

M
16 April
VII/749

BULGARIA

PERSECUTION (2200)
Arrests (2205)

RELIGION (2800)
Persecution (2804)
Roman Catholic Church (2806)

Persecution Of Catholics.

SOURCE TRIESTE : Bulgarian in exile in contact with high Bulgarian political and commercial circles.

DATE OF OBSERVATION : February 1953.

EVALUATION COMMENT : The persecution of the Roman Catholic Church was started in Bulgaria as early as 1943 and has been carried on until now with an almost unbelievable thoroughness, the final aim of which is an Autocephalous Bulgarian Catholic Church.

Thus, there are at present not more than some tens of the 127 priests still at liberty in the small Catholic community in Bulgaria and a few religious men and women of the 200 who used to be there. There are no longer any of the religious institutions and houses left from the 18 which existed before, and very few of the 57,500 faithful who had previously been there.

The annihilation of the Catholic Church in Bulgaria by the Communist Government could not have been more total, more serious and bloody (see Item 2906/53.)

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Although they are being quietly arrested and confined without trials people know that all persons belonging to the Catholic faith continue to disappear from the circulation in Bulgaria.

An acquaintance of our source (name not revealed) was sent to BELENE to serve a 5 years term after having been arrested for about one month. At any rate, these arrests and confinements are carried out without any trials whatsoever. It would not be convenient for the Communists to try these arrestees since there would otherwise be too many such trials. Too many persons could secretly testify that the defendants are not responsible for any bad actions, and besides the government wants to give the impression that it is not persecuting any religion whatever it may be.