

"Problems of Communism"
May - June 1966

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM

The Catholic-Communist "Dialogue"

By Kevin Devlin

EDITORS' NOTE: The article below is the first of a regular series of commentaries by Mr. Devlin on developments in international communism, to appear in every other issue of this journal. Comments and suggestions for topics to be treated in the future will be welcomed.

"**I**s this a Communist congress or an ecumenical council?"

There was some excuse for the cynicism of the bourgeois journalist who put this query after hearing Secretary-General Luigi Longo's opening report to the Eleventh Congress of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) on January 25, 1966. In his four-and-a-half-hour speech, Longo had dwelt—at iconoclastic length—on the similarity of many Marxist and Christian "values" and had called on Communists to undertake a "dialogue" not only with individual believers but with Catholic organizations

On leave of absence from Radio Free Europe, Munich, where he served as political analyst, Mr. Devlin is presently a Senior Fellow at the Research Institute on Communist Affairs, Columbia University, New York. He has published a number of studies on Communist activities in the non-Communist world and last appeared in this journal with "Moscow and the Italian CP" (September-October 1965).

and with the Church itself. The delegates had heard him voice fulsome praise of Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI ("outrageous in its low Machiavellianism," commented *Corriere della Sera* sourly, and anxiously¹); they had listened as he repeatedly quoted papal encyclicals and Vatican Council documents, adding:

In these and other recent Church documents we find motives, changes and objectives which have guided us in our struggle. Today, the possibilities of an encounter between Catholics and Communists have become greater, and there is a more widespread awareness that this is the road which must be followed if one wishes to change the present course of international politics.²

¹ Panfilo Gentile, "L'Appello ai Cattolici," *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), Jan. 27, 1966.

² *L'Unità* (Rome), Jan. 26, 1966.

Longo's hope, in short, was that Catholics would join in building the society of tomorrow. It would be a "socialist" society, of course; but the Catholic collaborators, he promised, would help to determine its features. Meanwhile, there were certain firm guarantees to be given. The Russian Mikhail Suslov was among the foreign party emissaries who impassively listened to Longo's criticism of outmoded "conservative ideological positions [which] identified the religious 'ideology' as the opium of the people" and to his further declaration that "just as we are against a theocratic state, so we are against state atheism. This means that we are against the state's conferring any privileges whatever on an ideology, philosophy, religious faith, or cultural and artistic school of thought, to the detriment of others."

The element of political opportunism in these statements, delivered from the rostrum of a Communist party congress, was clear enough—particularly when Longo took it upon himself to defend the Pope and the Council against "the criticisms and scarcely veiled attacks" of the Christian Democratic right wing, or when he urged that Italy adopt "a neutrality parallel to the neutrality of the Church, which has abandoned the politics of blocs."

Nevertheless, political opportunism is only part of the story. The emphasis which the Eleventh Congress of the PCI placed on an approach to Catholics draws much of its significance from the fact that it is not an isolated phenomenon. It must, rather, be seen against the background of a wider pattern of change in the relationship between communism and organized religion, particularly in Western Europe, in recent years. This in turn has been the result of a continuing process of ferment and transformation both in the Christian churches (as expressed in ecumenism and the conscious adaptation to secular realities) and in the Communist movement (revisionist polycentrism and the consequent erosion of ideology).

Probings by the Church

On the Catholic side, this radical rethinking of received teachings and revision of traditional attitudes has been associated above all with John XXIII, the elderly "caretaker Pope" who jolted his Church by calling for an *aggiornamento*, a coming-to-terms with the modern world and with the non-Catholic religious, political and intellectual forces at work in it. The change in attitudes towards what his predecessors had consistently anathematized as "atheistic communism" was memorably expressed, less than two months before Pope John's death, in his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*

(April 1963).³ Instead of sweeping condemnation, there was a tranquil warning against confusing "false philosophical teachings" with the "historical movements [inspired by these teachings] that have economic, social, cultural or political ends." Not only were such movements (Marxism was obviously meant, but not named) subject to development and change, but "insofar as they conform to the dictates of right reason and are interpreters of the lawful aspirations of the human person, [they] contain elements that are positive and deserving of approval." This was startling enough; but Pope John went further in suggesting that "a drawing together or a meeting for the attainment of some practical end, which was formerly deemed inopportune or unproductive, might now or in the future be considered opportune and useful." Prudence would guide Catholics in deciding "the ways and degrees in which work in common [with Communists] might be possible for the achievement of economic, social and political ends which are honorable and useful."

The line thus traced out by Pope John was continued under his successor, Paul VI, and, as it were, institutionalized—not without strong conservative opposition⁴—in the debates and documents of the Vatican Council, particularly those on the Church in the modern world and on religious liberty, and in the establishment in April 1965 of a permanent secretariat for relations with non-believers (primarily Marxists).

La Main Tendue

Actually these altered Catholic attitudes and the Communist response to them were not quite as novel as they appeared to most. It was the late French Communist leader, Maurice Thorez, who had first used the now familiar phrase, "the outstretched hand" (*la main tendue*), in his appeal to Catholic workers for political cooperation in April 1936. Thorez's appeal was made within the

³ For abridged texts of this and other papal encyclicals mentioned later, see A. Fremantle, ed., *The Social Teachings of the Church*, New York, 1963. For full texts of all but *Pacem in Terris*, see F. J. Powers, ed., *Papal Pronouncements on the Political Order*, Westminster, Md., 1952.

⁴ Some 450 prelates, out of nearly 2,200 voting on this question, campaigned unsuccessfully to have an explicit condemnation of communism included in the text on the Church in the modern world. They were hardly mollified by the insertion in the final version of a phrase quietly reconfirming previous papal criticisms of atheistic doctrines ("*sicut antea reprobatur*"). This nod to the past was more than balanced by the open invitation to atheists to engage in "prudent dialogue" for the betterment of the world.

opportunistic framework of the popular-front policy imposed by the Seventh Comintern Congress late in 1935, and the reaction from organized Catholicism was predictably negative: the only significant response seems to have come from a small group of "Revolutionary Christians," whose monthly organ, *Terre Nouvelle* (New Earth), bore as its eloquent emblem the hammer-and-sickle imposed upon a cross.

There was, however, a response from some Christian intellectuals, notably in a book entitled *Communism and Christianity*,⁵ a collection of essays by the Catholics François Mauriac, Père Ducattillon (O.P.), Alexandre Marc, and Daniel-Rops; the Orthodox Nicolas Berdiaev; and the Calvinist Denis de Rougemont. In the main, the essayists maintained a dispassionate emphasis on discussion rather than polemic.⁶ This was, in effect, an invitation to a "dialogue," but it was not taken up by Communist intellectuals.

Apart from any reaction to Communist moves, a small but important segment of French Catholic intellectuals was working during the prewar years towards a revision of traditional socio-political attitudes. The leaders here were Emmanuel Mounier and the group gathered around his periodical, *Esprit*; their "personalism" included a radical critique of bourgeois capitalism but still kept them far from the authoritarian and materialistic Marxist positions.⁷ Later, the thought of Jacques Maritain moved in a similar direction, with greater emphasis on representative democracy.⁸ Moreover, these thinkers could claim support from the official social teachings of the Church: for example, Pope Pius XI, who harshly condemned "atheistic communism" in the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*

(1937), had earlier criticized the injustices of the capitalist order in *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931).⁹

Between the mid-1930's and the mid-1950's, then, France was the scene of the most notable preparations on the Catholic side for a future "dialogue."¹⁰ During the same period, the major developments on the Communist side took place in Italy.

