

POSTSCRIPT TO THE ROME-MOSCOW AGREEMENT

[The following article appeared as a supplement to *Approaches* No.88, Ash Wednesday, 1984. It has been republished on the *Apropos* website at www.apropos.org.uk Our thanks are extended to A de M who scanned the original. ASF, Editor, *Apropos*.]

Subsequent to the publication of *Approaches* No.86, which included the Supplement, 'The Rome-Moscow Agreement Definitely Confirmed', we received the following letter, dated November 6, 1984 from John Haffert, leader of the Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima.

'Dear Hamish,

I received the recent No. 86 of APPROACHES with all of its enclosures. Some of it was marvellous . . . but some, of course, was shocking.

I am grieved at the calumnies against Cardinal Tisserant. And believe me, as Msgr. Roche says, they are indeed calumnies. Cardinal Tisserant lived the devotion of St. Grignon de Montfort. Few people knew what a truly holy, very holy, priest he was. But I once had the privilege of seeing his private bedroom . . . behind the throne room, behind a massive library. It was one simple room, and the only chair was a canvas beach chair, even without a pillow. It was a simple iron bed. And the only other furnishings in the room were the shelves, covered by simple doors, for his clothing. Outside the room was a small balcony where he walked up and down saying his rosary and his office . . . as his place of exercise.

And yet many would say that he was the most powerful Cardinal in the Church.

And as for his anti-Communism, while many Cardinals and Bishops of Rome were against Fatima, and most specifically against the Blue Army of Our Lady, the Cardinal came out publicly to endorse it and fearlessly proclaimed that Our Lady had need of a spiritual army against the forces of evil.

He was obedient to the Holy Father in everything . . . but in matters where he had his personal liberty there was no one . . . I repeat, no one who more strongly advocated the Apostolate of Prayer for the conversion of Russia, and the spread of the Message of Fatima, than Cardinal Tisserant.

And I can think of nothing which more angered the Soviets than this. In the Golden Jubilee issue of Science and Religion they mentioned Fatima as one of the three main reasons why they had not succeeded in their world atheistic revolution. And the other two reasons were Hitler and the Cold War!

*Dear Hamish, there are some things which indeed are *secret*. These are matters of diplomacy.*

And Nikodim walked a very fine and difficult line with his Soviet masters. They could never really know whether he was another Thomas More or not.

But he was. And Cardinal Tisserant knew it. And in that meeting, as time will eventually show, it was not the Church which was compromised, but the Soviet's forces of militant

atheism.

You have remarked that Nikodim died in the arms of Pope John Paul I. Did you know that as he died in the Pope's arms, he whispered a 'secret' to the Holy Father? And do you remember that the Pope said that the secret brought him great joy?

What was that secret?

Can we not suppose that Cardinal Tisserant, himself a saintly man and perhaps the greatest churchman of our century, somehow knew even that far in advance?

We were able to get a glimpse of Nikodim when he came to Fatima unexpectedly, unannounced, and came to the Blue Army House to see the Icon of Kazan. To the amazement of all, completely *from memory*, he did the entire Akathist of Our Lady before the Icon . . . something our own chaplain there, who recited the Akathist so many times, could never have done.

Then Nikodim went down to the Chapel of the Apparitions, fell to his knees at the place of the apparitions and remained completely abstract in prayer for a long time . . . and seemed almost reluctantly to tear himself away . . . and refusing to present himself to the Bishop of Fatima, or to anyone else. But he was so moved that he took his pectoral cross and gave it to our Chaplain at Fatima!

We should not always judge by appearance.

I enclose a copy of my letter to Msgr. Roche. I really am grieved . . . even though I knew Cardinal Tisserant so little and so briefly . . . at the calumnies that are being heaped upon him after his death. I hope you can do something to rectify this injustice.

The enclosed check is to keep APPROACHES coming to us. Perhaps when Msgr, Roche finishes his book you will be able to give it an objective review. People are writing about the cardinal who did not know him at all but how are simply drawing conclusions from hearsay or appearances.

And appearances are so deceptive . . . especially in the case of the secret, extraordinary role of Nikodim in the mystery of Our Lady's promise to convert Russia.

In a union of prayers, I am,

Yours in the Sacred Hearts,

(signed J.M Haffert)

19.11.84

Dear John,

Many thanks for your letter of the 6th which awaited me on my return from a 10 days' visit to Ireland.

I have certainly no wish to libel anyone, either directly or indirectly, and I shall certainly be only too pleased to quote your observations in Approaches No, 88 (No, 87 is already being dispatched). I have also forwarded a copy of your letter to Jean Madiran, editor of Itinéraires.

