

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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ALL SPORTS ARE NOT BANNED

by

Herbert W. Armstrong

Some of the youths at the second Camp at Orr, Minnesota may have misunderstood what I said to them about COMPETITION.

Truly, COMPETITION, not cooperation is the attitude Satan innoculates into human minds. But that does NOT mean all sports are wrong or banned in God's Church, College and schools.

The LAW OF GOD is the way of righteousness. Sin is the transgression of the Law. The Law of God is given us in the broadest principle and also magnified into the Ten Commandments, and even into many further specific commands that are merely magnifications of the PRINCIPLES of the Ten Commandments. God expects us--through His Spirit and spiritual UNDERSTANDING--to APPLY these PRINCIPLES of His Law to specific actions.

The basic Law is LOVE, outflowing toward God above all else, and secondarily "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

To HARM the other fellow, and to gain by so doing for SELF, is a kind of competition that is wrong. Hostility toward the other is sin. To get the best of another in a deal for one's own benefit is wrong.

Suppose you are an architect laying out a golf course. The one who wins at golf is not the one who GETS the most by taking it away from the other. In golf the player does not prevent the other from doing his or her best. The architect who designs and lays out the plans for building a golf course is not breaking God's Law when he designs sandtraps, small lakes or pools, or leaves certain trees to HELP the player to increase his skill. These hazards hurt no one, but are an incentive and help, to developing skill.

Two men or women--or several--in a race are not harming the other runners if they run according to the rules. The Apostle Paul uses winning a race as an example of a Christian developing character.

So, golf is not a wrong competition--nor is any race at any distance or hurdle race, or long jump, high jump, pole vault or other field competition in a track and field meet. At Ambassador we have banned the hammer throw because it might endanger others--but not because it is a wrong or unfair competition.

Now take basketball. Guarding on defense is, if within the rules, the same in principle as the sandtrap, clump of trees, or pond on a golf

course. The rules make it a foul if a defensive player prevents a shot by actual body contact or holding. If basketball is played according to the rules IN A RIGHT ATTITUDE, it can be a very invigorating, enjoyable game not violating God's Law. All depends on the ATTITUDE of the players.

In interschool or intercollegiate competition, or the pro game, the ATTITUDE too often is BAD. When it is--when there is a spirit of HOSTILITY toward the other side--then it does break God's Law. Therefore, at Ambassador College and in God's Church, competition against those outside the Church, or intercollegiate competition at Ambassador is BANNED!

Behind my back when I was away from Pasadena all but about 60 days in a year, others without my knowledge or consent got Ambassador into intercollegiate competition. THE RESULTS WERE BAD! That is OFFICIALLY BANNED from now on.

But before that, in intramural games between our own classes, a GOOD SPIRIT was shown, and even an objectionable call by an official was not yelled at or received in hostile attitude.

Boxing is definitely BANNED. God did not design and create the human brain and head to be pummeled and knocked senseless by an antagonist.

Wherever a game in sports involves ANTAGONISTS--in HOSTILE ATTITUDE to harm the other and/or to "GET" from the other--to get the best of the other--then a harmful, Satanic and evil attitude enters in, and the sport is EVIL, not good.

Sometimes there is a fine line between what is within and what is outside God's Law.

Basketball is such a sport. So is football, (American football), but because football is such a violent body contact sport, it TOO OFTEN is played in an ATTITUDE OF HOSTILITY, and is too DANGEROUS and fraught with PHYSICAL INJURY. Therefore it must be BANNED so far as participation by God's Church or people is concerned.

Soccer does not embody the same evils.

Baseball, softball, volleyball, while competitive, do not necessarily involve HOSTILITY, harm to others, or trying to prevent the opponent from doing his best. When played in God's attitude toward others these are acceptable and NOT banned.

The same is true of tennis. In pro tennis, in the past few years, there have been two or three "bad guys" who have brought unsportsmanship onto the courts. But tennis as traditionally played is a clean sport and acceptable.

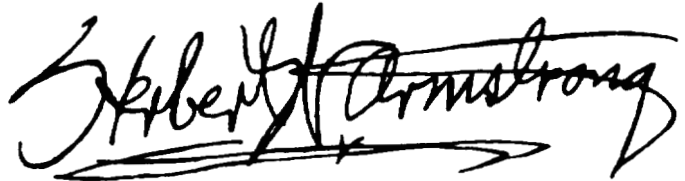
This is sufficient to illustrate the application of the PRINCIPLE of God's Law to sports. That participated in with an attitude of HOSTILITY toward the opponent is evil. That which HARMS mentally or physically an opponent is evil.