The Italian CP

Even before the war, the clandestine, persecuted Italian Communist Party was aware of the need to come to some kind of terms with Catholicism in the homeland of the Church. Thus, in September 1936 and again in April 1938, the PCI Central Committee issued appeals urging Italian Catholics to join in the struggle against the Fascist regime, which had also crushed Don Luigi Sturzo's Christian Democratic movement, and emphasizing the Communists' "absolute respect for religious opinions" (Sept. 1936 text).¹¹

When Togliatti returned to Italy from Moscow in 1944, he reaffirmed and strengthened this approach, committing his revived party (in his important policy report delivered in April 1944 at Naples) to a constitutional regime that would guarantee "freedom of thought and speech; freedom of the press, association and assembly; freedom of religion and worship." At the Fifth PCI Congress in late December 1945, he extended the list to "freedom of religious propaganda and organization." The new party statutes broke daringly with

⁵ English edition, with translator's preface by J. F. Scanlan, London, 1938.

⁶ The tone may be suggested by a few brief quotations: "Communism has too often been refuted by controversialists who did not know what it meant" (Ducattillon, *op. cit.*, p. 88); "In a period of acute social struggle, such as we are witnessing today, the system which corresponds best to Christian personalism is 'personalist socialism'" (Berdiaev, p. 226); and "In adopting a position *vis-à-vis* communism two attitudes are forbidden to a Christian at the outset, on the one hand the attitude of systematic hatred and suspicion, on the other that of a willingness to defend an intolerable condition of affairs [in non-Communist society]" (Daniel-Rops, p. 260).

⁷ See E. Mounier, *De la propriété capitaliste à la propriété humaine*, Paris, 1936. Cf. also the manifesto of Mounier's group in *Esprit* (Paris), Oct. 1935.

⁸ It is interesting to note that President Eduardo Frei of Chile has acknowledged his Christian Democrat regime's debt to the social and political thought of Maritain. See E. Frei and I. Bustos, *Maritain entre nosotros*, Santiago, 1964 (cited by E. Halperin, *The Christian Democratic Alternative in Chile*, Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1964).

⁹ In fact, Pius XI hit both targets in one sentence of *Quadragesimo Anno*: "It remains for us, then, to call up for judgment the economic order as it actually exists and socialism, its bitterest accuser; and to pronounce upon them both a frank and just sentence." The Communist charge that organized religion had, in practice, made itself the ally of the capitalist establishment contained much truth—but it was far from the whole truth.

¹⁰ A major postwar development in France was the Church's attempt to reassert its presence among the "post-Christian" masses through the "*Mission de France*" and the priest-worker experiment. This project was halted by Vatican decree in 1954 but again authorized on an experimental basis in October 1965.

¹¹ Both these documents were reproduced in *Rinascita*, Feb. 19, 1966. Although the Spanish Civil War had brought Catholic-Communist antagonism to a peak, there was apparently some tentative response to the April 1938 "Open Letter to Italian Catholics." In his preface to the republished documents, Franco Ferri reveals that in August 1938 talks took place at a Swiss convent between "Monsignor Rampolla, Secretary of the Congregation of Seminaries, and the Communists Donini and Sereni . . . in the course of which there was discussion of political alternatives and of the basis of the real guarantees contemplated by the Communists for the Church, not only in Italy." Ferri adds that there were "many [other] top-level contacts."

all Communist precedent by offering membership to "all citizens who—without regard to race, religious faith, and philosophical convictions—accept the political program of the party." In the Constituent Assembly of 1946-47, it was the decisive Communist vote (in contrast to Socialist, Republican and Liberal opposition) which assured the incorporation in the Constitution of the Lateran Treaty, giving the Church a privileged position in Italian life.

But the Communists' "outstretched hand" was rejected—as it was bound to be in view of the advent of the Cold War and the persecution of religion by the new Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. An anti-Communist campaign by Catholic leaders, clerical and lay, helped to defeat the Communist-Socialist coalition in the 1948 elections and was climaxed in July 1949 by Pius XII's decree excommunicating Communists and their supporters.¹² Shortly afterwards the left-wing Christian Democrats led by Giuseppe Dossetti were heavily defeated at the party's congress. During the 1950's Dossetti's follower, Giorgio La Pira, the "holy mayor" of Florence, was among the few lonely voices calling for Catholic-Communist collaboration.

By the early 1960's, however, attitudes in both camps had changed considerably. In Florence, Bologna and other centers, groups of "advanced" Catholics were reconsidering Marxism in personal meetings and through small-circulation magazines like *Testimonianze* (Florence). On the Italian Communist side, the hand was repeatedly stretched out—in the theses of the Ninth PCI Congress in January 1960 ("action for an understanding with the Catholic world is conceived as one aspect of the Italian way to socialism"); in the theses of the Tenth Congress in December 1962 ("the aspiration toward a socialist society . . . can find a stimulus in the religious conscience"); and in articles and statements such as Togliatti's speech of March 1963 in which he rejected "the ingenuous and mistaken idea" that religious beliefs would fade away under socialism.

Togliatti's remark presaged another turning point: the emergence of Western Communist criticism of established Communist theory and practice regarding religion. This appeared first in reaction to Leonid Ilichev's report to the CPSU Central Committee in November 1963, in which he denounced religion in traditional fashion as "diametrically opposed" to communism and called for an intensification of atheistic campaigns to "con-

quer" it finally. Italian Communist criticism of this "fundamentalist" line was belated and at first restrained. Initially expressed in an article by Professor Lucio Lombardo-Radice (*Rinascita*, July 4, 1964), it found fuller expression some months later in the most interesting book that the "dialogue" has yet produced: *Il dialogo alla prova* (The Dialogue Put to the Test), made up of essays by five Catholics and five Communists.¹³

Difficulties and Dilemmas

The initiative for this joint work came not from the Communists but from the "Lapirian" Catholics, who drew a rebuke from *L'Osservatore Romano* for their pains. The actual effect of the "dialogue" was to emphasize the "ideological" gap between the two sides—and the limitations of any possible discourse. Thus, the Catholic participants generally stressed that there was no question of *political* collaboration on the level of organizations; their concern was rather to explore doctrinal implications in a Johannine spirit of goodwill. For the Communists, on the other hand, political collaboration was frankly the goal, however obscured by talk of "common human values." They were at pains to clear themselves of the charge of opportunism and *strumentalismo* (using others for their own ends). They also insisted that what mattered was the reality of communism in Italy, not elsewhere; they deplored the Soviet "call for a struggle against religious survivals" (Delogu) and admitted that in the name of "vulgar materialism" believers were wrongly subjected to legal and civil discrimination in the USSR (Lombardo-Radice).¹⁴ Both sides generally agreed that there could be no ideological compromise; only the Catholic Zolo saw "the possibility of a doctrinal integration of some aspects of Marxist humanism with aspects of the Christian conception of man."

In fact, the Italian Communists were in a dilemma, torn between the legacy of the past and the demands of the future. Their problem was formulated with unusual clarity by Togliatti in his Yalta Memorandum of August 1964:

¹³ Florence, 1964. The contributors are alternately Catholic and Communists beginning with the Catholic Mario Gozzini, followed by L. Lombardo-Radice, N. Fabro, L. Gruppi, R. Orfei, A. Cecchi, G.-P. Meucci, I. Delogu, D. Zolo, and S. Di Marco.

¹⁴ Even when some public Soviet attitudes toward religion were modified, Italian comrades continued to criticize them as inadequate. *E.g.*, see L. Gruppi's discussion of M. Mchedlov's *Kommunist* article of October 1964 in the March 1965 issue of *Il Contemporaneo* (supplement to *Rinascita*)—a special issue devoted to the "dialogue."

¹² Despite the *aggiornamento* under Pope John, this decree is still binding on Catholics, as the conservative Cardinal Ottaviani tartly recalled in August 1965 (interview in *Studi Sociali*, Rome). However, it has obviously been ignored by large numbers of Italian Catholic voters—which may have had something to do with Pope John's shift in emphasis.

