

All Religions Face Extinction in Red China



Holy Spirit and Scripture are symbolized in dove and scroll.

'One Chain Of Darkness'

Headlines this week left little hope for an early settlement of the war in Vietnam.

U. Thant of the United Nations returned to New York after meeting two representatives from Hanoi in Rangon, Burma.

He said prospects for peace were dim.

Arthur J. Goldberg, U.S. ambassador to the U.N., returned from a brief visit to southeast Asia with the simple comment, "we must persevere" in peace efforts but, he admitted, he saw little chance for an early peace.

President Johnson and New York Senator Robert F. Kennedy are at logger-heads about the conduct of the war.

The post-truce war now includes dropping mines in North Vietnam rivers and shelling North Vietnam targets with artillery guns — and the President has denied that these measures escalate the war.

Cardinal Spellman again voiced his reluctant approval of the present "hard" policy — "there are things worse than war and things worse than death, and surrender to slavery is one of them," he said.

He termed "this business" of hawks and doves as "nonsense" and said "we all want peace... but I do not believe that we should simply withdraw and leave our friends in South Vietnam to the mercy of their foes."

Pope Paul, from his Vatican vantage point, didn't seem to discern any indications of peace either but he cautioned a throng at St. Peter's Sunday noon. "We must not give in to fatalism and pessimism, but must always strengthen our confidence... above all in the Lord."

Despite all these grim viewpoints, Americans continue to enjoy an affluent life and the Vietnam war, except for the news reports, seems remote. What Pope Pius XII said in 1943 during World War II can be a sober meditation for us today:

"Unfortunately the world, as it looks around, must still behold with horror the reality of strife and destruction which, growing daily wider and more cruel, dashes its hopes and with the icy blast of harsh experience destroys and cuts short its most sanguine impulses. We see, indeed, only a conflict which degenerates into that form of warfare that excludes all restriction and restraint, as if it were the Apocalyptic expression of a civilization in which ever-growing technical progress is accompanied by an ever greater decline in the realm of the soul and of morality.

"It is a form of war which proceeds without intermission on its horrible way and piles up slaughter of such a kind that the most bloodstained and horrible pages of past history pale in comparison with it. The peoples have had to witness a new and incalculable perfection of the means and arts of destruction while at the same time they see an interior decadence which, starting from the weakening and deviation of the moral sense, is hurtling ever downward toward the state where every human sentiment is being crushed and the light of reason is eclipsed, so that the words of the Book of Wisdom are fulfilled: 'They were all bound together with one chain of darkness.'"

We survived that war only at an incalculable cost.

Pope Paul, in his historic talk two years ago at the United Nations, spoke of the need for "works of peace" before we can have peace itself.

There is need for more of us to work for peace — or we shall find ourselves again "bound together with one chain of darkness."

—Father Henry A. Atwell

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United Nations—(RNS)—The Red Guards are making life harder than ever for 10 million Chinese Muslims and the remaining vestiges of Christianity.

This is a diplomatic consensus here, pieced together from on-the-spot "wall poster reading," diplomatic travelers in Communist China, and boastful admissions broadcast by various local radio stations on the China mainland.

They all point to the fact that with the growing rampage of the "proletarian cultural revolution" unleashed by Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the facade of religious tolerance in Communist China has crumbled. It is clear now, these diplomatic informants say, that Buddhists, Christians and Muslims alike suffer intensified persecution alike.

The insecurity of the once seemingly promoted Chinese Muslims, who were to attract cooperation for the regime in the Muslim-dominated countries of Asia and Africa, has particularly increased since the Red Guards declared war on "all old ideas, culture, customs and habits." Branding all religions as feudal, the Red Guards have denounced Islam in their wall posters, and have committed vandalism in a number of mosques. In some cases, these militants have bragged, about having "assaulted" Muslim religious leaders.

Reports from Peking tell of posters demanding "close all mosques." Others would "disperse religious associations," and still others abolish the study of Koran and "abolish marriage within the faith."

According to Indian government sources in New Delhi, the anti-religious aspect of the Red Guard campaign reached its intensity a few months ago, and that the Peking regime has tried to tone down the overt anti-religious activities in order to pacify its few remaining friends abroad.

However, reports from inside the strictest mainland indicate that these guarded appeals have gone mostly unheeded. Judging by Communist radio broadcasts and western travelers' accounts of the recent course of the "cultural revolution," the anti-religious campaign continues unabated.

In the past there had invariably been a contingent of Buddhist monks present at China's National Day celebrations in Peking. This year, however, the monks were noticeably absent. This is viewed by some Far Eastern specialists here as a sign that the Buddhists in China are high on the purge list.