Satan is the author of COMPETITION based on hostility, harm to the opponent, GETTING by taking FROM an opponent--to his harm or loss.

God's way is LOVE TOWARD neighbor equal to love of self.

Competition in business which TAKES FROM or HARMS the competitor is evil competition. Competition which HELPS the opponent by stimulating him to do his best or to do better, but does not harm--rather benefits the opponent--is healthy competition. So competition can be EVIL, or GOOD, depending primarily on the attitude in which it is participated.

The very name SATAN means "Adversary." But Satan is an EVIL adversary, who desires to HARM--who has a spirit of HOSTILITY. If it has GOD'S SPIRIT of "GIVE"--help, encourage, co-operate, stimulate for GOOD, based on an attitude of LOVE--it is right, not wrong.



FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

Appreciation for Ministerial Refreshing Program

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

My wife and I are very grateful for having been included in this third Ministerial Refreshing Program. After reading the fine comments of those who had taken part in the first two sessions, we came in anticipation and with great expectations. They were more than fulfilled!

We are especially impressed with the dedication, loyalty, and humility of those you have chosen to instruct us. The classes are meaty; leaving us satisfied with practical scriptural guidance for our ministry. Questions to which we had received either conflicting or no answers in the 70s are now being answered forthrightly.

We thank God daily for raising you back up to turn His Church around. Thank you for maintaining an intensive struggle to direct the Church according to God's Word. The good fruit is everywhere evident.

Refreshed aptly terms how we feel through these sessions. We're looking forward to putting it into practice.

Dave and Linda Fiedler

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Mr. Armstrong, thank you so much for allowing me to attend the second Ministerial Refreshing Program. It was my first opportunity to be on Ambassador Campus as a student.

Last Sabbath, I shared my enthusiasm with the Peoria and Macomb congregations as I told how fine the atmosphere is at Ambassador and how encouraging it was to be taught the basic foundational truths by dedicated men of God.

Response from the congregations was extremely positive; there was again an expression of gratitude that God has raised you up to set the Church and College on the right path. The brethren are solidly behind you, Mr. Armstrong. They want to do what is right and welcome strong leadership.

The opportunity to become better acquainted with Mr. Tkach and his staff was really uplifting.

The spirit among the ministers attending the Program was particularly inspiring. As a "home-grown" local elder, I knew none of the men personally when the session began, but by the end I felt a bond with them as if we had spent years together.

Thanks again for this special opportunity to gain the grounding to better serve God and the brethren.

Bob Druien

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

Words cannot express to you the gratitude Marie and I feel for being given the opportunity to attend the Ministerial Refreshing Program.

The subjects discussed were basic and clear--the very foundation stones of our belief. The men conducting the program are of the highest quality and displayed not only fidelity to you and God and the Church, but they also are true leaders, having proven their zeal, dedication and love throughout the years.

We can see more clearly now just how God is using you and this Church to be a fountainhead of knowledge on earth. God's truth has been in the Bible for centuries. Still God has used you, and is using you, to make His truth understandable to mankind. Of course the "Living Waters" of God cannot be understood without God's help and His Spirit. But now God is using you through your personal visits and sermons, your books, articles and other literature--yes, and even your ads written to the attorney general--to make His truth understandable to all who will listen and read with an open mind. Never again can man say, "We can't understand God's Word." Now those who read our literature and still reject the truth can only say, "We don't want to understand." God is making His truth available to the world through you and this Church, and it is a great honor to be your co-worker in this commission from God.

The refreshing program is truly refreshing and will help all of us to do a better job. Certainly members around the world will also benefit from what we have learned. Hopefully we ministers will strive more diligently than ever to help our members envision the responsibilities we have been

given to help the world understand God's truth. And hopefully we will all work harder to do our individual part in preparing for God's coming Kingdom.

Thanks again for the refreshing program and for everything you have done for us all. Warm regards to Mrs. Armstrong.

Art and Marie Docken

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

We would very much like to express our gratitude for our opportunity to attend the Ministerial Refreshing Program. You certainly named it appropriately for it was truly a "refreshing" experience. Between the sumptuous outlay of spiritual guidance and exhortation and Mr. Green's fancy-fixin', it was like a three-week Feast of Tabernacles! It was so encouraging to hear from men who are obviously loyal and dedicated servants of God and continuously supportive of your position and work. We most certainly enjoyed the Program, benefitted greatly from it and are even more determined to do our part as your assistants. Again, thank you very much.

