

An End to Centuries of Anguish

Rap Reds, Prelate Asks Council

Rome — (RNS)—More than 450 Fathers of the Second Vatican Council have signed a petition asking Vatican II to promulgate a specific statement condemning communism, it was reported here.

The action was said to have been spurred by the fact that while Schema 13 (on the Church in the Modern World) contains a passage analyzing and deploring various forms of modern atheism, an explanatory note said the schema did not specifically use the word communism because the document was non-political in scope.

Bishop Paul Hnilica, S.J., a member of the Council's Administrative Commission, was said to have told 800 bishops who received copies of the petition that "future generations will deplore the Council if it fails to speak out on Communism." Bishop Hnilica is from Communist-controlled Czechoslovakia, where he was secretly consecrated in 1964 while in a concentration camp. He was later expelled from the country.

The petition reportedly was sponsored by Bishop of Luigi Carli of Segni, Italy, who is rated among the most conservative Council Fathers.

(Continued from Page 4) application of Old Testament denunciations to 4th century Jews, etc.) Father Flannery is constrained to say:

"Christian as well as Jew can only deplore these sermons. They represent a grave lapse from Christian charity that cannot be condoned. In the eye of the historian, Chrysostom cannot be spared his niche in pantheon of anti-Semitism." (Page 49)

Even more important, the emotional tenor of these 4th century outbursts was to set a pattern that kept breaking out down through the years ahead, Father Flannery states: "A generalized popular hatred of the Jew was now rapidly under way; and... the tone of Chrysostom's diatribe found an echo in and out of the Church for centuries." (P. 49)

With the Church and State as closely allied as they were after Constantine, civil laws were enacted which severely disadvantaged the Jews. The Codex Theodosianus, a 5th century legal document, barred the Jews from the army and public administrative posts. Marriages to Jews were prohibited under the penalty of death.

It was in the fourth century, that the notion of "a divine curse" upon Jews for their role in the death of Christ, began to emerge strongly. St. John Chrysostom, much impressed by the failure of Julian the Apostate to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem in 363, interpreted the event as a divine intervention and a sign of perpetual rejection of the Jews.

"After Chrysostom," Father Flannery notes, "the theme of deicidal punishment gained wider currency, and although never accepted as a dogmatic tradition in the Church, seriously rivaled the primary and Pauline tradition of divine forgiveness of Israel's sin." (P. 62)

Bad as the immediate effects of this 4th century ideology were, it was in its long-range results that it proved most damaging. As Father Flannery notes:

"For centuries it was to supply a pseudo-theological basis

for myriad oppressions and degradations of the Jews."

In the Dark Ages
The Dark Ages—roughly from the 5th to the 11th centuries—were a chaotic period in Europe, and Christian treatment of the Jews varied greatly during the time. From reasonably good to ghastly. There was much mob violence during this period, and where the Jews were numerous, their own mobs often rose against Christians in bloody reprisals. But, generally outnumbered, their attempts at forceful defense of their rights were doomed from the start.

FORCED BAPTISMS of the Jews became a recurring evil of this period, despite the Church's official prohibitions against such practices. But to the Roman emperors, convinced of the necessity of religious and cultural unity, forced baptisms were one way to unify the Roman Empire. The Emperor Heraclius decreed in 632 that all Jews must be baptized and many of his successors were to renew the order, even though most of the time it was carried out only in a restricted area and for a limited time, usually because of some Jewish-Christian conflicts.

Pope Gregory I (540-604) was adamant in condemning forced baptism of the Jews. Fortunately his attitude formulated the official attitude toward the Jews in the early Middle Ages.

In practice, however, forced conversions went on, and almost every European nation with any sizeable Jewish population has its dark pages of history in this regard. For example:

IN SPAIN: Under the reign of King Sisebut (612-621), the orders went out to the Jews: "Baptism or exile." Thousands chose exile, but many accepted conversion as a lesser of two evils.