*The old atheistic propaganda is of no use. The very problem of religious conscience, its content and its roots among the masses, the way of overcoming it, must be presented in a different manner from that adopted in the past if we wish to reach the Catholic masses and be understood by them. Otherwise our outstretched hand to the Catholics would be regarded as pure expediency and almost as hypocrisy.*¹⁵

The outstretched hand was indeed generally regarded as "pure expediency"—and not without reason. Communist attempts to publicize the "message" of *Il dialogo alla prova* through articles and local meetings with Catholic participation were weakened by obvious political moves, such as Pietro Ingrao's call in January 1965 for a Communist understanding not only with the Catholic masses but also with Catholic organizations and the whole "Catholic world" (it was assumed that his aim was to exploit deepening division in the Christian Democratic Party). This maneuver promptly backfired: a week after Ingrao's call, the Christian Democratic factions united to issue a National Council resolution denouncing communism, and within the next few months, the major Catholic professional and labor organizations followed suit, warning members against taking part in any dialogue.¹⁶

But in spite of repeated warnings by *L'Osservatore Romano* and the Italian Jesuit organ *La Civiltà Cattolica*,¹⁷ the discussion nevertheless continued—if only with scattered groups of Catholics and their little magazines. On the Communist side, this led inevitably to a further development of revisionist positions, usefully recapitulated in Luigi Fabbri's recent book, *I comunisti e la religione*.¹⁸

Renewed Initiative

Across the Alps in France, meanwhile, the dialogue was developing along different lines. First, it had less direct relevance to national politics, the Catholic MRP party having become a minor factor.

¹⁵ English text in *The New York Times*, Sept. 5, 1964.

¹⁶ Norman Kogan, "Italian Communism, the Working Class and Organized Catholicism," prepared for delivery at the 1965 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., September 1965.

¹⁷ In this matter there is a notable difference between the position of *Civiltà Cattolica* and that of the French Jesuit organ, *Études*. See, for example, G. Jarlot, S. J., "Le neo-marxisme Italien," *Études*, January 1966.

¹⁸ Rome, 1965. Fabbri deals with the resistance of "doctrinaire" Italian Communists to these revisionist tendencies and also devotes an interesting chapter to relevant ideological developments in Poland and France.

Communism and Religion: The Selective Approach

The various historic-social vicissitudes through which each group of people or civilizations passed determined the crystallization of beliefs, the creation of determined precepts or religious norms. In almost all the globe and throughout almost all epochs, religion has held back historic-social development. But in determined historic phases and utilized by the ascending classes, it played a positive role, it was utilized as a revolutionary banner. Engels indicates it in speaking of the war of the peasants in Germany, and Lenin himself does in a letter to Gorki. "There was a time" he said, "when in spite of the origin and real significance of the idea of God, the struggle of democracy and the proletariat was brought about under the form of a struggle of one religious idea against the other." Lenin adds that "this time passed long ago."*

This is true. But in the ideas of goodness, equality, fraternity among human beings, which the Christian religion also speaks of and which are reflected in the honest religious and sincere conscience of any believers, there are elements capable of contributing to an emancipating struggle. These elements do not have their origin in religion as such, but they have been taken from non-religious, objective forms of relations between men as members of society. Perhaps these elements, instead of being a restraint to such a struggle, might constitute a stimulus? Our response is positive. . . . Religion is an encouraging idea where the religious movement supports the social transformations and socialism.

* Letter to Gorki, December 1913.

—From "On the Unity of Catholics and Communists," by Santiago Alvarez, in *Epaña Republicana* (Republican Spain), monthly organ of the Spanish CP, No. 594, Aug. 1, 1965, Havana, Cuba.

Secondly, on the Catholic side there was a considerably higher proportion of clerical participants, especially Jesuits and Dominicans. Thirdly, the French Communist Party did not commit itself organizationally to the debate to anywhere near the extent that the PCI did: the burden of Communist discussion was carried, rather, by a small number of individuals, notably Roger Garaudy, Gilbert Mury, André Moine and Michel Verret.

If the French Communist commitment to the debate has been less impressive than that of the Italian comrades, it has been met by a more receptive attitude on the part of some French Catholics. For several years now, Catholic spokesmen, clerical and lay, have participated in the Communist-organized "Semaines de la pensée marxiste."¹⁹ In March 1965 the compliment was returned when two Communists, G. Mury and J. Bruhat, attended the "Semaine des intellectuels Catholiques."²⁰

The leading Communist spokesman has been Roger Garaudy, director of the party's Marxist research center (and editor of its theoretical organ, *Cahiers du Communisme*, until "relieved" of his duties in October 1964 together with a third of the staff). His revisionist ideas on religion, developed over the past few years, are most fully expressed in his recent book, *De l'anathème au dialogue*.²¹

Like the Italians, Garaudy criticizes the Soviet-East European model. In fact, he was the first prominent Western Communist to do so: in February 1964, five months before the Italian Lombardo-Radice spoke out, he told a Catholic-Communist seminar in Lyons that "we cannot as Marxists adopt the present position of our Soviet comrades on the religious problem, as given by Ilichev. It is not a question of tactics, but of principle." Garaudy makes no doctrinal concessions; on the contrary, he stands by Marxist materialism, holding to the chiliastic belief that religion will eventually die under true and complete communism. But it will die of natural causes, he maintains, and there should be no attempt to kill it. This strain of eclectic revisionism was summed up in an article which

Garaudy contributed to the left-wing Catholic weekly, *Témoignage chrétien*, in March 1965:

The concept of Christian love . . . is the highest image that man can conceive of himself and of the meaning of his life; and that is why Marxism would be impoverished if Saint Augustine, Saint Joan of the Cross, or Teresa of Avila became alien to it.

*On this ground surely there can be a meeting of Marxists determined to understand, to integrate and to realize the human 'substance' of Christianity; and of Christians who understand the purifying virtue of Marxism as against all the disincarnated spiritual systems, and who are determined not to desert man's struggle.*²²

In Italy and France the "dialogue," such as it is, takes place in the open. In Spain, however, the complex confrontation between religion and Marxism proceeds in clandestinity, or in exile; it is conditioned by the bitter memories of civil war, and it is extremely difficult to trace its course. The leaders of the Spanish Communist Party have repeatedly made it clear that they now place their hopes in an alliance of anti-Franco forces in which Catholic organizations would have to play an important part. The grounds for these hopes were expounded—and exaggerated—in an article ("Towards an Alliance of Communists and Catholics") which Santiago Alvarez of the party Central Committee contributed to the June 1965 issue of *World Marxist Review*.

Alvarez's main point is that "the Catholics are our main allies today in the struggle against Franco," and he claims that "this process of rapprochement has quickened in recent months." To back this claim, he cites examples of priests supporting workers' protests in the Asturias and Catalonia; anti-Franco movements among Catholic students; a few left-wing Catholic publications like *Cuadernos para el Dialogo*; the formation in January 1965 of the Christian Democratic Union with a program of economic and social reform; and the positions taken by individual lay and clerical spokesmen—particularly that expressed by Msgr. Guerra Campos, secretary of the Spanish hierarchy (whose majority views he did not represent), in his ad-

¹⁹ The "Week of Marxist Thought" held at Nantes in the spring of 1965 was devoted to Marxist-Christian relations. See the proceedings in *La Nouvelle critique* (Paris), May 1965, especially the contributions of Michel Verret and the Dominican Père Duquoc.

²⁰ See G. Mury, "Le dialogue se poursuit," *France Nouvelle* (Paris), March 31-April 6, 1965.

