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POLITICAL
AFFAIRS

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and
RELIGION

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Editorial from **Continuum**

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Communism and the Church

Profound changes are unfolding within the Church. These changes are a response to the world-shaking revolutionary transition which marks the present stage of human history—a transition to a new social order free of the age-old exploitation of man by man. They reflect the new plane attained by this transformation and displayed with increasing sharpness during the past decade, the new historical epoch in which the forces of world peace, socialism and human freedom have replaced imperialism as the dominant factor in determining man's future. And they are expressive of the new level of political consciousness of the masses throughout the world, which has developed with and is part of the growing strength of the forces aligned against imperialism

The Clergy in The Struggle for Peace and Equality

In our country the great rise of democratic struggles during the past several years has brought into the front lines of battle representatives of all religious faiths. Catholic priests, Jewish rabbis and Protestant ministers have been among those who marched, demonstrated and worked for Negro freedom in the South, and they are numbered among the victims of racist violence and murder. Religious leaders have been increasingly prominent among those expressing opposition to the Johnson war policy. The moral issues involved in the wholesale killing of Vietnamese men, women and children have evoked reactions not only from individuals but also from religious organizations. Noteworthy among recent actions are those of the leading Jewish religious bodies—the Synagogue Council of America, the Union of Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis—sharply questioning or opposing Administration policy in Vietnam. And in the sphere of economic struggles, we may note as an outstanding case in point the militant support being given by Catholic priests to the grape strikers in Delano, California.

Of exceptional significance has been the part played by the Negro clergy in the great upsurge of the civil rights movement and more recently in the fight for peace. The clergy, and most notably the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and his colleagues in the Southern Christian Leadership Council, have been a vital force in energizing the Negro freedom movement and lifting it to a higher level. Through

the concept of non-violent resistance the Negro Church became an instrument for setting masses into motion as the new dimensions of the struggle required. To be sure, the movement has transcended the initiative of the clergy as other forces have come forward increasingly into leadership. But the great impulse provided by the Church and the emergence of such towering figures as Dr. King have made their mark not only on the Negro people's struggles but on the country as a whole. And they are continuing to do so.

This growth of a body of militant commitment to social progress has by no means embraced the Church as a whole; rather, it has given rise to a widening rift within its ranks, affecting all denominations and all levels. In the Christian Church, writes Harvey Cox, associate professor of church and society at Harvard University, a new schism is developing which "runs straight through churches and denominations." At issue is "the question of how the churches should respond to the revolutions of color, opportunity and power now sweeping the world, both at home and abroad." He goes on to say:

... On the one hand, there are those in the churches who want the church to play its customary social role as the guardian of the values and institutions of the past. They usually couch their attitude in terms which suggest that the church should "stay out of politics." On the other hand, there is that growing group of laity and clergy, mostly young, which insists that the church should play a direct role. ("Ferment in the Churches: The New Christian Soldiers," *The Nation*, October 11, 1965.)

The revolt against conservatism, long hushed-up, has now come to the surface and, Cox concludes, "the church will never be the same." Undoubtedly, in their own way, the Jewish denominations reflect this same process.

Significant Developments in the Catholic Church

Especially far-reaching are the developments which have taken place in the Catholic Church. The second Vatican Council, it is already clear even from preliminary estimates, has gone far toward liberalizing the attitude of the Catholic Church toward other Christians and toward other religions. Above all, it has abandoned the "Christian" anti-Semitism of some 1,500 years' standing—an anti-Semitism without which, says the German theologian Hans Kung, "the monstrous crimes of Nazi anti-Semitism would have been impossible." Of the meaning of this action, Father Kung writes:

... The Church condemns all manifestations of anti-Semitism, hate and persecution. She rejects all discrimination based on race, color, class and religion. ... The Catholic Church has spoken out without ambiguity against all anti-Semitism and for cooperation with the Jews, thereby introducing a new period of Judaeo-Christian relations after 2000 years of Church history." ("What Has the Council Done?," *Commonweal*, January 21, 1966.)

Most striking are the projected changes in the relationship of the Catholic Church with the secular world, as stated in the Constitution on the Church in the modern world. The Constitution, says Father Kung, expresses a positive attitude: "The Church desires a profound solidarity and cooperation with the rest of mankind. Reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, she desires dialogue in place of polemic, authentic witness in place of triumphalism, answering all questions." This is spelled out, among other things, "in the sympathetic and self-critical position taken toward the various forms of atheism (Communism is not mentioned by name in order to avoid political misunderstanding)" and "in the sharp rejection of war and particularly of atomic war (only a small and non-representative group within the North American hierarchy expressed opposition to the passage concerning the danger of possessing atomic weapons)."

And finally, the Council made a clear-cut, unequivocal statement concerning the right to religious freedom—a radical departure from previous condemnations of all other beliefs on the grounds that error is not to be tolerated.

Vatican II follows upon the heels of the noted encyclical of Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, which placed many social questions in a new light, indirectly expressed a more positive attitude to socialism and communism than hitherto, and opened the door to dialogue between Catholics and Communists. These developments represent a fundamental change in the attitude of the Catholic Church toward Communists, a change epitomized by the French Marxist Roger Garaudy in the title of his book *From Anathema to Dialogue*. It promises to have truly far-reaching consequences.

It is already reflected in the vastly altered attitude of individuals and groups within the Church, some instances of which are noted by Gus Hall in his article in this issue. Here we add one particular example which, we think, tellingly illustrates the extent of the change—the case of the Reverend Charles Owen Rice, currently pastor of a parish in Pittsburgh.

To those involved in the organization and labors of the CIO unions

in the thirties and forties, the name of Father Rice (now Monsignor Rice) was a familiar one indeed. He it was who, on behalf of the Catholic Church, spearheaded the anti-Communist drive against the Left-led unions, most notably against the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, then the third-largest union in the CIO. And he it was who was instrumental in bringing about the tragic splitting of the UE.

Today he expresses some second thoughts about his former role. In his column in the *Pittsburgh Catholic* of June 9, 1966, criticizing the exclusion of UE from joint negotiations by other unions representing General Electric workers, he says:

They would be even stronger if they were to accept the United Electrical Workers as an ally. The UE . . . is the union that once had nearly a half-million members and was fought bitterly as being Communist controlled. I was involved in that fight almost as a principal and I believe that my credentials as an anti-Communist are impeccable. I have reflected upon it a great deal in recent years.

His reflections have led him to conclude that the UE was actually a powerful, democratically-led union, doing a good job, but that with an assist from what he decries as the blunders of "certain doctrinaire Stalinists," it fell victim to the cold war. "It was a sitting duck for the hysteria which accompanied the United States' effort in the Korean War. McCarthyism 'did in' the UE, not the 'pure and noble' efforts of the non-red-baiting-anti-Communists." He goes on to say:

I think the Communists never really got much out of the union movement, and I am, further, convinced that their presence and the reactions that this provoked were, on the whole, good for the movement. The UE partyliners, for instance, were not able to do much for Uncle Joe Stalin but, ironically, they benefitted unionism in general.

This is a far cry from his previous condemnation of Communists as an unmitigated evil in the trade union movement. His changed attitude is demonstrated also in his sharing of the platform, on the occasion of the International Days of Protest against the war in Vietnam, with such fellow speakers as the national president of the Du Bois Clubs of America—something which those who knew the old Father Rice would scarcely have expected.

Clearly, Monsignor Rice is still a long way from being a Communist. But his present position permits of cooperation and dialogue with Communists, and that is fundamental. Nor is he unique in this

respect. But at the same time this change of views has by no means been universal, and the schism to which Harvey Cox refers has emerged with particular sharpness in the Catholic Church. The bulk of the top Catholic hierarchy has shown little inclination to take up the cudgels for peace and social progress, and in the face of the wide involvement of the clergy of other religious denominations, its almost total silence on the war in Vietnam is notorious.

So, too, is the punishment often meted out to priests who participate in the peace movement, as in the case of the Reverend Daniel Berrigan of New York, co-chairman of the interfaith Clergy Concerned About Vietnam Committee, who was suddenly sent off on a mission to Latin America on the eve of a mass rally. But what is most significant in this instance is the fact that his return to the United States was compelled by the flood of protests which emanated from Catholics in New York—a reaction expressive of the new developments in the Church.

For Discussion and Collaboration

On their part, Communists have been quick to pick up the invitation and to seek both discussion and collaboration with Catholics. During the past few years the Catholic-Communist dialogue has developed rapidly in many countries—in Italy, France, Spain, Latin America, the United States and others. There is already an extensive literature of increasing scope and depth.

In this country the dialogue was initiated with the public response of Gus Hall as leading spokesman of the Communist Party to the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. This response and some of the reactions to it from Catholic sources appeared in the pamphlet *Catholics and Communists: Elements of a Dialogue* published by us two years ago. This special issue of *Political Affairs* on Communism and religion is in the main a continuation of the dialogue, embracing not only the plane of unity of action but the ideological plane as well.

A dialogue, however, cannot be a one-sided thing. If it is to be genuine, it must require *both* sides to examine more deeply their positions and basic ideas. We Communists may welcome the changed attitudes of Catholics which have made dialogue possible, but we must also correct certain mistaken views of the past among ourselves which stand in the way of a proper relationship. In particular, we must fight to eradicate the sectarian idea that religious beliefs and religious institutions are *solely* instruments of reaction and obscurantism, and to make it clear that they have not only played a progressive—even revolutionary—role in past periods of history, but that

under certain conditions they may play a progressive role today. The dialogue must also compel us to examine more deeply our materialist world outlook, to expand our understanding of it in the light of both the new advances which are taking place. We hope that the content of this issue will contribute toward these ends.

There is much that is missing in our presentation. One major area, the status of religion and religious institutions in the socialist countries, is dealt with only partially and inadequately. There is much more to be said about developments in the Protestant and Jewish faiths and the need for extension of the dialogue to include these also. And the particular role of the Negro clergy in the democratic struggles of this period deserves extended consideration as a development of foremost importance on the American scene. With these aspects we plan to deal further in coming issues of *Political Affairs*.

COMMUNISM AND RELIGION

In this respect we are guided by these principles:

1. *We oppose all attempts to create division and antagonism among the people along religious lines. Accordingly, our Party is made up of believers and non-believers. What unites its ranks is a common social-political outlook.*

2. *Marxists disagree philosophically with the supernatural, mystical elements of religion; nevertheless we recognize many positive, humanist values in ethical and moral precepts of the several religions. We salute the increasing attempts of social-minded religious individuals and groups to apply the positive precepts of their faiths to the struggle for a better life on earth. A salutary development of our time has been the growing involvement of clergymen of all faiths, frequently on the front lines, in the battles for civil rights, peace, civil liberties and economic welfare. To all such efforts we extend the welcome hand of friendship and solidarity.*

3. *We subscribe to the fundamental tenets of democracy that are deeply imbedded in American tradition (even though they are too often violated); the right to freedom of conscience (which includes, of course, the right to atheistic convictions as well as religious beliefs), and the separation of church and state.*

4. *Full freedom of conscience and worship will be guaranteed in a socialist United States.*

New Program of the Communist Party, USA (Draft), pp. 116-117.

The Communist-Catholic Dialogue: A Critical Review

The turbulence which has developed within church institutions of all denominations is in essence social and political. It is an aspect of the general political upsurge of these days, reflecting the most fundamental revolutionary transition from one social system to another which history has ever witnessed. If the upsurge is so deep-going and so sweeping in its scope, this is because the transition is not merely to another social system but to one based on a new concept of man's relations with man.

This is the end of the long historical road traversed by social systems based on the concept of one man's right to exploit another. It is the threshold of a bright new vista of human progress made possible by an economic system in which the evil, corroding influence of human exploitation has been eliminated. Mankind is now entering a stage of history in which, for the very first time, human society will consciously plan and direct its affairs with the sole purpose of serving the welfare of all human beings.

Because the history of religious institutions has been one of supporting or condoning the status quo in society, and because they have thereby served, directly and indirectly, as a prop for the exploiting class, this transition, which abolishes such class relationships, is an especially stormy one. The rushing waters of social change have eroded the islands of neutrality. All are compelled to adjust to this historic transition or be washed into the current.

The *New Program of the Communist Party, U.S.A.* takes note of this process of readjustment in these words:

... we recognize many positive, humanist values in ethical and moral precepts of the several religions. We salute the increasing attempts of social-minded religious individuals and groups to apply the positive precepts of their faiths to the struggle for a better life on earth. A salutary development of our time has been the growing involvement of clergymen of all faith, frequently on the front lines, in the battles for civil rights, peace, civil liberties and economic welfare. To all such efforts we extend the welcome hand of friendship and solidarity (p. 116).

Catholic-Communist Dialogue

The question of whether there can or should be a dialogue between Catholics and Communists has already been answered by life. The dialogue is in progress; it is meaningful and it is worldwide. It is meaningful because the exchange has already cleared away enough of the underbrush to bring about significant steps toward unity of action in relation to cardinal issues of social progress. This process has strengthened the forces of peace, democracy and progress, as reports from Spain, France, Italy and most of the countries of Latin America testify.

Santiago Alvarez, a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Spain, writes: "The Catholics are our main allies today in the struggle against Franco. This is a fact. It is perhaps the most characteristic and encouraging feature of the Spanish scene today." He goes on to say:

We Spanish Communists are sparing no efforts to create such an alliance, for we are convinced that it is not only necessary to fight together with Catholics for these aims right now, but also that it is possible to continue this alliance in the future. . . .

We do not consider it as something accidental and limited to the present stage of the struggle against the fascist form of government, but as something substantial and permanent, something which should continue . . . throughout the period of democratic development as well as the socialist future of Spain. ("Towards an Alliance of Communists and Catholics," *World Marxist Review*, June 1965.)

The initiation of the dialogue has had positive effects also in the United States. These first steps have given added strength to the struggles for peace, civil rights and democracy. The trend toward unity in action between Catholics and Communists is contributing to the impetus of the whole Left political current. It is a factor in the rise of movements for independent political action. It is giving birth to new alliances in the fight for social progress.

Lessons of Yesterday

The greatest potential of this dialogue as a force for progress lies in the field of economic struggles, in enhancement of the ability of the trade unions to fulfill their missions as defenders of the workers' rights. This is also the area in which, in past years, the conservative, anti-Communist trade union policies of the Catholic Church did their greatest damage. In order to clear away some additional underbrush

in this field, it is necessary to review the way in which these relations have developed during the past few decades.

In 1937 the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists was organized, admittedly as a counterforce to the rising Communist and Left currents in the trade unions, which were a product of the organization of the mass production industries and the sharp class struggles of that period. In keeping with what was then the political outlook and role of the Vatican in world affairs, and in an effort to duplicate in the United States the Catholic trade union forms of organization of other countries, the ACTU emerged as a conservative force in the American labor movement. Its alliances were with the most conservative and reactionary forces in the trade unions. Its members received special training in the art of spreading the big lie of anti-Communism and in the use of red baiting as a weapon against the Left.

The ACTU became an instrument for defeating progressive, militant, and of course Communist candidates for posts of union leadership. It played a leading part in bringing about the split within the CIO. Its policy was to reject all overtures of unity from the Left.

The ACTU did not really become a mass movement, however, because it did not have the support of the great majority of Catholic workers. Many Catholic trade union leaders, including Murray, privately expressed disagreement with ACTU policies. But at the same time, in addition to its negative features, the ACTU did make some positive contributions. For example, it was helpful in bringing Catholic workers into the unions.

The history of the ACTU is an example of what happens to an organization when its main sustenance is the big lie of anti-Communism. This big lie was invented by reaction to serve its own purposes. It is a class weapon, used by the exploiters against the exploited. It is sheer fakery: the deliberate use of a falsehood. An organization that swallows this poison becomes itself a weapon for reaction. Not surprisingly, management in the mass production industries has in past years "used" the ACTU as an instrument against militant unionists, Communist and non-Communist alike. Hence a growing restlessness developed and a decline in the membership of the ACTU, clearly attributable to the rejection by Catholic workers of its anti-working class policy.

Today a new set of factors has become operative. The words of Pope John, in the case of the Catholic workers in the mass production industries, fell on fertile soil, for these words were echoes of their own experiences and conclusions.

The Catholic workers, like all workers, faced the problems of job insecurity and speedup, intensified by the growing introduction of automation. And like all workers they became aware of the inability of the unions to meet this new challenge. The unions lacked the necessary militancy, know-how and self-confidence because they lacked the necessary unity—because they lacked the fighting leadership of the Communists and the Left.

Hence, as the economic problems and unsettled grievances piled up, the effects of the ACTU policy of alliance with the conservative forces in the local unions came home to roost. In the absence of the militancy and know-how of struggle that the Communists and the Left had always contributed, the conservatives and in many cases the ultra-Right forces took over leadership of locals and pursued a no-struggle policy to the very end. The Birchites took advantage of this situation and infiltrated many local union leadership bodies. Together with the Ku Klux Klan they put on full-time organizers in industrial centers, seeking to use as a base some of the white workers who had lately moved into industry from the farm areas of the South.

Once in power, these Right-wing elements in the Catholic-conservative alliances began to turn also against the Catholic workers. This has created a new situation. Catholic workers have been drawing conclusions from these experiences, and Pope John's social message only confirmed the lessons they themselves had already begun to learn. The new economic problems affecting all workers, including Catholics, are dictating new concepts of unity. They are forcing a new look at the role of the Left and Communist members of the trade unions.

Such developments as these should serve to stimulate the dialogue and to carry it further. Communists should cast aside all hesitations and should take the initiative with regard to both further exchanges of views and overtures for unity of action. They should not permit past relations, past antagonisms, to stand in the way of the new unity that is both possible and necessary. The dialogue can be meaningful only if it can open the doors to new alliances and united actions.

The Nature of the Differences

It is necessary, however, to examine more fully some of the obstacles and problems that stand in the way of the further development of the dialogue and the consequent development of greater unity in struggle.

There are deep-seated suspicions about motives on both sides, creating hesitations and preventing frozen positions from being thawed out. In part, these suspicions are based on old relations; in part, they

are due to misunderstandings. In some degree they arise from the fact that each side, quite naturally, approaches the question from its own point of view. Thus, the problem as seen from the standpoint of the Catholic Church is expressed by Archbishop Helder Camara of Recife, Brazil in these words:

Woe be to all Christians if the lowly become convinced that the Church has abandoned them in this dark hour. They cannot but believe that religion is indeed the opium of the people and Christianity an ally of privilege and exploitation. . . . (John J. Considine, M. M., ed., *Social Revolution in the New Latin America: A Catholic Appraisal*, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1965, p. vii.)

On its face, this is simply an expression of concern for the future of the Church. But it should not be viewed with suspicion on that account. What is important is the direction in which it leads, namely, greater participation in struggles for social progress.

Some suspicions, however, are due to basic differences. Such differences can become serious obstacles to unity of struggle if they are not clearly pinpointed. It is to clear up such questions that the dialogue is necessary.

One fundamental difference is that between the Marxist world outlook based on materialism and the basic theological concepts of the Church. But this is not the main obstacle to unity of action, although it does of course have its effects on Catholic-Communist relations. However, the fact that it does not stop people with religious beliefs, including Catholics, from joining the Communist Party is proof that this is not the real source of mistrust.

The root of the problem lies closer to home: it is the difference over the question of capitalism. What is at issue is whether the Church remains a defender of the status quo, which means a defender of capitalism, and hence a prop for the class of exploiters. We Communists believe that capitalism has outlived its usefulness, that it is now an obstacle to human progress. We therefore advocate the revolutionary path of discarding capitalism and replacing it with socialism. We look upon capitalism as a dead weight holding back the march of history, and work to expose it as a system of unjust, inhuman exploitation.

This basic concept of the nature of capitalism affects the way in which we view problems occurring within its context. Thus, we are for united struggle against all the evil effects of capitalism, but we take such a position with no idea of thereby saving capitalism as a system. On the contrary, we look upon capitalism as the root of the

problems, and the struggle we project is one directed not only against the evils but against their source. We make no secret of the relationship between the immediate and ultimate goals, nor is there any contradiction between them, as our draft program points out:

. . . The active expression of this concern in the immediate present is not in contradiction with our ultimate goal; rather, it is the thread that links what *can* be done today with what *must* be done tomorrow.

It is in the democratic struggles for solutions that cannot be deferred, of problems that cannot be evaded, that we see an American path to socialism. . . . The American people will arrive at the conclusion that it represents their best hope not through argument alone, but through experience with alternate solutions. . . . Such a realization can only come about by putting the old forms to the test; that is, by fighting for the maximum attainable within these forms, by modifying these forms within the limits of the existing social structure, so that finally the people say, "With this social mechanism we have gone as far as we can go. It has now become an impediment in our progress. If we wish to go further, if we wish to right the evils that have become insufferable because they are so at odds with the social potential to abolish them, we must scrap this social system and institute another" (pp. 86-87).

There are many Catholics—millions in fact—who share this outlook, who are members of Communist parties in various countries, who are fighters against capitalism and for socialism. And, as we have learned through the dialogue, there are growing numbers of priests and nuns who are opposed to the Church's position of unconditional support of capitalism.

But as we know, this is not the outlook of the Church itself. The official position of the Church is defense of the status quo. This has always been its position. When the status quo was feudalism, the Catholic Church upheld it. In fact, this was what gave rise to the Reformation and the emergence of Protestantism. Now the status quo is capitalism, and it is the official position of the Church to uphold this social system. Even the historic statements of Pope John do not directly attack this position, although they do open up other doors for discussion and for struggle against the evil effects of capitalism.

Why is it so important for us to understand the nature of our difference on this point? The reason is that it sheds light on the nature of our differences on immediate questions. Because of our difference on the basic question of capitalism, we have tended to be on opposite sides on related questions. But if we each know where the other

stands on the basic question, then the motives of the other will not be subject to suspicion.

Unity in Struggle for Peace and Equality

Let us examine some of these related questions. For example, we believe in the full right of all nations to self-determination and independence. We therefore consider all struggles for these ends to be just struggles and we support them whatever may be the form they are compelled to take. We view capitalism as the oppressor of peoples and nations just as it is the oppressor of classes, and this national oppression we consider equally unjust.

The Papal Plan for Peace (*Catholic Almanac*, 1966) states: "All nations have the right to life and independence." This position brings our two points of view very close together. This is a basis for a dialogue; it is a basis for united action against imperialist aggression. In particular, it is a basis for united efforts to stop the U.S. war of aggression in Vietnam. It is likewise a basis for joint efforts to free the countries of Latin America from the economic, political and military oppression of U.S. imperialism.

