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**WHITING**  
BUICK BUY LINES

**FOUR YEARS IN A RED HELL**

**Life In Shackles**

By The Very Rev. Harold W. Rigney, S.V.D. Divine Word Missionary

The fetters I was forced to wear by my Chinese Communist captors cut deep into my ankles and ruined my low-cut, leather shoes.

For a day or so, I wrapped my pants around my ankles under the fetters.

These were strong U. S. Army pants that I had worn as a chaplain during World War II. But the fetters cut through this tough cloth, which soon became stiff with blood.

When the judge saw how I strove to protect my ankles, he forbade me this protection. Henceforth, my bare ankles must not be protected from the rusty, rough, dirty iron shackles.

**In Bare Feet**  
My feet and legs became swollen. My feet swelled so much I couldn't get my shoes on. I was given a pair of old Chinese cloth shoes, but they soon fell to pieces and I went to court in my bare feet.

Then, there were the handcuffs, they made my arms and hands swell. There were many occasions on which I was handcuffed with my hands behind my back for periods ranging from one day to a week.

Having your hands manacled behind your back is sheer torture. Besides the pain that comes from the rough iron cutting into your flesh every time you move your hand, you undergo sufferings, humiliations and insults. Also, you cannot bathe, wash your face, comb your hair, or scratch yourself when the lice bite.

**Can't Wipe Glasses**  
If you wear glasses, you cannot wipe off the sweat, dust and grease that collects on them. You find sleeping on a wooden kang (bed) a trial. You lie on one arm; pain shoots through it. You try the other; more pain. No matter what the position, you are agonized with pain.

How can you eat? The first time I was manacled, the chu chang (cell leader) ordered a fellow prisoner to feed me. Later, I had to eat unaided the best I could, like a dog.

My wu tou (steamed maize) was put on the edge of the kang. I had to kneel to eat the wu tou. Once I was handcuffed, as the punishment for refusing to accuse the Rev. Joseph Melners, a Divine Word missionary, and Dr. William Bruell of being Gestapo agents.

Father Melners had been on the staff at Fu Jen Catholic University and was active in developing the Legion of Mary at the institution. Prof. Bruell was head of the chemistry department at Fu Jen until he was forced out by the Communists.

The judge accused Father Melners and Prof. Bruell of being Gestapo agents and asked me what evidence I had to substantiate these charges. I replied that I knew of no facts that would indicate that either man had ever been a Gestapo agent. I also added that I personally didn't believe either had ever been members of the Gestapo.

Influriated by my refusal to "substantiate" his charges, the judge again ordered me put in manacles, with my wrists chained behind me. Because of a previous refusal to "co-operate" with a "People's court," I had been punished by the replacement of my medium weight fetters with the heaviest pair of shackles they had. These heavy leg irons weighed about 20 pounds.

With my arms thus confined, it was so difficult to sleep lying down that I sat up. My blanket was wrapped around me, but every night it fell away. By the time day broke I was thoroughly chilled.

**Arms Painful**  
When these handcuffs were removed, I found it painful to



Milton Caniff's drawing of a Sepo (Communist security police) guard.

packages, but the prison official refused to answer.

Later I learned that the sisters had brought a package to the prison gate as usual, but that the guards refused to accept it. As they gave no explanations, the sisters thought I had died and word sifted through to my relatives and friends that I was presumed dead.

Some 17 months later (in June of 1953), I asked the prison authorities for permission to write to a priest in Peiping for money to buy some simple necessities.

**Writes To Sisters**  
A prison officer replied that I would not be permitted to write this priest for help since he would not help an imprisoned "reactionary."

But he said I could write again to the missionary sisters, who were still in Peiping. I did and the following Monday, I received not only some paper and soap, but a big basket of food as well. In it were white bread, sausages, a jar of butter sugar and other comestibles.

I received three or four of these wonderful baskets at regular intervals. Then the food orders were stopped again. As usual, no explanations were given why I no longer received them.

I concluded that my failure to respond to the "magnanimity" of the "People's" government (by confessing to charges I was not guilty of) spurred that self-same government to put a halt to all packages slated for me.

These food packages were terrible, important; they helped slave off the hunger that was with me constantly. And this hunger came from a deliberate policy, set by prison officials, of starving me into submission.

While other prisoners were given as much wu tou (steamed maize) and pai tsai (cabbage soup) as they wanted, my portions, dealt out by chu chang, were niggardly. The chu chang acted in accordance with precise instructions given him by the prison officials on the kind of treatment to be given each prisoner.

The chu chang's attitude is reflected in the following incident: In April of 1952 a crown over one of my molars came loose. I reported this to prisoner Lei, who was chu chang of my cell in that period, and asked for permission to see a dentist.

**Suffers Toothache**  
Lei flew into a rage, shouting that my request was outrageous. Echoing his views were the rest of my cellmates; they heaped abuse on me as an American "imperialist" for having the temerity to ask for dental care.

Later, during an interview with a prison doctor, I was able to explain my plight. I asked if I could have my teeth looked after.

His reply was to prescribe tablets to relieve the pain. So, from April 1952 to my release in September of 1953, I suffered from prolonged and severe toothaches.

This was cunning torture. Next Week: A trio of hardened prisoners ruthlessly subject Father Rigney to an endless third degree.

**Collegians Volunteer For Alaska Mission**

Paxton, Mass. — (NC)—Three Holy Cross Mission in Alaska, graduates of Anna Maria College here and two seniors at Regis College, Weston, have volunteered a year's service at the Cross Mission, who is taking special studies at Anna Maria College.

The Holy Cross Mission is presently being moved from the Alaskan interior to Copper Education Project nearer the coastal region. The five will leave Alaska this Summer and begin teaching in September.

