

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC & FOREIGN RELATIONS  
of the  
SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA  
NEWSLETTER #47

January-April, 1984

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC & FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Council of Bishops, which met in Canada in 1983, resolved to resume publication of "Church Life", the official periodical of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, and its first two issues have already been printed. This has occasioned the reorganization of the material presented in our "Newsletter", in both Russian and English-language editions.

As in the past, they will contain basic information on events in Orthodox and heterodox ecclesiastical life, yet at the same time all decisions and resolutions of the Synod will be printed only in "Church Life."

Being unable to publish "Church Life" in foreign languages, or at best only in one of them, we will include a portion of the official information from "Church Life" in our English-language "Newsletter", although this may occasionally impel us to abbreviate some of the other headings which normally would appear.

Experience will show us how to distribute the material we have gathered so that, as in the past, our publications will remain a source of information for our clergy and laymen.

"Church Life" will appear six times yearly. The cost of an annual subscription is \$12.00. We hope that the magazine will attract new subscribers and collaborators.

REMINDER: In accordance with the resolution of the Council of Bishops, ALL PARISHES OF OUR CHURCH ARE OBLIGATED TO SUBSCRIBE TO "CHURCH LIFE".

EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

Changes in the Convents in Jerusalem

In accordance with the resolution of the Synod of Bishops, Abbess Theodosia, who has been the superior of the Convent of the Mount of Olives, has been appointed abbess of the Convent of Gethsemane, and Mr. Parasceva has been elevated to the rank of abbess to take her place.

Arriving at the residence of His Beatitude, Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem the evening before their installation, Mr. Theodosia and Parasceva were elevated to the rank of abbess by the Patriarch himself in his cathedral church, and afterwards, both abbesses, having received the Patriarch's blessing, returned to their convents.

On Saturday, March 17, after the liturgy, Archimandrite Anthony, Head of the Mission, read aloud the decree of the Synod of Bishops on the transfer of Mr. Theodosia to Gethsemane, where she previously held the position of prioress. After a moleben and a touching farewell to her abbess, she left to take up residence in her new place of ministry. At the gates of the convent she was met by the Head of the Mission and all the sisters who, with the traditional bread and salt and the chanting of the troparion, proceeded into the church for the serving of a short moleben with "Many Years" to the new abbess and her solemn ascen-

sion of the abbatial throne. The Gethsemane solemnity concluded with a modest meal.

On the following day, the installation of the new abbess took place in the Convent of the Mount of Olives. After the Little Entrance, the Head of the Mission read aloud the decree concerning the appointment to the position of abbess of the Mount of Olives Convent of Mr. Parasceva, who was solemnly elevated to the abbatial throne with the chanting of "Many Years" to the new abbess.

Both solemnities were attended by Bishop Daniel of Mt. Tabor and Archimandrite Theodosius, representing the Patriarchate of Jerusalem. After the ecclesiastical solemnity in the Mt. of Olives Convent, a meal was provided.

Both solemnities were conducted with great enthusiasm and were very well organized.

#### St. Nicholas Parish in Stratford

After several decades, St. Nicholas parish in Stratford, Connecticut, has finally returned to the bosom of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia. Accompanying his parishioners into the Church Abroad was the young rector of the parish, Fr. Stavros Rousos.

On Saturday of Meatfare week, His Eminence, Metropolitan Philaret arrived in Stratford at the invitation of the parish, and there served a short moleben and delivered a speech of greeting to his new flock. To the great astonishment of those who had come to pray, Bishop Job of the "Orthodox Church in America", accompanied by several of his clergymen, also arrived for the moleben. He and his group stood near the right kliros of the church. After the moleben, Vladyka Metropolitan was invited by the rector and the warden of the parish to a banquet, to which Bishop Job also came, sitting with his clerics at a separate table.

Thusfar there has been no clear explanation as to why Bishop Job would chose to appear at the service of thanksgiving marking his former parish's return to the Church Abroad.