We believe that it is capitalism, because of its drive for profits, which leads to imperialism and wars of aggression, and that this is clearly demonstrated by the war in Vietnam and the invasion of the Dominican Republic. We therefore take an unequivocal stand: the wars of aggression are unjust and the people fighting against such aggression are fighting just wars that deserve the support of all mankind.

In this sense, while Pope Paul's speech to the United Nations was an important step forward in the struggle for world peace, we believe its effects were weakened when he declared: "And let every war and guerrilla operation give way to constructive collaboration which is mutual and fraternal." This places the blame equally on victim and culprit. It appeals for peace but does not condemn the source of war: imperialist aggression. It does not condemn a wrong and support a right.

Nevertheless, our differences over the basic cause of war need not prevent a united struggle against war. Moreover, the new emphasis by the Vatican on world peace, as well as our mutual concern over the danger of nuclear war, has opened up a wide avenue for dialogue and joint action.

We Communists also view racial oppression as an aspect of capitalist oppression. Throughout all of our political lives we have taken a firm stand for an end to jim crow. To the extent that the Church

has become involved in the fight against segregation and discrimination, it has created a new basis for unity of action between Communists and Catholics. We can unite to end jim crow. And we can do so even though we Communists believe that the roots of jim crow lie in the very nature of capitalism whereas the Catholic Church does not.

It is clear that while the basic position of the Church regarding the capitalist system remains unaltered, there are important changes taking pace that make the dialogue both possible and necessary. As we have already noted, millions of Catholics do not follow the Church in its defense of the status quo, and increasing numbers of priests and lay leaders are raising serious questions about capitalism. Hence, while its official position regarding the final disposition of capitalism has not changed, the Church *has* changed its attitude toward many of the related questions. In our view these "related questions" are products of capitalism; in most church circles they are still referred to as "social evils." But what is new is the development within the Church of a readiness to engage in active struggle against these evils. This is the meaning of the discussions in the Ecumenical Church as they relate to social problems.

Some sections of the Church feel it necessary to compete with Communists in the struggles against the evils of capitalism. The Most Reverend Mark G. McGrath, C. S. C. expresses this view as follows:

There is nothing good and holy in the Marxist promises which is not better set forth in that Christian attitude towards the world which the Second Vatican Council is now studying in its projected Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. We, too, desire and work for an expansion of all material means of production and welfare, so that in our century, for the first time in recorded history, all men may have access to a material standard and an education which will free them from slavery to bodily want and the sad, almost animal dimness of life without knowledge, without culture, without joy, without beauty, without love. (*Social Revolution in The New Latin America: A Catholic Appraisal.*)

Of course, the test of one's conviction is one's readiness to struggle against the current manifestations of such evils, and one's willingness to join in united effort with all who share those convictions. On our part, we are both ready and willing to join hands in these endeavors.

Catholic Hierarchy Defends Status Quo

The dialogue faces other, rather formidable obstacles. The changed attitude of the Vatican and sections of the Church is not, on the whole,

reflected in the Catholic hierarchy in the United States. One receives the impression that there is strong resistance within it to any change that touches on basic social and political questions.

Cardinal Spellman's "my country right or wrong" appeal for blind allegiance to the Administration's policy of aggression in Vietnam is certainly a challenge to the spirit of Pope Paul's message to the United Nations. It is an appeal to the most bigoted and jingoistic sentiments among our people. It is an attempt to block all desires for a settlement of the war. It is at complete loggerheads with the Papal Plan for Peace. Nations cannot have "the right to life and independence"—and certainly not in Vietnam—if Cardinal Spellman's concept prevails. U.S. aggression in Vietnam is wrong, but Cardinal Spellman is determined to defend that wrong and thereby reject the right of self-determination for any nation other than the United States.

The relations of Cardinals Cushing and McIntyre with ultra-Right organizations are likewise not in keeping with the spirit of the dialogue. The transfer of priests because of their support of popular movements and struggles is indicative of strong resistance to the course charted by Pope John.

The scope of the problem inside the Church is highlighted especially by the situation in the Diocese of Southern California. With the encouragement of Cardinal McIntyre, the area has become saturated with ultra-Right organizations of Catholics. These groups are a part of the ultra-Right movement in southern California, but they are at the same time a special ultra-Right force within the Church. There are such groups as "San Diego Catholics for Better Libraries" and "Catholic Fact Research Association of Los Angeles." The largest of these fanatically anti-Communist, anti-democratic Right-wing organizations, with dozens of locals, are the Cardinal Mintzenty Foundation and the Christian Resistance Movement. All these groups have a voice in the diocese paper, *The Tidings*.

True, there are other voices. *Pacem in Terris* does have its advocates in the U.S.A. But these are not voices emanating from positions of authoritative leadership. This makes it difficult for priests, nuns and lay members of the Church to take part in the dialogue and to express themselves. And we should understand this difficulty.

Such are the obstacles. They may retard the dialogue, they may hold back the unity of struggle, but they cannot stop the process. The problems of our society have greatly sharpened and arise to confront us all. They cannot be avoided; passivity and neutrality toward these problems become increasingly difficult to maintain. The change in the Church's attitude toward social, economic and political ques-

tions to which this gives rise leads inevitably in the direction of opening up the path of unity and struggle.

Need for a Continuation of the Dialogue

The dialogue between Communists and Catholics is only one aspect of our Party's efforts to mold a broadly-based people's movement against the evils of monopoly capitalism. The future of our country, the future of the world and civilization, depends on the success of struggles based on the unity growing out of dialogues between organizations of the people.

The problem which the dialogue faces at this stage is that of getting to know one another's positions, pinpointing the differences and clearing away misunderstandings and suspicions, so that we can unitedly move into the battles for a better world.

The meaning of the inner-church processes initiated by Pope John is to give a wider-range freedom of action in the struggle against the anti-social and evil effects of capitalism. The papal statements of Pope John suggested a new path in these matters.

The present struggle within the Catholic Church in the Americas is fundamentally over the question of whether the Church should follow this new path or remain on the old path of defending the status quo of monopoly capitalism with all its evils—with its imperialist aggression, racism, hunger in the midst of plenty, its moral and ethical decay. It is over the question of whether the Church should continue to accept, condone or defend the concept of man's right to get fat and rich by exploiting his fellow men.

Not only the Church but mankind in general is moving to the cross-roads between these pathways, and during such a struggle silence or neutrality is in itself taking sides and always on the side of the oppressor.

It is becoming more and more difficult to speak about world peace and remain silent about the source of wars and aggression—capitalism. It is becoming more difficult to speak about brotherhood and to continue to ignore the source of bigotry and racism—capitalism. It is becoming more difficult to speak in general terms against hunger, slums and deprivation without speaking about their direct cause—capitalism. This will become an ever sharper contradiction for those who move to fight the evils of capitalism while continuing to defend the status quo of the system itself.

Our understanding of this contradiction does not in any way lessen our desire for unity of struggle. In fact this deeper understanding of our differences makes for a firmer unity.

We Communists are firm believers in the concept that the struggle for unity must result in a unity of struggle. We believe the struggle against the evils of the system opens the pathway to the struggle against the system itself. In fact, it is the realization of this inner relationship by those who want to hang on as the defenders of the status quo—capitalism—that is the basis for the resistance to the dialogue between Communists and Catholics. The realities of life have created the conditions for the present level of the dialogue. As these realities continue to develop, they will increase the pressure for a continuation of the dialogue.

I have no intention of comparing the religious ideology and the Marxist one. Their point of departure differs, even though they may, on certain problems, reach conclusions that are not divergent. We always rejected, however, all endeavors towards a rapprochement between Catholics and Communists on the basis of any sort of compromise between these two ideologies. Such a compromise cannot be reached. It is necessary, instead, to consider the Catholic world and the Communist world as made up of real forces—States, governments, organizations, individual consciousness, movements of varied nature—and to study whether and how, in face of the present-day revolutions and future prospects, mutual understanding and mutual recognition of values can be reached and, consequently, an entente and even an agreement to attain ends that are common, inasmuch as they are necessary and indispensable for mankind.

We refuse all endeavors at an impossible ideological compromise, even though in our ranks there is a very large number—probably the majority out of the total number of members—of believers. The condition for joining our party, in fact, as for all Communist parties, is the acceptance of our program, for the realization of which we fight and which can be accepted also by a believer.

Palmiro Togliatti, from a lecture delivered on March 20, 1963.

We Are Struggling On Behalf of Man*

One of the essential characteristics of Marxist atheism is its integration of all that which successive cultures and civilizations have contributed to man. Christianity constitutes a sizeable portion of this heritage. Marx, in *The Jewish Question*, stressed that only an authentic democracy could "make real in a secular way" the "human basis** of Christianity" (*der menschliche Grund des Christentums*).

What, then, is this "human basis" which Marxist atheism strives to integrate? In asking this question and in attempting to bring to it the beginnings of an answer, I do not in any way claim to take the place of the theologians nor to give an "interpretation" of Christianity, but simply to say what in Marxist thought appears to me to be linked with the Christian heritage.

As I see it, Marxism has incorporated three themes.

1) The awareness of the incompleteness of man, the dimension of the infinite. The aspiration to knowledge, admirably expressed by Hegel, involves a two-fold contradictory exigency: to penetrate into the real in order to render it entirely transparent to reason, and to constitute a finished whole: the system of total knowledge. Now, Marx precisely brought out the contradiction which existed between the system that implied an end to history and an achievement of total knowledge adequate for this history, and the dialectical method which thrust out into the infinite the movement of thought carried forward by its two-fold exigency. Marx thus "opened" man to this infinite dimension.

The religions (Christianity in particular) have lived this two-fold exigency: the need for and the impossibility of attaining total knowledge; but they have tried to give answers to the problems of the beginning and the end by means of myths dealing with the genesis of things and with eschatology.

The Marxist critique challenges the illusory answers, not the real questions which elicited them. One cannot deal with religion merely

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**The expression from Marx's *Die Judenfrage* (Braunschweig, 1843) is translated here. M. Garaudy used the French "fonds humain."

as a form of derangement: it is the answers that are deranged, not the questions.

2) What is true for knowledge is also true for action: man acquires an increasing mastery over nature, over society, and over his own future; but although his power grows without ceasing, he is always militant and never triumphant. He can no more achieve the total "blessedness" to which he aspires than he can achieve "total knowledge." Here again, religion claims to bring a metaphysical answer to this historical exigency. "Religion," writes Marx in *The Jewish Question*, "is the recognition of man by a detour, through a mediator."

Just as religions transformed into an answer something which was basically a question, (when they were prompted by a real need) in the realm of knowledge, so also they (and notably Christianity) have transformed an exigency into a presence in the realm of action: from the need for mediation, they have passed on to the presence of a mediator.

Here again, we shall say that the derangement lies in affirming this presence, and not in the exigency which elicited it, and that Marxism must find and take over that which, underneath the myth, was the aspiration that gave birth to it.

3) The promise of the unification of mankind, which forms a whole and gives meaning to the existence and action of man, is perhaps the richest aspect of the Christian heritage.

For Greek humanism, the largest whole for which the individual was called upon to sacrifice himself was the community of citizens, excluding slaves and barbarians. With the coming of Christianity, there appeared for the first time in our history the call to an unlimited community, to a whole encompassing all the other groups. Let us emphasize that this is still only an aspiration, a hope, for whereas early Christianity "mentally" abolished the distinction between slaves and free men, it did nothing to abolish it in actual fact, as did Spartacus, and did not even urge that it be eliminated. It was a religion of slaves, and not a revolution of slaves.

Nevertheless, even if it has taken centuries for the fulfilment of this aspiration towards a perfect meeting of minds to begin to take shape—and most often not thanks to the Church, but against her, in heresies first of all (as was the case with Thomas Munzer), then in revolutionary struggles and socialist revolutions—the fact still remains, according to Engels, that the appearance of Christianity "represented an entirely new phase in religious evolution; for Christianity was to become one of the most revolutionary elements in the history

of the human mind.”* Indeed, for the first time, even if the consequences of this principle were not yet drawn, it was proclaimed that one is not a slave “by nature,” and that the slave is a *man*; whereas even the greatest geniuses of Greece, Plato or Aristotle, for example, regarded the slave only as an object, a “speaking tool.”

Within this framework lies what Marx called “the human basis of Christianity,” which no so-called “Christian” State has ever achieved to any degree whatsoever, but which Communism can bring about in “a secular way”: a classless society, wherein each child, each man has the possibility to make full use of the human richness he has within him, and where the life and liberty of each is not restricted by but dependent upon the life and liberty of others. That presupposes abolishing regarding human beings as merchandise—an attitude which engenders alienation by transforming (as Marx put it) relations between men into relations between things, and creating the economic conditions of class exploitation, national oppression, and wars. This was the sense in which Maxim Gorki was able to say that with Socialism “for the first time of true love of man is organized as a creative force.”

The conception of Christian love according to which I do not know myself, and only fulfill myself in and through others, is the highest image that man can have of himself and of the meaning of life; and this is why Marxism would find impoverished to a certain extent if it had no knowledge of Saint Augustine, Saint Jean de la Croix, or Thérèse d’Avila.

But, instead of teaching that the concrete historical conditions for the full blooming of this love of man for woman and of each man for all men must be created by struggling to transform all human relations by which this love is contradicted and mocked, people invoke this love as if it already existed in order to condemn the just violence involved in struggles against a world that is the opposite of love. Thus this great dream of human unity serves as an alibi for the maintenance of institutions which are the worst obstacles to the coming of this unity and this love.

This permits us clearly to bring out the meaning of Marxist atheism.

* * *

We, as Marxists, are struggling on behalf of man. Our attitude has nothing in common with the atheism of Lautréamont, for ex-

* Engels, *On the History of Early Christianity*, first published in *Die Neue Zeit*, Vol. XIII, 1894-1895, pp. 4-13; 36-43.

ample, as we find it in the “Songs of Maldoror”: “My poetry will consist solely in attacking by every means this wild beast, man, and the Creator who ought not to have engendered such vermin.” This refusal of God stems from a refusal of man. Our attitude is on the contrary full of positive implications: we are struggling for man, and the logic of this struggle leads us to atheism when the answers given by the religious to the questions posed by man are unworthy of those questions, and when we are offered something sub-human under the pretense that it is supernatural, when we are offered religions of irrationality or resignation, for example.

Marxism does not need to define itself negatively with regard to this religion. Marx, at the time of his “1844 Manuscripts,” and much later, Engels, in his 1874 articles, showed how this word “atheism,” with its privative connotations, in no way defines the Marxist attitude. Speaking of the avant-garde German workers, Engels wrote, “Atheism has had its day among them; it is outmoded: this purely negative term no longer applies to them, for their opposition to belief in God is no longer theoretical but practical; they have simply finished with God; they live and think in the real world and are therefore materialists.”*

Do we take this to mean that they are not interested in the questions posed by man about the meaning of his life and his death, about the problem of his origin and his end, about the exigencies of his thinking and of his heart? Not at all.

If man’s greatness affirms itself in a demand for answers to questions, then the weakness or the fault lies with those who claim to give a dogmatic answer that is always bound up with a certain framework of knowledge, an answer given as definite, even sacred, whereas it really bears the stigma of the temporary insufficiencies of a certain era.

Atheism’s protest has thus a purificatory value. It is a legitimate and necessary protest against those who condemned Galileo or Darwin, and against those in every age who debased the idea of God by trying to find Him in the temporary gaps in our knowledge.

Atheism’s protest is legitimate and necessary against all the gross images of the Creation or the Last Judgment, of Hell, of Paradise, or of the miracles, against all the caricatures of the Infinite which are the crime against the spirit *par excellence*.

If we are told that these things are expressed in a language “for simple folk,” then we are face to face with the most dangerous form of contempt for man, that which consists in arresting his development

* Engels, *Flüchtlings—Literatur*, Artikel II, printed in *Der Volkstaat*, No. 73, 1874.

at the stage of mythology and primitive magic, instead of calling upon him to seek higher answers.

In order to respond to the lofty human demand for total fulfillment through knowledge and action that will render the Real transparent for us, such a religion offers substitutes (*Ersatz*) for Totality and for the Infinite, which sterilize and debase both thought and action.

Atheism is legitimate and necessary, if the contribution of Christianity is to be given its full meaning.

I am not posing here the problem of the historical existence of Christ. What is important is that about twenty centuries ago, men conceived an unlimited human community and a form of life which was the first prefiguration of the whole man, through his feeling of personal responsibility for this totality for which he was prepared even to die. This life and this death, perceptible through the limitations of the era which formed an image of them, give us the highest model of freedom and love and of man's perception of an infinite destiny.

However, a literal adherence to the Gospel texts removes that which makes of Christ's life and death an example for men, by stripping him of his human character.

His birth is no longer natural: he ceases to be a model for me because as the son of a Virgin he has been torn away from the human condition.

His life also breaks away from mankind when he is given the attributes of a miracle-working magician, such as one finds in the primitive religions.

Even his death is stolen from us: this splendid death of the man who feels responsible for the destiny of all and who gives his life its meaning and its beauty by sacrificing it on behalf of all mankind—this is not a real death because he is made to rise again.

Thus one of the greatest awakeners of liberty and love was separated from us as an example by being removed from the real history of men and made something other than a man: a myth like other myths, a being born of a God like the heroes of Olympus, performing miracles as did the idols, and rising up (as did Dionysius) with the return of spring.

So that freedom is no longer human liberty, but a divine gift. That love is not of this world: I am taught that it already exists and that Christ has already redeemed us. The history of human struggles for freedom and unity is no longer anything but a trumped-up story, because we are already redeemed.

The myth, like a parasite, conceals what is fundamental.

The basic things are the exigencies of human freedom, love, and unity, which are the soul of the creative activity of man, whose horizon broadens with each stage in his development, from the first flint to the fission of the atom.

Man is only fully man when he strives to be more than he is, when he forges for himself that infinitely enlarged image to which for thousands of years he has given the face of a God. "The hope of man is the flesh of God," said Henri Barbusse.

For a moment, all that men in their most beautiful dreams have attributed to God is not behind us but before us, like a task waiting to be accomplished.

The Anglican bishop, Robinson, wrote in *Honest to God* that the encounter with the transcendent is not a privileged experience; it is characteristic of all our human experience—in depth. The finite world is self-transcendent.*

This daily emergence of that which is transcendent takes place each time something new is added to the human form, in scientific research or in artistic creation, in love when it is capable of reaching the point of self-giving, either through death, or through a social revolution to end exploitation and alienation, or through a national liberation movement to end the oppression and dehumanization of man.

Transcendence is the experience by which man becomes aware that he is a budding god.

This ground can surely be a meeting-place for Marxists determined to understand, integrate, and realize the "human basis" of Christianity, with Christians who understand the purificatory value of Marxism with regard to all disincarnated spiritualisms, and who are determined not to abandon the struggle.

Are this dialogue and this perspective of cooperation and common struggle and striving a utopia?

We do not think so.

We believe that more and more Christians are coming to meet us along this path.

Accordingly as the pressure within the Christian masses becomes increasingly stronger, urging the refusal to interfere in the realm of science; urging men not to regard technological progress as a temptation of Satan, but a legitimate affirmation of the power and grandeur of man; urging that the hierarchy of social classes and social inequality no longer be sanctioned as an institution willed by God in expiation

**Honest to God*, page 52 (SCM paperback edition).

of sin; urging that private ownership of the means of production no longer be considered a guarantee of personal freedom; urging that men no longer cry anathema at Socialism and Communism, but on the contrary recognize them as an organization of human relationships which is superior to capitalism; urging that the love of life, knowledge, and happiness no longer be considered as evil lusts of the flesh,—as this pressure becomes stronger within the Christian masses, to the point where it can loosen and break the hold of economic and political powers that identify the destiny of the Church with that of their own privileges, a tremendous prospect of cooperation and joint struggle is opened before us.

Then the problem of relations between Christians and Communists will no longer be posed solely in terms of dialogue, but as an opportunity to teach one another and to strive together, to overcome the forces of the past and of death, to work together on the never-finished task of building a "civitas humana."

For the Christians as for the Marxist it is in history that man comes to know himself and all else.

Marxism as Propaedeutic*

It is more and more evident that any rapprochement of Marxists and Christians in the United States will have to begin on the level of ideas rather than of action. If the editors of *The New Republic* in an otherwise balanced treatment of the October demonstrations against the war in Vietnam could go off on a gratuitous excursion chiding the Students for a Democratic Society for their indifference to Communist infiltration,¹ it is obvious that even on the enlightened left there can be no common front with Marxists in any cause no matter how laudable and no matter how pure the Marxist contribution may be. Nor is this in any way surprising. The wounds of the past have not yet healed; and it cannot be denied that many of the tactics and goals of American Marxists in the past offer not the slightest foundation for mutual trust in the future.

Yet there are dangers in living in the past and in assuming that while oneself is progressing in wisdom one's enemies remain always the same—John XXIII ought to have proved a better instructor in history

* This editorial prepared by Justus George Lawler, Editor of *Continuum*, is reprinted with permission from its Autumn, 1965 issue. The term "propaedeutic" refers to a subject or course of study introductory to another. As used here Marxism is conceived as an introductory to Christianity, which in the writer's opinion offers the fuller comprehension of man and the universe.

1. "We shall be seeing a variety of demonstrations and counter-demonstrations in coming weeks. Respecting their constitutional rights to assemble, speak and petition does not mean respecting every tactic that is used. In our judgment, for example, the Students for a Democratic Society do themselves and their aims a disservice by welcoming Communists in their ranks, and by making a virtue out of indifference to the possibility of Communists becoming the dominant voice in their organization. The experience of the liberal and labor movements with Communist infiltration in the '40's ought not to be brushed aside as irrelevant. And although the Sino-Soviet split has spawned varieties of Marxists today, and the term 'Communist' is far more ambiguous than it was during the Korean war, a clear distinction remains between the advocates of a democratic society and those who wish to destroy it." *The New Republic*, Oct. 30, 1965.

than this. Though the old anticommunist slogans continue to be invoked with all the vigor of a decade-and-a-half ago, and the communist menace continues to provide a livelihood for its professional exorcists, most Americans would be hard put to define exactly what in the immediate present is the nature of this continuing conspiracy and in what specifically its present danger lies. Nevertheless, and understandably, given the tardy irreversibility of any obsolete popular assumption, there is little possibility of even the most innocuous active collaboration between American Marxists and any significant group within American society.