The girls are Misses Rosemary Bobka of Clinton, Genevieve Hetu of Southbridge and Sherry Ann Richard of Springfield.

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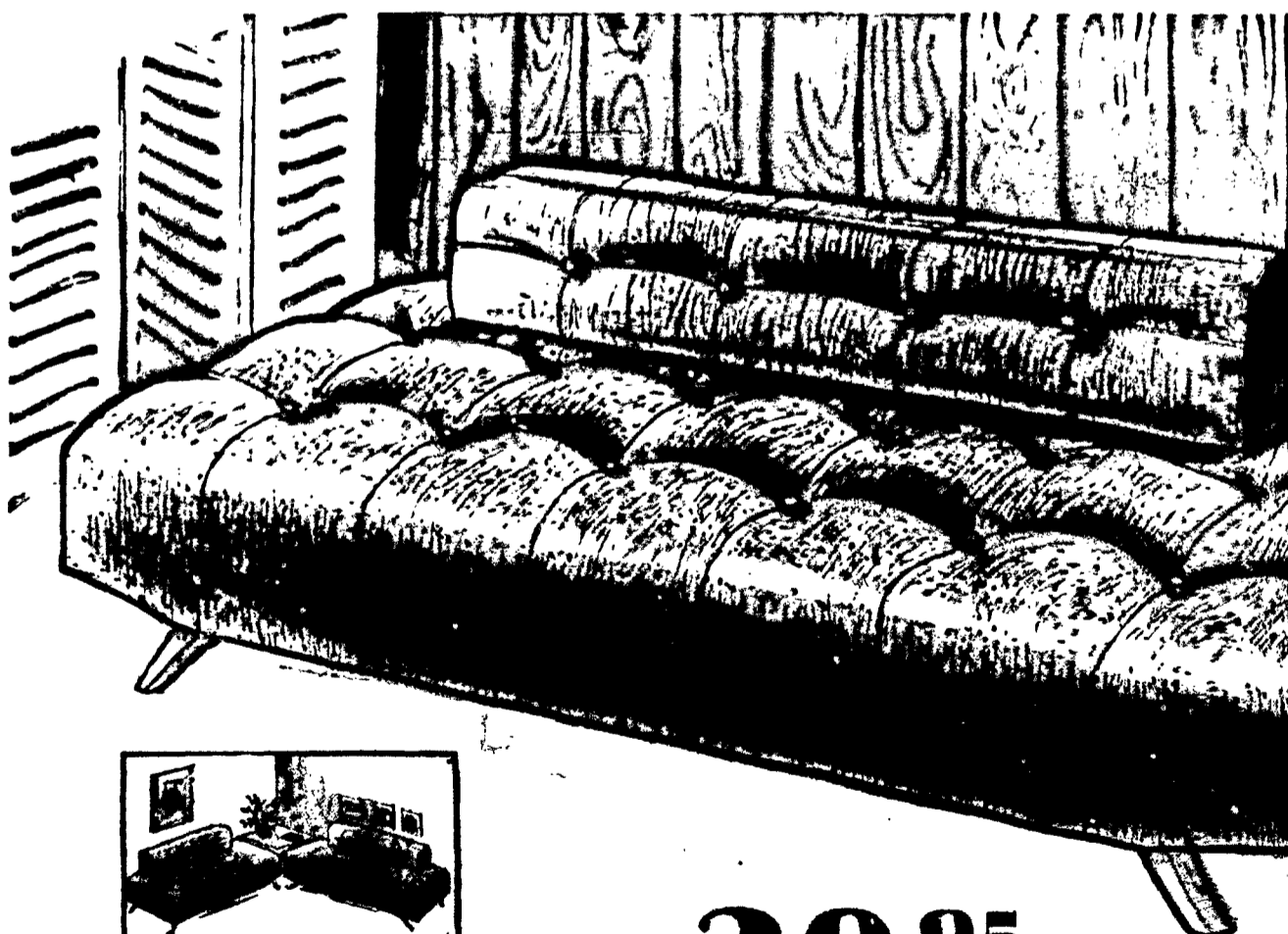
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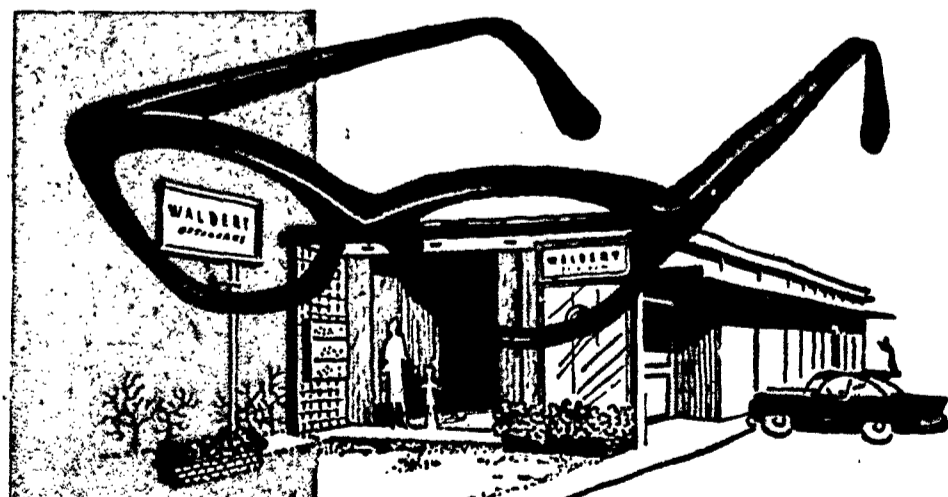
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