

# Attack Poverty at Its Roots

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mediately and could be laid out as a five-year plan of graduated steps:

• "To begin this process, each diocese, religious community, and Church-sponsored institution might make an inventory of the resources being used at present to meet actual human needs."

• "For new development projects on an interfaith basis, local parishes and dioceses could earmark a definite percentage of their yearly income over the next five years for new development projects."

• "Local churches, dioceses, and religious institutions could provide 'seed money' for low and moderate income housing."

• "Each diocese and religious institution should be ready to assist in a national program of human development."

The Labor Day statement declares that the task is urgent and the time is short. "The Church," it said, "is in a strategic position to give moral leadership and support to the private and public sectors by taking positive and serious steps" to wage war against social injustice.

Social efforts expended in the past by the Church have been "insufficient for the task at hand," the statement declares.

It pointed out that the U.S. bishops organized an Urban Task Force to coordinate Catholic activities in a social program, but noted:

"It remains now to push forward the implementation of a national pro-

## Still Poor!

### 25.4 Million Americans

Washington, D.C. (RNS)—The number of Americans officially in poverty situations stood at 25.4 million in 1968, down two million from the previous year, according to Census Bureau statistics.

Thirteen per cent of the population was listed as poor, with 33 per cent of the Negroes falling below the poverty-level. The poverty line in the census report was \$3,533 for a family of four.

For the entire nation, the percentage was down from 22 per cent in 1961. The decrease among Negroes was 56 to 33 per cent. The total number of poor since 1961 has been reduced 11 million.

Median income of white families was placed at \$8,937 as compared with \$5,360 for Negro families.

The Census Bureau also reported that half the Negro poor are in families headed by women, 29 per cent of Negro families having no male as the head.

Sixty per cent of the Negro males between 25 and 29 years of age were said to have finished high school as of the beginning of 1969 as compared to 36 per cent nine years earlier.

About a fourth of the 17.4 million white poor were reported to be over 65.

gram of social development in conjunction with the other religious denominations and privately sponsored organizations."

The statement points out, however, that "labor and management, together with the economic power in this country. It is their decisions and those of government which will largely determine the future course of our society."

Contrary to past practice, this year's Labor Day statement is addressed primarily to the Church rather than to labor and management.

"The Catholic Church," it declares, "is in the position to exercise strong moral leadership and take the first steps by making a generous portion of its limited resources available for the development and self-determination of the poor and the powerless."

# Northern Ireland Still Shaky

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Belfast and other parts of Northern Ireland because of their role during recent riots. Many Catholics regard them as a hostile militia, while the Protestant majority considers them as a protection of peace and property.

The ruling Protestant majority — 1.5 million Protestants as compared with 500,000 Catholics — favors defending the status quo; that is, Northern Ireland as a part of the United Kingdom under a constitution which guarantees its autonomy but clearly keeps it separated from the Republic of Ireland.

Extremists of this position are headed by the Rev. Ian Paisley, the moderator of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ireland. His attitude is: "The root cause of the difficulty is that the Roman Catholic

Church in this country refuses to recognize the constitution and until it does there will be no solution."

The extremists and, in fact, many others who do not share Paisley's militancy, fear that with the growth of the Catholic population — even though they are only a quarter of the nation's people — will ultimately become the majority and that will lead to union with the Republic of Ireland.

This is a real problem as far as the Protestants are concerned. There has been and still is discrimination within Northern Ireland, and Catholics find themselves poorly represented in Parliament, without any member in the cabinet of Northern Ireland, blocked in finding better jobs and housing and, in general, under a pressure to emigrate.

On the Catholic side, there is a fear of "extermination." In its most extreme form, this term for them means that they will be wiped out by one means or another. They point bitterly to the riots of last week, and declare that the riots were organized and carried out deliberately by extreme Protestant elements.

William Cardinal Conway of Armagh and five Catholic bishops of Northern Ireland have expressed their "horror" over the recent violence and said that Catholic districts had been invaded by armed mobs.

Charging slanted press reporting, the bishops' statement declared that Catholics had been attacked by mobs armed with machine-guns and other weapons. "A community which was virtually defenseless was swept by gunfire and streets of Catholic homes were systematically set on fire," the statement said.

