

'34 Months in Purgatory'

Story Of Torture In Red China Jail Told By Freed Belgian Missionary

By FATHER ALBERT O'HARA, S.J.
(Correspondent, N.C.W.C. News Service)

Hong Kong — A story of "34 months in purgatory" — over 1,000 days of inhuman psychological and physical torture in a Red Chinese prison — was told by a 42-year-old Belgian missionary who arrived here after his expulsion from the China mainland.

As Father Dries Van Collie, Immaculate Heart of Mary priest from Roulers, Belgium, calmly told the harrowing story it seemed unbelievable that he is still alive today.

Immediately after his arrest on July 25, 1951, the questioning began and the first intensive period lasted 21 days and nights. During this time, Father Van Collie was questioned two and three times a night and again during the day.

THE QUESTIONING lasted from four to ten hours at a stretch. When he would not admit that the Legion of Mary was a "reactionary and military organization," he was handcuffed with hands behind the back and his legs shackled with 13-15 iron bands. Back in the cell, his fellow prisoners were made to attack him with respites. During the 21 days and nights he was never allowed to snatch more than five to 15 minutes of sleep. He was made to stand or squat

and not allowed to lie or sit down.

His cell mates would ask him whether he would confess. When he refused, he was forced to squat while shackled and they would slap his face, head and shoulders with open hands or with their Chinese slippers. The victim would finally topple over and lie on the ground. No one would help the shackled man rise so he would drag himself to the wall and edge his way up until he reached a standing position.

Then he would immediately be dragged into the middle of the cell and his fellow prisoners would rush to the attack once more. They would spit upon him, slap his face, tug at his beard until they succeeded in pulling it out.

THE CELL LEADER was changed and a specialist in tormenting humans (a former bandit chief) was purposely put into the cell. He intensified the physical torture by pulling the priest's legs in opposite directions and by pressing his knees into the priest's back until he thought his lungs would burst.

Father Van Collie would be questioned all night and when about to faint or fall asleep standing up, he would be dragged out into the courtyard and made to jog about for 15 minutes to wake him up. Once again he would be brought in for questioning. As he started to doze off once more his judge became infuriated and cursed him. Finally when he had again been tortured to the point where he cried out with pain, they picked up a dirty rag and stuffed it into his mouth to stifle his cries.

After 21 days of this torture he reached a stage where he was almost broken. Then they introduced a new judge who spoke perfect French to the priest and used the kindest terms to persuade him not to be so stubborn. The judge wiped the blood from his nose, the filth from his face, and gave the thirsty sufferer some tea.

Scarcely knowing what he did, Father Van Collie "freely" confessed that the Legion of Mary was a reactionary organization and that he had given out information to "enemy" countries. This seemed to satisfy the judges for the time being and he was led back to his cell and his handcuffs removed.

He was then made to write "freely" what he had just "confessed." Father Van Collie said: "Outside of denying God or my faith, anything else that they asked me to admit then, I was so helpless that I think I would have done so."

AFTER SOME months of respite from direct attack, trouble started again in 1952. In the indoctrination classes which he was made to attend, he rejected atheistic materialism and gave proofs for the existence of a personal and spiritual God. He was again called before the judge who cursed at him. Once again he was given the rough treatment in his cell, handcuffs, slapping, beating, spitting and beard pulling.

Several times he was made to write at pistol point. "The Legion of Mary is reactionary and not connected with religion." "My activities here have been spying activities." He had to make recordings of these statements in French and Chinese.

SHORTLY BEFORE his expulsion, Father Van Collie was called in by a judge who treated him very politely and said: "Please tell me what is on your mind. Be very frank and have no fear."

The Belgian priest took him at his word and answered: "I can't understand how the government that calls itself the people's government would torture and force me by these inhuman means to confess things that are not true. It's completely wrong."

The judge manifested neither approval nor disapproval but quietly said: "Go back to your cell and sleep now!" One week later he was expelled.