#### Miraculous Kursk Icon Visits Parishes in Pennsylvania

On Wednesday, March 28, the miraculous Kursk Icon of the Mother of God, accompanied by Bishop Gregory and Archpriest John Sorochka of the parish of St. John the Baptist, Mayfield, Pennsylvania, arrived in Mayfield. Despite a severe snow storm, the holy icon was met by more than 500 of the faithful, who received it for the first time in their church with compunction and joy.

After the arrival of the icon, Bishop Gregory served a moleben and the akathist hymn to the icon in English.

In accordance with the schedule worked out in advance, the miraculous icon of the Mother of God remained in Mayfield for four days, visiting many of the homes of the faithful, nursing homes and hospitals, as well as the parish in Simpson and the mission in Old Forge. The holy icon also attracted many in these last two places.

In view of the severe snow-drifts, Bishop Gregory was compelled to remain in Pennsylvania a day longer than had been envisioned, yet this delay enabled him to visit the parish in Simpson, where he met with the rector and the warden.

#### Repose of Gerald Palmer

On February 7, George (Gerald) Palmer, benefactor of our British Diocese, reposed. The late Mr. Palmer had been a member of Parliament. In 1945 he journeyed to Mt. Athos and there became interested in the Orthodox Church. In 1950, he converted to Holy Orthodoxy and began to

take an active part both in the life of our London parish and in missionary work. He is especially well known for his collaboration and help in publishing patristic literature in English translation, specifically two volumes of excerpts from the Philokalia.

#### ALARMING AMENDMENT TO SOVIET LAW

The Keston News Service, in its February 23 Bulletin, reports that, according to information received from the U.S.S.R., the regime has made an amendment, fraught with dire consequences, to ¶70 of the criminal code, under the title "Anti-Soviet Agitation & Propaganda." It is in accordance with this law that the majority of the so-called dissidents have been condemned. Previously, this paragraph consisted of two parts. The first spoke of deprivation of freedom for a period of from six months to seven years, with the possibility of an additional period of internal exile of from two to five years.

Any repeated offence according to this point subjected the condemned to a longer period of time (from three to ten years), with the possibility of an additional exile of from two to five years. Now, the Soviet newspaper "Gazette of the Supreme Soviet" reports that a significant amendment has been made to this law: "...and actions carried out with the use of moneys or other material goods received from foreign organizations or from persons acting in the interest of such organizations..." Now condemnation according to this law may easily subject the rank-and-file victim of the regime to imprisonment for ten years, and additionally to five years internal exile. The law took effect on February 1.

This also means that any package received by a Soviet citizen who is under the particularly vigilant oversight of the KGB, can subject him to sanctions specified in the new law.

As we have reported before, the family of Fr. Gleb Yakunin is on the list of persons for whom it is not permitted to receive packages from abroad which are being sent through special international agencies. Now, any assistance shown this unfortunate family can bring about its complete annihilation.

#### DECLARATION OF PATRIARCH DIODORUS OF JERUSALEM ON THE QUESTION OF RELATIONS WITH THE HETERODOX

In the December 16 issue of the Greek newspaper "Orthodoxos Typos" there appeared the transcript of a conversation between His Beatitude, Patriarch Diodorus of Jerusalem and a correspondence of that periodical.

The Patriarch expressed his disquiet over a number of incidents in the Holy Land, in which the Church he heads stand guard over Orthodoxy. Subsequently, the head of the Church of Sion clearly expressed his disapproval of "the participation of our Orthodox Church as one among four hundred Christian denominations in the membership of the World Council of Churches.": For him "the participation of the Church of Jerusalem in the World Council of Churches is only formal." Finally, on the question of communion in the mysteries with the heterodox, he openly condemned the practice of permitting the members of heterodox churches to receive Communion, e.g. Roman Catholics and Copts. In conclusion, he called upon the faithful to enter the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.

This report was printed without commentary also in the bulletin of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, "Episcepsis".

#### DECLARATION OF THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH DEMETRIOS

In the December 1983 bulletin of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, "Episcepsis", there appeared the text of a very important speech of Patriarch

Demetrios, addressed to representatives of the Vatican who had come to Constantinople for the feast of the holy Apostle Andrew. Cardinal Wilibrands headed the Pope's personal delegation.