But how, then, is conversion to be wrought? How is any kind of modification, any kind of development or regression to be achieved? We can hardly expect presumably desirable ameliorations to result from the unending treatment of Marxists as in effect criminally and incurably insane. We cannot anticipate any improvement if the only curative offered by those who boast of the soundness of their own health is incarceration or isolation.

If there cannot be collaboration, there must at least be collision of antagonist views, there must at least be encounter on the level of ideology and of idea.² For the elementary truth is that conversation is not contamination; and since talk is cheap even the most fundamentalist Birchers should not begrudge their Christian neighbors some slight expenditure. But a difficulty considerably more grave than the widespread opposition to any discussion with communists whatever is raised by the fact that every dialogue assumes at least a minimum of shared beliefs, and it does seem that between a professed atheist and a professed theist all common ground has been eroded. Disregarding for a moment the haziness attached to any definition of "atheism"—for it is patent that an atheist totally committed to the *en avant* is by the fact committed to the *en haut*³—and assuming for the moment that the "religious" barrier is insuperable, one may still wonder why men in controversy must seek to locate their community of interests in a factor which, no matter how

2. For the radical need of dialogue on the social plane, see Louis Janssens, *Liberté de conscience et liberté religieuse*, Paris, 1964, pp. 120 ff.; for a phenomenology of dialogue between believer and unbeliever, see Maurice Bellett, *Ceux qui perdent la foi*, Paris, 1965, part one.

3. Of the Christian "en haut" and the Marxist "en avant," Teilhard remarks: "Two religious forces from now on colliding in the heart of every man; two forces, we have just seen, which are weakened and dissipated if one isolates them." "Le coeur du problème," in *L'Avenir de l'homme*, Paris, 1959, p. 345.

primary some may feel it to be in reality, is secondary in their own experience: why, that is, Christians and Marxists must seek a common ground in their diverging approach to the notion of a supreme being. The theological idea of God is so cluttered with ecclesiastical and sociological accretions, and the idea of Marxist atheism is so encumbered with the animus of eighteenth and nineteenth century conflicts, that in the present both ideas are largely cultural constructs—which like all constructs ought to be periodically razed.

The common basis for any discussion of essentials must be a datum which is, so far as possible, unmediated by anything ideological or notional. This datum is the human experience of itself. What is radical to Marxist and Christian is not their rejection or acceptance of the idea of God as such, but rather their sense of man in history. When Teilhard said that what is of importance in Marxism is not its atheism but its humanism, he implied also that what is of importance in Christianity is not its "theism" but its humanism;⁴ for it is only through humanity and its achievements that a Christian can affirm his belief—not in theism but—in a divine person. For the Christian as for the Marxist it is in history that man comes to know himself and all else. And it is in the analysis of this common commitment to the making of history, to the work of the temporal that Marxist and Christian meet.

Such an analysis will bring out that for neither the Marxist nor the Christian can this work be conceived of as something undertaken for "social betterment," as a kind of patronizing surveillance and domination of the earth; to so conceive it would be to fall victim to the colonialism of the intellect. It is not, then, a work done merely to assure a sharing in the "fruits of the earth," though this is its necessary concomitant. Nor therefore can it be a work done *in order to* bring about either a socialist utopia or the New Jerusalem; it is not ordained immediately to some programmatic future, whether that future be defined as the classless society or the Omega point. This work is undertaken for no ultimate temporal achievement, though temporal achievements are its surest signs, but simply be-

4. Cf., "Consider at this moment the two extremes: here a Marxist and there a Christian, both convinced of their particular doctrine, both also, one presumes, radically motivated by an equal faith in man. Is it not certain, is it not a fact of everyday experience, that these two men, precisely to the degree that they believe (that they feel each other to believe) strongly in the future of the world, experience one for the other, man to man, a fundamental sympathy?" "La Foi en l'homme," *Ibid.*, p. 242.

cause it is, unselfconsciously, unprogrammatically in the very act of "spiritualizing" reality—others may prefer to say "ordering," "organizing," "transforming"—that man exercises best his own humanity and so grows up to his full stature;⁵ and so approximates, the Christian would say, the ideal man: Christ.

It is in the implications of their engaging in the work of the world that Christian and Marxist can find a common basis for dialogue. "The mystical body of Christ," Pius XII wrote, "as the members who constitute it, does not muffle itself in the abstract, outside the fluctuations of space and time; it is not and cannot be separated from the world which surrounds it."⁶ And this, because it is *in* the world that the mystical body achieves self-understanding. Tawney has, not without some derision, observed that, "The last of the Schoolmen was Karl Marx."⁷ The *mot* is justified because it was St. Thomas who emphasized that, "It was a serious error in those of whom Augustine speaks to assume that it does not matter what men think of the created universe so long as they think rightly concerning God. For error in the matter of the universe means false opinion about God. . . ."⁸ And while the dimension of history seems seriously lacking in St. Thomas—though less seriously, as Father Max Seckler has shown,⁹ than modern critics of Thomism triumphantly proclaim—there is no doubt that his sense of the real causality of creatures and of man as an incarnate spirit represents a more organic view of the worth of the temporal than the oversimplified platonism which

5. "What passes from each of us into the mass of humanity by means of invention, education and diffusion of all sorts is admittedly of vital importance. I have sufficiently tried to stress its phyletic value and no one can accuse me of belittling it. But, with that accepted, I am bound to admit that, in these contributions to the collectivity, far from transmitting the most precious, we are bequeathing, at the upmost, only the shadow of ourselves. Our works? But even in the interest of life in general, what is the work of human works if not to establish in and by means of each one of us, an absolutely original centre in which the universe reflects itself in a unique and inimitable way? And those centres are our very selves and personalities. The very centre of our consciousness, deeper than all its radii, that is the essence which Omega, if it is to be truly Omega, must reclaim. And this essence is obviously not something of which we can dispossess ourselves for the benefit of others as we might give away a coat or pass on a torch. For we are the very flame of that torch." *The Phenomenon of Man*, New York, 1959, p. 261.

6. Text in *Etudes*, June, 1949.

7. *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, New York (Mentor Books), 1947, p. 39.

8. *Summa contra gentiles*, II, 3.

9. *Das Heil in der Geschichte*, Munich, 1964.

preceded and followed him, and which has been enshrined in Christian devotionalism up to the present.

Undoubtedly this shared commonwealth of Marxist and Christian still leaves vast differences that separate the two; but they are largely differences that relate to the indiscernible—though not therefore necessarily unknown—future. What is important is that both Christian and Marxist begin from a compatible notion of man's relation to the world, that both see a kind of salvation through the universe. And just as Christians are now learning that the natural law is not a body of ready-made tenets given from somewhere on high, but a law to be discovered in the concrete events of an evolving history, so the Marxist will learn that the God the Christian worships is not in some "great beyond" but is in the present actuality of things.

In classical Marxist thought the idea of God, like that of private property, was seen as a force for alienation. But such an idea of God is founded on a distorted theology. The only reality that can alienate man from his true selfness is falsity to what *is*. Man can rebel against some anthropomorphic Yahweh, even against the God of the churches. Man cannot rebel against the being that he is; and if this being that he is, is *somehow* also the being of God, then rebellion against this latter is the only real alienation of self: *Deus est virtualiter ego ipse*. History is written around the attempt to make a doctrine of such rebellion, to set the being of man against the being of God; but no matter how formulated, such an attempt is an impossibility. Regrettably it is the formulations that most men think they are living and dying for, and it is on the level of such formulations that the alleged essential contradiction of Marxism by Christianity is situated.

The atheism of the Marxist is only a pseudo-problem for the Christian. Though the Marxist may be convinced that the idea of God alienates man from himself, though he may think the Christian axiom, *homo magis Dei quam sui ipsius*, is only a deceptive tautology—this matters very little: the Christian *knows* better. It will not, of course, convert the Marxist for the Christian to say, as he may and should say, with Cardinal Newman, "I know because I know because I know because I know, etc."; but precisely because the Christian can say this, precisely because he *does* know, he is enabled to recognize the conflict of theism v. atheism as not of the first order, and as certainly no barrier to dialogue. The "drama of atheist humanism" is a drama in the exact sense of not being a reality in life: it is the creation of ideology, scheme, program—again, factors of significance, but simply not of the first significance.

Moreover, to the degree that Marxism is faithful to its humanistic heritage—and no one doubts that its infidelities have been as outrageous as have those of the churches to their own heritage—it is bound to engender a religious attitude among its followers, as Juarez foresaw when he predicted that the fulfillment of the communist ideal would be paralleled by a great religious revival.¹⁰ Religion is defined as a relationship to the sacred, and the “sacred” for Christian and for Marxist can only be defined as the breakthrough of the inferior reality by the superior: the breakthrough of matter by spirit, the Christian would say. The very fact that Marxists believe in a dialectic opens the way to the acknowledgement of “spirit,” as is fairly evident from the tortuous logic that has been marshalled, as well as from the tyranny of orthodoxy that has had to be imposed upon Soviet theoreticians, in order to maintain that the dialectic is totally one of matter. But there can be no dialectic without a genuine duality, and thus “diamat” is a contradiction in terms: a conclusion which Gustav Wetter has shown even Marxists are hesitantly beginning to accept—though Fr. Wetter may be faulted for taking philosophical credenda more seriously than they deserve in his gloss on *Divini redemptoris*’ condemnation of communism as “intrinsically evil.”¹¹

In seeking to affirm the autonomy of man, Marxists have simply been affirming what the Christian would call the transcendence of the human spirit. Religion as well as any other doctrine or program becomes an opiate when this transcendence is frustrated. The religion against which Marxism was originally rebelling was a religion in which in the name of a more or less accurate definition of “God” men turned away from the world, turned away from that act of *spiritualizing* matter—other terms may be supplied ad libitum—in which alone man experiences his being, experiences its contingency and its vocation to the absolute.

It is true the Christian believes he knows this absolute more fully than can the non-Christian; he knows it not merely by the lived experience of his aptitude for it, but also by reason of his belief that this absolute has entered into the contingent in the person of a human being: Christ. The Christian, therefore, believes that there is a terminal point to man’s temporal task of spiritualization. But such a belief in no way prevents him from recognizing the immense

10. Cited by Léopold Sédar Senghor, p. 52; see note 12 below.

11. *Dialectical Materialism*, New York, 1958, pp. 349 ff., and p. 560.

contribution of those who, while uncertain of the future, have focussed the attention of the world on the work of the world, and who have taught to many Christians the true meaning of ransoming the time. Such a belief not only does not prevent the Christian from seeking a rapprochement with Marxism, it positively invites him to do so.

It is good news, then, that *The Phenomenon of Man* is shortly to appear in a Russian translation. For if it is true that Marxism has taught many Christians the meaning of temporal engagement, and has thus been for them a kind of instructor in salvation-history, it may be equally true that Teilhard will be able to lesson Marxists in the meaning of the eschaton. Such would seem to have been the experience of at least one major Marxist who is now a convinced Teilhardian.

In *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin et la politique africaine*, Léopold Sédar Senghor,¹² President of the republic of Senegal, describes the failure of black racism to provide a constructive alternative to colonialism, and he remarks that Marxism proved to be the first instrument of liberation—though an instrument destined to be superseded: “The essential merit of Marx is not that of having taught us political economy, as one might suppose, but humanism. . . .”¹² Yet “humanism” is an intellectual and an intellectual’s ideal, and the broad appeal of Marx to the African Negro was nevertheless economic, it was the provision of a program for breaking with horrors of the kind sketched in *Heart of Darkness* and still existent in Angola and Katanga. The history of the African’s disenchantment with Marxism is of little immediate interest here: on the practical level it had to do with the universalist pretensions of communism and its disdain for the notion of negritude, and on a more abstract plane with its affront to the spiritual dispositions of the Africans: “The core of the debate is in the Marxian conception of matter.”¹³ According to Senghor, Marx’s genius lay in realizing the significance of dialectic in history, and, “if Marx had remained in this dialectical vision of the world, if he had gone up to the end of the historical movement, no doubt he would have satisfied our hopes. . . . But he didn’t, because his conception of matter remained weighted down by mechanism and his dialectic by logical determinism.”

12. Paris, 1962; the essay, “Art and the Elaboration of the Human Spirit” (*Continuum*, Spring, 1965), was translated from this same number of the *Cahiers Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Marx's belief that the "world of ideas" is only the material world transposed and translated into the human mind was alien to the African view of reality. Senghor, who is also a distinguished poet, found it repugnant that for Marx "ideas, religion, morality, art are only the 'reflections,' the 'echoes' of material realities, more precisely of economic realities."¹⁴

It was Teilhard who opened the way out of the dead-ends of classical Marxism as the Africans encountered it. It was Teilhard, Senghor maintains, who showed the Africans the possibility of contributing to the coming universal civilization of mankind without having to sacrifice the values of their "negritude." Nevertheless, the President of Senegal observes, "Teilhard completes Marx more than he contradicts him: he accomplishes Marx's neo-humanism."¹⁵

The witness of Léopold Sédar Senghor is not unquestionably conclusive mainly because he speaks as one reared in an intellectual tradition which is as much European as it is African, but his is an important voice particularly among those former colonial peoples who have already sought to develop a native form of socialism. If one believes in scrutinizing the signs of the times for their Christian import, one may find another indication of the role of Marxism as propaedeutic to Christianity in this widespread appeal of communism in precisely those lands where the Christian faith has never been planted. It is a paradox that Marxism has been embraced not in that Western Europe from which it derived its diagnosis of social ills and for which it prescribed its nostrums, but rather in that world which has never known Christianity.

Christian man, like Marxist man, is Antaeus man: he must keep in contact with the earth. And even though the Christian believes that Antaeus has a conqueror, that the exclusively Antaeus vision must be surpassed in a greater vision, this need not prevent the two giants yoking their forces in the present movement of history. It matters very little now that the Christian is convinced of the final impossibility of building here the lasting city and that he must look for another which is to come. It matters very little now that the Christian believes the time will come when the earth shall no longer sustain Antaeus man, when he must be lifted up by him who said that if he be lifted up he would draw all things unto himself. Antaeus will be lifted up by that incarnate Word which the Christian poet, Milton, explicitly compared to Hercules.¹⁶

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28, 29.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

16. "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," 228.

The Marxist does not believe this and need not believe it now. While eschatology will remain the underlying point of division, it is, by definition, a point which has not yet been realized, a point rooted in the future. In the meanwhile, in the *pasch* where man presently is, the Marxist can reply to the Christian "expectation of the coming" in the words of Roger Garaudy. "Our task as communists is to crown the highest dreams and the improbable hopes of man; it is to offer them their concrete fulfillment, so that even Christians may find on our earth the beginnings of their heaven."¹⁷

17. *Cahiers du Communisme*, Juillet-Aout, 1963.

All religion, however, is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces. In the beginnings of history it was the forces of nature which were first so reflected and which in the course of further evolution underwent the most manifold and varied personifications among the various peoples. . . . But it is not long before, side by side with the forces of nature, social forces begin to be active—forces which confront man as equally alien and at first equally inexplicable, dominating him with the same apparent natural necessity as the forces of nature themselves. The fantastic figures, which at first only reflected the mysterious forces of nature, at this point acquire social attributes, become representatives of the forces of history. . . .

Marx and Engels, On Religion, pp. 147-48.

Action and Ideology

A Comment on "Marxism as Propaedeutic"

The dialogue between Catholics and Communists in this country has so far developed principally on the level of probing the possibilities of unity of action despite ideological differences. Mr. Lawler, however, takes a pessimistic view of the possibilities of practical collaboration at this time in the light of the intense anti-Communism which still prevails. He proposes instead to examine the possibilities of ideological rapprochement pending the time when joint action may prove more feasible.

We believe that Mr. Lawler is mistaken in his initial premise. The evidence he cites—the *New Republic's* editorial rebuke to Students for a Democratic Society for opening its doors to Communists—can serve equally well to support the opposite of the conclusion he draws. For the decision of SDS which provoked the editorial is itself already a significant breach in the wall of anti-Communism and a noteworthy advance toward collaboration between Communists and non-Communists. Nor is this an isolated instance; other examples could readily be cited, not only within the Left but beyond its ranks. Not least among them is the dialogue which has been opened up by Pope John's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*.

To be sure, anti-Communism is still rampant and the path to its extinction is a long and thorny one. But what stands out on today's scene is the decline of its influence and the spreading awareness of its poisonous character. The fact is that old wounds *are* being healed, albeit slowly, and that wisdom *has* grown, on both sides. Above all, the wholesale slaughter of men, women and children in Vietnam in the name of "anti-Communism" is driving home to growing numbers the inconsistency and the folly of excluding Communists from the unity of action of those striving to put an end to such crimes. To endeavor to expand this comprehension and to strengthen the collaboration of all who stand for peace and social progress is essential *now* if the battle is to be won.

What We Have in Common

At the same time, the questions of practical collaboration and ideological rapprochement are by no means divorced from one another,

for joint action and even meaningful dialogue presuppose at least some degree of community of beliefs and purposes. It is useful, therefore, to explore the extent of the coincidence of views, to make clear the nature of the differences and to debate them with the aim of creating better mutual understanding. This Mr. Lawler proceeds to do.

It is significant that he finds an impressive range of common ground between Christians and Communists, and more, that he considers this area of agreement to be fundamental. He says:

... What is radical to Marxist and Christian is not their rejection or acceptance of God as such, but rather their sense of man in history. When Teilhard said that what is of importance in Marxism is not its atheism but its humanism, he implied that what is of importance in Christianity is not its "theism" but its humanism; for it is only through humanity and its achievements that a Christian can confirm his belief—not in theism but—in a divine person. For a Christian as for the Marxist it is in history that man comes to know himself and all else. And it is in the analysis of this common commitment to the making of history, to the work of the temporal that Marxist and Christian meet.

What Christian and Marxist share, he believes, is an essential humanism and a sense of man in history, of man as a being engaged in a constant process of self-fulfillment through his transformation of reality. "It is in the implications of their engaging in the work of the world," he concludes, "that Christian and Marxist can find a common basis for dialogue."

To credit Marxists—and in particular Communists—with humanism is a far cry from the anathema formerly invoked by the Catholic Church against "Godless Communism." The idea that humanism is peculiarly inherent in neither belief nor disbelief in God is shared by Communists. It is implicit in the rejection of atheism as a necessary condition for membership in Communist parties, expressed in the pamphlet *Catholics and Communists* (Political Affairs Publishers, New York, 1964, p. 4) in these words:

Nor do Communists judge people politically on the basis of whether or not they are religious. Communist parties seek to unite all workers in struggle for a common cause—believers and non-believers alike. They do not think workers should be divided in such a struggle by differences on religious doctrine. Hence they do not make atheism a condition for membership, and include in their ranks practicing adherents of all religions.

To this the Draft Program of the Communist Party adds:

. . . We recognize many positive, humanist values in ethical and moral precepts of the several religions. We salute the increasing attempts of social-minded religious individuals and groups to apply the positive precepts of their faiths to the struggle for a better life on earth. A salutary development of our time has been the growing involvement of clergymen of all faiths, frequently on the front lines, in the battles for civil rights, peace, civil liberties and economic welfare. To all such efforts we extend the welcome hand of friendship and solidarity. (*New Program of the Communist Party, U.S.A.—A Draft*, New York, 1966, p. 116.)

The French Communist theoretician Roger Garaudy goes further. Speaking of what Marx called "the human basis of Christianity," he calls attention to the debt which Marxism owes to Christianity: "The concept of Christian love according to which I do not know myself, and only fulfill myself in and through others, is the highest image that man can have of himself and of the meaning of life; and this is why Marxism would find itself impoverished to a certain extent if it had no knowledge of Saint Augustine, Saint Jean de la Croix, or Thérèse d'Avila." ("We Are Struggling in Behalf of Man," reprinted in this issue.)

Here, then, lies the foundation of dialogue—and of cooperation. This foundation is coming to be more clearly grasped both among Communists and within the Catholic Church. Mr. Lawler's views are shared by a growing number of Catholics. At the same time, however, the contrary position persists in Catholic circles. A recent expression of it is that presented by Dale Francis ("Dialogue With Atheists: Two Views," *Our Sunday Visitor*, May 1, 1966). The starting point of any dialogue, he asserts, must be the fact that Communists deny the existence of a transcendent God whereas Christians affirm it. Consequently, he argues, "the vision of Christianity starts with man while the vision of Communism starts with humanity." He concludes:

This is the beginning of the basic difference between us, and if our dialogue is to be really dialogue it must originate here. We certainly can work together to meet problems mutually shared, but any real cooperation between Christians and Communists is finally dependent on facing this basic difference between our visions—one of man as having an inherent worth of his own and society's deriving its worth from man; the other of society's having a worth of its own and man's deriving whatever value he may have from the fact that he is one of the cogs in society.

Mr. Dale insists that he favors dialogue, indeed that it is necessary,

but that Christians must approach it by taking the offensive. "Then let Communism defend itself," he says, "let it defend the indignities heaped upon man in the name of humanity, let it defend itself for its denial of the inherent worth of the individual that shows in its denial of human freedom wherever Communism gains power."

We submit that this offers no basis whatever for rapprochement. Cooperation and dialogue can no more be made conditional upon Communists giving up their atheism than it can upon Christians giving up their belief in God. Moreover, Mr. Dale's view is based on acceptance of the old falsehood that Communism is incompatible with human freedom, whereas on the contrary it is only through a socialist reconstruction of society which releases man from the bonds of economic exploitation that the Christian love to which Roger Garaudy refers can be realized.

True, instances of errors and abuses on the part of Communists may be cited. But then it is not difficult to show that the record of the Catholic Church as a defender of human freedom leaves much to be desired. However, all this is beside the point. The real question is: what are Christians and Communists prepared to do in the struggles for peace, freedom and economic well-being *now*?

In this connection it is worth noting that the most outspoken exponents of anti-Communism in the Catholic Church are as a rule also among those most strongly opposed to participation in such struggles. Particularly notorious is the case of Cardinal McIntyre of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, who vigorously discourages any participation in the peace or civil rights movements while he actively lends the facilities and influence of the Church to the establishment of a variety of organizations and activities of an ultra-Right character.*

The insistence that Communists abandon their atheistic views, therefore, is not really a call to dialogue; it is rather a demand that they abandon their political principles and join the ranks of reaction.

The position of Mr. Lawler and others is a welcome departure from such views as those of Mr. Francis. And it is most encouraging that it is their position which is in the ascendancy.