²¹ Paris, 1965. See the sympathetic review by the Dominican priest Père Gardey, in *Le Monde* (Paris), Dec. 10, 1965. From the Catholic viewpoint, *De l'anathème au dialogue* represents a considerable advance from the rather condescending attitudes expressed in Garaudy's earlier work, *Qu'est-ce que la morale marxiste?* (Paris, 1963). Cf. also A. Moine, *Communistes et chrétiens* (Paris, 1965) and M. Verret, *Les marxistes et la religion* (Italian edition, *L'ateismo moderno*, 1963).

²² Garaudy's article was reprinted in the dissident revisionist Communist organ, *Unir pour le socialisme* (May 1965), but not in the official party press. It also provoked disagreement on the Catholic side. On March 30 the council of French bishops censured *Témoignages chrétiens* for having published it (even though Garaudy was answered by a theologian in the same issue). In general, however, the French bishops have been much more permissive than the Italian hierarchy and have dissociated themselves from the positions of the "intégristes" on the Catholic right wing.

dress urging on the Ecumenical Council the need for a dialogue with Marxists.²³

In appealing to these potential allies, says Alvarez, the Spanish Communists are ready to offer many guarantees and promises—including not only freedom of religion but “aid to Catholicism by the [socialist] state.” But the contrast between these magnanimous promises and the weakness of Spanish communism (perhaps 5,000 harried party members) is striking. The available evidence suggests that the opposition to the Franco regime comes today mainly from non-Communist forces, with left-wing Catholics playing a major role. Party Secretary-General Santiago Carrillo’s recent claim that “workers’ commissions” consisting of Catholics, Communists, and other leftist elements have been formed “in all the principal centers of the country”²⁴ has the ring of propaganda; and the dream of Catholic-Communist collaboration in building a socialist Spain seems far from realization.

Less significant developments in other countries can be noted only briefly. In Belgium, for example, an enthusiastic Communist reviewer (L. Goty, in *Le Drapeau Rouge*, Jan. 16, 1966) reports that Garaudy’s *De l’anathème au dialogue* “is selling like hot cakes, and supply cannot keep up with demand.” But the Belgian Communists have made little contribution to any dialogue. Much the same is true of Austria. In Holland, the most “advanced” Catholic community in Europe finds no partner for discussion in an ideologically sclerotic Communist party. In West Germany, Catholic intellectuals have made a notable contribution to the reassessment of Marxism, but no response comes from the clandestine Communists. North America has produced little beyond an “outstretched-hand” pamphlet by Gus Hall of the CPUSA (the decision of the new Communist Party in Quebec to welcome Catholic believers into its ranks will make little impact on French Canadian conservatism).

There is no lack of significance in the interaction of religion and communism in Latin America although only in Chile does one find anything like a sustained “dialogue” in the European sense. However, the Latin American situation—marked by the growing reaction of some Catholics to social injustice, by the Church’s links with the “establish-

ment” in many countries, and by the inflexibility of most of the local Communist parties—is too complex to be discussed in this brief survey.

The Problems Ahead

The importance of the Catholic-Communist dialogue, especially in Western Europe, is clear; but so are its limitations. These arise above all from the fact that communism—like Catholicism—makes absolute claims affecting every sphere of life: as Reinhold Niebuhr has said, Marxism is “an irreligion transmuted into a new political religion.”²⁵ Consequently, neither side can compromise on the essentials of doctrine—and the doctrines are essentially incompatible. Moreover, the Communists are, naturally, interested primarily in political collaboration, whereas wary Catholics generally insist that any political cooperation be limited to what a French theologian has called “specific objectives, recognized as acceptable to Catholics, important to the common good, in circumstances where there is no danger that such cooperation will end by going beyond the limits agreed upon”²⁶—which leaves little scope for opportunism, even if one discounts the weight of the past.

These limitations emerged clearly in the most impressive personal confrontation that has yet taken place—the Salzburg conference of May 1965, which brought together some 250 scholars from both camps to discuss “Christianity and Marxism Today.” The initiative came from the largely Catholic St. Paul’s Society (Paulus-Gesellschaft) based in Munich. The discussion between theologians like Rahner and Reding and ideologists like Garaudy and Gruppi proceeded in an atmosphere of anxious goodwill; but it moved on the level of ideas, not on that of practical politics. The conceptual and semantic gap remained, and there were no concessions on the incompatible essentials. The participants, however, did resolve (by 200 votes to 20, with 30 abstentions) that “the dialogue is possible and fruitful, and . . . must be continued and widened. They hope for greater reciprocal information and mutual knowledge, in the awareness that both the Christian world and the Communist world are going through a phase of evolution.”²⁷

²³ Bishop Guerra Campos’ address was reproduced in the October 1965 issue of the Spanish CP’s monthly organ, *España Republicana*, published in Havana. It was followed by a long commentary in which the Communist Manuel Azcarate criticized the Church’s “reactionary” past but welcomed Catholic collaboration in building a multiparty socialist society in which Marxism-Leninism would prevail “not by means of external pressures but by its innate merits.”

²⁴ Interview in *Komsomolskaia pravda* (Moscow), Jan. 1, 1966.

²⁵ Introduction to *Marx and Engels on Religion*, New York, 1964.

²⁶ Yves Calvez, “Chrétiens et communistes,” *Revue de l’action populaire* (Paris), November 1965.

²⁷ For non-Communist accounts of the Salzburg conference see *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich), May 4, 1965; *Die Presse* (Vienna), May 5; and *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 5. For Communist coverage, see *L’Unità*, May 6; *Zeitung vom Letzburger Vollek* (Luxembourg), May 7; and *Volksstimme* (Vienna), May 9.

But perhaps the most significant thing about the Salzburg encounter is that the burden of Communist argument was borne mainly by the Italians and French. The East German, Polish, Czechoslovak and Hungarian regimes refused exit permits to the Marxist scholars invited from those countries;²⁸ consequently, only one Bulgarian and two Yugoslavs represented East European Communist views.

Early in March of this year, a spokesman for the Paulus-Gesellschaft announced that a second such conference would be held at the end of April, this time on the subject of "Christian Humanity and Marxist Humanism." He also announced that the Polish philosopher Adam Schaff, who was not allowed to attend the first conference, was among those who had already accepted invitations.

²⁸ The East German Robert Havemann, the Pole Adam Schaff and the Hungarian Georgy Lukacs were among those prevented from attending. The Hungarian regime allowed three Catholics to attend the conference.

²⁹ The official attitudes of the Communist regimes towards religion vary quite widely, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia now being the most liberal (Poland is a special case). In general, however, administrative and legal pressures against the churches continue. Consult *Religion in Communist-dominated Areas*, the useful bi-weekly bulletin issued by the International Affairs Com-

The greatest obstacle to the dialogue is the gap between promise and performance—between what Communists say in the West and what they do in the East.³⁰ This fact can only strengthen the trend towards revisionist reassessment of Communist theory and practice in the West, and hence towards the organizational fragmentation of the Communist world. Moreover, the "dialogue" adds a little more fuel to the flames of the wider ideological struggle, since the pro-Chinese parties and fractions will generally make no concessions to religion.³⁰

All in all, the political profit which those Communist parties involved can win from the dialogue seems to be marginal. Time may tell what price they have to pay in the revision of theory and practice.

mission of the National Council of Churches, New York. The Vatican's Secretariat for Non-believers takes cautious note of the apparent evolution in Italian, French, and Yugoslav Marxist positions on religion, and of the contrast with East European and Soviet practice, in its first report (*Corriere della Sera*, Oct. 24, 1965).

³⁰ For one of many examples, see the denunciation in the Albanian organ *Rruga e Partise* (Party Life), June 1964, of the "Holy Alliance of imperialists, reformists, modern revisionists and the Vatican against Marxism-Leninism and Socialism."