The Patriarch's speech of greeting was delivered at a session of a his Synod's commission for questions concerning the dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholics.

The program of the ecumenists, as outlined by the Patriarch, is divided into three stages. First, he greeted the representatives of the Vatican who had arrived in Constantinople with the aim of initiating negotiations on the establishment of union between the Catholics and the Orthodox (a Unia?). "We hope," said the Patriarch, "that our meeting and our contacts this year once again, by the grace of the Lord, will constitute a further step toward full communion between you and us." Such optimism in regard to closer ecumenical coöperation is significant. It indicates that what for Catholics and Orthodox ecumenists was presented as the final goal, the "restoration" of the churches which separated many centuries ago, is now but an intermediate goal. If in the past it was put forth that both confessions had preserved the truth and that the difference between them was only apparent and not profound, so that with good will on both sides it would be possible to find unifying formulae, now it appears that this is not sufficient: one must look further.

"During this fraternal meeting of ours," the Patriarch continues, "while concerning ourselves in the first place with the holy cause of the relations between our two churches and with the progress of the union we seek between them, as is natural, we must at the same time take into consideration the fact that the union between our two churches, sought and cultivated, does not constitute and should not constitute an end in itself. It is a stage, very important to be sure, toward a major and holy goal of complete Christian unity."

In what form this "complete Christian unity", of all the various confessions and sects, is proposed is not made clear.

Yet even this is considered to be but an intermediate stage. The actual goal is something completely different. "But this second, pan-Christian goal, though greater than the first," the Patriarch continues, "does not constitute an end in itself either. Our design is not only to realize the unity of those who are already Christian, but, through this unity, to witness to the world in a convincing manner that Jesus Christ is its Savior, and through this unity, to cause this world to be transformed and integrated into the Church of Christ so that His kingdom be thus established upon the earth!" (Emphasis ours)... "On this point also we are in agreement with the identical opinion that our brother Pope John Paul II expressed in his discourse to our delegation last June in Rome. Just as God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ became, through His Son in the redemption, joined in solidarity to humanity as a whole, so also we as Church, as extension of the Lord's salvific work are joined in solidarity with man, with every man, with the whole of humanity on this earth...."

Such a comprehensive ecumenical program, which sets the Church on the same level as a humanity which is foreign to it, and instead of a kingdom of God in heaven wishes to establish it on earth, by purely earthly means and apart from questions of truth and holiness, is truly frightening.

#### RESTORATION OF THE MONASTERY OF PECH

"Path of Orthodoxy", the official periodical of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America, reports in its February issue that, on the initiative of Patriarch German, in October of last year, there took place the solemn dedication of the restored building in the Monastery of Pech,

which had suffered during a fire which started under suspicious circumstances.

The fire, which took place in March of 1981, damaged one of the main buildings of the monastery very significantly, and there were suspicions that it was arson committed by terrorists. Thousands of people from all the ends of Yugoslavia travelled to this solemnity in the ancient monastery. As it happened, the priceless icons and manuscripts preserved in the monastery library were not harmed during the conflagration. Also preserved were several ancient churches, e.g. the Church of the Holy Apostles, erected in 1235, the Church of St. Demetrius, dating from 1317, and the Church of the All-holy Theotokos, dating from 1330.

Pech is one of the most famous monasteries of the Church of Serbia.

#### THE POPE OF ROME & YUGOSLAVIA

In the Ecumenical Press Service's March 24 bulletin, it is reported that the London-based Catholic newspaper "The Tablet" included an article on a proposed visit by the Pope of Rome to Yugoslavia next year. The Pope's intention has met with sharp protest, not only on the part of the leaders of the communist party, but also from the Church of Serbia. The communists are afraid that the visit of the Pope might "further strengthen a religious revival that is already going on," and representatives of the Church have simply stated that they will be very "upset" by such a visit, as well as by his intention to meet with representatives of the Macedonian Church, which was founded by Tito against the will of the Church of Serbia and which they still do not recognize.

#### NEW BUILDING FOR THE PATRIARCHATE OF JERUSALEM

The newspaper "The Jerusalem Post" reports that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem has submitted to the city government a plan for a building in which is to be housed a church, a library, the chancery, the patriarchal apartments, a hall for sessions of the Synod, living quarters and even housing for pilgrims who arrive to worship at the holy places.