While it was strong and accusing in tone, the bishops' statement also urged: "In this period of crisis, we call upon all our people to remain calm and to avoid all words or actions which could in any way increase tension. We ask them not to allow bitterness or hatred to enter into their hearts, to remember that Protestants in general are good Christian people and to commence the rebuilding of community relations with Christian faith and hope."

The Rev. Donald Gillies of Agnes Street Presbyterian church, spokesman for a number of Protestant clergymen, called the bishops' statement "a complete fabrication" and accused Catholics of bringing on the violence by aggression and provocation.

The debate and nervousness continue. Disarmament of the Specials has become questionable, even with the presence of the British army. How easy is it to disarm a force that is estimated to have at least 8,000 members and which is spread throughout the country? What happens when the British troops leave?

In a way, a letter to the editors of The News Letter, a Belfast daily that seems very much Protestant in its editorial policy, catches the problem of the average person in Northern Ireland. Signed by a Mrs. Rosalie White, it read in part:

"Sir: I watched the flames over Belfast with horror and listened next day while shopping to the wildest of accusations and rumors. There was little pity, compassion or self-reproach to be heard.

"It is no longer important who started any particular incident. They are all grown out of the hatred and bigotry between Catholic and Protestant. Help or interference from England and Eire will not last forever — in the end we shall be left to face each other in the mess we have made.

"Like Siamese twins, we are stuck with each other and it would seem realistic to get on with clearing up and learning to live together in dignity — not held back in restraint like wild animals.

"Only when the good neighbors of the Shankill can see their way to helping out the neighbors of the Falls will there be any real sign of Christianity in this city.

"Cups of tea handed to police and troops are kindly meant, but cups of tea exchanged between Protestants and Catholics would be a far better thing."

Whether or not the Northern Ireland of today is doomed to a sort of Grecian tragic darkness is also debatable. Reforms are promised and steps have already been taken to try to restore confidence in the police and in the government. For the moment, however, the future is not rosy by any means. As another well-informed Catholic priest said when I asked him about the future: "The victim cannot tell you. Our people are still in a very unsettled frame of mind. They are filled with apprehensions and conscious of the fact that while there is a lull in shooting, the campaign of intimidation daily continues with people being ordered to leave their homes and to police of military protection to keep them in their homes."

# Ecumenical Lesson Cited In 'Trouble'

Cork, Ireland — (RNS) — A Protestant churchman here likened the violence in Northern Ireland to that in American cities and warned that the Churches must learn an ecumenical lesson from it.

The Rev. F. K. Johnston, dean of St. Fin Barre's Anglican cathedral of the Church of Ireland said: — "Today we stand condemned; part of our country is torn and lacerated. Blind hatred runs deep. If this were solely a political issue it would be bad enough, but it has emerged as a religious issue between Catholic and Protestant."

He contrasted this with the situation of Protestants in the Republic of Ireland where Catholics are a 95 per cent majority.

"We have known no such ghettoes in the South," Dean Johnston said. "No man has been prevented from voting because of his position or belief. After nearly half a century of rule by successive Catholic governments there has been no unrest, no feeling of victimization or any unjust treatment of the minority in the Republic."

"We have been fairly and honorably treated," he added, "as first class citizens and have been happily integrated into the community."

"Today," Dean Johnston said, "one is ashamed to be termed a Protestant, and we regard the so-called 'protestant spirit' that deliberately sets out to suppress and intimidate, that allows and encourages ghettoes within cities and victimizes men and women because of their religious or political convictions."

# Mosque Burning Raises Arab 'Holy War' Cries

Beirut—(RNS)—The fire in the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, one of Islam's most holy shrines, has provoked a mounting series of reactions throughout the Arab world which include a frequent mention of a "jihad" (holy war).

Kuwait Radio charged that "eye-witnesses" on the scene had observed an Israeli helicopter dropping incendiary bombs on the mosque. Hardly less shrill was the "Voice of the Arabs" broadcast from Cairo which said that the fire was "another proof" of "barbarism . . . aggression and savagery."

Summoning all Arabs to a "long struggle" to make "Jerusalem Arab once more and the Al Aqsa Mosque sacred again," the Cairo broadcast predicted that "much pure blood will run over the mosque's sacred thresholds."

