

These questions are becoming more and more pressing; and there is far too little usefully relevant material we can go to for help. On the one hand, there is the Catholic tendency to churn over principles nobody wants to dispute—in eloquent dissociation from practical actualities. On the other hand, we find Protestant thought, as in *The British Nuclear Deterrent*, so thoroughly at home in practical politics as to bow out absolute moral recognitions with an almost pragmatic nonchalance. Here, a world of self-enclosed casuistic manoeuvres; there, a succession of real-life problems, constantly giving the slip to acknowledged imperatives. Both dissociate life from doctrine. Either way, prophecy is evaded, and creative practical witness displaced by a chronic makeshift mediocrity.

Perhaps a thorough ecumenical confrontation between these tendencies might bring rescue. It is precisely their dissociation that renders them so disastrous. Might not a real meeting between Protestant realism and Catholic logic issue in that prophetic food for which all the sheep are hungering?

## Two Revolutions

### I. Cuba—The Expulsion of Priests

MGR BOZA MASVIDAL

*In our issue of February 1964 we published an article by Leslie Dewart, the underlying implication of which (also worked out explicitly in his book 'Christianity and Revolution: the lesson of Cuba') was that the Cuban Church had made a too simple identification of the Christian cause with anti-Communism and of anti-Communism with pro-Americanism. In the course of the article (p. 56) Mr Dewart referred to the voluntary exodus of more than four hundred priests after the failure of the Pig's Bay expedition. In this connection we have received the following document from Mgr Eduardo Boza Masvidal. Mgr Boza was appointed auxiliary bishop and vicar-general of Havana in February 1960 and was forced into exile by the*

*Cuban Government in September 1961, as a result of the worsening in relations between the Cuban Church and the Government following the Pig's Bay invasion. His expulsion and that of the 132 priests who were expelled at the same time is clearly to be distinguished from the earlier withdrawals of mainly non-Cuban priests, and his enforced exile and that of other Cuban priests is plainly an act of grave injustice on the part of the Cuban Government in which he deserves our deepest sympathy. The document sent us by Mgr Boza is a copy of his reply to the Cuban Ambassador to the Holy See. The Ambassador had protested against the inclusion of Cuba in an Exhibition of the Persecuted Church. The Bishop's reply is given under three main headings.*

1. The Ambassador points out that diplomatic relations still exist between Cuba and the Vatican.

This in no way signifies there is no persecution of the Church in Cuba. As is well known, the Holy See has no other object in view, in maintaining such relations, than the good of souls; it is not concerned to withdraw from any country so long as it is not obliged to do so, notwithstanding all the injustices to which the Church may be subjected.

The Ambassador points out that three Cuban bishops have been present at the Council. That is true; actually there were four. But it is not to be reckoned a great favour that three bishops obtained permission from the Government to go to the Council, nor is the fact that a route was given to them which obliged them to travel direct to Europe and to return in the same way under pain of not being allowed to re-enter Cuba.

2. The Ambassador asserts that the priests left Cuba because they chose to do so, that the Government respected their decision, and that later a certain number were expelled for counter-revolutionary activity.

Refreshing the Ambassador's memory, the Bishop reminds him that on May 1st 1961 Dr Fidel Castro, talking on television, told the foreign priests that they could pack their bags because they all had to depart. This, together with the tactics of overt hostility and creation of difficulties, caused some of them to go.

Seeing that this did not have the expected result and that the majority remained, the Government issued individual expulsion orders to many priests, both foreign and Cuban, giving them a peremptory instruction, at very short notice, usually two or three days, to leave the country. In the diocese of Camagüey this order included the Bishop and all the priests of the diocese. These orders were communicated in the majority

of cases orally to the persons concerned or to their bishops, and in some cases (as for example that of the Bishop de Pinar del Rio) a piece of paper was sent on which were written in pencil, and unsigned, the names of the priests who had to go. One of the priests who received such an order asked his informants: 'And what will happen if I don't go?' and was told: 'You will be regarded as a secret agent, remaining illegally in the country, and subject to the laws governing the same'. This was the threat which, in one form or another, accompanied these expulsion orders.

These tactics resulted in the departure of many priests in the first moments of surprise and stupefaction. Later, the Nunciature and the Bishops told the priests not to comply with such orders and to remain at their posts in spite of them and of the threats that accompanied them; many remained.

Again, seeing how little effect this had (against expectations), the Government put armed bands in all the churches of the Provinces, arresting the priests and taking them under military guard to the ship *Covadonga* which was in the Port of Havana. In so doing they deceived almost all of them, taking them away without telling them where they were going. The Bishop himself was removed from his office in a car by four armed men, without knowing where he was going, and put aboard this ship. Many were not able to take more than a suitcase, and all were thrown out without passport or documents of any sort.

