

Archbishop Beran's Home Looks Normal Only To Newcomers

(SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE, N.C.W.C. NEWS SERVICE)

Prague — The residence of Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague has become the center of attention in Czechoslovakia for both Catholics and non-Catholics, for both Czechs and foreigners.

It was there that the communist regime began its strong-arm tactics against the Church with the confiscation of the Archbishop's residence, the seizure of his property, the arrest of his secretary and the arrest of his secretary.

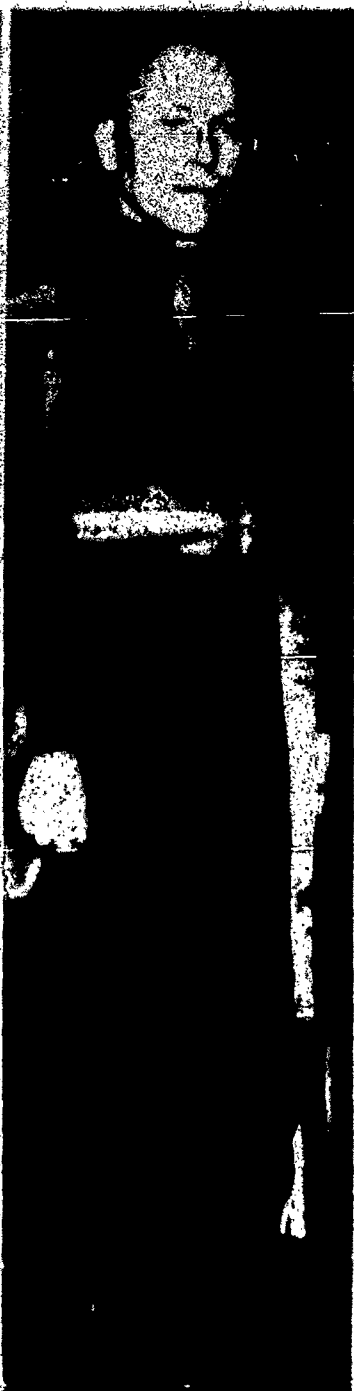
Right now the Archbishop's residence is a virtual prison, the regime asserts that he is perfectly free.

To the newcomer to Prague there are no surface indications of any extraordinary situation existing at the episcopal residence. There are no soldiers at the door. The doorway is open. There is an air of quiet with practically no visitors entering or leaving the house.

However, the newcomer does not know that the two doors at the entrance are not the Archbishop's private but the entrance to the secret police. He does not know that every one who enters the Archbishop's residence must first show his identity card, that the "doorman" then call police headquarters and ask whether the individual should be permitted to see the Archbishop.

The general observer does not realize that most of the private coming to see their Archbishop are turned away, told he does not wish to see visitors. The newcomer does not know that many of the individuals who were permitted to see Archbishop Beran were immediately afterwards taken to police headquarters and subjected to long interrogations about the details of the conversation.

The aim of the regime's policy is to isolate the Archbishop completely from his clergy. While recent weeks only his closest collaborators, the members of Prague cathedral, the vice-governor of the archdiocese and a few employees of the Archbishop's chancery, were given access to the Archbishop.



ARCHBISHOP BERAN

Many told the world that he is a virtual prisoner, and pointed out to the regime the illegality of its interference in Church affairs.

The Archbishop's "freedom."

of which Red propaganda constantly boasts, consists in his being free to move in his apartment and garden. The protests have not left his residence since June 19. When the weather was clearest this summer and fall he spent much time in his beautiful garden, which is surrounded by a high wall so no one can see the Archbishop. There he prays and meditates and chats with one of his trusted servants, Mr. Kafka, his former doorman, who was transferred to gardening when communists occupied the residence.

Because of the Czech mail censorship the Archbishop cannot communicate freely by mail. As early as February, 1948, the regime made photostatic copies of all incoming and outgoing mail of those on the "black list." All Bishops and dignitaries of the Church were on this list.

Even the movements of the Archbishop within his apartment are not completely free. The episcopal residence is easy to watch from government buildings. The President's palace on the one side and Schwarzenberg palace on the other provide ideal positions for spying on the Archbishop's movements. People with field glasses have frequently been seen in these palaces as they intently watched the Archbishop's residence.

Perhaps one consolation is the fact that some of the Czech communist spies are people not well versed in Church matters. Some, for instance, cannot tell the difference between a lay brother and a Bishop. Shortly after the communist coup of February, 1948, one Czech Catholic was interrogated by the secret police.

"What was the name of that Bishop who has been coming to see you," they asked.

"I never received a Bishop at my place," the Catholic replied.

The police isolated and showed him a photo of the "Bishop." It turned out to be an old friend, a member of the Brothers of Mercy.

Vatican Radio Explains Czech Bishop Move

Rome — (NC) — The instructions of the Czechoslovak Bishops to priests regarding the taking of an oath of loyalty and acceptance of state salaries do not constitute a retreat from the former attitude or a capitulation, they rather formulate an adjustment of position in the face of a new situation.

This is the gist of broadcasts by Vatican Radio in the Czech and Slovak languages sent out during recent days. One broadcast said that the Bishops are giving guidance to priests "in facing a new situation and going ahead along the line of true principle regarding the rights of the Church, and with the sincere will for a just agreement between Church and State."

ANOTHER BROADCAST of excerpts from the Bishops' message which, it said, gives directions to the clergy in facing the new situation created by the passage of the Czechoslovak church control law which comes into force on November 1.

