

Can The Kremlin Break its Bond With Atheism?

An ancient prophecy says someday the lion and the lamb will lie down together.

Cynics agree — but predict the lamb will be inside the lion.

Communism has been the beast for Christians of the twentieth century.

The Church has understandably reacted by cautioning its members from any contact with the lethal monster.

But if the beast changes, can't we change too?

This is the cautious question raised recently by Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright, head of the Foreign Relations Committee. "We are confronted with a complex and fluid situation and we are not adapting ourselves to it," he said.

The Kremlin is still anxious to export its product — Cuba is nearby evidence of that — but Communism under Nikita Khrushchev is certainly different from Communism under Josef Stalin.

The meager affluence and limited freedom behind the Iron Curtain today convinces people there that it is better to be Red than dead, a choice frequently made quite to the contrary a generation ago.

Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan on a recent fact-finding tour of eastern Europe for the Vatican's Secretariat for Unity reported that the picture isn't all black, that faith has survived and that Communist governments have improved the living conditions of people to an extent free governments there never did.

But whatever its changes or its accomplishments, Communism remains militantly atheistic.

Is there the possibility of a change here too? Can we think the unthinkable and hope Communism might someday drop its war against God?

One man who thinks it is possible is the energetic mayor of Florence, Italy, Franciscan Tertiary Giorgio La Pira.

Reading of a new campaign against religion in Russia, La Pira promptly penned a letter to Khrushchev in Moscow:

"This new anti-religion offensive must certainly be the work of the Stalinists," La Pira wrote. "They are your sworn enemies and the enemies of peaceful coexistence."

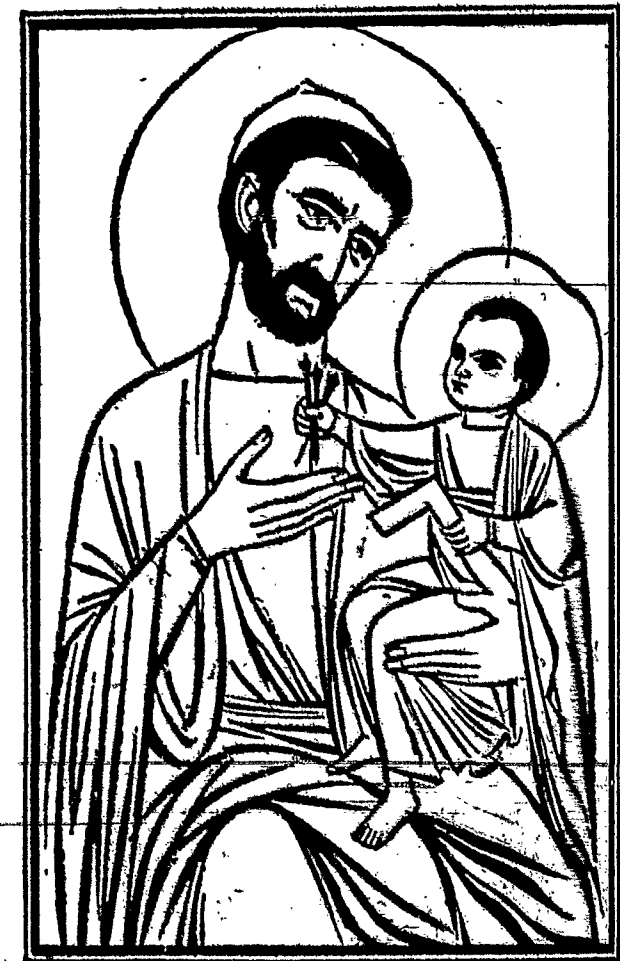
"A few days ago while addressing an international youth congress in Florence, I had this to say: 'Atheism, sponsored by a government is not only a pitiful sign of discrimination, of intolerance and of oppression, but it is also a sign of cultural and political infancy. It is an admission of scientific and historical senility. Atheism is one of the residues of bourgeois capitalism and atheism of the 19th century. This latest ruse must be the last gasp of Stalinism which tried so brutally, as you well know, to rob the Russian people of their vital religious and cultural heritage.'"

"This is the reason why I write you Mr. Khrushchev. I am mightily concerned about the negative and sad effects of this new offensive of atheism. You know how I admire you. Permit me, therefore, in this spirit of admiration, for the good of people and in the name of peace to say to you in all sincerity:

"Get rid of this cadaver of Stalin. This fetid body of atheism is polluting the free air. Bury it deep and forever because the Russians are sick of its stench. Your love for your people which led you to uproot Stalinism will encourage you to throw out atheism too."

"In so doing you will bring about the greatest political and spiritual revolution of the age."

