

February 19, 1954

Friday

General Washington Said:

# Don't Burn Pope's Effigy, Thanked Catholics Instead

(N.C.W.C. News Service)  
Cambridge, Mass.—The Commander in Chief of American forces today ordered his troops to stop plans to burn the Pope in effigy at traditional Guy Fawkes Day observances. He called the custom "ridiculous and childish."

That's how this story might have been dated and written 178 years ago. The commander in chief was General George Washington. He had come to Massachusetts from Virginia only five months before to take military command of the seven-month-old American Revolution.

And General Washington took over the rough, undisciplined troops with a firm hand. When he learned that his soldiers planned to whoop it up on November 5, 1775, by burning a "scarecrow" of the Pope, he quickly issued an order. In it, he reminded the men they were fighting "in defense of liberty." He called the Guy Fawkes Day plan "monstrous as not to be suffered or excused" and the officers and men who planned it "void of common sense."

HIS ORDER was delivered to "ill-fed, ill-clad, and ill-paid" soldiers entrenched outside the city of Boston when the British had held in these soldiers, who had fought courageously to take the city but had been repelled at Bunker Hill, now faced a New England winter's wait, holding Boston in siege.

In his order General Washington gave the disgruntled troops a common sense reminder: America was depending on Catholic allies in its revolt for freedom; the most successful campaign against the British had thus far been conducted by Catholic Canadian forces.

"It is our duty to address public thanks to these our brethren" rather than "to be insulting their religion," General Washington said.

Records also reveal that more than 38 per cent of the soldiers in Washington's armies were Catholics of either Irish birth or Irish descent. They had joined in the Revolution, despite the discriminatory statutes then in force against them.

## General Order

Head Quarters, Cambridge. November 6, 1775

As the Commander in Chief has been apprised of a design form'd for the observance of that ridiculous and childish custom of burning the Effigy of the pope—He cannot help expressing his surprise that there should be Officers and Soldiers in the army so void of common sense, as not to see the impropriety of such a step at this juncture; at a time when we are soliciting, and have really obtain'd, the friendship and alliance of the people of Canada, whom we ought to consider as Brethren embarked in the same cause. The defence and the general liberty of America: At such a juncture, and in such circumstances, to be insulting their religion is so monstrous as not to be suffered or excused; indeed instead of offering the most remote insult, it is our duty to address public thanks to these our Brethren, as to them we are so much indebted for every late happy success over the common enemy in Canada.

—General Orders, 1775-1776; Paper of George Washington; The Library of Congress

But regardless of these facts citizens of all denominations will and the General's order, a group not forget the patriotic part of Revolutionary soldiers carried which you took in the accomplishment of our Revolution, and the long-practiced in memory of England's notorious "Gun Powder Plot." (The plot in which Guy Fawkes, a Catholic, was accused of attempting to blow up the House of Parliament, was falsely interpreted as a Vatican-directed plan against England, and resulted in the death of Many Catholics.) An effigy of the Pope was burned that night on the hills south of Boston.

THE INCIDENT, however, was one of a series that marked a turning point in the position of Catholics in America — long regarded as the objects of Puritan distrust and their religion considered as "subversive of society," according to historian Father Paul J. Fink, C.S.C. Father Fink noted that with the revolution "the condition of American Catholics began to improve."

Throughout the Revolution, Catholic Americans proved their patriotism to such an extent that, years later, President Washington was to write them: "I presume that your fellow

## TWIN NUN LIBRARIANS



Nashville, Tenn.—These identical twin nun librarians at the Nazareth College Library here, are a constant source of bafflement to students. They are: Sisters Mary Catherine Siena (left), and Mary Thomas Aquinas, members of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Michigan. Being helped with their selection of books are students Colette Biron of Saginaw and Jane Casey of Chicago. The nuns are serving together in the same assignment for the first time since they entered the religious life ten years ago. (RNS Photo).

## El Paso Bishop Urges Workers Quit Communist-Controlled Labor Union

Silver City, N. M.—(NC)—A warning against membership in a union "whose leadership and ultimate aims are Communistic" was again given to mine workers here by their Bishop — this time by

radio after union leaders had refused to let the Prelate give his views at a union assembly.

Bishop Sidney M. Metzger of El Paso told the miners that "if they have been deceived and now actually belong to such a (Communist) union they have a serious obligation owed to God and country to disaffiliate and join another sound and decent union of their own choice."

EVENTS HERE clearly indicated that the Bishop was referring to the United Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers union which has been involved in labor strife here and whose local government has made a thorough investigation and proof of actual

of being "antilabor."

Bishop Metzger emphasized the acceptance of Communist

teaching is officially attested by public record."

(In Washington the National

Labor Relations Board has or-

dered a hearing to determine if

Maurice E. Travis, an official of the International Union of Mine,

Mill and Smelter Workers, filed a false non-Communist affidavit.

A former New Mexico local offi-

cial of the union was convicted

on similar charges. The union

was expelled from the CIO on

charges of Red domination.)

"THE BATTLE against Com-

munist is the concern of every

single American regardless of

political or religious belief or

station in life," Bishop Metzger

said. "It is time for action but

it is not the action of violence

that is needed. There is no jus-

tification for revenge, violence

or condemnation against any

person or group of persons.

## Editor Reports

### Persecution Charges In Latin America Fabricated Myths'

La Crosse, Wis.—(NC)—The much publicized charges by some Protestant groups of persecution in South America "are largely fabricated myths," a priest-editor declared here

#### proselytizing."

Methods employed by some Protestant groups in Ecuador are jeopardizing friendly relations with that country, Father Wagener said. He cited the case of a radio station in Quito, one of the most powerful in South America. He said the station is maintained by some 40 U.S. Protestant denominations and is used for "violent propaganda purposes."

FATHER WAGENER said one American firm engages in proselytizing in connection with its work in South America. He said of this construction firm working in Peru: "There is much evidence that this company through offers of jobs and money is persuading Peruvians to defect from the Catholic Church and join the Protestant religion. This activity is resented deeply by the Peruvian Church and State leaders."

The priest-editor said that some Protestant mission groups are using "educational bribes" in proselytizing. They operate schools and require that students be enrolled in a Protestant sect. Father Wagener said: "Some submit to this pressure, he said, because of 'the prevailing intense desire' of the South American upper classes to learn English."

### Marriage Course Draws 1,600

Toledo, Ohio.—(NC)—The preparation-for-Marriage course, being conducted at seven centers within the Toledo diocese, has attracted 1,641 young men and young women who are seniors in high school or out of high school and unmarried.

The course runs for 10 weeks, with one evening session each week. Each session consists of a 30-minute presentation on the subject by a speaker, followed by an hour's question period.



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