

Cuba's Poor Gain Lands

(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 Agrarian Reform Law is essential to the future prosperity of Cuba," a prominent businessman of Havana asserted.

"Just think — 33 families own most of the land in Oriente province, the most fertile area of Cuba. In a population of over 1.5 million there, most of the people live in huts with palm-leaf roofs," he said.

"All a Cuban wants is some land to call his own. That will give him a sense of responsibility. On that basis we can build a new Cuba, just as Puerto Rico has done," he concluded.

"Fidel Castro's ideas are right," a landowner said. "But I just can't figure out how the land reform is going to help the campesino (peon) . . . Unless we can find the capital to diversify agriculture and to introduce new industries, I don't believe we can help the campesino much."

Premier Castro is trying to do in one year what should have been done gradually since the 1920's, another businessman said. He went on: "Yet, he's got to do it."

"He's somewhat in the position of Abraham Lincoln, who had to free the slaves in a single step, instead of doing it gradually," he said.

"Almost from the beginning," he continued, "the republican government has been corrupt, and the ruling groups enriched themselves at the expense of the nation."

"Now Fidel has to beat an entirely new path. Drastic action is needed, even though some of us who are rich are going to suffer by it," he said. An economist sees the problem in a slightly different light:

"It's not so much financial loans that Cuban agriculture needs, as good planning and implementation," said Dr. Jose Artega, chief economic advisor in the department of economic development of the Ministry of Economy.

"Agriculture is Cuba's principal industry," he said. "Yet we import nearly 30 percent of our food — rice, beans, onions, garlic, wheat, peanuts, potatoes — all products we could produce ourselves if we planned our economy differently," he said.

"We also need irrigation projects, rural roads, rural electrification, and refrigeration facilities — all of which require central planning, appropriation of funds, and controlled development," he said.

DR. ARTEAGA said the land reform law, designed to bring about a rational agricultural development, is not the work of any one man.

"Many persons contributed to its formulation," he said, catching the story that it is the brainchild of Red party-liner Ernesto (Che) Guevara.

Dr. Artega, who specializes in agricultural economics, had a share in writing some provisions of the agricultural reform law.

The law, promulgated last May, has three principal features in its 67 sections and three temporary articles:

- It limits future farms to a maximum of 3,300 acres (except with 700,000 population, Cuba is

less than three times this area, but has 10 times the number of people.

Nearly 80 per cent of Cuban land is in farms, but only 20 per cent of the country is flat or rolling. The other 80 per cent is mountainous or hilly.

And yet 8 per cent of the farms account for nearly 75 per cent of the farm land. And 98 per cent of the farms control more than one-third of the land.

On the other hand, 85 per cent of the farms have only 20 per cent of the land.

THE NEED FOR land-redispatch to the people who work on it is beyond dispute from the viewpoint of social justice.

The land reform law provides for payments to former landowners according to their own estimates of the market value of their land, as stated in their annual tax returns.

Payment will be made in four and one-half percent interest, backed by the value of the land and by the honor of the Cuban government.

Some critics object that no landowner in Cuba ever used market value as a basis for paying taxes — that they always undervalued their land value.

Even granting that objection — and overlooking the cheating involved — most of the land-owning companies bought at extremely low prices in the early 1900's. United Fruit Company, for example, owns over 123,000 acres in one section of Oriente, which cost only \$100 in 1905. It gained title to the land when it absorbed the Nipe Bay Company.

During the years since purchase, landowning companies amassed vast fortunes in profits, very little of which were reinvested in the country, except to build sugar mills which brought even more profits.

Jose Ignacio Lasaga, in a study published by the Cuban Catholic review, La Quincena, argued: "In general, the declaration has always been the prevailing norm for fixing land values."

Among the countries which Cuba copies in its system of land payments for expropriated lands are Japan (whose law was passed under General MacArthur's administration), Italy, Egypt, Turkey and Bolivia.

Dr. Lasaga notes that communist regimes, like those of Russia and Poland, made no payment whatever, or only a token payment, for lands confiscated.

THE CUBAN law sets a limit below which land cannot be divided. Its purpose is to prevent division of the land into parcels too small for efficient cultivation. Many countries have similar provisions in their land laws.

Cuba's new cooperative farming setup is spinning its wheels, he said. There is nothing new in the essential makeup.

INRA officials stress the need for a long period of control and direction over the cooperative farms. The majority of Cuban land workers are illiterate, or at the most have only two or three years of primary instruction. They have no knowledge of farm management or of accounting.

The government-established

INRA will furnish crop advice, agricultural agents, overseers to train in operating and repairing machinery. It will provide seed and irrigation where needed. It will provide seed and machinery loans, and credits for needed construction. And it will administer a system of primary education for children and adults.

Gradually, according to the government's own promise, the cooperatives will become independent.

Dr. Lasaga writes in La Quincena:

"If INRA controls the cooperatives as a means to educate the peon, so that they can manage by themselves instead of depending on state paternalism, then — even should there be a controlled economy — then the present state school will continue to disappear until Cuba develops a property-owning class."

