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# 'Purge Day' Comes for Every Czech Student; Woe to Him If He Fails

Prague, June 30—(Via Air Mail)—It was a regular classroom at the university. But there was no class and no professor. This was purge day.

Purge day comes for every student. And the students prepare even more for the purge than they ever did for examinations. It is understandable. Examinations are secondary these days. If a student wants to make the grade, he's got to get a clean political bill of health from the purge committee. It's not easy and there is lots to worry about.

Typical is the case of—let's call him—Vaclav Prag, enrolled at a faculty of Prague University.

TEN DAYS AGO Vaclav received a letter. He had been expecting it for some time. It was a notification of the time and place for his appearance before the purge committee. Along with the notification came a questionnaire.

The questionnaire called for a detailed history of his life from the day the Germans occupied Czechoslovakia in March, 1939, until the communist coup last February. Vaclav filled out his questionnaire. He tried to make it as favorable as possible. Then he signed it under the penalty of perjury.

Until the last possible moment before going before the purge committee, Vaclav has studied and prepared for the purge. He has talked to those he knows and can trust who have already been purged. He has bonded up for every conceivable question.

Purge day comes for Vaclav. He goes to the prescribed classroom where he faces two purge committee members: a girl and a young man, who are also students. But there is a big difference between them and Vaclav. They are members of the Communist Party. That makes them members of Czechoslovakia's new ruling class.

THE GIRL ASKS for the questionnaire. She gives it a quick reading and then passes it on to the young man. There are anxious moments for Vaclav until he hears the first question. It's an easy one: "Do you subscribe to the student weekly?"

"No."  
 "But you want to. Don't you?"  
 No salesman's talk is needed. Vaclav signs up for a year.

The girl continues the questioning while the young man listens

and makes notes. Then comes the first meaty question: "What do you see good and bad about the Communist Party?"

Vaclav hedges with an "Oh, I don't know." "But," she says, "surely you have some idea about this." She pins him down for an answer. "Well," he says, "I like the (volunteer work) brigades. They are good." And he throws in a few more platitudes for a high score.

"Yes. And what is bad?"  
 "Well," says Vaclav, "I think some people were purged not only for political reasons. I think there were some mistakes."  
 "What do you mean?" she asks.  
 "Well some young persons have replaced older ones. And they are not capable. It is because they are Communists. And they are only Communists to get a better job or something."

"Yes. You are right. We are going to make it better." Then she jumps to another topic not so frightening: "Did you take part in the May Day celebration?"  
 "Yes," he says.  
 "ALL OF IT?" (This is interesting because many people reported for the beginning of the celebration but didn't stick around very long.)

"No, not all," Vaclav admits. "I missed some because I wanted to watch."  
 She laughs, saying in Czech, "Po anglicky," which means "like an Englishman." The Czechs hold this as an Englishman's particular way of getting out of something.

"What about your father?" she asks. "Is he in a political party?"  
 "No. But since February he is Communist."  
 "What do you think about the 'February Events' and what do you say?"

Vaclav hesitates. Then he begins to rattle off the prepared answer: "If it has been a voluntary offer of the people, all is in order."  
 "A moment," she interrupts. "Do you doubt it will be the will of the people?"

"I DON'T DOUBT anything," Vaclav replies. "As I watched it, all these things happened to better the position of the worker. And when the workers constitute the majority of the nation, it is voluntary of the whole nation. But, of course," Vaclav remarks, unable to help himself, "we must count with the minority, too."

"Are you for social progress?" she asks.  
 "Yes. Of course. I'm a good socialist from the heart. I am very pleased with the national insurance plan."

"Are you still a member of the Socialist party?" she inquires.  
 "I didn't leave because it has been purged of all the reactionaries. It is part of the National Front. Just the name is different now."

"Do you read any Marxist literature?"  
 "No," Vaclav replies.  
 "You should. You must become politically educated. You must understand the great change that is taking place."  
 HAVE YOU ANY friends in the Communist party?" she asks.  
 "No, not exactly. I know some. I like to speak and debate with a good communist. But I hate to speak and debate with one who is a new communist. They have done it only to better their positions."  
 "Yes. Don't speak with them. That is all for now," she says. "But remember, you must try to understand the deep social change which society is now undergoing. The Peoples' Democracy is a new epoch of our country's history."

Now Vaclav has been purged. If nothing happens, he presumes he has been given a clean bill of health. But he never knows for sure. If he is deemed politically unclean, he gets the usual treatment. Immediately he is expelled. Sometimes he has not the benefit of going before the purge committee. Being no longer able to study, he must find employment. But his position renders him unsuitable for employment within a certain time, the government can dispose of him as it sees fit. And that means he will end up in a mine or a work camp.

