

M'Arthur Freedom Steps For Japan Highly Praised

—Tokyo — (NC) — Conditions in Japan today and you're likely to have a draw between two men — Emperor Hirohito and Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

The Emperor is popular through heredity, but General MacArthur started six months ago with the handicaps of a victorious western commander in a defeated oriental nation. In this unpopular role, the General acted so wisely, humanely and firmly that he has gained the front rank of popularity among the millions of Japanese who were his enemies up until last August 15.

Anyone attempting a fair appraisal of the first six months of American occupation of Japan, must recognize the remarkable achievements of these two men, especially the historic evolution directed by General MacArthur and carried out by the Japanese themselves, without so much as a mild riot.

Four Clouds Lifted

Only those who knew prewar Japan can appreciate the changes which have been effected since last September 2, when the first of the Supreme Command directives was issued.

The cloud of fear has been lifted from Japanese life. Amid the woes of military defeat, men mainly are conscious of restored human rights. The Shintoist and Buddhist can rejoice in having Christian teachings on human dignity applied to them.

Noteworthy from a religious viewpoint are four paths of action taken in this nation during the last six months.

1. On October 4, General MacArthur issued his bill of rights directive, ordering the removal of restrictions on political, civil and religious liberties. He thereby lessened, possibly abolished — the real, though unformulated, penalties for embracing Christianity in Japan. He gave to accredited denominational schools the precious liberty to teach religion during class hours. His December 13 directive abolishing State Shintoism liberated school children and others from the obnoxious militaristic observances. This directive paved the way for the Emperor's disavowal of his divinity.

Free Market Given

2. General MacArthur struck another blow for human dignity on January 24 when he called for the abolition of legalized prostitution, through which girls could be sold into degraded slavery by their parents.

3. By insisting on the full, free ballot and extended franchise, the Supreme Commander directed Japan along the lines of Catholic teachings on democracy. The extension of the vote to women will help raise the status of Japan's womanhood.

4. General MacArthur showed himself as an exponent of Christian social justice when he spurred the Japanese Government to prepare bills favoring trade union, collective bargaining, division of large landholdings into small farms purchased by peasants, who hitherto were sharecroppers.

5. The world will watch with deep interest the operation of Japan's constitution, called "new and enlightened" by General MacArthur, which retains the Emperor but stipulates that he derives his position "from the sovereign will of the people," renounces forever war as a sovereign right of the nation and also the use of force; respects all people as individuals and makes their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness "the supreme consideration in legislation and in governmental affairs;" bases marriage on the mutual consent of both sexes, guarantees the rights of labor to organize and act collectively, and make other changes in the Japanese way of national life.

Catholic Life Reborn In War-Scarred Japan

BY REV. PATRICK O'CONNOR, S.A.C.

(Special Correspondent, N. C. W. C. News Service)

Tokyo — The night wind blows coldly around the dark, jagged ruins of Tokyo's small cathedral.

But in the little house beside the ruins, lights are burning steadily.

There you have a picture of Catholic life in Japan today. One of the downstairs rooms in that house serves as a temporary chapel. On the matting before the tabernacle men and women kneel every day. On Sundays the Catholics of the parish crowd into the tiny chapel for four Masses, overflowing into the next room and jamming the nar-

row. This evening in another room a Japanese priest is instructing a convert. Upstairs a priest is preparing the talk he will give over Radio Tokyo next Sunday. Seated at his desk, quiet, greeting Archbishop Peter Tatsuo Doi of Tokyo, is looking over reports of losses, survival, gains and uncertainties.

Before the war, the Church in Japan was composed largely of city dwellers. When the B-29's set ablaze acres of city areas, Catholic homes as well as churches and schools inevitably suffered. Millions of persons fled the country. Catholics among them.

Parish (cut in half). Hence today in scorched, blackened Tokyo, Osaka, Kobe and other cities, the priests miss not only their churches but thousands of parishioners. One Tokyo pastor tells me that he has only

400 people now whom he used to have 200. Out of Osaka's 4

600 Catholic residents only about 200 remain, according to Bishop Paul Yoshigoro Taguchi.

In some country places these evacuated families have priest and church within reach. In others they are in wholly non-Christian environments, remote from Mass, Sacraments and weekly instruction. Dispersal of these Catholic refugees from the cities may strengthen the Church

where it has been weak, in rural areas.

Will these Japanese Catholics return to their cities? Few can return soon. Rebuilding of houses will be slow. It would take all of Japan's lumber mills three years, working full time, to provide the lumber needed for reconstruction in Tokyo and Yokohama alone.

It is a lesson in disaster and

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