

THE NEW INQUISITION

By JOSEPH ZACK.

DURING the dark middle ages, dark because of the atrocities committed by the papacy and its clergy, to preserve the feudal system against the then rising revolutionary bourgeoisie, the feudal ruling class, led by the papal hierarchy, instituted a regime of black terror that became known as the *Holy Inquisition*.

The black terror of the Holy Inquisition, "The Tribunal of Faith," became particularly vicious as the peasantry, that is, the serfs, began to join the nascent bourgeoisie of the cities against the churchly feudal lords. This congregation of sadists, Catholic clergy, priests, monks and "sisters" all included, was then headed by his "holiness" Pope Gregory IX.

In Altensee, Germany, there is a monument which reminds the world as it is today of the deeds of this dead sadist who applied "the Sword of God" to several thousand traditionally independent peasants who refused to become serfs to the bishops and feudal lords of those days. These simple souls had the idea that the results of their labor should go to those that work and not to the loafing clergy and dukes. Hence, under terrible tortures this population of "heretics" was murdered almost to the last man.

Inquisition Harasses Poor.

In the south of France, north of Spain and Lombardy, the Inquisition was used against the poor but very numerous *Katherers*, a people of peasants and handicraftsmen who could not understand that the clergy, feudal lords and their military are entitled to bathe in luxury, while the laboring people should starve and suffer from cholera, pest and other diseases. They got it into their heads that the church is headed not by a "holy man, successor of Christ," but by the devil himself—they looked to Rome, where the high clergy lived in the most sensual pleasures, in the greatest of luxury, where the Vatican was one great fancy bordello and where everything that they thought that Christ condemned reigned supreme.

For 300 years the masters of Rome were busy rooting out these dangerous ideas through the most fiendish tortures. The monuments to their fantastic fiendishness still lay all over the southern part of France.

No one should think that the Inquisition was per chance one of the "visitations" of the Catholic church, for it was upheld by all the popes for 300 years. The high point of the Inquisition in France was reached when the "holy" Pope Gregory XIII opened the slaughter of the Huguenots (1572) with a "Thank God" service and a memorial Medaille.

The sadistic fiendishness and abysmal depravity of the popes of Rome played its most stupendous orgies however in the country of their greatest reliance, Spain. Here his "Christian Majesty," Philip III, the strong man of the pope in Spain, upheld the Inquisition by transforming the whole country into a phantasmagoria of slaughter and torture. During the 300 years of the Inquisition in Spain, which was to crush the bourgeois opposition to feudalism, various bourgeois historians estimate nearly 400,000 persons, mostly serfs, peasants and artisans, perished in the dungeons of the Inquisition and on the "Christian" convict ships of Queen Isabella.

Hide Class Character.

The church always found a way, of course, to hide the true class-character of its regime. The black terror was supposed to be against the heathen, against the Jews, against the Moors, etc. Never would the church admit that it was against the laboring population and for the preservation of the most barbarous of all systems of exploitation, *Feudalism*. Religious hypocrisy was used to cover the class character of the black terror, just as the bourgeoisie today oppresses in the name of "preservation of democracy."

Toward the end of the black terror the weak sex, the women, became the object of the sadistic pleasures of the clergy. "Witch" hunting was introduced under the reign of Pope Innocence VI (how innocent!), Clemens IV and Sixtus IV. Thousands of women, young and old, were burned at the stake while the popes maintained public brothels from which they received 20,000 ducats of income per year. (The church still indirectly maintains many brothels in Spain.)

In addition to the above-mentioned "holy" men, the pope: that acquired particular renown for their fiendishness during the reign of "faith" were Popes Paul II and Paul IV, who ruled during the reformation. Particularly the last mentioned one was such a fiend that the embittered people of Rome threw his cursed statue into the Tiber.

Only in 1781 did the world see the last death sentence in Spain under the rule of the Inquisition; that is about 150 years ago. Never have the "infallible" rulers of the church of Rome repudiated Inquisition as a policy. They only suspended its application, not having the strength, with the rise of the people's revolutionary movement, then led by the nascent bourgeoisie, to put this "holy law" any longer into effect. Even today the popes of Rome are still committed to the papal bull of Gregory IX which inaugurated the Inquisition in the fourteenth century and which aims to remove "heresy" from the earth by death.

That much about the history of the gentlemen of the Vatican who today in their bottomless hypocrisy dare to speak about "freedom of conscience" and "persecutions" of their dark breed in the Soviet Union. What about today?

