

### Review Of Background Casts Different Light On Persecution Charges

For the past several years a number of non-Catholic press organizations most notable of which has been the News Service of the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia—have printed detailed charges of persecution of their churches by Catholics. The following article offers information pertinent to the problem for the better understanding of the Catholic reading public.

(N.C.W.C. News Service)

The National Constituent Assembly of Colombia—once postponed—may convene soon to decide whether traditional principles in reference to dissident religious minorities are to be re-established in Colombia.

To be considered by the assembly are proposals for two revisions to the constitution which have for many months been the subject of controversy, and which have been seized upon by some Protestant publications as being evidence of "persecution."

Whether the proposed amendments will come to a vote, or how the votes will be cast, are still matters that cannot be ascertained at the present time. However, there is currently much discussion on these amendments both in the United States and in Colombia.

**THE FIRST** of these proposals provides that non-Catholic worship and activity be confined to church buildings. Assembly in the open, in homes or in other buildings, as well as the use of the press or radio for anti-Catholic presentations is forbidden to these groups. The second, while allowing for private schools for non-Catholic groups, states that "official education shall be organized and directed in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic religion."

To get a good picture of the situation in Colombia, one must be aware of several facts.

(1) For more than four centuries (long before the existence of the United States, as such) Colombia has been 99 per cent Catholic. Although—as in any religious group—all of this number have not been practicing Catholic,

still Catholicism has become a part of the way of life of the Colombians, has placed its mark on their culture, on their government, on their way of thinking and living. Its people, therefore, resent the fact that Protestant missionaries regard Colombia as a backward, pagan land, and go there to evangelize them.

(2) Most Protestant proselytizing is aggressive, and vigorously anti-Catholic. Presumably, to evangelize a Catholic country the sects involved feel they must attack Catholicism rather than present positive Protestant teaching.

(3) Violence which is admittedly done in some cases to persons and properties of some Protestant sects—though proven not to be as devastating as some would have it—is done by resentful natives or political groups. Because they are almost all Catholic, what they do as individuals is labeled as "Catholic."

(4) Protestantism is automatically associated with the Liberal party. Catholicism is usually identified with the Conservative party. Thus, differences between the two parties are often called religious when, in truth, they are political.

(5) Almost always, when there is the death or imprisonment or prosecution of a person, who also happens to be a Protestant, it is immediately seized upon as hav-

### Pen Used In Flag Pledge Signature



Washington, D. C.—The pen used by President Eisenhower in signing a joint resolution adding the words "Under God" to the pledge of allegiance to the flag is shown to parochial school children by Rep. Louis C. Rabaut of Michigan, sponsor of the resolution in the House. The pupils, left to right: Carl G. Powell, 10; Thomas Murdoch, 8; and Norman L. Edwards, Jr., all from St. Joseph's parochial school here. President Eisenhower gave the pen to Rep. Rabaut with a word of appreciation for sponsoring the resolution. Mr. Rabaut, who has three daughters who are nuns and a son who is a priest, said that he regards the resolution as the most important he has sponsored in 29 years.

ing been done because the person is a Protestant. In almost every instance the reasons are political or are matters of the violation of an existing law. "In most instances too, for what ever reason action has been taken, there has been provocation from the "persecuted" side.

When some of the incidents of provocation are cited, it becomes clear why sometimes the Colombians "persecute" the non-Catholic evangelists and do not so readily receive them. In 1934, at Puerto Tejada,

Province of El Valle, a group of Protestants seized a statue of the Blessed Virgin, plucked out its eyes, hanged it to a tree, and set it afire. There are accounts of a dozen more such instances on record. The forthcoming proposals of amendment to the constitution of Colombia are seen in a different light when considered along with the historical background of Protestantism in Colombia and the findings of current investigation of persecution charges.

### Pilgrims Walk To Guadalupe Shrine

Mexico City—(RNS)—More than 7,000 of 12,000 pilgrims from Queretaro walked the 130-mile distance for their annual visit to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe here.

Among those making the walking pilgrimage, which took seven days, was the celebrated Mexican bullfighter, Rafael Rodriguez, and his "cuadrilla" or retainers.

While on the road, the pilgrims heard Mass each morning at dawn, and during the day, prayers were recited and discussions held at rest stops en route.

The pilgrimages from devoutly Catholic Queretaro have been held annually since 1888 to Guadalupe, where three days of special ceremonies take place at the shrine.

### Last Jesuit Head In Shanghai Leaves

Hong Kong—(RNS)—The Very Rev. Ferdinand Lacroette of Paris, last Jesuit superior in Shanghai, arrived here aboard a British freighter.

He was expelled by the Chinese Communists after having spent almost three years in prison.

Father Lacroette, who was named a bishop while in prison but has not been consecrated, refused to talk about his ordeal. Superior of the Paris Province of the Shanghai Jesuit Mission, he had been in China 27 years. Five American Jesuit priests and one Maryknoll priest are still in prison in Shanghai.

### Czech Reds Arrest More Clergy, Laity

Sabaurg, Austria—(NC)—The Prague Communist government apparently aims at "settling the Catholic question" once and for all by driving faithful priests from their parishes and removing all Catholic activists from the countryside, according to a report from Catholic sources inside Czechoslovakia.

AN ESTIMATED 140 priests and more than 3,000 Catholic leaders are said to have been arrested during April and May. A mammoth "hunt" is expected to take place soon at which the jailed priests will allegedly give "evidence" of the hostile activities of the Vatican in Czechoslovakia internal affairs.

It is reported that priests are being arrested on trumped-up charges and planted evidence. They are then forced, in the usual fashion, to "confess" their "crimes." These charges range from accusations of communistic contact with the Vatican by radio to attempts at taking the lands away from farmers.

Reports describing the arrest of the priests state that Red police agents hide American-made radio transmitters, guns and ammunition in the churches at night. The next morning they surround the rectory and begin to question

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## STATEMENT OF CONDITION

AS OF CLOSE OF BUSINESS, JUNE 30, 1954

RESOURCES	
Cash .....	\$ 50,394,737.48
U. S. Government Bonds .....	120,733,638.39
Other Stocks and Bonds .....	9,318,485.16
Loans .....	86,975,097.85
Mortgages .....	37,087,945.18
Real Estate and Banking Houses .....	4,536,151.41
Other Real Estate .....	15,748.13
Accrued Interest Receivable .....	1,038,293.29
Other Assets .....	418,315.10
	<b>\$310,518,411.99</b>
LIABILITIES	
Deposits .....	\$285,591,618.51
Reserve for Interest and General Expense .....	701,072.80
Reserve for Federal Income and Other Taxes .....	1,341,845.86
Reserve for Unearned Discount .....	1,752,825.82
Dividends Declared and Payable August 2nd .....	200,000.00
Capital Funds .....	20,931,049.00
Common Stock .....	\$ 8,000,000.00
Surplus .....	10,000,000.00
Undivided Profits .....	2,931,049.00
	<b>\$20,931,049.00</b>
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Assets .....	<b>\$266,132,139.50</b>

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