

Missions Restricted

Little Freedom In Sudan

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The military government in the Sudan intends to stay in control and is apparently planning new restrictive measures against missionaries and thus against Sudanese Christians.

So I gathered from a recent interview with the Minister of Information and Labor, Maj. Gen. Mohamed Talaat Farid.

"We are reviewing everything concerning missions," he said. This statement, in conjunction with others, seems to imply that the current pressure against Christianity will be increased.

When I asked whether an announced revision of regulations about passports and immigration would affect the status of missionaries, the minister apparently preferred not to reply.

Maj. Gen. Talaat Farid is a member of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which took over the government of the Sudan in November, 1958. Headed by Gen. Ibrahim Abboud, who became Prime Minister, this council of seven generals suspended the transitional constitution and dissolved the elected Parliament. The Sudan had then been independent for 22 months.

"At that juncture the party system threatened to become fatal," Gen. Talaat Farid said.

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convicted of alleged offenses or expelled. The minister dialed on his telephone and spoke to somebody. Then he told me that I could see these documents only in the south. (I asked for them in the south, and they were not available.)

The general maintained that missions have "freedom to convert."

"A Moslem is free to become a Christian," he asserted. "I won't stop Christians from spreading their religion and I won't stop Moslems from taking the same steps."

(In practice, no Moslem can become a Christian without suffering heavy social and economic penalties. In the southern non-Moslem provinces the government hinders Christian conversion work, while throwing its full weight behind the Moslem drive to convert pagan tribes. The only Christian I know who turned Moslem was rewarded with an official job.)

"Some of the missionary people are undermining our security," the minister alleged. "They were involved in the events of August, 1955."

This was the mutiny of southern troops. The minister's charge is not supported by the published report of the official Commission of Inquiry into the Southern Sudan Disturbances or by any other evidence that I could find.

IS THERE any prospect of constitutional or representative government for the Sudan?

"Already a beginning has been made, in local government," the minister said. "District councils have been created in Darfur province (west-central). We have rendered Darfur clean and troublefree. Provincial councils will also be created. In establishing these councils we exclude undesirable."

A six-man committee is preparing "recommendations" for expanding local councils. Meanwhile every province has a military commander and a civilian administrator.

"We will proceed to form a national assembly at the appropriate time," the minister said.

