

Ignoring Vatican Nazis Grab Church Bells In Belgium

VATICAN CITY (NC) (Radio)—The Holy See has striven, but without success, to halt the Nazi confiscation of church bells in Belgium and to obtain the revocation or mitigation of the orders deporting Belgians to forced labor in Germany. It is revealed in a joint Pastoral Letter of the Belgian Hierarchy, the text of which has been printed in *La Liberte de Belgique*, Brussels.

The Belgian Bishops, in this vigorous document bearing date of Mar. 21, 1943, which was read in all Belgian Catholic churches, say: "We now solemnly declare that we oppose with all our episcopal authority the measures which have for their purpose but that of transforming our bells into machinery of war and instruments of death."

The Belgian Hierarchy warns that collaboration by the faithful in the Nazi program of church bell confiscation or in the deportation of Belgian workers for forced labor in Germany is "gravely illicit in conscience."

The joint Pastoral Letter (complete text of which appears below) is signed by His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Van Rooy, Archbishop of Malines, and by the Bishops of Liege, Ghent, Bruges, Tournai and Namur.

Belgian Bishops Flay Nazi Grab of Church Bells, Forced Labor

VATICAN CITY—Following is the text of the joint Pastoral Letter of the Belgian Hierarchy protesting against the excesses committed by the invading German Nazi authorities:

"Dear beloved brethren:

"TO YOUR PIOUS ANGER we must now add another which will be extremely painful for you; the occupying authorities inform us that they are going to proceed to the requisitioning of our church bells. Some months ago, in the face of the Nazi menace, we presented to the German authority an energetic protest and enumerated the grave religious and juridical reasons against the seizure of the bells. On its part the Holy See intervened with the Government of the Reich. We had hoped that, thanks to these interventions, the decision would not be put into execution. But now we learn, with dismay that orders have been given to take the bells from our parish belltowers.

In the face of this unbelievable measure, it is impossible for us as Catholic Bishops responsible for the religious patrimony of our country not to raise our voice in public reproach and condemnation of this proposal. We reproach and condemn the seizure of our bells in the name of religion. The church bells are not merely so many objects of bronze. They have an exclusively religious purpose; they must not be used except in praise of God and to invite the faithful to divine services. They have been consecrated and sanctified by ritual benediction and, hence, are destined irrevocably to divine worship. They cannot be destined to profane use, not taken without the consent of responsible ecclesiastical authorities.

We now solemnly declare that we oppose with all our episcopal authority a measure which has no other purpose but that transforming our bells into machinery of war and instruments of death.

It may be that in Germany and Italy the Bishops submit without protest to measures which they must condemn in their internal forums, just as we do perhaps in their eyes; patriotism secures the tolerance of an evil which they cannot impede. For us, however, in the contrary, patriotic duty coincides with religious duty and our silence would constitute complicity and treason. Furthermore, the seizure of our bells constitutes a flagrant violation of international law stipulated by the Hague Convention and sanctioned by all civilized States.

Article 40 imposes upon the occupying authority the obligation of respecting the free exercise of worship; but the bells serve for the exercise of Catholic worship. Article 52 limits the requisitioning of property to the needs of the army of occupation. Now it is evident that the bells which will be seized will not be used by the troops of occupation. Finally, Article 53 consecrates the complete immunity of consecrated places of worship and prohibits all seizure to their detriment. Thus, therefore, the written law of the nations prohibits the seizure of church bells by the occupying authority.

"The measures for the requisitioning of manpower are absolutely unjustifiable. They violate natural law, international law and Christian morality. They fail to take into account either the essential dignity and freedom of human person or the welfare and honor of families, or the supreme good of society, which will suffer fatally from these sentiments of anger and blind hatred sown in thousands and thousands of oppressed hearts.

The constraint imposed upon bodies and wills is serious, but the violence inflicted upon consciences is still more serious. Belgian citizens are obliged to cooperate, directly or indirectly, with the military operations of a foreign power which has unjustly imposed on their country a very severe occupational regime without giving them the slightest assurance for the future. Male workers, and especially female workers, are often placed in gravely harmful moral and religious conditions. Finally, despite their reiterated protests, your Bishops have not succeeded in obtaining an authorization to send chaplains to their exiled dioceses to assist them with their sacerdotal ministry.

We are told that these measures are necessary to protect European civilization. But is this application of measures which violate the essential principles of all civilization to be defended or is it not rather to destroy civilization? Human reason and Christian morality condemn and castigate these iniquitous and barbarous measures. All collaboration in the execution of these measures is gravely illicit in conscience.

Civilized nations, if they are informed of them, cannot fail to express their profound reprobation. At any rate, the Christian faith tells us the Almighty, who is sovereign justice, is witness to what is happening. And it is before Him, that the acts of all human beings, without exception, will be judged in accordance with eternal laws.

JUST IN CENTURIES

If the announced decision is carried out, history will say that it is the first time in the course of the centuries that this profanation, contrary to the manifest and recognized rights of religion, has been perpetrated in Belgium. Our Epis-

Papal Aide Dies

VATICAN CITY.—Monseigneur Luigi Capotosti, Papal Master of Ceremonies since 1929, died March 16, in Rome. As a student at Capranica College he was a contemporary of His Holiness Pope Pius XI.