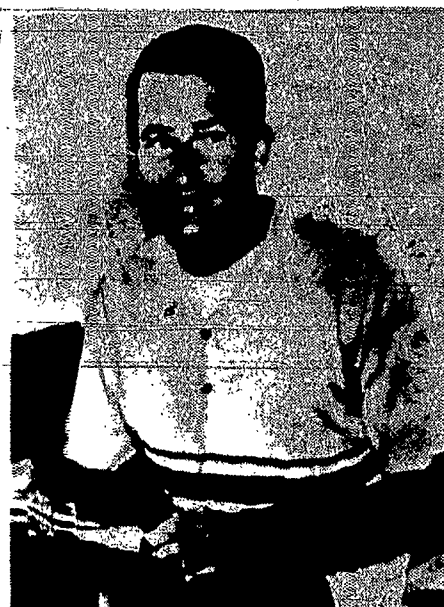
Israel's reaction to the fire and to the storm of Arab criticism has been twofold: an expression of sorrow at the damage caused and of willingness to aid in repairs together with a firm rejection of the "unbridled campaign of incitement and libel" by the Arab countries.

Outside of Israel, the viewpoint of many Jews around the world was stated by the American-Jewish Congress when it expressed "heartfelt compassion" to "the people of Islam . . . over the damage done to a place they revere and hold sacred."

"We reject these slanders with all our moral strength," said Menahem Begin, Israeli Minister of State. "We have preserved and shall always preserve the holy places of all religions, only those who gave instructions to burn synagogues and destroy the holy places of another people could invent the present suspicions and false accusations voiced by Arab dictators."

Arab accusations against the Israeli government continued to mount despite the announcement here that a suspect, Michael Denis William Rohan, 27, an Australian fundamentalist Christian, had confessed setting fire to the Al Aqsa Mosque.

Mr. Rohan, who said he was a member of the Church of God, reportedly told a friend that God had told him to burn the mosque in a dream. He is said to believe, as do a number of small Christian and Jewish sects, that a third temple must be built on the



Michael Denis William Rohan, 27-year-old sheep shearer from Sydney, Australia, sits on his cot in a prison cell in Jerusalem after being arrested on suspicion of setting fire to the Al Aqsa Mosque. The mosque, one of Islam's most holy shrines, was partly damaged by fire, causing a storm of protest throughout the Arab world. (RNS)

site of Solomon's Temple, which includes the mosque area, to bring the Messiah to earth. Generally, adherents of this belief hold that the two mosques in the area will disappear through direct divine intervention — probably an earthquake — and not through human action.

The prisoner is being held under tighter security than has been seen in Israel since the trial of Adolf Eichmann.

The call for a jihad was issued most clearly here in Beirut, traditionally considered the most moderate capital of the Arab world in regard to Israel. Sheikh Hassan Khaled, the chief mufti of Lebanon, called for a holy war "by Moslems and Christians alike" to recover the Jerusalem holy places from the Israelis.

Kiriz Hussein of Jordan, once second only to the Lebanese government in its moderation toward Israel, issued a statement calling for all Arabs and heads of Islamic states to "rise in defense of our religion's sacred places and heritage."

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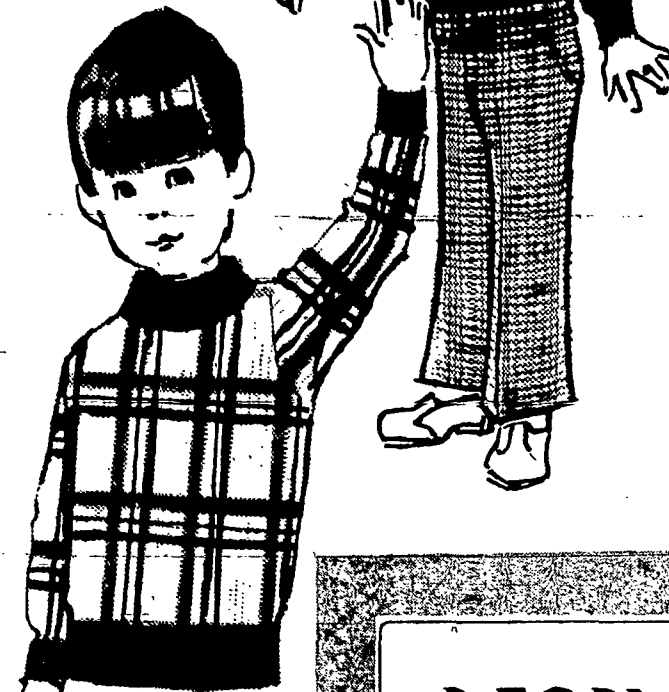
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