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American Reporter Describes Cardinal And Strange Procedures at Red Trial

(Continued from Page 1)

On the dais sat the president of the people's court and the four other judges, all members of government parties, one dressed in a peasant shirt without a tie.

Cardinal Mindszenty, dressed in the garments of an ordinary priest, wore the Cardinal's ring on his finger, the only sign of his high office. Alongside the Cardinal were the other six defendents: Baranyal, Zakar, Esterhazy, Nagy, Ispanyi, Toth. Their faces were drawn. Their attitude ranged from apparent resignation to indifference to the proceedings. Alongside each defendent was a policeman.

THE CARDINAL'S head seemed perpetually cocked to the right; the Cardinal's hands were crossed in his lap. Once in a while he turned the ring around in his finger. But usually the Cardinal sat still.

Through an American's eyes, the most striking thing about the trial was the procedure. Justice in a "People's Democracy" is a strange thing.

There was the president of the court, Vilmos Olthi, before and during the war, as secretary general of the Hungarian German society, one of Hungary's foremost nazis. Olthi was the judge but acted as prosecutor and jury. Like a machine gun, Olthi rattled questions at the defendants. He completely drowned out the man called the prosecutor, whose main function seemed to be making the opening and closing remarks against the defendants.

BUT IT WAS HARDLY necessary to persecute the defense. Everything seemed to have been arranged too smoothly for that. In the first place, before the trial began, there were confessions from all the defendants. The trial ran like a well rehearsed but poorly produced play. For a trial of historic importance the speed [illegible] it was all over in three days seemed indecent.

Zakar, the boyish-looking secretary to Cardinal Mindszenty, acted like a little boy who had stayed after school to learn the Gettysburg Address. Zakar's look was dazed. His face was pale. The court was kind to Zakar.

Cardinal Mindszenty spoke in a low, almost inaudible voice. The court had to ask the Cardinal to speak louder.

The faces of the defendants, when it was possible to see them, were indifferent or dazed or calm. Only Baranyal and Mindszenty seemed to follow the proceedings with a little interest. The Hungarian nobleman, Esterhazy, hardly paid attention to what was going on.

From the first moment — and I know this from a man whom I trust, who was there when I was barred — the competition was not between the defense and the prosecution, as in an American trial, but among the defendants. It was a constant grind to confess. All the defendants had admitted many of their "crimes" in writing.

WE WERE PUZZLED to hear an orator, Cardinal Mindszenty speaking in a monotonous, unconvincing voice, a man who for three years withstood every pressure from the Government to give up his policy of resistance to the Communist regime, weak, ready to admit anything, completely agreeing with the court.

Strangest of all was the attitude of the so-called defense attorney. During the prosecutor's remarks, the defense attornys didn't take a single note. None of the defense attorneys seemed very keenly interested in what the prosecutor was saying.

Cardinal Mindszenty's lawyer, Koloman Kicko, made a speech that could better be described as a plea for Kicko than a plea for Mindszenty. Kicko, a Communist since 1919, was the man according to the Government whom Mindszenty selected over such outstanding Catholic lawyers as Joseph Groh, who was expelled from the last trade union before the trial, for insisting on defending the Cardinal.

The first thing Kicko pointed out in his defense of Mindszenty was that [illegible] chosen him of his own free will." That seemed like a strange thing for a defense attorney to say. Kicko spent a good part of his speech telling the court how loyal he, Kicko, was to the Hungarian Government rather than talking about Mindszenty's alleged disloyalty. Kicko praised the Hungarian Government. Kicko even thanked the prosecution for bringing up the charges against Mindszenty.

NOT ALL THE strange happenings were inside the court room. Outside, the Hungarian Government tried to gag all the foreign correspondents on what they should write for their readers. Insisting, the Hungarian press chief told us at two press conferences to write that the Cardinal [illegible] a court."

On the second [illegible] at a press conference an attempt was made to [illegible] a resolution which [illegible] sion it would give to the outside world [illegible] the trial. Edward C[illegible] of the United Press whose dispatches were completely objective throughout the trial, refused to sign that resolution. And so did I. All sort of pressures were put upon us, but we did not sign.

The trial is over. That the prosecution, the judge, the defense, the Hungarian press system, were all very strange by American standards is indisputable.

BUT THE QUESTION remains: what made the Cardinal act as he did? What made him [illegible] alleged crimes? Was Cardinal Mindszenty drugged? Or tortured?

