

RUSSIA: Russian court for the first time 'liquidates' a local Jewish community

By Paul Goble

Window on Eurasia (31.08.2016) – <http://bit.ly/2cbPxfg> – In the most disturbing indication yet that Kremlin-sponsored xenophobia will ultimately go to what has been its default setting in Russia and become anti-Semitism, a Russian court in Vologda oblast, at the request of prosecutors, has “liquidated” the local Jewish community, sparking fears among many and delight among Russian anti-Semites.

This action comes only a few days after a meeting of European rabbis in Moscow declared that there was no anti-Semitism in Russia and that the Jewish communities in that country were experiencing an unprecedented rebirth (<http://bit.ly/2clgHoZ>).

But it also comes on the heels of more anti-Semitic posts on the Runet and more attacks on Jewish memorials in various parts of the Russian Federation, some of which the authorities have brought those responsible to justice but others of which appear unlikely to go unpunished (<http://bit.ly/2c83MDv> and <http://bit.ly/2c0HWD7>).

The human rights monitor “The New Chronicle of Current Events” provides the fullest coverage of what happened in Vologda yesterday (<http://bit.ly/2cImcin>). In an article with the

headline, "They're banning Jews in Cherepovets," it says the court's action was 'the first case of its kind in the history of present-day Russia."

Officials of Russia's justice ministry called on the Cherepovets court to disband the Jewish community there for what it said were violations of registration rules concerning its location. The court made its ruling without providing additional details (<http://bit.ly/2bWmxMY>).

But Interfax added that one of its sources in Vologda said that the Jewish community was accused of failing to show the necessary respect for the Russian authorities because it had failed to respond when officials informed it that the community was in violation of the law. Because of the court's action, the community will no longer have registration and the right to function.

Members of the Jewish community in Cherepovets said that they had recently received anonymous threats and had handed them over to the FSB's local office, but that the latter had not done anything that they could see. Then Irina Nechayeva, head of the Cherepovets administration's office for work with social organizations, said that the Jewish community had failed to take part in city-organized Subbotniki.

Of course, as the leaders of the community pointed out, Jewish law precludes the participation of Jews in such actions on Saturdays.

Following the court's decision, Roman Yushkov, identified by the New Chronicle of Current Events as a leading anti-Semite in the Urals region posted on his Facebook page a declaration expressing his hope that courts elsewhere in Russia will follow suit (<http://bit.ly/2c84j8A>).