Our Differences

We turn next to Mr. Lawler's judgment of the nature of the dif-

* See for example, A. V. Krebs, Jr., "Catholicism in Los Angeles: A Church of Silence," *Commonweal*, July 10, 1964. The situation he describes continues virtually unchanged.

ferences between Christians and Marxists. These differences, he believes, though great are but secondary and "are largely differences that relate to the indiscernible . . . future." In essence, he argues that the atheism of the Marxist must pass, that the Marxist, if he sincerely functions as such, must be led to the vision of the Christian.

Just as the Christian has learned from the Marxist the true meaning of natural law and the importance of engaging in the world's work, "so the Marxist will learn that the God the Christian worships is not in some 'great beyond,' but is in the present actuality of things." Man cannot rebel against such a God; to do so is to rebel against one's own being, since "God is virtually I myself."

He adds:

Moreover, to the degree that Marxism is faithful to its humanistic heritage . . . it is bound to engender a religious attitude among its followers. . . . Religion is defined as a relationship to the sacred, and the "sacred" for Christian and for Marxist can only be defined as the breakthrough of the inferior reality by the superior: the breakthrough of matter by spirit, the Christian would say. The very fact that Marxists believe in a dialectic opens the way to the acknowledgment of "spirit" . . . there can be no dialectic without a genuine duality, and thus "dialmat" is a contradiction in terms. . . .

Finally, what the Marxist looks upon as the transformation of matter is in reality the "act of *spiritualizing* matter . . . in which alone man experiences his being, experiences its contingency and its vocation to the absolute." The absolute has already entered into the contingent in the person of Christ (the ideal man), and so "there is a terminal point to man's temporal task of spiritualizing."

Toward these Christian beliefs the Marxist must tend. It is in this sense that Mr. Lawler sees Marxism as propaedeutic—as introductory to Christianity. From the Marxist viewpoint, however, it can successfully be argued, we believe, that the reverse is true, that it is rather Christianity which is propaedeutic.

The materialist dialectics of Marx derives from the idealist dialectics of Hegel. The great contribution of Hegel's philosophy lies in his recognition that endless change is inherent in all things, that everything carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction and its replacement by something new which in its turn perishes and is replaced by its successor. Frederick Engels writes that

. . . precisely here lay the true significance and the revolutionary character of the Hegelian philosophy . . . that it once and for all dealt the deathblow to the finality of all products of human thought

and action. Truth . . . became in the hands of Hegel no longer an aggregate of finished dogmatic statements, which once discovered, had merely to be learned by heart. Truth lay now in the process of cognition itself, in the long historical development of science, which mounts from lower to ever higher levels of knowledge without ever reaching, by discovering so-called absolute truth, a point at which it can proceed no further. . . . And what holds good for the realm of philosophic knowledge holds good also for that of every other kind of knowledge and also for practical affairs. Just as knowledge is unable to reach a perfected termination in a perfect, ideal condition of humanity, so is history unable to do so; a perfect society, a perfect "state," are things which can exist only in imagination. (*Ludwig Feuerbach*, International Publishers, New York, pp. 21-22.)

Hegel, however, encases his dialectics in an attempt to construct a complete philosophical system—in short, to discover the absolute truth. He begins, therefore, with the concept of the "absolute idea," existing prior to and apart from the world of nature and man. This absolute idea alienates itself, that is, transforms itself into nature. Thereby the whole process of natural evolution, human history and the development of human thought becomes in essence an unfolding of the already-existing absolute idea. Engels states: "According to Hegel, dialectics is the self-development of the concept. The absolute concept does not only exist—where unknown—from eternity, it is also the actual living soul of the whole existing world." (*Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 53.)

In the course of development, the absolute idea comes to conscious cognition in the mind of man, and human history tends ultimately towards its full cognition and its realization in the world of human affairs. For Hegel the first was achieved in his philosophy and the second in the Prussian state under Bismarck.

The Marxist Resolution

The contradiction is obvious: on the one hand the inherently infinite nature of the process of development, whether of nature, of human history or of human knowledge; on the other the coming to an end of all developments with the realization of an *a priori* absolute idea. It was Marx who saw clearly the root of this contradiction in the positing of the independent existence and primacy of an absolute idea governing the development of the material world, itself but a crude copy of the idea. It was Marx who saw the resolution of the contradiction in the materialist view of the dialectical process as a property of matter itself and of ideas as reflecting material reality.

Hegel had reversed the relationship. "This ideological reversal," wrote Engels, "had to be done away with. We comprehended the concepts in our heads once more materialistically—as images of real things instead of regarding the real things as images of this or that stage of development of the absolute concept. Thus dialectics reduced itself to the science of the general laws of motion—both of the external world and of thought. . . ." (*Ludwig Feuerbach*, p. 54.)

In doing this, Marx elucidated the true relationship between man's striving to know himself and the universe fully and the impossibility of doing so. He saw the contradiction as expressing itself in an infinite process of social development and an infinite expansion of human knowledge, with no terminal point. As Roger Garaudy puts it in the article cited above, "Marx thus 'opened' man to this infinite dimension."

Marxism does not deny the existence of the spiritual. Marxian dialectics recognizes matter and mind, nature and spirit as unities of opposites. What it does deny is the *independent* existence of the spiritual, its *primacy*. On the contrary, it sees matter as primary and the spiritual as related to and derived from the material—and in its turn influencing it. This is how Marxists see the process of "spiritualizing" matter.

Herein lies the meaning of the materialism and atheism of the Marxist. This atheism is not a mere rejection of an anthropomorphic or a traditional concept of God; it is a rejection of any idea that man is governed by supernatural forces beyond his control, whether these be conceived of as existing "out there" or within man and that which surrounds him.

This materialist world view is the foundation of science and scientific method. Indeed, scientific method is predicated on the proposition that there are no independent entities existing outside of space and time and hence not subject to observation or control. On this proposition rests the claim of science that its results offer a valid basis for prediction. And the validity of this claim—and with it of the materialist outlook—is, we believe, more than amply demonstrated by the spectacular achievements of modern science, achievements which are laying ever firmer material foundations for the spiritual liberation of man. Marxism represents the application of scientific method to the investigation and transformation of human society itself; as such it is necessarily materialist in its fundamental outlook.

It seems to us, therefore, that the direction of ideological development is not that which Mr. Lawler envisions but the opposite. Historically, Marxism arose, as we have noted, through the liberation

of dialectics from its idealist shell. The trend today is not toward a reversion to Hegelian idealism or its Christian counterpart; this would be a step backward. On the contrary, the present-day world is marked by the growing prevalence of the materialist world view and the ever wider currency of Marxist ideas. And this, as we have sought to indicate, is the necessary course of advance.

The case which Mr. Lawler cites to the contrary, the adoption by Léopold Sédar Senghor of the ideas of the theologian Teilhard de Chardin, represents in our opinion not an advance from Marxism but a retreat from it. Space forbids a detailed discussion of Mr. Senghor's views. Suffice it to point out here that his ideological reversion to idealism and mysticism is reflected in his conception of socialism, which is likewise a return to the past. Of his book *African Socialism*, Idris Cox writes ("Africa and Socialism," *World Marxist Review*, February 1966):

The most confusing and mystical version of "African Socialism" is that expounded by President Senghor, with its related concept of "Negritude." To him African traditional society is synonymous with socialism:

". . . Negro-African society is collectivist or, more exactly, communal, because it is rather a communion of souls than an aggregate of individuals. We would learn that we had already achieved socialism before the coming of the European. We would conclude that our duty is to renew it by helping it to regain its spiritual dimensions."

For Africans, a reversion to primitive tribal society hardly constitutes the road to the future. Just as little, in our opinion, would a return from Marxist dialectical materialism to idealism represent an advance in human thinking.

We fully agree with Mr. Lawler, however, that the resolution of these differences over the question of eschatology, of the historical absolute, need not divide us today. What is urgent is collaboration in behalf of world peace and removal of the menace of nuclear annihilation, of human freedom and dignity for all peoples, and of the realization of that abundance for all which modern science and technology make possible. It is in the course of fighting side by side in these battles that the ideological differences can be most fruitfully debated.

HERBERT APTHEKER

Marxism and Religion*

We shall deal with four questions:

- 1) What were the views of Marx and of Engels on religion?
- 2) What are the most prevalent distortions of these teachings?
- 3) What tactical problems present themselves in the present world, vis a vis Marxism and Religion?
- 4) What is the essence of the matter of so-called reconciliation between Marxism and Religion?

I

Marxism sees the source, the root, of religious *feeling* in a sense of awe, wonder, helplessness, and misery. Marxism notes two different founts feeding this source: 1) in the earliest stages of history from man's inability to comprehend and therefore to deal effectively with the forces of nature; 2) with the development of classes, an additional fount was the oppression endured and inability to comprehend the reasons for this oppression and therefore to effectively overcome it. To the degree that the conquest of nature has been incomplete and the unlocking of its mysteries far from done, under class societies both these founts have operated to swell the ocean of religious *feeling*.

Marxism sees the source of religious *institutions* in class divisions and in the consequent division of labor, the appearance of a state power and the usefulness of such institutions to the maintenance of that power.

Marxism understands religion itself to be—and the clearest and briefest definition is in Engels' *Anti-Duehring* (1878)—“the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces.”** Insofar as religion is held to be this

* This paper was presented at an AIMS-World Fellowship symposium, held in Conway, N. H., July, 1965; it forms a chapter of a book on *Marxism and Religion* that Humanities Press will publish for the American Institute for Marxist Studies (AIMS) late in 1966.

** Marx and Engels, *On Religion* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow), p. 147. Further page references are from the same volume.

“fantastic reflection”—i.e., distorted, springing from and reflecting alienation—and insofar as religion holds to the supernatural—that is, the anti-scientific—Marxism is radically opposed to religion.

Marxism treats religion historically, as it does and must everything else, since, of course the dialectical quality of Marxism sees all phenomena in a dynamic and not in a static manner and sees process as the essence of all reality.

Thus, most particularly as concerns Christianity, Marxism stresses the significant contrast between early and late Christianity. It will not be amiss to illustrate this fact from some of the writings. Thus, Engels, in an essay entitled “On the History of Early Christianity”—published during the last year of his life in *Die Neue Zeit*—wrote:

The history of early Christianity has notable points of resemblance with the modern working-class movement. Like the latter, Christianity was originally a movement of oppressed people: it first appeared as the religion of slaves and emancipated slaves, of poor people deprived of all rights, of peoples subjugated or dispersed by Rome. Both Christianity and the workers' socialism preach forthcoming salvation from bondage and misery; Christianity places this in a life beyond, after death, in heaven; socialism places it in this world, in a transformation of society. Both are persecuted and baited, their adherents are despised and made the objects of exclusive laws, the former as enemies of the human race, the latter as enemies of the state, enemies of religion, the family, social order. And in spite of all persecution, nay, even spurred on by it, they forge victoriously, irresistibly ahead. Three hundred years after its appearance Christianity was the recognized state religion in the Roman World Empire, and in barely sixty years socialism has won itself a position which makes its victory absolutely certain (p. 316).

In this same essay, Engels declares of the early Christian writings “. . . they could just as well have been written by one of the prophetically minded enthusiasts of the International.”

Engels, in his earlier article on “Bauer and Early Christianity” (1882) again declared that “the essential feature” of “the new religious philosophy”—he means Christianity—was that it “reverses the previous world order, seeks its disciples among the poor, the miserable, the slaves and the rejected, and despises the rich, the powerful and the privileged . . .” (p. 196).

In *Anti-Duehring*, the historical, developmental treatment of religion that is basic to the Marxian approach is spelled out with particular clarity. Permit a somewhat lengthy quotation:

In Catholicism there was first the *negative equality of all human beings before God as sinners*, and, more narrowly construed, the equality of all children of God redeemed by the grace and the blood of Christ. Both versions are grounded on the role of Christianity as the religion of slaves, the banished, the dispossessed, the persecuted, the oppressed. With the victory of Christianity this circumstance was relegated to the rear and prime importance attached next to the antithesis between believers and pagans, orthodox and heretics.

With the rise of the cities and thereby of the more or less developed elements of the bourgeoisie, as well as of the proletariat, the demand for equality as a condition of bourgeois existence was bound gradually to resurge, interlinked with the proletariat's drawing the conclusion to proceed from political to social equality. This naturally assumed a religious form, sharply expressed for the first time in the Peasant War.

The bourgeois side was first formulated by Rousseau, in trenchant terms but still on behalf of all humanity. As was the case with all demands of the bourgeoisie, so here too the proletariat cast a fateful shadow beside it and drew its own conclusions (Babeuf) . . . (pp. 149-150).

Here will be noticed Engels' point that while institutionalized religion seeks essentially to bulwark the status quo, the content of the religious affirmations—whose sources, as we have seen are not unitary—has its own logic and may appeal to and does appeal to different classes. That is, while ruling classes may *wish* to employ religious feeling and belief as forces for the retention of their power, religion, being a mass phenomenon and transcending in that sense classes, may serve as the justification for and the inspiration of vast popular movements that are revolutionary.

As we have seen, Marxism emphasizes the revolutionary quality of early Christianity. Marx himself, as a schoolboy, wrote a paper "Observations of a Young Man on the Choice of a Life-Work" in which he manifested his admiration for the Christ figure, and in which he then declared: "To men God gave a universal aim—to ennoble mankind and oneself." (See, on this, Robert F. Fulton: *Original Marxism*, Boston, 1960.) This, of course, is the pre-Marxian stage of Marx but the reverence is to be noted and the particular point that attracted

Marx to Christ is significant. This recurs in the later and fully mature Marx; for example, writing in 1955 on an anti-Church demonstration in London, he excoriated the Established Church for its callousness and reactionary policy and went on to contrast that with the teachings of Christ. Marx added: "The classical saint of Christianity mortified *his* body for the salvation of the souls of the masses; the modern, educated saint mortifies *the bodies of the masses* for the salvation of his own soul."

Marxism repeatedly notes the connection between religiosity and rebellion; but it is the religiosity of masses who see in their religious beliefs goads not for pie in the sky but for battle on earth. Of such mass efforts in Europe prior to the French Revolution, Engels in his work on *Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (1886), writes: "The sentiments of the masses were fed with religion to the exclusion of all else; it was therefore necessary to put forward their own interests in a religious guise in order to produce an impetuous movement" (p. 264). And, of course, Engels' entire book, *The Peasant War in Germany* (1850) spells this out.

There are no better illustrations of this than those that saturate United States history. The motto of Thomas Jefferson was: "Resistance to tyranny is obedience to God." No American was more profoundly religious than John Brown. While the masters taught the slaves only one lesson in their religious instruction—i.e., be meek and docile; accept your lot on earth as the portion given you by an omniscient God and know that protest against this lot is blasphemy—many slaves rejected this teaching, but they did not reject religion. On the contrary, their religion was the religion of early Christianity, because like those who created that Christianity they, too, were slaves and outcasts and among the wretched of the earth. Their slave rebellion leaders were all religious men; Nat Turner preached to his comrades that the first shall be last and the last shall be first; that God so hated slaveowners that he sent fearful scourges amongst them; that he so loved the slaves that he parted the seas so that they might escape and they brought the seas together again and drowned the masters' pursuing armies. And that which was true of past popular struggles in the United States, is true of them today, as everyone must know. How multifarious is religion may be indicated by the fact that both Francisco Franco and John Brown profess religion.

The classical statement of Marxism on religion—at least the one most often quoted—or, better, excerpted—is of course the "opium" one. While it is true that Americans are in a great hurry—going nowhere, commented Brecht—still it is worthwhile noting that the

“opium” phrase appears in an essay; if one does not have the time to read the whole essay, perhaps he can take the time to read the two paragraphs in which the “opium” appears. At any rate, I will now take the time. This is from Marx’s essay, written in 1844, entitled “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right.” The two paragraphs are:

Religious distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the *opium* of the people.

The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is required for their *real* happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the *demand to give up a condition which needs illusions*. The criticism of religion is therefore *in embryo the criticism of the vale of woe*, the *halo* of which is religion (p. 42).

Dismissing this as some sort of vulgar atheism, as a cranky and mechanical rejection of religion per se is an utter distortion. It is as though one quoted Christ as saying, “Go and sin.” Of course, he did say that, but one should at least complete the sentence—that is—Christ said “Go and sin no more.”

In the above two paragraphs note is to be taken of the fact that Marx emphasizes the protest potential of religion; he emphasizes its beauty, and its source of refreshment. He also insists upon its *necessity* given oppressive, unjust, unreasonable and unknown relationships. In this sense Marx insists upon the deeply persistent quality of religion, exactly because it serves real needs. In his great work, *Capital*, Vol. I he wrote, for example: “The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish, when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellowmen and to nature,” (p. 136). On religion, I would say, Marxism does not err in underestimating its lasting potential; in other areas I think Marxism did err in this direction—I mean in the direction of minimizing its potency and lasting force. I would say this is especially true as regards nationalism.

Let me hasten to add that I absolve Marxism of this error, but by no means do I absolve all Marxists of this error. Father Lauer* was remarkably frank in noting the aberrations and failures of Christi-

* This refers to Father Quentil Lauer of Fordham University who participated in the Symposium.

anity; he insisted, truly, I believe, on distinguishing between Christianity and Christians. Marxists—or those calling themselves Marxists—also have not been guiltless of errors and crimes and failures. These all are explicable in terms of history and environment and the unprecedented nature of the task—to build socialism—but while they all are explicable, not all are forgivable. But none touches the reality or validity of Marxism and all in fact violated that reality and insofar as they did impeded the advance of socialism.

• • •

Having the views which I have summarized of religion, Marxism, of course, opposes religious persecution; it opposes coercive methods aimed at religion. This, by the way, was one of the many points of conflict between Marxism and anarchism—between Blanqui and Marx. In this sense, in the attitude towards religion, one has a good illustration of the fact that Marxism was created not only in combat with the Right—i.e., against capitalism, but also with the ultra-Left—i.e., against anarchism and Blanquism, etc. This attack upon religious persecution recurs in the classical writings.

At the same time, Marxism always advocates a secular society and favors separation of church and state. In doing this, Marxism makes clear that it demands not simply religious toleration for that would be intolerant towards anti-religion. In his *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) Marx made explicit his position that there must exist not only the toleration of all religions but also of agnosticism and of atheism.

Marxism not only opposes professional atheists; it also opposes what George Lukacs once called—in an essay published 15 years ago in *Masses & Mainstream*—religious atheists. That is, it opposes those who so vehemently and insistently attack God as to lead to the belief that they do protest too much. Where individuals have reached intellectual and ideological positions wherein God is altogether unnecessary that is their business, and when the social order reaches the stage where religious illusions will no longer be necessary they will evaporate.

Marxists will argue their historical materialist position, of course, and will seek through their work and their writings to show its validity; and socialist states will seek to educate their populations in an historical materialist direction. I do not mean there is indifference in Marxism, philosophically, to religion; but I do mean that Marxism sees the multifarious sources of religion; that Marxism

carefully distinguishes between religious feeling and religious institutions; that Marxism knows that religious feelings may and often have impelled the most magnificent and most effective progressive and revolutionary activity; that such feeling means one thing to one class and another thing to another class; that it is itself a phenomenon in process. An attitude of contempt for religion is an anti-Marxist attitude; an attitude of superiority towards religious people is not only anti-Marxist but is also contemptible.

There have been such attitudes in the past among some Marxists. There have been sectarian patterns of behavior in the past—and perhaps not only in the past—that to recall makes one's flesh crawl. Some of this has its roots in ignorance; in psychological failings; in reaction to persecution, in the strain of the struggle. And some of this has its roots in literal and non-historic readings of certain writings by Marx and Lenin.

In the latter case, for example, one can find statements to the effect that all religion always serves reaction and nothing else. This certainly is—as we have shown—un-Marxian but statements of this nature will be found in Lenin. Of course, fully rounded presentations of the Marxian view of religion are in Lenin, but the other statements occur, too. Are these contradictory? Only on the surface. Why? Because the apparently one-sided remarks of Lenin appear in personal letters written quickly and under pressure and for the moment and to influence a particular person in a particular situation. Thus, in the awful period of Stolypin reaction and repression in Czarist Russia, prior to World War I, Gorki himself was showing evidences of despair and of a rejection of the materialist view and a kind of grasping at religious solace if not explanation. Lenin then wrote to Gorki unequivocally attacking religion as ever reactionary. But if this is not placed in its place—Czarist Russia with its established, powerful and fearfully corrupted Church, and its time—a time of pogroms and fierce repression by the Czar (who of course, also was head of the Russian Church), then one is not seeking a true reading of Lenin but is seeking rather material for the House Un-American Activities Committee.

The same phenomenon occurs at times in Marx, notably in his paper on "The Communism of the Paper *Rheinischer Beobachter*" written in 1847, where Marx is polemizing with the ultra-reactionary newspaper of Cologne and with a State Councillor who had just in the name of Christianity attacked what the official called the fearful conspiracy of communism.

One of the lessons here is to bear in mind that when one is

reading the books of Marx and Engels and Lenin he is reading not sacred scripts but rather—books. To read the books of these men in any manner other than a scientific one is to manifest contempt for them, since devotion to science was their passion.

II

Having considered the content of the Marxian approach to religion and some sources of its distortion, we turn now to the question of tactics.

Pressures for change on the part of religious institutions and religiously inclined people in their attitudes towards Marxism and Socialism are numerous and great. Simultaneously, pressures dictating a change in attitude on the part of Marxists towards such institutions and such feelings also are consequential.

The great religions of Asia, the mid-East and the West face the fact that socialism exists in one-third of the globe; exists now in Asia, in Europe, in Latin-America and is being consciously sought in Africa. These religions also face the fact that additional scores of millions of peoples in countries not yet socialist adhere to a socialist perspective, more or less avowedly Marxist. This is true in Indonesia, in India, in France and Italy, in Brazil and Chile, in Finland and Burma.

These great religions also face the fact that movements of national liberation—often with significant socialistic overtones—are sweeping what remains of the colonial and semi-colonial world. Related is the Negro freedom movement in the United States—also carrying challenges to the structure of the social order; that movement and the responses to it have represented among the most significant challenges faced by religion and religious organization in the United States since the pre-Civil War era.

All these globe-shaking events are ensconced within and casually connected to the great scientific, demographic and technical revolutions and innovations of the past two generations which in another way offer challenges to traditional concepts of religion.

