

Communist Terroristic Tactics In Czechoslovakia Reveal Familiar Pattern

Fists Follow Smiles In Red War Against Czech Catholics

(NOW NEWS SERVICE)
The post-war methods of communism in Czechoslovakia provide a striking example of the "scientific pattern" that governs the communist war on religion and the Church. Its guiding principle was to bring justice to force as long as results were obtained. Open persecution was necessary for the time when necessary failed to gain the "scientific following" which communism so much desires.

IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, the eastern part of the country, the communist fist glove tactics were used in vague and methods of their self-styled "protectors" and oppressors.

Once more the press became opinion and made no secret of its sympathies with western ideas. Catholic papers, like the weekly *Obzor* (Horizon), became outspoken in their criticism of communist behavior. Crucifixes reappeared in the schools. Communist violence and deceit were ruthlessly exposed.

The struggle between communism and the other political parties reached its climax before the national elections in May, 1946. Communism sought an overall majority, knowing that Catholics were the opponents most to be feared, they published leaflets asserting that communism stood for "protection" of religion and labeling any statement to the contrary a vile lie.

COMMUNISTS DID NOT win 1946 elections; still, by forming a coalition with the moderately Marxist Social Democrats, they had a parliamentary majority. The Social Democrats played a double game: sometimes supporting the communists in parliament, but more often the other parties.

From these elections until February, 1948, the situation became more and more hopeful in Czechoslovakia. Communist strength steadily declined. Their violence and tyrannical behavior lost them any sympathy they may have gained. The freedom of the press became ever more apparent.

This was the situation when, suddenly, the catastrophe came. Communists realized that the next election would be disastrous for them, and an order from Moscow forestalled such a calamity. Thus came the coup d'etat of February, 1948.

Communists having gained power through the "workers police" and the state police (which they controlled ever since 1945) ousted all non-party members from local councils and other autonomous bodies.

PRESIDENT BENEŠ, whose skilled political light-ropewalker tactics had for two and one-half years delayed the sovietization of Czechoslovakia and preserved at least partial freedom, finally gave in to communist demands, realizing that resistance would mean bloodshed in a hopeless struggle, because the Russians were, if need be, ready to invade the country.

All Catholic diocesan papers, though not political in outlook, were banned. The communist anti-religious struggle, (Continued on Page 6)

Czech Regime Loots Church Art Treasures

London (NC) — In its ever-growing need for "hard" currencies the Czechoslovak government is once again interfering ruthlessly with the property rights of the Catholic Church.

Only two years ago a nationwide search was made for rugs, carpets and tapestries belonging to the Church, and among the spoils were many valuable products of Oriental, French or Belgian craftsmanship, which had been used only on festive occasions for the decoration of the sanctuary.

INDEED, SOME OF the very old churches in the country were forced to part with carpets and tapestries which they had owned and treasured for centuries, and which any museum of fine arts would have been proud to possess.

THE PRESENT action, which was preceded by a government decree prohibiting the customary collections during the services in Catholic churches, has as its object the expropriation of all kinds of ecclesiastical works of art, such as paintings, sculptures, works of wrought iron, panels, and, in particular, gold monstrances and other sacred vessels of precious metal.

Abp. Beran Quips Red About Dachau

Chicago (NC) — Some months ago Abbot Cepcia, Czechoslovakia Minister of Justice, visited Archbishop Josef Beran at his chancery in Prague.

The communist government official told the noted foe of Marxism:

"You'd better support our front, or else . . ."

Adjusting his moustache atop his head, the little prelate smiled, walked over to the closest near his desk, and opened the door slowly. He picked up some rags and said:

"Here's my uniform from Dachau, let's go!"

The chagrined minister walked out of the office abruptly.

This anecdote, showing the type of churlishman the communists face in their war on the church, was told by a Czechoslovak living here. He is Anthony J. Jandacek, who escaped from Czechoslovakia and is now an editor for the Chicago Bohemian Daily Narod, a Catholic newspaper.



World attention is centered on courageous Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague, whose arrest is feared at any moment because of his forthright stand against the Communist-controlled Czechoslovakian government. (NC Photos).

Reds Hit Bishops Who Fought Nazis

NCWC NEWS SERVICE
The ruthless and diabolical campaign of defamation which the Red regime in Czechoslovakia is pursuing against Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague follows so closely the pattern employed in the arrest and trial of Archbishop Alojzius Stepinac in Yugoslavia and His Eminence Josef Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary that it is evident that the purpose in each case is the same.

A COMMUNIST regime is about to throttle another heroic nation and to hold it beneath the dark waters of terrorism and indoctrination until it loses its being.

