

### Schools' Seizure Deplored

Washington — (RNS)—William F. Johnson, president of the nine-million-member National Council of Catholic Men, has asked the U.S. State Department to protest to the Ceylon government about its nationalization of church schools and "repressive" action against religious minorities in the predominantly Buddhist country.

In letters to Secretary of State Dean Rusk and U.N. Ambassador Allan Stevenson, Mr. Johnson called for "appropriate representations" over the Ceylonese government's actions.

"During the past year," he wrote, "an exceptionally grave situation, directly and adversely affecting the Catholic citizens of that country. The events are well documented: what has been happening to basic human rights in Ceylon is a matter of public record."

Among the specific charges made by Mr. Johnson were the Ceylonese government's takeover of some 750 Catholic institutions "without compensation," and strict controls placed upon Christian religious personnel and foreign teachers of religion.



### Air-Cooled Sunday Mass

Milan — (RNS) — At a crude altar carved out of Alpine snow, an Italian priest is photographed at the Consecration of a Mass for a mountain-climbing party, composed mainly of school children. The priest, Father Mitta, who loves to climb mountains, led the group up to the peak of Mt. Gran Zebro in the Italian Alps.

### Vatican Asks Peace In Tunisia

Vatican City — (RNS) — A plea for "peaceful negotiations" which said the news from that end of the strife in Tunisia was "human and Christian ears."

It said that "as a consequence of this unforeseen struggle between a great nation, noble in its ancient Christian traditions, and a young community which only a few years ago attained self-government, one suddenly recalls those bonds of brotherhood which unite human beings naturally, making them all one big family."

## Tom-toms Spawn New Africa Sects

Johannesburg — (RNS) — Many parts of South Africa are witnessing a mushroom growth of native sects in which attempts to "Africanize" Christianity are blended with superstitious beliefs and old tribal customs.

One of the most common sights in all cities of the lower half of Africa is a gathering of African men and women in a vacant plot on Sunday afternoons. They are dressed in white, with colored sashes, and they shuffle or stamp their feet around a man beating a tom-tom.

The white robes, the crosses and stars worn by the leaders, the weird chanting and the bongo of the drums — all show visually the new "Africanization" of Christianity. It is a process increasing at an ever faster rate.

Sometimes these white-robed crowds gather round a tree, declared "holy" by the leader or "prophet" of the group. Others gather near cemeteries and in some places one can see a dozen groups at the same time.

But all these new sects have one thing in common — the tom-tom which pulses its way through every ceremony. It dates back from about 1930 when a preacher in the Northern Transvaal is said to have had a vision that he should use a tom-tom to praise the Lord. He did — and started a vogue which has not yet burned itself out.

A survey made last year in the industrial areas around Johannesburg shows that there are now 2,345 sects active there, of which only 91 are recognized by the government.

Today, their number probably exceeds 3,000, and in the coastal city of Durban, which is less industrialized, it has been found that more than half the African population belongs to non-to-heaven-like bird recognized sects.

Dr. J. C. de Ridder, a Johannesburg psychologist who has made a special study of unrecognized sects among Africans, says that they attract mostly the less sophisticated type of African to whom their "messages" and colorful ceremonies appeal.

The sects give the urban African in many parts of the continent a basic religion with Christian concepts, magical faith and traditional flavor. It is a middle road between the old and the new, between tribalism (which still has a great hold on urban Africans) and the simple faith of the mission churches.

"This Africanization movement is not anti-white, nor a protest against discrimination," Dr. de Ridder says. "It is a reversion to old tribal forms of worship of the ancestral spirits."

The most favored word among the sects is "Zion." Where it came from is not exactly known, but practically no new sect will enjoy popularity if it does not contain something or other about Zion. The later the sect has been founded the more elaborate its title. One of them is called "The Christian Catholic Ethiopian Universal Church of Jerusalem in Zion in South Africa," but some bear even longer titles.

The sects are also well-known for their so-called "izilimi" (Zulu for "gibberish") ceremonies during which the pro-

phet talks in "oracular language" to communicate with the angels (or ancestral spirits).

The "prophet" gives the replies to the congregation standing around in the open air, and they believe them to be divine messages. The language is only understandable to the prophet who speaks. No two prophets can understand each other's gibberish.

But if a white attends the ceremonies he will hear some strange English words interspersed in the gibberish, such as "ham and eggs," "give me a mixed grill" and the "four-thirty bus to Molefe." At these moments the prophets presumably suffer a temporary lapse in their inspiration.

Many of these ministers seem to have a fanatical faith in their own powers. Such a man was the Rev. Nkanyane of the Christian Catholic Church of Johannesburg who believed he would fly.

He prepared some crude "wings" of feathers and wood on the edge of a cliff. Starting to "fly" he plunged off the rocks and injured himself badly.