World Marxist Review
May 1966

Viewpoints on Current Problems

New Conditions of the Ideological Struggle of Communists and Catholics

ORLANDO MILLAS

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW has examined in previous articles the problems arising from the changes that have taken place in the thinking of Catholic circles under the impact of the social struggle. These articles, and particularly the article by Santiago Alvarez, "Towards an Alliance of Communists and Catholics", summed up the experience making possible joint actions by Communists and Catholics, and the participation of the latter in democratic movements. This subject is of exceptional interest, especially for countries like Chile where the Christian-Democrats are in office. The attitude of the Catholic masses, of their organisations and leaders, is of great importance for advancing the unity of the forces fighting for peace, the independence of nations and against the aggressive policy of U.S. imperialism and the omnipotence of the monopolies.

"Aggiornamento"

Last December the Second Vatican Council ended its deliberations. Pope Paul VI declared in this connection that one could not speak of the Council having "reformed" or "transformed" the Church, but one could say that it had "renovated" it. Press commentators use the Italian word "aggiornamento", meaning "modernisation", to describe this new development.

A change in the attitude among the clergy is evident also in Chile. It can be said that in certain respects the Church is departing from its traditional positions. Some of our views regarding the Church are, therefore, no longer valid and need to be modified.

Unlike religion, Marxism-Leninism does not require "aggiornamento", for its very essence is constant critical reflection, examination of reality and rapidly cognising the new. Let us, therefore, frankly, carefully and dialectically examine the problem of Catholic "renovation".

The Real World—the Basis of the Changes

The act of convening the Ecumenical Council signified a departure from the dogmatic extremes associated with the personal dictatorship of the Pope. After the First Vatican Council in 1870 affirmed the infallibility of the Pope, it was announced that there would no longer be any need for such meetings. Pius XII based his absolutism on the principle: "The Church, I am the Church". Numerous articles published at the time in the Vatican repeated the sacramental phrase: "The living directives of Pius XII are the direct and universal norms of the faith." During his office bishops were reduced to mere vicars of the Pope. The Council, on the contrary, is a collective authority, and its recent meeting accented the need for partial decentralisation which would create the prerequisites for semi-autonomous initiative by the dioceses.

The authoritative Catholic commentator Rene Laurentin in his *The Dispute about the Council*, which appeared shortly after John

XXIII's initiative, wrote: "The difficulty is that Jesus Christ did not institute the Councils. Neither he nor the Apostles established any explicit norms. It is an improvised institution, connected with unforeseen historical circumstances. . . . Usually Councils are summoned at times of crises, abnormal situations, when serious danger threatens the Church."

"Crisis", "abnormal situations when serious danger threatens the Church". What lies behind these words?

We are living in the times of the transition from capitalism to socialism. Marx wrote in *Capital* that the religious world is a reflex of the real world. This real world is changing rapidly, and with it its religious reflex.

Marx explains that "for a society based upon the production of commodities, in which the producers in general enter into social relations with one another by treating their products as commodities and values, whereby they reduce their individual private labour to the standard of homogeneous human labour—for such a society, Christianity with its cultus of abstract man, more especially in its bourgeois developments, Protestantism, Deism, etc., is the most fitting form of religion," and that "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".

The process of adequately reflecting society is extremely complex and difficult. In our times too the protest against "real misery" is expressed in the shape of "religious misery", "the sigh of the oppressed creature", "criticism of the vale of tears, the halo of which is religion", "disillusionment which leads to critical reflection and revolutionary action—all these feelings are closely interwoven in the hearts and minds of millions of people.

The Standpoint of the Communists

We know of innumerable cases of deeply religious people taking an active part in the struggle headed by the Communists, even though this participation meant for them the personal tragedy of excommunication. We know of many families where the mothers or grandmothers who, although devout Catholics, helped their Communist sons and grandsons in the struggle during the periods of repression. They would return heartbroken from the Sunday Mass at which the priest had anathematised Communism as being "evil from its very birth".

We explained to these families that at the beginning of the last century Pius VII had intimidated fighters for the independence of Chile by invoking the wrath of the Lord, and that Leo XII in one of his encyclicals had denounced the founders of our republic as miscreants. Now when celebrating the anniversary of the founding of the republic the archbishops and cardinals praise the Lord for the

victory which not so long ago they had cursed. And on Independence Day, September 18, 1965, during the thanksgiving service in the Cathedral of Santiago, the priest, enumerating the most illustrious figures in the national history, mentioned the name of Luis Emilio Recabarren, the founder of the Communist Party of Chile.

Anti-communism isolated the Church, erected a wall of distrust around it which blocked its access to the hearts of people. In many villages the peasants regarded the visiting monks as the direct accomplices of the landlords. In the mining villages the presence of priests was considered a bad omen. In the past decade the number of people dedicating themselves to religion has sharply decreased. Congregations too are becoming smaller; parish priests in poor areas have told us that their rejection of anti-communism has made their work easier, had given them new possibilities for regaining the confidence of the people.

The attitude of the Communist Party of Chile to religion has always been consistently Marxist. True, there was a time, shortly after the Party was founded in 1912 (as the Socialist Workers' Party), when it was influenced by the anti-clericalism of a section of the bourgeoisie and by the anarchists, when it sent lecturers to working-class centres who satirised religious practices. Even Comrade Elias Laferte, who subsequently became chairman of the Party, was tried in his youth as editor of the satirical newspaper *El Bonete* which lampooned the Church. However, before long these methods were replaced by persistent ideological work which far from weakening stimulated joint action by all working people against reaction.

In the 19th century the progressive attitude of the liberal elements of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie was identified with anti-clericalism. During the latter part of the century when the radicals became the standard-bearers of the progressive movement the secular trend gained ground, due primarily to the freemasons who opposed the Catholic Church. Later a series of anti-clerical demands were granted (the right to have secular cemeteries, civil registration, civil marriages, freedom of religious rites, compulsory elementary education), and in 1925 the Constitution was amended to provide for separation of the Church from the State. However, as workers gathered from their own experience, the amended Constitution did not put an end to the regime of exploitation. They continued the struggle on a different plane, at the same time carrying forward the correctly understood anti-clerical traditions. In our times these traditions are reflected in the movement to extend the network of state educational institutions with a scientific approach to instruction, in opposition to interference by the Church in politics, in the fight against religious intolerance.

In his article "Emigrant Literature" Engels ridiculed the programme of the Blanquists which stated that: "There is no room for priests in the Commune, every religious manifestation, every religious organisation must be prohibited". He wrote in this connection: "This much is sure: the only service that can be rendered to God today is to declare atheism a compulsory article of faith and to outdo Bismarck's *Kirchenkulturkampf* by prohibiting religion in general. . . ." In his *Anti-Dühring*, he expressed himself in a similar vein: "Herr Dühring, however, cannot wait until religion dies this, its natural, death. He proceeds in more deep-rooted fashion. He out-Bismarck's Bismarck; he decrees sharper May laws not merely against catholicism, but against all religion whatsoever; he incites his gendarmes of the future against religion and thereby helps it to martyrdom and a prolonged lease of life. Wherever we turn, we find specifically Prussian socialism."

This denunciation of the anti-religious twaddle had as its purpose to organise the working class, to raise its ideological level in the course of the social struggle and thus help develop the mass consciousness away from religious illusions. *The determining factor must be the actual progress of the class struggle, the guiding principle—concrete conditions, without "transforming what is a shifting and relative boundary into an absolute boundary"*(Lenin).

In Latin America reactionaries have always exploited the religious differences in the working class. This has always been an obstacle to developing mass movements. In this connection it should be noted that in view of the growing role of women in society, to identify their religious sentiment with counter-revolutionary positions can only keep them away from the common struggle. Communists are now using all possibilities to promote unity of the working class and the people and to foil attempts to divide them.