Is La Pira really thinking the unthinkable? Do we not pray, even daily, that Russia may be converted? Despite the cynics, we have confidence that great hopes can still be fulfilled.



Patron of China

St. Joseph, a member of the royal family of David, was leading the obscure life of a village carpenter when God chose him to be the husband of the Blessed Virgin and the foster father of the Incarnate Word. Joseph was a man of great silence, scripture records no word spoken by him. He lived deep in the mystery of Jesus and Mary. Patron of his foster son's Holy Church, he guards and protects it as he did his Holy Founder. Pope John XXIII ordered the insertion of his name in the Canon of the Mass and declared him the patron of the Second Vatican Council. St. Joseph is also patron of Belgium and Canada.

How Pope Pius Helped to Save 500 Jews

By JAMES FLANNERY

Cleveland — (NC) — The story of how Pope Pius XII intervened to save the lives of nearly 500 Jews during World War II was told here by a Jewish merchant who was one of those aided by the Pope's action.

Cleveland furniture dealer Herman Haskovic telephoned the Universal Bulletin, Cleveland diocesan newspaper, to tell his story on his own initiative. "I was told," he said, "that the Pope wouldn't be here today."

Haskovic said that when he heard about the controversial play "The Deputy" which charges that Pope Pius XII allowed indifference to the fate of Jews suffering persecution, "I felt it was unfair to a person who had done so much for others."

"If he were alive, he could defend himself. Being that he is not, at least I could tell what he did for me," Haskovic said. Another Cleveland businessman, travel bureau manager Marcel Friedman, was one of the 500 Jews in the party that included Haskovic. He confirmed Haskovic's account of the incident.

HERE IS the story: In 1940 Haskovic, now 45,

was one of 500 Jews in Slovakia who joined in a plan to escape growing Nazi persecution by going to Palestine, then under British control.

They rented a river boat, a sidewheel steamer, used for shipping cattle, and hired a captain — who turned out to be a drug addict. "That was the best you could expect for a job like this," Haskovic explained.

The plan was to go to Sullina in Rumania, near the mouth of the Danube River on the Black Sea, and there board a larger ship for the rest of the voyage. The 500 Jews — men, women and children — set sail from Bratislava, Slovakia, on June 15, 1940.

The trip to Sullina was supposed to take four days. Four months later they were still on the river boat, sleeping on planks, often near starvation, rarely with enough water, and with no radio communications.

Authorities delayed them for weeks in Hungary and Yugoslavia. Each time the Jewish community sent them food and fuel. At one point, when Rumanians blocked their passage, a Bulgarian bishop — probably Orthodox — sent them a small boat full of food.

When they reached Sullina, the expected ship wasn't there.

But there was nowhere to go but forward. Haskovic refused the day during which the shallow-draft river boat struggled south on the Black Sea.

It was like a box of matches, each person had to make a certain position because if 10 persons moved to one place at one time, it could throw the boat off balance. We were breathing along with the boat. And we were all seamen.

AT ISTANBUL, a police boat kept them out of the harbor and refused to supply food or water. The 500 Jews went on through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles to the Aegean Sea.

They got help at a Greek island and then stayed for three months at the Greek port of Piraeus, where their boat was repaired.

A few days after their ship left Piraeus, the boiler exploded and they drifted for several hours until the ship hit a rock near a small island and sank.

The Jews swam and waded to shore. They picked up their waders and ate raw fish. Six young men set out in a small boat salvaged from the wreck, looking for help.

They drifted in the Mediterranean and eventually were reported picked up by the British. Meanwhile an Italian destroyer

picked up the other survivors, who had been on the island 11 days, and took them to Rhodes, where a prison camp had been established.

On Rhodes, 13 or 14 died of illness the first two weeks. But Haskovic said the Italians did their best to make life bearable. However, Nazi air crews stationed nearby learned about them, and the Jews began to fear for their lives.

Some of the Jews managed to make contact with their families in Slovakia. A man in Bratislava was able to get his son out of the Rhodes camp and into Switzerland.

ON HIS WAY north the released man stopped in Rome and told a Vatican official about his fellow prisoners.

He was given an audience with Pope Pius XII who listened intently to his story. The papal secretary told him he would intervene with the Italian government.

Two weeks later the Jews were transferred from Rhodes to the relative safety of a camp on the mainland, in Calabria, where they stayed until the Allies invaded Italy.

Again, Haskovic said, the Church came to their rescue. As the Allies pounded the Germans north, fears arose that the Nazis

would slaughter the Jews in camps and prisons before retreating.

But the chaplain in the camp persuaded the guards to let the Jews out before the retreating Nazis reached the area. The Jews hid for three days in a forest, then returned to the camp which by then was under Allied control.

