

Department of Public and Foreign Relations
 Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside
 of Russia

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UNLAWFUL DEMAND UPON HOLY TRINITY SEMINARY IN JORDANVILLE

During the past year the Office of Civil Rights in Washington has frequently requested from more than 19,000 American schools, universities and seminaries statements that "discrimination" against women was not being practiced in their institutions. Church affiliated schools had the opportunity to file a petition to be exempted from preparing such a report if the demands of civil rights for women did not meet with their religious convictions. Schools which did not comply with this request were to be denied any financial support from the federal government.

In the beginning of 1977 representatives of the Office of Civil Rights telephoned the Seminary's administration and informed them that the report should be forwarded in due time, otherwise the office would institute a law suit against Holy Trinity Seminary in order to deprive it of any financial support by the government. The Seminary's administrative board asked to be given some time to study the request, but the Office of Civil Rights refused to cooperate and filed a law suit and publicized it in the press.

After discussing the matter with lawyers and representatives of the Education Department of the State of New York the following conclusions were reached:

1. The Seminary does not receive any financial aid from the federal government and therefore the threats of the Office of Civil Rights are unfounded.
2. The laws by which the Office of Civil Rights is basing its claim refer exclusively to schools which receive financial aid from the government; therefore the above mentioned office acts outside of the law if not against it.
3. Complying with the unlawful demands of the Office of Civil Rights would mean that the Seminary acknowledges its jurisdiction over herself and in the future would be obliged to comply with all of the office's demands and claims.

Basing its decision on the above mentioned points, the Seminary refused to follow the request presented by the Office of Civil Rights. The legal defense of the Seminary was led by Mr. Emlyn Griffith, a member of the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. After a number of negotiation sessions and more publicity about the case in the newspapers, the Office of Civil Rights dropped its law suit against Holy Trinity Seminary. One should note that the local press was very sympathetic and sharply criticized the bureaucratic clerks.

It became obvious from this case, which, thanks be to the Lord ended happily for our Seminary, that the Office of Civil Rights instead of defending the rights of citizens, itself violates the religious rights of church affiliated schools and endangers their existence in this free country. This case also demonstrates that one should be very vigilant at all times.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH IN THE USSR

A. Levitin-Krasnov in the periodical "Russkaya Mysl" (Russian Thought) published some new information about the unceasing persecutions of the

faithful in the USSR. According to information recently received by him from Moscow, the representatives of the government have been pressuring the Board of Trustees of the parish in the village of Grebnevo, of which Fr. Dimitri Dudko is the rector, demanding that they terminate their agreement with him. So far, the parish has refused to be influenced by them.

The incarceration of the faithful in mental hospitals also has not ceased. Just recently a priestmonk Michael (Ershov) was forcibly put in a Kazan hospital. He spent nearly forty years in the labor camps and is one of those clergy who do not recognize the canonical status of the Moscow Patriarchate. Another priest, Fr. Leo Bonin, also was recently placed in the psychiatric ward of a Leningrad hospital.

Cases of persecution of monks in the Pochaev Lavra (a large monastery in Volhynia) have become more frequent. Drunken local authorities forcibly entered the monks' cells, questioned them about why candles are sold in the church and threatened them with arrest. A woman, who had been put in the mental hospital which was established after the Second World War on the monastery's property, came to church to receive Holy Communion and was dragged out by male nurses.

The New York Times also reported about a petition to Leonid Brezhnev from 12 monks of the Kiev Caves Monastery that this most ancient Russian monastery be re-opened to monastics. By 1929 the Lavra was totally closed. In 1942 as a propaganda measure Stalin permitted it to be open to a very limited number of monks and the famous monastery existed thus until 1961, having a minimum of monks supervised by the Abbot Akhilla. Also during that period the monastery was made into a museum which became very popular with foreign tourists. Fr. Akhilla managed not only to publicize his petition to Brezhnev, but also to arrange a contact with representatives of the foreign press.

Fr. Gleb Yakunin also supported the monks' plea and said that all previously forwarded petitions to open the Lavra came from different parts of the country and were declined on the grounds that there are not any monks who could possibly populate the monastery. The 12 fathers of the Kiev Caves Monastery stress in their petition that they were evicted from the monastery and are ready to return to live there as soon as they obtain permission.

THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH AND THE ROMAN POPE

The official periodical of the Greek Archdiocese in America, "The Orthodox Observer", for the month of January declares that relations between the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox "may never have been better."

Patriarch Demetrios sent a letter to the Roman Pope in which he declares that "The Orthodox Church is ready to break down all the barriers separating the Catholic and Orthodox Churches with the aim of being able to share the Body and Blood of the Lord together in the same Holy Eucharist."