The project proposes to preserve a portion of the facade of the existing buildings of the Patriarchate together with the construction of new buildings, and a complete renovation of the old buildings. Unfortunately, several old buildings with domes, which are situated beyond the basic facade, will suffer considerably. The entire complex, comprising, as it were, "a classic, symmetrical structure", will be erected on a large plot of land belonging to the Patriarchate.

The plan for the new construction was prepared in Greece and, apparently, the Patriarchate has approved it and the Israeli authorities have no objections to it in principle. There may, however, be some protests in the future. Amos Kloner, the former district archaeologist, has protested to the city engineer against the wrecking of the domed rooms.

According to Israeli law, the erection of a new building may proceed only when the archaeological commission declares that it does not propose to conduct any excavation on the site. This can become clear only as the building is erected. The Council for a Beautiful Israel has as yet made no statement on the plans, and it is expected that the project will not encounter any significant opposition from the authorities.

#### THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE & THE LUTHERANS

The official magazine of the World Council of Churches, "One World", reports in its January 1984 issue that a routine ecumenical meeting be-

tween representatives of the Patriarchate of Moscow and Finnish Lutherans has taken place in Leningrad (sic). After the sessions of the commission, all of its members travelled by train to Petrozavodsk, the capital of the Karelian A.S.S.R. The purpose of the trip was a personal meeting between the Lutherans and the Orthodox of that region.

The Moscow delegation was headed by Metropolitan Anthony of Leningrad, and the Lutheran party by Archbishop Johannes Vikström. Both of them signed the minutes of the sixth such meeting, which took place at the "Leningrad" Theological Academy.

As the magazine writes, despite a number of historical misunderstandings between Russia and Finland, both countries have learned to respect one another and to co-exist peacefully.

These dialogues with the Lutherans were initiated by the late Metropolitan Nikodim of Leningrad, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Affairs. The theme of the original discussions was theological questions concerning the Eucharist, the doctrine of salvation, and, later, the nature of the Church. The magazine notes: "Perhaps the most important result of these doctrinal discussions has been the clarification of their own identity for both churches. Finland's Lutherans are now more clearly aware of belonging to the Western church and the Lutheran tradition, in which the sacrament of baptism, the preaching of God's word and justification by faith alone are among the fundamental pillars." The article continues, rather fatuously, to note that "with regard to salvation and the church as the body of Christ, both [churches] teach much the same way. It has been noted that the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith and the Orthodox doctrine of deification have a common point of intersection: love."

Of course, a great deal of time has been devoted to the work of the church for world peace, the condemnation of the "arms race" and nuclear proliferation. It was proposed by the Moscow delegation that an exchange of students be arranged, for which special scholarships would be provided.

Desiring to emphasize their good relations with the Lutherans, the Moscow Patriarchate has obtained permission from the Soviet regime for the construction of a Lutheran church in Petrozavodsk. While this was being done, there are Russian Orthodox people who have been waiting for years, hoping to receive permission for the renovation or construction of a new church, and the Moscow Patriarchate shows them no help whatsoever.

#### JAPANESE GOVERNMENT IS WARY

The newspaper The New York Tribune reports in its March 22 issue that Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was very concerned over a visit of a delegation from the Moscow Patriarchate which was to take place later in that month, among whose members were to be "three Russian Orthodox Church leaders." The government was afraid, and, of course, not without reason, that the hierarchs who were to come would turn out to be spies in riassas. The Japanese newspaper Kyodo learned that the government had asked the organization which was arranging the visit of the Soviet delegation not to permit its guests any view of the Nagasaki shipyards. The shipyards, in which military vessels are constructed, is under constant surveillance by two destroyers.

Representatives of the Japan External Cultural Federation told reporters from Kyodo that the Ministry had asked them to submit to it a detailed itinerary as early as March 13, the Soviet delegation being expected in Nagasaki on March 29.