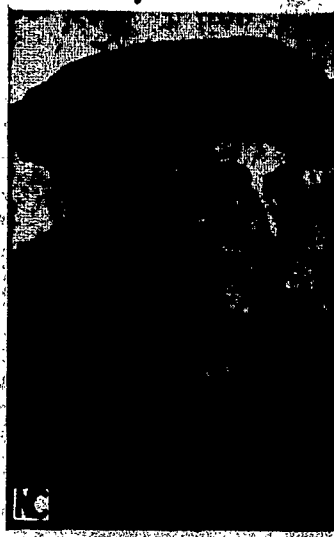
Vatican Honors President Einaudi

Rome (RNS) — President Luigi Einaudi of Italy was awarded the Supreme Order of Christ, highest Pontifical decoration, at a special ceremony held in the chapel of the Quirinal Palace here.

Archbishop Giuseppe Pella, Papal Nuncio to Italy, conferred the rare honor upon President Einaudi. It was given to him for his services to Italian Catholicism.

The late King Victor Emmanuel of Italy was similarly honored in recognition of the signing of the Lateran Treaty which established Vatican City State as a sovereign entity.

Lawyer-Saint



On July 6, the Catholic Church will celebrate the feast of St. Thomas More, English martyr, and one of England's outstanding lawyers. He was the first layman to hold the office of Chancellor of England. He was imprisoned for his refusal to support the divorce of King Henry VIII and was beheaded on July 6, 1535. Pope Pius XII canonized him in 1935. (NC Photos)

French President To Rebuild Chapel

Paris (NC) — The chapel in the Elysee Palace, France's White House, will be rebuilt by President Rene Coty. It has been learned here.

The chapel in France's official presidential residence was turned into an office in 1946.

President Coty has asked His Eminence Maurice Cardinal Feltz, Archbishop of Paris, to appoint a priest to serve in the chapel when it is completed.

The president also has renovated the chapel in the Chateau of Rambouillet, where the French chiefs of state spend their vacations as well as frequent week-ends. The president has offered to put the Rambouillet chapel at the disposal of residents of the town who live nearby.

Nurse Heroine To Tour U.S.

Washington (NC) — Miss Genevieve Galard-Terraube, the heroic nurse of Dien Bien Phu, will begin a three week tour of the United States in mid-July.

She is coming at the invitation of Congress Rep. Frances P. Bolton of Ohio, who sponsored the resolution asking Congress to extend her the invitation. The resolution said the visit "will be a dramatic illustration of the devotion to duty of women in the nursing profession in all countries."

Miss Bolton also said the trip will stress the importance of the shortage of nurses in the United States.

Aviator Missioner Relates First Flight Through High New Guinea Mountains

The following narrative, written by a Chicago missionary who serves as co-pilot to an aviator Bishop, describes his first flight through the towering New Guinea mountains. The priest obtained a pilot's license after being ordained and is now stationed at Wewak as an aide to Bishop Leo Arkfeld, S.V.D., native of Butte, Neb., and Vivar Apostolic of Wewak.

By FATHER IVO BUTER, S.V.D.

Wewak, New Guinea (NC) — My first air trip through the jutting mountains of New Guinea taught me that something more than just plane and pilot has brought the Bishop safely through hundreds of trips.

On the first trip in, I was in the pilot's seat with the Bishop riding as co-pilot. Our destination was about two hours away. The strip was in a 5,500-foot valley surrounded by jagged mountains that soared to 12 and 13 thousand feet.

We were cruising along rather peacefully, but the weather was shaping up badly, and I had to begin a series of ups and downs, and twists and turns to avoid cloud formations. (The strictest rule for New Guinea flying is "never go through a cloud" for you never know when it might have a solid center.) As we climbed over and around this nebulous nuisance we lost contact with our ground check points and had to rely on the compass alone for the next half hour.

