

Croat 'Himmler' Finds U.S. Haven

By Drew Pearson

LOS ANGELES — At Surfside, Calif., not far from Long Beach, lives very quietly a man officially charged with instigating the death of 700,000 Orthodox Serbs and over 60,000 Jews.

He is Andrea Artukovic, frequently called the "Himmler of Croatia," who was Minister of the Interior for the Nazi Croatian Republic under Hitler during the war.

Artukovic's case becomes important at this time, first because the man who finally led him to flee Croatia, President Tito of Yugoslavia, arrives in the United States today; second, because the United States Supreme Court has just set an important precedent in the case of former dictator Perez Jimenez of Venezuela, that an exile charged with crimes against his own country must return to face trial.

Artukovic has previously been ruled deportable because, among other things, he entered this country from Ireland under a false name, Aloys Anich. However, the Immigration Service has stayed his deportation on the ground that he would be subject to persecution if forced to return to Yugoslavia. But under the

Court's ruling in the Perez Jimenez case, Artukovic is now definitely deportable.

Artukovic is a Catholic. Hitherto he has been able to get strong Catholic support, especially from the former Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, Luke E. Hart. Hart, together with various Croatian exiles, have tried to picture Tito as the persecutor of religious minorities.

The Vatican Protested

However, the record shows that the Vatican, plus many of the Catholic bishops in Yugoslavia, was deeply shocked over the wholesale murder of Jews and Protestants under the direction of Artukovic when he exercised police power over Nazi Croatia.

Artukovic set up a "Central Office for Jewish Affairs" and on April 30, 1941, only 20 days after Hitler took control of Croatia, issued a decree "on racial affiliation" defining those persons who were considered Jews, and on the same day issued a decree on "the protection of Aryan blood and the honor of the Croatian people."

There followed a long list of decrees, all signed by Artukovic, and a series of ghastly wholesale exterminations by burning, mass burial, throwing people over cliffs, so that six months later, on Nov. 7, 1941, the Catholic Bishop of Mostar wrote to Archbishop Stepinac: "The Stozerniks and Logor-

niks (Croatian Nazi officials) have abused their positions. . . . The results have been horrifying. Human beings hunted down and caught like animals; they have been slaughtered; they have been thrown alive over precipices. The deputy mayor of Mostar, Baltic, a Moslem, said — he would do better to keep quiet and not say such things—that at Ljubiaje in one day 700 schismatics (non-Catholics) were thrown into a pit.

"From Mostar and from Capljina, six railway truckloads of women, girls and children under 18 were taken to Surmnacl. They were all made to get out. They were taken into the mountains and mothers and children alike were thrown over a precipice.

"In the Parish of Klpecl, 700 schismatics from the surrounding villages were killed. It would take too long to give any more figures. In Mostar itself, hundreds and hundreds of schismatics have been bound and taken out of town and slaughtered like animals."

Conversion by Force

So wrote the Bishop of Mostar. He added that the Italians, who were both Catholic and fighting against Tito and the Allies, had intervened to defend the Orthodox Serbs and Jews.

The Bishop of Manjaluks

joined in the protest against "bestial cruelties" and "indescribable ferocity." Archbishop Saric of Sarajevo wrote: "The policy of the authorities is to convert as many Orthodox as possible, but unfortunately they are not setting about it the right way."

When word of these atrocities reached the Vatican, Cardinal Tisserant, secretary for the Eastern Congregation, condemned the operations of Croatian Catholics and the Croatian authorities as "unworthy of civilized human beings," while Archbishop Stepanic addressed an appeal to the Croatian Nazi regime asking for a stop to mass executions and asking for special treatment for Jews and Serbs who had entered the Catholic Church, and to exempt the Jews from wearing yellow arm bands.

When the Yugoslav government requested Artukovic's extradition for trial as a war criminal, the State Department supported the request. After much tedious litigation the Supreme Court ruled him deportable.

However, the Justice Department has not acted. It is in the hands of Attorney General Kennedy to alone for the terrible atrocities against over 800,000 non-Catholics. With the mere signing of his name to a deportation order he can do so.

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