Haskovic and other Jews in the group joined the British Army's Czechoslovak Brigade and fought with a tank unit in the liberation of Europe. He was wounded in France. After the war, he came to the U.S.

He does not feel bitterness toward anyone, including the Germans. He speaks with understanding of a people who were misled, but he added:

"Many people in many places failed to help the Jews. It is not right to single out one leader, the Pope, for something which was not under his control. I owe as much, I thought I should tell people."

In volunteering his story to the Universal Bulletin, Haskovic set one condition: "Don't mention the name or address of my store. People will think I'm doing this for advertising. But that's not the reason. If it weren't for the Pope, I wouldn't be here today."

Is there a Limit to the Growth of Catholic Schools?

Q. I'd like to start first with some statistics about Catholic parochial schools in America. How extensive are they — how many young people attend, what is the approximate worth of the school plant, how much does it cost to run?

A. The parochial school population runs just under six million. Its \$7,000,000,000 approximately. There are close to 1,000 elementary schools and about 2,300 secondary. The population in the secondary schools runs a little over a million.

This means that about one out of seven children in the United States is in a Catholic parochial school.

The worth of the plant is a question to which I would have no particular answer. We guess it is about \$6,000,000,000. But this figure does not reflect any scientific estimate. The support of parochial schools is with the parish, and parish books, parish maintenance, and everything else is intermingled.

The National Catholic Educational Association has now published a uniform accounting procedure manual for all Catholic schools. But the question is, can we get the pastors, the principals, and the superintendents to use it.

Q. What about operating costs of this education? Who bears these?

A. The cost is borne mainly by the parishes, except in instances at the secondary level, where we do have rather high tuition in certain areas. For example, in Chicago we have tuition ranging from \$150 to \$300 a year on the secondary level. The elementary schools either have a fairly low tuition — \$15 or \$20 — or nothing. The parishes, out of their ordinary income, support the schools, which means that the people support the schools. There is no such thing in most areas as high tuition, except on secondary level, and that is spotty.

In my own diocese (Marquette, Mich.), it happens that tuition on the secondary level is \$80 a year, which is not a great deal. This means that the parishes then have to compensate for the difference in cost.

Obviously we operate at a lower cost than public education. The major reason for this is that we have contributed services. The sisters, the priests, and the brothers contribute their services for little or nothing. This means that they are helping to support the schools.

Q. What about the costs of operating these schools? How much does it cost?

A. You mean, per child?

Q. I mean the whole amount.

A. The United States Office of Education came up with a figure of around \$2,500,000,000 a year. Now where they got that figure, I have no idea. We hope that maybe the Carnegie study at the University of Notre Dame will come up with some figures.

Q. If we assume that it costs roughly two and a half billion dollars to run the Catholic parochial schools, then if there were no parochial schools this amount would be paid for out of the public treasury?

A. Yes, but it would be more than that, because you would not have the contributed services. You would have to take the average cost of public schooling in the United States, which for the twelve-year span would be \$352 per year per pupil. Now our estimate on per pupil cost for the elementary level runs between \$80 and \$90; and on the secondary level runs around \$150.

Of course, if our six million young people were to go into

The American parochial schools — long quietly taken for granted — are now a frequent topic for debate. Should federal funds aid pupils who attend them? ... what good do they do the six million Catholic children who attend public schools? ... where will pastors get money and teachers enough to cope with soaring parochial school enrollments?

The Rochester Diocese has declared a moratorium on new school construction until there are nuns enough to staff the classrooms. The Cincinnati archdiocese last month announced its first grades would be closed and then a week later the Milwaukee archdiocese said the first two grades would be cancelled.

How big is the U.S. Catholic school system? How big can it grow in the next few years?

In this interview by Howard Langer of Scholastic Teacher magazine, Monsignor O'Neill C. D'Amour, associate secretary of the National Catholic Educational Association, gives his views on these questions.

the public schools, they would have to be figured at the \$352 level. In addition, all these pupils we do have would have to be replaced out of public funds.

Q. In several states, there's some aid to parochial schools. For example, in New Jersey, there's a transportation law. In some instances, in other states, there is some allowance for textbooks. About what percentage of the school budgets in these areas would be involved?

A. It would be very small because transportation, although it is a considerable item, is not the major expending in school costs. In most instances the transportation of non-public school children is along the same routes used by the public schools, and only when there is room in a public school bus.

There are two exceptions to this.

One is in the State of New York, which has compulsory legislation, and the other is the State of Michigan, which has legislation regarding transportation. In Michigan the cost is somewhat less than that of New York but is still quite satisfactory.