Where Faith Burns Hottest.

We will take the most Catholic countries, those countries where the faith burns hottest, that is, the Spanish-speaking countries, and illustrate by the practices there today what the Inquisition was yesterday.

Let us take the flower of the Catholic faith in South America, *Venezuela*. In this country of three and one-half millions population, immensely rich in natural resources, bigger than New England and New York state combined, there are about 15,000 political prisoners in the dungeons blessed by the church, and twice that many are outside in the country. As the regime there is in many respects typical of other Catholic countries in Latin America and Europe, we will describe the regime there more in detail. The bulk of the land is owned by the Catholic church and Gomez, the dictator. The regime is sustained by Washington because of the rich oil resources, mostly owned by Standard Oil. The slightest criticism of the regime is punished by the tortures we will

enumerate. Only lately a poor clerk who dared to send to the governor of the oil area clippings of the foreign press, criticizing the regime, was condemned to 20 years' imprisonment. No opposition, much less an organization of that character, is tolerated in the country. Here the Catholic church and Washington show their true face. Here is a brief description of what happens to those that dare to forget in these most Catholic countries that they are slaves.

The "Red" Road of Venezuela.

To construct railroads is very expensive. Modern automobile roads are cheaper, particularly if they are built by convict labor. Were not the convict ships of the "Christian" Queen Isabella one of the main sources of strength of the "holy" regime in Spain?

The Chain Gang.

Anyone that is in Venezuela caught protesting against the regime, even in whispers, is transformed into a "Vago," a chain gang convict. No sooner the "citizen" is caught often upon a mere denunciation, just as in the Inquisition days, he is, without any further ceremony, dressed into a coarse convict suit of red material taken to one of the roads under construction and submitted to the hardest labor from sunrise to sunset and very often continual labor until exhaustion. He is clothed red not only as an irony, but to hide his bleeding from the chains around his legs and brutal whippings administered continually (like on Isabella's convict ships) by the guards, in order to drive them on to the maximum of exertion. They live on a loaf of corn bread and a few spoons of beans a day. At night they are chained together, to prevent escape and sleep, irrespective of weather, next to their work on the road. They awake with the crack of the whip. At the least slowing down in work the whip cracks over their bodies, and if any should dare to even show a sign of resistance he is whipped till his skin peels off his back. The roads, constructed across swampy, yellow fever and malaria infested regions, are built in this manner. Under such treatment they die like flies, of course, but, you see, the death penalty has been abolished in "humanitarian" Venezuela.

This is the regime for the mass of prisoners. But then there is special treatment for those that are considered of special importance.

The Jails.

The "blessed" Gomez, dictator, "elected" by the "democratic" congress—you see there is election, congress and all that—has made prisons of two old castles, San Carlos and Puerto Cabello. There is also "La Rotunda," situated in the center of the capital. The procedure of breaking the rebellious is as follows: The political prisoner is put in a square hole of two yards diameter. There is no light and very little air. He is kept in there half naked, he is chained, a bit of bread and a spoonful of beans is his meal per day. He is deprived of all communication with the outside world or reading material. Very often water is poured deliberately into the hole. He is whipped and tortured by the brutes especially selected for their depravity to guard him. This is his introduction to prison life. On the slightest pretext he is put through the second treatment. Bars of iron "grillos" are attached, weighing 60 to 80 pounds, in a way that he can neither eat nor sleep. Ulcers form where the iron is fixed on the body, and often he is given "company," that is, another prisoner is attached to him with the same bars, which is worse than the isolation. Very often they are left to die this way, and then they are transferred to the hospital, to make the relatives believe they died naturally. The great majority of those that got into these prisons never left them alive. This is the treatment for the mass of prisoners in the prisons. But then there are prisoners that receive "special" attention.

Tortures.

In order to obtain confessions they have a special commission of experts from Italy. The Inquisition specialists have devised three particularly agonizing tortures, the "Tortol," the "Soga" and the "Cepo."

The one particularly used to get confessions is the "Tortol." This consists of a rope, tied in such a way that it can be put around the man's most sensitive part. The rope is then attached through a tackle on the ceiling and the prisoner, hands tied, is lifted to the ceiling very slowly. The pain is such that often the man swoons before he can even declare his intention to confess. He is then let down and refreshed, and, if he does not confess, put through the same procedure until he is mutilated. Similar torture is carried out in various fashions. Another torture with the rope is to tie it around the chest and then gradually tighten it more and more till the rope penetrates the flesh and crushes the ribs. Very often the tortured, having been arrested upon false denunciation, have nothing to reveal, tell lies and are tortured till they implicate other innocents, or till they die.