IN FRANCE: The Frankish monarchs of the 5th to 7th centuries were not adverse to ordering forced baptism of Jews. After King Dagobert (629-639) ordered all Jews in his kingdom to be baptized or leave the country, there were few Jews heard of in the Frankish kingdom for 150 years. (Flannery, p. 78)

A breathing space came for the Jews with the advent of Charlemagne (742-814) as king of France. He and his successors enforced the Theodosian Code rather casually and made efforts to assure the Jews freedom to practice their religion.

The Crusade Era
The age of the Crusades, beginning in the late 11th century, was the age of drastic persecution for the Jews. Flannery says emphatically: "The year 1096, which marked the start of the First Crusade:

"To find a year more fateful in the history of Judaism than 1096 would necessitate going

back a thousand years to the fall of Jerusalem or forward to the (Hitlerian) genocide." (p. 90)

What happened was that in the mighty emotional upheaval that shook Europe with the unorganized and undisciplined First Crusade, a shocking "Crusade backlash" suddenly lumped the Jews at home with the Moslem invaders in the Holy Land. Father Flannery notes that there were mutterings that the Crusaders might better start their work with the "infidels at home." (p. 90)

When mob action followed this "logic," Jews all over France and Germany were suddenly faced with the choice of being slaughtered by angry mobs. To their credit, the German bishops struggled to halt this holocaust, but were only partially successful. Father Flannery states that in 7 months of 1096, about 10,000 Jews died in this persecution, about one fourth to one third of the Jewish population of Germany and Northern France at that time.

THE SECOND CRUSADE in 1146 renewed the miseries of the first for the Jews, but on a mitigated scale, because of the more effective intervention of King Louis VII of France. Emperor Conrad II and especially St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Rebuking the rabble-rousing monk, Radulph, (a French religious who was A.W.O.L. from his monastery) St. Bernard urged him to stop his anti-Semitic preaching which was inflaming mob violence. Recalling St. Paul's teaching, the Cistercian saint said:

"Who is this man that he should make out the Prophet (St. Paul) to be a liar and render void the treasures of Christ's love and pity?" (Flannery, p. 93)

Even when there was no mob violence, the Jews were constantly in fear of other forms of oppression. When they sought refuge from violence during the crusades, enterprising monarchs would protect them, but put them in a subservient status as "serfs of the imperial chamber," which in effect reduced them to pieces of property which could be bought, sold and loaned like merchandise.

This concept got some theological support from some of the medieval popes. Innocent III (1198-1216) referred to the "perpetual servitude" of the Jews, and 3rd Lateran Council (1179) spoke of the "subjection" of Jews to Christians. When translated into civil law, it meant, as the English jurist Bracton said: "The Jew cannot be a freeman, he is a serf, not for himself but for the king." (Flannery, p. 95)

The Usury Issue
The involvement of Jews in money-lending was a develop-

ment of the Middle Ages. Church law was still adamant about usury at this time; and the burgeoning economy, stimulated by new trade which followed the Crusades, made ready money an important commodity. Barred from holding slaves, the Jews were squeezed out of any large agricultural production. Most of the craftsmen's guilds were closed to the Jews. Money-lending was one of the few fields open to them. It was always a mixed blessing, however, for while it often meant getting rich quick, it also made affluent Jews a target for powerful kings and angry creditors. Many of the "popular uprisings" of the 13th century, were thinly veiled pretexts to take the money-lenders' money, and destroy their lists of debtors.