Some social science specialists told me they are pessimistic about the future of the cooperatives. They fear the leftist tendencies of some of the INRA leadership — men who may seek to change the cooperatives into communist-type collectives.

But others, equally expert — like Father Ignacio Blain, editor of La Quincena — are optimistic about the outcome of the land reform program.

One young Catholic official of the Department of Agriculture said, in substance:

"We know that the communists would like to take credit for our land reform. They make more noise than their small numbers warrant. But we are equally certain that the Cuban will develop in freedom, and that the peon class will become part of the new property-owning middle class which we need for future prosperity."

Father Angel Rivas, Catholic student director in the Archdiocese of Santiago and famous rebel chaplain, said the people know that the Reds never cooperated with the Revolution until victory was certain.

"They will never forget that," he said, "and they won't let the Reds rob them of their new freedom and dignity."

Justice Review

Louvain (NC) — World Justice, new review of Louvain's Research Center for International Social Justice, has now come off the press.

"THE DILAPIDATED BUILDING ON THE CORNER . . . This was the description given of the Catholic Church at St. Anna (West Fort, Michur). It was at one time a testimony to the faith and sacrifice of the people, but the heavy rains and high winds have taken their toll. The building is now a shambles. But it is more than a destroyed building. It is a challenge to the parishioners. Under the leadership of the bishop and their missionary priests these good people gathered together and provided the materials, the labor and the money. At the present moment they are but \$2,000 short of the total needed. Can you possibly help them in their trial?"

WE HAVE OFTEN ASKED FOR MASS OFFERINGS . . . AND WE MUST CONTINUE TO ASK . . . THE NEED FOR THEM CONTINUES . . . YOUR SPIRITUAL NEED . . . THE MATERIAL NEEDS OF YOUR MISSIONARIES.

THE FEAST OF THE SEVEN DOLORS OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER (SEPTEMBER 15) brings to mind the difficulties and trials of the Blessed Mother while she was on earth. Her trials still continue, as she does in her union in every follower of her Divine Son, PAUL and ISAAC have thought and prayed over the sorrows of their Mother and they wish to help. It is their desire to become priests. They have done everything possible to attain their goal. At the present time, each boy must have a sponsor who will be willing to pay his necessary expenses of \$200 a year for the six year seminary course. Would you like to have "a priest in the family?"

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE THE POOR OF CHRIST AS YOUR GUESTS? YOU . . . YOU WILL FEED A REFUGEE FAMILY FOR A WEEK "OFT COMES CHRIST IN STRANGER'S GUISE."

THE SORROWS OF OUR LADY have inflamed the hearts of SISTER ANNIE and SISTER CHRISTINE. They wish to devote their lives to the service of the poor in Lebanon. They will give everything in their power. But this is not enough . . . each girl must have a sponsor who will pay her necessary expenses of \$150 a year for the two year period of novitiate training. Can you help . . . have you been moved by the sorrows of Our Lady?

CLEANING UP ODDS AND ENDS . . . WHY NOT TAKE LOOK AT YOUR WILL . . . HAVE YOU MENTIONED CATHOLIC NEAR EAST MISSIONS . . . WHY NOT HELP THE HOLY FATHER TODAY!

SCHOOL BELLS RING AND CHILDREN . . . at least so goes the old song. The beginning of school is an exciting time for children and parents everywhere, EXCEPT in the poverty and fear ridden lands of the Near East. \$5 will buy a GALABAYA (school suit) for a refugee child. Will you make one child happy?

YOUR MEMBERSHIP OFFERINGS are strength to the hands of the Holy Father in his work to help the poor of the Near East. Perhaps you would like to enroll yourself . . . your family . . . or those who have gone before you.

INDIVIDUAL ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP . . . \$1
FAMILY ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP . . . 5
INDIVIDUAL PERPETUAL MEMBERSHIP . . . 20
PERPETUAL FAMILY MEMBERSHIP . . . 109

GIVE TO WIN THE WORLD FOR CHRIST!

Near East Missions
FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN, President
Mgr. Peter P. Uehy, Nat'l Sec'y

Send all communications to:
CATHOLIC NEAR EAST WELFARE ASSOCIATION
480 Lexington Ave. or 46th St. New York 17, N.Y.



Little Black Madonna

Monserrat (RNS) — For 11 centuries Spanish Catholics have venerated this image of the Virgin and Child in the famous shrine of Our Lady of Monserrat located here in the mountain heights above Barcelona. Known as the "Little Black Madonna," the statue is in Monserrat's Benedictine Abbey, whose history also goes back many centuries. According to legend, the image was miraculously discovered among the rocks of Monserrat in the ninth century. It is 38 inches high and was fashioned of wood, now black with age.

Back Ties For Nikita

(Rocky Hill area Catholic War Veterans) voted this week to wear black ties during the Nikita Khrushchev visit to America.

Manchester (NC) — The Catholic War Veterans of New Hampshire have decided to wear black ties during the forthcoming visit of Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev to the United States.

