

'Persecution' In Colombia Seen Bogus Talk For Export Only

The writer has just returned from Colombia, where he made observations and talked with persons familiar with situations in that country.

By FRANK A. HALL
(N.W.G. News Service)

The sensational charges of "Catholic persecution of Protestants" in the friendly Republic of Colombia (now largely exploded) were:

Straight "for export only," deliberate propaganda in which the name "Protestant" was misused.

Ard made by persons who when challenged, gave no supporting evidence, but remained silent.

At a Free Conference with Dr. Evaristo Soudain, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, U.S. newspapermen were assured that there had been no "persecution of Protestants" in Colombia. Charges of such "persecution" had been reported widely in the general press of the United States.

With these things to be true, "For Export Only."

The reports making the charge of 200,000 numbers were definitely suppressed in Colombia, but were vigorously disseminated outside, particularly in the U.S. In one of the "bulletins" (No. 4), the Protestant sects themselves made this clear.

This bulletin said that the reports were transmitted to the then President of Colombia at a time when he was immersed in acute political difficulties, and also to the Papal Nuncio, but did not let any actual Colombian church authority.

On the other hand, the bulletin boasted that they were sent to the following outside persons or organizations: a U.N. Commission; the Organization of American States; the Pan American Union; the President of the U.S.; the Secretary of State of the U.S.; and an Under-Secretary; the World Council of Churches; the National Council of Churches of Christ in America; the National Association of Evangelicals; the Home Board of Mission Societies working in Colombia; the American Board of the United States; the International News Service; the Foreign Relations Service; the State Department; the War Department; and various foundations and religious societies and religious publications throughout the world. It also was said that the charges were sent to Pope Pius XII, Vatican offices and one American Cardinal.

This is the testimony of the sects themselves, making entirely clear that this was a propaganda move to arouse concern and "pressure" outside Colombia.

Protestant Church. The words "Protestant" and "the Protestant Church" were extravagantly used. Actually, when 26 Protestant groups existing in Colombia, only 17 joined an Evangelical Confederation in Colombia, then set up. Such church groups as the Anglicans and Episcopalian and the Baptist refused to join.

The list of those known who became members is studded with "strange" sects often unknown as Protestant denominations in the U.S., such as the "Calvary Holiness Church," "Fourquare Gospel Church," "Assembly of God," "Independent Evangelical Church of Villavicencio," "Independent Gospel Tabernacles of Casanare" and a "World-wide Evangelical Crusade."

Protestants themselves—the U.S. may judge whether such "splinters" are to be regarded as the "Protestant Church" as they know it. Nevertheless, this is the group which charged "persecution of Protestants" in Colombia.

Dr. Eduardo Osuna, Salvadorean scholar of the Pontifical Xavierian University, Bogota, has written: "The Protestant Denominations in Colombia," which documents with documentation and with notable calmness and clarity, the whole charge of "Protestant persecution." His compact work has been translated into English. Dr. Osuna told me this:

"*Truth to Challenge*"

When the charges were made, as noted, they were withheld from circulation in Colombia, although sensationalized distributed in the U.S. and elsewhere. No opportunity was given the Colombian Government or the Catholic authorities to check the assertions or give any reply before the lurid reports were suddenly given out "for export."

Dr. Osuna himself made a most painstaking investigation. It took much time, for he was careful and insisted on evidence. Most of the areas where "persecution" was alleged were far away, in some cases in almost inaccessible small communities. The final result devastatingly brought out the inaccuracy of the charges. Father Osuna says to the Evangelical fabricators of the charges:

"Gentlemen, your reports are full of falsehoods."

At THE COUNCIL meeting several of the chieftains expressed their views on neutral schools.

Chief Mwambutsa of the Barundi tribe said:

"The public schools . . . set aside religion and God. But this attitude shocks not only our Catholic convictions, it also hurts directly the intimate convictions of the Barundi, who all consider Man as God as the supreme master whom one cannot leave out of school more than out of the whole of life."