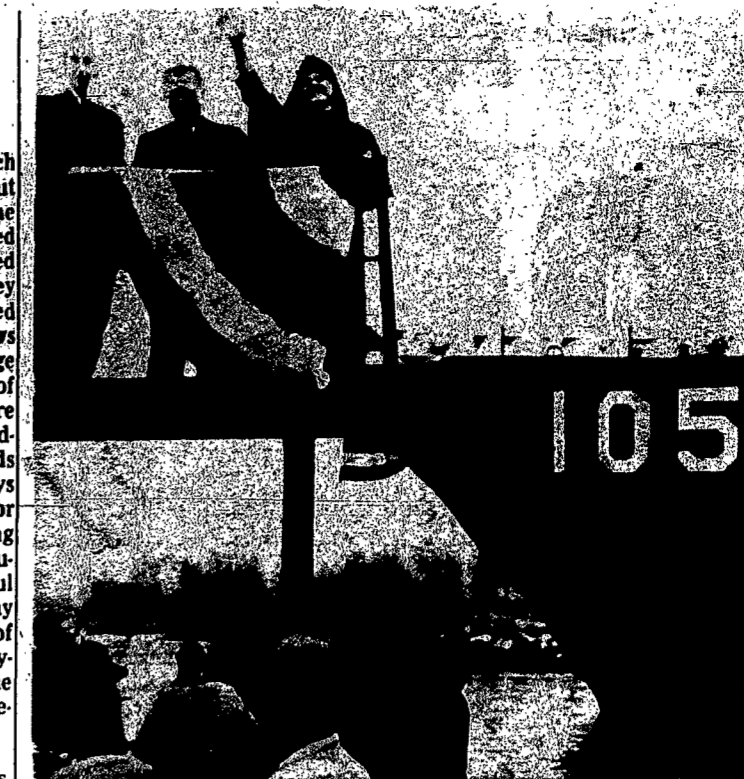
As Father Flannery notes, "it was a fatal situation. The prince would protect him as long as he was useful, and the anger of the mobs and creditors did not explode. When it did, the king usually abandoned 'his Jews,' and hypocritically joined in the clamor." (p. 97) Most of the mass expulsions of Jews at this time were based on the business of usury. By the end of the 13th century, Jews were expelled from France, England and most of Germany. (Flannery, ibid.)

"RITUAL MURDER" was a charge that was often hurled at the Jews in the Middle Ages. Strictly defined, it meant the official murder of a Christian, preferably a child, in Holy Week, for ritual purposes. This was an old chestnut which has been dredged up against suspect minority groups since pre-Christian days. (In the 1840's the charge was even leveled at American Catholics!) This charge became another peg to hang the bloody cloak of Jewish persecution on, and for centuries Jews were killed or jailed on this charge, frequently with little or no evidence. In condemnation of this libel, Pope Innocent IV said in 1247: "No matter where a dead body is discovered, their persecutors wickedly cast it against them."

Badges of Shame
One obnoxious practice instituted by the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) was the prescription of a distinctive dress for Jews. The motive stated by the Council was to prevent intermarriage between Christians and Jews. The "badge of shame" took different forms in various countries, a yellow spherule in France, a pointed hat in Poland, etc. Father Flannery remarks on the results of this practice:

"The effect of the badge on the Jew, naturally, was noxious. Physically marked off from his fellow Christians, he stood out as a pariah, prey to insults in his daily life and to violence in time of crisis." (p. 103)

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were generally dark days for Jews. Toward the end of the 13th century, Philip IV expelled all the Jews from France. In 1298, after a charge of "desecrating the Host" (another well-worn calumny), in Rottingen, Germany, a fanatic named Rindfleisch led mobs which wiped out the Jewish community there completely. Inflamed with blood-lust, he and his Judensackers (Jew-slayers) went on a lengthy orgy or pillaging, burning and murdering Jews through Ger-



Nun Christens Warship

Bay City, Mich. — (RNS) — A Maryknoll Sister dedicates a Navy destroyer named for her hero brother at Bay City, Mich. The USS O'Callahan, a destroyer escort, is named for Father Joseph T. O'Callahan, Navy chaplain who won the Congressional Medal of Honor during World War II. Sister Rose Marie, first nun ever to christen a U.S. warship, waves to the crowd (above), accompanied by her brothers John, of Boston, and Neil O'Callahan of Philadelphia. Sister Rose Marie, 58, is head of the literature and arts division of Maryknoll College, Quezon, P.I. Father O'Callahan, who died in 1964, was cited for valor in organizing and leading fire-fighting crews aboard the stricken aircraft carrier, the USS Franklin, off Kobe, Japan, on March 19, 1945. He ministered to the wounded and dying, directed the jettisoning of live ammunition, and was credited with a major role in saving the ship.

many and Austria. Estimates place the murdered at 100,000. The decimated communities at 140. Historians point out that the Rindfleisch massacres were the first attempt to hold all Jews responsible for a crime, "an abortive genocide well before Hitler." Father Flannery remarks tellingly.