Ken and Marki Smylie

A Special Word of Thanks for Prayers and Concern

Dear Mr. Tkach and Ministerial Services Staff:

I would like to take a moment or two to express our appreciation for the prayers and concern for my wife Donna after her recent accident that severed about one-half of her outer ear. Desperately desiring the prayer and support from God's people, I telephoned Mr. Blackwell on a Wednesday afternoon about what had happened. He gave us reassurance of God's care and said he would mention it to others to pray about. There was no big fanfare, but as a result of that conversation both my wife and I have been joyously impressed by the concern of people in Pasadena. Each time I have called Pasadena since then, the operators and personnel ask about her condition.

Much has been said recently about the change of spirit and atmosphere at Pasadena over the past months. The love and concern we have received from the team at Pasadena PROVES to us that God's Spirit and attitude are once again at the center of the Work, setting us all an example. Thank you very, very much.

Roger and Donna Abels

Comment About Bible Study Tape on Galatians 3 & 4

Mr. Armstrong, I wanted to drop you this quick note to let you know that after I listened to the tape of the study you gave on Galatians 3 & 4, I had learned more about these chapters of the Bible than I had ever learned during and since my years at Ambassador College. Thank you!

Ralph Orr

Weekly Letter Comments

Brethren in field churches are most appreciative of the G-II visits by ministers from Pasadena. The documentary on the State's attack, together with the sermons, inform, encourage and inspire. Members also wholeheartedly support Mr. Armstrong's informing of the public about the State vs. Church issue through the full-page newspaper ads. And readers overseas express their thrill at being able to receive The PLAIN TRUTH. They see a remarkable difference between it and other magazines.

Ministerial Visits From Pasadena Inform and Inspire

We are writing to say a giant "thank you" for sending Dr. Kessler and Mr. White to speak to us last Sabbath. It was special and we felt really inspired. It was as if we had heard you, Mr. Armstrong, speak personally to us. We are also very grateful for the documentary film. We will pray that it bears good fruit in the upcoming months.

--Ann Dean (Buffalo, N.Y.)

It was wonderful to hear Mr. Neff and Mr. Dean here in Augusta and see the film on what happened at the College and what the attorney general did. Those disfellowshipped members will some day have to answer to God Almighty.

--Mrs. Josephine Oliver (Gardiner, ME)

I really enjoyed our recent services with Mr. Dean Blackwell and Mr. Aaron Dean. The sermon, the film and the question-and-answer session were very good. Thank you so much for this privilege.

--Mrs. Ida Rice (Burton, MI)

We all met together in Chicago this past Sabbath and had a very fine sermon from Mr. Rader. I am sure everyone learned a lot from him and was able to get to know him much better. We also appreciated the film showing the truth about the State's attack on God's Church and the loyalty of the brethren in California.

--Mr. & Mrs. Robert Warden (Crete, IL)

Last Sabbath we saw the film on the takeover of the College by the State of California. It is hard to believe things like these happen in a free country. But, as we know, Satan has no restraints other than when God directly stops him. The film certainly was inspiring and encouraging. We are very thankful for the opportunity to see it. After the film, Mr. Dibar Apartian gave a most inspiring sermon.

--Mr. & Mrs. Levi Troyer (Sugar Creek, OH)

Newspaper Ads Have Impact!

I do not have a T.V., so I did not hear Mike Wallace, but I liked the advertisement asking him why did not tell the turth. I also liked the ads addressed to the attorney general. I certainly

am back of the Church and definitely not of the public supporting the attorney general! God allows the Church to struggle, but there will always be a Church of God!

--Mrs. Vera Call (Doty, WA)

I saw your latest ad in the WN and I had to say you surely get to the point of the matter. You lay the "plain truth" before everyone showing that the charges against you and Mr. Rader by the attorney general are based on outright lies!

--Glen Greenfield, (Girard, OH)

We were very glad to see your open letter advertisements addressed to the California Attorney General. It was timely, forthright and hard-hitting! I hope to see more of these advertisements in the future and I would hope you could place some in the Washington Post. There are many concerned people here in the Washington, D.C. area, who need to know that the Constitution only covers 49 states while exempting the "Church of California."