**28 Get Diplomas In Dansville**  
 Two Catholic schools in Dansville graduated 28 boys and girls in impressive ceremonies.

Dansville—Graduating exercises of St. Patrick's School in Dansville were held in St. Patrick's Church Wednesday evening, June 23. Following the processional and the hymn—sung by the adult choir—"To Jesus Heart All Burning"—the pastor, the Rev. John C. O'Donnell, presented the class of 1948, numbering eight, with the diplomas and prizes, and delivered the graduation day address.

The Rev. Pastor's Prize for scholarship was awarded to Joanne Smith.

The Knights of Columbus Council No. 785 Prize for the highest per cent in Christian Doctrine was awarded to Nancy Lehrer.

Every graduate had earned the final certificate in the Palmer method of business writing and a testimonial of reading given by the University of the State of New York for having read "Fifty Approved Books" during the elementary course of studies.

**50 K. C. Ladies Attend Picnic**  
 Dansville—The Ladies Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus, Dansville Council held its annual picnic party at the Rod & Gun Club Monday evening, June 28. Approximately 50 enjoyed picnic supper served by the following committee: Mrs. Theodore Mandel and Mrs. Fred Holmes, co-chairmen, Mrs. Bart Monte Verde, Mrs. Joseph Malone, Mrs. Malcolm Dempsey, Mrs. Fred Beckwith, Mrs. Carl Morsch and Mrs. Martin Walker.

Rev. John C. O'Donnell, Spiritual Advisor, attended. A short business meeting followed, at which President Mrs. Norbe Blum presided.

The Auxiliary voted to continue its monthly Teen-Age dances during the summer months following a favorable report of the May Dance by Mrs. Walter Schwan, Chairman.

Games and cards highlighted the evening's entertainment. Prizes were awarded to the Misses Norma Lemen and Alice Rodman, Mrs. John Hargraves and Mrs. Tom Donoghue. Guests included Miss E. Eloise Kelly and Miss Waters of Dansville and Mrs. Duffy of Sonoma.

Auxiliary meetings are now adjourned until September. The Fall meeting opens with an outing at the farm home of Mrs. William C. Shults of Wayland. Mrs. Edward T. Burke was named chairman in charge.

**Fr. Muckle Talks To Avon Class**  
 Avon—Catholic graduates of Avon Central School were told to go forth "and model your lives after Christ," by the Rev. Charles E. Muckle at a baccalaureate service in St. Agnes Church, June 27.

The graduates clad in caps and gowns assisted at Mass and received Holy Communion in a body.

Father Muckle declared Christ to be the Greatest of all educators. The graduates were told to practice the beautiful virtues of faith and charity in their daily lives and to use the talents entrusted to them by God not for selfish gain, but for the love and service of God and neighbor. Only in so doing, the pastor said, would one could true happiness be found here or hereafter.

After the sermon each graduate was presented with a New Testament by Father Muckle.

**Social Enjoyed By Clifton Parish**  
 Clifton Springs—A successful ice cream social for the benefit of the Altar and Rosary Society of St. Felix Church of Clifton Springs under the direction of Mrs. William Keating and Mrs. Claude Goodman was held Tuesday, June 22. Due to the rainy weather it was held in St. Felix Hall dining room, which has been recently painted and decorated with roses and peonies.

The guests enjoyed an entertainment program during the evening at which Mayor William Polisher acted as Master of Ceremonies and Mrs. John Boardman of Manchester presided at the piano. Rev. Ennett Dougherty sang two Irish songs. Patrick McLoughlin of Manchester sang several songs and Bertram Lush of Manchester played the bones and sang. There was tap dancing by Miss Carol Murphy and solos were sung by Clifton's "blues singers" Mary Jane DeMaso and "Bing Crosby" Robert Keating.

**Newark K. C. Slate Picnic For Scouts**  
 Newark—Victor DeWeaver of Newark, district deputy of the 55th District, New York State Council, Knights of Columbus installed the new staff of Newark Council officers Tuesday evening. He was assisted by Howard L. Franklin of Newark, district warden. Newly installed Grand Knight Nicholas Critelli announced Monday, July 5 as the date for the annual picnic for Boy Scout Troop 120 sponsored by Newark Council. The picnic will be held at Perkins Park at 6 p.m. and will be held for Knights of Columbus members as well as the Scouts, the grand knight states.

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