The Beginnings of a Process

We fully appreciate the importance of the new policy of the Catholics. Although some people believe that, apart from certain outward change, everything has remained the same, while others regard "aggiornamento" simply as a skilful, calculated move, we on the contrary see the world in constant movement. We know that the class struggle is the decisive factor revolutionising institutions and ideas. We are fully aware of the profound effect that the structural changes and the trend towards socialism are having on the superstructure in general, and on the religious outlook in particular. And we were not surprised by the convening of the Council which was summoned to register the irremediable agony of values formerly exalted by the Church, and the triumph of all that it had combated.

If religion were to die suddenly, without leaving any traces in the minds of people, things would be simple and a requiem would be enough. However, for a substantial part of humanity it is a question of a real drama of the conscience, often a question of personal tragedy with the most unforeseen moral consequences affecting many aspects of everyday life. The process will continue for a long time, ultimately merging with the struggle for national and social liberation.

The Instability of Religious Norms

One of the theologists who participated in the Second Vatican Council, the Jesuit, Karl Rahner, in an article published in *Stimmen der Zeit* testified that "some Catholics welcome the Council and its work with enthusiasm since it represents the beginning so long awaited and which very nearly came too late".

The old Catholic thesis: *Stat Crux dum volvitur orbis* ("the world changes, but the Holy Cross remains") has lost its pull. This thesis never corresponded to historical reality. But even the elementary concepts of religious thinking which were used to prevent the masses from being drawn up into the revolutionary movement, are now losing their former effectiveness.

Finding themselves compelled to combat the danger of the collapse of the fundamental doctrines of Catholicism, ecclesiastical commentators had to differentiate between immutable Divine right and Ecclesiastical right which are undergoing modifications, depending on the zigzags of historical development. To avoid more serious difficulties they have warned: "Doubts might arise about some particular law being ordained by God, and hence immutable".

Great indeed is the effect on the faithful of the doubts about the religious canons, and also of the Church's recognition that a large

part of its commandments, laws, proscriptions, prohibitions and grants of absolution are determined by circumstances and not in any way by "revelations".

The Democratisation in the Church

For nearly two thousand years the dominant tendency in Catholicism was submission to an external, superior will. It was the religion preached by emperors, slaveowners, feudal lords, capitalists, imperialists. But alongside this there was another powerful, though subordinate and submerged, tendency, that of "love thy neighbour", found chiefly among the masses of the exploited. Marxism has always stressed the difference between these two tendencies. The centuries-old contradictions in Catholicism, which stem from such factors as the spirit of solidarity and the spirit of antagonism inherent in this religion, are now developing on a new plane and are no longer determined by purely internal impulses but by the changes taking place in the world.

The most notable change registered by the Second Vatican Council is a certain democratisation in the Church, which makes it possible for the faithful to exert a greater influence.

This democratisation is manifested in the changing of the Church, for centuries patterned as an absolute monarchy, into "the children of God", in a reassessment of the role of believers who, while continuing to be subordinate to the decisions of the Bishops, will meet at national episcopal conference possessing a certain degree of autonomy. Clearly this will enable many leaders of Catholic organisations influenced by modern trends to adopt a more progressive standpoint. The signs are that the ideological struggle in the Church far from relenting, will gain in intensity.

The rejection of gloomy rituals, of unintelligible symbolism expressed in Latin and their replacement by ceremonies, prayers and sermons in the respective national language, signify more than just rapprochement with the masses. The new is invading the domain of theology. For example, believers now have access to religious books, and Scripture is becoming the object of different interpretations. As we know, because of its ambiguity the Bible was interpreted differently in time of tense class struggle by the contending classes which sought in it justification for their views. The Papal tyranny, established by the First Vatican Council, bequeathed to the Pontiff the monopoly right to interpret religious texts. Nowadays this "monopoly" is beginning to lose its practical value to some extent.

One has only to listen to the sermons of some of our priests to realise that there are two antagonistic trends of thought also in the church in Chile, and that the influence of the traditionalists is steadily waning.

In his article "Religion and Development", published in the journal *Mensaje*, the Chilean Jesuit, Mario Zañartu, admitted that Catholicism in Latin America, justifying the existence of the social order by the will of God, condemned the desire for more or less radical changes, sought to concentrate the thoughts of the masses "in the hereafter in order that they should scorn life in the present", preached resignation to misery, fatalism, and so on. In the same article the new, counterpoised to the traditional Catholic way of thinking, includes "a favourable attitude to change", advocates "an interest in this life", "action to arrive at a more perfect earthly existence and improve its structure", the conviction that "the

omnipotence of the Almighty by no means implies rejection of individual responsibility or a lessening of efforts to change things", "the need to do one's best", "love thy brother, which signifies all people and is aimed at achieving universal good", and "profound respect for all forms of human activity".

The Crisis of the "Social Doctrine" of the Church

The policy of "aggiornamento", continued by the Second Vatican Council despite numerous deviations and vacillations, has been necessitated by the disintegration of the so-called "social doctrine" of the Church, the reactionary tenets of which have been disproved by experience. This doctrine was first expounded in 1891 by Leo XIII in his encyclical "Rerum Novarum" and amplified in 1931 by Pius XI in his encyclical "quadragesimo Anno", and by Pius XII in his radio message of Pentecost in June 1941. These documents are wholly in the spirit of "Quanta Cura" (1864) and other Vatican acts which condemn both liberalism and socialism, refer to the secular State as being impious and absurd, and declare war on freedom of the press, freedom of conscience, not to mention science.

According to the "social doctrine" of the Church "it is unthinkable that all people in civil society should rise to the same level". "It is man's lot to suffer and endure. No matter how hard man tries, no matter what efforts he exerts, he will not be able completely to remove these inconveniences from the life of humanity." As for the Socialists "all their efforts against Nature are in vain". "All power derives from God and is a manifestation of the works of God." "Private property should not be burdened with excessive taxes, for not from the laws of men but from nature comes the right to private property; consequently, the public authority cannot abolish this right it can only moderate its realisation and combine it with the common good. Thus, it is unjust and inhuman to exact from the property of individuals in the guise of taxes more than is equitable." ("Rerum Novarum"). "Grave harm is caused by those who propagate the principle that the value of labour is equivalent to the fruits of its production, that the remuneration of labour should be equal to this value, and that the working man, therefore, has the right to demand everything that is the product of his labour." ("Quadragesimo Anno.")

The idea that exploitation of man by man, that capitalism, the appropriation by the capitalists of surplus value, anti-labour repressions and inequality are all "works of God", opposition to which is a mortal sin, was spread in the most extreme forms.

For a long time the Church used its influence on behalf of the masters and against the workers. It is true, some Catholic circles, the forerunners of the present Christian-Democratic Party, advocated those sections in the "social" encyclicals which condemned capitalist abuses. They did not adhere to the viewpoint of the reactionaries, and they had the support of some priests and bishops. But, as we know, it takes more than a few swallows to convince us of the arrival of summer.

In Chile the Church for a whole century identified itself with the most reactionary political party in the country, the Conservative Party, headed by the landlord oligarchy responsible for the massacres and crimes perpetrated in the country. Incidentally, the party emblem was the crucifix.

Playing on primitive prejudice and superstition, parish priests in the villages and in the districts of the poor would ascribe satanic

qualities to Communists.

Nothing, however, could prevent the rise of the working-class movement and a mass Communist Party. The Church realised that its policy was not getting it anywhere. A similar process was under way in other countries of Latin America and of the world. The crisis manifested itself in diverse forms and particularly in a widespread movement inside the Church for renovation.