On March 15, the Ministry again insistently asked members of the Federation not to allow representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate even a glimpse of the shipyards from a distance. Two days later, the Minis-

try of Foreign Affairs phoned, asking the Federation to change the hotel at which it had been planned that the delegation would stay, because the Nagasaki Tokyu Hotel was situated in such a way that one could see the shipyards from it. The Ministry did not give any reason for asking for this change, but finally agreed to allow the delegation to stay at that hotel after all, forced to concede because of pressure exerted by representatives of religious groups which are members of the Federation, who were sharply critical of the Ministry's activities.

At present, Japan does not have any laws protecting it from spies, and for this reason the Soviets have managed to organize an enormous intelligence net within its boundaries.

The New York Tribune, not without foundation, maintains that the Moscow Patriarchate functions in the U.S.S.R. "only under the supervision of the state. The theology of the church is closely supervised by the KGB, and the church has supported the party on most issues. It is believed that this close relationship exists because of early infiltration by KGB men into the clergy and subsequent control of the leadership positions of these men."

Visitation of Japan by Soviet religious groups began in 1980, and the year after the government had already begun to regulate such visits itself. Thus, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not permitted the Soviets to see Okinawa and has delayed the issuance of visas to them until the very day of their arrival in Japan.

#### DISTURBANCE IN WARSAW

The communist government of Poland has occasioned a new disturbance in its country. In the town of Garvolin, which is located not far from Warsaw, there took place a rebellion of students of a school in which, by government fiat, the crucifixes were to be removed from the classroom walls. The pupils, under the influence of the priest Mieczyslaw Nowak, staged a sit-in. They were soon joined by some 400 more students representing ten Warsaw schools. Since, under pressure from the regime, Cardinal Glemp immediately transferred the courageous priest Nowak to another parish, nine of his parishioners, after the conclusion of mass, declared that they would undertake a hunger strike until their pastor was returned to them.

The demand that crucifixes be removed from all public institutions was applicable for the entire country, but the principal protests originated with schools and workers in the Warsaw area.

President Jaruzelski was very upset by the protests. "They pray before the statue [of the Virgin Mary], but have the devil under their skin. They are backed by those who have mistaken the pulpit for the microphone of Radio Free Europe," he stated.

Jaruzelski emphasized that "There must not be a choice for the citizens of our country between loyalty to the state and attachment to the church."

Not wishing to make any responsible decisions while the crisis was brewing, Cardinal Glemp left for a month's tour of South American nations.

Time magazine, in its March 26 issue, reports that at the first mass which the cardinal served after his return, the Warsaw cathedral was full to overflowing with worshippers who waited on pins and needles for what their spiritual leader would say about the removal of the crucifixes. The magazine stresses that Cardinal Glemp was especially slow in his movements and his sermon was very carefully worded. At first, Glemp related to his flock all the petty details of his journey, even describing the climate, flora and fauna, etc. of South America. Spencer Davidson, the reporter who wrote the Time article, notes that the first

portion of the homily was quite boring in content and inappropriate. The aggravation of the crises between the government and the church took place precisely during the Cardinal's absence; it would appear that there were no pressing reasons for his trip. At the same time, the transfer to another parish of a priest with whom the government was at odds has shown the Poles that Glemp will follow the path of least resistance. Everyone had tensely awaited the time when the Cardinal would finally broach the crucial question of crucifixes in the schools. Finally, he could put it off no longer, but saying only that "everywhere beside the white eagle [Poland's coat of arms] there is a cross", the Cardinal passed on to the topic of the necessity of preserving peace. "We need peace. The church strives for social order and for a moral good. But the social order includes tolerance, which cannot be taught with intolerance of the cross in the name of secularity. The church will defend values in peace, looking for ways, however difficult, to get through."

After his homily, Glemp met with the nine hunger strikers and the priest Nowak for an hour and a half.

Jaruzelski's government insists that "state schools in Poland are and will remain lay institutions."

So that the inhabitants of the town of Garvolin be not left in the slightest doubt as to the inflexibility of the government's position, they were informed that a platoon of police was being stationed in their neighborhood which is used especially for the putting down of riots.

