Prague's Once Crowded Churches Now Empty Under Apostate 'Red' Pastors

Linz, Austria — Several of Prague's once most crowded churches stand empty today. To the faithful they are huge silent tombs symbolizing the deathblows dealt the Church there. Refugee priests arriving here relate that the Church of St. Ignatius in Prague, once administered by the Jesuit Fathers, has been taken from them by the communists and handed to an apostate priest, Father Konas.

Formerly the church was packed to capacity at every Mass. Catholics came from distant sections of the city, attracted by the sermons of famous Jesuit preachers. They included three priests recently sentenced to prison by the regime on charges of "conspiracy": the Revs. Adolf Kajpr, Frantisek Silhan and Frantisek Mikulasek.

TODAY, WHEN Masses are celebrated by Father Konas or another apostate priest, the Rev. Jan Mara, there are no faithful present. Catholics enter the church for a few minutes of private prayer only outside the time of scheduled services.

Father Konas has been seen in the street near St. Ignatius, accosting passers-by and asking them to attend religious services at his church. So far his activity has borne no fruit.

A similar fate has befallen the Redemptorist Church of St. Cajetan in another section of Prague, refugee priests report. Here the regime has installed as "pastor" Father Mara, excommunicated administrator of the communist-controlled Catholic Charita.

THE REDEMPTORIST Fathers were especially popular as confessors. The whole religious community has been removed from the monastery and placed in a ported. One member of the com- Red concentration camp, it is re- munity, the Rev. Jan Blesik, was recently given a ten-year prison term. He is reported to have died in prison.

Another empty church in Prague is that of St. Giles formerly in the charge of the Dominican Fathers. They were also ousted from their monastery and sent to a concentration camp. One of their members, the Rev. Silvester Braito, was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

WHEN THE Dominican community was given notice to make immediate preparations to leave the monastery the friars obtained police permission to enter their choir for the last time. There they sang the "Regina Coeli." As they were loaded into police trucks the friars chanted the "Miserere," the Church's traditional prayers at burials and psalm of penitence.

As special activities the Prague Dominicans used to conduct religious retreats and give courses in theology for the Catholic laity

Jailed Czech Priest Dead; Inhuman Treatment Cited

Rome — (NC) — One of the ten Czech Religious sentenced to prison by the regime in April has died and another is gravely ill, according to news received here from sources inside communist-dominated Czechoslovakia.

The Very Rev. Jan Blesik, Redemptorist provincial and procurator who was sentenced to ten years in prison for alleged "anti-state activities, has died. The Rev. Jan Urban, Franciscan provincial, who received a 14-year sentence, is gravely ill.

The imprisoned priest-Religious, it is learned, are confined in the old fortress of Mirov, near Olomouc in Moravia, which the nazis used as a concentration camp. The communists, informants here say, have "improved on nazi methods of tyranny and have submitted the convicted priests to inhuman treatment.

Nevertheless, their lot is said to be only a little worse than that of many other Religious who have been expelled from their monasteries and confined to "concentration monasteries."

THE SALESIANS have been placed into the old Cistercian monastery of Oseg near Teplice in northern Bohemia; the Dominicans and Franciscans into the Benedictine monastery of Broumov in northeastern Bohemia where until recently a number of Benedictines from Lisle, Ill., lived. The Jesuits have been confined to Mariaschein near Aussig on the Elbe river.

The Religious are forced to work long hours at physical labor and must undergo "instruction" in the Marxist doctrine. They are permitted to offer Mass in private but are not allowed any contact with the outside world. Robbed of most of their belongings the priests live in primitive conditions.

Negro Convert Wins Track Championship In First Bid

Los Angeles—(NC)—A Loyola University of Los Angeles football star, who had never competed in a track meet before this year, was the only Catholic collegian to win a championship in the National Collegiate Athletic Association meet at Minneapolis.

MEL 18 NOR BYRD, a senior who has just been graduated. The Negro convert scored a clean-cut triumph in the 100-yard dash against a fairly stiff breeze in the time of 0:09.8 at the 77-college meet, which was won by the University of Southern California.

The 6-foot, 204-pound athlete reported to the Loyola track coach, Ed Leahy, this spring only because his waistline was beginning to balloon and he wanted to get in shape. Sports writers say that Ed Leahy deserves the coach-of-the-year accolade for whipping the unschooled sprinter into stardom shape in this short time.