--John Parker (Riverdale, MD)

The courage and strength displayed in the recent series of full-page newspaper ads which you have written against the California intrusion, have given me renewed faith and inspiration to withstand the negative forces and influences this world is so full of. The illegal action by the State of California has only increased my faith further that this is the true Church of God founded in 31 A.D. Your words of wisdom continue to provide me with a source of inspiration, guidance, and yes, much needed correction.

--Malcolm Thomas (Perry, FL)

With our first tithe check we wanted to let you know what an impression your ads are having at my husband's office. Someone brings them in each time and comments float around the office! It is very interesting!

--Mrs. Donald Peabody (Rowland Hts, CA)

What Overseas Readers Say

Greetings in the precious name of Jesus my soon coming king. It's my joy and pleasure to compliment this organization for its magazine of understanding. While at work I read many of your magazines from one of my friends and he encouraged me to write you for the monthly magazine, so here I am requesting it.

Not only am I requesting, but also other friends who visited my country a few months ago. We all would like to be your customers from now on and are expectantly waiting for your reply. May God continue to bless this organization to proclaim Christ to nations worldwide.

--Owen Mitchell (Guyana)

I was real gratified to receive, once again, my copy of The PLAIN TRUTH. Thank you. To us in Uganda, who had been denied the privilege of receiving and reading informative magazines like The PLAIN TRUTH by the authorities, the copy you have just sent shows that the Almighty God loves our country. We pray that the freedom recently granted persists so that we continue to receive The PLAIN TRUTH, let alone tranquility, development and social and economic progress of our country. Again, thank you.

--DWK (Uganda)

This is the first time I've ever considered writing in to a magazine. I just have to tell you that your magazine is fantastic!! I cannot think of a better way to discuss the Bible than to relate it to the state of the world today. I have to admit that I didn't think I was a religious person before I read your magazine. I tried reading the Bible, but I didn't know where to start. I tried going to church, but it seemed that people were just there for appearance's sake--they looked so bored. I just shrugged religion off as something people did in their spare time so that they could label themselves "good" people.

Your magazine really puts religion in a perspective that I can relate to. I'm majoring in philosophy in university so you can see how important realizing the meaning of something is to me. I would also be very interested in reading your book, "Why Were You Born?" Thank you very much!

--Lori Richert (Winnipeg, Canada)

I thank you for your letter and The PLAIN TURTH. While I much appreciate and admire your endeavors in bringing about peace and harmony among the people, I loathe and condemn the persons, with vested interests, who are insinuating absurd charges against your integrity in an ugly effort to take over the control of Worldwide Church of God.

--RPJ (India)

It is a joy to know that by means of your literature I have been preparing myself for baptism and that in the near future I will be visited by one of your ministers. You can't imagine what great news this is!

--M.L. Dalmao (Xaxim, Brazil)

--JOE TRACH, MINISTERIAL SERVICES

NOTICE TO ALL CHURCH PASTORS

Anyone needing information about a Walter Barton (he has also used the name of Jerrell Barton), please contact Mr. Gary Moore, the pastor of the Cornwall and Plattsburgh churches. Gary's telephone number is (613) 938-6098.

--Ministerial Services

An Open Letter to Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Jerry Pacht

ON JAN. 2, 1979, you signed an order appointing a receiver to take possession of the Worldwide Church of God.

Civil libertarians, constitutional authorities and Church members alike are appalled by your unprecedented action under which the Church has suffered enormous damages.

Distressing also are the strange and questionable circumstances under which you signed the order—which cast shadows of suspicion on the integrity of the judicial system.

WHY COURT RULES IGNORED?

According to court documents Hillel Chodos, a private attorney (representing six dissident former Church members unhappy with Church policy) acting in concert with Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Tapper, telephoned you on the morning of Jan. 2 stating he would be in court that afternoon for an ex parte hearing. You suggested he send over his proposed pleadings for your study.

That afternoon in your chambers you met with Mr. Chodos and his associates. Mr. Tapper and ex-judge Steven Weisman to consider appointing Weisman receiver over the Worldwide Church of God. The Church was not represented and knew nothing about that secret hearing. And the case had not even been officially filed.

Why, Judge Pacht, did you not enforce your own court's rule, which requires that defendants must be notified prior to any such hearing so they may defend their interests? The Church would have introduced evidence to controvert all the information you were given. It was furnished only on "information and belief"—not substantiated by evidence.