On his part, the Pope previously said to Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon, Dean of the Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the "slowly but surely our communities are advancing toward complete union."

Patriarch Demetrios in return sent with Metropolitan Meliton a lamp from his private chapel, asking that it be placed in the Pope's chapel as a sign of the light of Christ.

ECUMENISM IN PRACTICE

It is customary for Orthodox bishops to greet their flocks on such great holy days as Pascha and Christmas. The Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarch for Russians in Western Europe, Archbishop George, introduced something quite new in 1977. His Christmas encyclical is addressed not only to his own flock, but also to "all those who celebrate the Nativity of our Lord according to the new calendar." He enumerates them: "members of our parishes who asked and received the blessing to celebrate this great day according to the new calendar, Orthodox Greeks and Rumanians and our heterodox brethren, Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants."

It is not clear if this encyclical letter refers also to those members of Archbishop George's flock who still celebrate according to the Church calendar. But it is a sad fact that there are two calendars in the same church. One part of the flock has already celebrated the Feast, while the other has two more weeks of fasting to go. And with which part of his flock is the bishop celebrating? Under such conditions the particular church lacks spiritual unity on the most important feast days.

PERSECUTION OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE IN CONSTANTINOPLE

The Greek periodical, "The Orthodox Observer", published by the Greek Archdiocese of New York reports that one of the high ranking bishops of the Ecumenical Patriarchate wrote a letter to Archbishop Iakovos and bitterly complained about a new wave of persecution of Orthodox Greeks by the Turkish government.

According to this report, the Turkish government tries by means of terror to minimize the activity of the Greek Patriarchate abroad and finally force it into total oblivion. Under new laws, Greek churches and schools are burdened with extremely high taxes and many citizens - and even some bishops - cannot get exit visas to travel abroad. Orthodox schools are in an especially difficult situation because the government reclassified them from "minority schools" to "private schools" and of course the new status deprives them of any state support and compels them to pay real estate taxes. This will force many of them to be closed in the near future.

THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CYPRUS

Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Paphos was recently elected to the See of Cyprus which became vacant with the death of Archbishop Makarios. The new Archbishop was born in the western part of Cyprus in 1927, ordained a priest in 1961 and a bishop in 1968.

The new Ethnarch does not intend to be involved in politics as much as his predecessor, but he is already well-known for his diplomatic and oratorical abilities. As an example of his talents in this field, the New York Times notes a period when his mentor, Archbishop Makarios, was nearly overthrown by some bishops and Metropolitan Chrysostomos managed to help him survive and at the same time to keep friendly relations with all of Archbishop Makarios' critics.

PERSECUTION FOR CONFESSING ORTHODOXY

In our previous bulletin we mentioned Fathers George Economou, Theodore Stavru and Chris Constantinou, who in a Greek newspaper pointed to a number of apostasies by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and who asked the question: "Are we still Orthodox?"

Archbishop Iakaovs brought them to spiritual court. The Greek clergy

stated, as The Hellenic Chronicle reports, that they were requested to "repent for the scandalous, disrespectful attitude and style reflected in their letters and articles and for their specific contents and expressed views and opinions." The defendants were willing to ask pardon for the expressions which were interpreted as insulting to the Archbishop, yet they remained adamant in reference to the printed statement and the questions raised by it. The court ruled their position to be unacceptable and demanded a written apology. This was done and again the court did not accept it.

After a brief deliberation the spiritual court ruled that all three clergy were to be suspended until they "repent" of their defense of Orthodoxy, to which they continued to refuse.

SERBIANS IN AMERICA PROTEST PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH IN YUGOSLAVIA

The clergy and laity of the Annual Assembly of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America forwarded a petition to the International Forum for the Protection of Human Rights meeting in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, protesting the persecution of the Serbian Church.

The official publication of the Serbian Diocese in America, "The Path of Orthodoxy", reports that "It is known to us that the hierarchy, clergy and faithful of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia are being pressured to follow the regime now in power. Some of them have been and presently are being tortured, have suffered physical attacks, imprisonment and being exposed to general public harassment, such as the late Metropolitan Nektarije of Sarajevo, Dr. Vasilije Kostic, Bishop of Zica, Bishop Pavle of Prizren, clergy including Fr. Sava Bankovic of Srem, and laity who are threatened and intimidated when they attend church. Not being in a position to obtain support from anyone, they have been ultimately left to their own fate."

At the conclusion of this protest the diocesan assembly wrote: "We present this petition to the Commission for the Protection of Human Rights and request that you act to insure the human rights of our hierarchy and clergy presently under attack in Yugoslavia, the host country of your Commission."