To these challenges, the old order of capitalism responds with the threat of fascism and war. Whatever may have been the policies of concession and adjustment—or even, in some cases, support—vouchsafed fascism by religious institutions, these were normally grudging or shamefaced and more or less coerced. And perhaps it will be agreed that in any case such policies of concession and/or support are regretted in hindsight.

The unprecedented challenge of general war with thermonuclear

weapons and with bacterial and chemical weapons—and other horrors still on the drawing boards—presenting the real possibility of the extermination of Man, also must induce reconsideration of tactics vis a vis other human beings and other social orders no matter what their character. This involves not only such philosophical questions as the possibility of a just war using such weapons—and no religion condones any but a just war, whatever the excuses may be—but also such questions as the very persistence of religion itself. The impact of these considerations may be illustrated by the fact that in the Roman Catholic Church two of the post-World War Popes—Pius XII and John XXIII—have expressed repeated and intense pre-occupation with the necessity of peaceful coexistence among states having different social systems.

It is becoming increasingly clear to churchmen of any sensitivity and perception that persistence in opposing the world-wide demand for an end to hunger, illiteracy and indignity is suicidal. The Catholic Professor of Philosophy at St. Michael's College in Canada, Leslie Dewart, has argued this persuasively in his *Christianity and Revolution: The Lesson of Cuba* (Herder & Herder, New York 1963), particularly in his chapter "The Theology of Counter-Revolution."

All the considerations offered above as necessarily inducing an alteration in the attitude of religious institutions and people in Marxism, also work the other way—that is, also induce changes in attitude and conduct from Marxists relative to such institutions and people. Where socialism exists it is necessary to deal constructively and decently—not to say creatively—with the inhabitants of such lands; or better, they as inhabitants of such lands will now be building a decent and creative society. This must be done in lands having different religions—and different traditions, even if the formal religions are the same. Problems and considerations differ, that is, not only in terms of traditionally Protestant sections of Czechoslovakia as contrasted with traditionally Catholic areas of the same country, but also between the Catholic Church within Poland—where its tradition was one of an ally in a prolonged national struggle—to Hungary where its tradition was one of support for an intensely chauvinistic, aggressive and anti-Semitic hierarchy.

Again, while the Church in Italy must adjust to the reality of 2,000,000 Italians who choose to be Communists and one-fourth of the electorate who vote Communist, so must the Communist Party adjust to the fact that scores of thousands of its members belong to the Church and hundreds of thousands of its electoral supporters also adhere to the Church.

Furthermore, with the advent of fascism to power in Germany the entire outlook of the world Communist movement shifted—as symbolized in Dimitrov's report to the VII Congress of the Communist International (1935). This outlook remains basically in effect and it is an outlook of breadth, of unity, of shunning sectarianism and narrowness. It is an outlook of unity with all who stand opposed to fascism and war—and unity with all such no matter what other differences may be present.

It was in response to this threat on the international level that the worldwide Communist movement developed the policy of collective security; again in essence this remains in effect in a new, wider and more urgent form as the necessity for peaceful coexistence among States having different social systems. This remains and is intensified because the danger of war remains and because the nature of another general war certainly will be catastrophic and may well be annihilating.

In the face of the dangers of fascism and of thermonuclear war those who oppose both have in that opposition more in common than anything that can possibly divide them. To permit differences to weaken—not to say vitiate—this common need is frightful and everything must be done to prevent it.

These are the essential grounds why all of us—whatever our motivations and truths—religious or scientific, spiritual or material—must act together for our great ends and must discuss our differences with dignity and with a predetermination not to aggravate them but to delimit them. This does not mean abandoning outlooks—unless one is persuaded of a superior outlook—but it does mean recognizing the mutual necessity for respect and regard.

III

Let me say something on reconciliation after first noting that to seriously discuss this in the U.S. after twenty years of cold war reflects a most positive development. I think to project reconciliation in the sense of some kind of merger of differing outlooks by shedding what may be erroneous in both and wedding what may be true in both is unreal. I think outlooks have changed and will change in accordance with changing reality. It is vital that one avoid fanaticism and that one appreciate the necessity—for the health of one's outlook, if for no other reason—that flexibility be permitted and that change and growth be assumed. Truth advances through the detection of error; error is detected through reason and through science.

To one who thinks, there is no greater service than the detection of error.

Specifically, in terms of the mutual existence of Marxism and religion, both do exist and have existed together for a century. If Marxism is correct and if the universal achievement of communism produces a world that is reasonable and controllable and therefore a world in which religion, being unnecessary, will disappear—why, then, that is what will happen. If, on the other hand, this Marxian projection is wrong—and of course it may well be wrong—then religion will not and perhaps will never disappear. Very well, in either case the worst that can happen is that one of the two—the religious person or the Marxist—will have been proven in error. Then each will be wiser. Is this a calamity?

Not only will each be wiser, but both will be alive. We say, given the will one can find the way. Surely one may also say, given life. Mankind will find solutions. If some will say, not solutions — or at least solutions in any ultimate sense are quite impossible—I will say to that, I think not but perhaps you are right. Then let us agree that given Life, Man may always *seek* solutions.

All right. Let that be the path of reconciliation. Let us compete—those who see religion as the way and those who see Marxism as the way — and all others, too, who see other ways altogether, let us all compete in seeking solutions—in creating a *life* that is whole, fruitful, sane, fraternal and peaceful.

On this let us found our Great Reconciliation.

... when society, by taking possession of all means of production, and using them on a planned basis, has freed itself and all its members from the bondage in which they are now held by these means of production which they themselves have produced but which confront them as an irresistible alien force; when therefore man no longer merely proposes, but also disposes—only then will the last alien force which is still reflected in religion vanish; and with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that then there will be nothing left to reflect.

Marx and Engels, On Religion, p. 149.

Marxism and the American Christian Church: 1876-1917*

I joined the Congregational Church in a small town in Michigan in 1902, when I was twelve years old. I left some five years later because I read Unitarian tracts questioning the divinity of Christ and the authenticity of Bible miracles.

Then in 1912, when I was 22, I joined the Socialist Party of Michigan and cast my ballot for Eugene V. Debs for president.

I thus had an early experience in both Christianity and Marxism, and implicit in this was an urge to straighten out my relationship to each of these bodies of thought.

Now, like everyone else, I had heard Marx's oft-quoted statement, "Religion is the opium of the people," and I had no reason to reject it. However, there soon came something of a logical crisis for me, which I wasn't fully prepared to meet. In early 1919 the Socialist Party of Michigan, under a rather sectarian Left-wing leadership which I supported, declared in so many words that as a part of its political work it would "explain" and oppose religion. That—in part—is why the Michigan group became the first state organization to be formally expelled by the Socialist Party of America later that year, just before the formation of the Communist Party.

Thus in my first seven years as a Marxist I was brought face to face with the subject and have given it quite a bit of study and thought in the half-century since.

First of all, let us look again at that quotation about the "opium of the people."

What Marx actually said, and its context, is this:

Religious distress is at the same time the expression of *real distress* and the *protest against* real distress. Religion is the sigh of the

* This article is based on a Chapter of the author's work in progress, *Marxism in United States History, 1876-1917*. It was also delivered as a lecture in the AIMS-sponsored symposium on "Marxism and Religion" at World Fellowship, Conway, New Hampshire, July 19, 1965.

oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.*

Thus wrote Marx in 1844, when he was 26 years old. Humanist that he was, he regarded religion as a protest against distress and as a sigh of the oppressed, as well as, eventually, an opiate, that is, a pain-killer.

Marx's objective but not unfriendly attitude toward religion appears even more clearly in another translation of the same passage, which reads as follows (in both quotations the emphasis is added):

Religious misery is, on the one hand, the expression of *actual misery*, and, on the other, a *protest against* the actual misery. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the kindliness of a heartless world, the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the people's opium.**

This puts the religious question in a different light. As for the anti-religious stand by the Socialist Party of Michigan in 1919, I learned much later that Marxists do not approve of *dividing* workers *politically* on the basis of religion, any more than on the basis of language or color. Workers need to be *united* politically (as well as economically) on the basis of their common interest.

Nevertheless, in trying to reach people with a new idea, old ideas continually pop up and must be considered. In approach, therefore, the earlier propagators of Socialism did not leave Christianity out of account. For example, the Socialist orator, Kate Richards O'Hare, an editor of the *National Rip-Saw*, argued directly with church people in her pamphlet, "The Church and the Social Problem," published in 1911 (Rip-Saw Series No. 2).

"You say that the Socialists are un-Christian and atheistic," she begins. "That may be, according to your ideas; but this I know, irreligious as we may be, we are doing Christ's work, trying to make *your* religion live and livable. . . . If the Church won't do its duty, then the Socialist movement must do it, and I am with the force that does things."

The Socialists also used irony in confronting the Church. Paul Lafargue, one of Karl Marx's sons-in-law, wrote his celebrated squib on *The Religion of Capital*, containing this "Confession of Faith":

* From the essay, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right." Karl Marx, 1844.

**Herbert Aptheker, *The Era of McCarthyism*, p. 23n.

I believe in Capital, the ruler of body and mind.

I believe in Profit, His Right-hand Bower, and in Credit, His Left-Hand Bower, both of which proceed from and are one with Him.

I believe in Gold and Silver. . . .

I believe in Dividends. . . .

I believe in Private Property, the fruit of the labor of others; and I also believe in its existence from and for all time.

I believe in the eternity of the Wage System. . . .*

This mockery was doubtless annoying to quite a few religious persons, but it was also difficult to argue against, because, after all, Christ said, "Ye can't serve God and Mammon."

Now, one might think that neither the challenge of Kate Richards O'Hare nor that of Paul Lafargue would win converts to Socialism, but that would be a mistake. Here are three kinds of examples of the sort that forced this writer to re-shape his opinions.

In the Tamiment Library in New York (this is really the old Rand School Library of the Socialist Party of half a century ago), where a considerable quantity of old Socialist Party records are kept, there is a letter addressed to Julius Gerber, Organizer, Socialist Party, 239 East 84th Street, New York, dated June 15, 1911. It begins "Dear Comrade" and ends "Thy comrade, Annie Wright" of 122 Cleveland Street, Brooklyn, New York. Here was evidence of Quaker Socialists in the United States.

Then, a California journalist, Reuben W. Borough, testifies in a letter that in Marshall, Michigan, where he went to high school in the early days of the Twentieth Century, the rector of the Episcopal Church gave him his first copy of *The Appeal to Reason*, the pioneer Socialist paper founded and edited by J. A. Wayland.

Also, a few years ago, Clarence Hathaway, former editor of the New York *Daily Worker*, told this writer that as a teen-ager he had been influenced in a Leftward direction by a liberal pastor in his home town in Minnesota, the Reverend David Morgan.

I was finally able out of a welter of data to formulate the central historical problem in this way:

1) To what extent has Marxism influenced Christianity in the United States?

2) And—a secondary question—in what way has Christianity on its side influenced the *expression* of Marxism in this country?

* Socialist Co-operative Publishing Association, New York, 1902.

The best way, I think, to present the facts is to discuss half-a-dozen or so Christian Socialist pastors who clearly showed Marxist influence and played an outstanding political role.

Professor George Davis Herron (1862-1925)

Professor Herron was a Congregational pastor who we may say began his radical career in 1891 when he delivered a sermon to the Minnesota State Association of Congregationalist Ministers entitled "The Message of Jesus Christ to Men of Wealth." In 1893 he became Professor of Applied Christianity at Grinnell College, Iowa, and held that position for six years. Then in 1900 he joined Eugene V. Debs in organizing the Socialist Party of America, and was Debs' vice-presidential running mate in the election of that year.

Herron's wealthy mother-in-law, Mrs. Carrie Rand, established the endowment for the founding of the Rand School of Social Science in 1906, which was the educational center of Marxist activity in the United States for a generation.

When he accepted the Socialist vice-presidential nomination, Herron delivered a campaign speech in which he revealed that he had already been voting the Socialist Labor Party ticket for the eight years past. He implied that now, with the new Party headed by Debs, the Socialist movement might take "its coherent and conquering form in the politics of America." (*Why I Am a Socialist*, C. H. Kerr & Co., Chicago, 1900.)

Explaining why he was supporting Socialism, he said: "Socialism comes not as a remedy for the evils of existing society, but as a program of principles for a new society; or rather, let us say, as the first proposition for social order that has ever been presented to the world."

Three years later, on the occasion of honoring the Paris Commune, at which Herron gave his great lecture, "From Revolution to Revolution," in Fanueil Hall, March 21, 1903, he took the opportunity to defend the Marxist principle of class consciousness.

"I know," he said, "that the term 'class consciousness' is offensive to many, both without and within the socialist movement. I know that it is often used in a way that makes it seem like a tiresome and commonplace cant. Those who do not understand the term mistake class consciousness for class hatred. None the less, it remains true that until the working class becomes more vividly and intensely conscious of itself than it now is, until it realizes that it is the disinherited owner of the world that it has built on its own back, its struggle toward emancipation will be blind and unintelligent, betrayed and

baffled and compromised, and without that nobility of comprehension which should mark the greatest cause to which man has ever been summoned."

The Reverend Charles Henry Vail (1866-1924)

The Reverend Charles H. Vail was, like Herron, a socialist in the days of the Socialist Labor Party, before the Socialist Party of Debs was organized. Vail wrote and copyrighted his *Modern Socialism* in 1897. It was published by the Commonwealth Company of New York. Vail produced a later and better book, *The Principles of Scientific Socialism*, in 1899, published by the Comrade Cooperative Publishing Company of New York, the first real Marxist textbook on socialism in this country.

About 1900, Vail gave a lecture, "The Mission of the Working Class," in which he paid tribute to the Utopian socialists as forerunners, but added, "it was left for Karl Marx to clearly point out the genesis of surplus value and the evolutionary tendency in economics."

Who Was Who in America, Vol. I, p. 1266, gives us some details about the Reverend Vail's religious career: He was ordained in 1893, and belonged to the Universalist Church. His first pastorate was at the All Souls' Church, Albany, N. Y., 1893-1894. Then he went to First Church, Jersey City, New Jersey, 1894-1901, and during this period he became a Socialist. He continued in his church work for some years after that, while writing and lecturing on socialism.

Bishop Franklin Spencer Spalding (1865-1914)

In the files of the Socialist New York *Call*, at Tamiment Library, New York, there is an obituary about the Right Reverend Franklin Spencer Spalding, Episcopal Bishop of Utah, killed in an automobile accident in 1914. (September 27, 1914.) He was known as "the Socialist Bishop," and every Party member in the United States mourned his passing.

The full story of Bishop Spalding is told in the biography written by the Reverend Howard Melish.* "Undoubtedly the most conspicuous fact in Bishop Spalding's life was his championship of the cause of the working man," says the biographer. "It was the passion of his life. He was an enthusiastic convert to the economic theories of Karl Marx and he saw in Socialism the instrument by which, under

* Rev. John Howard Melish, *Franklin Spalding: Man and Bishop*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1917, pp. 236-256.

God, the terrible wrongs and inequalities which mark the civilization of today were to be righted."

The author, Melish, an advanced liberal in his own right, was pastor of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity in Brooklyn for many years.

Melish quotes Spalding as follows:

Behind all the movement for social uplift outside the religious organizations today is a philosophy which is as yet unappropriated by the Church, and yet which is, I believe, true. It is based upon the fact that environment has most to do with the making of the product, and that therefore the chief work of any organization desiring success must be to create right conditions. Karl Marx called it 'Materialistic Conception of History,' an expression which his followers soften into the 'economic interpretation of history,' and to the hundreds of thousands of socialists who follow him, it means that a new form of society must be worked for, if need be, fought for, in which the fundamental business of the State shall be, to give to each human being a supply for its physical needs. Man may not be able to live by bread alone, but first of all he must have bread, and today there are millions even in this land who are hungry, and who have inadequate shelter and clothing.

Spalding cast his first ballot for Socialism in 1908, when he supported Debs on the latter's third try for the presidency. He not only cast his vote but his lot with the Marxists.

I cannot refrain from citing one further passage from Bishop Spalding, as quoted by Melish from *The Christian Socialist* magazine (November 1911), which had asked him for a statement. "The Christian," said the Bishop, "has the advantage over Karl Marx because he knows the name of the Truth which illuminated Marx's mind, of the Power which gave him his moral courage and of the Love which made him faithful unto death. The Socialist, on the other hand, possesses in the 'Materialistic Conception of History' and the 'Class Struggle' two truths which the Christian must learn."

Bouck White (1874-1951)

Bouck White was educated at Harvard University, the Boston Theological Seminary, and the Union Theological Seminary in New York. His first job was as head for five years of the Men's Social Colorado coal and iron mines, and Bouck White led his poor ragged Service department of Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn (under John Howard Melish).

But his real fame began when he set up the Church of the Social

Revolution in New York in the spring of 1914. It happened that the Ludlow Massacre took place about that time in John D. Rockefeller's Colorado coal and iron mines, and Bouck White led his poor ragged congregation to Rockefeller's plush First Baptist Church on Fifth Avenue (they were only a few blocks apart) so that, hopefully, both church groups pray together for a righteous solution to the trouble at Ludlow.

But the Rockefeller church called the cops. White was arrested for "disturbing the peace," and sent to prison for as many months as the law allowed. Debs and other Socialists hailed him, and he was a *cause celebre*.

When White was asked, while in prison, "What is the relation of our Church to the Socialist Party?" he made a forthright reply. He agreed to the suggestion that the Church—that is, his Church of the Social Revolution—was "a sister movement to the Party." But he preferred, he said, to say: "The Church of the Revolution is destined to be the soul, of which the Socialist Party is the body."*

Bouck White wrote *The Call of the Carpenter* (1911) and *The Carpenter and the Rich Man* (1914), gradually evolving what may be described as a Marx-influenced interpretation of the New Testament.

Some of this is indicated in his re-writing of the Apostles' Creed, which goes like this:

I believe in God, the Master most mighty, stirrer-up of Heaven and Earth, and in Jesus the Carpenter of Nazareth, who was born of proletarian Mary, toiled at the work bench, descended into labor's hell, suffered under Roman tyranny at the hands of Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. . . .**

The Reverend Edward Ellis Carr (1871-1933)

The Reverend Edward Ellis Carr was in certain ways a phenomenon even among social-minded preachers. He was chief editor of the influential *Christian Socialist* magazine, published at first in Danville, Illinois, and later in Chicago, from the time of its founding in 1904-05 throughout its more than ten-year history. In 1907 he reported in its pages on his attendance as an official American delegate at the International Socialist Congress in Europe. *The Christian Socialist* always published the platforms and resolutions of the Socialist Party, and editorially supported Socialist candidates in the

* Bouck White, *Letters from Prison*. Introduction by Lucy Weeks Trimble. Richard G. Badger. Boston, 1915, p. 45.

** Ibid, p. 14.

elections. Carr himself praised the Charles H. Kerr publishing company for its services in making available the works of Marx and Engels (though he disapproved of Arthur Morrow Lewis, who he said wrote not to make socialists, but "to make atheists out of socialists").

Over the years he listed literally hundreds of preachers who announced support for socialism. The *Christian Socialist* exulted on May 15, 1908, that ten of the 216 delegates to the Socialist Party national convention of that year were Christian clergymen. Carr published special editions of his paper for Baptists, for Roman Catholics, for Lutherans, and so on, trying to reach every denomination.

The *Christian Socialist* reported with pride in the issues of June 1 and June 15, 1909, that at the Fourth General Conference of the Christian Socialist Fellowship, held in Toledo, Ohio, there were 26 delegates from seven states, and that Mayor Brand Whitlock of the host city gave an official Address of Welcome.

The magazine was remarkably successful in securing and printing contributions of one sort or another from a wide variety of notables, including not only Socialist Party leaders but others: Edwin Markham, poet; Horace Mann, educator; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, author; as well as Clarence Darrow, Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and a long list of others.

Up to the time of World War I, The *Christian Socialist* could be described, I suppose, as a "party line" publication, but at that time patriotism (the pro-war variety) intervened. The Socialist Party resisted United States entry into the war; the *Christian Socialist* urged United States participation.

The Reverend Father Thomas McGrady (1863-1909)

There have been Roman Catholic Socialists, too, who did obeisance to Karl Marx.

Father McGrady was rector of St. Anthony's Church, Bellevue, Kentucky, around the turn of the century, and when he died, in 1909, Eugene V. Debs wrote his obituary in the *Appeal to Reason*, which was reprinted in the *Christian Socialist* (January 1, 1909).

Father McGrady wrote several socialist pamphlets, one of which was *A Plea for Social Democracy*, published by Standard Publishing Company, Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1901.

"If our powers of productivity have been multiplied twenty-fold within the last half-century," he wrote, "then we should have twenty

times the amount of comforts for the same application of labor in the days of our fathers. But such is not the case. Poverty has everywhere kept pace with the march of progress."

He asked: "Are your ears deaf to the lamentations that echo throughout this great land, from ocean to ocean, and from the Gulf to the Lakes? Are your hearts callous to the widow's wail and the orphan's cry?"

Going on, he analyzed the existing situation, and declared:

The result of our economic system is seen in the growth of poverty among the toilers, and the amassment of great wealth by the idlers and parasites of society.

Give the laboring man the full value of his labor, and there will be no hard times, no stagnation of industry, no strikes, no lockouts, no crises, no failures, and, above all the land will not be cursed with over-production, while millions are starving and in tatters.

Continuing, he said: "Socialism will give every man an opportunity. It will make all men free and equal. Under it there will be no privileged class, and *this* is why it has been so obstinately opposed." (Father McGrady's emphasis.)

An illuminating article was written by Father McGrady for *The Comrade* (predecessor of the *Masses*), Vol. II, No. 1, p. 74 (1902), under the title, "How I Became a Socialist."

He wrote: "I perused the works of Laurence Gronlund, Belamy, Vail, Sprague, and other Socialist writers, and became acquainted with the three great ideas of Karl Marx, and before the end of '99, I was firmly convinced that the collective ownership and administration of capital for the benefit of all the people was the only rational solution of the industrial problem. In the early part of 1900 I wrote to Father Hagerty, who was then rector of the Catholic Church at Cleburne, Texas, informing him that I was a disciple of Marx."

Father T. J. Hagerty, in replying, congratulated him!

Father Hagerty deserves more attention, but there is space only to say he was one of the organizers of the I. W. W. (Industrial Workers of the World) in 1905. He and Debs, with Daniel De Leon and William D. Haywood, brain-trusted that remarkable trade union effort. Hagerty designed the circular emblem, often called "Hagerty's Wheel."

