

Dismissal of Nun Teachers Causes Clash In Alsace

GRAFFENSTADEN CATHOLICS OF FER RESISTANCE TO COMPLETE SECULARIZATION OF THE SCHOOLS

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)
Paris, May 1.—Serious incidents have occurred in Graffenstaden, an Alsatian community, following the decision of the municipality to send away the nuns who have taught up to this time in the public school.

The Catholic population has opposed the departure of the nuns. Graffenstaden has about 6,000 inhabitants. A little more than half of the people are Protestant and the remainder are Catholic. The municipality is socialist and the Mayor, M. Baumann, a wealthy industrialist, is a Jew. It was M. Baumann and his aides who took the initiative in informing the sisters that their services no longer would be required.

As soon as the news was spread a violent emotion seized upon the Catholic population. Delegates were appointed to represent the Catholics and to demand in their name that they would not think of demanding that the nuns be retained in schools attended by Protestant children, but that there was a sufficient number of Catholic children to justify the maintenance of the school taught by the Catholic nuns. The matter was referred to the Bishop of Strasbourg who immediately went to Graffenstaden to examine the situation and tell his people what to do.

After hearing the Bishop, 2,000 Catholics assembled and, led by their parish priest, and accompanied by a band, they went to call upon the mayor in his chateau. In the grounds of the residence of this multi-millionaire the band played the hymn, "Nunc Vobiscum Deus," which was sung by the 2,000 manifestants. A delegation went up to the chateau, where they were informed that M. Baumann was absent. A memorandum, summing up the claims of the Catholics was left with Madame Baumann, who promised to inform her husband of their demands.

The next day was the day on which the nuns were to be replaced by secular teachers. But things did not go off as the mayor had planned. A Catholic Vigilance Committee, headed by a physician, had made plans of its own. At five o'clock in the morning the Catholic fathers of the pupils took possession of the school building and occupied it. At half past seven a large delegation, carrying sticks, went to the church, where the nuns had heard Mass, and escorted them to the school. When the lay teachers appeared, they were informed politely, yet firmly, that it would be well for them to withdraw. They did so without trouble.

The municipality then called on the gendarmes. The Catholic parents informed them that they would not vacate the premises. The captain of the gendarmes was careful not to cause any conflict, the consequences of which would have been deplorable. He sent for the primary schools inspector, who negotiated with the pastor.

"Give us," the priest said, "what you have given the Jews of Strasbourg: religious classes for the children of our faithful. But in any case do not send away the sisters." The inspector of schools promised to inform the Prefect of these proposals.

A little later the sub-prefect arrived. He showed himself extremely conciliatory, asked permission to talk to the sisters, made them some very courteous compliments, and then negotiated with the men, who presented him, in formal terms, their resolutions opposing the departure of the nuns.

In the afternoon the delegation went again to escort the sisters to the school, and took them home again after the school closed. The Mayor's Strategy. But that night, Mayor Baumann who had not appeared during the entire day, went to the school accompanied by a locksmith, caused all the locks to be changed and sent the fire brigade to occupy the building. He then proclaimed that the public school was closed.

The Catholics thereupon opened their school, five temporary classes, in a club house, putting it in charge of the sisters until a final solution is reached.

It must be noted here that this incident was not caused by a government order but by the decision of an anti-Catholic municipality which desires to secularize the community. It must also be emphasized that the Catholics do not demand the retention of the nuns as teachers in the general public schools. They wish them to be retained only in five classes out of twenty. The nuns have taught in this community for 48 years.

American Legion's Essay Prize Won By Catholic Boy

Winner, Robert Krumholtz Of Springfield, O., Announces His Intention To Study For The Priesthood.

Indianapolis, Ind., May 11.—Defeating 200,000 other contestants, Robert Krumholtz, Catholic high school student of Springfield, Ohio, has won first place, with a prize of \$750, in the American Legion's national-wide essay contest.

Announcement of the results has just been made by the National Americanism Commission of the Legion which conducted the contest. Legion national headquarters are in this city.