The action was decided upon in a resolution adopted at a meeting of the CWV state board here, followed the adoption of similar resolution at the national convention of the organization in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Washington

Deals Charged In Development

Washington (RNS) — The National Conference of Catholic Charities sharply criticized here the agency responsible for remaking one of the most blighted slum areas in the nation's capital.

In a report prepared by the Rev. Robert G. Howes, a graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Conference charged that the city's Redevelopment Land Agency and Webb and Knapp, a New York building firm, had made a "sub rosa" agreement to eliminate low-cost housing in the redevelopment area.

THE WELFARE group said that it was asking the Urban Renewal Commission and the Housing and Home Finance Agency to investigate the charges which were denied by Joseph A. Remon, chairman of the Redevelopment Land Agency.

The Redevelopment Land Agency is responsible for rebuilding the southwest section

of Washington, an area bounded roughly by the Washington waterfront and the Capitol Building.

The Catholic group's report asserted that an "actual deal" has been made between the Agency and Webb and Knapp to do away with low-income housing in the area and called for a halt to all redevelopment here until the situation is thoroughly investigated.

Intended for dioceses throughout the country, the report said original plans for redeveloping the area would have provided housing for families with incomes too high for public housing, yet too low for non-subsidized housing.

"Concession after concession has been made to the redeveloper," the report stated. "The record has been punctuated liberally with ultimatums and veiled threats of withdrawal if such and such a point is not agreed to."

The criticisms contained in the report are similar to some made recently by civic groups here.

MIAMI BEACH (NC) — Father Gervase Brinkman, O.F.M., a chaplain at the Illinois State Penitentiary at Stateville, Ill., has been elected president of the 4,000-member American Correctional Association.

The association members include wardens, psychiatrists, chaplains, probation officers and other officials of United States correctional institutions.

Subsidiary organizations such as the American Correctional Chaplains' Association and the American Catholic Correctional Chaplains' Association, of which Father Brinkman was an organizer and first president, met in conjunction with the main sessions, designated as the 25th annual Congress of Correction

at the Illinois State Penitentiary today in St. Vincent O'Connell Hall, Stateville, Ill.

ATTENTION! IRISH AMERICANS
Read America's Foremost
IRISH MAGAZINE
Yearly subscription \$1.50
IRISH-AMERICAN RECORD
1170 Broadway New York, N.Y.

GARMELITE PRIESTS
• Men of Prayer
• Men of Action
• Men of Mary

Be a Carmelite! Mary's own Order is doing for the world. Write for information today to Fr. Simon O'Carroll, 128 South St., Astoria, N. Y.

McCurdy's it's brand new!

"NITEY NITE" NOW IN CHILDREN'S UNDERWEAR

You've known and loved their wonderful sleepwear . . . and now Nitey Nite is bringing you the same super quality in children's undies. These are the finest combed cotton knits . . . soft, absorbent and Perry-ized for shrink-resistance. They're cut for super comfort, reinforced for extra wear . . . have heat-resistant elastics, nylon reinforced ribbing! Come see them now at McCurdy's.

A. Boy's t-shirt with that famous Nitey Nite contour neck. White. 4, 6, 8, 79¢. Webbed elastic waist briefs, fly front. White. 4, 6, 8, 75¢

B. Girl's pilot-edge sleeveless shirt. White. 4-16, 75¢. Double crotch panties, pink or blue flower print on white. 4-16, 69¢.

C. Cap sleeve shirt for girls or boys. 4, 6, 8. White, 69¢. Double crotch white cotton knit panties. 4-16, 59¢.

McCurdy's Young Lingerie, Third Floor, Northgate and McCurdy's of Geneva

Come In! Write! Or phone BAKER 5-3000

PROTECT

• Your Family's Health
• Your Family Budget

with **NORTON Dry Cleaning**

Don't Be Confused There IS A Difference

If you've never tried NORTON, we invite you to do so. We feel sure that you will be more than satisfied. Expert care is used in cleaning your garments. Clear plastic bags, at no extra cost, let you see the sparkling difference. Fast 2 day service to please the young family with limited wardrobes. So many little things will please you about NORTON that you'll be amazed that such good cleaning and service are yours at modest budget prices. Stop in this week, and

SUIT DRESS 2 for \$1.19

★ SPECIALS THROUGH SATURDAY, SEPT. 12 ★

NORTON CLEANERS Cadet

There's A Convenient Store In Your Parish

- 420 NORTON ST.
- 761 GENESEE ST.
- 389 N. WINTON
- 416 JEFFERSON
- 1965 RIDGE RD. E.
- 463 LYLE AVE.
- 936 WINTON RD. S.
- 999 PLYMOUTH AVE. S.
- 1865 E. MAIN
- 1507 LAKE AVE.
- 3749 DEWEY AVE.
- 640 RIDGE RD. W.
- W. RIDGE CENTER
- SURBURAN PLAZA
- E. HENRIETTA
- 1099 CULVER RD.
- 936 MONROE AVE.