Possibilities for Joint Action

If we proceed not from abstract moral categories, but from the actual requirements of the social struggle, we can speak of two trends in modern Catholicism—of a theology that seeks to divert the attention of the working people from the problems of the day, and a theology which does not prevent believers from joining the stream of revolutionary action.

In Chile growing numbers of young Catholics identify the very vague and ambiguous concept "communitarian system", regarded as the Christian ideal, with Socialism and Communism. The Christian-Democrat deputy, Julio Silva Solar, in a book on this thesis upholds "ideological pluralism", by which is implied competition and even the possible co-operation of Marxists, Catholics and people of other ideological trends in building socialism and communism, understood as a social system in which there is no private ownership of the means of production. Similar views are shared by many deputies and also by most of the leaders of the youth organisations of the Christian-Democratic Party.

The Communists, who are striving for unity of all working people, do not reject this pluralism. In Chile the People's Front was in power for ten years. Towards the end this democratic coalition government included representatives of our Party. Communists have been, and still are, the majority in some municipal councils. And Catholics can confirm that never once have we used our influence to the detriment of their religious feelings. Lack of mutual understanding was due to the militant anti-communism of many Popes who unscrupulously used their religion for reactionary political aims. After the publication of "Rerum Novarum", practically every Vatican document (irrespective of its subject) contained sharp attacks against the working-class movement and especially against the Communists. When fascism was on the upsurge, Pius XII heaped curses on "materialist and atheist communism".

John XXIII's "Mater at Magistra", written in much more fraternal and humane tones, marked a significant change in the style of the Pope; it heralded, in a way, a return to that image of Christianity which was brought into being by movements of the exploited, movements which in the past had been religious in character and had usually been considered heretical.

But the most important new feature introduced by the encyclical was its approval of socialisation, understood as "the progressive multiplication of relations in society, with different forms of life and activity and juridical institutionalisation". John XXIII emphatically refuted the fears of his predecessors in the following words: "Ought it to be concluded, then, that socialisation, growing in extent and depth, necessarily reduces men to automatons? It is a question which must be answered in the negative." As for the social struggle in the epoch of the transition from capitalism to socialism, John XXIII expressed his sympathy for it or, at any rate, recognition of its historical necessity. "Socialisation", he said, "is not to be considered as a product of natural forces working in a deterministic way. It is, on the contrary, as we have observed, a

creation of men, being conscious, free and intended by nature to work in a responsible way, even if in their so acting they are obliged to recognise and respect the laws of economic development and social progress and cannot escape from all the pressures of their environment."

In "Pacem in terris" John XXIII amplified these tenets. In this encyclical he departed from anti-communism and unequivocally recognised the need for joint action based on understanding and respect for the historical mass movements not connected with Christianity.

New Campaign to Recruit Followers

Undoubtedly a considerable part of the hierarchy understand "aggiornamento" to mean the adoption of more modern and flexible methods and shedding, so to speak, all that is redundant, with a view to creating new possibilities for gaining followers. In the case of these groups it is a question of making up for time lost and of achieving by different means their old aims of ousting the Communists, neutralising the mass movement and blunting its militant character.

The Catholic propaganda apparatus has been reorganised accordingly. A veritable army of sociologists is now at work. With practically unlimited resources at their disposal, they are making the fullest use of the advances in industry and sociology, in the system of "human relations", publicity and education.

The International Catholic Centre of Social Research in Brussels with its ramified network of branches is the principal co-ordinating centre of this activity for Latin America.

An enumeration of all the organisations engaged in clerical activity would take up too much space. Among the more important are those grouped according to ideological trends of international importance as, for example Opus Dei, also called the Sacred Society of the Holy Cross and the Works of the Lord. A reactionary integralist organisation, it has a membership of nearly 100,000 organised in 200 secret lodges in different parts of the world. Its rival organisation is the "Left" Economy and Humanism, headed by the Dominican, Lebret, who also heads several research centres, and around whom are grouped a large number of reformist priests and leaders of Christian-Democratic parties.

Mention should also be made of Columbianum (Genoa), a Jesuit organisation for neo-colonialist contacts between Europe, on the one hand, and Africa, Asia and Latin America, on the other. The European-Latin American Centre is one of the branches of this organisation.

Thus, a variety of trends are represented—from the "Right" Opus Dei, to the "Centrist" Columbianum and the "Left" Economy and Humanism.

We are witnessing an intensive Catholic campaign to recruit new followers, a campaign which is being conducted much more effectively than in previous years, and directly among the masses.

The "marginal" theory advanced by Christian sociologists recognises the tendency on the part of all individuals to join the social struggle, but notes at the same time that considerable sections of the population have not been able to achieve this either in the countryside or in urban working-class areas where women in particular play hardly any part in public life; the same is true, they add, of different social categories who have no access to culture. The Christian leaders of the new type pay special attention to these "marginal" sections which include people who have recently joined the ranks of the working class, farm labourers, men employed in

small workshops and the members of their families not engaged in production, and the petty-bourgeoisie. They appoint "leaders" from among these sections, form organisations for them, act as their spokesmen and channel their activity into reformism and certain forms of class collaboration. They call this policy "popular advancement".

Imperialist Influence

What is the attitude of U.S. imperialism to the new clerical policy?

In his interesting article, "The Ideological Offensive of Catholicism in Latin America: the Social Sciences" published last year in the Uruguay journal *Estudios*, Manuel Facal noted that one of the decisive factors contributing to the proliferation of new Catholic organisations is the financial support given by U.S. and West European foundations, mostly non-clerical.

Although the Gregorian University in Rome indisputably remains the *alma mater* of this tendency, after the Alliance for Progress was launched and, in general, beginning with the first steps of President Kennedy's Administration, the United States became the second centre. The Belgian Jesuit Roger Vekemans, the "grey eminence" of the Christian-Democrat government of Chile, welcomed the Alliance for Progress with the same enthusiasm as his European fellow-priests had welcomed the Marshall Plan. Vekemans has established in Santiago the Centre for the Economic and Social Development of Latin America, which has links with the Organisation of American States. This Centre collaborates with the Loyola University in New Orleans.

The relations between imperialism and the modern clerical trends are not those of unconditional subordination of the latter to the former; they are more in the nature of reciprocal relations. The Latin American Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (regional organisation of the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions), distinctly differs from the Inter-American Regional Organisation of Labour (ORIT), although both oppose unity and independence of the trade unions and the World Federation of Trade Unions. Having failed to split the working class, the Latin American Confederation of Trade Unions set up its own organisation, the Chilean Trade Union Movement (ASICH) which trains union officials and operates inside the unions. The Christian-Democratic Latin-American Federation of Peasants and Farm Labourers has, on the contrary, been able to establish parallel organisations, which in the struggle for agrarian reform are beginning to carry out joint actions with the Federation of Peasants and Indians, an affiliate of the Trade Union Centre of Working People.

The ultra-reactionaries in the Pentagon and the State Department who consider violence and military dictatorships to be the lot of Latin America do not believe in the effectiveness of the actions of the clericals and, as a rule, view their reformism with hostility. It is symptomatic, however, that a paper like *El Mercurio* (Santiago), mouthpiece of the U.S. Embassy and known for its sympathies for the "gorillas", should at the same time support the Catholic groups in power. In the crusade against communism both God and the Devil will do!

U.S. imperialism has rendered very substantial aid to the Chilean Church in its campaign to win new followers. It has supplied the Church, through the American Catholic charity organisation, with food, medicaments, clothing and money. The Chilean Cardinal, Raul Silva Henriquez, heads the charity organisation *Caritas Internacional*.