In one of his pamphlets Hagerty quoted the Irish proverb: "We take our religion from Rome, but our politics from home."

Apologies for Those Omitted

The above does not by any means exhaust the subject. I have not discussed Socialist clergymen who were elected to office on the Socialist ticket, such as the Reverend George R. Lunn, a Presbyterian, who became mayor of Schenectady, N.Y. in 1911. (His secretary was the young Walter Lippmann.) Nor the Reverend J. Stitt Wilson, who a little later (1914) became mayor of Berkeley, California. There is also the Reverend Frederic O. MacCartney, a Congregationalist, elected as a Socialist to the Massachusetts legislature in 1900.

Furthermore, I have omitted such noteworthy personalities as Bishop William Montgomery Brown, author of *Communism and Christianity*; the late Reverend Albert Rhys Williams, advocate of American-Soviet friendship; the Reverend Eliot White, Episcopalian, a delegate to the national convention of the Socialist Party in 1908; the Right Reverend Paul Jones, Bishop of Utah (successor to Bishop Spalding), who listed himself as a socialist in *American Labor Who's Who*, edited by Solon De Leon; A. J. Muste, who voted for Debs in 1912; and the Reverend Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist minister, who in 1901 gave a friendly critique of Marxist and pseudo-Marxist socialism that is worth studying even today.

I have failed, incidentally, to take note of a Negro cleric, the Reverend George W. Woodbey, of California, author of *The Bible and Socialism: A dialogue Between Two Preachers*, published in 1904, in which he speaks of Marx as "the great philosopher of modern times"; also another Negro preacher, the Reverend George Frazier Miller of Brooklyn, a contributor to *The Messenger* which was founded in 1916-17 by A. Philip Randolph.

It is impossible here to discuss the whole total of religious leaders who were influenced by Marxism, or even to list them all.

Conclusion

There may be some question about the much earlier Christian Socialism of the utopian period, in the mid-nineteenth century. There was indeed such a movement, but it bore no overt relation to Marxism, and is therefore not taken up here.

It must, I think, be agreed that Alexander Trachtenberg was right in differentiating between that earlier non-Marxist Christian Socialism, led by W. D. T. Bliss and Professor John R. Commons, which was "unconnected with the Socialist Party of that time," and the later Christian Socialism described in this article. "Since 1900, however," Trachtenberg wrote, "Christian Socialism has stood for

the movement within the Socialist Party of those who believe that only by means of the Socialist Commonwealth can Christian principles be applied in society." (*American Labor Year Book*, 1916, p. 157).

In an article in the *Christian Socialist*, June 1, 1908, Rufus Weeks, an Episcopal layman, makes the point even more positively. He insists that really there can't be two kinds of socialism—"a Christian Socialism and a non-Christian Socialism"; there is just Socialism. But the Christians have "a special motive of their own—the Christian motive"—for supporting Socialism. And they all, he says, uphold the basic teaching, the Marxist doctrine.

Then there is the reciprocal influence of the Church on the Marxist movement, the secondary question I raised at the beginning. It may be justly argued, I think, that the moral quality of Christian teachings helped to emphasize the strong humanist strain already present in Marxism, and served as a bridge across which a dialogue between Socialism and Religion could be begun. At the same time, Church influence brought about an over-emphasis on the *forms* of ethics and a weakening, at times, of working class militancy.

A third point, and an important one, is that the greatest difficulty with the spread of Christian Socialism was the spread of supposedly Christian *Capitalism*. It may be true that, as the Reverend George E. Littlefield said in 1904 in the *Arena* magazine, Christians should vote for Socialism because "Socialism will make religion real." But at the same time, as William Appleman Williams wrote in *The Contours of American History*, "the great majority in the Social Gospel movement favored Christian Capitalism." They even, he implied, seemed to advocate imperialism and the sending of missionaries as two interdependent and admirable developments.*

My fourth concluding observation is also beyond the limits of this brief study, but it needs making. The point is this: No one should think that the subject-matter of Christianity or of any other religion is outside the purview of science. All traditions and theories and systems (Marxism too!) are subject to study, examination, testing, and either proof or disproof, and Christianity is no exception.

My main purpose, if I may repeat, has been to examine the effect of Marxism on Christianity in this country before 1917—that is, before the Russian Revolution. The facts show, it seems to me, that Marxism did in truth influence, to a considerable degree, the character and the teachings of the Christian Church.

* William Appleman Williams, *The Contours of American History*. World Publishing Company, Cleveland & New York. 1961. p. 357.

Catholics and Marxists in Latin America

The dialogue between Catholics and Marxists in Latin America is the logical consequence of the deep-going crisis affecting the broad social strata, believers and non-believers. With the notable exception of Cuba, Iberoamerica is gripped in a life and death struggle in this, its second fight for independence. Unlike the nineteenth century, the national liberation movements of today are inextricably bound up with radical social and economic structural changes. Both aspects of the struggle are directed against foreign imperialism and feudalism. These mounting movements are having their repercussions in the Catholic Church, attested to by divisions and schisms and by a new orientation favoring the development of united actions despite ideological differences.

The Changes Within the Catholic Church

Here, a few observations are in order. First, the old policies of the Catholic hierarchy have inexorably created the process of its separation from the masses. But the most significant phenomenon is the powerful influence exercised by the broad masses upon the Catholic institutions, forcing changes and modifications, some even of an objectively revolutionary character as we shall indicate later. The Church has no alternative other than to modify its theology, its customs, its language and even the liturgy. Above all, in the drive to reconquer the masses, basic changes in the Church's social doctrine are necessary. On the other hand, there is the promotion of Christian-Democratic parties and programs, in most instances bearing a reformist character.

This process is not only quantitative but also qualitative. Participation in the developing battle causes believers to acquire a consciousness of their own power as the sole force capable of liberating them. The following episode may prove the point. In the village of Santo Adriano, Chile, thousands of workers' families engaged in struggles for housing and succeeded in acquiring land and a roof over their heads. The Communists were an integral part of the struggles. When a Communist delegate asked some women tenants what

they thought about the victory obtained, one of them said: "I have succeeded in settling in this new home thanks to the Virgin Mary." Another said: "I got this thanks to the Party." And a third: "That is true, we owe it to the Party and the Virgin Mary."

Secondly, the Catholic clergy as a whole is oriented toward reconquering the masses of believers and a tremendous effort is being made to achieve it. The number of clergymen is being increased, modern methods of organization are being introduced and most of all, programs are being advanced to improve the conditions of the masses. The Church is out to win the conscience of the people especially where Communists are active—in villages, factories, shops, offices and schools.

Thirdly, there is a growing number of priests and Catholic laymen who do not identify religious beliefs with resignation. They do not recommend submission but call for social responsibility and action. The Chilean Jesuit Mario Zañartu expresses this viewpoint quite forcefully, when he says that the model Christian is the one who uses all his dynamism in the service of his neighbor, through his dedication to revolutionary reforms.**

In the historic dialogue with Argentine Marxists in October 1965, Father P. Carlos Mujica raised his challenging voice:

... for no responsible and honest Christian who wants to live according to the Evangelical precepts can the Church continue to be a refuge and a pretext to evade committing himself basically to human progress, to struggling with all his might so that each man can live as a person. . . .

Today in Latin America millions are dying violently of hunger. And if we Christians do not seek to change this world, let us change the name because we would not have the right to go on using it.**

He says further that the time has arrived when

... as Christians we break once and for all with a solidarity which we repudiate as men of the Church: solidarity with capitalism and with a certain conception of private property. With the help of God, I am disposed to give my life for the Gospel but not to defend capitalist structures even if these are within the Church (ibid).

* Orlando Millas, "Adelante por el Camino del XIII congreso," *Documentos del XIII Congreso Nacional del Partido Comunista de Chile*, Folleto No. 8, p. 22.

**Tambien aquí Dialogan Catolicos y Marxistas," *Nuestra Palabra*, October 27, 1965.

The Church in the Latin-American Countries

The role of the Catholic Church in Latin America varies in each country, depending on the militancy of the people fighting oppression and poverty, the pressure exerted upon the Church and the maturing revolutionary crisis affecting all strata of the population.

In Chile, under the strong pressure of the Catholic masses, the Church, in its own way, opposes reaction while at the same time it is antagonistic to the anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic forces bidding for power (the Popular Action Front). In Argentina, the Church opposes President Illia's program for the nationalization of oil while part of the clergy sides with the anti-imperialist struggles of the people. The hierarchy in Venezuela and its creature COPEI (Christian-Democratic Party) are props of imperialism. The leaders share the guilt of the crimes and atrocities perpetrated by the governments of Betancourt and Leoni. It is known that in the Dominican Republic the Catholic hierarchy supported the military coup that overthrew the constitutional government of Juan Bosch in 1963. Peru is undergoing a severe internal crisis aggravated by U.S. interventionist manipulations, military and otherwise. At this moment, when the Peruvian people are resisting the sell-out of petroleum fields and fighting in defense of their patrimony, Cardinal Juan Landazuri in an address at Huancayo declares that the "death penalty against atheistic Communism is justified in defense of constitutionalism."*

On the other hand, the Catholic priest Salomon Bolo Hidalgo, from San Quintin prison in Peru, where he is confined because of his support to the guerrilla fighters, issued a letter condemning the Cardinal's call to inquisition. The bloody Duvalier regime in Haiti is being more and more opposed by the clergy. The Catholic journal *La Phalange* is opposed to the dictatorship even while it points to an imaginary Communist danger. On the one hand, a group of Catholic priests deliver lectures on Communism to "prove" that Marxism is outdated. On the other hand, Fathers George and Bissainthe carry on active opposition to Duvalier.

In some countries the Catholic Church speaks of "revolution," of "anti-imperialism," but in essence advocates reformism. Typical of this trend is the article written by the Jesuit priest Gerardo Claps and Julio Barzan, leader of the Catholic Action in Chile:

The enormous weight of these capitals in national life would justify their nationalization. But if we want to be just, it is a duty

* *The Worker*, December 26, 1965.

to indemnify them. And if we want to be sensible we cannot deprive the country of necessary investments. More, it is commendable to attract them. But the profits must be shared equitably between foreign investors and the country that opens its hospitality to such capitals.*

The Catholic Church is the promoter of Christian-Democratic political parties, which play the role of reformism, striving to channel the people's movements along the road to compromises with the national oligarchies and imperialism. Nonetheless, it would be wrong to conclude that this type of reformism is wholly negative. In the concrete conditions of sharp mass struggles, sometimes the Church and the Christian-Democratic parties assume objectively a progressive and on occasion even a revolutionary character.

In Colombia, we observe two tendencies: Cardinal Concha belongs to the reactionary wing. In a document issued by the theologians of Bolivar University in Medellin, they insist on the moth-eaten dogma that the poor stay poor: "The rich," they wrote, "are the managers of God's wealth on earth."** The other tendency is expressed in the program and activities of the Christian Social-Democratic Party. It presents itself as a truly revolutionary organization whose objective is to "liquidate the capitalist system" and establish a "community society" (not a Communist society—A.M.). Its leaders claim to take a "third road."

Let us briefly examine the positive and negative features of this program as estimated by the Colombian Communists. With regard to the Colombian revolution, the Christian Social-Democratic Party, reports Alcibiades Paredes, categorically asserts the necessity of

... a revolution in the truest sense of the word, without vacillations and dissimulations. Simple and transient reforms are insufficient. It is necessary to achieve an integral, profound and rapid transformation of the present structures in accordance with a determined plan (ibid).

According to the platform of the Christian Social-Democratic Party, colonialism is repudiated, peaceful coexistence is advocated and control over the exploitation of the country's natural resources

* *Integraci del Hombre en el Proceso Economico*, *Mensaje*, October 1963. Quoted by: Orlando Millas, *Los Comunistas, los Catolicos y la Libertad*, Editorial Austral, Santiago, 1964, p. 123.

** Quoted by Alcibiades Paredes in "El Partido Social-Demócrata Cristiano y la Problemática Nacional," *Documentos Politicos*, October 1965.

supported, but leaving untouched the imperialist-oligarchic setup. It projects important agrarian reforms such as land to the peasants with credit and educational facilities. However, the latifundia system which is the basis of backwardness, obscurantism and feudal relations, remains intact. These demands assuredly do not call for "structural changes."

A positive feature in political action is the opposition of the Christian Social-Democratic Party to the traditional Conservative and Liberal parties who made a mockery of the Constitution. On the whole, the platform provides a sound basis for agreement and action. The Communist Party of Colombia, the first to raise the need for structural changes and many other immediate issues, takes a positive attitude in public polemics, insisting on "testing on the anvil of practice" the demands advanced by the Christian Social-Democratic Party.

In Colombia, there is, perhaps, a third tendency arising from the Catholic clergy, whose spokesman has been Father Camilo Torres Restrepo. He maintained that the clergy must not be the instrument of the exploiting classes, that the Evangelical principles of "love thy neighbor" are impossible of realization without the majority taking power. He forcefully exposed the poison of anti-Communism that disunites the people and helps the national oligarchy and imperialism. He led the movement known as United Front, and finally joined the guerrilla fighters and was killed in combat in February 1966. It was Camilo Torres who publicly declared in September 1965:

I have said that I am a revolutionary as Colombian, sociologist, Christian and priest. I consider that the Communist Party contains authentically revolutionary elements and, therefore, as Colombian, sociologist, Christian and priest, I cannot be anti-Communist.*

Quite a number of Chilean priests have recently confessed that anti-Communism was isolating the Church from the people and that cessation of this harmful propaganda was a great relief to them. In September 18, 1965, in the Te Deum at the Cathedral of Santiago, the preacher included among the outstanding personalities of the country Luis Emilio Recabarren, the founder of the Communist Party of Chile.

Chilean Marxists greet *aggiornamento* with an open mind. Learning from past history, they note with satisfaction the abandonment of past practices of meting out excommunication to national leaders of

* Mensaje del Padre Camillo a los Comunistas," *La Voz Proletaria*, September 9, 1965.

the country who fought for independence and the separation of State and Church.

How about an "aggiornamento of the Communist Party?" some Catholics ask. Orlando Millas answers:

In the case of Chile, there are evident modifications in the conduct of the majority of the clergy. It can be said we are facing attitudes on certain matters different from those which we know and which were traditional. For this reason some of our judgments with regard to the Church have lost their validity and we must modify them. Marxism-Leninism does not need any "aggiornamento" because implicitly its very essence is constant critical reflection, the study of reality as it is and the immediate apprehension of the new. It is in this alert, open and dialectical spirit that we greet the Catholic renovation . . .

He says further:

The Communist Party of Chile has maintained a consistent Marxist-Leninist attitude on religion. There was an initial period when the Party was founded in 1912 under the name of the Socialist Workers Party, when it was influenced by the anti-clericalism of a section of the bourgeoisie and, above all, of the anarchists. It was then that Communists organized lecture tours in workers' centers . . . devoted to biting criticism of religious practices. Comrade Elias Laferte, who later became Party chairman, was sued in his youth as the editor of the satirical journal *El Bonete*, which made fun of ecclesiastic topics. A little later, however, this strident attitude was replaced by persistent ideological struggle which did not exclude but on the contrary reinforced joint action by all sectors of the working class and the people against reaction.*

Role of U.S. Imperialism

The United States foreign policy makers are by no means unmindful of the developments within the Catholic Church in Latin America. An integral part of their plans of direct and indirect intervention to subvert the movements for social progress is the use of the Church and Catholic organizations. Let us read Millas again:

In an interesting account given by Manuel Facal in the Uruguayan magazine *Estudios* in the middle of last year . . . he asserted pointedly that behind the proliferation of a new type of Catholic organizations is to be found, as one of the decisive supports, the

* Orlando Millas, "Nuevas Condiciones en la Lucha Ideológica entre Comunistas y Católicos," manuscript prepared for publication, 1966.

financial backing of North American and West European foundations. Although the alma mater of this support continues unquestionably to be the Gregorian University of Rome, since the emergence of the Alliance for Progress and in general since the "development" policy of the Catholic President Kennedy, it can be said that a second center is located in the United States. The Belgian Jesuit Roger Vekermans, the gray-haired eminence of the Christian-Democratic government of President Eduardo Frei, greeted the Alliance for Progress with the same enthusiasm as his European correligionists did the Marshall Plan. He established in Santiago the Center for Economic and Social Development of Latin America (DESAL), linked to the OAS (Organization of American States). This Center operates in collaboration with Loyola University of the South in New Orleans.

The relation between imperialism and the modern clerical current is not one of simple and unconditional subservience of the latter; to say the least it is one of reciprocal friendship. . . .

North American imperialism has extended great help to the proselytizing work of the Chilean Church through the American Caritas, in the form of foodstuffs, medicines, clothing and money. . . .

Behind a number of Catholic organizations, one can easily discover the North American financial contributions. One factor which has facilitated the phenomenon is the investment of capital by the Vatican and religious orders in certain Yankee monopoly enterprises, some of which operate in Chile and Latin America generally, and which show a willingness to make contributions to the work carried on by religious institutions. On the other hand, because of the growing scarcity of Chilean priests, there are many foreign parochial priests, especially from Spain and the United States (ibid).

But the clergy itself is a victim of imperialist plans of building up huge dossiers containing information on the thinking and activities of all leaders, including those of the Church. Such a plan was Project Camelot, engineered by the Pentagon and the State Department, which was scuttled by the White House after a roar of protests in Chile. Despite all this, the new thinking of the majority of the clergy must be disappointing to the imperialists and the hierarchy. In 1961, the Catholic University of Chile, on the initiative of Loyola University, carried out an investigation probing into the social and political thinking of the clergy in Santiago. The questionnaire was sent to 782 priests and 1500 Catholic laymen, of whom 79.4 per cent are members of social groups directed by the Church. Of the priests, 58.1 per cent rejected the concept that the Catholic Church is the implacable enemy of "atheist Communism." As to whether the principal problem in Chile is Communism, the answer was that such things

as housing and insufficient education were the main problems. Furthermore, 83.1 per cent of all answers agreed that the Communist influence was greater than that of the Church in poor communities and 94.8 per cent agreed that the Party's influence in the trade unions was greater. On economic questions, 87.4 per cent declared that the natural resources are sufficient for a comfortable life for each family; 84 per cent were for wage increases; 60.6 per cent were for a better distribution of land; 40.8 per cent believed that the revolution would be peaceful and 21.4 per cent that it would be violent.

It is important to note that the investigation preceded Vatican II and Pope John's celebrated *Pacem in Terris*.

Dialogue and Unity in Action

Thus, debates between Catholics and Communists go on in Latin America, preceded and followed by united actions. The Argentine Communists emphasize the fact that the battle today is not between atheists and believers. The real battle is for human progress, and unity is the indispensable weapon. The common objective is to block the road to those who live and intend to live at the expense of the hungry majority. The aim is to fight together against hunger, for peace and for the country; to create a new type of government that will advance democratic liberties and secure national independence.

With equal fervor, the Catholic participants in the dialogue stress the need of unity of action and mass mobilization as the road to national and social liberation. Expressing the desire that future dialogues take place with mass participation of Catholics, Marxists, Protestants, Jews, Socialists, Peronists, Progressive Radicals, the Catholic student leader Guillermo Tedeschi states that he would not want to be a Christian if this implies an exploiting-class political ideology.

Another question occupying an important place in the debates is the fear that Communists will use religious people in the struggle to achieve socialism and then abandon and even persecute them. Tedeschi expressed it thus:

. . . We cannot deceive ourselves nor do we intend to deceive ourselves. And in order that there will be no misunderstandings, we say to them that the role we want to play (in the socialist society) is that of being able to think freely, to live in freedom of religious thought which will permit us to be the shining asset in the vanguard of the proletariat and life in the new world.*

* Acción Conjunta de Creyentes y no Creyentes por un Mundo Nuevo," *Nuestra Palabra*, November 3, 1965.

The Chilean priest Gerardo Claps gave vent to a similar misgiving:

It (Marxism) wants to monopolize the revolution or at least to initiate it. As a tactic it seeks transient collaborators who later are thrown overboard.*

The Argentine Marxist Fernando Nadra answers Tedeschi:

This togetherness is for how long? We must first resolve the problems of our country . . . We must create a new type of government, radically change our country, for true democratic liberties, for an end to the high cost of living, for an end to hunger and superexploitation, for an end to emergency governments, and for our independence from imperialism. For all these we can be united for a long time. And after that we will have to build a democratic society leading toward socialism. Will we not be together, Catholics and non-Catholics, as believers and non-believers are today in the socialist countries?***

And Orlando Millas answers Father Claps:

It is not a mere Communist tactic to look for collaborators. We want the unity of all who are for the cause of the working class, of the people, of freedom, of progress and of peace. To the degree that the collaborators sincerely support this cause in its entirety, they are not transient but are collaborators for all of the tasks of our epoch . . . We do not seek monopoly of the revolution, but on the contrary, we want it to become the general patrimony of the people (ibid., pp 175-176).

In summary, let us refer once more to Millas' remarks on what he correctly calls the creative dialogue, remarks expressing deep humanistic and hopeful thoughts for struggling mankind:

Joint action of Communists and Catholics does not eliminate the ideological struggle but places it on a new terrain. It is not a question of Communists modifying their principles in order to come to an understanding with Catholics, nor of the latter ceasing to be Catholics. The terms of the dialogue are distinct from any compromise: through it there is to be sought frankness and clarity on the position of each with a view to mutual understanding, which involves a disposition to uncover the truth and, above all, to find

common ground for concerted efforts to achieve common objectives in the light of the respective positions.

Millions of Catholics have been deceived all their lives by slanders directed at us Communists. We highly appreciate the opportunity given to them to know our thoughts, our objectives and our methods of action. This will permit the definitive treatment of that devil, that cloven-hoofed devil with other animal attributes and the smell of sulfur Communists maintained was incarnation. On our part, we are ready also to lay aside prejudices and misunderstanding because we are people interested in having a positive approach to reality.

The dialogue interests us more than anybody else because of the nature of our doctrine, of the unlimited confidence we place on critical reflection and action, of the eminently scientific position which we take and of the certainty that the world advances and is taking the direction traced by us . . . Though we proceed from different premises and propose distinct objectives, what allows us to work together is that we put the accent on the happiness of man obtained through struggles against backwardness, exploitation, material misery and cultural deprivation.

