

IN THE PHILIPPINES TODAY:

CHRISTIAN FAITH, IDEOLOGIES . . . MARXISM**CONTENTS**

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These Papers all deal with Christianity's "encounter with Marxism," with Marxism itself, the cooperation of Christianity and Marxism, and ideologies of liberation, all areas of interest and concern for the Churches of Asia, and, indeed, of the world. The Papers first appeared as *Loyola Papers No. 10*, published by the Loyola School of Theology of the Ateneo de Manila University, and are reprinted with the kind permission of the Editors.

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This paper will deal with Christianity's encounter with Marxism, and will discuss itself, the cooperation of Christianity and Marxism, and ideologies of liberation, all areas of interest and concern for the Churches of Asia and indeed of the world. The paper first appeared in *Asian Affairs* and is published by the Loyola School of Theology of the Ateneo de Manila University, and was prepared with the kind permission of the Editors.

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In the following essays, we focus on Marxist-Christian dialogue and cooperation as we see them at the Bukidnon grassroots. They are the results of some quite intense soul-searching on the part not only of ourselves, the writers, but also of other religious and groups of the Province of Misamis Oriental. The ideas expressed are not common "Bukidnon doctrine," by any means. But at the same time, we feel they are, to a very large extent, the articulation of a shared conviction among the clergy and people of Bukidnon vis-a-vis the Marxist predicament.

PREFACE

"BUKIDNON PAPERS"

Our orientation is simply and thoroughly pastoral: what concerns the spiritual and human good of our people and our

Trashing about in the seething vortex of a socio-political maelstrom and thinking critical thoughts about that very predicament do not recommend themselves as acts of sanity. But *that* is exactly what we are attempting in the following pages. The effort, insane as it may seem, is a matter of great importance to us who are engaged in pastoral labors in these trying and uncertain times in the Philippines today. For even as we spin about dizzily in the social and political mess we are in now, we have to try to continually clarify our visions and perspectives, know where we are at, from moment to painful moment.

Martial Law, Philippine style, benign as its authors labor to make it appear, has spawned problems of no mean import for Church and people alike. "Critical collaboration", a phrase coined by the AMRSP (Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines) as early as November, 1972, has for long been the operative formula as far as Church dealings with government go. It is a happy phrase, pregnant with good sense, but only if the emphasis is put on *critical*. This is our emphasis too.

For we in Bukidnon realized early enough that the formula is good not for government alone but for all and any groups that profess concern for the reform of the social order—Leftist organizations, especially, the NPA, the NDF, the CCP, Marxist/Maoist entities of varying shades of coloration, the MNLF and other

movements in Mindanao that strive for the violent restructuring of people-relationships.

In the following essays, we focus on Marxist-Christian dialogue and cooperation as we see them at the Bukidnon grassroots. They are the results of some quite intense soul-searching on the part not only of ourselves, the writers, but also of other religious and priests of the Prelature of Malaybalay. The ideas expressed are not common "Bukidnon doctrine" by any means. But at the same time, we feel they are, to a very large extent, the articulation of many a generally accepted sentiment among the clergy and religious of Bukidnon vis-a-vis the Marxist problematic.

Our orientation is simply and thoroughly pastoral: what conduces best to the spiritual and human good of our people and ourselves in the here and now?

Under this perspective, often dearly held *positions of the moment* must perforce become *questions of the moment*. For we are only too aware that even deeply held convictions must necessarily become questions, both for those who disagree with us and for ourselves as well. In the constant seeking—open and honest at every step, we hope—we will approximate more and more the truth of things.

We trust these efforts, geared as they are not to intellectual niceties but to effective pastoral action, will be of some use to others who struggle in the Lord with the same ideas and problems and work mightily for the coming of the Kingdom of truth, justice, and love.

FRANCISCO F. CLAVER, S.J.

Bishop of Malaybalay

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September 9, 1977

CONVERSATION WITH MARXISTS

BISHOP FRANCISCO F. CLAVER, S.J.

BACKGROUND

Over the past few years I have had occasion to talk with people in the Leftist Underground, with priests and religious who either work with them or are in complete sympathy with their aims and goals.

Uppermost in my mind in all these talks was the nagging question: Why do otherwise convinced Christians fall for the Marxist line?