REVIEW OF ECUMENICAL "ACHIEVEMENTS"

As the Episcopal magazine "The Living Church" reported on the 8th of January, five different denominations united together in a eucharistic service in St. Teilo's Priory in Cardiff, Wales. Participating in this service were the ministers of the Anglican Church in Wales, Presbyterian Church of Wales, the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church. This group was presided over by the Anglican Archbishop of Wales.

Reviewing the achievements of the past year, the president of the Vatican's Secretariat for Christian Unity, Cardinal Willebrands, noted with satisfaction the progress toward union with different religions. "In fact, we have joint study commissions with the Anglican communion, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Methodist Council, and we have just concluded a five-year cycle of conversations with the Pentecostals." He also stressed that ties with Orthodoxy became even closer, and noted that the most important ecumenical undertaking of his church is the relationship with the World Council of Churches.

Furthermore, the magazine notes that one of the more serious ecumenical disasters can be considered the problem of the new prayer book of the Episcopalians who can never make up their mind which version of the Creed

to use: the genuine Nicene or the one altered by the Roman Catholics. The problem of the ordination of women is becoming more acute with Roman Catholics who get closer and closer to the Episcopalians. An editorial in "The Living Church" predicts that regardless of the fact that "the Roman Church has historically been so strongly opposed, and theoretically is today, [it] will in all likelihood be ordaining women to the diaconate in the 1980's. It is quite likely, furthermore, that in the 21st century they will also be ordaining women to the presbyteriate."

Let us say on our part that judging by the tempo by which the Roman Catholic Church is heading toward disintegration, one can expect the establishment of a female priesthood to occur within the next few decades. As far as the Orthodox are concerned, in spite of all the pressures applied by western denominations in order to raise this question and at least to establish the institution of deaconesses, so far this mission has had no effect.

NEW GUIDELINES FOR CATHOLIC DIOCESE

The National Catholic Reporter of February 3rd relates that the Roman Catholic Diocese of Newark permits its priests to give communion to non-Catholics in exceptional cases if there is "a serious spiritual need."

The authorization was issued by Archbishop Peter Gereti and is contained in "Guidelines on Fostering Spiritual Ecumenism," which was in preparation for some 2 years by the archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. The Guidelines are believed to be the first ones of this kind in America. The manual was sent to all priests of the Newark diocese along with a letter by Archbishop Gereti and a commentary from the ecumenical commission explaining in detail which cases are considered to be a "need" when a non-Catholic can receive Communion.

A special section deals with the Eastern Orthodox. It is noted there that because Orthodox bishops in America strongly oppose sacramental sharing, it is possible rather in principle than in practice.

The Commission is preparing further guidelines which will deal with marriage, anointing of the sick and burial. It is the second publication by the ecumenical commission. Earlier a handbook on parish ecumenical activities was published.

CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCE PROHIBITED IN A NUMBER OF SCHOOLS

The newspaper "Spotlight" of January 2nd gives important details on the prohibition of the observance of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord in American schools.

Florida's State Education Commissioner Ralph Turlington issued an 8-page memorandum to all school principals explaining that the separation of church and state should be carefully observed. Turlington noted that the observance of some customs during the Christmas period "constitute a form of religious teaching and are therefore unconstitutional."

The situation in Florida is not exceptional. Principals and superintendents of schools throughout the country were very much concerned that their schools would not practice any kind of religious observance. Now even traditional carols are banned, out of fear that Washington authorities might easily revoke all grants given by the government for school support.

Florida state authorities received several protests against the observance

of Christmas customs from such organizations as The American Jewish Committee, The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, The Rabbinical Council of America, The American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and others. In full accord with them was the American Civil Liberties Union and athiests.

It is interesting to note that the crusade against the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord started some 27 years ago when Josphe Dunner published his book "The Republic of Israel" and wrote, "We want all Christmas propaganda stopped. The masses of Jewish people in the United States have a right to demand from the educational system of the United States that it keep Christmas out of public schools."

ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE GREEK LITURGY OF NO HELP

The Greek newspaper, "The Hellenic Chronicle", of January 12th in the article "The Orthodox Church of North America: Path to Extinction?" very seriously discusses the question of how much influence the introduction of the English language in the Greek Liturgy has upon the spiritual level of parishioners and how much it affects the attendance at services.

In the past few years there has been strong pressure upon the Greek Archdiocese to introduce the English language into the Liturgy, at least in some parts of it. Some parishes already use English in their services and it has resulted in a confusion of the concept of the differences in religions. The author of the article, Constantine Houpis, states that unfavorable results are especially noticable in the younger generation, which feels it is much easier to go to some nearby heterodox church instead of its own Orthodox, which very often might be located at a far distance.

