

ACADEMY PLANNED BY RUSSIAN CHURCH

Advanced Theological School Here Is Announced at Union Theological Reception

Plans for an academy to serve as an advanced training center of the Russian Orthodox Church in North America for priests of that faith and other interested scholars were announced yesterday at a reception at Union Theological Seminary.

Speakers at the reception, including the Right Rev. John, Russian Orthodox Bishop of Brooklyn, also indicated that this academy might provide the nucleus for a spiritual counter-attack against Soviet influence. The academy will be the first of its kind in the western hemisphere.

Joining with Bishop John in explaining the academy project were Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, president of Union Theological Seminary; Prof. Boris A. Bakhmeteff of Columbia University, who was the Russian Ambassador to the United States during the Kerensky regime; Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, associate general secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Prof. G. P. Fedotov of Union Theological Seminary.

The occasion for the announcement was a reception held by the faculty and students of Union Theological Seminary for the faculty and students of St. Vladimir's Russian Orthodox Seminary, of which Bishop John is the dean.

While St. Vladimir's now provides training for orthodox priests on the college level, the academy, it was explained, would have an augmented faculty equipped to conduct post-graduate studies pertaining to the Russian Orthodox faith.

Courses May Start Next Year

Plans for the new school have not been completed, but Union Theological Seminary is making classroom space available in its annex, and Col. Peter Zouboff, a member of the executive board of St. Vladimir's, said he believed courses would start in September, 1948.

Russian theological scholars already committed to accept posts on the faculty include the Very Rev. George Florovsky of the Orthodox Theological Academy in Paris; Prof. E. V. Sectorsky, pre-Soviet director of Kiev University, and Prof. N. S. Arsenieva, formerly of Warsaw University.

It is intended eventually to establish the academy as one of the specialized schools of Columbia University, although at the outset it will have an independent status.

Establishment of the academy also was seen as another barrier to any move by the Patriarchal church in Moscow to bring the Russian Orthodox Church in North America into its spiritual orbit. Such an effort was made in November by Metropolitan Greg-

ory of Leningrad and Novgorod, who came here as an emissary of Patriarch Alexei.

Bishop John, who spoke through an interpreter, denounced anti-Christian collectivism as opposed to true Christian civilization and said: "The new epoch of man's history in which we find ourselves has encountered a spiral of absolutist totalitarianism. Materialism has itself attempted to usurp the concept of absolutism, but denying Christ, and in a false, early sense."

Among those at the reception were Bishop Andrei of the Bulgarian Church and Bishop Nicolai of the Serbian Orthodox Church. It was announced that Orthodox students of their countries, also would study at the academy.