High school students from every part of the country completed, and a huge number of essays was received. "Why Communism is a Menace to Americanism" was the subject.

Young Krumholtz is a student in St. Raphael high school at Springfield. He plans to enter the priesthood and is now selecting the college in which he will make his preliminary studies. He gives unstinted credit for his signal victory in the national essay contest to his teachers, the Sisters of Charity.

Second national honors, with a prize of \$500, went to John S. Miller, Jr. of Portsmouth, Va., now at Virginia Military Academy. The third prize of \$250 was won by Miss Grace Nichols, of Healdsburg, Cal.

Judges in the contest were W. W. Husband, Commissioner General of Immigration, George F. Aulher, president of the National Press Club, and William Mather Lewis, president of George Washington University, at Washington, D. C.

Communism could never be successful in America because it is directly opposed to American principles, the Catholic boy holds in his winning essay. It is a brief but stirring and convincing appeal against the communist system. Its text is as follows:

"Communism is that system of social organization in which all productive property is owned by the state or community rather than by the individual. Its principles are directly opposed to Americanism, which allows every man that which he earns.

"Americanism stands for freedom and justice to all, while communism is the essence of injustice, since it gives to every man the same, no matter if he be an idler or worker.

"Deep in the soul of every real man there is planted that craving to advance a little higher than his fellowmen. This we call ambition. Communism destroys this worthy and commendable passion at its very roots by compelling all to possess the same. In its stead it promotes laziness, for the people would say, 'Why should I work when I only get the same as everyone else whether I work or not.'

"It can be truly said that anything that is a failure is a menace, and communism from the very beginning of history has proven itself a complete failure, as in the case of the ancient Spartans, who were no more than trained animals lacking the power to act individually.

"History proves that communism can only be successful when all possess unity of belief, and therefore Communism could not possibly be successful in our fair land known as the land of the free.

"It has been said by those who are considered authorities on the subject that a modern communist is one who possesses nothing and has yearnings for the equal division of unequal earnings; for idler, bungler or both, he is willing to fork out his penny and take in your shilling.

"American has been held up in history as the first country to give equal rights to women and the honor and respect due to her virtues. Communism would degrade woman to the mere rank of common property and the beautiful and venerable name 'Mother' would be forgotten.

"Oh, true American citizens, if you are worthy of so honorable a name unite against this common enemy, communism, and crush it like serpent. Insure to our followers that peace and happiness to purchase which our ancestors did not hesitate to shed their blood."

"The organization is the Catholic Truth Society of the Diocese of Jaro, which has just held its fourth annual convention.

Father Edwin V. Byrne, secretary to Bishop McCloskey, organized the Society with a handful of high school students in 1921. Shortly afterward he went to a neighboring town, where 250 gathered to hear an address. "Thereafter the movement spread until Bishop McCloskey has said that Father Byrne is 'no longer a secretary but a missionary.'

HOLY CROSS BROTHER FIRST WHITE MAYOR OF AKYAB, BURMA, A BUDDHIST CITY

Remarkable History of Brother Vital Now A Visitor in The United States—It Was He Who Officially Welcomed The American World Flyers When They Landed In Akyab

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)
Washington, May 8.—When the American World Flyers were winging their way around the globe in the epochal flight last June, they stopped at the city of Akyab, in Arakan-Burma, India. Akyab was once the capital of the colorful Kingdom of Arakan and seat of a resplendent court of Indian kings. Now it is the largest metropolis on the east coast of the Bay of Bengal, and one of the finest seaports in the country.

News despatches at the time were brief. They did not announce, among other things, that in this proud old royal city the mayor, who headed the swarthy committee of welcome for the airmen, was, oddly enough, an American and a white man like themselves—a young Massachusetts Yankee.

Nor did they record that the far-wandering young Yankee, although he administered a Buddhist city of more than 40,000 souls, was a Catholic religious. Nor that, so far as was known, he was the only white mayor the centuries-old city had ever had.

