

Cubans Grub Six Weeks In Kremlin's Shadow For Living

The author of the following article, associate editor of the Times Review, weekly paper of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wis., recently completed a two-week fact-finding tour of Cuba.

By PATRICK J. WHELAN
(N.C.W.C. News Service)

"The Revolution had to come—and the agrarian reform had to be its first fruit."

A prominent businessman of Santiago de Cuba was trying to explain the blind alley down which former Cuba regimes had led the Cuban economy.

"The Cuban economy had reached the point of no return," he said.

A day in some of the almost roadless hill country of Oriente Province showed how deeply the "point-of-no-return" had reached into the lives of real men, women and children.

The jeep driver and guide first stopped at a group of palm shacks somewhere on the road to Guantanamo.

"We left the black-topped road, sloshed through weeds and mud to the first hotel."

"My grandfather is in the fields," said the 13-year-old boy who looked no more than eight or nine.

A gaping hole lacking a door showed that rain-water had poured through the entrance, to disappear into a banana grove to the rear.

To the left of the six by eight foot room, on a plank attached to the wall, another boy—12-year-old cousin of the first—lay stretched out, apparently just awakened by our arrival.

To the right was another room about the same size—the sleeping area for grandfather, parents, four brothers and a sister.

To the rear, attached precariously to the hut or "bohio," was a lean-to sheltering a fire-place of loose stones. A blackened pot hung in the area, the only utensil in this area, generously called a kitchen.

"Where's the rest of the family?" we asked.

He wasn't sure. They were out there somewhere—he pointed into the distance—looking for work, he said vaguely.

THE NEXT TWO hovels had no "man of the house."

In the first, a mother of nine children from three to 24 years said her husband had died in the last year from a hernia operation.

"How do you manage here?" I asked.

The older boys do odd jobs wherever they can—even as far away as Santiago," she said.

Next door, a lone mother of four children said simply, "I have to feed my brood," to explain why she was going to work soon on a coffee plantation.

She and her 12-year-old son will work an eight-hour day picking coffee beans at 70 cents a tin. If they're lucky, they will fill four tins each a day. Usually, only men do this work.

SOME MILES farther—now on a muddy dirt road—we stopped near a shack in front of which two men were standing.

Strong faith, grinding poverty and retarded science characterize present day Poland, Dr. Richard J. Brzustowicz, just returned from a six weeks tour in that country, said this week.

The well known Rochester neurosurgeon spent June 16 to August 7 in the 95 per cent Catholic nation still held in the weakened grip of Communism.

During his six weeks there, Dr. Brzustowicz, who speaks Polish fluently, visited ten cities to study techniques in neuro-surgery and to talk with doctors, priests, city people and peasants.

He now knows first hand what it's like to live in the ominous shadow of the Kremlin.

The Polish revolt against Moscow on October 18, 1956, has been termed a "frozen revolution"—one that half succeeded, half failed in that nation's bid for freedom. Four days later, Russian tanks brutally stamped out a similar rising in Hungary.

Why Warsaw escaped the blood bath given Budapest is still an unanswered question—but Dr. Brzustowicz did find answers to other questions.

What is Poland's economic position? Pitiably poor. While families have to live in one room, three rooms are considered luxurious living.

The one room families, even in recently built apartment houses, have to share kitchen, toilet, laundry facilities with as many as five to ten other families.

Crowded conditions in these have boosted the tuberculosis rate to a record high—despite Soviet boasts of free socialized medicine for all citizens.

Communist party members get preference in job placement, wage rates, better apartments and at the local health clinics, Dr. Brzustowicz said.

Is there freedom in Poland? To some extent yes. The Rochester doctor found he could take pictures when and where he wanted to—and he has over 350 Kodachrome slides now being processed.

(A selection of these pictures will be published in a subsequent issue of the Courier-Journal.)

He said he also noted Polish people spoke to him openly—sometimes with blunt criticism of the Communist government—without fear of reprisals.

There is, however, no democracy in Poland. Decisions are made by the government—and the people must accept them.

The government is aware, nonetheless, that it skates on thin ice and a major ripple in the status quo can spell its own doom in a popular uprising or a Russian invasion.

Newspapers are rigidly controlled by the government—as was demonstrated in the recent Khrushchev and Nixon visits to Warsaw. Dr. Brzustowicz arrived in the capital city the day after the Soviet premier left and stayed until the day before the Vice President came there.

"Now the people number over 35 million."

Warsaw citizens told the doctor the government brought bus loads of people from factories, offices, even summer camps to line the streets for the Kremlin leader's arrival.

Despite strong Communist prodding, the people's reaction was anything but enthusiastic.



DR. BRZUSTOWICZ saw frozen revolution.

at Lublin, still the country's best school. Even the government prefers Lublin graduates for its top positions.

Bishop Sheen, "the television bishop," is well known in Poland and his books are in great demand.

Is Soviet science as advanced as reports indicate?

Dr. Brzustowicz said his observations convinced him Soviet science is "way behind" advancements made in the free world.

Polish doctors, after twenty years isolated from the democratic west and under the aegis of wanted Kremlin scientists, have failed to keep pace with post-war medical progress.

Polish doctors, he said, are aware of their scientific lag and want contracts, journals and latest instruments from the free nations. He hopes to present their plea at the autumn meeting of America's neurosurgeons.

The Polish people view every Kremlin contact with the free world as a step toward peace. As Communist leaders learn of freedom and prosperity, they will inevitably become less satisfied with their slave system.

Dr. Brzustowicz lives at 380 Oakdale Drive and is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes parish.

Only one Catholic university has survived the war and subsequent years of occupation.

Religion has to stay strictly religious.

To win approval from the people, the government has financed rebuilding of war-wrecked churches and permitted religious instruction classes in the public schools, paying the salaries of the religious teachers.

Registration will be held at the institute on the Fordham campus on September 12, 14 per semester for the 1959-1960 and 15.

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Boston—(RNS)—Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston congratulates Archimandrite Dimitri Nicholas of the Syrian Orthodox Church on his acceptance as a priest in the Catholic Church.

Orthodox Priest Becomes Catholic

Boston—(RNS)—For the first time in the history of the Archdiocese of Boston a priest of an Orthodox Church has become a Roman Catholic priest.

He is Archimandrite Dimitri Nicholas of the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church whose acceptance into the Catholic priesthood was announced here for Catholic priests of the East by Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston.

Cardinal Cushing, who sponsored Mgr. Nicholas' petition for admission to the Catholic priesthood, presented documents was given the rank of Monk to him announcing his acceptance which is equivalent to a full abbot in the Syrian Rite.

State Funds For Study Of Russian At Fordham

New York—(NC)—Twenty scholarships for the beginning of Russian studies in the Fordham University Institute of Contemporary Russian Studies have been made available by the New York State Department of Education. It has been announced by Father Walter G. Jaskiewicz, institute director.

The scholarships, which cover tuition and fees in full plus a commuting allowance of \$25 per semester for the 1959-1960 and 15.

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Too Many Volunteers

Huehuetenango—After saying Mass in a local Guatemala jail, Father William H. Woods, Maryknoll Missioner of Bellaire, Texas, asked for volunteers to carry his portable altar back to the rectory.

All hands went up. Just as the volunteers were picking up the altar, the organ stepped in and said: "Padre! That isn't the way we do it here!"

Four guards carried the altar back.

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