I am not a doctor. I was not permitted to speak to the Cardinal. [illegible] Cardinal [illegible] beaten or [illegible] know that a [illegible] was strong [illegible] become weak and [illegible]

The Cardinal acted [illegible] a man not in his [illegible] mind at the very first session of the court. For example, a letter was produced from the Cardinal to the Hungarian Minister of Justice offering to resign. As a Cardinal, Mindszenty must have known his resignation could be accepted only by the Pope.

The Cardinal had frequent lapses of memory and had to be prodded... (Before his) arrest, the Cardinal could deliver a letter-perfect sermon from a few notes. Then there were the mistakes in grammar by the Cardinal and the other defendants, men ordinarily incapable of such mistakes.

The key to all this are those 38 days the Cardinal spent in custody before the trial. I don't know for sure what method was used on the Cardinal and on the other defendants. But I have spoken to many Hungarians who have been held by the secret police for questioning. These Hungarians signed confessions persuaded by such convincing methods as standing with arms overhead until faint, receiving electric shock treatments or repeated blows on the kidney with a blunt instrument.

PERHAPS THE Cardinal wasn't tortured at all. Perhaps Zakar, the Cardinal's boyish-looking secretary, was the main victim in order to arouse the Cardinal's pity. Of all the defendants, Zakar looked like the likeliest victim. Zakar's dazed appearance, his carefully recited lines, all lend credence to that theory.

But not all the clues to what happened are outside the court. It is worth noting that the Cardinal's final speech—after the so-called defense attorney had spoken—was delivered in a much clearer, more decisive manner than his earlier repudiations and confessions. For the first time, the Cardinal gave some evidence of being an orator. He recited the speech with emphasis.

THE CARDINAL said "I stand here with an inheritance of half a century of formal education in basic principles. These basic principles are impressed in the human soul as railway lines are imbedded in the earth. These basic principles direct us in a straight line as the railway lines guide the train." And this was the same man who for three days had been going far off that track, repudiating his basic principles, confessing his alleged sins, kowtowing to the Communist Government.

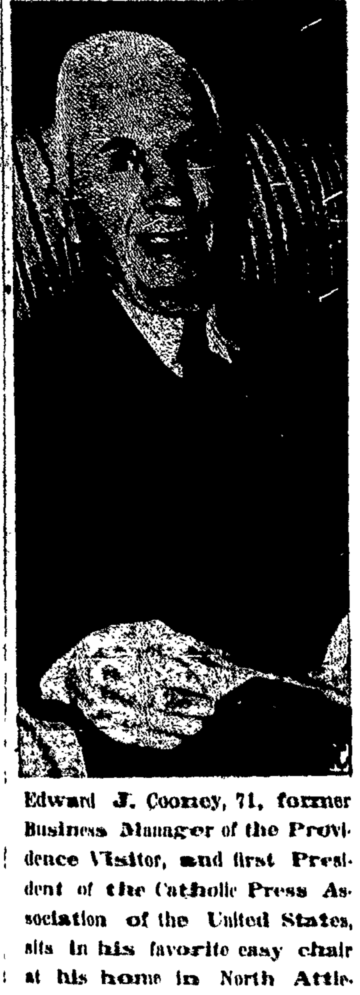
The rest of the Cardinal's final speech had many innocuous statements. But one more passage is worth mention. "I was not and am not the enemy of the Hungarian people," said the Cardinal. "I did not and do not have any conflict with the Hungarian [illegible] of the Hungarian [illegible] to which class my family belongs."

Perhaps in these two passages the Cardinal, although forced to confess and to go along with the Government throughout the trial, cleverly concealed his real thoughts, that he believed—as he always did—that he was not an enemy of the Hungarian worker or peasant, but only of what he left out of that statement — the Communist Government.

I shall never forget that last touching scene when the defendants arose and the court pronounced the sentences. The Cardinal stood with head slightly bowed, hands crossed before him. His only sign of emotion was a slight twitching of his face.

I SPOKE TO other people in the street, in the little coffee houses. Those few who dared speak were bitter. A housewife said everyone believes the Cardinal has spoken of his own free will. They [illegible] have done something to him. I spoke to a man who had been very close to the Cardinal. This man said "they were afraid to give him the death sentence because they know his hold on the people is too great."

Ex CPA Head



Edward J. Cooney, 71, former Business Manager of the Providence Visitor, and first President of the Catholic Press Association of the United States, sits in his favorite easy chair at his home in North Attleboro, Mass., and reads in his diocesan paper, Bishop Ready's call for the observance of February as Catholic Press Month. Mr. Cooney was elected first president of the Press Association in 1911 and was reelected the following year.