THE BLACK DEATH (1347-50) was a tragedy for most of Europe, but had catastrophic results for the Jews. In the plague which carried off more than one third of Europe's population, the Jews were once again cast in the scapegoat's role. The rumor spread that the Jews were poisoning Europe's wells with a weird concoction, responsible for the plague.

In the persecutions which followed, France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Poland and Austria were all stained with the blood of Jews. The pattern was much the same, as the plague advanced: accusation—trial—torture—confessions and consentment to the flames. Pope Clement VI (1342-52) intervened twice, condemning violence against Jews, and arguing that since they were falling victim to the plague as quickly as anyone else, they could not be guilty of causing it.

The death-toll of the Jews during the Black Death, not as much from the plague, although they suffered proportionately, but from mob lynchings, cannot be accurately measured. Father Flannery says that about 200 Jewish communities were destroyed. The massacres were greatest in Germany, lightest in Austria. Some idea of the breadth of the slaughter may be gained from the figures: in Poland—10,000 Jews killed—and the casualties, Father Flannery says, were "comparatively light" there!

Italy an Exception

ONE BRIGHT LIGHT should be recorded here—in Italy, the Jews generally were not given the harsh treatment that other European nations accorded them. This was partly due to economic reasons—the northern Italian cities had their own Christian usurers, and Jews tended to be neither very rich nor very poor, and partly to the protective attitude of the Popes. Leon Pollakov says: "Rome, the only large city of Europe from which the Jews were never expelled, remained an oasis of peace for them." (Pollakov, "Du Mahomet," p. 303)

In Spain, the status of the Jews went from one extreme to another. A succession of liberal-minded monarchs in the 12th century gave the Jews considerable latitude, and many of them rose to positions of high influence in the royal courts. But in the late 14th century, the anti-Semitism that was so prevalent in the rest of Europe infiltrated Spain. Ferdinand Martinez, an arch-deacon in Seville, began inciting mobs against the Jews, and after 4,000 Jews were killed there, the persecution swept like a fire through Spain, until some 50,000 Jews had been killed.

Forced Baptisms Backfire

Of those who had survived, most accepted baptism, but this only meant a new problem from then on. Many of the "new converts" continued to practice their Jewish faith secretly, many others went through the gestures of being Christians with no real conviction. Spanish persecution of the "marraños" (swine) became a recurring evil, culminating in the Spanish Inquisition, which was especially harsh against the Jews. The final blow came in 1492, when all Jews—whether Christian converts or not—were exiled from Spain. 300,000 Spanish Jews were forced to leave the country.

Enter the Ghettos

During the 16th to 18th centuries, anti-Semitism evolved in a different pattern. In most cities, Jews were relegated to one section, "the ghetto," and forbidden to settle elsewhere. The effects of this were to cut the Jews off from the rest of the people, keep them in an inferior status, cut away their self-respect and make them objects of aversion and derision. If not the object of mob violence so often, they were yet discriminated against and categorized as "outcasts."

Conclusion

The most calamitous outbreak of anti-Semitism was reserved for modern times, in the Nazi persecution of the Jews. This chapter is close enough to us to be well-remembered. When the "final solution" to the "Jewish problem" had been unveiled the death toll of the Jews was six million people! Father Flannery insists that this was one persecution that was atheistic in origin, based on racism.

While this is true, it is difficult to evade the conviction that the long tradition of anti-Semitism among Christians had at least prepared the ground for the Nazi heresy, even if the latter was basically anti-Christian as well. Father Flannery concedes this:

"It is possible... to agree that anti-Semitic forces in Christian tradition exerted a secondary or tertiary influence on the emergence of fascist anti-Semitism." (p. 275)

Coming to 1965, and the statement on the Jews by the Vatican Council, it would seem that Father Flannery's scholarly book answers completely any question about the need or relevance for an official Catholic theological statement on the Jews. It should establish, hopefully, the basis for future Catholic attitudes toward the Jews.

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