And why, Judge Pacht, did you not enforce your court's rule that a suit must be filed and the fees paid before being considered by a judge? According to the reporter's transcript Mr. Chodos stated at the outset:

"Your honor, I wanted to interrupt just to state for the record, a copy of the proposed pleadings was furnished to you this morning. The original is in my briefcase. It has not yet been filed, but we are prepared to file it and pay the necessary fee at any moment. It is just that we did not want a public filing before coming to see you..."

Why, Judge Pacht, were these men so anxious to have you hear their complaint before it was filed? Were they simply looking for a sympathetic judge before filing? Had you turned down their request would they have shopped around for another judge? Why did you not tell them to file their case first, then have it assigned to a judge according to normal procedures, instead of circumventing the rules by choosing their own judge and getting a ruling before filing?

Messrs. Tapper and Chodos attempted to convince you it was urgent for you to act immediately. They alleged the Church was selling its properties below market value and shredding its financial records and that you needed to intervene immediately.



STANLEY R. RADER

If they felt there was such urgency, why did they wait more than a week after making up their complaint before coming to court—till the very first day you were sitting in the Department of Writs and Receivers? Why didn't you ask them?

Receivership is perhaps the most drastic remedy known in the law—almost never imposed ex parte. Yet you not only imposed it ex parte, you allowed the hearing to take place without notice, before the case was even filed, contrary to court rules. We ask you to explain why.

WHY PAPERS "BARELY SKIMMED"?

And why, since you were imposing such a drastic remedy didn't you take time to carefully review the data you were given in advance? The transcript quotes you stating: "I am concerned about the ex parte nature of the proceedings, and the rather majestic order which would flow from these proceedings without a hearing."

But then you went ahead and made the requested ruling anyway. Why the rush, the secrecy, the waiving of court rules?

And why did you make such a sweeping ruling with such little study of the facts? You are quoted stating: "I have read the declarations pretty carefully. The rest of the matters, and some of the supporting data, obviously, in the length of time afforded to me, I have barely skimmed through; some of the financial matters... I have just glanced at; obviously, I haven't digested those in any form." Yet these financial matters are alleged to be the heart of the case!

We ask it customary in your courtroom for you to hear suits before they are filed, without notifying the other party and without carefully weighing and digesting all the facts?

WHY EX-JUDGE WEISMAN?

A receiver is supposed to be an impartial, neutral party who will preserve the interests of all sides. Why, then, did you appoint Steven Weisman as receiver to take possession of the Church? He was invited to that hearing by the side that was pressing the action and using all those unusual tactics that violated your court's rules. And didn't you think it odd that shortly after you appointed him, Weisman appointed the Chodos brothers as deputy receivers and permitted them to rummage at will through Church records and property while denying Church personnel access to their own offices—hardly a neutral and fair-handed stance?

The Worldwide Church of God is a Christian Church consistently proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the message of His return from

heaven to rule all nations in this generation, to all the world as a witness. In so doing it expends a small part of its resources to send its Apostle around the world visiting heads of state and holding meetings—expenditures the attorney general seems to find objectionable.

Why, Judge Pacht, did you choose to appoint a nonmember to operate this Christian Church? How could you expect him to be understanding and sympathetic to the Church's Work? We wonder if someone was trying to ruin the Church—thereby creating a lengthy and lucrative receivership while the Church's considerable assets were disposed.

Since Weisman had never been a receiver before, why did you think he was qualified to take control of an \$80 million Church operation? The record doesn't indicate that you even inquired about his qualifications. Within weeks after his arrival, the Church's previously impeccable credit rating and credit relationships with our banks had been ruined, a million dollars of checks had needlessly bounced, hundreds of widows and others receiving their income from the Church couldn't cash their checks and suffered difficulties with personal credit. The Church would surely have been bankrupted had not its personnel shifted business operations to Arizona and paid the bills from there, outside your receiver's control. Why did you saddle the Church with such a receiver, under such strange circumstances?

WHY RULE BEFORE SUIT FILED?

At the close of that fateful hearing on Jan. 2, 1979, you stated on the record: "I think what I have indicated is what I will sign as soon as the appropriately filed papers are presented to me. And we'll set down your order, appoint Judge Weisman..."

After discussing a return date, you commented: "You better get it filed." Mr. Chodos then asked to use your table outside to prepare the papers and return them for signature, and you responded: "I will be here, I am sorry to say..."