Times such as these demand armed vigilance in the ideological field with alertness in seeking clarity in polemics. The least abandonment of positions of principle gives advantages to imperialism. . . .

To be effective, the ideological struggle must be waged convincingly. For this it is necessary in the first place to link it with social actions for peace, bread, freedom, progress, welfare and culture. The Communist style of ideological struggle is one that facilitates joint action of all sectors of the working class and the people and an anti-monopolist regrouping.*

*Orlando Millas, "Nuevas Condiciones en la Lucha Ideológica entre Comunistas y Católicos."

* Orlando Millas, *Los Comunistas, los Católicos y la Libertad*, p. 175.

** *Nuestra Bandera*, November 3, 1965.

Religion, Church and Laicization in Hungary*

When representatives of Hungary and the Vatican signed a protocol on September 15, 1964, embodying the partial agreements between the Hungarian state and the Catholic Church, much prominence was given by the world's press to Hungary and the religious situation in this country. Unfortunately, as is usual, reports have very often described a distorted state of affairs due to ignorance, imprecise knowledge of the facts, and even political prejudices or hostile attitudes.

Several publicists attributed the process of laicization in Hungary in the course of the last twenty years' development to "the violent religious persecution carried out by the Communist state." But the fact is that the process of laicization—and this must be seen clearly—does not begin by definition in the course of socialist transformation. In the bourgeois societies of our days, secular and ecclesiastical sociologists, specializing in religious affairs, have concurrently pointed out—with resignation or with gratification, depending on their respective world outlook—that the membership of Christian denominations has been dropping fast and religious activity as such is on the decrease. In the last 30 years, the world's population rose by some 700 million people while the number of Catholics only increased by 100 million. Statistics show that only about 25 per cent of the christened people actively participate in their Church's life, attend divine services or take part in parish work.

According to West German statistical data, half of the Evangelicals living in urban areas there only belong to the Church nominally. French Catholic church-affairs sociologists established in the course of their researches that men and young people among the industrial working class have in the main become alienated from the Church, and two-thirds of them cannot be regarded as belonging among the faithful.

This process of development, which is a sequel to industrialization and urbanization, could only occur in Hungary after World War II,

* This article was prepared for Political Affairs through the courtesy of Valéria Benke, editor of *Társadalmi Szemle*, theoretical journal of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party.

and with the socialist transformation of social conditions it has been speeded up and has assumed massive dimensions. The main reasons for this are as follows:

Before World War II, Hungary was a country with backward social structure and economy. The development of industrial capitalism dragged behind the general European rate of development and the strong remnants of semi-feudal conditions left their marked imprint on the country's economy. Latifundia, like so many octopuses, stifled the economy and society of the country. It is appropriate to mention here that the churches held an important share of landed property, a total of about one million yokes or one and a third million acres, and that the Roman Catholic Church was Hungary's premier landed proprietor.

The backward economic structure had a superstructure composed of a set of backward social, political and intellectual conditions. In prewar Hungary, wide masses of the population were fully or half illiterate. The Horthy regime forced the Communist Party underground while the Social Democratic Party was headed by opportunist personalities of its Right wing (who, for instance, relinquished any work of organization among rural workers, under an agreement with the government). The infinitesimally small bourgeois-democratic elements were also smothered by a mentality of backwardness and indifference. Accordingly, for wide masses of the population living in prewar Hungary, religion constituted the protest against the existing conditions, and the main area of illusory escapism.

This situation was overtopped by a privileged position enjoyed by the churches. We have already touched upon their material wealth. Besides, the churches had deeply influenced almost all areas of the people's life, ranging from compulsory religious instruction in schools to the abundance of organizations under church control. Counter-revolutionary Hungary officially attached the tag "Christian-national" to itself, professed a Christian religious morality and called for peace among the social classes.

It was one of the characteristics of postwar development in liberated Hungary—a feature determined by the historical traditions of the country—that the tasks of industrialization and urbanization, realized in industrially developed countries many decades before, had to be carried out concurrently with the socialist transformation of society. In fact, the two processes were interwoven.

Concerning the position of the churches, this also entailed a rapid laicization process. With the way freed before the masses for independent social activities, increasingly wider sections of the population

realized that the illusory escapism provided by religion is only a sham refuge which makes for no improvement in this world below. There was also the contributory reason of land reform, that primary feature of the Hungarian democratic transformation, which divested the churches of their fundamental economic potential. The churches were also ousted from political life, mainly because their backward-looking leaders had opposed both socialist and general democratic transformation measures (the then Prince Primate of the Catholic Church, for instance, protested in 1946 against the proclamation of the Hungarian Republic). With the secularization of the schools in 1948, a basis was created for a uniform democratic school system in Hungary where the churches no longer enjoyed a privileged position.

The appraisal of realities finally actuated the leaders of the churches to settle their relationships vis-à-vis the Hungarian State in an agreed form. These agreements were actually concluded by 1949. With them, the basic condition has been provided for the normalization of the situation. By concentrating their activities on the spiritual sphere, the churches can in fact better fulfill their true vocation (and characteristically enough, voices can be heard these days among West European and South American Catholic Church personalities to the effect that the Church, as a community operating in this world, can better fulfill its tasks if it renounces worldly wealth).

However, sound development on that basis was hampered both by the illegal political machinations by some of the then church personalities, and by the administrative and police actions by the government of that time in reaction to these machinations. Unfortunately, the application of these methods was spreading over a number of years and frequently replaced proper enlightenment and efforts at persuasion. This is the reason why credence was given in 1956 to the propagandistic allegations about religious persecution, upheld by some church personalities who had gone over to illegal practices or had been formerly shelved by the churches themselves.

In 1957, with the increased consolidation of the political situation, it became possible for the government to place on its agenda again the matter of relations between the state and the churches, and to remedy mistakes committed in the past. The agreement has once again been confirmed under which the state pays the purchasing price of the former landed property of the churches, offered to the state up to 1951, with an annual 5 per cent interest. Another point of the agreement says that when these sums have been fully paid the state will give extraordinary grants-in-aid to the churches, in order to make up for the emerging deficiencies in income.

The agreement concerning state grants to the churches continues to operate. Besides, the churches receive taxes from their faithful—this situation corresponding to the prewar situation with the difference that, as a result of separation of church and state, the church taxes are no longer collected in the manner of public taxation.

The Hungarian government guarantees for all citizens the freedom of religion and of conscience—rights embodied in and guaranteed by the Constitution.

In this connection, supporting evidence is available. If we compare, for instance, the number of dioceses in 1945 and in 1962, we see practically no reductions at all.

Number of Dioceses or Corresponding Units

	1945	1962
Roman Catholic	17	14*
Calvinist	4	4
Lutheran	4	2
Jewish	6	6
Unitarian	10	10
Greek Orthodox	4	4

Figures concerning the clergymen of the major religions show that there was no significant decrease between 1945 and 1962. The only exception is the number of rabbis of the Jewish religion, which is explained by the emigration in the years following the war and by the fascist massacres.

If we disregard the Catholic monastic orders (the only operating orders in Hungary at present are the teaching orders), the figures are: Practicing Catholic parish priests, 6,345, in 1945 and 5,400 in 1962. Calvinist clergymen, 2,000 and 1,610. Lutheran clergymen, 520 and 460. Unitarian clergymen, 8 and 8. Popes of the Orthodox Church, 61 and 65.

For the sake of completeness, we mention here that in prewar years the so-called historical churches of Hungary have sharply fought against denominations of the character of sects. Under their pressure, legislation in that period set up categories for "recognized" and "established" religions. Legislation today knows no such distinction and the religious groups formerly called sects—the Baptist, Adventist, Methodist and other denominations have founded the Council of

* The drop is due to reorganization.

Free Churches. Through this Council, they participate in the work of the World Council of Churches.

The number of church buildings (or meeting-houses) of the various religions has shown an increase between 1945 and 1962. Besides the state contribution to the rebuilding or restoration of war-damaged churches, with special regard to those which figure as monuments, many new church buildings were erected from the funds put up by the faithful, or partly from foreign aid. This should be seen primarily as a result of natural development, namely, that while the majority of the faithful lived in poverty or even misery before the war, now they are willing to spend more on the prosperity of their parish institution with the general increase in personal income and living standards. Naturally, general prestige considerations are also coming into play, as in some areas—and especially in the closed societies of some villages—the amount of money offered for the maintenance of the parish institutions, or for the building of a church, shows up as a symbol of status. This explains why there was a decrease in the number of active church members while at the same time the number of church buildings (or meeting-houses) increased.

Here are the relevant figures:

Number of Church Buildings (or meeting-houses)

	1945	1962
Roman Catholic	4,824	4,757
Calvinist	1,265	1,297
Lutheran	423	474
Jewish	1,400	100
Unitarian	8	8
Orthodox	102	87
Baptist	500	450
Adventist	169	153
Methodist	14	10*
Other denominations belonging to the Council of Free Churches	233	316

Before the war, the churches—and especially the Catholic Church—carried on very large-scale book and newspaper publishing activities. Only a certain part of their publications were of a religious character, however. A great part of them consisted of daily and weekly news-

* In addition, 15 congregations meet in homes.

papers, books and brochures of definitely political character. At present, the churches—since owing to their changed position they no longer carry on political activities—concentrate their publication activities on periodicals and books of a religious nature, or on belles-lettres of religious inspiration. There are two Catholic publishing companies operating at present: these publish two weeklies and one monthly.

The Calvinist Church publishes one newspaper and four periodicals, the Lutheran one newspaper and one periodical, the Jewish one weekly newspaper, and the Orthodox one periodical. The Baptists publish periodically their *Harbinger of Peace* and the annual *Guidance* and *The Voices of Faith*, these last being hymn-books.

All over the world, the churches find it difficult to ensure a fresh supply of candidates for priesthood. Hungary is no exception to this rule. Although in Hungary there are a Catholic Theological Academy and Central Seminar, five diocesan theological colleges, two Calvinist theological academies, one Lutheran theological academy, one Jewish rabbinical training college and one *yeshiva*, and a Baptist theological seminary, the number of college and seminary students has shown a decreasing tendency.

In 1962, there were 8 Catholic grammar schools (2 for girls) and 6 boarding schools, also one Calvinist and one Jewish grammar school. In spite of the general secularization of the school system, these teaching establishments remained under the control of the churches in order to satisfy the needs of parents who insist on the education of their children in a religious spirit.

Parents who want their children to attend classes on religion in the state general and secondary schools can enter their children for Scripture classes under a system of optional religious education, or can have their children attend the catechism half-hours arranged in parish buildings. A decreasing number of parents have availed themselves of this possibility, under the realization that the modern scientific world outlook of the school curricula would conflict in the children's minds with the religious world outlook, so they want to keep their children from such controversial dual effects.

In some Budapest secondary schools research was made into the religious-sociological state of affairs. It was shown that in the minds of 17-year-old students religion tended gradually to lose its validity as a guarantee of high morality. Such research was also carried on sporadically among rural youth, and the result shows that a similar view is held even by young people who are believers. In our view the fact that religious teachings are not considered the only, and by

many people not even the primary, guarantee for a high morality, has also contributed considerably to the decrease in the number of student entries for religious instruction in schools.

These data show that there is no obstacle in Hungary to the exercise of the freedom of religion and conscience. This fact is amply proved also by the figures relating to church weddings and church-assisted funerals.

It is a well known fact that conventions play a very important role in maintaining certain ways of life and forms of attitude. Especially in the villages, but also in towns and cities, there are many young people who—under the influence of tradition-minded public opinion and especially of the elder generation, their parents and relatives—want to have a church wedding in addition to the civil procedure. A considerable part of these young people—as has been established from the above-mentioned sociological research—yield to conventions, or the pressure of public opinion, although very often they are indifferent to religion or even consciously non-religious. In 1963, there were 84,387 weddings in Hungary, of which 46,960 were sanctioned by Church ceremony as well.

The proportion is even bigger where christening of the newborn is concerned. Of the 132,335 newborn in 1963, 103,529 were christened. And psychological motives, especially the fear of death which is one of the mainsprings of surviving religious faith, were behind the fact that of the 99,871 deaths in 1963, 81,231 were followed by a church funeral.

In appraising the causes of the extensiveness of church ceremonies, one must take into consideration that the pomp, solemnity and loftiness of these ceremonies exert attraction on many people. To provide such solemnity for non-believers is the aim of the so-called social ceremonies for milestones of human existence, such as name-giving ceremonies for birth, wedding ceremonies, and last respects before funerals. These worldly ceremonies have very short traditions as yet in Hungary, and can only look back to a few years of currency. But these worldly ceremonies were in fact needed, as is shown by the fact that in 1963, 6.1 per cent of the newborn babies were not christened in church, 26.5 per cent of the weddings were carried on with only social festivities, and 5.6 per cent of the persons who died were not given a church funeral. (These data do not include the people who availed themselves of neither of those solemnities, i.e., parents who only entered their new-born baby's name in the registrar's books, or weddings before the marriage registrar without any following festivity.)

These processes show that the rules obtaining in highly industrialized and urbanized societies are striking root in Hungary as well. But it must be borne in mind at the same time that these transformations occurred amid socialist circumstances, amid conditions of socialism in the building. From the point of view of our subject matter, this means that the world outlook of our society is increasingly being transformed and Marxist thinking is becoming public treasure.

Marxism, already in the early works of its founders, stressed its opposition to the idealist world outlook, including religion. Since 1957, increasing currency has been gained in Hungary by the Marxist idea that the fight against religion is not a fight in the sense of that once carried on by the exponents of the French "Enlightenment" or the German "Aufklärung." Today, the criticism of religion is not primarily a theoretical task but a corollary of the transformation of social conditions, of extending socialist democracy.

The state professes, strictly keeps to—and makes everyone keep—the principle that religion is a private affair of the citizen. No one can be persecuted, or placed in a position of disadvantage, because of religious beliefs. Great religious festivities and occasions—including pilgrimages and processions—are still being held with traditional ceremony, but the number of participants has generally shown a gradual decrease.

Besides, in the spirit of socialist democracy, the state makes possible the existence of theoretical criticism of religion, although there are no free-thinking societies in Hungary because the state does not wish to sow dissension among its citizens on the basis of whether they are religious or not. On the contrary, under the announced government policies of unity of the people and the nation, the state has endeavoured to achieve cooperation among the citizens for ensuring the common good, peace and social progress. Thus, for instance, we find ecclesiastical personalities affiliated to the various levels of the Patriotic People's Front, from the national leadership to the local committees, cooperating with people of different world outlook in the interests of the common good.

The Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the directive force of Hungarian society, has repeatedly stressed that although ideologically it disagrees with religion it wishes to carry on a dialogue with people who are faithful to our system but hold a different world outlook. In the course of this dialogue, carried on mainly on the level of joint activities, the Party strives to prove that the progress of socialist conditions in society advances the whole people's well-being, freedom and culture. The achievements of the building of socialism find

recognition even in church circles. Thus, recently, at the fourth session of the Ecumenical Council in the Vatican, and during the debate over Scheme 13, the delegate speaking on behalf of the Hungarian Bench of Bishops made a declaration to this effect.

Another sphere where there is opportunity for cooperation between believers and non-believers is the peace movement. The preservation of peace, the averting of a thermonuclear world cataclysm, is in the best interests of all working people, irrespective of ideological differences. The churches have also realized the threatening peril and, even if they do not agree fully with the ideas of the non-religious socialist social layers in their approach to the methods of safeguarding peace, these differences have proved slight compared with the tremendous issues at stake. Therefore, the churches have manifested their will for peace in various ways, and have rallied their faithful on the side of peace. "Opus Pacis," the peace movement of the Hungarian Catholic clergy, is just as important in this field as the manifestations of the Protestant churches participating in the Peace Conference of Prague for Protestant Christian Churches.

The great majority of the priests of the various churches are loyal to the Hungarian People's Republic and to their oath of allegiance taken to it. Unfortunately, however, as remnants of the past—even if in dwindling numbers—there are still ecclesiastic personalities who do not respect the laws and legal order of the state. The Hungarian state, as any other state of the world would do, proceeds against these persons under the laws, on the basis of equality before the law for all citizens, and they are called to account, as anyone else would be. However, this does not mean—and Hungarian government leaders and authoritative personalities have repeatedly said so—that a process is being started against religion or any of the churches. Such action is only taken against misguided individuals.

Such cases, however, are few and far between and they do not disturb the fundamentally correct and good relations which have been established between the state and the Church. In all probability, more work will be needed in the future to cope with emerging problems by joint efforts and mutual good will (for instance, work on further improvement of relations between the Hungarian People's Republic and the Vatican). This can be achieved, based on the results amassed up to now, if both sides keep in view the interests of common good, peace and social progress.

Religion in the USSR

The Soviet Union, the first country in the world to blaze the unexplored path to the new socialist society, is also the first land in the history of mankind to be guided by a scientific materialist world outlook—Marxism-Leninism. Scientific thought is replacing the mysticism, superstition and obscurantism of religion so prevalent in the every-day life of the people during the reign of Tsarism.

The profound revolutionary changes in the class structure of Soviet society, with the elimination of the class of exploiters and the establishment of socialist production relations in industry and agriculture, has uprooted the social base for the sway of religion in the consciousness of man. The phenomenal advance of science, the elimination of illiteracy and the heightened cultural level of the whole population, has helped to sever the ties of the once backward masses from the religious myths which formerly dominated their existence.

As the Soviet Union approaches the celebration of its 50th anniversary, the materialist world view and the alienation of the people from religion have become mass phenomena. The number of religious believers of the Russian Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist and other religious communities is steadily declining, with religious survivals prevailing in the main among the elder citizens.

There is perhaps no single aspect of Soviet life that has been so maligned and distorted as the attitude of the Soviet State and the Communist Party to religion and religious believers. In the first years of the revolution, when the people heroically defended the new regime against the White-Guardist counterrevolution and the armies of fourteen capitalist nations, a veritable crusade was unleashed calling for the destruction of Bolshevik "Godlessness" lest it engulf the whole Christian world. Since then, whenever it served the interests of world imperialism, the cry of "religious oppression" has been renewed to fan anti-Soviet hostility and the myth of "Communist expansionism."

Contrary to prevalent misconceptions in our country the Soviet Union has at no time passed laws to restrict freedom of conscience or the right to religious worship. On the other hand, it has not only proclaimed but *guaranteed* religious liberty by law.

The Decree on Religious Liberty

The Soviet regime was not yet three months old when it spelled out the relation of the new state to religious institutions, to the practice of religion, and to religious teaching in the schools. The decree, enunciated by the Soviet Government on January 23, 1918, provided:

1. The Church is separated from the State.
2. Within the limits of the Republic it is prohibited to publish any kind of local laws or orders which would hinder or limit the freedom of conscience, or would establish any kind of preference or privilege on the basis of the denominational adherence of the citizens.
3. Every citizen may adhere to any religion or to none. Any limitations before the law relating to adherence to any kind of faith or non-adherence to any faith are abolished.
4. All State and other public and social functions before the law are not to be accompanied by any religious customs or ceremonies.
5. Free practice of religious customs is safeguarded in so far as it does not disturb the public peace and does not infringe upon the right of citizens of the Soviet Republic. Local authorities have the right to take all necessary measures to safeguard public peace and security in such cases.
6. No one may evade his civil duties on religious grounds. Exemption from these, on condition of substituting one form of civil service by another, in each separate case must be granted by a decision of a people's court.
7. The religious oath is abolished. In necessary cases only solemn promises are given.
8. Records of civic state [birth, marriage, death records, etc.] are kept exclusively by the civil authorities, by departments of marriages and births.
9. The School is separated from the Church; the teaching of religious confessions is not allowed in state, public and private schools where secular subjects are taught. The citizen may teach or be taught religion in a private capacity.
10. All Church and religious societies are subject to the general status existing for voluntary societies and unions—and do not enjoy any privileges or subsidies from the state, or from local autonomous and self-governing bodies.
11. Compulsory collections or assessments for the benefit of church or religious societies, as well as measures of compulsion or punishment on the part of these societies over their members are not permitted.
12. No Church and religious societies have the right to own property. They have no rights of juridic persons.
13. All property of existing Church and religious societies is

declared the people's property. Buildings and objects specially designated for divine service are given for free use to corresponding religious societies on the basis of special ordinance of the local or central state authorities.*

The decree made religion a private matter, guaranteeing religious liberty in accordance with the dictates of one's conscience. By separating the church from the state and depriving the former state church of all subsidies from the government, it eliminated the privileges of the state church and assured equal rights to each religious denomination. At the same time, of course, the decree protected the right of the Soviet citizen to profess no religion at all, and freely to express non-religious views without fear of persecution.

With the separation of the church from the state and the school from the dominant church, the Soviet government at long last realized principles projected during the bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Russian Marxists had fought for these democratic principles and incorporated them in their first program adopted in 1903. In his article on "Socialism and Religion," written toward the end of 1905, Lenin spelled out this position:

Religion must be declared a private affair. . . . We demand that religion be held a private affair so far as the state is concerned. . . . Religion must be of no concern to the state, and religious societies must have no connection with governmental authority. Everyone must be absolutely free to profess any religion he pleases, or no religion whatever, i.e., to be an atheist, which every socialist is, as a rule. Discrimination among citizens on account of their religious convictions is wholly intolerable. Even the bare mention of a citizen's religion in official documents should unquestionably be eliminated. No subsidies should be granted to the established church nor state allowances made to ecclesiastical and religious societies. These should become absolutely free associations of like-minded citizens, associations independent of the state. . . .**

The Pre-Revolutionary Role of the Orthodox Church

While all religious communities in the land were at that time anti-socialist, having ramified ties with the monarchist groupings and the deposed capitalist class, it was the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, the dominant church community, which embarked on the

*Rev. Stanley Evans, *Churches in the U.S.S.R.*, Cobbett Publishing Co. Ltd., London, 1943, pp. 42-43.

**V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*. Vol. 10, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962, pp. 84-85.

path of open resistance to the decree and to all measures promulgated therein.

Under Tsarism there was no freedom of conscience, nor did the different religious denominations enjoy an equal status before the law. The Orthodox Church was virtually a department of the monarchist government, granted special status and privileges, supported by huge government subsidies. It worked hand in hand with the autocracy to Russify the subject nations, to destroy their native institutions and forcibly to convert the people to the dominant religion. Religious persecution went hand in hand with national oppression. The church was violently chauvinistic and anti-Semitic, instigating and perpetrating many of the pogroms against the Jews segregated in Jewish ghettos. All other faiths were persecuted or restricted, and the law of the land prohibited people from joining any other church. The clergy of other denominations or sects who attempted to seek converts were arrested, exiled and subjected to barbarous treatment.