DR. J. MARANTENKA declared:

"Let the government consider what is happening in Kenya (a reference to the Mau Mau terrorist campaign) before establishing neutral public schools which set God aside. If our people no longer had the help of religion, the road to revolt and excess would be opened."

CHIEF NDUMUMWA, the King's uncle and a former regent of Uganda, stated:

"The missionaries were the first white people to come to our country. They brought us peace and prosperity. For what can they be blamed? We do not want missionaries to enter our country through the instrument of the guerrillas that divide Europe; imposing upon our children an education different from that brought by our missionaries."

In the matter of the Colombian charges of "persecution against Protestants," the refutation has been documented. But only in the last month, the Church in that nation had to answer an extravagant blast, printed in a U.S. Southern Methodist publication, which affirmed that the Colombian Government was seeking systematically to "exterminate Protestant cities." There is no Protestant city in Colombia.

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Africa Chiefs Vote Against Neutral Schools

Ugandans, Rwandans-Urundi (NC)—The High Council of Uganda has unanimously voted against the establishment of religiously neutral public schools and asked that any public schools opened by the government be staffed by priests or nuns.

The High Council of the United Nations trust territory under Belgian administration is made up of the native African King, Mwami Mwambutsa, and 29 chieftains. The Council met to vote on the school issue after the Belgian government had proposed the opening of schools from which the teaching of religion would be excluded.

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MSGR. OSCAR ROBLES TOLEDANO

Priest Named Dominican Republic's Consul General

New York (RNS)—A Roman Catholic priest has been named Consul General in New York of the Dominican Republic to succeed Dr. Joaquin E. Salazar, who was appointed that country's ambassador to the United States.

He is Msgr. Oscar Robles Toledano, 42, the Dominican Republic's minister plenipotentiary to the United Nations, a post he will retain.

A noted scholar and master of eight languages, Msgr. Toledano was vice-rector of the University of Santo Domingo, oldest seat of higher learning in the Americas, for four years. He then became chancellor of the Santo Domingo archdiocese, the position in which he was serving when named to the Dominican U.N. delegation last year.

Mgr. Toledano's predecessor, Abramón Toledo, was a Jew who became a convert to Catholicism when he married Luisa Urquiza, daughter of the physician to a former Dominican president.

His appointment is made for six months.

One might say that with this record and with the charges having abated why pay more attention to this crazy phenomenon? The answer is simple:

Truth to Challenge.

It was decided ago that the bogus and vicious K.C. "orthodox" was alleged and sensationalized circulated. It was promptly and conclusively proved to be false. But only in the last few months, it has bobbed up again in this country and even abroad, to provide ammunition for professional anti-catholics.

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British Catholics Extend Convert-Winning Program To Big Sunday Papers

London, England (NC)—Two important developments have taken place in connection with the Catholic Information campaign begun just over a year ago. One is the spreading of the campaign to the mass-circulation national Sunday newspapers. The other is the opening of a special headquarters in London by His Eminence Bernard Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster.

THE CAMPAIGN, the most encouraging convert-winner in Britain in recent years, is being extended now after a Knights of Columbus program in the United States. A committee of placing advertisements in the selected press offering free open courses in Catholic belief.

The advertisements impose no obligations on inquirers. They receive a series of leaflets near the time of the conversion of the Mass and its meaning.

The religious survival of the growing generation depends in large measure on the decisions we take today," the Archbishop of Montreal told members of the Richelet Club.

HE SAID: A U.S. Communist writer had declared that the party was behind 85 per cent of the obscenity literature distributed in that country.

"It is not a mistake to think that the conversion of young is one of the objectives of Marxist materialism. Cardinal Griffin said.

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Communist Aim Seen To Corrupt Youth

Montreal (RNS)—His Eminence Paul-Emile Cardinal Leger in an address here called upon all men of goodwill to combat the systematic corruption of youth which he termed "one of the objectives of Marxist materialism."

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