

10. Castro Regime Seizing Parochial Schools and Expelling Foreign Priests

The regime is moving against private schools in Cuba following Castro's 1 May announcement that laws will be passed "in the next few days" to nationalize private and parochial schools and expel foreign priests.

There are some 250 parochial schools in Cuba, with a normal enrollment of about 130,000 students. The American-founded Villanueva University was specifically slated for nationalization in Castro's May Day speech. The church has never exercised great strength in Cuba outside the educational field and has had relatively little

political influence. Over 500 of Cuba's approximately 700 priests are non-Cubans, most of them Spaniards. Castro said in his speech that "honest" foreign priests may remain in Cuba if they ask permission and said there is no reason why the Catholic Church cannot "coexist" with the new social system in Cuba, now that the "bourgeois republic" is disappearing.

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