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Vladimir Mikhailovich Gundyayev's asymmetrical assault on Orthodoxy

by Archon Elias Damianakis

For years, Patriarch Cyril's Synods have engaged in a relentless assault to undermine Orthodoxy and the rule of canon law and ecclesiology around the world. The Kremlin's Patriarch Cyril employs an asymmetric arsenal that includes uncanonical geographic invasions, cyberattacks, disinformation, support for fringe ecclesial groups. The Kremlin based Patriarchate of Moscow has refined the use of these tools over time and these attacks have intensified in scale and complexity across Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

If we fail to work with urgency to address this complex and growing threat, the patriarchal regime in Moscow will become further emboldened. It will continue to develop and refine its arsenal to use on Patriarchates around the world. Astonished by the poverty of the Russian Orthodox ecclesial arguments and the success of the monastic based misinformation ministry we are obliged to present the surefooted and historical ecclesiastic authority we have inherited. This is the first in a multi-part series addressing the abhorrent behavior by Patriarch Cyril of Moscow.

The Soviet Union motto was "Workers of the world, unite!" with Stalin as supreme ruler. "Stalin was paranoid that capitalist powers such as the United States were willing to destroy the Soviet Union and communism." Cyril and his cohorts continue with this mentality with a slight metamorphosis. Today's paranoiac mantra is capitalist powers and ancient patriarchates under the thumb of the United States are attempting to destroy Mother Russia and the Orthodox Church.



The current Kremlin based Patriarchate of Moscow was established in 1941 by Joseph Stalin. Stalin “revived the Russian Orthodox Church to intensify patriotic support for the war effort.” Some historians argue that the Russian church really did not start until after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990 while others maintain 1990 was the beginning of the collapse, of the Russian Church. The election of Patriarchs Alexi (1990) and Cyril (2009) are fraught with the seeds of Orthodox disunity and notorious Soviet style politics.



In 1961, Yevgeny Yevtushenko asked, “How to remove Stalin from Stalin’s heirs,” and yet today we find the new Orthodox Stazi thriving in the Kremlin. Most salient example these days is the rash of historical and theological revisionisms which emanates from the Moscow Patriarchate and plays an important role in manufacturing public discontent. “The Church positioned itself as the Ministry of Ideology,” says Luchenko. The Patriarch did not shy away from praising Putin in public, even going as far as saying: ‘Putin saved Russia from collapse.’ When Putin needed the Patriarch to support his foreign policy Patriarch Kirill supported the Kremlin during the war in eastern Ukraine. The result was huge losses for the Moscow Patriarchy in Ukraine, home to millions of Orthodox believers.”



You must marvel at Cyril's chutzpah. Headlines like “Patriarch Kirill is Russia’s first truly Soviet patriarch” does not deter his audacious wounding pursuit of his ultimate objective: absolute Orthodox dictatorship. It is not an "information war" Cyril practices but a "war on information," a war on truth. There is an objective truth in Orthodoxy and Cyril endeavors to debilitate it.





While threats of schism are headline-grabbing they are also distractions from the Moscow Patriarchate's real plans and dirty little longings. The Kremlin's actions are particularly frightening because the lies "leadership based on numbers" and "wherever there is a Russian there too is the Russian church" are so antithetical to the Orthodox Ethos. Though it is good business, the faithful aren't totally sure how to protect themselves from ecclesiological hackers. And this aggressor mentality is still a drop in the bucket, in terms of overall organized crime tactics utilized by the Kremlin based church. Let us recall disinformation is a Soviet invention. "The English word disinformation is a loan translation of the Russian *dezinformatsiya*, derived from the title of a KGB black propaganda department."

The Russian Church's belligerent attitude to go after entire communities, churches, senior hierarchy, and Patriarchates to an extent that would make other syndicates squeamish. The Cosa Nostra ("our thing") approach of Moscow is notorious for enforcing omert, its code of silence, on clergy, and even other local churches with differing opinions.

The Post-Soviet Kremlin based ecclesio-mafia tactic utilizes state assets to finance the banking, construction, and additional ministries of strategic churches throughout the region. The Kremlin takes advantage of poor communities and feudal societies to maintain power and influence. Its subversive monastic media organizations modify ecclesiology from within, by introducing their illicit teachings into the Canonical Church Tradition.

When we think about mafia organizations, we are inclined to see only their illicit activities: drug trafficking, weapons, and racketeering but the Kremlin Patriarchate's dishonesty is only the surface; behind these lies an enormous network, an amassed political power infrastructure, which is camouflaged and laundered until it bears a resemblance to an Orthodox Church. As difficult as it is to track the routes of political influence in the Kremlin based church, it is even harder to follow an historical-distortion trail in the era of on-line ecclesio-propaganda and revisionist cyber canon manipulation.

Despite the clear assaults on our Mother Church of Constantinople and other Ancient Patriarchates, the Orthodox church still does not have a coherent, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to the Kremlin Patriarchate's "malign influence operations." It is important to draw a distinction between Mr. Cyril's corrupt regime and his disguised influencers and the people of the Russian Orthodox Church who seek sincere faithfulness. We pray for them.