

Behind Iron Curtain

Tensions Smoulder

(Religious News Service)

The death of Alojzije Stepinac, Archbishop of Zagreb, Croatia, has underscored smoldering tensions between the Catholic Church and the Communist government in both Yugoslavia and Poland, which have been threatening to reach a dangerous pitch.

With the death of Cardinal Stepinac, who had been named to his native village of Krasic and barred from exercising his episcopal functions ever since his release from prison in 1951 after serving five years for alleged political offenses, one of the biggest sources of Church-State friction has been tragically eliminated.

Meanwhile, only the day before, the cardinal's nominal successor as head of the Conference of Bishops, Archbishop Josip Ujaskovic, was given a Belgrade award for his efforts toward "normalizing" Church-State relations.

These two developments have added a new twist to the situation in Yugoslavia, where the sentencing of six priests and two seminarians earlier this month to prison terms ranging from two and a half to seven years for alleged anti-state offenses had been accompanied by Communist threats of new restrictions on the activities of the Catholic clergy.

Reports from Poland meanwhile have been hardly less disturbing. Although Church and State authorities have agreed to hold talks on a number of disputed matters, these are potentially less explosive than the issue of government-backed birth control and legalized abortion, programs to which the Church is irreversibly opposed and in which no compromise can be expected.

Of more immediate concern has been the situation in Yugoslavia, where Communist attempts to stir up anti-Catholic feeling marked the trial concluded this past week at Opatjak in the predominantly Catholic region of Croatia.

THE TITO REGIME has appeared in recent years to be anxious to achieve "friendly" Church-State co-operation, even going to the extent of facilitating admission to the

threshold visits to Rome of several Yugoslav bishops. These visits, it was apparently hoped, would help to ease tensions arising from other things, from the continued detention of Cardinal Stepinac and the heavy taxation of village priests by local authorities.

However, hopes of making "peace" between the Church and the Tito regime have been dashed by the arrests of numerous priests and seminarians in various parts of the country and new pressures being brought on Catholic clergymen to join the government-sponsored priests' associations to which the hierarchy refuses to give formal recognition.

In a statement late last year, President Tito asserted that relations between the Church and the Communist government were "at present much better than in past years." But developments since then have belied this claim.

Toward the end of January, sharp attacks on the Church were made by official newspapers, including *Kommunist*, organ of the League of Communists, which charged that priests were misusing their offices for political purposes.

These attacks were sparked by the arrest and trial of Father Rudi Jerak, a Franciscan priest in Zagreb, who was accused along with 15 other defendants of plotting against the state by promoting a Croat nationalist movement.

It was alleged that Father Jerak, who was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment at hard labor by a district court, had organized terrorist and subversive activities and that these were conducted from two local monasteries. The prosecutor demanded to know why no Catholic authority had so far condemned the priest's activities or dissociated the Church from them.

The Communist-created furor over the case of Father Jerak just hardly subsided when the trial at Opatjak began. The eight defendants were accused of conducting hostile anti-state propaganda, fomenting religious and racial hatred between the Catholic Croats and the Orthodox Serbs, and trying to restore

Croatia as an independent state.

Government prosecutors charged that these "treasonable" activities were conducted at the diocesan seminary in Djakovica. They insisted that other church properties also were being used for similar purposes.

That these allegations seriously alarmed Church authorities was evidenced when Archbishop Josip Ujaskovic of Belgrade and other bishops appealed to state authorities not to close the Djakovica seminary in retaliation. Similar trials in the early postwar years had led to the closing of two Catholic seminaries in Rijeka and Zadar, which have still not been reopened.

It was subsequently reported that state authorities were planning no action against the Djakovica seminary. They were quoted as stating that the government would permit theological seminaries to remain open as long as they refrained from any hostile anti-state activities.

In some Catholic circles, it was felt that the Opatjak trial, regarded as one of the biggest in Yugoslav history involving priests accused of political offenses, might have been aimed indirectly at the new head of the Djakovica diocese. He is Bishop Stjepan Ujaskovic, who is reputed to have shown a stiff attitude toward the Tito regime and particularly toward priests belonging to the state-sponsored priests' associations.

In Poland, meanwhile, a secret meeting last month between Communist leader Wladyslaw Gomulka and Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, has paved the way for new sessions of the mixed Church-State Commission which was set up by the government late in 1956 following the liberation and restoration of the cardinal to his See.

The talks will deal with such problems as the taxation of church property and the Catholic University of Lublin, religious instruction in the state schools, and the government's insistence on the right to install government inspectors in parishes and to call up priests for military service.

Another important point at issue may concern Bishop



Coadjutor Archbishop Franjo Šeper of Zagreb has been named Apostolic Administrator of that See until Cardinal Stepinac's permanent successor is appointed. The archbishop served as celebrant at Cardinal Stepinac's Pontifical Requiem.

Czeslaw Kaszmarek of Kielce, who has been the target of bitter Communist attacks because of his criticism of the Warsaw regime. These attacks have been followed by the withdrawal of state "recognition" of the bishop and threats that priests who follow the bishop's "illegal directives" are liable to prosecution.

Whatever compromise was worked out in these matters, there will remain the thorny problem in the Church's fundamental opposition to the birth control programs now being conducted with the full backing of the Warsaw government in hopes of reducing the annual population increase of 100,000.

A parallel problem stems from the Church's equally adamant stand against a new Ministry of Health decree facilitating legal abortion "either for health or economic" reasons.

The birth control and abortion issues are a slow-burning fuse calculated to set off a major explosion, but so far the situation has gone no further than attacks on what the Communists call the Church's "obscure attitude."

