

World, Nation, People... in Brief

Provided by NC News Service

World

Arrest of Bulgarian OK'd

Rome -- The Italian judge investigating the 1981 assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II has authorized the house arrest of Bulgarian Sergei Ivanov Antonov, suspected of complicity in the shooting, according to judicial sources. Judge Mario Martella ordered the transfer from a Rome prison to an apartment after medical tests were taken to determine if the 36-year-old Antonov was in failing health, the judicial sources said June 16.

Birth Control Policy Review

Bogota, Colombia -- Colombia's top health official has denied a cardinal's charge that the country is subsidizing mass sterilization, but indicated a now-defunct program may have paid for sterilizations by private doctors and said the government has begun a review of its family planning policies. The government also announced, in the wake of criticisms by Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo of Medellin, that health workers involved in family planning will be trained in natural birth control methods approved by the Catholic Church.

Vatican Workers Get Raise

Vatican City -- The Vatican on June 15 announced it has agreed to give its 1,800 lay workers raises ranging from 5 percent to 20 percent in the first contract agreement since a previous pact expired in 1980. Vatican officials said, however, that they are concerned about the burden the increases will place on the Vatican treasury. The Vatican workers' association, which includes 1,600 of the lay work force, regards the increases as a first step toward a basic adjustment of pay scales, which would include linking wages to the rate of inflation.

Nation

Vatican Ruling Protested

Washington -- The U.S. bishops are trying to get the Holy See to reverse a recent ruling that alcoholic priests can no longer get permission to celebrate Mass without consuming consecrated wine. From 1974 until last year, an alcoholic priest who underwent treatment could receive permission from his bishop to use unfermented grape juice when he celebrated Mass. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, last September sent a letter to U.S. bishops revoking that permission.

White House Rejects Abortion

Washington -- A proposed White House position paper on population policy rejects abortion as a form of population control and attributes poor nations' problems to adverse economic policies, not population growth. The draft document, prepared for use by U.S. representatives to the International Conference on Population in August in Mexico City, seems in some cases to parallel views already expressed by Pope John Paul II. Two former senators, Joseph Tydings, D-Md., and Robert Taft, R-Ohio, both involved with the Population Crisis Committee, criticized the proposals, saying they present "a potential foreign policy embarrassment of serious proportions."

S. Africa Change Predicted

Washington -- A black South African Catholic official who has been penalized for opposing racial discrimination said the church seeks peaceful change in South Africa, but the country's white-ruled government will decide whether apartheid ends quietly. "Change will come, must come," said Father Sompahiso Mkhahisa, secretary general of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference. He spoke June 14 at U.S. Catholic Conference headquarters in Washington on race relations in South Africa. He said South Africa's Catholic Church has been rooting out discrimination in its own institutions since 1976; its actions have included desegregating Catholic schools and promoting black Catholics into important church positions.

GE Hit by Protests

New York -- Twenty-six Catholic religious orders have announced the sale of their General Electric Co. stock, 49,000 shares worth an estimated \$2.4 million, to protest the company's continued production of nuclear warhead components. All are members of the ecumenical Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility in New York City. Since its founding in 1970, group members have used shareholder resolutions, legal actions, public hearings and consumer pressures to fight corporate policies which they say contribute to social injustice. A GE press representative said the sale won't have a noticeable effect on the company since it has nearly half a billion shares outstanding.

House Okays Amnesty For Illegal Aliens

Washington (NC) -- Amnesty for illegal aliens who came to the United States before 1982, a key element of immigration reform, was approved by the House June 20 after amendments failed to kill the provision or substantially narrow its scope.

Msgr. Daniel F. Hoye, general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference, described the amnesty provision June 20 as "the final hurdle" for the bill, H.R. 1510.

Msgr. Hoye said that although the USCC was disappointed with other provisions passed by the House, such as the plan to expand the guest worker program, tampering with amnesty would have been the one action which would have caused the USCC to withdraw support for the bill.

The USCC is the public policy arm of the U.S. bishops.

The National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, on the other hand, announced its opposition to the immigration reform proposals. It said passage of the bill would cause further problems without dealing with underlying immigration questions.

Msgr. Hoye, in letters to members of Congress the previous week, had urged that 1982 -- not 1980 -- be used as the cutoff date for granting amnesty to illegal aliens. He called amnesty

"the most important provision of the bill."

"Without legalization," he continued, "the proposed program of immigration reform and control would be a failure."

An amendment which would have removed the amnesty provision entirely was defeated June 20 by a vote of 233-195. That amendment was introduced by Rep. Bill McCollum, R-Fla.

Bishop Anthony J. Bevilacqua of Pittsburgh, chairman of the bishops' Migration and Tourism Committee, said in an interview June 20 that amnesty is necessary to help the subculture of exploited workers who are rejected by both their homeland and the United States.

Amnesty is a realistic solution to long-time problems, the bishop said. "There is no way these people can suddenly be gathered up and returned" to the countries they left years ago.

An amendment approved by a 247-170 vote June 19 retained the Jan. 1, 1982, cutoff date, but added a new condition. The amendment, introduced by Majority Leader James C. Wright Jr., D-Texas, would allow aliens to become temporary residents for two years, then permit them to become permanent residents if they were employed and had been studying English and U.S.

civics.