#### LAICIZATION AMONG THE CATHOLICS

In its March 9 issue, the National Catholic Reporter reports that the process of spontaneous defection of priests among the Roman Catholics has slowed down. Even in 1977, 2,506 Catholic priests left, who were officially permitted to return to the lay state. According to Catholic doctrine, the priesthood is "indelible" and deposition in its Orthodox sense does not exist among them. However, during 1981 only 1,206 priests left, which is viewed by the hierarchy as great progress.

This phenomenon is explained by the fact that in 1977 almost every priest who petitioned to be returned to the lay state received permission without any particular difficulty. This gave the right to each legally laicized priest to have an established post in some parish and even to hope that he might be permitted to be a "minister of the eucharist", i.e. to fulfil a responsibility which the Catholics established not long ago, which gives them the right to distribute communion.

Beginning with 1981, the situation changed drastically in view of the fact that new rules were introduced for those that were abandoning their priesthood. The ecclesiastical authorities ceased to take into account the mood of the petitioner at the moment when he submitted the petition, and are basing their decision on what the mental condition of the petitioner was prior to his ordination. Now, every priest who wishes to receive dispensation from his vows must, as far as possible, bring forward two witnesses who will show that from childhood the person in question was known as an inveterate liar, one who was possessed of vile sexual inclinations, or had become an alcoholic. If such a petitioner manages to discredit his life to the satisfaction of the Rota, then "the petition has a better than 50-50 chance of being granted." Final decision in any such case lies with Cardinal Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith; yet even he frequently decides that there are insufficient grounds for the granting of such a petition, and the petitioner must then wait another three years. For this reason, although this would leave such a Catholic priest excommunicated from his church, he frequently considers it simpler to



leave without any formalities. In view of this, the percentage of those who leave without the permission of the ecclesiastical authorities has now risen significantly.

#### NEW CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK

On Sunday, March 18 and Monday, March 19, there took place the solemn installation of the new archbishop of New York, John O'Connor. More than 1,200 Catholic priests took part in the procession. One priest, who walked in the procession, vested, with his guide-dog, attracted particular attention to himself. For some reason, none of his brother priests found it necessary to offer him assistance.

The press provided much information on the new archbishop and accompanied their articles with a multitude of photographs. The ceremony of enthronization, which took place in the Roman Catholics' Cathedral of St. Patrick, was also filmed for broadcast on television. By all accounts, the populace of New York reacted to this occasion as it would to an ordinary parade. The new head of America's third largest Catholic diocese made a definitely strong impression upon the crowd, which reacted with animation to the jokes of their archbishop, who delivered his first sermon in the vast church which was full to overflowing. When Archbishop O'Connor spoke of his relation to the baseball team the "Mets", he showed the public the baseball cap which he had personally received from the team. The same joke was repeated the following day with regard to the Mets' rival team, the Yankees, the archbishop averring that he had to maintain complete impartiality. The entire church erupted into loud laughter and clapping. Prolonged clapping and laughter also resounded when the archbishop called a young boy over from the sidelines who shared his name, and, to the delight of the crowd, placed his mitre on his head.

Seated in the first row were honored guests and clergymen of other denominations. Archbishop Iakovos was present at the ceremony, as was Metropolitan Theodosius of the "Orthodox Church in America." There were also a goodly number of rabbis who came to congratulate the new Catholic archbishop. The newspapers reported that he is very well disposed to ecumenism, protests against abortion and will give particular attention to the city's needy and schools in ghetto areas.

#### THE FATE OF ARCHBISHOP VALERIAN TRIFA

Early in February, the newspaper The New York Times published the text of an interview with the Romanian Archbishop Valerian, who is threatened with forcible exile from the United States.

Archbishop Valerian has submitted petitions to six different countries, but none of them has thusfar found it possible to offer him refuge. Nevertheless, Archbishop Valerian has not lost hope of finding a permanent place of residence, and continues to try to make a choice from among 127 nations. However, as he himself admits, no sooner are negotiations undertaken to obtain a visa than the term "Nazi" is mentioned and he receives an automatic refusal.

Neal Scher, director of the Office of Special Investigations in Washington, which has prosecuted war crimes cases, has stated that "We will find a country for the Archbishop pretty soon. He is stateless, and he has no choice but to go where we will send him."

