

The Russian Church unfrocks Tikhon

By *D. Ivon Jones* (Moscow).

Just at the time when the Archbishop of Canterbury and the capitalists are raising a fury about the persecution of the Church in Russia, the All-Russian Synod of the Russian Church meets and declares that Tikhon is no longer Patriarch, derobes him of his priestly cassock for allying the church with counter-revolution, and says that he shall henceforth be known as plain "Mr. Belavina"!

The Synod further declares the office of Patriarch abolished, as a relic of Tsardom.

Just as the Protestants of England sought salvation from

defeat by seeking to reconcile "religion and science", so the All Russian Synod declares the task of the church to be the "reconciliation of religion with revolution, preserving the dogmas of the orthodox Russian Church, and at the same time sincerely accepting the great Russian revolution with its world consequences."

What about religious persecution in Soviet Russia? Here is the Synod's declaration:

"According to the Soviet Constitution, freedom of thought in religion is the right of all citizens. The decree on the separation of church and state guarantees this right. Freedom for religious propaganda (side by side with the right to propagate anti-religious ideas), gives a possibility to believers to defend their religious convictions. For that reason it is not possible for the church to regard the Soviet Power as anti-Christian; on the contrary, the Synod draws attention to the fact that the Soviet Power, by its methods, is the only State power in the world which is able to realize on earth the ideal rule of God."

The Synod was attended by 350 delegates and in its varied composition reflected the enormous change that has come over the Russian Church, precisely because of the freedom of religious discussion. Under the Tsar there was no such thing as freedom of religious thought. Now the church is moving away from orthodoxy; in fact there is far more freedom of discussion now than would please the Archbishop of Canterbury;—he will soon be excommunicating the Russian Church for heresy.

The Church is dividing into various groups of thought. Of the 350 delegates composing the Synod, there were 150 from the group which calls itself the "Living Church", and about an equal number from the "Union of Communities of the Early Apostolic Church"; six representing the group "Resurrection", of which the Metropolitan Antonin, honorary president of the Synod, is a member. The question now is: can the old bottles hold the new wine?

The Synod traced the history of Tikhon's counter-revolutionary activities for the past five years. It accuses him of deceiving the faithful in the interests of the White Guards. "Tikhon is not the leader of the church, but a leader of the counter-revolution" says the resolution. "The Patriarchate was established for counter-revolutionary purposes. The primitive church had no Patriarch, but administered the church by Synods. It is therefore abolished". And so the Pope is a thing of the past.

"Patriarch Tikhon committed a crime against the Russian church in making the church an ally of the counter-revolution, and therefore he should stand before the revolutionary tribunal. At this moment the Russian Church must declare before the Revolutionary Tribunal on which side it is: in the dock with Tikhon—or with the prosecution on the seat of judgment. We say—on the seat of judgment."

—So says the group "Resurrection" in its meeting held before the Synod.

And what is the attitude of the Synod towards the proletarian revolution? Here is the resolution. What does "my lord of Canterbury" say to it?

"The All Russian delegated Synod bears witness before the whole church and humanity, that the world is divided into two classes: capitalist exploiters and the proletariat, on whose blood the capitalist world builds its well being. In all the world only the Soviet Power of Russia has entered upon a struggle with this great social evil. Christians cannot be indifferent in this struggle. The Synod denounces capitalism as a deadly evil and the struggle against it is a holy duty for Christians. In the Soviet Power the Synod perceives a world leader for fraternity, equality and peace among the nations. The Synod denounces, with all its religious and moral authority, the international and national counter-revolution.

The Synod calls upon every true Christian citizen of Russia to a united front under the leadership of the Soviet Government, to enter into the struggle against the world evil of social injustice."

Bishop Blake, representing the American Methodist Episcopal Church, was a specially invited guest at the Synod and greeted it in language that would make Rockefeller strike him off his subscription list.