The author advises all those who are so enthusiastic about the use of English in the service to acquaint themselves with the book "Catholic Schools in a Declining Church" by the Catholic priest Andrew Greeley. Fr. Greeley states that until the English language replaced Latin in the Catholic mass, the churches were attended by some 77% of the faithful, but after the reform this attendance record started to slide down to 42%, and this process is still going on. The Catholic priest thinks that this is mainly the result of the elimination of Latin and not so much of the social changes which have taken place.

It is very strange that an Orthodox author sees no other means to attract young people and bring them back into the fold of the Church but "the compelling attraction can only be the beauty of the Greek language and the immortality of the hellenic culture which the Greek Orthodox Church should be preaching as part of its ministerial duties and objectives to retain the youth in the preaching of the Orthodox faith." The article does not mention with a single word that the "attraction" just might be the truth of Orthodoxy!

ONE MORE BIBLE

The paper "Jerusalem Post" relates that the former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, Andre Chouraqui, was received by Pope Paul VI in a private audience and presented him with his own French language translation of the Old and New Testament in 26 books.

The new translation of the Bible is the first one ever made by a Jew, and roused considerable interest in the Christian as well as the Jewish world. When accepting the gift, the Pope said that in order to be able to complete such a work, one had to have a great deal of love. When Chouraqui, on behalf of President Kazir, greeted him on the occasion of his 80th birthday,

the Pope replied by sending his greetings and blessings to the President and the people of Israel.

NEW PUBLIC SCHOOL COURSE

According to information from "Living Church" the German-American Committee of Greater Philadelphia has sharply protested the introduction of a new "holocaust" course into the school program as part of the history curriculum in Philadelphia public schools. School officials admitted that the course on the destruction of Jews in Nazi Germany was an experimental one for some schools, but now will be officially included in the program of the 66 Philadelphia schools.

This course was developed by a group from Temple University with the cooperation of the Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia and some Protestant groups. Lutheran pastor Hans Haug, the President of the German-American Committee, stated in his protest that "the proposed course "gives the impression that the Nazis were the only ones who committed crimes against humanity and that the Jews were the only ones who suffered to any great extent."

NEW ISRAELI LAW CONCERNING MISSIONARIES

Time Magazine of January 23rd relates that beginning with April of this year a new Israeli law goes into effect according to which any person who offers any "material inducement" to an Israeli to convert from Judaism to another religion is liable to a \$3,200 fine and five years in prison.

The new law was passed by the Israeli parliament during the celebration by western denominations of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord and especially aggravated the international situation in the Mid-East region, a fact which, according to the magazine's editors, greatly helped to distract the world's attention from the consequences of this law. According to official information received from the Israeli government only 17 Israeli so far have apostasized from their religion, but Christians have reason to believe that this figure is actually much higher. The law is worded so that it can be interpreted in different ways and therefore a number of Christian groups are very much concerned with the danger of being convicted of offering "material inducement" to any Jewish convert, even in such cases as the use of a Christian hospital by a patient or a school by a student.

When Egypt's President Sadat last year was influenced by Muslim fanatics and proposed to declare apostasy from his religion a capital offence against the state, Christians in Egypt raised such an outcry that the government was forced to cancel the bill.

Dr. Uzi Ornan, a professor at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, strongly repudiated the law when it was still in the form of a draft. He called it a "charter for persecution of Christians, since even innocent talk might be construed as 'unfair' inducement."

IMPORTANT GREEK THEOLOGIAN REPOSES

The periodical of the Serbian Diocese in America, "Path of Orthodoxy", and "The Word", the Antiochian Patriarchal periodical, both noted the death of the prominent Greek theologian Dr. Panayoti Trembelas, who passed away at the age of 91. The deceased had an exceptionally broad education and authored some 90 books, specializing in theology and philosophy.

Dr. Trembelas was a very strong opponent of ecumenism and even at the

advanced age of 85 delivered a speech from the ambon of the Cathedral of Athens in which he attacked ecumenism and criticized Pope Paul, Patriarch Athenagoras and all the western religions "where there are theologians and bishops without God or with a dead god." For 50 years the famous scholar preached in the Church of St. Irini, and was a member of a number of international conferences, the founder of the Brotherhood of Theologians (SOTIR), editor of a periodical and lately Professor Emeritus of Theology at the University of Athens.