WHO WILL ENFORCE THE RULES?

Judge Pacht, since both you and Mr. Chodos are fellow members of California's Commission on Judicial Performance—charged with overseeing the conduct of California judges, even examining the California Supreme Court, don't you think you owe us an explanation for permitting these breaches of court rule? Why did you grant Mr. Chodos and associates such treatment? Why did you hear their case before they filed? Why did you appoint their handpicked receiver without notice to the Church at all and without even carefully studying the evidence?

Your order has helped propel the attorney general's case through the early stages of litigation without evidence. Your order has cost the Church enormously as well as blackening our name. We ask why, if there was any real case against us, you didn't uphold court rules, give notice and let this matter begin according to proper procedure? We, and the public, have the right to know. What do you say?

STANLEY R. RADER
Treasurer
Worldwide Church of God

Appeared in the Los Angeles Times September 5, 1980

ATTENTION ALL INTERNATIONAL OFFICES

Please send all magazine and newspaper articles, as well as all other publicity concerning the Church, its affiliated organizations, ministers or members to the News Bureau in Pasadena. We forward copies to all the offices in need of that information (Executive, Legal, Ministerial Services, etc.). Copies of copies are often difficult to read, therefore we ask you to please send the original article for us to paste up. Include the source, date, and city of publication. Thank you very much for your help.

--News Bureau

CO-WORKER GROWTH UP SIGNIFICANTLY

1979 was truly a "benchmark" year for the Work of God. It was a year of crisis, a year of struggling against herculean odds--and yet a year of great accomplishment and achievement.

The latest figures for co-worker growth during 1979 and 1980 reflect this period of "crisis" vs. ultimate triumph. During 1979, because of the receivership and resulting bad publicity, etc. the Work added only 8,921 new co-workers during the entire year and lost 16,663. The year ended with a net loss of 7,742.

However, because of the power of God's Church pulling together through the energetic, purposeful guidance of Mr. Herbert Armstrong, co-worker confidence is being renewed and we are seeing much better co-worker results during 1980.

Through the end of July 1980 we have already added over 10,660 new co-workers to our contributor files, and have a net increase of 827 for the first seven months of 1980.

The Work is forging ahead in a positive manner under Mr. Armstrong's direction. The attitude and confidence of our co-workers certainly attests to that. We wanted to share this small piece of happy information with you, and hope that it is as encouraging to you as it is to us. God's Work has definitely been turned around. With His help we are overcoming the impact of the crisis of 1979, steadily and surely.

--Richard Rice, Mail Processing Center

ON THE WORLD SCENE

POLISH CRISIS: FIRST STEP TOWARD A NEW EUROPE Striking Polish workers have dealt Moscow the most dramatic blow to its domination over Eastern Europe since Marshal Tito won independence for Yugoslavia in 1948.

In winning extraordinary reforms, such as the right to organize independent trade unions, Baltic shipyard workers and Silesian coalminers have rocked Communist regimes throughout Eastern Europe back on their heels.

Party officials in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania are now worried that the stunning economic and political reforms conceded by the Warsaw regime will spread to their areas too.

Timing Perfect

The Polish strikers, supported by dissident intellectuals who helped frame the workers' demands, knew exactly when and how to act. The spark was the government's sudden announcement in mid-August of a sharp increase in meat prices. But this merely provided the justification by the strikers to go far beyond calls for increased wages and better working conditions to demand almost the unthinkable: that their country's Communist Party divest itself of its monopoly of power.

The strike leaders were both bold and cautious. Unlike work stoppages which led to riots and government crackdowns in previous years, the strikers were forbidden to attack party headquarters or other symbols of party or governmental authority. Instead, the workers, deprived by their leaders of vodka, sought quiet refuge in their Catholic faith.

Perhaps most importantly, the strikers were convinced that the Soviet military might would not be brought to bear against them. They knew that the Russians were bogged down in Afghanistan and that the Soviets never get involved militarily in two places at once unless absolutely necessary.

Political Power Next

The workers made Polish party boss Edward Gierek eat humble pie. They forced him to purge the upper echelons of the party of officials the strikers didn't like. Then, in a remarkable show of penance, Gierek went on Polish television to confess that his regime was guilty of "vacillation and weakness."