Authoritative observers here point out, on the basis of reliable press reports from Czechoslovakia, that it was a perfectly normal procedure for the Church to carry on a determined fight against the regime's church control bill as long as the measure was only under consideration, and to revise tactics — without any compromise on principles, however — after the bill had been enacted into law.

SOME CZECH refugee circles here expressed the view that it would have been a double folly to seek martyrdom over a mere salary dispute while at the same time leaving the people without the spiritual care and guidance of their priests.

The reservations stipulated in the Bishops' instructions were repeated in the Vatican Radio broadcast. "You won't do anything contrary to your conscience or priestly honor," the Bishops declared, "if you accept the (state) salaries. It is just for you. We wish to preserve you for the spiritual care of your people."

According to information here, the statement was signed by all members of the Czechoslovak hierarchy, with the exception of Archbishop Josef Beran of Prague, and of Bishop John Vojtasak of Spis (Slovakia), who is ill. The signatures are headed by that of Archbishop Josef Matocha of Olomouc, who is serving as acting president of the Bishops' conference.

WARNS OF COMMUNISM



Archbishop Paul Yu-Pin of Nanking is shown as he boarded a plane in Washington, en route to Latin America on a three-month tour to warn against the ravages of Communism. The primate heads the purge list of intellectuals proclaimed by the Communist Party in China. In the photo, Dr. Chou-Kuang-Sie, former Chinese Minister to the Vatican, bids him farewell.

East German Red Regime Growing Hostile To Church

Berlin (NC) — With the formation of a Soviet puppet government for eastern Germany the present tendency in the Russian zone of occupation to restrict the freedom of worship and all public religious activities probably will be accentuated, in the opinion of competent observers here.

Significantly the new "constitution" promulgated for the so-called "German Democratic Republic" on October 7 under the authority of the self-appointed East zone regime provides that the facilities of religious groups, instruction must not be misused for aims contrary to the constitution and for the purpose of party politics.

"FULL FREEDOM of worship and conscience" as well as "the unhindered practice of religion" is promised in the preceding paragraph, while the one following the provision just quoted goes as far as to specify that "the privilege of religious communities to take a stand from their point of view in regard to matters vital to the nation remains unchanged." However, it is not explained how such freedom could be exercised as long as the aforementioned loop-hole remains in force. Obviously it can be interpreted to suit the whims of the present rulers.

In any case, clearly the new

Sisters Reject Life Under Red Superior

Rome — (NC) — The 1,400 Rumanian nuns, who were ousted from their educational and charitable work and deprived of their homes by the communist regime a few months ago have all returned to their families.

They were given 15 days at the time in which to go to three small convents in Rumania or to return to their families. The nuns unanimously refused to go to the convents when they discovered they would have to live under superiors appointed by the communist authorities. The convents could have accommodated only a little over 100 of the nuns. Information of these developments was received here by the Oriental Church Information Service.

New Societies Enter Mission Fields in Japan

Tokyo — (NC) — The growth and spread of Catholic missions in Japan is notably illustrated by the movements of pioneer members of newly represented religious congregations in this country.

Two pioneer priests of the Quebec Mission Society in Japan since last winter, have left for their new mission in the Province of Aomori. The Columbian missionaries, who also arrived last year have taken over missions in the Province of Wakayama as well as sections of the Yokohama diocese. Soon they will take over all missions in the Province of Kumamoto.

BETHLEHEM MISSIONERS from Switzerland who came here last fall have gone to Iwata province in the north, and Canadian Redemptorists, who arrived in Japan last year, are working in the Dioceses of Yokohama and Osaka. The stone-masons of the Society of the Holy Fathers of the Holy Spirit, who came in July 1948, now have their own mission district in Yokohama diocese.

Others who arrived last year are the Scheut Fathers who now have their own mission district in Himeji; the Scarborough Fathers, who will soon take over a district in Nagasaki. Only here since last July priests of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary are preparing to take over work in the Province of Ibaragi.

MEANWHILE, ACCORDING to information received here by the service, the Rumanian priests have all been placed on the government payroll as of August 1 and have been informed that with government pay they have "corresponding obligations." Priests are now being tempted to accept the pay and at the same time to disown their Bishops, all of whom are under arrest by the regime.

In the Latin-Rite Diocese of Jassi 15 of the 88 priests have been imprisoned and another nine have escaped. In the parish at Moldavia it was learned, the pastor has been forced to offer Mass no later than five o'clock in the morning on weekdays.

Canada Plans New Law on Crime Comics, Evil Books

Ottawa, Ont. — (NC) — A scathing denunciation of crime comics was made in the Canadian House of Commons during debate on a bill introduced by E. D. Fulton, Member of Parliament, which would amend the Criminal Code in order that persons publishing or selling crime comics might be punished.

Mr. Fulton termed crime comics "a real menace to the youth of our country." His bill would add to the Criminal Code, which now deals with obscene literature, exhibition of a disgusting object and sale of harmful drugs, the following clause: "Every one is guilty of an indictable offense and liable to two years imprisonment who knowingly prints, publishes, sells or distributes any magazine, periodical or book which substantially comprises a matter depicting pictorially the commission of crimes, real or fictitious, thereby tending or likely to induce or influence youthful persons to violate the law or to corrupt the morals of such persons."

Indians Aid County Fair For Negroes

Sulphur Spring, Miss. — (NC) — Choctaws of the Mississippi Indian missions, which are administered by the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, took part in the Leake County Fair for Negroes. The fair was sponsored by the Sacred Heart Vocational School, which is started by the Missionary Servants and the Ursuline Nuns.

Indians from three missions went to the fair in a chartered bus. In the booth reserved for them they exhibited canned products, baskets and other craft work, quilts, and native dresses.

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