

MUNICH, 4 August 1970 (CAA Dept.) The following is a Radio Liberty Research item by D. Pospelovsky of 31 July 1970.

UPI reports from Moscow (July 30, 1970), on the basis of a report in Pravda Vostoka, the trial and sentence (doesn't give the term) of an Orthodox priest Father Pavel Adelheim. The article presents him as a debaucher, sadist who savagely beat his wife and children, and states that the believers considered him unworthy of being a priest.

Khronika Tekushchikh Sobytiy (No. 13, p. 31), on the other hand, reported that he was a very well educated and highly popular priest in the Bukhara Oblast town of Kagan (Uzbekistan). During his term there he had managed to build a new and modern church in place of a shack. Both the sentence and Khronika state that Father Pavel was involved in samizdat activities and was in touch with Eshliman and Yakunin, the two priests who in 1966 sent a letter to the Soviet government protesting the illegal persecution of the Orthodox Church, and to the Patriarch, condemning the subservience of the church leaders to the regime.

These are the actual reasons for Father Pavel's sentence; and it is obvious that the cruelty charge is a crude fabrication in order to disgrace him in the eyes of uneducated believers.

Similar cases were known in the past. Archbishop Iov of Kazan was sentenced in 1960 to 3 years and Archbishop Andrey of Chernigov in 1962 to 8 years of hard labor on charges of embezzlement, whereas in fact they were very popular bishops and actively resisted the closure of churches and monasteries in their bishoprics. The falsehood of these charges is proved by the fact that Archbishop Iov is now the ruling bishop of Ufa and a member of the Patriarchal Synod (Zhurnal Moskovskoi Patriarkhii, No. 1, 1970, p. 7). It is highly unlikely that a criminal would have been elected to the highest ruling body of the Russian Orthodox Church.

However, the line of attack of Soviet authorities against the Church is now different from the Khrushchev days. Then the aim was to destroy the Church as such in the shortest possible time. Now the failure of this aim has been recognized (see e.g. Nauka i Religiya for 1965-67). Now the fight is against a

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merger of the religious opposition with the political opposition into a single Democratic Movement. Hence the arrests of Levitin-Krasnov and Talantov last year, the present arrest and trial of Father Adelheim. Khronika also reported the search of the apartment of the Rev. Gleb Yakunin in Moscow. Thus his arrest can also be anticipated. Rev. Sergiy Zheludkov, the author of a letter to Sakharov (text see Vestnik RSKhD, No. 94, 1969, p. 53) and of a samizdat book Why I Am Also a Christian, was also searched and samizdat literature was confiscated from him. All these religious men have been active in samizdat and the common struggle for the defense of civil liberties in the Soviet Union.

Thirty-two Soviet citizens, including P. Yakir, A. Yesenin-Volpin, Mrs. Grigorenko and others, protesting to the UN and to world public opinion the arrest of Levitin-Krasnov on September 12, 1969, inter alia, stated: "The civil authorities repeatedly warned him... 'You're a church writer; go on and continue your defense of the Church, but don't mingle in politics.' But 'politics,' i.e. the defense of civil rights, has increasingly become the vital activity of his existence..." (RLR No. 252, p. 2). Levitin-Krasnov was one of the 15 founding members of the Initiative Group for the Defense of Civil Rights in the Soviet Union, formed in the spring of 1969 (see also CRD 328/69 and CRD 333/69).

The fear of the regime is natural: the Church membership runs into tens of millions (somewhere between 30 and 50 million practicing Orthodox Christians according to unofficial estimates of Orthodox hierarchs in the Soviet Union). If the priests become active members of the Democratic Movement, they may bring along with them the masses, much more so than the scientific intelligentsia. Hence the regime is trying to remove and isolate those popular priests who are involved in samizdat; those who believe and practice their belief that religious freedom is inseparable from social and civic freedom (from the above letter).

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