The growth of the sects is also particularly noticeable in Ghana, where the phenomenon is attributed to the social tensions which worshippers undergo in periods of rapid social changes, which characterize Africa today. As everywhere else in Africa, these cults in Ghana thrive especially where Africans have been most in contact with white culture.

Some professional Zionist prophets have been extremely successful — from their own financial point of view. "Chief" Lekhanyane, head of the Zion Christian Church, uses a tin bath for collections among his fanatic followers, to whom he grants dispensation to practice polygamy.

Now he owns the most luxurious fleet of American cars, a new "Jerusalem" with cathedral, bus services, shops and factories. And to make himself more impressive, he recently bought himself a 24 carat gold tie for use at his ceremonies.

#### Red Threat

Quite (NC) — Ecuador's Cardinal Archbishop de la Torre has warned Ecuador that international communism has set its sights on this country and other "weak zones" of Latin America.

### Interview With de Valera

(Continued from Page 1)

ers at Charleville, later Blackrock College near Dublin, and eventually a degree in Mathematical Science at the old Royal University.

Although President de Valera's name is almost always linked with the politics of Ireland, he spoke to me principally about education, emphasizing the importance of "fundamental thoroughness" in the basic subjects such as reading, writing, and arithmetic.

His mother's fabled prowess at spelling matches, served for him as an illustration of an early type of schooling which did not neglect the "fundamental thoroughness."

Earlier, in a used book store on Harcourt Street, I had come upon a reprint of this story which Monsignor Connors had so often loved to tell. It was the account of a Spelling Bee at Blessed Sacrament School Hall, when the fifty guests who had been invited to participate were gradually eliminated, and the one woman who had volunteered remained.

"Who was this simple-looking woman sitting alone on the stage?" She was no other than the mother of Eamon de Valera, President of the Irish Free State. At that time she was known to the members of the parish as Mrs. Charles Wheelwright, having married again after the death of her first husband.

Speaking fluently, the President reminisced about his early interests in both the classics and mathematics. When the time of decision drew near in his education, he selected mathematics as his field because there were few Catholic laymen teaching that subject, and the classics remained generally the province of the clergy.

His interest in literature has remained, although, as he observed, the circumstances of his life in the past and the condition of his eyesight now have not always permitted him to do the reading he would like.

Again he returned to the subject of the care which must be exacted in learning. The emphasis was upon clarity and accuracy rather than speed, and "fundamental thoroughness" rather than a superficial dexterity.

It was the old schoolteacher who was speaking — the man who had taught a half century ago at University College, Dublin, at Belvedere, at Clonliffe, at the Carysfort Training College for Teachers. It was the father, and grandfather, too, who was concerned with the education of his own — their Latin, and French, and mathematics.

Remote seemed such things as the discussion of the Common Market, or Irish trade, or the past forty-five years of Irish history, or even the longer past beyond that.

But twenty minutes fitted by. He arose — tall, dignified, erect. "Do give my regards to Monsignor Connors," he said, as he saw me to the door. "Mother was always very fond of him."

## Bring African Students To Catholic Colleges

Chicago — (RNS) — The National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice called here for more scholarship opportunities for Catholic Africans to study in Catholic colleges and universities. Of 1,800 African students in the U.S. last year, only 86 attended Catholic colleges, the conference reported.

In releasing a report on a survey of scholarship, exchange and service programs for African students in America, the conference charged that they are too often "a disorganized scramble." Some are poorly planned and present a "danger of sending home to Africa" young people thoroughly disillusioned with the U.S., it said.

Several young Africans, desiring to be engineers, are studying at non-accredited trade schools for radio and television repairmen because they obtained scholarships based on faulty information.

Finance is a major problem for the students, the report stated. "Room and board, scholarships, part-time jobs and summer work thus become an absolute necessity," it said. It also pointed out that jobs were difficult to find for an unskilled foreign student and that frequent racial discrimination in employment makes the problem even greater.

### Inner Six Study Pope

Strasbourg — (RNS) — The Parliamentary Assembly of the six-nation European Economic Community voted here to distribute the part of Pope John XXIII's encyclical, Mater et Magistra, which deals with relations between economically developed and underdeveloped countries.

HE SAID that "the future leaders of Africa are here in our own cities" and appealed for better treatment of them.

The survey reported these conditions were found among the 1,800 African students in America.

One student lost a year's college credit because he couldn't pay his school bills and is unsuccessfully looking for a summer job in Chicago.

A girl from Kenya sought to study biology but the scholarship she was given took her to a small college without an accredited biology department.

Distribution is to be done by the parliament's Commission for Cooperation with Underdeveloped Countries.

The parliament's decision was based on a proposal submitted by an Italian member of the commission. The European Economic Community embraces Luxembourg, France, West Germany, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands.

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