In granting the workers the right to form their own independent unions, the government gained a dubious trade-off. The workers agreed, on paper, not to turn their new union system into a political party. The workers also accepted, they said, the Communist party's leading role in Polish society and the so-called "reality" of Poland's alliance with the Soviet Union.

How long will this agreement stick, however? The West German newspaper, Frankfurter Allgemeine, predicted that "the demands of the strike committee remind one more of historical declarations of independence...than of positions in a labor struggle....A labor organization, independent from the party...would soon become the core of a second party which the people would join in droves."

Hamburg's Die Welt added: "One can imagine what would happen in the East Bloc if the Poles succeed in making independent labor unions official partners of the regime in an on-going dialogue. There would then be an institutionalized pluralism for the first time within the Soviet power area. Even if these free unions obligated themselves not to touch any sort of a political problem (at which the question would soon have to arise--what really is not political?) through their sheer existence, these unions would rise up as a democratic island out of the sea of totalitarianism."

East Bloc Break-Up Coming

In his co-worker letter of August 27, 1980 Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong asked: "Will Poland free itself from Soviet domination and join with Yugoslavia, Romania and possibly Czechoslovakia--and with Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and Austria--in a resurrected medieval 'Holy Roman Empire' to dominate Europe and equal the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. in world power?"

As if to partly answer Mr. Armstrong's questions, political analyst William Pfaff, writing from Paris (Los Angeles Times, August 31, 1980) observed that "the East Europeans will not permantly remain satellite states of the Soviet Union, though for the foreseeable future they will certainly have to remain extremely prudent neighbors...."

Speculating on Eastern Europe's future orientation, Pfaff continued: "The current subordination of the East European societies to Soviet economic and social norms, as well as to Soviet political dictation... has been the source of repeated international crises of the kind now once again taking place. A solution has to be found.

"Bulgaria is historically and socially very close to Russia, and it has been a docile satellite. Romania has also been part of the Byzantine world, but the Romanians claim to be a Latin society and they have made the most successful resistance to the Soviet Union. But Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia are all historically independent states, and cultures of considerable power and originality, which belong to the West, not to the East. They experienced Renaissance and Reformation. They, like East Germany, are a part of a sophisticated Central European civilization whose natural attachments are to Vienna, Berlin, and Paris, not to Moscow.

"The hostility between these societies and the Soviet Union," added Pfaff, "poses a basic and lasting problem for the Soviet government. These states are never going to provide the totally reliable zone of security the Soviet Union wants....It is time that this is recognized in the Kremlin."

Pfaff recommends, as it were, a "solution" for Moscow's dilemmas. "There is an answer," he says. "It is the "Finlandization of Eastern Europe." In other words, Moscow should release all of its troublesome satellites allowing them to operate as restricted sovereign states, much as Finland does, in an arrangement that would somehow still allow Moscow to feel secure behind a Western buffer zone.

Such an arrangement, however, would alter the whole map of Europe. NATO, as it presently exists, would be finished, as would probably the U.S. military presence in Europe. Moscow would never permit its freed satellites to become part of an adversary military bloc, advancing to the west bank of the Bug River. Talk of pan-Europeanism and of a non-aggression pact would fill the air.

Watch Austria Too

In short, what we're seeing is the first concrete step in the refashioning of Western, Central and much of Eastern Europe into a new--yet ancient--arrangement.

Significantly, Mr. Armstrong mentions Austria as one of the nations to watch. Austria is a neutral nation on the eastern flank of non-Communist Europe. Even today it acts as the bridge between East and West Europe. But in a reconstituted Roman Empire, Austria--with its renowned capital, Vienna, the seat of authority for the Holy Roman Empire for hundreds of years--would be in the very center of things.

Kept on display in the Schatzkammer, or Royal Treasury in the old Imperial Palace (Hofburg) in Vienna is the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, dating back to the time of Otto the Great in the tenth century. It seems to be waiting for one final emplacement. The crowning of the secular authority of the soon-coming church-state combination might occur in that city of intense European tradition--the seat of authority for the Holy Roman Empire for hundreds of years.

Perhaps for a reason, a massive governmental complex has been completed along the banks of the Danube in Vienna. Called "U.N. City," it belongs to the government of Austria, but has been leased in part to the United Nations as a "third" U.N. headquarters. Might it be used for other purposes in the future?

Keep your eyes on Poland, the Polish Pope--who will visit West Germany in mid-November!--and Austria.

--Gene H. Hogberg, News Bureau