

Education of the City University of New York has functioned in Thessaloniki under the joint auspices of Queens College and the Institute for Balkan Studies. The courses lasted six weeks from the beginning of July till late August and they were attended by students of the Colleges of City University of New York.

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This volume was already in the press when the sad news of the death of Basil Laourdas, director of the Institute and Editor in chief of *Balkan Studies*, came.

The Advisory Board of our journal deeply regrets the loss of the scholar, and administrator that was Basil Laourdas.

This report was drafted by him before his death and approved by the Executive Committee of the Institute on January the 27th, 1971. This was the last meeting Basil Laourdas was able to attend.

## THE ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY IN AMERICA

An international Conference of Orthodox theologians was held on the campus of the Hellenic College in Brookline, Mass. from September 7-11, 1970. It was the first such conference since 1936 when a similar one was held in Athens, Greece, with the prominent Orthodox theologians of that time attending. This conference was very well attended by over 100 persons, including seven Orthodox bishops, many prominent Orthodox theologians from America and Europe, many members of the local clergy, students of theology, and a number of distinguished non-Orthodox observers.

The Conference was sponsored by the Orthodox Theological Society in America, which is a professional society constituted primarily by Orthodox theologians, both clergymen and laymen, who teach in the Orthodox schools of theology or in other institutions of higher education. The idea of the Conference was conceived over a year ago. It immediately received enthusiastic support and became a major project of the Orthodox Theological Society in America.

In selecting the speakers, an effort was made to include prominent names who would be representative of the various segments of the Orthodox world, and who would also be able to make a vital contribution to contemporary Orthodox theology. Even though some of the people invited were not able to attend the Conference at the last minute, the Conference was, nevertheless, very representative of the Orthodox world both in this country and in Europe.

After the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on Tuesday morning, the participants were welcomed by Fr. L.C. Contos, President of the Hellenic College. The Conference itself began with an address by the Rev. Dr. D.J. Constantelos.

President of the Orthodox Theological Society in America. Among other things, Father Constantelos stressed the urgent need for closer cooperation among the Orthodox Churches all over the world, and indicated that the Orthodox Theological Society in America is dedicated to this cause. Father Constantelos added that the theological topics for discussion at the conference are of vital importance to Orthodoxy and to Christianity in general, because they seek to express the historic Christian Faith within the framework of contemporary problems of theology and church life. Father Constantelos concluded his address by stating that the task of the Orthodox Theological Society is to challenge contemporary Orthodoxy into a kerygmatic proclamation of the historic Christian Faith, and he identified this task with that of the Conference.

Before the first topic was introduced, his Eminence, Metropolitan Chrysostomos Konstantinidis, of the Ecumenical Patriarchate conveyed the blessings and paternal greetings of His Holiness, the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I.

The first topic was "Unity and Diversity in Orthodox Theology" presented in the afternoon by Fr. Boris Bobrinskoy of St. Serge Orthodox Theological Institute in Paris and by Fr. Livery Voronov of the Theological Academy in Leningrad, U.S.S.R. The discussion which followed touched primarily on the problems of Christian unity.

The second topic was "Biblical Studies in Orthodox Theology." The subject was introduced in the evening with a paper prepared by Professor Savas Agourides of the University of Athens. Professor Veselin Kesich of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological School in Tuckahoe, New York and Fr. Theodore Stylianopoulos of Holy Cross Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Mass. responded critically to the paper and aroused substantial discussion on the nature and extent of biblical criticism.

On Wednesday morning the third topic entitled "Canons: Continuity and Reform" was introduced with a brief paper prepared by Fr. Damaskeños Papandreou of the inter-faith monastic community at Taize, France. Fr. John Meyendorff of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological School and Vice-President of the Theological Society and Fr. Maximos Aghiorgoussis, Dean of Faculty of Holy Cross Orthodox School of Theology responded critically to the paper, presented other aspects of this critical topic, led the discussion, and answered specific questions which followed.

The afternoon of the same day the fourth topic on "Liturgy and Theology" was introduced by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, Dean of St. Vladimir's. Fr. Athanase Yievtich representing the Orthodox Church of Serbia and Dr. George Bebis of Holy Cross responded critically to the paper. Interesting discussion followed which touched on many problems related to the spiritual crisis in the parish life today.

On Wednesday evening the participants enjoyed a musical program by the Byzantine Chorus of Holy Cross under the direction of Prof. Savas Savas.

On Thursday morning the fifth topic on "The Church and the Secular World" was introduced by Fr. Stanley Harakas of Holy Cross. The respondents to his paper were Rev. Victor Angelescu of Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield, Michigan, and Dr. David Evans of St. John's University in New York. Some very contemporary and crucial problems were raised. In the presentation, the responses and the discussion which followed some steps were taken in the direction of certain solutions.

On Thursday afternoon the sixth and final topic was introduced by Dr. Christos Yannaras, a young Greek theologian from Athens, whose topic on "Orthodoxy and the West" drew rather long responses from Dr. Nikos Nissiotis, Director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland, and Metropolitan Chrysostomos Konstantinidis of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople.

On Thursday evening a banquet was enjoyed by all the registered participants of the Conference, at which time Archbishop Kiprian greeted the participants and extended his blessings to them, while Archbishop Iakovos addressed the participants for a fine exemplary conference and commended the efforts of the Orthodox Theological Society in America, and pledged his constant support.

On Friday morning a hierarchical Divine Liturgy was celebrated by His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos, accompanied by many of the clergymen attending the Conference.

A final session was held after the Divine Liturgy to raise and discuss topics of general interest and to make suggestions for future conferences.

The Conference was very enthusiastically received by the speakers and the many participants, including the local clergy and interested non-Orthodox observers. There was a general appeal to convene such conferences more often. The Orthodox Theological Society in America plans to publish the papers, the responses and the discussion of this conference, and hopes to sponsor another such conference in the near future.

In addition to the President and the Vice-President of the Theological Society, the following members served on the Planning Committee: The Rev. Dr. N.M. Vaporis, the Rev. Fr. Th. Stylianopoulos, the Rev. Fr. John Townsend, Miss Constance Tarasar, and the Secretary of the Society Mr. Peter A. Chamberas.

PETER A. CHAMBERAS  
Secretary