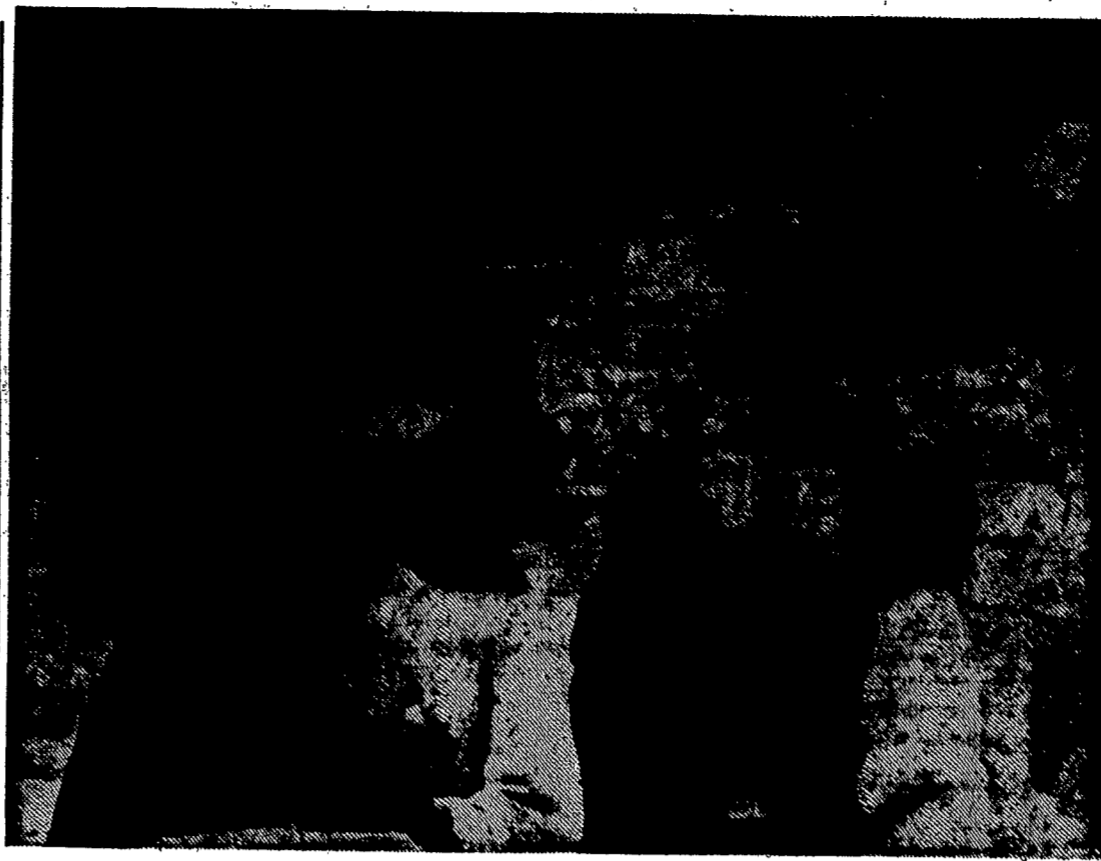
The only trade unions now permitted are "one each for the employees of each establishment," he explained. "For instance, there would be no union for textile workers in general, but there would be separate unions for each textile factory." These "unions" are tightly controlled by the state. There is virtually no freedom to strike and arbitration is compulsory.

(Since I interviewed Gen. Talaat Farid, three Sudanese leaders, all Moslems, have petitioned the government for a return to civilian parliamentary rule and the restoration of democratic liberties. The petition has been rejected.)

Birth Control Pills Cheap

Warsaw — (RNS) — Large-scale production of contraceptive pills has been started in Poland under the auspices of the Polish Planned Parenthood Society, the Warsaw Radio announced. It said the pills will be sold for "a few cents each."

The station said that meanwhile Communist youth organizations have been urged to push campaigns, especially in the rural areas, to acquaint women with the use of contraceptive drugs and other birth control devices.



Italian Orphans Build Own Home

Tivoli — (RNS) — Orphaned youths carry stones on their shoulders as new buildings are added to Italy's Boys' Town at Tivoli. Directing their efforts is Don Nello del Raso (left), a Roman Catholic priest who conceived the idea of the town and has sheltered homeless boys there since 1946. The priest plans to visit the U.S. shortly on a fund-raising tour. Browne, Elaine Klingler and Mary Dupre.

West Germany

Church Unions For Workers

Bonn — (NC) — Germany's Bishops have appealed to Catholic workers of join Catholic labor organizations.

The Bishops said in a statement issued here that first results of a study they have begun show that "Catholic workers' organizations have an irreplaceable and still growing significance for Catholic workers and their apostolic activities in the world of work."

"Nobody," they said, "should stand aside in this field of decisive importance for the future of the Church and society."

The Bishops called on Catholic labor groups to increase their efforts to instruct their members in the social teachings of the Church, saying: "They must take care that the number of responsible, thinking laymen who practice their faith and its social teachings in family and industrial life keeps growing."

The workers' attitude toward the Church, the Bishops continued, will be decisive in determining the future of the "Lord's kingdom on earth," and said:

"To win back the great number of workers alienated from the Church is the decisive and vital question for the Church in our nation. Moreover, it is the only way that the working class can fulfill its great tasks in the Church and society. It is a matter concerning everybody and demanding appreciation and cooperation from everybody."

Last year a new Association of Christian Trade Unions was established in Germany by representatives of 14 Christian-oriented labor groups. The association had 200,000 members, compared with the six million workers who belong to Germany's General Federation of Labor (DGB).