Archbishop Valerian, in the words of the reporter, is aware of this and, smiling, told him: "Anything can happen. But I think the government of Israel has more wisdom than that. It's one thing to take Eichmann to Israel. It's another thing to take me."

When the reporter asked him why, in his opinion, they wish to deport him, the archbishop replied: "I am a man who happened to get put

in a moment of history when some people wanted to make a point. The point was to revive the Holocaust. But all this talk by the Jews about the Holocaust is going to backfire."

Asked about anti-Semitic articles in the newspaper which he edited many years ago, Archbishop Valerian said: "They were not anti-Semitic. They were anti-Jewish. And they were true. They were against the Jews who controlled so much of economic life in Rumania."

Questioned as to whether the Jews also control the economy of the U.S.A., Archbishop Valerian said: "They have enough power to throw me out. Why should I be in the position I'm in without Jewish pressure? It's public record."

Despite the tendentious questions of the reporter, which continued for two hours, Archbishop Valerian, apparently, managed to maintain complete self-control.

According to a report in the newspaper The Jewish Press, dated February 3, a demonstration took place at a meeting of the National Conference of Christians & Jews, demanding that that organization make a formal statement calling for Archbishop Valerian's deposition and excommunication from the Church. Participating in this demonstration were representatives of the Jewish Defense League, represented by Fran Rosenblatt, Dr. Charles Kramer of the Romanian Jewish Federation of America as well as of the Committee to Bring Nazi War Criminals to Justice in the U.S.A. All of these organizations, through their representatives, submitted documentary evidence that Archbishop Valerian had left Europe with the help of the so-called Vatican-sponsored "Monastery Route."

Dr. Jacqueline Wexler, president of the NCCJ, assured the demonstrators that as soon as Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum returns from his trip, their demands would be submitted to the American Jewish Committee.

Archbishop Valerian has already announced to his flock that, for the good of the Romanian Church in America, he is retiring as of the end of July.

#### DIFFICULTIES WITH CONVERSION TO JUDAISM

In a lengthy article printed in late January, the newspaper The Jewish Press reported on the difficulties experienced by those who, because of their marriage to a Jewish spouse or for other reasons, wish to convert to Judaism.

At present, there exist three basic religious tendencies within Judaism: the Orthodox, the Conservative and the Reformed. All of these are headed by groups of their own rabbis, and each has its own personal manner of receiving converts. However, herein lies the principal difficulty. Those who convert to Judaism under one of these groups are not acknowledged to be Jews by the others. Orthodox rabbis recognize as Jews only those converts received by the Orthodox group, and the state of Israel acknowledges only those conversions performed by a group of Orthodox rabbis within the boundaries of Israel; those performed outside Israel have almost no chance of being recognized.

Reaching an impasse with this question, representatives of the three Jewish factions conducted an experiment, forming a special conversion panel which was to convert a large group of candidates with the condition that this conversion be absolutely recognized as valid by all participants. The first such attempt at unity took place in Denver, Colorado, and as a result 750 people were officially acknowledged to have converted to Judaism. Later, similar experiments were conducted in other centers of the Jewish diaspora in America, but they were not particularly successful.

The rabbis say that this program was proposed in 1977, when it was resolved that it was necessary to be able to guarantee that persons who

have converted to Judaism in the Denver area be recognized by all the Jewish communities in America. This idea was so innovative to some that Orthodox rabbis, for example, demanded that the existence of such a program not be made public knowledge, to avoid attacks on them by their brother rabbis. Inasmuch as Orthodox rabbis took part, the conversion to Judaism of several residents of Denver imparted to this act its own type of legality.

As a preliminary requirement, this group of 750 people had to pass a sixteen-hour course in Judaism, and the conversion itself was conducted under the exclusive supervision of the Orthodox rabbis. Dispensation was given for males not to be circumcised if they feared such a procedure as adults, but they all had to be immersed in a ritual bath (Mikvah), one after the other.