In all three instances—first in Yugoslavia, then in Hungary, and now in Czechoslovakia—the Catholic Church has been the last considerable force to stand in the way of totalitarian savagery. In the cold-blooded calculations of the communist masters of these once proud countries, it had to be done away with.

TO BEGIN with, there was a cunning effort to wheedle Catholics in each country away from home. Tactics at various times have included the issuance of newspapers falsely labeled as "Catholic"; the founding of spurious "Catholic Action" groups, and the representation of mere "freedom of worship" as real "freedom of religion."

Good will toward the Church was pledged at every turn, but through it all a "national church" separated from the Holy See was held up as the ideal.

This failing, an attempt was made to tear the people from their spiritual leaders—the Bishops; to leave them foundering and without guidance. This failing, the shepherds—the Bishops—had to go.

Actually, the Moscow-dominated regimes in these countries could not have picked three persons more innocent of such charges. All three are "of the people." All three fought the Nazis heroically. All three languished in prison for the defense of the common people.

ARCHBISHOP STEPINAC fought the Germans as a soldier in World War I and vigorously opposed the methods of the Nazis as Archbishop of Zagreb in World War II. He denounced the persecution of Jews, con-

demned the execution of host-ages, protested the conduct of occupation troops. For all his paths he was imprisoned for 17 days following the war, by Tito's police who subjected him to all sorts of abuse and threats.

CARDINAL MINDSZENTY, as young priest and Bishop, was most distinguished for his love of the poor and the tenacity with which he clung to them. He was Bishop of Veszprem when the Nazis were in control of his country and he was the most outstanding figure in the Hungarian resistance movement. He refused to permit the Nazis to enter his residence in search of people who had taken refuge there. When the Nazis broke in, the Bishop met them in his episcopal vestments, and went forth to jail with those who were found hidden in his house.

ARCHBISHOP BERAN spent three years in the infamous Dachau concentration camp as a prisoner of the Nazis. The late Eduard Benes, post-war President of Czechoslovakia, lauded him for his fortitude at this time, and said he knew that Czech priests had suffered for their nation during the war.

In each instance, the final action against the principal prelate has been prefaced by all sorts of vilification of the Church and the priests and Bishops in general.

Truman Petitioned to Protest Czech Tactic

Cleveland (NC) — President Truman was petitioned to protest religious persecution in Czechoslovakia in a resolution adopted at a Catholic mass meeting held in Public Music Hall here. Bishop Floyd L. Beggs, Auxiliary of Cleveland, and Mayor Thomas A. Burke were among the speakers.

The protest meeting was held a few hours after Jindrich Kotlas, 54, deputy Czechoslovakia consul in Cleveland resigned in a sharply-worded message to the Red-ruled Prague government, refusing to obey an order for his return to that country.

Nazi Concentration Episode Failed To Daunt Archbp. Beran

By ANTONIN JANDACEK, EDITOR CHICAGO CATHOLIC BOHEMIAN DAILY (Written for N.C.W.C. News Service)

Appointment on November 7, 1946, of Dr. Josef Beran, professor of the Theological Faculty of Charles University and rector of the Prague archdiocesan seminary, as Archbishop of the capital city of Bohemia was an event of extraordinary importance for Czechoslovakia.

Selection of a priest who had for years been the victim of Nazi concentration camps served to stress the great suffering which the Czech nation and its priests endured during World War II.

BORN IN 1888 and ordained in 1911, the Archbishop had served as a parish priest, a teacher and a seminary rector. When he was associated with St. Ann's Normal School, Prague, he was known as "Our Lamb." (Beran means ram in Czech.) This was partly because of his small stature, but chiefly on account of his modesty and kindness.

When the Nazis took over Bohemia in 1939, they attempted to inject their racism into the seminary of which he was rector. Curly and deceptively Dr. Beran told German officials that the seminary was a school of the Catholic Church, therefore none

but Catholic doctrine would be taught there.

For this unflinching stand he was sentenced to the dreaded prison of Pankrac in Prague, and then to Terezin in northern Bohemia.

AT THE TIME Lidice was wiped out in 1942 Dr. Beran was transferred to Dachau. Here he was assigned to sweeping streets.

When Patton's victorious Third Army liberated Dachau on April 29, 1945, Dr. Beran was freed with the rest of the 30,000 prisoners.

Archbishop Beran has always been an intrepid fighter, battling for the principles of Christ and for a better humanity. If he is now in the world limelight it is not because he is displaying a new fighting spirit. It is just that the freedoms he is battling for are of world importance.

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