

Pontiff Excommunicates Leaders And Members Of Czech 'Catholic Action'

Decree Declares 'Schismatic' Red-Ruled 'Catholic' Group

Rome — (RNS) — Acting on behalf of Pope Pius XII, the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office issued a decree here branding as schismatic the new government-sponsored "Catholic Action" organization in Czechoslovakia and excommunicating those responsible for its organization or who give it support.

The decree, published in Osservatore Romano, Vatican newspaper, declared that "recently the members of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia founded a so-called Catholic Action through which they are attempting to induce the Catholics of that republic to desert the Catholic Church and thereby the legitimate power (bishops) of the Church."

"Such action," the decree stated, "is in direct opposition to the teaching of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, and is an attempt to separate the Catholics of that republic from the Catholic Church and thereby the legitimate power (bishops) of the Church."

"The decree," the document continued, "is issued with the aim, which is that of separating the integrity of faith and morals, the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, in behalf and with the approval of the Supreme Pontiff, against and against the members of the so-called Catholic Action, which is fraudulently called 'Catholic Action'."

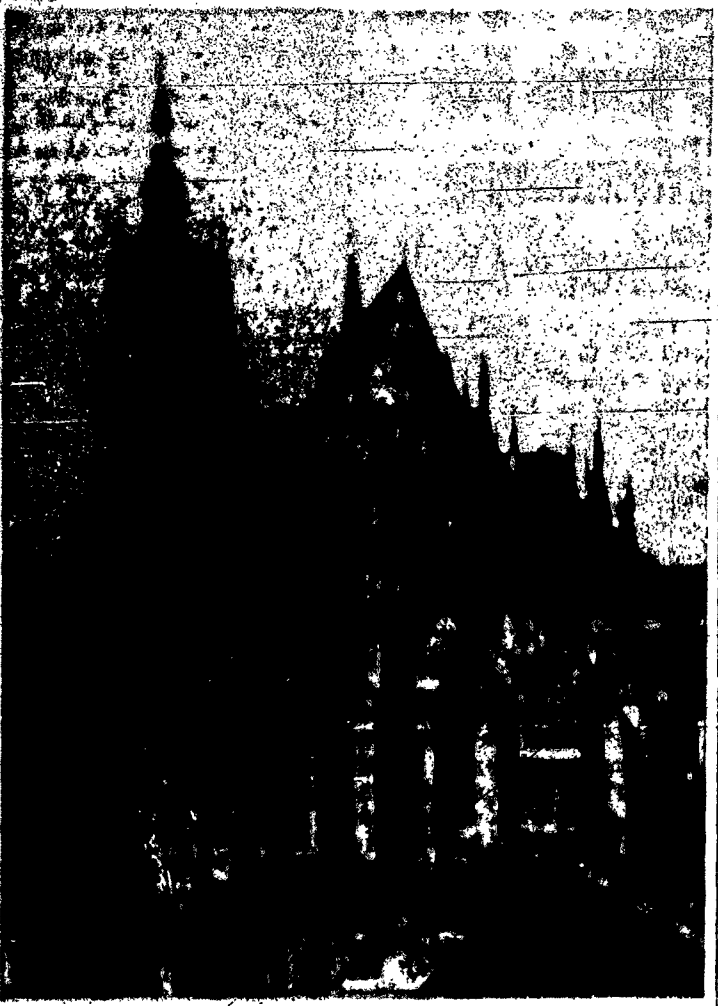
"At the same time, it pronounces schismatic and apostate all and each one of those, both clerics and lay, who knowingly and of their free will have joined or will in the future join it, especially the authors and promoters of it. As such they have or will incur ipso facto an excommunication especially reserved to the Holy See, in accordance with Article 2316 of canon law."

COMMENTING ON the decree, Observatore Romano denounced "the underhanded movement against the Catholic faith and fundamental freedoms" started in Czechoslovakia, and declared that "what has so far been printed in the press represents only a small part of what has happened in this country of public Christian and civil freedom."

"The intolerable persecutions in this so-called democracy," Observatore added, "surpass any tyrannical absolutism of yesterday."

