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The Difference A Year Makes

By GERARD SHERRY

Monterey — (NC) — The bulletin from Moscow that came over the wire services last week appeared routine.

It said: "Maj. Irving T. McDonald, assistant U.S. air attache, today was ordered to leave the Soviet Union on the charge of conduct unbecoming a military attache. The Russians accused McDonald of engaging in activities considered here as espionage."

It brought back memories to this editor of a far more cheerful Thanksgiving for the McDonalds last year. I was privileged to share it with them in their Moscow apartment.

THE McDONALDS, who hail from Provincetown, Mass., are one of the few American Catholic families under the spiritual care of Augustinian Father Louis Dion, the priest who ministers to the spiritual needs of U.S. Catholics in the Soviet capital.

On Nov. 21, last year, I arrived in Moscow, the first editor of an American Catholic newspaper to be granted such a visa. It was restricted to 10 days.

On the morning of Thanksgiving day, the McDonalds were among members of the Catholic colony who congregated before a small portable altar erected for the occasion at Spaso House, residence of the American ambassador.

A special Mass was offered by Father Dion to commemorate America's Thanksgiving at which I was privileged to be the server. Normally, Maj. McDonald takes his turn as server at the Mass, held each Sunday in Father Dion's Moscow apartment.

After the Mass, the McDonalds insisted that I return with them to their apartment in a Moscow suburb and enjoy a typical American Thanksgiving with turkey and all the trimmings.

The alternative was to join in a Thanksgiving party being held in the bachelor quarters of the embassy officials. I went home with the McDonalds. Father Dion was also a Thanksgiving guest.

I remember the Soviet security police who followed McDonald's car from the ambassador's house all the way to his apartment.

I remember going for a walk near the apartment with McDonald, his children and Father Dion, while Mrs. McDonald prepared the dinner. And all the while we walked, the Soviet police followed us at a respectable distance.

I remember, too, leaving the apartment at 10 o'clock at night to go to my hotel. In the courtyard were Russian security police, with their car engines all warmed up, read to go.

When we arrived in McDonald's car at Red Square below the ominous walls of the Kremlin, I was let out to cross the road through a subway to my hotel. I watched as McDonald's car continued along Red Square followed by the security police.

This surveillance is a 24-hour task, and no Western embassy official escapes it.

According to the news dispatches, the Russians accused McDonald of some form of espionage. To me, having been an-on-the-spot observer, it seems hardly likely that he could have done any — considering the 24-hour watch on him.

A more likely explanation is

Oklahoma City — (RNS) — Establishment of a Catholic student center on every Non-Catholic college and university campus in Oklahoma has been set as a long-range goal by Bishop Victor J. Reed of Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Bishop Reed said the project, if realized, would be "the main accomplishment of my episcopate in Oklahoma."

He described the Catholic student center expansion as "a necessity of long standing." An estimated 3,500 Catholic men and women attend Non-Catholic Colleges and universities in the state, the majority at the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, and Tulsa University.

The Church in Oklahoma presently operates Catholic Newman Clubs at these and six other educational institutions in the state, but Bishop Reed termed this a "bare skeleton program."

Dinner For The Carmelites

NEW YEAR'S DINNER for the Carmelite nuns will be provided by the Anthony Valenti family of St. Boniface Parish. Since the family cannot invite the nuns to dinner, they decided to bring the dinner to the nuns. The family is shown delivering fruit for the dinner, with the rest of the dinner to be delivered New Year's day. With Mr. and Mrs. Valenti are their children, Kathleen, Roslyn and Thomas.

Polish Resist Brainwash

Berlin — (NC) — Communist periodicals from Red-ruled Poland received here complain that young Poles are resisting government attempts to educate them into atheism.

The atheist journal, Argumenty, has reported that despite intensive antireligious propaganda, 78 per cent of college students admit to religious belief.

The atheist fortnightly, Fakty i Myśli, a leader in anti-religious propaganda in Poland, attributes youthful resistence to atheistic efforts to a powerful counterattack from the Church. It said:

"LENTEN RETREATS for young men are very precisely worked out with respect to method and argument. The Church knows how to exert pressure on human psychology . . . The Church is a great teacher . . . It organizes Lenten retreats for men and students with the motto: 'You have come from God, you must return to God.'"

Fakty i Mysli continued: "Catholic education is also fostered by various directives of the chancceries, by premarital instruction, by methods of activating children at Mass . . . The Church is a splendid organization, rich in tradition and tested methods of educational influence."

The Bishops of Poland attribute the resistance of Catholics to an energetic and apostolic laity.

They said (Sept. 4) in a pastoral letter: "Thank God that the great idea of lay apostleship is spreading more and more. Lay Catholics are increasingly conscious of their responsibility for the fate of the Church of God, and are increasingly standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the priests."

Italy Seeks Return Of Lax

Rome — (NC) — Italian Catholic Action has launched a year-long campaign to bring lax Catholics back to the practice of their Faith.

Agostino Maltrello said in announcing the campaign that a survey of 25,000 indifferent Catholics in 4,000 parishes indicated "a decline in spiritual and religious values." Most of those polled were communists and socialists who had been pushed into the leftist camp by economic or political pressure, or by their labor unions.

Faith Still Free In Laos Capital

Vientiane — (NC) — Religious life in the capital of this southeast Asian country, recently taken over by rebel troops, is normal.

But tension continues high following the August 9 take-over of the city by a rebel force demanding the ouster of U.S. military advisers and adoption of a neutralist policy in the cold war.

Roads leading out of the city are blocked and it is virtually impossible to enter or leave Vientiane. Food and money are scarce, but tanks and guns are plentiful.