The association's foundation

was the latest step in the development of Christian labor organization in Germany, which began in 1894 with the establishment of the Christian Federation of Labor. The federation, which grew to 1,350,000 members, exercised considerable power until it was dissolved along with all other union groups by the nazis in 1933.

FOLLOWING World War II Christian labor organizations were not revived in Germany. In 1949 the unified General Federation of Labor was set up and included workers of all religious denominations and ideologies. Supposedly neutral in these matters, the DGB was actually strongly socialist.

At least 50 per cent of Germany's workers, and in certain industrial areas even 80 per cent, have a socialist orientation and no church affiliation. Thus the leading posts in the members unions and the federation were held by persons with a pronounced socialist mentality.

In 1952 the German hierarchy cautioned that neutrality

Dutch To Pray For Council

Utrecht — (RNS) — The Dutch Catholic hierarchy, in a joint pastoral letter read in churches throughout the country, stressed the need of all the faithful to contribute toward the success of the forthcoming Second Vatican Council "by prayer and reflection on their own faith and upon the present situation in which they live."

Noting especially the Council's concern with Christian unity, the bishops said "we Catholics have the task to render the Church a true living space in which our separated brethren can find the fulfillment of all that they glean from their own spirituality as a dearly beloved Christian legacy."

"Their spirituality," they said, "can, in turn, stimulate our own."

The bishops announced that, meanwhile, they had published a 30-page pamphlet on the nature, meaning and purpose of the Ecumenical Council.

In a chapter on the relation of the Kingdom of God and the Church, the bishops told the faithful that since the Church

and tolerance were the necessary bases for cooperation between Catholics and socialists within a unified federation.

Later a number of Catholic labor leaders felt that Catholic workers should not belong to an organization that fosters some doctrines opposed to the Church's social teachings and in 1955 set up a Christian labor organization.

Although some Protestant groups joined it, Protestant bishops publicly stated their objections to the organization.

The Catholic hierarchy in a joint statement said that there were good reasons for establishing Christian labor unions, but that Catholic workers were free to decide for themselves whether to join or to remain in the unified DGB.

In another chapter, the bishops listed among "serious problems of an internal character" confronting the Council "the adaptation of the apostolate of priests and laymen to changing conditions, the active participation of the faithful in the mysteries of the Church" and "many problems of morality which have to be studied in accordance with new data in the psychological, medical and social fields."

Papal Honor
Hartford, Conn. — (NC) — Msgr. Terrence P. McMahon, executive editor of the Catholic Transcript, newspaper of Connecticut's three dioceses, has been named a domestic prelate with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor.

Caution Given On Dialogues

Toledo — (RNS) — Roman Catholic Bishop George J. Rehring of Toledo has written to diocesan priests forbidding them to attend small group discussion meetings in the area with Protestant ministers.

He cited a provision of canon law which forbids meetings of priests with clergymen of other faiths for the purpose of discussing doctrinal matters without prior approval of the ordinary of the See.

He declared that "millions of good people live in the name 'Christian.' They are in deep love with Christ our Saviour... there can be no doubt about their good intentions and their sincerity... regretfully, they are unable to convince themselves that unity is not something to be created by human agencies 1,900 years after the ascension of Our Lord into Heaven, but that it is an essential property of the Church..."

Castro Called 'Dictator'

Rome — (RNS) — Osservatore Della Domenica, Vatican City weekly, branded Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba as a "dictator."

Vocation Crusade

Vatican City — (NC) — The Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities has called for a special campaign for vocations by Catholic Action organizations and all Catholic associations interested in vocations.

The Congregation issued an instruction for such a campaign addressed particularly to bishops and the heads of national and diocesan associations of laymen throughout the world. It recommended especially such actions as crusades of prayers, programs which aim toward formation of the mind in regard to the priesthood and vocations, and practical assistance to vocational organizations and

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