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Ecumenical Patriarch: Russian propaganda does not intimidate me



Responding to the Russian attacks against the Ecumenical Patriarchate and his own person, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew refers to “Stalinist propaganda narratives” and “subversive actions,” making clear that such tactics do not intimidate him.

As he remarks pointedly in an interview with the newspaper Ta Nea Savvatokyriako, it is they who should be afraid, not of him, but of the Day of Judgment.

When asked whether he feels concerned or intimidated by the Russian attacks directed at him personally, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew responds with characteristic clarity: “Intimidated? No, no! Russian propaganda does not intimidate me. I fear neither the false and fabricated information they disseminate, nor the dirty attacks orchestrated by various agencies, nor the slanders directed against our Patriarchate and my person, nor the Russian internet

trolls, nor their mouthpiece websites.

Whatever they may do to obscure the truth, they cannot hide it; nor can they deceive everyone forever. I do not fear them. Rather, it is they who should fear the Day of Judgment, if indeed they believe. Among many other things, they will be held to account for the war in Ukraine, for having described it as “holy,” and for their attempts to fracture the unity of Orthodoxy by employing Stalinist propaganda tactics aimed at controlling, subjugating, and manipulating Orthodox peoples.

It is clear that they seek to create a Russian-controlled hybrid, a construct bearing no genuine relation to Orthodoxy. They therefore accuse Constantinople of precisely what they themselves are doing, judging others by their own actions. They attempt to evade the heavy responsibilities they bear and to assign them elsewhere. It is always someone else who is to blame. This is a mirror effect, a projection onto others of their own subversive conduct.

I therefore repeat once again: I do not fear them. I do not fear insults, slanders, improprieties, nor anything else they may be planning.

The recent statement issued by the Russian intelligence services revealed not only how far propaganda is willing to go, but also exposed, urbi et orbi, who truly holds the upper hand in ecclesiastical affairs in Russia.

Referring to the progress of the peace negotiations concerning Ukraine, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew emphasises that he prays constantly for the cessation of wars and conflicts in every part of the world.

“From the very outset, we stood by the Ukrainian people, who have been severely tested by the Russian invasion. Our solidarity extended not only to our Orthodox brothers and sisters, but to all Ukrainians, who, with courage and resolve, like another David facing Goliath, defend the sacred values of their homeland and resist the forces seeking to plunge Ukraine into the darkness of humiliation, exploitation, subjugation, and enslavement.”

It is deeply troubling that the architects and proponents of the so-called “Russian World” do not hesitate to instrumentalise religious sentiment and to distort Orthodox theology and tradition by branding this war as “holy.” The victims of this war, to date, number in the tens of thousands, including young soldiers on both sides, civilian populations, and, tragically, many young children.

As I have stated on other occasions, I am equally grieved that ecclesiastical figures

have embraced and repeated this unholy and heretical narrative, evidently yielding to the dictates of political authorities, perhaps in exchange for the multifaceted support provided by various propaganda mechanisms and services. No, therefore, this war is not holy; it is expansionist. It is utterly demonic, the product of vain individuals addicted to the opium of power.

Peace must and can return to Ukraine, grounded in respect for its national independence and supported by a comprehensive plan for reconstruction. Only then can a hopeful future be secured for all Ukrainians, and certainly for our Orthodox brothers and sisters, who, united, must work together toward this common goal.

The First-Throned Church of Constantinople, from which many peoples received the gift of Baptism, including today's Ukrainians and Russians, fervently prays with all its strength to Christ, the Prince of Peace, to bring this bloodshed to an end and to restore peace once more."

Regarding the Christian populations of the Middle East, he voices profound concern over the continued erosion of the Christian presence in the lands where our Lord Jesus Christ was born, taught, was crucified, and rose again.

"It grieves us deeply to witness our brothers and sisters suffering and living in constant danger amid conditions of insecurity and conflict. As always, we stand in solidarity with the ancient Patriarchates of Antioch and of Jerusalem, uniting our prayers with those of their Primates, His Beatitude Patriarch Ioannis and His Beatitude Patriarch Theophilos, together with their clergy and faithful.

We hope that local governments, as well as all those working for a peaceful Middle East, will commit themselves fully to the protection of Christian communities, and indeed of all inhabitants, by fostering conditions of security, stability, and sustainable economic development."

The Ecumenical Patriarch expressed cautious optimism regarding the reopening of the Halki Theological School. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has reportedly sent a relevant letter to the Minister of National Education of Turkey, initiating a dialogue on this matter with the Patriarchate.

"I believe that substantial progress has been achieved, although certain issues still remain to be settled. Nevertheless, there appears to be the requisite political will, which gives us reason to hope that positive developments will soon follow from the state authorities. At present, extensive renovation works are underway at the historic building of the School and its surrounding grounds, with the financial

support and overall assistance of the Archon Exarch of the Mother Church, Athanasios Martinos, Ecumenical Grand Benefactor, and his wife, Marina.

The works are expected to be completed by the summer, and we hope that by then the definitive operational framework of the School will have been finalised and the necessary authorization granted, so that, after 55 years, it may once again welcome new students. At that time, we also intend to invite His Excellency the President to jointly inaugurate the reopening of this historic educational institution of our Patriarchate."

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