An amendment introduced by Rep. Dan Lungren, D-Calif., would have made the House version comply with the tougher two-tiered Senate bill. That amendment was voted down 245-181. The House also rejected, by a 246-177 vote, an amendment that contained a one-step 1980 cutoff for amnesty.

The Senate version of the immigration bill, passed in May, would grant permanent status to those who have been in the United States since before Jan. 1, 1977 and temporary status to those in the country prior to Jan. 1, 1980.

Rep. Robert Garcia, D-N.Y., chairman of the Hispanic Caucus, said, "If there's anything that's humane in this bill, it's the amnesty program." Without it, he said, "there would be no dignity for anybody."

The Hispanic Caucus had opposed many aspects of the bill -- which the House began debating June 11 -- including fines for employers who knowingly hire illegal aliens and the expansion of the guest worker program.

Msgr. Hoye said the USCC was "very disappointed in the guest worker provision, in the danger of another bracero program." The bracero program, from World War II until the 1960s, brought hundreds of thousands of Mexican agricultural workers into the United States.

Peace Academy Approved

Washington (NC) -- The Senate voted June 21 to establish a national peace academy to teach American and foreign leaders how to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.

The measure was adopted by voice vote as an amendment to a military authorization bill, which now goes to a House-Senate conference committee. The House version of the bill did not include a similar amendment.

According to supporters, the peace academy would be a non-profit national center using federal funds for research and training. Supporters say it could emphasize practical training in negotiating as well as examine ways to limit violence between nations and by terrorists and revolutionary organizations.

Martha Manning, a spokeswoman for the National Peace Academy Campaign, said the campaign is optimistic about the chances of the peace academy amendment surviving the House-Senate conference and "I don't anticipate trouble with the House floor vote."

The National Peace Academy Campaign is a non-profit public interest organization based in Washington. Members of the National Peace Academy Campaign advisory board include Holy Cross Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame, and Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen of Seattle.

The U.S. bishops specifically endorsed the peace academy in their 1983 pastoral letter, "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response."

Lay Group Planning U.S. Economic Report

By Jerry Filteau
NC News Service

Leaders of the Lay Commission on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy said June 20 that they will meet in July with Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee, head of the bishops' committee drafting a pastoral letter on Catholic teaching and the American economy.

The lay commission, chaired by former Treasury Secretary William Simon, also announced plans for the first five hearings in a series of regional forums it will hold to gather testimony in preparation for its "lay letter" on Catholic social teaching and the U.S. economy.

The commission is a group of prominent American Catholics formed by another lay group, the American Catholic Committee. Its project parallels that of Archbishop Weakland's committee, which has been gathering testimony to write the first draft of a national pastoral letter by the U.S. bishops on that topic.

Release of the first draft of the bishops' letter is expected shortly after presidential elections this November. Publication of the lay letter is expected within a few months after the bishops' first draft is released.

The lay commission had its first meeting June 13 in New York. On June 20, in response to requests by NC News for information on that meeting and the commission's plans, Simon and commission vice chairman Michael Novak released a joint statement.

They said that during the meeting Simon reported "that Archbishop Weakland had graciously accepted his (Simon's) invitation to meet with him in Milwaukee in July." Among other commission members who would participate in that meeting, they said, were Novak and business executive J. Peter Grace.

At least one bishop, Bishop J. Francis Stafford of Memphis, Tenn., has criticized the lay commission as a "faction" in the tradition of Catholic socio-political conservatives who reject the teaching of popes and bishops on social issues.

Responding to that criticism, Simon and Novak said, "In a general discussion (at the meeting) members of the commission agreed that the commission should cooperate with the bishops, while at the same time meeting its obligation to speak forthrightly on the U.S. economy."

Simon and Novak said commission members "agreed further that lay persons can make an important contribution if they speak on economic issues on the basis of their practical knowledge and experience as participants in the American economy."

The joint statement said some commission members criticized Catholic theology and social thought for not giving due regard to "the originality of the American experiment" in economic enterprise.

"Laymen can make up for the failure of theology and theologians to appreciate the practical success of this experiment," said Simon and

Novak. "Much as (Jesuit Father) John Courtney Murray expressed the originality of the American system of religious liberty, Catholic laymen can express the originality and value of the American economic system."

Father Murray was the chief inspiration behind the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on Religious Freedom," which stated that the role of civil government is not to establish or enforce adherence to a single religion but to insure the legitimate freedom of conscience, belief and religious practice of all its citizens.

Simon and Novak announced five scheduled hearings planned by the commission in the next two months to address specific issues concerning Catholic social teachings and the U.S. economy:

- July 11 in New York, on poverty and welfare.
- July 26 in Washington, on planning and the role of government in the economy.
- July 30 in New York, on trade and international development.
- Aug. 8 in Washington, on Catholic social teaching.
- Mid-August (no precise date set yet) in Los Angeles on productivity, job creation and economic growth.

Patricia Leeds, administrative director of the commission, told NC News that another hearing has also been set for Sept. 11 in Pittsburgh, on industrial competitiveness and decline. Additional hearings are planned, but dates, places and topics have not been definitively set, she said.

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