Now on visit to U. S. Now the erstwhile white mayor of Akyab has come back to "the States."

He is Brother R. Vital, Holy Cross missionary and the first Brother from an American foundation to enter the India mission field. He hails from Three Rivers, Mass.

They sent him back because for twelve years he had not seen the land of his birth, had not passed in the arduous day-and-night apostolate he served once, six years ago, when his nerves momentarily weakened under the strain. He had organized two night schools, reorganized a hospital, taught constantly, visited almost inaccessible primitive tribes collecting materials for the great Vatican Missionary Exhibition, and arranged a section of the exhibition at Rome.

For the political honor was incident and was forced on him; he was always first the missionary. And now he was tired. So he was sent back for a rest.

But today his eye is clear again his step is springy and his slight form is erect. He goes back to India in October, and he is eager to resume his work.

He is only thirty-three. He feels he still has much to do. Brother Vital's blue eyes are mild and they twinkle with a generous sense of humor. They assume an ardent seriousness when he speaks of the remarkable progress of the Catholic Church in India. He likes to talk of that. It is others, however, who tell of his picturesque career, who know of the dangerous adventures of the unflinching missionary's zeal of the popularity that made him the idol of an ancient Indian capital, of his great services to that city and its people, and of the honors they showered on him.

Brother Vital had an example of ardent Catholicism in his youth. His father, J. R. Giboulean, had early attested his devotion by joining the Papal Zouaves in the troublous days when the Vatican was threatened, and taking part in the defense of the Papal States in 1870. The son joined the Holy Cross Order when he was 16. Thence, the mere chronology of his mission life is as follows:

He taught five years in Canada; in 1913 went over as the pioneer American Brother in the India mission field; for a year taught and studied the ways and language of the people at Dacca, headquarters of the Holy Cross missions in India; went to Chittagong, Bengal, where he reorganized the native school in the Fifteenth Century Portuguese mission, and served five years as its head; spent four months in the Kashi Hills recuperating from a nervous breakdown; went to Akyab, Burma, founded another native school and directed it five years; was despatched to Rome as the delegate of Bishop Legrand, C.S.C., of Dacca, to arrange and have charge of a section of the Vatican Missionary Exhibition; remained there seven weeks, and then was sent to America for a rest, his first in twelve years.

Elected Mayor of Akyab. It was three years ago that Akyab virtually forced the impressive honor of being its mayor upon Brother Vital. But first it made him a civic hero and showered other honors upon him.

It came about in this way. When the young missionary arrived in the city to found his school, he set diligently about learning the native tongue—he now speaks five languages. So when he called a mass meeting for the school project, after his period of preparation, he addressed his hearers first in English, then in Burmese. The natives were swept off their feet. Such a thing had not happened before. The gesture of congenial effort to come, of their community, as a fellow citizen, and the kindly, uncritical words won their hearts.

Thereafter, the Akyabese took Brother Vital to themselves. They tried to make him a member of the Civic Labor Board. Then they placed him on the Board of Education. Here he brought about the adoption of a Moral Code, to be taught in all schools. Then they put him on the Hospital Board. His chief labor in the new capacity was to arrange for the first four American laywomen coming to the India missions to take charge of the Government Hospital and thereby facilitate greatly the care of the native sick.

There came a vacancy on the Municipal Council, and immediately the people advanced him for the office. There were two other candidates.

One received 1 per cent of the votes, the other 9 per cent, Brother Vital got all the rest.

Then came the time for the municipal election for mayor, and again the insistence that the Catholic religious become a candidate. He replied that his field was religion, that he could not run without his bishop's consent. The townspeople promptly obtained the consent. So Brother Vital, Councillor from the Civil Station, white Catholic missionary, became a candidate for an office in a Buddhist city which, so far as was known, won. Opposing him were the incumbent and the vice-president of the council, both native Akyabese and fellow religionists with the citizens. Akyab has barely 5 per cent Christians in its population, and only about 200 Catholics. The odds seemed overwhelming.