PRICES RISE AGAIN IN JERUSALEM

The newspaper "Jerusalem Post" from the 27th and 29th of December notes that as of January 1st everyone's water bill will be increased by 20% and hotel rooms by 15%. At the same time, the above mentioned paper on January 2nd reported that grocery prices for such items as sugar, eggs and all dairy products had risen another 10%. Prices for basic groceries also rise in America, but never by a full percent; usually it is by a fraction of a percent.

NEW ANGLICAN VERSION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

The New York Times published a new version of the Lord's Prayer which was approved by the General Synod in England and is to be included in the revised Book of Common Prayer for Anglicans. It is interesting to note that in the new approved text the words "Thy kingdom come" are omitted. It is hard to say if it was an oversight on the part of the editors, or if the Anglicans are no longer interested in the heavenly kingdom, because we have not come across this information in any of the Episcopalian or Anglican periodicals.

The New York Times relates that both the traditional and new versions of the Book of Common Prayer, including the Lord's Prayer, are optional for Anglicans as well as Episcopalians.

A SCHISM WITHIN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A group of Episcopalians who were protesting the ordination of women and a lenient policy toward homosexuals first organized three dioceses of the provisional Anglican Church of North America and recently had a bishop ordained. The dissidents happened to secure the agreement of some bishops and two of them consented to ordain the Rev. James Mote for them. Episcopalian Bishop William Frey of Colorado, who called this act a "disasterous course of action", could not persuade his colleagues to abstain from the ordination service for the schismatics.

The new ordination makes this group totally independent from other Anglican churches. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who himself favors the ordination of women, hastened to state that he will not accord recognition to the new dissident group. He secretary noted that the Archbishop's decision was not made in connection with the women's issue.

HOMOSEXUALS NO LONGER FEEL RESTRAINED

Homosexuals who have penetrated the clergy of different denominations in considerable numbers are competing in a race with one another in order to try to justify the lawfulness of the sin of sodomy by the Bible. One sees and hears more and more of them on the political and social scene. Their "marriages" also have become more frequent.

One Methodist minister invented a "covenant service" which in everything resembles the western style wedding, except for the formula "I proclaim

you man and wife." Originally the Rev. Paul Abels started to perform his "covenant service" for people of the same sex in his study, then he became more courageous and now they are conducted in the sanctuary. After the ceremony in the church the sodomist partners sign a real estate contract which joins their property.

The minister stated that when he was approached for the first time to perform the service for two lesbians, he asked the church board and received permission. One of those "wed" by him, who because of shyness preferred to be called only by the name Tom, said that "the service was so beautiful, there wasn't a dry eye in the church.... Paul (Abels) never mentioned homosexuality once. It was a religious service although technically not a wedding."

Homosexuality has also become quite a problem for Episcopalians. A Commission of the Ministry for the Diocese of Ohio ruled that homosexuals may be ordained and married in the church. Bishop John Burt pleaded with the 8-member group to renounce their stand but was flatly refused. The Commission's report asserted that "'sexual orientation' has no relevance in consideration of a candidate for ordination...unless there is well-documented evidence that the 'sexual orientation' is a symptom of some underlying personality problem or psychiatric illness."

PRAYER BY TELEPHONE

In the past year the Episcopal Church has installed a special telephone line for transmitting tape recorded prayers. From Lent until Pentecost one could dial the New York diocesan phone number and for two minutes listen to a message by the presiding Bishop, John Allin, which ended with a prayer for the toll-free caller. The success of it surpassed all expectation, so that in a very short time the diocese ran out of funds set for this project and had to stop the program. Now it has been decided to resume the telephone prayer with even better service to the faithful. The new prayer will be heard for three minutes, Bishop Allin will change his message twice a week, and listeners may record their requests for prayers stating their needs. A group of volunteers will sort them out and present them for commemoration at the mass. It is reported that the prayer line is in urgent need of at least 144 "partners" who would contribute \$5.00 or more monthly, and as many individual offerings as possible. "The Church that prays together stays together, united and effective", noted Rev. A. Schwab with great satisfaction.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Archimandrite Panteleimon (Holy Transfiguration Monastery); Rev. D. Sever, Canada; Mr. Klanco, Rev. V. Evsiukov, Australia; Mr. J. Kowalski, Mr. J. Sivanich, Rev. P. Semovskih, Australia; and Dr. Stutzer, Canada.

The Foreign Relations Department greatly appreciates this help.

THE GRATITUDE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

Upon ending another year of our Newsletter publication, we want to express our sincere gratitude to all those of you who supported us by sending some valuable information, by encouraging us with their favorable reviews and especially those who through their financial aid considerably helped to make our work possible.

We hope that in this year our friends will continue to support us. Many thanks to all of you!

Archpriest George Grabbe, Director
PUBLIC AND FOREIGN RELATIONS DEPT.