A few months ago, Harbin Radio reported that the Red Guards there had conducted a successful "clean sweep" aimed at cleaning up "the garbage reeking of the poisonous fumes of feudalism and capitalism." The broadcast told of one Red Guard "trekking out" the abbot of a local temple, accusing him of carrying out "counter-revolutionary activities under the cloak of religion."

The report said that the Red Guard group in Harbin also "wrecked the abbot's lair and threw away all his paraphernalia used for disseminating superstition and other feudal and counter-revolutionary ideas."

Catholics Gain In S. Vietnam

Vatican City — (RNS) — Vatican Radio described a "living and promising Catholicism" in South Vietnam "despite the present situation," in a broadcast which claimed for Roman Catholicism nearly one-tenth of the war-torn country's population.

The broadcast gave detailed statistics on the Church's membership in the South but said that up-to-date information on North Vietnam is not available.

Before World War II, the broadcast said, Vietnam had 1,414,000 Catholics, including 1,050,000 in the North and 364,000 in the South. The figure for South Vietnam has since grown to more than 1,500,000, "equal to nearly 10 per cent of the entire region's population, which amounts to about 16,000,000."

The decision of 16 U.S. Catholic bishops to join as "Friends of the Court" in asking the Supreme Court to declare Virginia's antimiscegenation law unconstitutional may not be world-shaking, but I think it is an encouraging straw in the wind. The issue is certainly a moral one, and consequently one on which Church spokesmen properly can and should express themselves.

The way they have chosen is, I think additionally significant. To participate in civic processes as influential citizens is a role hitherto not often associated with Catholic clergymen. It suggests a praiseworthy sensitivity to the spirit of the Vatican Council constitution on the Church in the world today.

I hope we will see similar Catholic reaction to another issue which is currently rocking the country, the secret manipulation of purportedly civic groupings by government agencies. When I say this I am not questioning the right of the



Red China has banished all missionaries. Bishop Sheen told guests at Jesuit Missions benefit dinner Monday that if faith survives in China it is due to laity of Legion of Mary.

Kremlin Radio Raps Peking For Drive Against Religion

New York — (RNS) — In an unaccustomed role of defender of religion, the Soviet Union has gone out of its way to tell the outside world that it highly disapproves of the current excesses against religion by the Chinese Communists.

In a Moscow radio broadcast in Arabic, beamed to the Middle East but not to domestic Moslem audiences within the USSR, the Soviet editors spoke of "savagely massacred" and "violations of sanctity of temples."

Excerpts from the broadcasts, made available here, disclose that a man named Hamid, described only as a member of Parliament in Ceylon, recently protested to the Peking Embassy in Colombo against oppression of Chinese Moslems in Sinkiang Province. He was quoted as saying: "We accuse the Chinese People's Republic government of annihilating and oppressing the Moslems of China."

The broadcast then told its Middle East listeners that this was not the first time such an accusation has been leveled against Red China, holding that pictures of the "savagely massacre" carried out against "Catholic monks" in South China monasteries have spread to various parts of the world.

According to other reports teaching neighboring Asian capitals, in Hangchow the Red Guards posted signs on the image of Buddha, reading: "Destroy the old world, establish a new world and a special policy of proletarian long life."

Two big posters displayed on the wall of the Luyung Buddhist temple in Canton demanded that the temple cease functioning as a religious institution.

One poster which proposed that the Peking government should confiscate the temple building for use as a "Red Guard kindergarten," said: "Why should Socialist Canton tolerate the existence of this feudal and superstitious Luyung temple? Why use such spacious ground to house those dead wooden idols? The revolutionary action of the Red Guards in pulling down these dead wooden idols is indeed most pleasing."

The other poster preferred that the temple should be assigned to the Chinese cardboard box-makers. It also recalled how in 1965 that particular enterprise had "by means of productive labor reforms helped transform Buddhist monks of the Luyung temple into 'new men under socialism.'" It further suggested that the new use of the monks' labor in the company's production purposes should be intensified.

Especially disturbing news has come from Tibet where factional fighting among the Communist usurpers has apparently revived long-suppressed nationalism of the once-independent Tibetans. Priceless Buddhist treasures have been destroyed, travelers and refugees from Tibet report. Among the targets of the Red Guard rampage was the Tengyeling monastery where religious texts were destroyed and images and articles of worship desecrated. The main image of the monastery was hurled into a river. The perpetrators were later praised for their "high degree of political consciousness." Tibetan exiles in India said.

In Peking, where Christians number less than 20,000, the Red Guards took over some churches as far back as August 1966. At the South Cathedral, which represents the main Catholic center in the capital, red flags fly from the dome and the west tower. Windows are shattered, pictures mutilated, slogans painted on the dome and a stone cross chipped away, one Indian diplomatic source said.