I started out with the hypothesis that most do so because they do not find in conventional Christianity (the socially-uninvolved kind, that is) a real outlet for their idealism, for the concretization of their dreams for a more socially just society. The hypothesis, despite all the talks and meetings (they add up, all told, to some dozen sessions), is still largely untested—or at least not sufficiently tested for me to arrive at firmer conclusions.

The original question is really nothing else but an attempt to understand the thinking of Marxists. The attempt was by no means merely an intellectual exercise. For on the answer depended our whole pastoral approach to the problem of *critical collaboration* with Leftist-inspired movements for reform. (Basically, then, the question was the same as the one we have been asking about the Church's approach to totalitarian governments of the Right.)

The following notes are by no means an attempt to reconstruct our conversations but to put in stark relief the questioning that still goes on in our minds about Marxism and the program and philosophy, drawn from it, for the restructuring of society. Our misgivings, to be candid about it, still endure.

The headings used in our scheme of discussion and questioning—dialogue, the good of the people, structural analysis, ideology, religion, etc.—may seem to be arbitrary and haphazard. They probably are. But they have become, strangely, in tightly intermeshing fashion, the very specific points at issue in our grappling with the entire question of justice and human rights, and the Marxist approach to it. And they are used here then simply as springboards to deeper and wider questing into the essence of the problem. Thus,

1. DIALOGUE. Both sides must be open to change, learning, modification. But is this the reality—on the part of the National Democratic Front or, for that matter, of the Church? Even when dialogue takes place in praxis and not merely in theoretical discussions, is there a possibility that there will be shifts in positions—and shifts made not only for tactical or strategic reasons but in actual philosophies, ideologies, aims and purposes, definitions?

2. THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE. This good is paramount in the thinking of both the NDF and Progressive Christians. But who defines that good? Presumably, the people. But will they be allowed to think for themselves? The rhetoric is filled with terms like *back-sliding* and *revisionism*. But from whose standpoint are these terms to be used and understood? I can conceive of a situation where the people will decide “back-sliding” is good for them at a given time, for a given situation, even for good. Will this be allowed? The usual answer given by Marxists is, yes, such “revisionism” will at times be allowed—but only for tactical reasons.

3. STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS. Can Marxist structural analysis be divorced from ideology? Marxists will say, no, not completely; there are certain givens in Marxist ideology that cannot

be surrendered, like class warfare, the good of the people, armed struggle, etc. But Marxist structural analysis is only one way of dissecting society for study. There are many ways—each valid according to one's premises (ideology). Hence our fundamental question: the Marxist manner of analysis is so rigid that facts and people are made to conform to ideological *givens* rather than the other way around. The whole aim of structural analysis, it seems, is to lead people to the very ideology that it springs up from.

4. IDEOLOGY. There are common elements in NDF ideology and that of "Progressive Christians"—as the more socially conscious and active portions of the Church are termed by the Left. Cooperation is possible in practice, especially on these common elements. But there is the grating suspicion that there is always something beyond, say, the agreement on the paramountcy of the *people's good*—the Revolution, the Party, some further end. (We probably can say the same of the Church.) That "something beyond" must be deeply scrutinized.

5. RELIGION. Religion has no place in classic Marxism. At best it is only a passing phase; at worst, the "opium of the people". It will disappear, so the philosophy goes, not necessarily immediately, but eventually as the Revolution runs its course. Neo-Marxists seem to be ambivalent about the classic Marxist acceptance of the nature of religion—or at least they seem to be more amenable to the possibility that religion (though not institutional religion) *can* be a continuing fact in the lives of people.

In the new order, there will be freedom of religion. But what guarantee is there that this will happen? Promises are not enough. The only thing we can go on now is the actual experience of religion in Marxist-dominated countries. What happened there will not happen here?

6. THE ROLE OF RELIGION. What we are doing now—i.e. being critical of the unjust social order—is an essential role of religion as we see it. It is a role that is good now under a capitalistic dictatorship. It will be a role that will still be good—and

will have to be played—even under a communist regime. I doubt this prophetic role of religion will be tolerated.

7. INSTRUMENTALIZATION. We cannot shake off the feeling that all this talk of uniting in a common front is only for the furthering of the aims of the Party rather than for the good of the people. That good is always subservient to the Party's definition of it—a definition that like methodology and programs must necessarily include the admittedly unchanging elements of Marxist ideology. This *being-used-ness*—manipulation, simply—is something we would resent and oppose as Christians, be it by Church, government, Party.

