

People and Events Of the World and Nation

700 Denounce Klan and Racial Violence

Washington (RNS) — Seven hundred people calling themselves the National Anti-Klan Network denounced racial violence at the kickoff here of a nationwide campaign to "stop the Klan."

The network was formed in 1979. Delegates attending the meeting at Howard University included representatives of church, civil rights, labor, left, student and feminist groups.

"We are calling for a nationwide concerted effort and a national state of emergency be declared on the Klan and racial violence," said the Rev. Lucius Walker, director of the network and head of the New York City-based Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization. "We also are calling for vigorous enforcement of existing laws to put an end to this racist violence..."

(In a related development, Religion Today writer Martin Mawver reported that Tony LaRicci, the Grand Dragon for the Maryland Klan chapter, has said, "The race war is inevitable." To this end, the Maryland chapter and seven other state groups are setting up guerrilla warfare training grounds.)

Among the organizations protesting racial violence are the National Black Lay Catholic Caucus, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the National Council of Churches.

The Anti Defamation League of B'nai B'rith will not participate because, an ADL spokesman said, the network includes leftist groups which have in the past supported Palestinian terrorism.

Akinshijuola Ola, network spokesman, admitted that the network included the Socialist Workers Party and the Revolutionary Workers Party, leftist organizations.

Abortion Vote Scheduled in Italy Before Summer

Rome (RNS) — A court ruling has set the stage for a new battle over Italy's three-year-old liberal abortion law.

Italy's Supreme Court cleared the way on Feb. 4 for a referendum among the nation's 32 million voters between April 15 and June 15 on whether to liberalize existing laws or impose tough new restrictions on abortion.

Abortion Defenders Renew Demand To Meet Reagan

Washington (RNS) — Seventeen pro-abortion religious leaders, angered that President Reagan met with an anti-abortion delegation but not with them, have renewed their request for a meeting to present their side of the abortion issue.

On Jan. 22, the president conferred with representatives of the thousands of protesters who had converged on the capital to mark the eighth anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling which legalized abortion.

But the liberal Protestant and Jewish leaders who traveled to Washington to demonstrate support for legal abortion were notified that afternoon that President Reagan could not see them.

The petitioners said they hoped to discuss the theological basis for their positions with the president and convince him that they represented the majority of American Christians and Jews on this issue.

Reagan Expected To Name Wilson Vatican Delegate

Washington (RNS) — President Reagan reportedly plans to name as his special representative to the Vatican the longtime friend who has headed his personnel advisory committee.

The Washington Post said William A. Wilson, 66, a California rancher and a convert to Catholicism, will receive the Vatican appointment.

The newspaper described Wilson as a member of Reagan's "kitchen cabinet," a group of friends who have long conferred with him at his home on political questions.

The newspaper said, "The position pays expenses only and is traditionally given to a wealthy Catholic who can afford, as Mr. Wilson can, to serve at the Vatican and do the required entertaining without salary."

Evangelist Criticizes Preacher Who Shunned Catholic on Dais

Fort Worth, Tex. (RNS) — Evangelist James Robison said he was "surprised and disappointed" that a speaker canceled an appearance at his Bible conference here because anti-ERA activist Phyllis Schlafly, a Catholic, would be on the program.

Dr. Curtis Hutson, editor of the fundamentalist *Sword of the Lord* newspaper of Murfreesboro, Tenn., informed Robison that because Mrs. Schlafly is a Roman Catholic, he could not speak at the Bible conference.

Dr. Hutson, in an article in his weekly journal, said that he took his action because Roman Catholicism "is a growing accumulation of error through the years."

Robison said he was unhappy about Dr. Hutson's cancellation "because I felt people wouldn't understand." His association is not anti-Catholic or "anti any other group," he said.

The cancellation "will not be a fellowship builder," Robison said, "and I've been trying to get cooperation among all groups to win people to the Lord. Unless Christian people quit fighting each other we're not going to be able to accomplish our goals."

50 Religious Leaders Sign Petition On El Salvador Aid

New York (RNS) — Some 50 religious leaders have joined an equal number of civil rights literary and entertainment figures in denouncing the U.S. government decision to resume military aid to El Salvador.

Their names appeared in a full-page ad in the New York Times Feb. 2 under sponsorship of the U.S. Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. It calls for letting the people of El Salvador decide their own future by ending military and economic aid to the Latin American nation.

Roman Catholics predominate among the religious leaders listed, including the superiors of 29 men's and women's communities led by the two Maryknoll superiors, Father James Noonan for the fathers and brothers and Sister Melinda Roper for the sisters.

Also among the signers are the families of three of the dead women, Maryknoll: Sister Maura Clarke and Ita Ford and Jean Donovan, the lay missionary.

Among the civil rights figures are Jesse Jackson, Andrew Young, Coretta Scott King, Dr. Benjamin Spock and Julian Bond.

Other signers include Linus Pauling, Ed Asner, Harry Bellafonte, Jane Fonda, Erica Jong and Kurt Vonnegut.

Bill Could Control Abortions in States

Washington (RT) — A bill introduced into both Houses of the Congress has lighted a spark of hope for opponents of abortion.

The bill also would prevent any state law which forbids federal courts from enjoining abortions.

Introduced by Sen. Jesse Helms in the Senate and Reps. Henry Hyde and Roman Mazzoli in the House, the bill would forbid states to fund abortions and would allow each state to choose for itself whether to permit abortion.

This new angle for stopping abortion is a result of growing despair over the possibility of passage of the Human Life Amendment. Though both houses can accumulate sufficient votes for a simple majority, neither is close to mustering the two-thirds majority needed for the HLA passage.

The bill states that "present-day scientific evidence indicates a significant likelihood that actual human life exists from conception." This is called the bill's "rationale basis," which allows it to declare that fetuses are protected under the 14th amendment.

This same amendment permits Congress to determine when life begins and which life is to be protected. In other words, Congress has power to interpret the meaning of the 4th Amendment and not just the courts.

If the bill passes, states will be forbidden to fund or assist in any form the performance of abortions. The state may, also, if it chooses, ban abortions altogether or limit them to certain situations.

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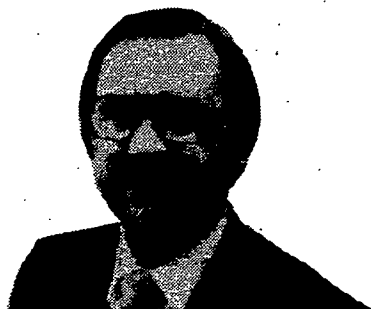
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