

Statements of Archbishop Nikodim Compared With Testimony of Former Soviet Secret Police Officers

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The statements of Archbishop Nikodim in the press conference of the World Council of Churches, November 20, 1961, are here compared with sworn testimony of former officers of the Soviet secret police who have defected to the West and given their testimony before the United States Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. Yuri Rastvorov, a lieutenant colonel of the MVD, served in the secret police for eleven years. His testimony was given February 8, 1956, and April 12, 1956, in Washington, D.C. Petr S. Deriabian, a major of state security serving as an officer in the NKVD, and working in the counterintelligence section of Okrana, March, 1947, to April, 1952, testified May 5, 1959, before the United States Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. His lengthy testimony is entitled, "Communist Controls on Religious Activity."

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Nikodim said: "The church is completely independent in Russia. There is no question of government approval or disapproval."

Mr. Rastvorov: "As you know, the church in the Soviet Union is not independent, as, at the present time, the Soviet Union Government is trying to prove. It is completely dependent on the state, and the state conducts all activities of the church in the Soviet Union" (April 12, 1956, page 781).