I would however point out that quite independently of the personal character of either Msgr, Nikodim or Cardinal Tisserant, Msgr. Roche nevertheless confirms Madiran's main thesis concerning the Rome-Moscow Agreement.

Incidentally, I take advantage of this opportunity to draw your attention to the 3-volume study of "Toute la Verite sur Fatima" by Brother Michel de la Sainte-Trinite. The 3rd volume has yet to appear but I found the first 2 volumes - 850 pages in all - most fascinating. In particular, he gives documentary evidence concerning the Ostpolitik of Pius XI, which clearly stood in the way of his consecrating Russia to Mary's Immaculate Heart. It was only after he had come under the influence of Cardinal Pacelli (the future Pius XII) that he published Divini Redemptoris, but by then other political considerations had intervened. Most interesting of all however is the testimony the books include concerning the sanctity of the 3 seers. Speaking as a grandfather of 25, only too aware of the sinful inclinations of even the most charming children, I find the sanctity, the balance and the equanimity of all 3 a greater miracle than even that of the sun, stupendous as it was . . .

With, every good wish for Xmas and 1985,

Yours most sincerely in Christ the King,

(Signed) Hamish Fraser

POSTSCRIPT TO A POSTSCRIPT

We would certainly not dispute John Haffert's evidence which would, seem to indicate that Mgr. Nikodim had been touched by grace, for did he not have the greatest of all possible graces! that of dying virtually in the arms of the Sovereign Pontiff. However, not even this must blind us to the objective significance of Mgr. Nikodim's sensational rise to power under most ominous circumstances, and the undoubted fact that he was the trusted emissary of Moscow. For he served his Soviet masters not only by his role in effecting the Rome-Moscow Agreement, but also by his role within the World Council of Churches.

Concerning this we wish to quote some interesting excerpts from the controversial lecture by Michael Bourdeaux, Director of Keston College, delivered on October 29, 1984 at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and abridged for publication in *The Tablet* of November 3, 1984. In Michael Bourdeaux's own words:

'In the late 1950s membership of the Russian churches in the World Council became a practical possibility.

'On the Russian side, the architect of these new relations was Metropolitan Nikolai (Yarushevich) of Krutitsy and Kolomna. In December 1959, a World Council delegation went to Moscow under the leadership of the general secretary, Dr Visser 't Hooft, for a

visit which turned out to mark a decisive moment in the ecumenical movement, for it led to a successful application for membership of the World Council of Churches by the Russian Orthodox Church. This was presented to the World Council's third assembly in New Delhi in 1961.

'At the same time, Khrushchev's campaign of virulent persecution was in its early stages. The year in which the Orthodox Church joined the World Council was also the blackest for religious liberty since before the second world war. Twenty thousand functioning Orthodox Churches were being reduced by two-thirds through brutal physical measures; after only 15 years of renewed activity, theological seminaries were being closed again and any who resisted were being imprisoned after only a crude pretence of justice.'

'The Russian Orthodox Church was thus taking a decisive new step against a background of acute crisis. Nothing embodied this more symbolically than the events surrounding the man whose efforts had brought the church to this point - Metropolitan Nikolai. Seemingly at the height of his powers, he was removed from office in 1960, almost certainly on orders from the highest level in the kremlin. It was therefore Archbishop (later Metropolitan) Nikodim, then aged only 32, who led the delegation to New Delhi.'

Such were the circumstances under which Mgr. Nikodim had been selected by Khrushchev for the purpose of integrating the Soviet-controlled *Russian Orthodox Church* within the *World Council of Churches*, within which, as Michael Bourdeaux points out 'The Soviet representatives could *de facto* exercise a veto over any activities of the World Council of Churches in defence of human rights in the eastern bloc, to be circumvented only in cases of special magnitude.'

Objectively therefore Mgr. Nikodim had indeed served his Soviet masters well: *by vetoing not only any discussion of Communism by the Second Vatican Council, but also any WCC activities designed to defend human rights.*

There is however no contradiction between this and his subsequent conversion and happy death in the arms of John Paul I - any more than there was any contradiction between Saul of Tarsus' persecution of Christians and his subsequently becoming St. Paul, the Apostle of the Nations.

If, notwithstanding the evil he had wrought qua faithful emissary of Moscow, Mgr. Nikodin did indeed have a *'happy death'* this should not only remind us that the Lord is indeed *'merciful and compassionate'* (James 5,11); it should also inspire us to pray continually for a happy death, not only for ourselves and our friends, but also for the innumerable Churchmen who are today no less subversive than was Mgr. Nikodim who, unlike them, had not been privileged with membership of the One True Church.

(.....)