8. COOPERATION. When cooperation is talked about, it is always in terms of the Church cooperating with the NPA or the NDF. Why not the other way around too? The usual answer is that this would be endangering the Church. (Presumably *our* cooperating with them does not?) But the point is in any cooperative effort, the shots are still called by the Party. Real cooperation is not possible in such a set-up. Everything is always looked at in terms of tactics and strategies, of furthering the struggle, the Revolution. Hence there is no escaping the conclusion that the interests of the Party and not really those of the people are the real aim of the cooperation sought.

9. INFILTRATION. The very term makes me wary of the Movement. If the Church, other institutions, are really working for the people's good, why is it still necessary to infiltrate them? The reason is because there is only one way of working for the people's good—and that is the Marxist way? All others are wrong, or at least merely self-interested? I am of the opinion that priests and nuns who are Marxists should not *use* their position in the Church for Party aims. It would be more honest for them to go UG. To Marxists this is "impractical". The present approach is the only to do now—for tactical reasons. Again, the shadow of instrumentalization.

SUMMARY

In general the Marxists I spoke with tried to show that all my objections were not completely valid. The NDF is open to change, dialogue, freedom of religion, etc. But we look always

for *actual proof* that our fears are baseless—even now in the cooperative effort, if there is going to be such a thing, to work for the good of the people. There are no signs in evidence of that proof.

Our conversations often took a philosophical turn—e.g. we went into the problem of knowing, the nature of objective truth, the relativity of knowledge, theories and hypotheses and their validation, etc.

They were rather honest discussions—but always I felt I kept coming up against a wall when I pressed for ultimate answers: “What then after the revolution? Who makes the final decisions? In whom will real power be vested in a people’s democracy?”

The Party and its establishment in power *were* the ultimate end. Everything else, everybody else—people, Church, the common good—all were subordinated to that one end. Is this conclusion simply a bias of our “reactionary” mentality?

AFTER-THOUGHTS. What is *our* position? Our alternative? Even though we say it is not our task as Church to evolve particular ideologies, the fact is the NDF looks at us—they call us “Progressive Christians”—as having one.

What is this *ideology* of ours—or approach (to avoid bogging down in semantics)?

For we do have an approach to the very same problems that are very *raison d’être* of the NDF, of the whole Marxist movement in fact. But what is it? And why does it not “grab” people enough to elicit the same kind of commitment and dedication that confirmed Marxists have to the Party or Revolution—or whatever it is that ignites them into a total giving of themselves?

We lack a “mystique?” Or if we say we have one and can even identify it, it does not have the same pulling power as the Marxist one? It is a point we Christians must seriously ponder. For the fact is there is a growing number of priests and religious, other Christians, who—even in the context of “Progressive Christianity”—are going more and more for a strictly Marxist option. Why?

Perhaps only *they* can answer the question. Until their

answer is forthcoming, we have to look into our own approach (or lack of it), scrutinize our premises, examine their validity. We may be proving Marx right in his judgement on the irrelevancy of religion—because we have become irrelevant ourselves.

12 August 1977

They were rather honest discussions—but I kept coming up against a wall when I queried for ultimate answers: "What then after the revolution? Who makes the final decisions? In whom will real power be vested in a people's democracy?" The Party and its establishment in power were the ultimate end. Everything else, everybody else—people, Church, the common good—all were subordinated to that one end. Is this conclusion simply a kind of our "reactionary" mentality? A REACTION? What is our position? Our orientation? Even though we say it is not our task as Church to evolve particular ideologies, the fact is the NDP looks to us—they call us "Progressive Christians"—as having one. What is this ideology of ours—or approach (to avoid bogging down in semantics)? For we do have an approach to the very same problems that are very much a part of the NDP, of the whole Marxist movement in fact. But what is it? And why does it not "grab" people strongly to effect the same kind of commitment and dedication that our former Marxists have to the Party or Revolution—or whatever it is that latches them into a total kind of themselves? We lack a "message". Or if we say we have one and can even identify it, it does not have the same pulling power as the Marxist one? It is a point we Christians must seriously ponder. For the fact is there is a growing number of priests and religious, other Christians, who—even in the context of "Progressive Christianity"—are going more and more for a strictly Marxist option. Why? Perhaps only they can answer the question. Until their

ORTHODOXY AND ORTHOPRAXIS IN THE BOONDOCKS

DENNIS CORRIGAN

1. THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE

MARXISM

The Revolution takes place for the sake of the people. It is waged for the liberation of man from alienation and all forms of oppression.