ARMY UNITS led by a cabinet minister ousted by the rebels have threatened civil war. The units are headed by former Defense Minister Gen. Phoumi Nousavang.

Leaflets dropped here in Gen. Phoumi Nousavang's name accused the rebels of exposing Laos to the threat of communism.

Laos has long been plagued by procommunist guerrilla fighters, the Pathet Lao, who are partly supplied from neighboring communist North Vietnam. In June a Catholic missionary — Father Mario Borzaga, O.M.I., from Italy — disappeared in territory heavily infiltrated by the Pathet Lao. In January the Pathet Lao guerrillas killed a missionary priest in Pakse.

The rebellion here began when troops led by Capt. Kong Le ousted the government of Premier Tiao Somsanith. Premier Somsanith had followed a strong pro-Western and pro-U.S. policy.

The man backed by the rebels — Prince Tiao Souvanna Phouma, President of the Laotian National Assembly — was then named premier by Kind Savang Vathana and confirmed by the National Assembly here. The Prince has twice before served as Premier.

In 1957 he worked out a truce between the government and the pro-Red Pathet Lao guerrillas, led by his half-brother, Prince Souvanna Pong. The guerrilla leader was taken into a coalition government which collapsed in 1958. Later Prince Souvanna Vong was imprisoned here on charges of treason. He escaped from jail in June.

The new Premier has pledged that his government will again seek to end the conflict with the Pathet Lao forces and follow a neutralist foreign policy. Meanwhile, the Pathet Lao leaders have announced that they support the new government.

Laos, a former province of French Indo-China, became independent in 1949. The land-locked nation, about the size of Oregon, borders on Red China as well as communist North Vietnam. It has a population of about two million people, the great majority of whom are Buddhists. There are approximately 21,000 Catholics.

Sermon Series Against Bias

Durban, South Africa — (NC) — A series of sermons against race prejudice will be preached in all parishes of this archdiocese by order of Archbishop Denis Hurley, O.M.I., of Durban.

A similar series was preached in the Cape Town archdiocese in August. Later, others will be delivered in all Catholic churches in the country.

THE ANTI-BIAS sermons are to be preached at a time when the South African government is reportedly seeking to intensify its policy of apartheid — strict racial segregation.

The Cape Argus, United party daily published in Cape Town, has reported that Minister of Bantu (Negro) Administration and Development, M.D.C. de Wet Nel, has proposed an amendment of laws for Negroes in urban areas restricting their right to worship in churches in towns or villages.

Archbishop Hurley is sending outlines of the anti-prejudice sermons to parish priests weekly. They contain these points:

ALL MEMBERS of a community, regardless of race, language, color, religion, all who contribute to the welfare of the community, have a right to be treated with justice on all aspects of community life. In a statement in 1952, the South African hierarchy asserted that "justice demands that non-Europeans be permitted to evolve gradually towards full participation in the political, economic and cultural life of the country."

In politics, it is unjust to exclude from the right to vote and to stand for election any person who has the necessary qualifications.

In economic life it is unjust to restrict the opportunities of certain groups just because of color or race. It is unjust to pay insufficient wages.

In cultural life it is unjust to give education benefits and facilities to one race and deny them to another.

New Atheist Magazine

Vienna — (NC) — Hungarian communist leaders have started a new magazine on atheism as part of their effort to stamp out religious faith in that country.

The new magazine is called Vilagossag (Light). In announcing the new magazine the Hungarian newspaper Magyar Nemzet said its purpose was the "anchoring of dialectical materialism and scientific thought among the masses of the population, the creation of an effective body of criticism of all mystic - idealistic trends in philosophy, and the stamping out of such trends in the minds of the people in general."

Gift Brings Blessing

North Quincy, Mass. — (RNS) — It was a proud day in six-year-old Joey Barron's life when he stood before the whole student body of St. Ann's parochial school here to have a blessing bestowed upon him in the name of Pope John XXIII.

The story began when the Pope's 79th birthday on Nov. 25 was approaching and Joey's father, Deputy Fire Chief William Barron suggested: "You should make a little sacrifice and give him a present."

Joey promptly sat down, wrote the Pope a greting card and put it into an envelope along with his present — a stick of chewing gum.

Three days before Christmas, Joey got his thank-you from the Pope when Msgr. Walter J. Leach, pastor of St. Ann's church, read the Apostolic blessing sent by the Pontiff.

Martyred For Schools

Colombo — (RNS) — Two persons were killed when police opened fire on a crowd gathered at Paiyagiala, 25 miles south of here, to protest against the government's recent takeover of private schools, mostly Roman Catholic.

The shooting occurred when the crowd, assembled outside a Catholic church, defied police attemps to remove loudspeakers set up for the meeting.

Aid Appeal To Be Made In March

New York — (NC) — The 15th annual Catholic Bishops' Relief Fund appeal to support the work of Catholic Relief Services - National Catholic Welfare Conference will be conducted nationally March 5 to 12.

A minimum goal of five million dollars has been set for the appeal which provides basic support for the programs of CRS-NCWC, the U.S. Catholic overseas relief agency.

DURING THE past year Catholic Relief Services aided some 40 million needy people in more than 60 countries. For the fourth straight year its overseas shipments of clothing, medicine and U.S. surplus food totaled more than one billion pounds.

These shipments were valued at more than 90 million dollars.

March 12, closing day of the appeal, is Laetare Sunday. The fund appeal will be carried on at that time in the most of the nation's 16,500 parishes.

A 40-day Lenten campaign among children in Catholic parochial schools will begin on February 15, Ash Wednesday. In the past year the children's contributions, which go to aid needy children overseas, have totaled more than one million dollars.

Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati, chairman of the NCWC Administrative Board, announced the Relief Fund appeal in a letter to bishops.

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