

# Albania Lashes Vatican's Condemnation

**Tirana [RNS]** — Communist Albania has launched a blistering broadside at the Vatican for its "hostile campaign" against Albania.

Though the Vatican was the primary target of the attack, the United States, the British, and other imperialists were also assailed for alleged collaboration with the Vatican in a campaign "to overthrow the People's regime" in the Balkan country.

The rhetorical assault came in an article published in *Zeri i Popullit*, the organ of the Central Committee of the Albanian Worker's Party.

The article, "The Hands of the Vatican and the Fascists Are Too Short to Reach Albania," was broadcast over the government-controlled radio network.

"For a long time," the article said, "the Vatican has been

conducting a hostile campaign against Albania, cursing it for abolishing religion and all religious institutions.

"This Vatican campaign was intensified recently by accusations that Albanian authorities had ordered the execution of a (Roman) Catholic priest.

"Now, the Pope himself, crying and wailing, is praying day and night for the 'loyal servant of God' from Albania to find consolation in Heaven."

The article was referring to a report by Kathpress, the Catholic news agency in Vienna, Austria, that a Catholic priest, Father Stephen (Stefan) Kurti, an inmate at a labor camp in Albania, had been executed for secretly baptizing a child.

(Religious rites are outlawed in Albania which, in 1967, proclaimed itself the "first atheist state in the world" and closed down all religious institutions.)

(A recent Vatican Radio broadcast, apparently occasioned by the report of the priest's execution) charged that Albanian authorities "with cold calculation and meticulous tenacity" had brought about "the total elimination of the Catholic Church hierarchy, the radical suppression of religious and cultural institutions, and the suffocation of all forms of Christian life.")

Albanian Radio said about the Vatican's alleged anti-Albania campaign: "Since the liberation of Albania (in 1944) and right up to this very day, the Vatican has given protection to all Albanian quislings and war criminals, who have been sentenced by our People's justice, and to all foreign spies and subversives and to all reactionary counter-revolutionaries."

Then, in an explicit reference to "Stefan Kurti," the priest in the Kathpress story, Albanian Radio continued: "The Vatican is now offering protection to the spy and robber and bandit, Stefan Kurti, who, for his crimes committed three years ago, received the punishment he deserved."

"We say categorically to these Fascist gentlemen: Keep your hands off Albania. The Pope and his friends can sound all the bells

in the world and call to their aid all the saints and gods of this or that world. They can never divert socialism again from its correct road."

The article concluded with the somewhat confident assertion that "the Vatican's campaign" would be disowned by "all upright and progressive men and women who hate and reject the Vatican's diabolical deeds and Jesuit-Fascist plots."



ON THE RIGHT SIDE  
Fr. Paul J. Cuddy

Father Joseph Champlin is a pastor in Fulton, a liturgist, and author, a lecturer and a fine person. He comes in May to lecture to the priests of our diocese. This is a letter to him.

Dear Father Champlin,

About 4 p.m. Good Friday I stopped at the local St. Anne's rectory. The weary pastor, Father Bob MacNamara, frequently confused with St. Bernard's historian, Father Robert MacNamara, was trying to catch his breath in the church office, from the pastoral, canonical, liturgical, sensible, and nonsensical, demands made on him and intensified by Holy Week itself. Within eight minutes he had three phone calls. During the third I noticed on his desk a high pile of communiques which flood our rectories. Many dedicated priests wonder: "Is it really necessary to be directed so minutely in any and every area?" Do you read Erma Bombeck? Recently she illustrated over-direction, but in education. She wrote:

"Miss Lilani is my son's kindergarten teacher. She majored in mimeograph. Since last September, I have received no less than four commanding memos over her signature. Her dissertation on 'Car Pools' last fall was eight pages, single spaced; and left no question unanswered: from unexpected pregnancy of the driver to what to do when a passenger is throwing up and the traffic light is red. This does seem to relate to the lack of confidence in the rationality and judgement of pastoral priests which the flood of mimeo and printed matter from multi-bureaus implies.

Anyway, while Father MacNamara was assuaging the troubles of a parishioner, I picked up the top communique. It was another command performance "to leave all things and follow" to another meeting, to be held at an option of three locations. I was pleased enough, that if all diocesan priests have to take off for another meeting, you are to be the speaker, director, communicator, allayer and inspirer. And because I do regard your judgment well, may I request that you put in a plug for the harassed pastors and their associates?

## Knights of Columbus Praised by Pontiff

**Vatican City [RNS]** — Pope Paul has praised the U.S. — founded Knights of Columbus for its charitable work throughout the world. The pontiff met with leaders of the American organization after they had conducted the first-ever meeting of the group's Supreme Council in a Vatican chamber.

Headed by Grand Knight John McDevitt, the Knights were in Rome to observe the 50th anniversary of the founding of their charities and other work here.

Pope Paul said he deeply appreciated the faithfulness of the organization to the papacy and the work of the members on behalf of the poor, sick, youth and aged.

You are familiar with the Reverend Lester Kinsolving, whose weekly comments in the religious section of the secular press I usually despise. He is a combination of a liberal Episcopalian Voltaire, and Jack Anderson. However recently he wrote a good article, entitled: **Friend-Pastor Era May Be Dawning.** According to recently retired secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr. Eugene C. Blake, local pastors are the front line of the religious community. To what sociologist Vance Packard has described as 'A Nation of Strangers' this may be the beginning of the era of the pastor, a desperately needed friend and counselor, after decades of primary focus upon the hot preacher, the fiery prophet, and glorious-gimmicks running from encounter groups to the funding of minority group hustlers." Then Rev. Kinsolving cited a few examples of just good, kindly shepherd pastors, ending with a Rev. Mr. Hutt, about whom he commented: "I do not know what Mr. Hutt felt about atomic energy control, prison reform and the national health scheme but it will take a great many sociological reports to convince me that his ministry was not a resounding success."

I have noticed from my meetings with the diverse people who are our hospital patients that the most effective ministers in the area are not great theologians, great organizers, or earth shaking preachers. But they are the ministers who have a simple, unsophisticated love of Our Lord which impels them to seek out their people as persons, and to serve them as good shepherds. They are not imprisoned by over-directing communiques and meetings.

Over 30 years ago I read in a Methodist monthly: "A home visiting parson makes a church going people." I do not think either the times or man's nature had changed completely in this respect.

Would you please plug for the aspects of personal service as a top priority in the pastoral priesthood? With your delicate touch I am confident you can do it without offending administrators and their staffs; and you will give courage to many frustrated pastoral priests. Later I should like to express some strongly felt views about the celebrations of the Mass.

## CDA Poetry, Essay Awards

The local chapter of Catholic Daughters of America, Court of Our Lady of the Cenacle No. 1139, has announced the winners of its annual poetry contest.

Parochial school students are invited each year to submit poems with a religious or patriotic theme. High school students may submit essays instead of poems.

In Division 1, grades 4-6, this year's winners are Rita Grelick of Holy Redeemer School, Laurie Kane of Mother of Sorrows, and Catherine Ann Roth of Holy Cross.

In Division 2, grades 7-9, the winners are Regina Gerhardt of St. John the Evangelist, Humboldt St., Martin Carney of Our Lady of Lourdes, and Catherine Conheady of St. Pius X.

The high school division essay winners are Nancy Callahan, Nancy Maurer, and Cheryl Cross, all of Bishop Kearney High School.

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