But the Revolution is simply a transitional stage; a higher phase—that of communism—will develop. The proletariat will become the nation. Thus class distinctions and the need for class struggle will disappear. The opposition of manual and mental labor, the conflict between the city and rural sectors will disappear.

The State will wither away, because its only function is to hold down the exploited class.

Since the proletariat will have become the nation, they will need no state.

In a second phase in which all traces of capitalism will be eliminated, society will proceed on new principles. Men will cease to govern men.

Man will administer things.

Public authority will replace State powers. The principles of society will then become: "From each according to his abilities, to each, according to his needs."

That at least is the theory!

In the concrete historical development of Marxism there has been an identification of state and society, of party and state.

This has led to a stifling socialist centralism and a ruthless suppression of individual needs—with promises of future happiness for all through increased production figures. The increased production is achieved through harsh work norms.

The uniqueness of the individual is ultimately despised. To talk of it is "bourgeois liberalism and excessive personalism."

Even the suppression of human rights and concrete suffering can be allowed for the sake of goals to be achieved. These attitudes have been clearly manifest in talks with Party-ideologues and trade-union organizers.

THE CHURCH

Man is unique: the image of God, created for freedom, knowledge and love.

All things exist for man; nothing is above him—not the State, nor the economy, not political strategies or tactics; no Party or ideology—but God alone who gives meaning to his life, future and all his activity.

The economy exists for man, not man for the economy. (Cf. *Populorum Progressio*.)

The State is relative. It can never demand absolute loyalty; this is given to Christ alone.

2. ALIENATION

MARXISM

Marxism speaks eloquently of man's alienation and the increasing misery of the workers. Their misery is not simply the physical misery of their lives, but also the psychological deprivation arising from their alienation.

For Marx, alienation could exist, and even deepen, despite improvements in material standards of living.

In the process of work, i.e., the molding and changing of nature outside himself, man molds and changes himself.

The more his work develops, the more his individuality develops.

But with the rise of new modes of production (the Industrial Revolution) work became a duty and an obsession.

Men become alienated from the process of their work itself since work is imposed on them by social conditions. It is not self-fulfilling but a denial of self: they exhaust themselves physically and debase themselves mentally—becoming like machines.

In work, the laborer gives over to the owners, the control of his activity. It is work for someone else.

Work results in the creation of private property, the product of the work belongs to another no matter how much the worker empties himself into this product. Private property thus creates further alienation.

Alienation, working together with economic exploitation, leads to increasing misery, and so, in due course, to the formation of the proletariat as a class for itself.

THE CHURCH

With the Marxist, Catholic social teaching is sensitive to the plight of the workers, as is manifest from early documents like *Rerum novarum* up to more recent writings such as *Mater et Magistra*, *Pacem in Terris* and *Populorum Progressio*.

The Church sees man's alienation as arising from deeper sources than mere economic and social forces. It raises questions about the very meaning of life, of sin, of suffering and death.

The overcoming of alienation and man's ultimate fulfillment does not lie in work, militant solidarity or dialogic existence, but in the joy and security of the knowledge that he is loved by God and that the brokenness of his life with its frustration, despair and death, is healed and overcome in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

3. FREEDOM

MARXISM

The economic basis of a society determines its social structures as a whole as well as the psychology of the people within it.

Political, religious and legal institutions, as well as the ideas,

images and ideologies through which men understand themselves and the world, are simply reflections of the economic base of society. The economic base determines the super-structure (institutional and ideological forms).

Although men make their own history, given the circumstances of the economic base, the way they make it and the direction it takes are determined.

The course of history is structurally limited to the point of being *inevitable*.

Thus Marx refuses to discuss the future or to persuade men of new moral goals—the proletariat will inevitably reach them.

Despite all this, the process needs to be carried forward by revolution, and as Mao says, there can be no revolution without a revolutionary theory. Hence the need for a revolutionary Party to guide the course of the Revolution.

