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Court Cites Rumanian Bishop For Contempt in Taking Office



D. Trifa (left), of the Rumanian Orthodox Church of the United States and Canada, talks with Allan J. Klinger in Federal Building. Both were cited for contempt.

3 Other Prelates, Attorney Named In Control Fight

Bishop Viorel D. Trifa, who was invested here Sunday as head of the Rumanian Orthodox Church of the United States and Canada, was cited for contempt of the U. S. District Court yesterday.

Bishop Trifa became director of the church in this continent at a three-hour ceremony Sunday in the Church of the Descent of the Holy Ghost, American and Brown sts., despite a direction of Federal Judge Allan K. Grim that the function would be in contempt of a U. S. District Court restraining order.

Cited with Bishop Trifa and three other prelates of the church, was Maximilian J. Klinger, an attorney, who advised the episcopate to proceed with the consecration of Bishop Trifa in defiance of the court order issued on petitions of Bishop Andrei Moldovan, of Detroit.

OTHERS CITED

Given 10 days to answer contempt charges in addition to Bishop Trifa and Klinger were Archbishop Ioan Theodorovich, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Ukrainian Church of the U. S.; the Rev. John Popovich and the Rev. Ioan Tenutza, both of Bodine st. near Poplar.

Both sides charged that the other was Communist-inspired and that Moscow was trying to seize control of the church.

The court announced that a citation also had been prepared for Archbishop Mystyslew, of South Bound Brook, N. J. Judge Grim explained that the prelate had not yet been served with the legal papers.

Klinger, who tearfully admitted that it was on his advice that the Sunday investiture was undertaken, assured the court that the property of the church "would remain intact" until the court action was resolved.

MONASTERY PLANNED

The court was informed that the church has \$13,000 in cash in this country and Canada, and owns a newspaper and a 200-acre farm in Michigan. The church plans to build a monastery on the acreage, the court was told.

On the petition of Assistant U. S. Attorney Alfred Lounga, Attorney William M. Gerber was named attorney for the court, John R. Vintila, Cleveland attorney, announced he was representing Bishop Moldovan in proceedings that had been "instituted in 1950 in Cleveland."

Klinger, who has practiced law in this city for 15 years, said that Bishop Moldovan "was installed behind the Iron Curtain (of Russia) in 1950."

COMMUNIST CONTROL

Judge Grim asked: "Is this an effort of the Communists to control the Patriarch of this church, and your people will not recognize him as the titular head of the church?"

Klinger replied: "Yes."
Judge Grim said he had "nothing but admiration for these men "if they were attempting to break their church away from Communist domination, but added that "the court must be obeyed."