

# THE CHURCH 1974

Robert Anson Gaudy

A number of people are not prepared to believe that anti-Catholic bigotry is still strong in American society. Let me cite two recent articles that should eliminate any doubt. I shall discuss one here and the other in a subsequent column.

In the leftist journal "New Times" of May 17, a character named Robert Sam Anson produced a piece called "The Irish Connection." In it he asserts, among other things, that "Catholic lobbying applied much of the grease on the slippery slope that led to Vietnam. Few people remember that Ngo Dinh Diem was an obscure exile living in a Maryknoll seminary in New York until Francis Cardinal Spellman made the right introductions to John Foster Dulles. One can also wonder what the course of U.S. involvement in Vietnam would have been had most of the 9,000 refugees who left North Vietnam in 1954 been Buddhist rather than Catholic."

Mr. Anson (whose credentials, according to "New Times" are that he went to Notre Dame and that he is Irish) is a slippery fellow. He doesn't come right out and say that the Catholic hierarchy got us into the war; he merely broadly hints at it — and a hint is all the elitists who edit and read "New Times" need since they already have a strong propensity to see Catholic plots lurking all around the environment.

In fact, there is absolutely no evidence in any of the published studies — David Halberstam's book the Pentagon Papers, etc. — of any Catholic hierarchical influence on the long line of tragic Vietnam decisions. On the contrary, most of those decisions were made by elitist intellectuals who were a generation older than the "New Times" crowd. Furthermore, there is substantial evidence in the research of Prof. James Wright, of the University of Massachusetts, that Catholics were more likely than the average American to oppose the war in Vietnam from the beginning. My own research shows that Irish Catholics were particularly strong in their opposition to the war.

Mr. Anson has engaged in a

## Human Development

**Dansville** — The seven-week training course sponsored by the human development committee of St. Mary's parish has ended, and work has begun on five priority projects — service counseling, transportation, neighborhood deterioration, community apathy and low-income housing.

The training sessions were given by Fathers Dennis Shaw and Charles Collins and Sister Joan McAttee. Each received a framed declaration of thanks and a circle-of-life bracelet from the class. Ronald Powell was elected human development chairman; Jane Whitford, vice chairman; Helen Wolf and Jean Bowie, secretaries.

smear — a deliberate smear of the sort that the late Sen. Joseph McCarthy practiced. Because some of the South Vietnamese are Catholic and because Cardinal Spellman knew Diem, the Irish Catholic Church is responsible for the Vietnam war. I can just imagine "New Times" writing something like that about blacks or Jews.

He quotes a priest as saying of Latino Catholics, "They like to be married men and have a family more than the Irish." Anson adds, in a non sequitur that would surely be applied to no other group in American society, "In short, since Puerto Ricans are Latinos, they must be lovers. And the Irish Church has no room for lovers." Mind you, he is saying that the celibate tradition is not an ancient and powerful one in Spanish Catholicism, and the Irish celibate clergy do not know how to live.

Presumably, Irish married laity are not lovers either — despite evidence that levels of husband-wife interaction are higher among the Irish than among other ethnic groups and despite the whole bawdy tradition of Irish culture (for which see Bryan Merriman's "The Midnight Court" or the writings of George Moore). Again we have the clever turn of the phrase, the calculated smear, the nasty crack well designed to sell an article to the nativist bigots who run "New Times."

And "American Catholicism today is as Irish as Catholicism has always been: conservative, intensely nationalistic, puritanical, obsessed with the continuing struggle between absolute good and absolute evil."

The number of wild comments in the sentence is mind-boggling. Catholicism has always been Irish? That will come as quite a surprise to the Roman Curia and to the French and German intellectuals. Maybe he means American Catholicism? This will come as very interesting news indeed in the chancery offices of the archdioceses of Philadelphia and Boston to say nothing of Brooklyn and Cincinnati. And nothing has changed in American Catholicism? Good heavens, where has Mr. Anson been for the past ten years? And the Irish conservative? Compared to whom? Presumably compared to the intellectuals and would-be intellectuals on "New Times" since when the Irish are compared with every other American religio-ethnic group they are more liberal on almost every statistical measure available. They have also been the leaders of the liberal reform movement within the Church. One need only mention names like O'Gara, Callahan, Egan, Higgins, Berrigan, Ryan, Muldoon, Ireland, Keane, England to prove that Mr. Anson doesn't know what he is talking about.

Still, he gets printed in "New Times." I repeat, could anyone write an article about blacks or Jews that reveals such appalling ignorance and still get published in an elite journal?

If that isn't prejudice and bigotry, then those traits just don't exist in American society anymore.

# Holidays to Honor Malcolm X, Dr. King

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — The birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. will be an official holiday in the District of Columbia public school system next year, and the U.S. Capitol may get a bronze statue or bust of the famed civil rights leader under legislation pending in Congress.

D.C. Schools Superintendent Barbara A. Sizemore also included the birthday of Malcolm X, the slain black nationalist, as an official school holiday in the 1974-75 calendar she submitted to the Board of Education, and designated 12 "commemorative days" in honor of black leaders.

About 95 per cent of students

attending elementary and secondary public schools in the District of Columbia are black, according to an aide of Mrs. Sizemore.

Students will have no classes on Jan. 15, birthday of Dr. King, and May 19, birthday of Malcolm X.

Special programs throughout the academic year are recommended to honor such noted blacks as abolitionist Frederick Douglass (Feb. 14), educator Mary McLeod Bethune (May 18), singer and political activist Paul Robeson (April 9), Nat Turner, leader of slave rebellions (Oct. 2), and Dr. Ralph Bunche, Nobel Peace Prize winner.

In order to maintain a 182-day school year for students, the Easter vacation would be shortened by two days to make up for the two holidays. The school board is expected to approve the calendar since it directed one of its committees to propose school holidays on the birthdays of Dr. King and Malcolm X.

Meanwhile, a bill has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.), with 35 co-sponsors, authorizing erection of a bronze statue or bust of Dr. King in the Capitol. He would be the first black American so honored.

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