Convert Class Attracts 83

A group of 43 non-Catholics accompanied by some 40 Catholic friends attended the opening talk in the Information Series sponsored by the Catholic War Veterans at the Hotel Seneca Tuesday evening.

The weekly course of instructions in the principles and practices of Catholicism will continue each Tuesday evening at 8 p. m. sharp for 24 weeks under the direction of the Rev. Richard Tormey, associate editor of the Courier Journal.

The informal discussions of religious doctrine are designed for non-Catholics seeking instruction for entrance into the Church. To keep the class unified, Father Tormey announced, no newcomers may enroll after the second meeting, next Tuesday, Feb. 22. Catholics may attend the series only if accompanied by an inquiring non-Catholic friend.

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Reds in Hungary Office

Vienna (CIP) — A recently published list of members of the Hungarian Parliament shows that 119 Representatives who were declared elected at the polls of August 31, 1947 have been expelled and that 100 of them have been replaced by new Representatives appointed by Communist-controlled party leaders.

Mother-Child Relationship Told Dansville K. C. Unit

Dansville — Need for a better present day mother-child relationship was stressed by Mrs. Edward Matheis, Speakers Bureau, Rochester Deanery Council, National Council of Catholic Women in an address to members of the Ladies Auxiliary, Knights of Columbus at the Valentine dinner held in the Dansville K. of C. hall, Monday.

Three points stressed by Mrs. Matheis were:

(1) Comic books have replaced the "Book of Knowledge" in the home; radio has taken the place of the mother's voice in the home. Let's make our voices heard for our children to remember.

(2) We must not protect and cherish our children beyond the point of normal care. They must live in a world which is harsh, cruel and sometimes even unjust.

(3) Make every Sunday family Communion Sunday; let the family gather each evening for the recitation of the Rosary. In the quietness of a little home at Nazareth, the Holy Family has given us the perfect example of a child-parent relationship, which we should strive to follow.

The Rev. John C. O'Donnell gave the blessing and the Rev. Orrin W. Feller, the Benediction. Mrs. Charles Muldoon, president, presented the guest speaker.

Mrs Jacob M. Fries was chairman assisted by Mrs. Leo Engle, Mrs. Malcolm Dempsey, Mrs. Mrs. Martin Derrenbacher, Mrs. Thomas Faulds, Mrs. Andrew Forsythe, Mrs. Pearl Freas, Mrs. Frank Gilligan, Mrs. Lester Gould, Mrs. William Kelly and Mrs Edward Lauffer.

Mrs. Matheis was accompanied by Mrs. Lawrence Driscoll of Rochester, formerly of Dansville.

At the business meeting new members received were: Miss Mary Brann, and Mrs. Julia Dailey of Sonyea, Miss Tillie Amico and Mesdames Justin Vogt, Edward Derowitsch, Carl Schreiber, Andrew Gould, Sr., Harold Applin and Frank Gross of Dansville.

Mrs. Edward Morsch reported $10 for the March of Dimes Fund raised at the February Teen-Age Dance. A sum of $5 was voted for the Red Cross.

Future projects include: Food Sale, Feb. 26 for "Girl Scout Little House," and solicitation from each member for the Veterans Fund.

Auxiliary also seeks donations of religious articles, new or used for Sister Carmela Marie needs, Miss Mary Black of Dansville, for Maryknoll mission.

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Living Wage For India Voted Down

New Delhi, India —(NC)— The attempt of the only priest legislator in the Indian Constituent Assembly to amend the Draft Constitution to give expression to the right of a living family wage and to declare the family as the primary unit of society has been voted down.

The Rev. Jerome De Souza, S.J., principal of Loyola College, Madras, and representative of the Christian community in the assembly wished to have this amendment added to article 31 of the Draft Constitution. The article lays down principles which should guide the government in securing the protection of workers.

In his plea for a living wage, which won the applause of some delegates, the priest said it should enable the father of a family to keep his wife and children in good health and render it unnecessary for the mother to go to work.

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No Firing For Religion

Helena, Mont. — (RNS) — A bill which would prevent dismissal of public school teachers for religious reasons has been introduced in the Montana House of Representatives.

Industrial Council Group Formed in N.Y.

New York —(NC)— Application has been made in New York State for the incorporation of a group known as the Industry Council Association, which aims to encourage and participate in the establishment of the councils of employers, employees and the public suggested in the Papal social encyclicals as the Christian way of regulating industrial life.

According to the incorporators, the association will be non-profit, non-denominational and non-political.

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