Does all this mean that the attacks of the Communists upon religious superstition are going to cease? The *Pravda* points out that the church, like other social groups, is arranging itself on the side of the proletariat, in order to preserve its existence. In the arena of full freedom of religious discussion the sale of the "anti-religious" papers of the Party is being pushed with greater vigor than ever. The Church has capitulated to the Revolution. The proletarian revolution has forced it to declare for some of the early ideas of social justice for which the Christian Church was supposed to be founded. It has followed; it has not led.

The *Pravda* concludes an article on the "Regrouping of Social Forces" thus:

"It goes without saying our Party will not give its blessing to religion, even when the church tries to bless the Party. But the inevitable conflict is carried up into a higher plane and changes its form. For with us there is a fundamentally new social equilibrium, under the direction and hegemony of the victorious proletariat."

The fury in England at the execution of a counter-revolutionary priest, has left Russia quite cold. Trotzky in a speech on the 5th of May said, that the Capitalists have siezed this incident to give vent to their chagrin at the cardinal fact of the present situation in Russia: which is, that Lenin and the Communist Party have definitely shunted the Soviet locomotive away from capitalism, and are driving it straight ahead towards socialism. That is why they are frothing about the priests.

Opening of the All-Russian Exhibition

We especially request the Party press to reprint this article. Ed.

On the 15th of August of this year an event will take place in Moscow which is of the greatest importance for Soviet Russia: The opening of the All-Russian Exhibition for agriculture and home industry (with a foreign department). New Russia will display everything its economy has created or developed under the new social order.

The exhibition is being organized on the suggestion of the IX. Soviet Congress, and pursues far-reaching aims. Its enormous importance for the future economic development of Russia consists in its cultural and enlightening role. It will have to bring the worker nearer to the peasant, and to show both parties of what great mutual help they can be to one another. The cause of the low level of agriculture under Tzarism was, to a large extent, the loose relations between town and country. Russian agronomy made progress only within the walls of the city. The laboratory of the savant remained closed to the peasant. The Soviet Government, on the other hand, has broken fundamentally with this system, and regards as the only pre-requisite for the economic strengthening of the country the close contact between town industry and agriculture, in the application of the advances made by science to actual farming practice. However, the exhibition will by no means be an agricultural one exclusively. It will display every branch of non-city industry in the country, and its natural treasures. Every province of the republic will exhibit the products of its raw materials and its local production, whether it be from Turkestan (cotton), from the vineyards of the South or from the forests of the North (furs). The visitor to the exhibition will be able to acquaint himself with all the innumerable natural treasures of Russia, systematized in scientific order. Every branch and description of Russian economy will be graphically displayed by the aid of a tremendous number of objects from every part of Russia: Tillage, work in flax and hemp, cultivation of vegetables, cattle rearing, vintage, silk worm breeding, etc., besides every branch of the multilarian home industry, from Buchara carpets to articles of Karelian birch.

The Exhibition Committee is at present chiefly occupied with the erection of the exhibition buildings, with obtaining building materials and collecting the objects to be exhibited. The exhibition grounds are situated on the bank of the *Moskva*, from where a magnificent view is to be obtained of the *Kreml* and the whole city.

The exhibition—this general review of the whole of Russian economics—is not alone of extreme importance for the economic development of Russia, it is at the same time exceedingly important for the resumption of commercial relations between the Workers' and Peasants' Republic and the outer world. Extensive arrangements are being made for a Foreign Department on a large scale, so that western industrial undertakings which are desirous of resuming trade with Russia will have the opportunity of exhibiting their samples, if these are likely to be useful to Russian agriculture. They will also be enabled to acquaint themselves with those Russian raw materials which are intended for export. Commercial agreements will be concluded directly in the trade and export department of the exhibition. The foreign exhibitors—citizens of those states which have resumed diplomatic and commercial relations with Russia—will enjoy a number of privileges and advantages. Many firms and undertakings have already expressed to the Foreign Department of the exhibition their desire to take part in the exhibition. The representatives of the commercial world of the West will doubtless arrive at the conviction that Russia has already won the first victory in the battle against economic decay.