In actual conversations with Marxist-ideologues, it became clear that true freedom is freedom to obey the Party line, to carry out its orders, to implement its strategies and tactics, to have the "correct line" and "correct thought", which is always the Party-line and the Party's thought.

Freedom does not mean "bourgeois liberalism", which seems to include placing truth, personal loyalties, ties with family and friends, kindness, mercy and faith above the Party and the exigencies of the Revolution.

THE CHURCH

The Christian acknowledges the many forces, conscious and unconscious, that buffet man and even diminish his freedom, sometimes to the point of volitional helplessness.

At the same time we declare our belief in personal responsibility and individual guilt, in a fundamental option for good or evil that can determine the whole direction of man's life, in a new freedom given in Christ: freedom from fear and guilt, freedom from superstition and idolatry (money, self-interest, the will to dominate), freedom for others, freedom to love and to hope in God and so in man.

All this is a far cry from the Marxist conceptions.

My own experience has been that the more I became involved with the movement in terms of seminars for indoctrination and the carrying out of "political tasks", the less free I became to think, or act, or even speak like a human being.

One is always conscious of revisionism, back-sliding and deviating from the correct (Party) line.

4. TRUTH

MARXISM

Precisely because Party goals strategies and tactics come before all personal loyalties and cultural values (such as gratitude, friendship, sincerity) the truth becomes a dispensable item:

"The only truth is that which serves the people" (read Party!).

"The only morality is that which serves the people" (read also Party!).

"Of course you can use people to help the Revolution, what's wrong with that?"

And after one seminar in '73:

"*Maayo ang response sa mga tao. Ginagamit si Kristo!*" (The response of the people is good. Christ is used!)

Again and again over 10 years, since the very beginning of the Marxist-dialogue, I have experienced a fundamental duplicity in the Marxists and cadres with whom I have worked.

I have come across constant dishonesty in cadres claiming to be personal friends: smiling faces and approving words for work-style and projects coupled with secret and bitter attacks on the Church and (especially foreign) priests; cadres accepting money and asking assistance in problems (sometimes entailing considerable risk to personal safety for those helping) at the same time organizing against priests and the church in the barrios.

The examples could be multiplied *ad nauseam*. One thing that strikes me is how un-Filipino and un-Gospel the whole thing is.

THE CHURCH

"The truth will make you free." The sacramentality of the Church and man is to express its being and inner life in words and actions that effect what is signified: life, love, justice, peace, freedom, joy.

The face of God and the power of the Good News, are seen in the transparency of a life lived in sacrifice and unconditional commitment to truth.

By contrast, in the Underground, there is a basic attitude of mistrust even for fellow cadres. One should not get too close, too involved with friends. One may have to denounce or kill them later.

One should not tell people, even fellow cadres, too much about one's work—it militates against security. Thus the use of aliases, codes, etc.

Examples of this duplicity appear in the NDF manifestos. The document claims to be the programme for a United Front, but is couched completely in a Marxist framework with Party policy and jargon. It leaves little doubt as to who is *really* in control of the NDF.

In the April 24, 1973 Manifesto the NDF attacks the "constitutional authoritarianism of the "fascist dictatorship" of Marcos. They list "horrible crimes" against the sovereign people: attacks on democracy, terror, intimidation, assassinations, mass arrests, mass detention, torture, blackmail, extortion, forced mass-evacuations, etc.

All these methods have been used in the name of the Party and the Revolution in Russia and the Soviet Bloc, in China, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Some have also been used in the Philippines, e.g., by the Sparrows: assassination units of the NPA.

What do they say about this?

In the same Manifesto they talk of the "struggle raging throughout the archipelago." This is contrary to historical fact.

In the more recent April 24, 1977 Manifesto there is a significant increase in the number of sections referring to the rights of all national and democratic parties to participate in the coalition (23-26). No party or clique should monopolize (27-29), (30-31).

Freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, movement, religious belief and the right to due process are *stressed*, (107-109) especially, freedom of religious belief (139-142). In Sect. 328 to Sect. 330, belief in religious freedom is affirmed "*but through persuasive means we must turn aside from every type of obscurantism and escapism.*" This, no doubt, spells the doom of any religious activity that is not deemed useful by the Party.