In one of our Catholic schools in Michigan we did transport our own kids, and we figured around \$20 per child a year about average. But we were transporting quite a distance.

Q. How old is parochial school education in the United States? About when did it start and when did it really begin to grow?

A. We can trace it back to around 1790. It was right after the Revolution, but really began to grow only in the late 19th century when immigration mounted exceedingly right after the Civil War. Large numbers of Catholics came in.

Then the public school system really became organized not as the secular public school system that we know today, but as a Protestant public school system. It was actually intended, first of all, to eliminate the sectarian differences in Protestantism, at least to mitigate them, and also to take the immigrant Catholics and eliminate

the "heathenish" superstitions.

Then the Catholics found a need to protect themselves by beginning the Catholic parochial school system. And it has grown rapidly since. The greatest spur has come, since the Second World War, though.

Q. Why is it that there was such a boom in parochial school education following World War II?

A. I think there are two reasons for the phenomenal growth. One, the Catholic people moved into new social and economic levels in our society. Prior to the war, the Catholic population mainly was in the lower socio-economic group and therefore did not have a great deal of money.

Secondly, for the first time a large number of Catholics who had had parochial education now had the opportunity to choose the kind of education they wanted for their children. They immediately chose the parochial school idea.

Thirdly, I think the war brought about a real feeling on their part of a need for spiritual education, religious education, as opposed to one completely secular.

Q. What problems come up when you compete with the public school system — which is a secular one?

A. Well, problem number one, of course, is education. The NCEA has said a number of times that one reason for the failure of the federal aid bill is because of the opposition of parochial school educators who want their share of it. What is the official stand of NCEA on this whole question?

A. First of all, we have no particular stand on federal aid as such. Federal aid to education is an economic and political matter that the nation must decide on that basis.

However, we do feel that if federal aid is granted, if a federal aid bill goes through, it should provide justice for all children in the country. It should be realized that most state constitutions were adopted during the days of the AEA, the National Anti-Catholic Education Association, and were basically anti-Catholic constitutions. The system that has resulted is an injustice to these children.

We feel that it's new pattern is to develop and massive injections of federal funds are to take place, that it almost becomes a question of the survival of the Catholic parochial school system in American education. Now our schools can survive by raising tuitions, but that means schools only for the wealthy and we do not feel this is in the American tradition.

Q. One of the proposals that has been suggested as a possible alternative to the federal aid issue is shared time. Can

you explain to me exactly what this is and how it would work?

A. Shared time, of course, according to Dr. Henry L. Stearns who originally wrote concerning it, is a recognition in fact and in principle of the philosophy that acknowledges the rights of family, church, and state in education.

Editor's Note: Dr. Stearns wrote about shared time while Superintendent of Schools in Englewood, N.J. He is now chairman of the division of education, Board of National Missions, United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

What it would mean would be the family could choose how much time would be spent in a church-related school and how much time in a secular school. Try to think of a school plant as being a campus. In a center would be the public, tax-supported secular school. This school would teach all things for those who wanted that type of education. For those who wanted a partly religious education, the parents would choose to have the social studies, literature, religion, and one of the sciences under religious auspices.

There would be another school side by side with the public school and the child would spend part-time in each. The religiously oriented school would be supported completely by the church.

Now for us this offers a very great compromise. It is a definite compromise, because we believe in a totally integrated school program with religion at the core. However, we have been willing to look at it, because Protestants, especially, have felt that they had to find a means of providing a religious education for their children since this is impossible within the secular school.

There are two hundred and some instances of such programs going on in the United States that we know of, and we only know because the NCEA ran a survey. Actually what I would call shared time exists in only two places, one is Cheboygan, Michigan, and the other is Southfield, Michigan, outside of Detroit.

I feel that this has nothing to do with the national pattern, that it's something that can be done on a community level if the community is amenable. If the structure of the community is such, for example, in Cheboygan it evidently would be educationally uneconomical to have two high schools. But they can have a high school and a half, and it's working out quite well there.

Q. Do you think that the Supreme Court decision on the matter of prayer has changed the climate of public opinion regarding the question of federal aid to parochial schools?

A. It's difficult to say. From the comments made in the recent conference at Columbus under the auspices of the National Council of Churches, I would say yes. It appears that the Non-Catholic American is becoming more and more concerned over religious education.

However, I think more than the Supreme Court decision, the federal aid debates during the last three or four years have made the non-Catholic American aware of the injustice that is being done.

Americans basically are a fair-minded people, and they look at their Catholic neighbor and they say, "Now this isn't fair. We should do something about it." I think this is changing the climate much more than the Supreme Court decision.

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