

has talented “writers, thinkers, university professors, and business executives,” its political system excludes them from positions of power. In Kinzer’s view, “in no country is the gap between the quality of the educated elite and the quality of the political class as great as it is in Turkey.”

Many Turks seem resigned. While some younger folk resent the lack of freedom, they also see the military as Atatürk’s inheritor and the most competent institution in Turkish society. Young men must perform military service, and hence Turks “do not fear

their army or consider it oppressive, the way terrified Africans and Latin Americans did when cruel military dictatorships dominated their societies.” On the contrary, many view the military as a bulwark against extreme Islam, the Kurds’ periodic revolts, and the turmoil in neighboring Iran and Iraq.

More than 75 years after the revolution that overthrew the Ottomans, Kinzer says, the country must once again “break free of its shackles and complete its march toward the democracy that was Atatürk’s dream.”

China’s Persecuted Catholics

“A Tale of Two Bishops” by M. A. Thiessen, in *Crisis* (Feb. 2002),
1814 1/2 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

In a dingy Shanghai apartment, an 83-year-old man in “a moth-eaten sweater and worn slippers” greets the first Westerner he has met in many years. The old man is Joseph Zhongliang Fan, the Roman Catholic bishop of Shanghai. He lives under virtual house arrest, having spent the years from 1955 to 1985 as a prisoner in the Chinese *Laogai*, or gulag.

Fan has been relatively fortunate, writes Thiessen, a Washington writer who was Fan’s visitor that day. “The persecution of underground Catholics in China is systematic, ongoing, and brutal. Bishops, nuns, priest and laity are arrested, beaten—sometimes killed.” Some 1,200 churches have been torn down during the past three years in one province. In 1999, Rev. Yan Weiping was found dead after being arrested while saying mass. He had been beaten and thrown from a window.

No such dangers face Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian, of the 45-year-old officially sanctioned Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, which rejects the pope’s authority. Fan and Jin were both protégés of Fan’s predecessor, and both went to jail with him in 1955. Like Fan, Jin spent many years in prison, but he eventually broke. In 1985, he agreed to be consecrated as the Patriotic Church’s bishop in Shanghai, usurping his mentor, and was excommunicated by Rome. Thiessen visited him too. “He looks like the

stereotypical sweet, elderly priest. But his words are bitter—full of disdain for his suffering brothers and sisters who remained loyal to Rome.”

Why does Beijing fear its tiny Catholic minority? China, says Thiessen, “is spiritual dry brush—a small spark could set off a giant spiritual brushfire.” That’s why it has also suppressed the Falun Gong movement.

There are signs of dissension within the Patriotic Church. When the church moved to consecrate 12 new bishops in January 2000—on the same day Pope John Paul II was to elevate 12 bishops in Rome—nine of the men balked and 130 seminarians refused to attend the ceremony.

For all that, Beijing and Rome have been engaged in a delicate dance of reconciliation for several years: John Paul II has acknowledged the church’s errors in China during the colonial period; Beijing apparently sought his prior approval of a new Patriotic bishop. The Vatican “desperately wants to prevent” a permanent breach like the one that led to a separate Church of England centuries ago. Beijing is intrigued, says Thiessen, by a deal that would require the Vatican to sever official relations with Taiwan. Last year, Bishop Fan and Bishop Jin met to discuss the choice of a successor in Shanghai. However, they couldn’t agree on a candidate.