At a local Protestant church, the same source continued, the interior was rearranged and a larger-than-life bust of Mao Tse-tung placed in the center. Pictures of Mao and other "cultural revolution" leaders, as well as red flags and banners were hung on the walls.

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European nuns as a school for foreign diplomats' children. Here, foreign observers report, statues of Christ and the Virgin Mary were broken and a cartoon of the Pope was placed over the entrance to the convent.

In an effort to remove every possible Christian influence on the mainland, Red Guards are reported to have demanded that the Christian era be replaced by the Marxist era and that dates should be from the birth of Marx, not from the birth of Christ. As a result of this concentrated campaign, diplomatic sources in Peking say that the past Christmas in China was the first in this century without any public religious services.

But Islam is not faring much better. Last November the Red Guards formed a new organization called "the Revolutionary Struggle Group for the Abolition of Islam." Posters in various Chinese towns call for the abolition of Muslim customs. One of the posters demanded that in this alleged purification drive the authorities should abolish circumcision.

One poster listed a 10-point program for "the eradication of Islam." The points included demands that Muslim priests work in work camps; traditional Muslim burial practices be replaced by cremation; the abolition of all Muslim feasts and holidays.

According to reports reaching Middle Eastern capitals, the chief priest of a Peking mosque was recently badly beaten by the Red Guards. Another Middle Eastern report says that one Chinese scholar who had translated the Koran into Chinese was recently made to parade in a tall hat, was publicly criticized and suffered other humiliations.

According to African seamen who recently visited Canton, the Red Guards there forced local Muslims to eat pork. This was done on the grounds that to eat beef was a waste of cattle which could otherwise be used to till the land, whereas pigs were produced solely as food.

The Central Islamic Organization of India, called Jamiat Ulama, met in New Delhi in early February and condemned "the torture of Muslims in China." A resolution said that "the violent threat by Chinese imperialism was aimed at perishing Muslim faith from the soil of China and is an open danger to Islam." The meeting called upon Muslims everywhere to take serious note of the situation and to come forward to meet the Chinese menace.

In this context, the bishop said, "We must accept the development of doctrine in a proper sense, a sense of reasonable change, the change achieved through insight." He pointed to Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., as a "high priest" of the sort of development of which he spoke.

"The Church is not destroyed by change," Bishop Carter said, "but we must differ between essentials and accidentals, between the permanent and the existential. And we must remember that we can go so fast as to damage what is fundamental."

The theology seminar was the first sponsored by the Catholic Press Association. The Pittsburgh Catholic local diocesan newsweekly, acted as organizer and host. Both Bishop Carter and Father Leatham praised the seminar idea. Bishop Carter said, "Problems of today are more theological than sociological, but it is the latter that gets the great emphasis." He said "theology cannot be the privilege of a few," and impressed upon the editors the thought that they were in a "bridge position" to help infuse theology into the thinking of people generally.

In an evaluation session at the close, the participants expressed the opinion that more such seminars should be held.

Both Bishop Carter and Father Leatham saw change as an integral part of the Church's life. "The Church without stain or wrinkle is the eschatological Church, the Omega Church, the Church of fulfilled destiny," Bishop Carter said. "But we are a pilgrim Church moving toward a fulfillment of which we are left in mystery. It is contrary to logic to think that a pilgrim Church can be without change."

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St. Patrick's Day

Kearney

Bishop Kearney High School's Marching Band and Color Guard will lead the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City Friday, March 17, the largest parade of its kind in the world.

This privilege has been accorded to the school by the band selection committee of the 165th Infantry Division, popularly known as the "Fighting 69th." This military unit has traditionally been the vanguard of the parade.

Geneva Parish Mothers Club To Hear Nuns

Geneva — The Mother's Club of St. Stephen's School will have a day of recollection Sunday, March 12, beginning at 10:45 a.m. at De Sales High School. Topic will be "God's Continuing Revelation."

An introduction will be given by Sister Mary John, director of public relations Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester. First conference will be given by Sister Anne Maary, director of vocations, entitled "God Reveals Himself to Women."

Afternoon conferences will be given by Sister Ruth Agnes, diocesan supervisor of schools, "God Reveals Himself Through Sex," and by Sister Marie Christ, resident director at Nazareth College, on "God Reveals Himself."

The retreat day will conclude with Mass at 4 p.m. Mrs. Richard Maher and Mrs. Francis McCormack are co-chairmen.