As apparently the Ambassador was not aware of the number of those who departed in this way, the Bishop informs him that there were exactly 132, that is to say about half of those still remaining in Cuba. Of these 46 were native Cubans. 'We Cuban priests (says the Bishop) claim our right to live in our own country and to exercise our ministry there. We have not renounced these rights; they were taken from us only by force.'

The Ambassador says that these bishops and priests were expelled for counter-revolutionary activity. But to none was given a trial of any sort nor were they convicted of any crime. The fact is that they were collected indiscriminately, with more attention to numbers than to persons. Amongst them were some who were old and sick (for example Fr Estaban Rivas who was more than eighty years old and unable to walk). They were engaged in the exercise of their priestly ministry and in preaching the whole Gospel, including those parts of it that did not please the Government. And this is what the priests who still remain are doing.

So Cuba is left with 130 priests for the whole island, with about seven million inhabitants.

3. The Ambassador says that all the churches in Cuba remain open, functioning normally, and that there is complete religious freedom.

It is difficult to see how they can function normally if they have not the priests to look after them. Practically no country church has a resident priest. One will go, covering sometimes enormous distances, on Sunday or some other day to say Mass and administer the Sacraments, making heroic efforts to do what is required. If the Ambassador thinks that religious freedom consists in being able to celebrate some Masses in some of the churches, this is a pure equivocation.

In Cuba the Church has been deprived of all possibility of public propaganda through radio and television and all its programmes have been closed down. No religious functions are allowed outside the churches, nor may the catechism be taught. Catholics are subject to hostile demonstrations and attack on coming out of church. In April 1961 80% of the priests were arrested and all the churches were occupied by the military, some in the diocese of Camagüey being profaned, including profanation of the Blessed Sacrament. The Government has taken over the quarters of Catholic Action and other religious associations, the Novitiates of religious communities, Retreat houses, as well as some Convents, including that of the Madres Clarisas at Havana, making the religious leave the convent on the grounds that it was needed for something else. The President of Catholic Action Youth was arrested for the sole crime of being the president, and so with many others. The Church has been deprived of the right to teach and all its schools have been taken over, to the number of at least 300, in which 120,000 Cuban children and young folk were being educated.

The Ambassador says that a religious procession has never been interfered with, except in the sick imagination of United States propaganda.

Apparently, with that amnesia from which he suffers, he has crased from his memory the 10th September 1961 when the Government tried to disperse with gun-fire the thousands of Catholics who were unwilling to leave the annual procession of the Patroness of Cuba, Our Lady of Charity. The Bishop was an eye-witness and attended a number of those with shot-wounds who were brought into the sacristy of the church before being transferred to a hospital; and some thousands of people in Havana were also witnesses of these events.

If the Cuban government is worried because the country figures in

an Exhibition of the Persecuted Church, all it has to do is to restore to the Church its right to teach, give it back its schools, permit the return of all the priests and religious who have been compelled, in one way or another, to leave, permit them to celebrate public functions, guarantee freedom of worship and religious propaganda, and so on.

The Bishop concludes: 'We pardon wholeheartedly our persecutors and every day, without fail, I pray for them in Holy Mass. But it is our duty to defend truth and justice, and the rights of the Church and of the souls entrusted to us'.

## 2. Zanzibar—Some Reflections<sup>1</sup>

MICHAEL AND MARGARET COOK

We were at Mass that Sunday morning, not through bravery but through ignorance. The first attacks of the revolutionaries began in the small hours, but it was not until the congregation was leaving the 7.15 or 'English' Mass that the insurgents penetrated the town centre and shot down two young Goans from the church-goers. A few paces behind, trailing the smaller children desperately after us, we dodged into a side street and into a strange Arab house. There we spent the day breakfastless but unmolested, and crept back to safety in the evening before the curfew started, and after the shots seemed to have died away in the quarter. So began our experience, as a family newly arrived from England, of the latest of the world's political revolutions.

Next morning we discovered that we now lived in, and even worked for, the Commonwealth's only People's Republic. A great spirit of elation was in the air; everyone seemed happy, and gave a ready greeting to casual passers-by—the new salute, Churchill's famous 'V' sign. The high spirits and good fellowship of the first successes soon died away, however, at least outside the African townships, and the first signs appeared of the uncertainties that became characteristic of the revolutionary regime. When the fighting was over, when the looters were rounded up, the banks guarded and the civil service at work, the time came for the new government to declare a policy and carry through a work which nearly everyone wanted but which none

<sup>1</sup>The authors were present in Zanzibar from 10th January to 20th April 1964. They therefore have no first-hand knowledge of the situation there since the ratification of union with Tanganyika.