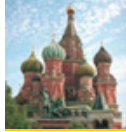


| [JRL Home](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Support](#) | [Search](#) | [Topics](#) | [Archives](#) | [RAS](#) | [RW](#) |

Jan. 4, 2003: #7004 • [JRL Home](#)



Johnson's Russia List



Edited by
David Johnson

Excerpts from the [JRL E-Mail Newsletter](#)

Headlines: [Assassinations](#) :: [JRL RA](#)

Topics: [Security/International](#) :: [Domestic](#) :: [JRL](#) :: [Firefox-optimal](#) :: [site feedback](#)

#9 - JRL 7004

Report: Russian Patriarch Blames Vatican

January 4, 2003

MOSCOW (AP) - The head of the Russian Orthodox Church blamed the Vatican for worsening relations in an interview published Saturday, but said he was open to dialogue.

Moscow Patriarch Alexy II told the newspaper Trud that the Vatican's decision last year to upgrade its administrative structures in Russia to full-fledged dioceses was to blame for a new downturn in relations.

"Our Church was presented with a fait accompli, while such issues need to be seriously discussed beforehand," Alexy said. "The Vatican's decision once again revealed its strategy of insistent missionary work among Orthodox peoples, to which we are categorically opposed."

The Russian Orthodox Church has long accused the Vatican of poaching converts on its traditional territory. The Roman Catholic Church contends that it has a moral right to be active in Russia, which had Catholic communities - made up mostly of ethnic Germans and Poles - before the 1917 Revolution. The dispute is the main obstacle keeping Pope John Paul II from fulfilling his long-held wish to visit Russia.

The Moscow Patriarchate stepped up its criticism of the Vatican after the decision to establish dioceses. At the same time, Russian Catholics have faced problems with the government, which has barred five foreign priests - including a bishop - from the country.

The two churches have also been at odds over property disputes in Ukraine, where the Vatican also set up two new dioceses last year.

The patriarch said the church continued "to hope for a change in the Vatican's position" and was open for dialogue.

[Back to the Top](#) • [Next Article](#)

Jan. 4, 2003: #7004 • [JRL Home](#)

| [Top](#) | [JRL Home](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Support](#) | [Search](#) | [Topics](#) | [RAS](#) | [RW](#) |