

## The Bitter Choice Facing Serbia

At this moment the world is following the gruesome assassination of the Libyan tyrant, Colonel Gaddafi. Western leaders, including the British Premier Blair, who welcomed him and used his torture facilities only recently, now pore over well-prepared plans on how best to strip his country of its natural resources. We, however, remind ourselves of the saying of the Saviour that, 'those who live by the sword shall die by the sword'. But at this time we should be careful not to overlook the recent important speech of Patriarch Irinei in Serbia against another tyranny, that which has been menacing Serbia since it too was bombed and occupied by Western forces.



On 17 October His Holiness blessed a memorial to the Serbian heroes who fell in the wars of liberation between 1912 and 1917. Afterwards the Patriarch spoke of their sacrifices and of the present choice facing Serbia and how today we too have to sacrifice our lives for the Orthodox Faith and for Serbia. He said:

‘This memorial must remind us that we have never forgotten our great martyrs and forebears who gave up their lives for their homeland, their freedom and their faith’. They knew the true values of these, he said, and therefore they should be examples for us and now too:

‘Today we face a similar temptation. We have received an offer to join Europe, but at a terrible price – that of giving up Kosovo and Metochia. But what are we if we give up our holy land? Can a man whose head has been cut off live? And what is a man if his heart has been torn out? What will happen to him?...And this is Serbia without Kosovo and Metochia. This is our great temptation. Unfortunately, I do not know what ours think, but if we have to join Europe by sacrificing Kosovo and Metochia, then it would be better to thank them for their kindness and love, but let them leave us alone, let them not do what they did recently, and let our Kosovo stay with us.

Our whole country has been stained red with blood from the Battle of Kosovo until today. Surely we cannot dare to give up what is holiest – our Jerusalem, our Holy Land. We cannot

allow this...Those who were once our friends, or so we thought, are no longer our friends. Today, they are taking away from us what is most precious of all, what is highest and most sacred. Oh, we thank them for such friendship’.

Thus, the Serbs are being blackmailed and bribed into making the same choice that the UK had to make forty years ago. This was to become part of the European Federal State (although it was, cunningly, not presented as such at that time) or else to remain an independent and sovereign land with its own identity and values, which are not those of European secularism and atheism. The loss of Kosovo and Metochia is as if the EU had forced Kent and Canterbury to become part of an immigrant Muslim State, ripping it away from England, as the price for large EU subsidies. And, spiritually speaking, that is not so far from the truth...