From the time of Peter the Great, in 1721, the Tsar was the recognized head of the Orthodox Church, the "anointed of God." The church in turn sanctified the rule of the monarchy, condemned all opposition as opposition to God's will. Typical was its role during the 1905 revolution, when it upheld the bloody massacre of the workers and peasants, in a declaration issued a few days after what has gone down in Russian history as Bloody Sunday. It stated:

In the capital and other cities of Russia began strikes of workers and street riots. Russian Orthodox people from time immemorial stood for their faith, the Tsar and their fatherland, but now incited by evil minded persons at home and abroad, they have abandoned their peaceful occupations and decided as a mob and by force to obtain their rights as if trampled down, causing much enmity and disturbance to peaceful inhabitants, leaving many without bread and leading others into useless death without repentance, with bitterness in their hearts and curses on their lips. . . . Our enemies wish to shake the foundations of our orthodox faith and autocratic power of the Tsars. . . . Fear God, honor the Tsar. . . . Submit to every power ordained of God . . . to toil according to God's ordinance in the sweat of the brow.*

Up until the October Revolution, the Orthodox Church was the wealthiest institution in all of Russia, owning some 20,000,000 acres of rich land, substantial real estate in the cities, dozens of factories

*Cited by Rev. Stanley Evans, p. 23.

and other enterprises—a vast empire of feudal-capitalist exploitation of countless thousands of workers and peasants. Its annual income was estimated at 500 million rubles a year. Bank deposits, totalling 8 billion rubles, were confiscated when the Soviet government nationalized church property used for the exploitation of the labor of others.

Albert Rhys Williams, one among a number of outstanding Americans who have brought the truth of Soviet life to the people of our country, described the role of the Orthodox Church as follows:

. . . In the Russian Orthodox Church the autocracy of the Tsar found its most faithful servant and ally. Acting as the spiritual police of the Tsar, the priests used the secrets ferreted out in the confessional to trap and destroy hundreds of revolutionists. Under the notorious Pobednostev, High Procurator of the Holy Synod, over 10,000 school teachers suspected of sympathizing with the Revolution were imprisoned or sent into exile. Crosses and ikons headed the procession of pogromists entering the Jewish quarters to slay, pillage and burn.*

Not only the Tsarist regime, but the nobility, the landowners and the rising bourgeoisie, viewed the Orthodox Church as an indispensable instrument for keeping in subjection the oppressed and deprived Russian people. Its archaic preachments, untouched by the Reformation which took place in other capitalist countries, absolutized class divisions as ordained by God and condemned to eternal punishment all who challenged the monarchy, class rule and exploitation.

Church Embarks on Path of Counterrevolution

The higher circles of the Orthodox Church made no pretense at covering up their animosity to the new regime. The Bolsheviks were not only "haters of Christ"; they were "German hirelings, betrayers of the fatherland, men who had led the simple people astray by fake promises of wordly blessings."**

Patriarch Tikhon, elected on the eve of the October Revolution, and installed on November 21, 1917, in an elaborate religious ceremony, without any interference whatsoever from the new Soviet government, vehemently anathemized the regime and called upon the faithful to rise up in defense of the church. His message, read publicly at a massive religious procession on January 21, 1918, urged the

* Albert Rhys Williams, *The Russians, The Land, The People and Why They Fight*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1943, p. 210.

** John Shelton Curtiss, *The Russian Church and the Soviet State*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1953, p. 44.

establishment of organizations to bring about the downfall of the regime. He said, in part:

Think what you are doing, you madmen! Stop your bloody outrages! Your acts are not merely cruel, they are the works of Satan, for which you will burn in hell-fire in the life hereafter and will be cursed by future generations in this life. . . .

And you, brother archpastors and pastors, without delaying in your spiritual action for one hour, with burning faith call our sons to defend the trampled rights of the Orthodox Church, immediately organize religious leagues, call them . . . to range themselves in the ranks of the spiritual fighters . . . (*ibid.*, p. 49).

"Actually," John Shelton Curtiss notes in his scholarly work, "the measures of the Soviets were not as drastic as the churchmen allege: while they did close churches or chapels in government buildings and in palaces, they closed few parish churches, so that fears that they would be turned over to Jews, Moslems, or heathen were baseless. Priests were not drafted into the army, services continued in parish churches, and little was done to halt religious indoctrination. The Sobor [the leading church council], however, continued to take such a militant tone and to sponsor measures so challenging to the Soviet authorities that it seems probable that these actions were intended to provoke violence and bloodshed, which might produce a great popular revolution against the Soviets and sweep them away" (p. 54).

While the Church, with the help of the opponents to the regime among the nobility and men of wealth, did succeed in igniting some resistance to the government decrees, resulting in the killing and wounding of many hundreds of participants, their main efforts failed completely. The overwhelming majority of the people, most of them adherents of the Orthodox Church, did not respond to the church appeal. The government, too, "avoided a head-on collision with the church," showing "no desire to make martyrs of ardent churchmen" (*ibid.*, p. 57). Those among the clergy who were ready to accept the Soviet regime—some who reported they found the People's Commissars "benevolent" and more than willing to negotiate unresolved questions—were almost wholly ignored and often condemned as enemies of the church. The hierarchy was determined to make war on the government. Anti-Soviet literature, with marked anti-Semitic overtones and declarations, was widely circulated. Close ties were established with counterrevolutionary elements within and outside the country.

From the first days of its advent to power, the workers' state distin-

guished between the clergy who concentrated on espousing their religious faith and those who gave outright support to or engaged in direct anti-Soviet activities. There were no punitive measures taken against religious practitioners as such; they were punished as enemies of the Soviet people who under the guise of religious raiments committed overt anti-Soviet crimes.

With the spread of the civil war and armed imperialist intervention, the Orthodox Church openly became a center of counterrevolution. The hierarchy called upon world Christians to join in the holy crusade to overthrow the "yoke of the Godless." Monasteries were transformed into warehouses to store munitions and provisions, serving as centers for conspiratorial plots. Religious armed detachments—"Regiments of the Holy Virgin," "Battalions of Jesus"—were organized to fight in the armies of Kolchak, Denikin, Petlura and Wrangel. Prayers were held calling for victory of the counterrevolution.

The workers and peasants in the cities and countryside retaliated by the closing down of hundreds of churches. Soon thereafter the abolition of the monasteries became universal throughout the country. Hundreds of bishops and priests were arrested and imprisoned, and a number were executed. In many instances, partisan brigades acted summarily when monarchist priests were captured. In utter disregard of the counterrevolutionary activities led and organized by the church hierarchy, the Soviet Union was pilloried by the vested interests in all corners of the globe for "religious persecution." Yet Curtiss, while stating that the "scanty records" made it difficult to determine the extent of the prosecutions, nevertheless draws different conclusions:

. . . A careful study, however, leaves the impression that the Russian Church was a matter of slight concern to the Soviet authorities at this time and that they executed a relatively small number of clergy, and these only in cases where they believed that the conduct of the ecclesiastics were not only hostile but dangerous. . . . For four years the Soviet regime was engaged in a desperate struggle for survival, during which its hostility to religion, and especially to the Orthodox Church, was a matter of minor importance . . . (p. 89).

But the end of the civil war did not halt the resistance. When famine struck the land, the hierarchy attempted to exploit the mass starvation to undermine the regime and instigate public discontent, while the emigré priests called for a renewal of armed intervention. Hypocritically commiserating with the plight of the people, the church hierarchs sabotaged the decree to turn over church valuables not needed in religious services, for the purpose of feeding the hungry.

Lower clergy, in parishes close to the people, who acquiesced to the requisitioning, were condemned as "traitors of the church" and ostracized. Yet the government, as indicated in the columns of *Izvestia* (March 28, 1922), warned against turning the removal of church valuables into anti-religious or anti-clerical demonstrations, characterizing such acts as harmful to the interests of the state and the people.

Not until July 26, 1923, did Patriarch Tikhon publicly admit his collusion with the counterrevolution and his ties with foreign and internal monarchist groups. However, his pledge to halt such activities and his vows of allegiance did not put an end to anti-Soviet activities. Neither did the promise of Metropolitan Sergei (who took over the reins in December 1925) that the Church would no longer interfere in politics and would halt the subversive work of intransigent monarchist priests.

With the launching of the First Five Year Plan of industrialization and the campaign to collectivize agriculture, the opposition once again took on serious proportions. Churchmen, dependent upon the support of the rich kulaks, the last surviving exploiting group in the Soviet Union, set out to block collectivization. Even William C. Fletcher, in his obviously biased book entitled *A Study of Survival: The Church in Russia 1927-1943* (Macmillan, New York, 1965), admits that agitation against collectivization was widespread; that "letters from heaven" purporting to come directly from God, Christ or the Blessed Virgin, contained "crude warnings against joining the kolkhoz"; that apocalyptic warnings of imminent doom were used to sow fear and confusion in the countryside. But the activities did not stop with agitation. In connivance with the kulaks, the priests made attempts to instigate revolts among the peasants.

There was considerable resistance to collectivization also among many Evangelical and Baptist ministers, among leading members of the Ukrainian Autocephalic Church, Moslem mullahs, Buddhist lamas and many others.

Church Plays Patriotic Role in World War II

But as collectivization swept the countryside, and as the goals set by the Five Year Plan were fulfilled, a noticeable shift took place in the ranks of the clergy. That is why the new Soviet Constitution, adopted in 1936, not only reaffirmed religious freedom but granted franchise to the clergy—the right to elect and to be elected to all organs of government. With the outbreak of World War II, except for isolated incidences of collaboration with the Hitler invaders in

the Ukraine, in Latvia, Lithuania and here and there in other parts of the Soviet Union, the overwhelming majority of the clergy loyally defended their country, with many outstanding examples of superb heroism and patriotism. Since the end of World War II, representatives of the religious communities have been actively engaged in the cause of world peace, calling upon their co-religionists in other lands to join in united efforts.

Does this signify that there are no longer churchmen who refuse to abide by Soviet laws? Of course not. There are still instances of speculation for personal aggrandizement, of coercive levies for the maintenance of houses of worship, of forbidding children to attend public schools, of refusing to work in Soviet enterprises, and even of underground formations to plot subversion and sabotage. But these are now isolated cases. Today the overwhelming majority of the clergy take a loyal stand and actively identify themselves with the achievements of Soviet society.

Harrison E. Salisbury (*New York Times*, February 7, 1962) points out that within the Orthodox Church, the young priesthood "are seeking to break the image of the Orthodox Church as a fortress of superstition and backwardness. They seek to develop an appeal to the youth. They are aware of the tendencies emerging among men of science and they hope to adapt the church activity to the complexity of the modern world. Like ministers in Western churches, they wish to relate the Church to the life of the community."

There is no doubt that open hostility to the Soviet regime, under today's conditions, would lose whatever support religion still retains within the country. This is well understood by Soviet religious leaders.

Scientific-Atheist Propaganda

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, adhering to the materialist world outlook, has from the first days of the October Revolution subjected all religion to scientific criticism. With complete faith in man's unlimited capacities to master on an ever-expanding scale the laws of nature and his own destiny, the Party has countered religious obscurantism with scientific enlightenment. So long as man accepts the religious premise that the earthly life is only a preparation for life in the Kingdom of Heaven; that people can accomplish nothing without God's will; that the poor and oppressed must bear their heavy burden without malice; that the status of each human being is pre-ordained and permits of no change, then religion acts as a brake in the attainment of a society free of exploitation, oppression and poverty.

The building of the new socialist society demanded the replacement

of faith in divine guidance with faith in man—in man's ability to know his natural environment and to utilize this knowledge in the service of man. It was necessary to prove that poverty and deprivation, exploitation and oppression were man-made and could be eliminated by man's conscious and planned activity.

Reverend William Howard Melish, reviewing the status of religion in the U.S.S.R. in a pamphlet* written immediately after World War II, notes that the new society had to be built "in the face of the conservatism of the peasantry with religious taboos about the social status of women, their antiquated and ignorant concepts of health, their fear of machinery, and skepticism toward scientific agricultural methods."

The dead hand of the myths and superstitions stood in the way of overcoming the antiquated status of agricultural production, which threatened in turn to impede the progress of industrialization. The elimination of illiteracy, the raising of the educational level of the whole population, ridding the peasantry especially of the delusion of religious mysticism and magic, were all indispensable conditions for unleashing the creative efforts of the people to build the socialist economy.

The Communist Party recognized that religious ideology, a consequence of specific historical conditions, could not be swept from the consciousness of the people by dictation, repression or restriction. Religion could not be legislated out of existence. Its final disappearance could come about only when the social roots which gave it sustenance—the exploitation of man by man—were abolished, and replaced by a society in which an all-round, dignified, cultured existence could be assured for all. However, scientific education, explaining natural and social phenomena, could help weaken the hold of religion on the people.

A cursory study of Soviet life will corroborate the fact that the ideological struggle against religion never became the pivot of the political life of the country; that it was always subordinated to the interests of the people and nation. The Soviet government, the Communist Party and all civic organizations in the country worked to unite the people, regardless of differences in religious beliefs, to realize the almost superhuman tasks of socialist construction. This was in keeping with the admonition of Lenin when he wrote:

... under no circumstances ought we to fall into the error of

*Rev. William Howard Melish, *Religion Today in the U.S.S.R.*, National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, 1946.

posing the religious question in an abstract, idealist fashion, as an "intellectual" question unconnected with the class struggle, as is not infrequently done by the radical-democrats from among the bourgeoisie. . . .

It would be bourgeois narrow-mindedness to forget that the yoke of religion that weights upon mankind is merely a product and reflection of the economic yoke within society. No number of pamphlets and no amount of preaching can enlighten the proletariat, if it is not enlightened by its own struggle against the dark forces of capitalism. Unity in this really revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven.*

Distortions in Atheist Propaganda

While no organ of Soviet power conducted anti-religious propaganda, the Communist Party, the Komsomol, such organizations as the League of Militant Atheists (established in 1925 and dissolved with the outbreak of World War II), science departments in the schools and universities, etc., developed atheist propaganda on a broad scale. Sometimes waning, and at other times expanding, scientific education to counter the reactionary essence of religious ideology, has been conducted from the first days of Soviet power.

It would indeed be foolhardy to deny that many gross errors were committed in the conduct of anti-religious propaganda, errors which have not been completely overcome even to this day. Leninist norms requiring patient and skillful explanation of the roots of religion and strictly scientific refutations of its dogmas, were all too often violated or ignored. No doubt the long years of anti-Soviet hostilities organized by the clericals explains the intensity and even intolerance which have affected the ideological struggle against religion. Thus, at times the criticism of religious obscurantism and distortion was accompanied by crude and offensive attacks on religion, with sweeping generalization of its reactionary idealist essence while overlooking certain valid aspirations and strivings contained therein, though couched in religious allegories and myths. In correctly showing religion as but-tressing class exploitation, the early role of religion as the cry of the slaves and the oppressed was overlooked, hindering thereby an understanding of the social role of religion throughout the centuries. Offensive caricatures of religious people marred the ideological content of the published scientific material.

*Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 86-87.

Often, too, the overzealous replaced the ideological struggle with outright political and personal attacks on the clergy with ridicule of religions rites, baiting of believers, and flaunting of holy days by organizing anti-religious demonstrations, carnivals and outings. Administrative interference by local organizations and individuals gave rise to mechanical shutting down of places of religious worship, the removal of cupolas and bells from church towers, the prohibition of religious processions, and in false arrests and indictments of churchmen. Under the guise of opposition to religion alien elements pillaged church valuables, destroyed ikons and other symbols of religious rituals.

An inordinate amount of publicity has been given by the press in our country to every such dogmatic distortion. But what is less known is the insistent demand of Soviet Communists throughout the years for strict adherence to Soviet laws protecting freedom of conscience, including repeated warnings to avoid affronting the sensitivity of the religious by ridicule or harsh administration methods.

Space does not permit the documentation of the many public declarations issued by the Soviet party to combat over-zealousness and excesses in the conduct of atheist propaganda. Suffice it to cite one example. In November 1954, the document "On Errors in Conducting Atheist Propaganda" declared in part:

It must be borne in mind that actions insulting the church, clergy and citizens who are believers are incompatible with the policy of the Party and the state in the conduct of scientific atheist propaganda and are contrary to the U.S.S.R. Constitution, which grants freedom of conscience to Soviet citizens. . . . The Party has always demanded and will continue to demand a considerate, mindful attitude toward these believers. All the more is it stupid and harmful to cast political doubt on Soviet citizens because of their religious convictions.

There are many other examples that can also be cited to indicate actions by government and judicial bodies against individuals or local administrations who violate the freedom of conscience of religious believers, and to rectify false maligning of religious personnel.

New Charge of "Religious Persecution"

Yet, the campaign against alleged persecution of religion in the Soviet Union continues unabated throughout the capitalist world, and markedly so in the United States. The most recent instance is the wave of demonstrative activity against so-called official anti-Semitism, which has involved the major Jewish organizations

from coast to coast, and in which any criticism of Judaism has been considered as ipso facto tantamount to anti-Semitism. In fact, it is charged that Judaism has been singled out for specific abuse and restriction.

A decade ago, a delegation of the Rabbinical Council of America visited the Soviet Union; yet, despite its pronounced anti-Soviet bias, it could not report any evidence of religious persecution. In a series of ten articles written for the *Journal American* (beginning August 5, 1956), the delegation decried the decline in the number of synagogues, the inadequate facilities for religious worship and the absence of Jewish parochial schools. Nevertheless, it stated:

Within limits we found Jews in Russia free to worship. We saw them praying, observing dietary laws, circumcising their sons, ritually burying their dead—and to a far greater degree than we had anticipated.

Attendance at synagogues, the delegation observed, consisted primarily of older citizens. The crux of the question was the fact that the majority of young Jews "have become estranged from the whole religious and cultural heritage of their people." They found the youth did not observe religious rites, not because of any legal restrictions, but because "the mood of the country, especially dominant among young people, is one of avowed godlessness."

It should be noted, that this was stated only a few years after the death of Stalin, when the wrongs perpetrated against cultural and religious Jewish institutions in the latter years of Stalin's life, had not yet been corrected.

Theodore Shabad (*New York Times*, March 3, 1964) estimated that about 90 per cent of Soviet citizens are now alienated from religion. This is no less true for the Jews than it is for all other nationalities and races in the country. The decline in the number of synagogues, therefore, is not in itself evidence of "religious persecution." Rather it is evidence of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Jews, too, now order their lives in accordance with a scientific world outlook.

As we have tried to show, Soviet society while guaranteeing freedom of worship for all its citizens, does not thereby encourage religious ideology. In subjecting Judaism to scientific-atheist criticism, as is true in relation to other religions, serious distortions and even blunders were committed. There have been instances of administrative closing down of synagogues, impermissible crudities in explaining the historical role of Judaism, and indefensible caricatures of the

Jewish people. These have been seized upon by anti-Soviet elements to give credence to the charge of "Soviet anti-Semitism."

No doubt, too, the establishment of equality before the law of all religions has sometimes resulted in certain inequities for the smaller congregations. Since all religious institutions maintain themselves by voluntary contributions from the faithful, the larger churches encounter few difficulties in securing the necessary religious articles required for their services. But this is not so for the smaller congregations. As a result, as Hyman Lumer points out, "this very equality of treatment becomes in practice inequality, for while the Greek Orthodox Church can manage to provide for its needs in the way of religious articles, the synagogues cannot, and are therefore deprived of access to such things as *tallisim*, *tfilin* and prayer books."*

All these shortcomings exist within the overall framework we have tried to describe in the present article. Whatever the shortcomings and errors they offer no basis for charging that the Soviet Union is systematically trying to destroy religion. We have attempted to deal only with the underlying developments and the historical role of religion to help enlighten the present status of religion within the Soviet Union.

Overcoming Religious Survivals

While the social roots of religion have been eliminated in Soviet society, religious survivals persist among a substantial section of the population. This can be attributed to the fact that consciousness always lags behind changes in objective reality. This alone however, does not explain the tenacity with which religious vestiges continue to survive in socialist society.

Clearly, a deeply rooted social phenomenon like that of religion, cannot be overcome in a few years or even decades. The force of centuries-long religious tradition and custom frequently integrated with moral codes and conventions, still weighs heavily on the present. Thus millions of workers and their families who no longer attend either church, mosque or synagogue, and in fact consider themselves atheists, continue to bow to such traditions as baptism and circumcision, church weddings and religious funeral rites.

A new awareness exists today that such rituals and ceremonies, transcending the purely religious function, often fulfill vital social

*Hyman Lumer, "Soviet Anti-Semitism"—A Cold-War Myth, Political Affairs Publishers, 1964, p. 9.

needs as well, encompassing the yearnings for the participation of friends and relatives in moments of great joy or deep sorrow in the personal life of the Soviet citizen. That is why particular attention is being given today to the development of a meaningful and symbolic system of civic ceremonies to replace the old religious rites, ceremonies in celebration of such joyful occasions as betrothals, weddings, births, or sad events like the demise of loved ones, all serving to bring the warmth and sympathy of relatives, friends and comrades to those involved.

The emotional and moral impact of religion remains one of the most important areas of religious sustenance. It cannot be ignored and obviously can not be subjected to general anti-religious propaganda.

Thus the persistence of religious survivals in the Soviet Union after nearly fifty years of existence, has deep roots in the past. Not least is the fact that socialism continues to exist side by side with capitalism—and the pressure of capitalist ideology, including that of religion, are calculatedly focused to influence the lives of the Soviet citizen.

In this context, it should be understood that while the exploitation of man by man has been eliminated in the Soviet Union, certain conditions within socialist society which continue to sustain religious beliefs have not yet been completely eliminated. In his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx stressed that the first stage of communism, i.e., socialism, still bears the birthmarks of capitalism. The socialist principle, from each according to his ability to each according to the work performed, inevitably means that inequality in the economic status of individual workers and farmers still operates. Furthermore, while great strides have been made in narrowing the gap between mental and physical labor and in the general educational level of the entire population, disparities continue to exist, and the majority have not yet reached the level of science.

Thus religion still finds a material base even within socialist society. These birthmarks will disappear with the ushering in of the era of Communism. Only Communism will finally sweep away all survivals of religion in the consciousness of man. Only then will man—with a capital M—become the master of his destiny and free himself forever of all religious delusions.

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