An explanatory note in Osservatore, written by Father Mariano F. Cordero, who has the title of the Pope's theologian, described the new "Catholic Action" as "schismatic, anti-Catholic, anti-Communist and, in opposition with the apostolate."

He said that among the organizations reported supporting it are "many priests who have been deceived, who have



St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague where Communist rioters shouted down Archbishop Beran's attempt to preach during a Corpus Christi Mass.

never lost their names, and who are protesting against the fraud of the so-called Progressive Democracy." The names include, he added, priests who "have been deaf for some time."

"This is the third time in the last three years that the Vatican has pronounced excommunication against supporters of anti-Church actions in Communist-dominated countries. Previous decrees were directed against those responsible for the arrest and imprisonment of Archbishop Aloysius Stepanac of Yugoslavia and of Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary."

ARTICLE 2184 of canon law invoked against the promoters and supporters of the new "Catholic Action" organization in Czechoslovakia refers to "all apostates of the Christian faith as well as all and every heretic and schismatic."

The article declares that "unless they heed the admonition, they are deprived of all benefits, dignities, pensions, offices, or other functions held in the Church, and if they are clerics, after a repeated admonition they are removed from their posts."

Mindszenty, Beran Cases Follow Pattern

Vatikan City — (NC) — The reports on the situation in Czechoslovakia enable public opinion to recognize that whatever may be the differences between Communist countries, "Their unanimity against the Catholic Church is unbreakable," declares an editorial in Osservatore Romano. "There isn't in fact anyone," the editorial continues, "who does not recognize also at Prague a religious and ecclesiastical issue originating from the same points of conflict which emerged in neighboring Communist countries concerning those liberties and rights of the Church that are inherent and necessary in her evangelical mission."

NOR IS THERE anyone who fails to recognize, says the editorial, the placing of these matters of contest from a religious into a fictitious political field. Once there, the Episcopate and the clergy are described as a current, as a party of opposition, to the Government and regime, in order to denounce their "reactionary spirit, their anti-popular, anti-state activity."

"The Catholic press, the editorial declares, and other informed authoritative circles maintained reserve and distrust, even though the Czechoslovak regime attempted to blind public opinion against seeing the same pattern there as in other countries, until finally came Czechoslovakia's turn."

If such delaying, confusing, tactics of the regime ever had a laudable effect, it was destroyed by a mimicry too evident in conduct and methods.

SCORING THE falsity of such tactics and the betrayal of their faith by those participating in a so-called "Catholic Action," the editorial declares that Archbishop Beran did not fall in his duty of warning the public against believing these mystifications which are leading to a schism in the field of collaboration of the laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy.

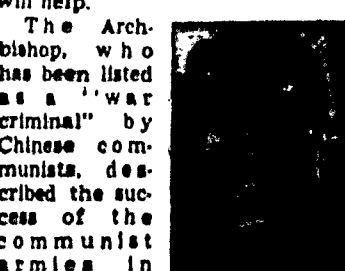
Comparing the arrests of Magr. Rudolf Doerner and Father Kucera in Prague to those of Magr. Andras Zakar and the Rev. Janos Fabian (secretary and archivist, respectively, of Cardinal Mindszenty), the editorial goes on to say: "At Hrad (Prague castle) we are now at the very same point as at Estergom on the Danube. Everyone knows what happened in Budapest from then on."



Hradecny Square in Prague where Red rioters forced Archbishop Beran to abandon plans for a Corpus Christi procession. Shown in photo (left) is ARCHBISHOP BERAN'S palace now under police guard and in the foreground beyond the presidential palace of Czechoslovakia's Communist PRESIDENT KLEMENT GOTTFWALD.

Archbishop Yupin Returning To China; Urges U. S. Help

New York — (NC) — Before leaving this country for his Red-held Nanking See, Archbishop Paul Yu-Pin at a testimonial dinner in his honor here declared there still in



Archbishop Yu-Pin

time to save his nation from the communists if the United States will help. The Archbishop, who has been listed as a "war criminal" by Chinese communists, described the success of the communist armies in China as "one of the greatest catastrophes of all history" and warned that China is the key to all Asia, with Burma, Japan and the Philippines likely to fall in the Red basket if China did.