The "Soga" is a torture by which they hang the "prisoner" by his feet till the blood runs out of his mouth, nose, eyes and ears; if he does not "confess" he dies of hemorrhage.

The "Cepo" is a torture by which they make the prisoner crouch and pass his hands beneath his legs. The fingers are then tied up in a certain way. The rope is then tightened up till it penetrates into the flesh and the fingers are stretched out under the weight and strain. The pain is so awful that the victims very often become insane.

Tortures Today.

The tortures of today reflect the tortures of the inquisition of yesterday. Just read the account of the dungeons and tortures of catholic (fascist) Italy, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, etc., etc. In what do they differ from the "heathen" in China? You will find the experience of the inquisition applied to the working people under the blessings of the catholic church even today. These very degenerates who speak about the "sacriligious crimes of the Bolsheviks" never utter a word against that.

Needless to say the proletariat, the rising class, now in power in Russia, the class that will abolish all classes, has no need whatsoever to use the methods of the "Christians," of the Vatican. They do away with this hideous breed which thrives upon the ignorance of the plain people, by the very growth of Socialism which destroys the material base of these values. Surviving from the past. The monstrous hypocrisy of the popes when they speak of "freedom of conscience, now is of service in revealing to thousands the true character of these human scum.

Christianity arose during the struggle

"LET ME CALL YOU SWEET



From Gitlow

By ANDREW OVERGAARD.

WHILE the workers throughout the United States on March 6th showed the tremendous desire to struggle, and it was proved to the most doubtful that the analysis made by the Central Committee of our Party on the radicalization of the American working class is 100 per cent correct and also that our primary task is the united front from below, the Lovestone renegades are travelling further and further into complete amalgamation with the A. F. of L. fakers and the Muste-ites.

While the rank and file miners in the United States through bitter struggles have shown that they will have nothing to do either with the Lewis machine nor with the Farrington-Fishwick fakers, while the great majority of the coal miners in the South, in Ohio, the Anthracite and in Western Pennsylvania are today unorganized and the only fighting force in existence in these territories is the National Miners' Union, Mr. Gitlow, the trade union fig-leaf for Mr. Lovestone, still insists on complete orientation and support to the Farrington-Howat-Fishwick group of fakers. In the April 7 issue of the Revolutionary Age, Mr. Gitlow attacks the analysis made in Labor Unity on March 8 to the effect that "the main job of the miners is to smash the Fishwick-Farrington convention scheduled for March 10th in Springfield, Illinois. This convention is organized by and for the coal operators. It is a stool-pigeon convention."

against slavery. Slavery was abolished, but the people, those that produce, were not freed. The institutions created in the struggle evolved into supporters and organizers of the new feudal order, of which the catholic church became the expression par excellence.

In order that humanity might progress, it became necessary to overthrow the regime of the church, feudalism sought to save itself through black terror and the holy inquisition. Political freedom and bourgeois individualism was necessary to develop the productive forces and resources of the earth. The bourgeoisie who led the masses against the church and feudalism, terror-stricken before the desire of the masses of working people of town and country to fully liberate themselves, went only half-way. The possessing classes compromised under bourgeois hegemony. Now the remnants of the feudal order, the most reactionary landlords of whose interest the catholic church is the typical representative, are in the vanguard of the white terror regime being inaugurated by the finance bourgeoisie which has expropriated the masses of individual producers and made the masses wage slaves or peons. In old inquisition, the catholic church, is the seeks to save itself by terror, just like feudalism, just like the slave order of bygone days.

Use Most Desperate Means.

The expropriated masses, now working by the thousands in huge enterprises, are organizing to expropriate the expropriators and to establish collective economy, Communism. Hence, as in the past, the dying ruling class use the most desperate means. The feudal classes and big capital merge into one reactionary stream, the cosack and the cannon, confronted by the masses of exploited, who Communist Party. They seek to prevent the now have their own leadership—the world destruction of their dying regime by combination of all possessing classes against the proletariat and the peasant and peon by the use of white terror, by "the new inquisition."

Nevertheless, gentlemen, your end is already in sight. Even the fact that all of your churches are blessing and sanctioning the "new inquisitions," Protestant, Jewish, reverends and rabbis, and are accepting the leadership of the old inquisition, the catholic church, is the best proof of that, and this time it will be the end of all inquisitions, not in hundreds of years, but in a few years time will be up.