Knights Protest Kennedy View

Knights of Columbus Precinct Blood Council 5147 at Bath N.Y., has proposed to all K. of C. units in New York State a resolution against "the statement taken by Senator (Robert) Kennedy on the question of abortion." The Knights also said that Senator's recommendation to revise the State's present 80-year-old legislation on the subject is "contrary to the Law of God and an insult to all good practicing Catholics." The resolution is signed by Rev. Henry F. Adamski, chaplain, Grand Knight John J. Miller and other Council officers.

Southern Tier Speakers Unify

About 60 women of southern tier parishes met recently at St. Peter and Paul's hall, Elmira, for the third quarterly meeting of the Chemung-Schuyler district of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women. Mrs. Raymond G. Granston of Watkins Glen, district president, announced a speakers' bureau of 17 members available for talks on a variety of topics.



Study Group

Mt. Morris — For a group of women of St. Patrick's parish here, the season of Lent is a time for special study of their faith.

For the past 27 years, the members of the St. Patrick's Study Club have met at one another's homes once a week during Lent to read and discuss material on their religion. This year they are studying

Church's Co Told First F

"Everyone of you as Catholics should be concerned with the needs of the poor," Father Daniel Torney, assistant pastor St. John the Evangelist Church, Greece, said to members of the First Friday Luncheon Club Hotel Sheraton, March 3.

He was replacing Father David Finck, Episcopal Vicar of Urban Ministry for the diocese called out of town on business. Father Torney said his own message paralleled that of the scheduled speaker.

Father Torney, newly elected to the diocesan Senate told Christ's love for the poor and how the Saviour did not want them to come to him but to go out among them to help their needs.

"Now the Pope, the Bishop and the Episcopal Vicar

Use and Abuse of Tax-Exempt Foundations

By GARY MACEOIN

The decision of 16 U.S. Catholic bishops to join as "Friends of the Court" in asking the Supreme Court to declare Virginia's antimiscegenation law unconstitutional may not be world-shaking, but I think it is an encouraging straw in the wind. The issue is certainly a moral one, and consequently one on which Church spokesmen properly can and should express themselves.

The way they have chosen is, I think additionally significant. To participate in civic processes as influential citizens is a role hitherto not often associated with Catholic clergymen. It suggests a praiseworthy sensitivity to the spirit of the Vatican Council constitution on the Church in the world today.

I hope we will see similar Catholic reaction to another issue which is currently rocking the country, the secret manipulation of purportedly civic groupings by government agencies. When I say this I am not questioning the right of the

Central Intelligence Agency to exist, still less the desirability of government allocating public funds for socially desirable purposes. What is immoral is the method that has now been exposed.

Recently we had the Cambiol scandal in France, when it emerged that purportedly scientific studies by U.S. scholars were a front for intelligence activities. The damage to legitimate American scholars working abroad will take long to overcome. The new revelations create a credibility problem here at home for all involved in civic organizations, in the same way as the chicanery of some politicians is frequently projected to all. If, this goes on, it will be dangerous to roll bandages for the Red Cross or collect for the Community Fund.

I think the scorn of public opinion and the call for appropriate legislative remedy should be directed less to the C.I.A. than to the so-called private foundations which grossly betrayed the public trust which is the one reason for giving them the benefits they are accorded in our society. The

American concept of the tax-exempt foundation is an excellent one. It encourages the channeling of funds into worthy causes with a minimum of bureaucracy and a maximum application of the principle of subsidiarity, that is to say, of letting people do for themselves what they are able by their own efforts to do.

Every good thing can, however, be abused. You have the big corporation which finances and through the naming of trustees controls a tax-free foundation whose research will primarily benefit that corporation. You have the foundation which provides tax-free trips to charming tropical retreats for the executives of its sponsor or guarantees their privacy by dedicating the land adjacent to their estates to educational, charitable, or — need I add? — religious uses.

Disclosure might bring out facts embarrassing to some religious bodies, major beneficiaries of tax-exemption. But I hope we have reached a point where our community conscience is drawing slightly ahead of our group interests.

It would be salutary for us to have analyzed on a national scale the uses to which the Churches put their tax-exempt funds. Church administrators, being human, act as strangely at times as do other humans when exempted from the economic laws which control most decisions of most mortals.

The present C.I.A. scandal provides an opportunity to mobilize public opinion for a wider study of foundations. Perhaps nothing more is needed than a law ensuring fuller disclosure of their funds and the uses to which they are put, combined with a stricter application of the existing law on their accumulation of capital funds.

It might be surprising, for example, to have statistics on the growth of desert areas around our churches, with the acquisition and demolition of taxpaying buildings to provide parking spaces for a few hours weekly. And we complain that our property taxes are out of control. A little community planning could correlate church parking with that of the municipality, the supermarket or the public playground, but who'd think of anything so obvious?