THE 22-YEAR-old Compton, Calif., athlete had sprung another sensation earlier in the month in a track meet held in his native city. Still an unknown then, Bob Boyd entered a field of stars from all points of the compass in the nation in the 100-yard dash and ran away from the field to win in a time of 0:09.5. He ran this race after only three hours' sleep because he had to cram for examinations which were held on the meet day.

Bob enrolled at Loyola as a non-Catholic, but was baptized last May.

New Treatment Releases Lepers

Accra, Gold Coast, Africa — (NC) — Sixty lepers have been released from the leper settlement at Ho after being given a new treatment, according to the Rev. Gerard Hemberger, S.M.A., chaplain.

In July the Catholic lepers will hold a Corpus Christi procession in thanksgiving for the phenomenal success of the new treatment, the priest said. The nature of the treatment has not been divulged.

ROLLS TO TOP OF HER CLASS

Leading the commencement procession at St. Mary's College, South Bend, Ind., is 22-year-old Patricia Kraemer, of Placentia, Calif., in her wheel-chair, pushed by her sister, Janice, a sophomore at the college. Class valedictorian, and graduate "Summa Cum Laude," she pushed her way through college on wheels. A polio victim at seven, she had both legs broken in an automobile accident at 11. Classmates helped her up and down stairs to second floor classrooms. (NC Photos)

Baptists Hear Proposal For Protestants Schools

Worcester, Mass. —(RNS)— A call for the establishment of interdenominational Protestant elementary and high schools throughout the United States was sounded at the annual meeting of the Baptist General Conference of America here.

The Rev. J. Leonard Carroll of nomination's Bible school and young people's work said such a step is necessary because Christianity cannot be taught in public schools.

Collegeville, Pa. —(RNS)— Dr. Ernest Johnson warned here that as a result of recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions, "the traditional doctrine of separation between Church and State is in process of becoming a doctrine of separation between the State and all religion whatsoever."

Addressing the eighth triennial session of the Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Dr. Johnson, professor at Teachers College, Columbia University, said this was an eventuality which "Protestants can never accept."

The Church should provide religious day schools if the public schools "can't do what needs doing," Dr. Johnson said. He insisted that instead of being isolated from the public schools, "religion should be studied as it is encountered."

Mexico Restores Salesian Buildings

Mexico City — (NC) — The Mexican Government has returned to the Salesian Fathers two buildings that had been seized during the religious persecutions of the 'twenties.

The ceremony was attended by more than 1,000 ex-students of the Salesians who received their education in those ancient halls. Among those present was Archbishop William Piani, Visitator Apostolic of the Holy See in Mexico, who for years was a professor in the college whose buildings are now being returned to the Salesians.

Lawmakers In Bermuda Bar Catholic Schools From Colony

Hamilton, Bermuda — (NC) — By a vote of 16-9, the House of Assembly of Bermuda has rejected a petition, signed by 1,900 Catholics and others, for permission to open a Catholic school in Warwick Parish. The proposed school was to be financed by the Church and directed by the Sisters of Charity.

This last action of the Government of Bermuda, banning denominational schools from this British Colony, is the culmination of 15 years of consistent appeals on the part of Catholic parents and the Church to open a Catholic school.

FOLLOWING THE action of the House of Assembly a statement was issued by Msgr. J. N. Theriault of St. Theresa's parish at Hamilton the capital. As Vicar Forane of the Bermuda Church, which is in the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Halifax, Canada, Monsignor Theriault said that the House had reached a tragic and far reaching conclusion. He stated that the Church and Catholic parents of Bermuda are faced with the "fact of religious persecution" and the "fact of a creeping state socialism."

By an Amendment to the Schools Act of 1926, it became necessary to obtain permission from the Bermuda Board of Education to open a new private school. During the ensuing years, the board did not grant permission for the opening of a separate school. By chance, the Sisters of Charity did open and run a school, known as Mount St. Agnes Academy, a private school, long before the Amendment of 1926.

FROM 1935 to 1939, applications were made to the board by the priests in charge, Msgr. L. D. Comeau and the Rev. J. K. Burns, for permission to open a school for colored Catholics of the community. Permission was refused.

In 1945 Monsignor Theriault obtained a site for a school at the St. Anthony's Mission in Warwick Parish. The parents made a petition to the Board of Education, but it was refused. An appeal was made to the Governor of Bermuda, who also turned them down. The result was that the 60 children who were to attend the Sisters of Charity school at Warwick were forced to travel by bus all the way to Hamilton, where they were lodged temporarily in an annex of the convent school at Mt. St. Agnes Academy, the only Catholic school allowed to operate.

