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CHURCH AND STATE REPS CALL FOR NAME OF TSAR NICHOLAS II TO BE RETURNED TO ARCTIC ARCHIPELAGO



Church and state representatives have teamed up to make another call for the name of Tsar Nicholas II to be returned to the Severnaya Zemlya (Northern Land) Archipelago in the Russian Arctic.

The archipelago was opened in 1913 by an expedition sent by the Tsar and was thus named after him, though the islands were renamed in soviet times and now bear distinctly communist names: Pioneer, Komsomol, Bolshevik, and October Revolution. The issue of renaming the islands and archipelago has been raised several times in recent years.

Among the signatories of a new appeal to the authorities of the Krasnoyarsk Krai are His Grace Bishop James of Naryan-Mar and Mezen, the priest and adventurer Fr. Feodor Konyukhov, the granddaughter of Boris Vilkitsky, the discoverer of the islands, and State Duma Deputy Viktor Zubarev, reports TASS.

“We hope that the regional state authorities will accept our arguments and take measures to restore historical justice,” Deputy Zubarev said.

The regional legislative assembly told TASS that the letter was received and the deputies are working on it.

Regional authorities say the proposal would have to undergo “comprehensive public debate,” reports the Barents Observer. “However, the case has already gained momentum, and powerful forces are likely to continue to push for the renaming,” the outlet writes.

Bp. James, the head of the patriarchal Russian Arctic Project, which aims to missionize and sanctify the Arctic, made a push for the archipelago to be renamed two years ago. “We must follow the path of historical and Divine truth... Geography and the naming of lands should record the path of creation, not of destruction. It’s comical to see these names in the Russian Arctic: Komsomol, Bolshevik, Pioneer. We must have a more serious attitude towards our own history, and respect and love our land,” he said in January 2018.

There was at least one earlier attempt to rename the islands in 2006 as well.

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