

Report Aled for Justice

... (RNS) — The Catholic South African bishops' Conference in a new much-awaited official declaration, again condemned the government's apartheid (racial segregation) policy.

... However, initial reaction to the bishops' statement, among Catholics and others was one of disappointment.

... This resulted from the un-... (RNS) — The Catholic South African bishops' Conference in a new much-awaited official declaration, again condemned the government's apartheid (racial segregation) policy.

... In many quarters it had been expected that the bishops would make a detailed and ringing denunciation of racism — so they have done in the past — especially in view of a recent statement by Archbishop Whelan in Durban, Natal, in which he stressed that "there is no teaching in the Church opposing the idea of a state composed of a number of national or racial groups maintained in their separate and distinct identity by the state whereof they form a part."

... Issued after a plenary session here — in which Archbishop Whelan's statement was thoroughly discussed behind closed doors — the statement by the Bishops' Conference read:

"THE OFFICIAL policy of the South Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference in respect to race relations is that set out in previous statements of the Conference, namely in 1932, 1937, 1940 and 1943.

"The Conference recognized the complex situation in South Africa. The bishops are concerned that law and order should be maintained, that justice be done to all groups and persons and that the spirit of charity should animate all relationships."

"Statements issued by individual bishops are made on their own responsibility," the Conference added, "this being the only apparent reference to Archbishop Whelan's position."

"Some observers here said the brevity of the bishops' statement was 'deceptive.'"

They explained, that in referring to their previous pronouncements the bishops had quietly "shot down" Archbishop Whelan's declaration with an earlier Conference statement which was unequivocal in opposition to apartheid, and particularly the attendant racial effects.

The same observers stressed that in pointing out that statements by individual bishops are made on their own responsibility, the Conference had settled officially the question whether Archbishop Whelan spoke on behalf of the Church.

Left unaid by the Conference.

Fanny Hill Book Ruled Obscene

New York — (RNS) — The State Supreme Court's Appellate Division ruled, 3 to 2, that "Fanny Hill," the 18th century novel of a London prostitute, was obscene and banned its New York publisher from distributing the book.

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Children's Aims for Lent

Children at Catholic school show their Lenten aims today to Monsignor John B. Mahoney, pastor, who is diocesan director of the Bishop's Relief Fund for the world's needy millions. Collections in parish churches of the United States this Sunday will replenish depleted treasury to continue the Catholic Church's worldwide program of mercy to the poor. Children in photo are third graders Margo Witzack, Melissa Rodgers and Mary Villanti.

Christians Flee Pakistan

Taru, India — (NC) — Some 35,000 Christian refugees from Pakistan have arrived in India claiming they had to flee their country because of religious intolerance and economic pressure by its Muslim majority.

About 20,000 of the refugees are Catholics. The rest are mainly Baptists. Some estimates put the total number of refugees as high as 60,000.

The Christian exodus is taking place along the heavily populated border area between the Mysore District of East Pakistan and the Garo Hills of northeastern India's Assam state.

MOST REFUGEES are landowners who reported that they were driven from their homes by armed Muslims who took their cattle and their crops. Their flight follows religious riots in East Pakistan between Muslims and Hindus in January during which a U.S. priest — Father Richard Novak, C.S.C., of Johnstown, Pa. — was killed.

The refugees belong mainly to the Gany tribe, which inhabits both sides of the 100-mile-long frontier region.

In Pakistan, Communications Minister Abdul Suber Khan denied (Feb. 28) that there had been a mass departure of Christians from his nation. In an interview in Karachi, West Pakistan, he said reports on the number of refugees were exaggerated and false. He accused India of using unfair methods to stimulate the emigration of minority groups from East Pakistan.

But reports from Catholic missionaries in the East Pakistan border area stated that departures have been heavy from their seven major mission stations there. All Catholics, they said, have left one mission. Another mission has lost four-fifths of its people. Still another has lost one-half. In one mission, there have been no departures, but missionaries reported that the people there are getting ready to flee.

(Meanwhile, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Z. A. Bhutto said in Dacca, capital of East Pakistan, that about 10,000 Christians had fled to the Garo Hills. He declared that Pakistan wants them to return. He denied what he called a "malicious story" from India that 50,000 Christian refugees had crossed the frontier because of Muslim persecution.)

Peking Shadow Seen in Congo

Leopoldville — (NC) — The pattern is always the same in terror-ridden Kwilu province of the Congo — total destruction, and it is always explained in the same phrase by the survivors: "We are going to destroy all that was built by the whites. We want you to leave us to settle our political problems here. When you are gone and everything is destroyed, people from Peking and Moscow will come and bring us food, jobs and all the things we need. You can come back later if we have need of you."

A bishop whose priests have repeatedly heard this explanation and who has seen the accompanying destruction is nevertheless determined to return soon to Kwilu and rebuild the mission there.

Bishop Rene Toussaint, O.M.I., of Iloilo lost 26 of 30 missions to the rebel bands led by former Congolese cabinet minister Pierre Mulele. Hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of church, hospital and school buildings, equipment and vehicles were either destroyed or made useless. The bishop's own home at Iloilo was wrecked, the rebels breaking all windows and setting it afire.

But the Belgian-born prelate, a youthful 43, held a telegram from the British non-sectarian relief organization, the Oxford Committee for African Relief, and said: "My priests will be indeed heartened by this gift of two trucks, the first sign of renewal."

Bishop Toussaint told how the rebels entered one of his missions, where three priests were murdered.

"At Kilembé, they were taken until a certain signal was given, from whatever source, to start pillaging. Somehow the villagers know the night before they would no longer have jobs the next day. The mission workers all came to ask for their pay just before the trouble began. One of the priests at Kilembé escaped because he was in town and knew nothing of the massacre until word was brought to him. The nuns at Kilembé locked themselves in their home nearby and completely escaped the terrorists' attack."

HE HAD warm praise for the American Protestant missionaries at Mukedi, after the Kilembé tragedy. "The nuns went to Mukedi, 18 miles away. In spite of the danger, the missionaries came. Immediately, rescued the Sisters, and radioed to Kikwit for an airplane to evacuate them from Mukedi."

The province of Kwilu is one of the most densely populated areas of the entire Congo, and the biggest producer of palm oil in the country. Over 450,000 persons live within an area of 60,000 square miles and in the disease of Idi alone there are 175,000 Catholics. The four missions now operating in the old province of Kasai are sparsely settled.

The school children here also felt the enormity of the disaster. Over 1,000 primary school and over 4000 secondary students of both sexes now have no place to go. All lay and religious teachers have left. Hospitals at Iloilo, Mukedi, and Iloilo had to be abandoned.

Pope Names Two Bishops

Washington — (NC) — Pope Paul VI has named two new U.S. bishops. They are: Edgar Thomas A. Donohue, rector of St. Joseph's Seminary, Yonkers, N.Y., appointed Bishop of Ogdensburg and Edgar Vincent M. Leonard, vicar general and chancellor of the Pittsburgh archdiocese, named to be Auxiliary Bishop there.

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