Quite a few Catholic organisations are financed from U.S. sources. One of the factors facilitating this is that the Vatican and religious orders invest their capital in those U.S. monopolies operating in Chile and in Latin America generally, which announced in advance their readiness to give part of their profits to aid the clerical institutions.

Some Catholics go Further . . .

The religious world, in the throes of a crisis, is rent by many contradictions. However, the theological changes, far from mitigating these contradictions, are exacerbating them. The result is a deep-going moral conflict attended by many misgivings and far-reaching aspirations. Many Catholics, including priests, go much farther than the stand proposed by their colleagues who are anxious to adapt Catholicism to the condition of the last phase of capitalism in order to maintain contact with the masses, and to retain their influence, at any price, on the historical process. The well-known and instructive example of the worker priests, many of whom have become imbued with the spirit of class consciousness, is now being repeated on a wider scale. Imperialism's investments in some of the clerical organisations might well lead to results it least expected.

There was a time when the broad-minded approach of the Jesuits to the new social reality of our times seemed astonishing. In Chile the Jesuit college San Ignacio educated several generations of Christian-Democrats, the first to join progressive movements. But the Jesuits soon systematised their aims in the framework of reformism which Roger Vekemans hitched to the Alliance for Progress, thus revealing its feebleness.

The reformism of the Jesuits is limited. It assiduously avoids anything that might injure the U.S. monopolies. And yet the Jesuits have had to release the deluge, held in check so long and whose course they cannot block.

Although a neo-colonialist trend was apparent at the Second Vatican Council, with Paul VI as its main spokesman, the voices of other prelates were heard during the deliberations, among them Heider Camara of Brazil and Tchidimo of Guinea, who went further. And it is not a question of individual dignitaries. Constant contacts with Catholics in the trade unions, in residential areas and in the mass movements show that a large number of them want to break with capitalism. The same is true also of many priests. The men of this trend sincerely believe that the democratisation of their churches would be a truly Christian undertaking. They see the meaning of their religion in love of their fellow men, in implicit faith in man. To these Catholics their faith is no obstacle to being revolutionaries; on the contrary, it helps them in the struggle. An example of this was the life and heroic death of the Colombian priest and revolutionary, Camilo Torres.

Unity of the Working Class and the Entire People

We Communists are glad to be working side by side with Catholics in the mass movement. We are all for unity of the working class and the entire people, for a united trade union in every branch of industry, a united centre of the working people, a united organisation of the residents of a particular settlement or area, a united centre of the mothers in a community, for organisational unity of all mass movements without exception. There will be place in them for Marxists and Catholics, for Protestants and other groups, for Communists and Socialists, Radicals and Christian-Democrats, National-Democrats and for people of no party.

The common denominator is basic class interests. Experience shows the need for united front action and rallying the masses of town and country. At the dawn of the working-class movement in Chile the revolutionary trend, headed by Luis Emilio Recabarren, had to contend with anarchists and the "Josefinos", as the Catholic workers were called at the time, since the Church maintained that Saint Joseph was the patron saint of their union centres. In the beginning the trade union centres functioned on a regional scale and were known as workers' communities. Subsequently, on the initiative of the railwaymen the Workers' Federation was formed, the first national union in the country. It was headed by the Conservative Marin Pinuer. Owing to the fact that the unions in the industrial communities did not at first join the Federation initial membership consisted mainly of "Josefinos". During the First World War the Federation was joined by contingents of the working class with long traditions of militancy. Luis Emilio Recabarren became its general secretary. Ten years later official trade unions were formed with the object of undermining the unity of the working people. These unions enjoyed the support of the authorities and also certain privileges. The Communist attitude was that all workers should join these unions, with the result that the revolutionary trend soon predominated in them.

After the Second World War the U.S. imperialists succeeded in splitting the trade union centre, then known as the Confederation of the Working People of Chile. Undaunted by the split, the Communists still fought for the unity of all unions. They insisted that the minority supporting a split in the unions that had remained loyal to the old Confederation should have the same rights as those supporting unity in the unions that had been split. Before long, the Centre itself, under pressure of the lower organisations, urged healing the split, with the result that the Trade Union Centre of the Working People of Chile came into being.

Respect for the creeds and political views of the members, public discussions at meetings, proportional representation of the respective groups in the leading bodies, reaching agreement with the groups concerned on basic resolutions, using every opportunity to arrive at unanimous decisions (in keeping with the rule of the subordination of the minority to the majority)—all this, far from weakening the struggle, favours its development and hampers the manoeuvres of the class enemies and the intrigues of their agents.

Practice has shown that the Catholic workers do not always adopt reformist positions or show insufficient class firmness. Ideological convictions do not necessarily correspond to exact and automatically defined views on the development of the class struggle. Even if Catholic workers are members of a group led by Catholic Action, or of a political party which acts as spokesman of their religious principles, this in itself should not prevent most of these workers from supporting the Communists for purely class reasons. But this requires a correct approach not only to the revolutionary perspective and to politics in general, but also to the minor problems and concrete issues worrying the working people and their families. In other words, it demands that all organisations of the Communist Party master the art of being a heedful, thoughtful vanguard.

A Creative Dialogue

Joint action by Communists and Catholics does not mean renunciation of the ideological struggle; but it means shifting it to new ground. It is not a question of Communists changing their principles for the sake of mutual understanding with the Catholics, or of the Catholics ceasing to be Catholics. A dialogue does not mean striking a bargain: its purpose is to clarify the positions of the parties concerned in the interests of mutual understanding. A dialogue presupposes a readiness on the part of both sides to seek the truth and, first and foremost, to find an area for concerted efforts to achieve common aims.

All their lives millions of Catholics believed the anti-communist slanders. We attach importance to the opportunities to explain our way of thinking, our aims and our methods. This will enable us finally to lay the ghost of the notorious devil said to be embodied in the Communists. We, for our part, will also finish with certain prejudices and oversimplified notions, for we are vitally interested in correctly understanding reality.

For us Communists the dialogue is of greater importance than it is for anybody else precisely because of the character of our doctrine, the boundless faith we have in critical reflection and critical action, our scientific approach to the world and hence our confidence that the world is moving in the direction predicted by us.

The changes in the Catholic Church are a result of the changes taking place in life, changes for which we Communists hold ourselves responsible with understandable and justified pride. We can but welcome these changes. They do not, and cannot of course, resolve our differences regarding the celestial world, but they considerably approximate our views regarding the temporal world. Although we proceed from different premises and use different methods, these changes make it possible for us jointly to concentrate on the issue of human happiness which can be won only in struggle against backwardness, exploitation, want and ignorance.

Our times imperatively demand that the ideological dispute be conducted in a way that makes for mutual understanding. Any departure from our standpoint, even the slightest, can but play into the hands of imperialism which hides behind anti-scientific concepts of all kinds. Still, if the ideological struggle is to be effective it must be conducted in a convincing way and must be linked with the fight for peace, bread, liberty, prosperity and culture. The Communist style of ideological struggle facilitates joint action by all sections of the working people, cements the anti-imperialist forces.

Among the questions worrying forward-looking Catholics is the question whether different parties, holding different religious views, and particularly Marxist-Leninist and Catholic parties, will be able to exist in our countries under socialism. We believe that Catholics—both laity and their representatives—as they come in direct contact with the noble undertaking of socialist and communist construction will themselves join this process, enjoying the new rights stemming from their new position. The question posed therefore applies to them rather than to us. We welcome all their actions aimed at freeing themselves from fetters, obvious and disguised, with the help of which imperialism has tried and is still trying to hold them back.

At the end of last year a Chilean Parliamentary delegation visited the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Catholic senators and deputies made some very positive statements. They no longer doubt that socialism is a viable force and a very promising reality. This is a sign of the times. But even more so is the fact that millions of Catholics in town and country are gaining a new understanding of socialism and of Communists.