WE WERE NOW at about 4,000 feet with the cloud layer skimming under us. Here and there a hole opened in the solid billowing stuff and we strained our eyes for the sight of a familiar landmark that might give us some assurance that we were still keeping on the "straight and narrow" course. I came up with a glimpse of a river. "That's the Yut River," the Bishop remarked casually.

But how could he be so sure? It was the first glimpse of the good earth we had had in 30 minutes, and the Sepik Valley over which we were flying was washed into a thousand places by the countless rivers that came coursing down the mountains that flanked its sides. Yet that was the Yut without a doubt.

Good pilots like the Bishop have a sixth sense for reconstructing a whole map out of a scrap much the same as a paleontologist constructs a complete prehistoric monster from a treasure eye-tooth.

A few minutes later I discovered for myself that it was the Yut, and my stock of confidence in the Bishop went up another 100 per cent. We were then only 20 minutes from the mountains, but all we could see were the large banks of clouds that shrouded them.

Besides the 500 pounds of cargo, we were carrying a Dutch missionary, Father Bus, back to his station. As is usual with these heroes of the "old-back," he was riding along without care or concern. The trip was "old-stuff" for him and he could smile at the perspiring novice at the controls.

The mountains were getting close and it was time to do something. As we advanced toward

at the valley I had heard so much about from our handful of missionaries that worked there. The sun finally broke through to add to the sight.

The mountains had been swept back at both sides and the broad valley extended thirty miles to the north until it was abruptly stopped by one of the highest ranges in this part of New Guinea. Native gardens made kaleidoscopic patterns on the valley floor and on the sweeping hillsides. But why to much planting and food?

AS WE CIRCLED the strip I had my answer. I had heard of this sight, but I was still amazed to see thousands of natives working on the strip and hundreds more going to and from work. Here is a real harvest for some zealous missionaries.

On the final approach the Bishop told me to make a landing. It was my first at such an altitude and the plane dropped off sharply when I cut the throttle. "Get the nose down. More speed," I felt like a student pilot again, as I followed the Bishop's orders. Even then I squashed in a bit short, though there were no ill effects to the plane or the people in it, so I marked it down as a successful attempt.

When I opened the door I was invigorated by the chilly mountain air. After perspiring under the strain of my first mountain flight, this was like a cool breeze.

COURIER-JOURNAL

Friday, July 2, 1954

In the hot summer, a slight drizzle refreshed me at first, but my 'tropicalized' thinned blood couldn't take much of it, so I was relieved when the cargo was unloaded and we had bid farewell to the sight.

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HEARTBREAKING!

It's really heartbreaking what our Little Sisters at the Poor Clares do for the poor. They are really heartbroken when they see the poor people who are so poor. They are really heartbroken when they see the poor people who are so poor. They are really heartbroken when they see the poor people who are so poor.

SISTER ANNA, a novice with the Poor Clares at Kalkoorukum, India, needs a heart to help the poor. She is really heartbroken when she sees the poor people who are so poor. She is really heartbroken when she sees the poor people who are so poor. She is really heartbroken when she sees the poor people who are so poor.

"I WAS HUNGRY AND..."

You know how hungry I was. I was really hungry when I was in the orphanage. I was really hungry when I was in the orphanage. I was really hungry when I was in the orphanage. I was really hungry when I was in the orphanage.

HOLY THINGS FOR HIM

Our MONICA GUILD club offers the litany and novenas of our mission chapel. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor.

ARE YOU IN GOD'S WILL? PUT HIM IN YOURS.

THE FORGOTTEN MISSIONARY

Often our people forget the missionary work of our apostolic fathers. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor.

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THE "SUSPENSE CARD."

SHINING LIGHT

Archbishop Paul Muench, although he died a young man last fall, was truly a shining light of the Church among the poor people of the world. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor.

GHERENCHIEL has six years to train in Rome before we hope to send him back to his native Ethiopia. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor. We are really heartbroken when we see the poor people who are so poor.

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1954 AUGUST 1954						
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