Church authorities are concerned not merely over the moral implications of artificial birth control and legalized abortion in a predominantly Catholic country, but over thousands of obscure Catholic doctors and midwives to cooperate in the programs.

The magnitude of the challenges confronting the Church is reflected in a far-reaching program of birth control information agreed upon at the recent government-sponsored national congress of the Polish Planned Parenthood Society.

Plans call for setting up branches of the society in all factories, offices and other places of employment, as well as enrolling all teachers and other educational workers as active members of the organization. In addition, sex education is to be introduced in all primary and secondary schools.

More serious still, the congress approved plans that would obligate all doctors and midwives to cooperate in carrying out legalized abortions. Most of the Polish doctors are Catholic, and they have repeatedly been denounced by the Communist press for refusing to perform abortions.

It remains to be seen how far the government is prepared to go in forcing Catholic doctors to carry out such operations.

Volunteers Illegal

No Pay, No Coach

BY GLEN GORJANER

Jephia (NC) — A Knight of St. Gregory was banned from a high school basketball coach here because he was overzealous with his time and talent.

A. P. (Bos) Bowers donated many free hours as head coach of the crack basketball team (16 wins in 23 games) at McAuley High School, a private Catholic institution conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. His generosity won him the great neighborhood honor — but it also cost him the coaching post, because he was not paid for his services.

Bowers' assistant coach, Loren Olsen, was dismissed for the same reason.

The Missouri State High School Activities Association, with which McAuley is affiliated, ordered the dismissal. The association said a rule adopted in 1954 requires all coaches of member schools to draw a salary.

"I slipped up. I haven't been keeping up with the new regulations," said Sister Rose Marie, McAuley's principal, who took full blame for the dilemma. But she overcame her remorse in time to solve an immediate problem.

She pressed Father James B. Cooney, McAuley religion teacher, who is eligible under the association's rules, into action.

Penalty

For Parents

St. Paul — (RNS) — The world's population "explosion" has prompted a Minnesota Methodist commission to recommend a revised ministerial scale which would reduce a pastor's per child allowance with each succeeding addition to his family.

At present, the Conference Commission on Minimum Salary and Mutual Aid guarantees each married minister a minimum salary 25 per cent of the average salary paid in the conference, plus \$200 for each dependent child.

Under the proposed change, which will be acted on by the conference at its annual meeting here next June, the per child allowance would be \$200 for the first child, \$150 for the second, and so on down to \$50 for the sixth.

Seventh Baby On The House

Manchester (NC) — From now on, the seventh baby born in a family will be "on the house" at Sacred Heart Hospital here.

Mother Callista, hospital administrator, said that hospitalization for mothers and their seventh baby will be free. Sacred Heart is the first hospital in New Hampshire to make such an offer.

Mother Callista said maybe someday the institution will be financially able to give free hospitalization to mothers and their eighth, ninth and tenth babies.

N.Y. Cardinal

To Visit Munich

Manhattan (NC) — Cardinal Spellman of New York will celebrate Mass in Munich cathedral August 6 for American pilgrims and servicemen attending Munich's International Eucharistic Congress.

vice as coach. Then the McAuley for a local electric company. Warriors went out and whipped Mrs. Olsen is a personnel and Seneca High School 38-30 the night after the two unpaid coaches were dismissed.

"I SUPPOSE we will keep Father Cooney for the rest of the season, then engage a salaried coach next season," Sister Rose Marie said. "But it will be a financial drain on us."

Mr. Bowers is a die foreman Friday, February 19, 1960

GOD LOVE YOU!

By MOST REV. FULTON J. SHEEN

THE UNITED STATES is full of philanthropists and they are all well known. The United States is full of "charitists," but they are known only to God. What is the difference between a "philanthropist" and a "charitist"? A "philanthropist" gives for a human reason; a "charitist" gives for a Divine reason. What is given may aid the needy equal to it, but the motive is the same. But the big difference is in the motive of the giver, not in the amount of the gift.

Hence Our Lord said that a drink of cold water given in His Name would receive a reward a hundredfold. He also suggested that those who gave simply to be praised or to have a building named after them, "already have their reward." St. Paul, developing that idea, wrote that if a philanthropist emptied his wallet of stocks and bonds for the poor, but had no love of Christ in his heart, it would not add to his merit. "I may give all I have to feed the poor; I may give myself up to be burnt at the stake; if I lack charity, it goes for nothing."

SO MANY ARE Christians; so few have the spirit of Christ. So many think they acquit their obligation to religion when they give what they receive. The spirit, so often we hear "he is an outstanding Catholic," when all that is meant by this is that he gives away a lot of money. Our Lord, however, regards simply not just a refusal to give something, but as a refusal to accept something, namely, His Mind. His Will, His Spirit, His very life.

Ten years as National Director of the Holy Father's Society for the Propagation of the Faith have convinced us that no one loves the Missions unless he has the Spirit of Christ. One can love philanthropy without it; one can love gymnastics, scientific laboratories, \$100 a plate dinners, bronze plaques and stained glass windows with the family name, but one cannot love the spread of the Kingdom of God, the conversion of a heathen, the sanctification of an Ubu, the vocation of a Vietnamese, the catechizing of a Korean without a deep, burning love of Christ and Him Crucified. To all our readers who have the Spirit of Christ, we beg a prayer that more Catholics may live by that urging Passion, and above all that philanthropists may become "charitists." Our national average of 26¢ per Catholic to the Holy Father every year will increase not when we become richer, but when we become holier.

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