IN JANUARY of this year the Council of Catholic Men took up the question of the proposed St. Anthony's School and pledged themselves to see that the parents' rights in this matter should not be forever denied. They presented a petition to the board. After nine weeks of waiting, the board again rejected the petition.

Another petition was then drawn up and signed by over 1,900 adult Catholics and others, and this was presented to the legislature by J. E. P. Vesey, member for Southampton. After a two-day debate the 16-9 vote against the petition resulted.

SPEAKING ON behalf of the petitioners, Mr. Vesey stated that "this is a matter of principle: that is, the parents have a basic right to train and educate their children according to their religious beliefs, and to send them to the school of their choice. The Roman Catholic Church has shown during a period of over 50 years that it is well able to run a school which will attain the highest scholastic standards. The rejection of this petition by this House means the repudiation of the parents' rights in education."

Cardinal Will Raise School Issue In British Election

London — (NC) — His Eminence Bernard Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, speaking in Manchester, repeated his promise that the rights of Britain's Catholic schools will be taken up again at the next general election. British political leaders have warned Church leaders against such action.

"WE ARE NOT going to give up one of our schools," the Cardinal declared at a dinner attended by several other members of the British Hierarchy.

"I maintain that the Catholic Church in this country owes its strength and vigor to the fact that we have our Catholic schools. You can have fine churches and priests, but with the wrong sort of education you might as well pack up.

"Churches and priests are not enough. We must have schools for our children. One of the things that keeps Catholics together in this country is the education problem.

"We are fighting for our existence. Catholic education is of such vital importance to the country that, whatever the cost, we must go ahead with our schemes. Come what may, we shall continue to build. Whatever the difficulties we shall continue with the struggle for education."

THE CARDINAL pointed out that the Education Act in Britain, imposing new conditions and demanding a number of reorganizing and expansion requirements for Church schools before they can receive state aid, could "administer Catholic education out of existence."

His Eminence said that certain non-Catholic Members of Parliament were backing the Catholic fight. The recognize he said, "that we are fighting for the education of our children."

Tito Regime Ousts Nuns

Milan, Italy — (NC) — The Tito regime of Yugoslavia has effected the dissolution of another religious community of nuns by demanding the vacuation of its last two houses and ordering the sisters to find jobs "useful" to the state, it was learned here.

Before the once thriving community was robbed of its convents by the regime it numbered some 200 nuns living in 22 houses.

The suppression of religious communities of men and women continues unabated throughout the whole of Yugoslavia, the report stated. Nuns still in possession of their convents, have been warned by the Tito communists to remove their religious dress and work as civil servants or face eviction.

The report stated that several thousand nuns have been driven from their convents by the undiminishing persecution of the Catholic Church in Yugoslavia.

Catholic Charities Conference Slated

Washington — (NC) — The 40th anniversary National Conference of Catholic Charities and the annual meeting of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the United States will be held here November 2-6.

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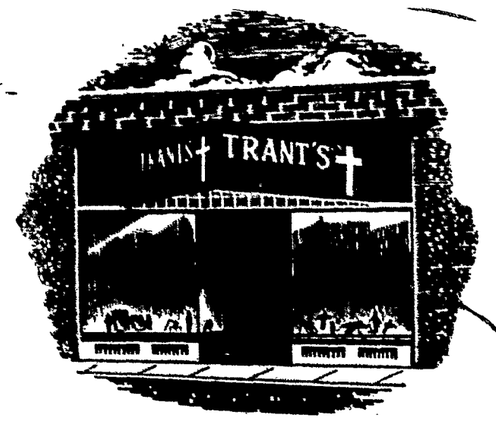

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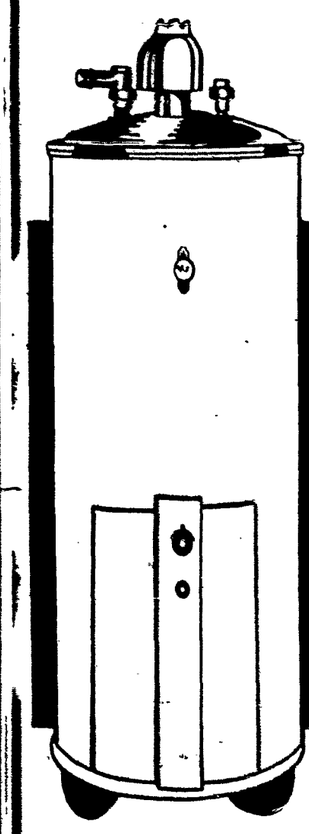

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