figure, who survived until circumstances made it possible for church life to begin again. And after all the Russian Orthodox Church is in existence today. But if in one sense he saved the church from complete eradication, in another he condemned it to long years of subservience to the state, introspection and isolation from society. This is what Firsov (1999) in his book *Vremya v sud'be* describes as the negative legacy of 'Sergianism' (*Sergianstvo*).

We cannot assess the man without considering his Christian faith. In the words of the 1927 Declaration, he believed that nothing happened by chance, that all is in God's hands. Metropolitan Veniamin (Fedchenko), who knew him in earlier times, remembers him as having 'a harmonious and balanced nature, even in pre-revolutionary times not very prone to talk of "the accursed questions", though he was constantly thinking of them'. Metropolitan Veniamin remembers him saying 'In spite of everything, God's world still stands ... Governments may change, and still God's world endures ... Political systems may change and yet it remains. There may be wars, revolutions, and yet it still stands fast' (Firsov, 1999, p. 55).

Metropolitan Sergi's cell servant for the last ten years of his life, Archimandrit Ioann (Razumov), who knew him intimately, describes his prayer practice. He would rise unfailingly at five in the morning and say the office. This was followed by Bible study in three languages (Hebrew, Greek and Slavonic). Then he was ready to work. He continually practised the Jesus Prayer, and said the evening office before retiring to bed. He used to wake at three in the morning for the 'Twelve Psalms'. He venerated St Serafim whom he believed to be his life-long protector, and while the monastery of Sarov was still open used to welcome the pilgrims passing through Nizhni Novgorod. 'Everything about him', recalls Fr Ioann, 'was modest and simple. All his movements, the kind and caring tone of his voice, his good humour and his unfailing equanimity and calmness reflected the depth of his spiritual world and the illumination and concentration of his mind' (Razumov, 1947, pp. 232–33).

However saintly his personal life, we are left with some questions. Was it right to hand over the church to the security services for the sake of its legal existence? Was it right to lie blatantly for the sake of keeping it in being at all? Fr Georgi Mitrofanov points out the uniqueness of the situation of the church in the Soviet Union, commenting that Metropolitan Sergi trod a path never before trodden in the history of the World Church (Mitrofanov, 2002, p. 400): and who then are we to judge him?

### Acknowledgement

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**Notes**

- 1 See Dixon, 2004, for an in-depth study of Sergi's views and administrative policies in the years preceding the 1917 Revolution.
- 2 On the Religious-Philosophical Meetings see: Pyman, 1984; Dixon, 2004, p. 54.
- 3 Firsov lists the 20 sessions, lasting over a year and a half, as: the church and the intelligentsia (I–II), Lev Tolstoy and the Russian church (III–IV), freedom of conscience (VII–IX), spirit and flesh (X–XI), marriage (XII–XVI), and the development of dogma (XVIII–XX) (Firsov, 2002, p. 110).
- 4 On Sergi's administration of the archdiocese of Finland and Vyborg, see the essential study by Dixon (Dixon, 2004, pp. 50–73).
- 5 On Bishop Sergi's talents and his work as an original theologian, see Mitrofanov, 2002, pp. 376–80.
- 6 Firsov, 1999, pp. 46–47, quoting from an archival source.
- 7 Vostryshev does not give a source for this passage. On the complexities of this situation, the interrelationships between Sergi and the others, and the role of Metropolitan Petr, see: Stratonov, 1995; Yeleverfi, 1995. On the fate of Metropolitan Petr, see Corley, 1996, pp. 108–12.
- 8 Following the execution of Metropolitan Petr in 1937 Sergi became officially *locum tenens*.
- 9 The text, dated 16/29 July 1927 and signed by Metropolitan Sergi and eight members of the Temporary Patriarchal Holy Synod, is published in Patriarkh, 1949, pp. 59–63. On the draft of the Declaration, which the authorities did not accept, see Mitrofanov, 2002, pp. 383–87.
- 10 A point lost in translation is that the 'joys, successes and failures' refer to the 'Motherland' (*rodina*) and not to the Soviet Union.
- 11 On the state organs of control over the church, see the important article by T.A. Chumachenko (2003).
- 12 According to a letter received by Metropolitan Yevlogi, Sergi had been given the text of the announcement and then kept in solitary confinement. 'He was faced with the dilemma of either saying that the church was persecuted, in which case all the Tikhonite bishops would be arrested – that is, the whole church organisation would be destroyed – or of saying that there was no persecution and being shamed as a liar' (Yevlogi, 1994, pp. 568–69).
- 13 The full text of Karpov's notes on the meeting has now been published: Zapiska, 2003.
- 14 Pospelovsky debates this issue: Pospelovsky, 1997, pp. 140–41.
- 15 The Synod had not met since 1935 because virtually all its members had been arrested.
- 16 Of the whole list only one, Bishop Nikolai Mogilevsky, was in fact released.

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