Despite all of this, there remained many unresolved questions among the initiators of this temporary rabbinical committee: thusfar it has still not been made clear whether the new converts will be considered Jews in the eyes of all of Orthodox Judaism, and how the children born to these neophytes will be treated; it is also not yet known if the Orthodox rabbis who took part in the panel will suffer reprisals for their participation in such a thing. All of these questions immediately brought an end to the existence of the newly-formed rabbinical panel, causing feuds to arise among its members.

Several prominent rabbis in America agreed to recognize as Jews those converted in Denver, but others, among them Rabbi Abraham Hecht, president of the Rabbinical Alliance of America, one of the largest such groups, has stated that "My personal opinion is that they have to scrutinize each of them individually. I wouldn't recognize them."

Another rabbi, Binyamin Walfish, said that "if we state categorically that these conversions are no good, then the weddings are no good, the kids are illegitimate."

As is obvious in practice, the "scribes and Pharisees" have not yet become extinct in Israel.

#### THE SALVATION ARMY & HOMOSEXUALS IN NEW YORK

The Salvation Army has broken its forty-year old contract with the city of New York because Mayor Koch has demanded that the leaders of the sect sign an agreement that they will not discriminate in hiring, including those whose "sexual orientation and affectional preference" they object to.

The Salvation Army was under contract by the city to provide a number of services and charitable functions for \$500,00.00 per year.

The reason for the termination of collaboration with the city was the basic position of the Salvation Army that homosexuality is a violation of the law of God. Wallace Conrath, head of the New York Division of the Salvation Army, stated: "I am disappointed that an exemption could not be made for religious organizations."

The Salvation Army has shown its disinclination to compromise on question of principle in the past. It was one of the first members of the World Council of Churches to withdraw from it, because that organization had begun to support Marxists and terrorists, occupying itself with politics rather than with religion.

#### CLOSURE OF CHURCHES IN ENGLAND

Visnyk (The Herald), a Ukrainian newspaper, reported in its February 1 issue that approximately sixty churches are closed in England every year. Ten years ago, there were 17,000 churches in England, of which 900 were already closed. The majority of these former churches have now become storage houses, sports halls, offices and even living

quarters and factories. About a quarter of them have been demolished and other buildings erected in their place.

Since the Anglican Church is still, to a certain extent, state sponsored, the question of the closure of a church is bound up with a considerable amount of juridical red-tape. In any event, there is a paragraph of the law which makes provision that a closed church not be demolished under any circumstances for any amoral purposes.

The Anglican Church is the largest property owner in the country. However, economic difficulties have touched even it. The departure of parishioners to other regions, the decline of religious sensibility in general and the resultant decline in numbers of parishioners is forcing parishes to disband and sell their ecclesiastical property.

#### AN EXPERIMENT AT A CATHOLIC SEMINARY

In its February 17 issue, The New York Times newspaper reports that the Catholic Archdiocese of Rochester, New York, at the initiative of Bishop Matthew Clark, has permitted an experiment to be conducted at its seminary. Bishop Clark was very concerned over the great loss of Catholic clergymen and the fact that their numbers were not being significantly replaced; he therefore proposed to undertake an experimental reform. As is well known, Catholic seminarians are strictly forbidden to meet young ladies. Now, in the Rochester seminary, under the supervision of the administration, seminarians can meet with girls in an amicable environment. Too frequent meetings between a particular seminarian and a particular girl will show him and the administration that in his case it would be better not to make the vow of celibacy and, therefore, better to leave the seminary and try to find another vocation. In the upper classes, such assignments would not be permitted.

The majority of those who have left the priesthood have complained that they were forced to make a responsible decision concerning their vows not to marry at such a young age that they could not possibly have made a conscious assessment of the step they were undertaking.

Timothy Johnson, director of the National Conference of Vocational Directors, said that the Rochester Diocese has decided to provide the young candidates with the possibility of making a timely choice. The diocese has a population of 380,000 serviced by 275 priests. Ten years ago a roughly equivalent population was serviced by 384 priests, and the outlook for 1994 is that there will probably be 217 priests functioning. It is difficult to place any hope in the ordination of new candidates from among the young seminarians, for last year only one new seminarian enrolled in the diocese's seminary.

#### DONATIONS RECEIVED & GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED

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