"A COMMUNIST China," he declared, "is a menace to the world. It will make possible Russia's march toward world conquest. China can give tremendous manpower. Manchuria alone offers a rich mine of raw materials, which Russia is now furiously developing. 'Now, what can be done?' I do not think so. Where there is a will there is a way. America, the most friendly and powerful nation in the world, can still save China."

"I KNOW THE people of the United States are opposed to the recognition of a communist government in China. The traditional America policy toward China has always upheld the freedom and integrity of my land. 'We must take our stand in this world struggle,' the Archbishop continued, 'on moral issues — what is right and what is wrong. The moral challenge of China today is a world challenge — atheism and materialism versus faith and morality.'"

Church in China Has 3.2 Million

Shanghai — (NC) — Catholics in China, at the end of June, 1948, numbered 3,274,740, according to statistics just released by the Census Bureau at Zikawal. The survey showed that 28,532 adults completed courses of instruction and were baptized in the preceding year. An additional 194,712 were taking preparatory instructions. Students in Catholic schools numbered 319,444, according to

Prague Reds Jeer Archbishop Beran

(Continued from Page 1) all the while blessing the crowd, many of whom came close to touch his garments or kiss his hand.

AS HE LEFT in his automobile for his palace a few hundred yards away, the Archbishop was followed by Catholics chanting the prayer "Lord, defend us from evil and from all adverse things. May the heavenly forces fight on our side and defend us."

Other Catholics gathered in the courtyard raised the cry of "Long live the Archbishop," while Communists took up the chant, "Long live President Gottwald." With the urging of a hundred uniformed policemen and a policeman equipped with a loudspeaker, the crowd was dispersed in about 15 minutes. Many persons were arrested by the police and others were forced to show their identity papers.

On the previous evening, Archbishop Beran preached a sermon at the Strahov monastery in which he warned of the uncertain fate that awaited him because of his refusal to make any agreement with the State that would infringe upon the rights of the Catholic Church.

Three thousand persons, many of them women who wept openly, heard the 60-year-old prelate, once a Nazi prisoner, tell them he did not know how often in the future he would be allowed to address them.

The Archbishop then echoed an injunction sounded by Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty, imprisoned Primate of Hungary, by begging Catholics to keep their faith in him even if they heard he had "made a confession."

"Perhaps very soon," he said, "you will hear all sorts of things about me from the radio. You may hear that I have made a confession or other things. But no matter how often you hear these things, I hope you will believe in me."

Wearing the tall gold and scarlet bejeweled mitre of his office, Archbishop Beran, who was obviously under a heavy strain, approached the altar to pray. His first prayers were for the youth of Czechoslovakia that they should not be misled and should be educated in the Catholic spirit.

HE PRAYED next for Catholic families "in their tribulation," for all families because they are "the cells of society," and for Catholics who are wavering in their faith that they might not be "misled by lies and distorted reports."

Continuing, Archbishop Beran prayed for priests who had been listed in the press as having supported the government sponsored Catholic Action, but did not even know their names were being used and who had suffered in consequence. Finally, he prayed for "Judases who are betraying their priestly calling, allowing themselves to be tempted by short-term successes and material benefits."

When he left the monastery, the Archbishop was given a send-off by members of the congregation who shouted, "We won't let you be taken. We won't give you up."

IN HIS LATEST pastoral letter, issued in the name of all the Czechoslovak Bishops, Archbishop Beran denied reports that negotiations for an agreement between the Catholic Church and the State had failed "through the fault of our Bishops."

He enumerated the following conditions, which he said must be met before any agreement could be established.

Firstly, the Christian way of life and ideas must be respected and recognized in public life and in education. That means not only by word but by deed also.

Secondly, the government must be ready to recognize the spiritual supremacy of the bishops who are obedient to the Pope, according to valid ecclesiastical law.

THIRDLY, ALL measures that endanger and limit the religious rights and freedom of the Catholics of Czechoslovakia must be cancelled without delay.

Archbishop Beran charged that "despite all assurances of good will," the government has taken steps inimical to religious freedom, including the abolition of the Catholic press, infringement against Church finances, and the establishment of a separate Catholic Action organization "intended to confuse the faithful and disable the Bishops."

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