Brother Vital did no campaigning whatever; he went on about his work as a missionary teacher. But when the ballots were counted he received 98 per cent of the votes. The city prepared a huge demonstration for its new mayor, but he found consent and occasion to make a school tour and did not attend.

Noted Speakers To Address Catholic Industrial Congress

N. C. W. C. News Service)
Washington, May 8.—Three outstanding figures in the industrial world will address the Catholic Conference on Industrial Problems in Chicago, June 24 and 25. The speakers for the session were announced here this week by the Rev. R. A. McGowan, secretary of the Conference.

James A. Corcoran, of New York, who devised and is now in charge of the industrial insurance plan in use in the garment industry, will discuss "Unemployment Insurance." Mr. Corcoran's system was recently adopted as a result of an agreement between the employers and the unions in the industry, and he will tell of its working.

M. J. Feron, of Chicago, general superintendent of the Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad, and assistant general manager of the Chicago Rapid Transit Company, will speak on "Employee Insurance from the Employer's Standpoint," outlining the plan of general insurance used by the elevated railroad and the North Shore.

Edward J. Evans, vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which has pioneered in perfecting labor union insurance, will speak on "Labor Union Insurance." It is largely because of the example this union has set that there has been called in Washington this summer a conference of the heads of all international unions to encourage Labor bodies to install the insurance systems for their members.

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industry, and he will tell of its working. M. J. Feron, of Chicago, general superintendent of the Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad, and assistant general manager of the Chicago Rapid Transit Company, will speak on "Employee Insurance from the Employer's Standpoint," outlining the plan of general insurance used by the elevated railroad and the North Shore. Edward J. Evans, vice-president of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which has pioneered in perfecting labor union insurance, will speak on "Labor Union Insurance." It is largely because of the example this union has set that there has been called in Washington this summer a conference of the heads of all international unions to encourage Labor bodies to install the insurance systems for their members.

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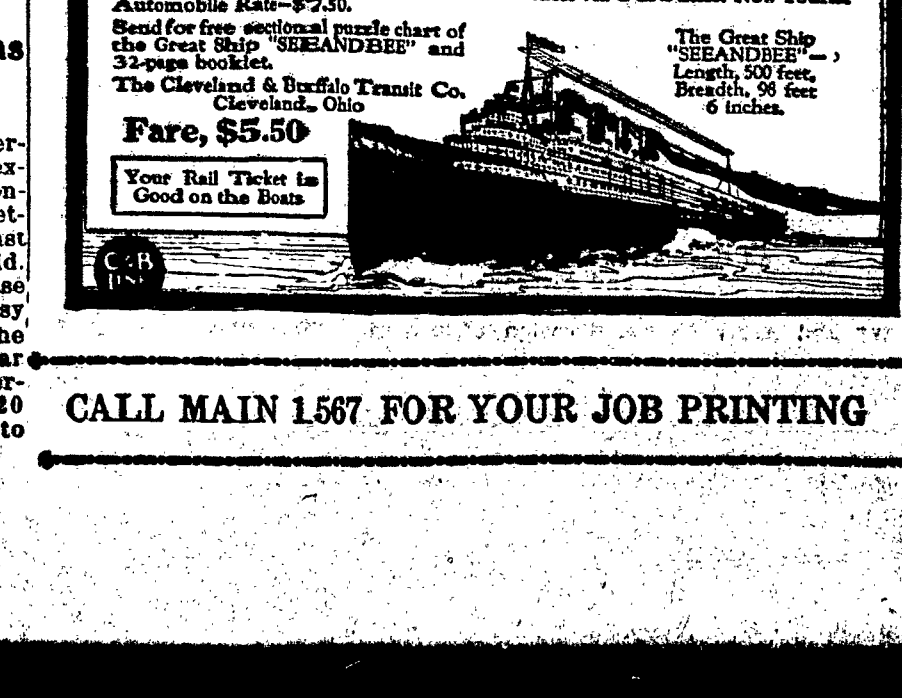
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