MINDANAO MISSIONARIES INTERNED



Northern American Oblates have been interned by the Japanese at Cotabato, Mindanao Island, P. I., according to word just received in the United States. Among those pictured above are, left to right: front row, Fathers John Chesham, Brockton, Mass.; Francis McSorley, Philadelphia; Emile Bolduc, Lowell, Mass. (interned at Job); Gilbert Billman, Milton, Mass. (Army chaplain still missing); George Dion, Central Falls, R. I.; rear row, Fathers Paul Drome, Belleville, Ill.; Emile Laguerre, Central Falls, R. I.; Joseph Quinn, Lowell, Mass.; Edward Gordon, Lowell, Mass.; Brother Michael Evans, St. Louis; and Father George Bayan, Chicago. Photo courtesy of Oblate World. (N.C.W.C.)

Regardless of Race, Christian's Duty To Love All, Pope Avers

VATICAN CITY.—(NC) Dad of the Christian not only to love his own country but to embrace the whole human family, regardless of race, in the divine love of Christ, is emphasized by His Holiness Pope Pius XII in a letter written to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Association of Italian Catholic Youth.

In his letter, the Holy Father recommends reciprocal social concern between all members of the Association "to whatever class or condition of life they belong, whether they be manual laborers or in intellectual employment, whether they be of humble families or of illustrious families and wealthy, let them love one another with Christian love as brothers."

Pope Pius XII's letter recommends love of country, but emphasizes that it is the duty of Christians "to embrace the universal human family in the divine love of Jesus Christ, whatever be their descent or race."

"Actually," His Holiness states, "love of fatherland does not exclude, or nullify, the fraternal community of all peoples, nor does this mutual link amongst all men lessen the love due to one's native land."

Vatican City.—Word has been received here of the death in Rio de Janeiro on March 26 of Antonio Cardoso, who was a member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

Denies Cardinal Asked Prayer For Bolshevism

VATICAN CITY (NC)—Charges made by a Munich, Germany, newspaper that the late Cardinal Hinsley, at the order of "highest religious authority in Rome," had "invoked Belgians to support the Nazis in a crusade against Communism," has been exposed by Belgian authorities here, the British Ministry of Information has announced.

Cardinal van Rooy has issued a "formal, stringent, biting denial" that he was the author of the letter, and Cassandre, proprietor of Belgian newspaper, and the Belgian news agency, label, have since reported the Cardinal's protest and contended the forgery was a hoax perpetrated on the Nazis.

The purported letter was timed to offset protests made in a pastoral dated February 21 by the Catholic Bishops of Holland against deporting Dutchmen to Germany for forced labor and against other Nazi injustices.

The forged letter, calling upon Belgians to aid Germany, was broadcast widely over the Hilversum and Paris radars and by the German Transoceanic News Agency.

The Bremen radio, in addition, read excerpts from a letter the Cardinal was falsely reported to have written recently containing anti-Russian passages—but it was discovered the letter was written on Christmas Day, 1931. The Nazi controlled Belgian press made it appear Nazi authorities were victims of the hoax.

Cardinal Brands Letter Backing Nazis As Forgery

LONDON (NC)—The forgery of a letter purportedly prepared by His Eminence Joseph Cardinal van Rooy, Archbishop of Malines and Primate of Belgium, which called upon prayers for Bolshevism" on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Soviet Army, were refuted in a Vatican Radio broadcast.

The speaker pointed out that Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical *Mi Bona Redemptoris* and Pope Pius XII in his Christmas Message of 1942 showed for the Russian people the same love and consideration evidenced for other nations and peoples, simultaneously repudiating unequivocally atheistic Communism. The speaker also quoted from a recent Pontifical message of the present Pontiff which included a special reference to the Russian people and noted that the Pope had prayed for peace for the Russian people and their return to the Catholic Church.

The radio speaker asserted that Cardinal Hinsley had referred to Russia and the Russian people and not to Bolshevism and reminded that the Cardinal had opened his discourse by referring to the fact that Pius XI had ordered prayers after Mass for Russia, that is, for its internal peace and religious liberty.

NUN IN TEMPLE

Maryknoll, N. Y.—For the first time in its century-old history, the walls of a pagan temple in South China recently reverberated to the strains of an Ave Maria chanted by a Maryknoll nun, while the rendition of the hymn aroused the interest of two disciples of Buddha in the true Faith.

Forced Marriages Decried By Bishops In Germany

BERN, Switzerland.—A rising divorce rate, free love, adultery and marriages that are forced upon individuals for the purposes of building the race are vigorously condemned in Lenten pronouncements of German Bishops, according to RIPA, Catholic press agency, here.

The Bishops, the agency says, strike out against an "un-Christian naturalism" which "denies a great deal of difference between men and animals." They attack compelled marriages as "the introduction of force into the most personal and delicate point of private life of human personality," and they denounce those who call virginity "a tree without fruit and a life without purpose." The Bishops say some persons have even scorned virginity "as treason to the race." They point out that "the Church defends the right to virginity."

The Bishops, the agency reports, warn against the inclination on the part of many to treat adultery and divorce lightly, and assert that, if Germany is to be "a land of faithfulness," faithful hearts must be cultivated where it counts most—in marriage. They declare that those who place legitimacy and illegitimate motherhood on the same level attack the ideal of motherhood and the value of woman, and do "the worst possible service to the female youth."