5. THE ENEMY: CLASS AND CLASS STRUGGLE: THE PROLETARIAT AS A CLASS-FOR-ITSELF

MARXISM

Class struggle rather than harmony—"natural" or otherwise—is the normal and inevitable condition in capitalist society. This conflict is basic, i.e., irremediable within the system: if one interest is fulfilled, the other cannot be.

Within capitalist society, the workers cannot escape their repressive conditions by winning legal or political rights and privileges. While unions and mass labor organizations are training grounds for revolution, they are *not* a guarantee of socialism.

The class struggle between owners and workers is a social, political and psychological reflection of objective economic conflicts. History is thus a dialectic, a series of contradictions and their resolutions.

History is also a struggle between classes.

In the light of the Marxist theories of class warfare and class analysis certain people emerge as *the Enemy*.

If you are not one of the oppressed, then you must be an oppressor. There is no neutral condition.

In the current Philippine context, all military, police, government officials, even "non-progressive" priests and religious, big businessmen, foreign capitalists, can be seen as "*the Enemy*."

Generally, Marxist cadres see reality and persons in black and white categories; there are few greys.

I remember one poignant story from an NPA member. He was examining the dead bodies of Philippine Army troops killed in an encounter with their squad. One of the victims was a young man about his own age, an "Enemy", because he was wearing a PA Uniform. The NPA soldier discovered letters in the pocket of the dead PA--letters to his mother telling her not to worry about him and explaining that he had joined the PA because they were poor, and his mother, a widow, had no support. For him, temporarily at least, the class myth was exploded: a man cannot be simply classified as an enemy because he has a certain income or property, or is located within the military sector.

THE CHURCH

For the Gospel there are no barriers left dividing man. All are one in Christ. Human persons can no longer be divided on the basis of religion, race, culture, sex, politics, class, wealth, or power.

Jesus Christ celebrated banquets in which the most diverse classes of persons were to be found: national traitors, zealot revolutionaries, women (second class citizens of that time),

prostitutes, businessmen, members of opposing religious sects. His table-fellowship was open to all without limits.

All men are brothers because they have one Father: God, who makes his sun shine and rain fall on good and bad alike.

The radical concept of "brotherhood" proposed by Jesus overturned many of the social relations of his day and created an equality unparalleled in history.

By contrast, the dictatorship of one class, one party, the liquidation and suppression of opponents and counter-revolutionaries, the Marxist theory of no rights and no tolerance for the class enemy go deeply against the Gospel spirit of equality in brotherhood and love.

Similarly, the Marxists' elitist privileged knowledge ("higher consciousness") and their dogmatic partisan thinking actually effect the dehumanizing of man.

6. THE MARGINALIZED PEOPLE

MARXISM

All the criticisms of the class-struggle elaborated above can be applied also to the Marxist view of the social misfits, the *bugoys*, the rejects of the community.

"The slum proletariat" which is formed by the *putrefaction* of the lowest strata of the old society is to some extent entangled in the movement of a proletariat revolution. On the whole, however, thanks to their conditions of life, the members of the slum proletariat are far more apt to become the venal tools of the forces of reaction.

THE CHURCH

As stated in the previous section, the Church has a mission to the oppressed. This does not simply mean the economically hard-up, but *all* who for any reason, be it race, religion, culture, sex, or even social pathology, stand in need of the Gospel's healing power.

7. MATERIALISM

MARXISM

Matter is all. Legal relations as well as forms of state cannot be understood by themselves nor explained by the so-called general progress of the human mind, but are rooted in the material conditions of life.

The religious temperament itself is a social product.

All social life is essentially practical. All the mysteries which urge theory into mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice (theses from Feuerbach).

The highest point to which contemplative materialism can attain (i.e., that materialism that does not comprehend our nature as practical activity) is the contemplation of separate individuals and of civil society.

The standpoint of the old materialism is civil society. The standpoint of the new materialism is human society or *social* humanity.

Even theology, therefore, and concepts of God are rooted in the concrete economic base and politico-cultural superstructures of the various ages. (Cf. "Political Theology", Mariano Laya)

THE CHURCH

There is such a thing as Christian materialism, if by this we mean the goodness of creation and the use of the world to promote human development. In more recent writings on the theology of creation, man is seen as immersed in history and also creating it; he must relate to his environment sympathetically and realize that he is dependent on it for his life and thus should care for it, etc.

The world is good.

Through the concrete world of men and relationships we come to know God.

But, it is a materialism that acknowledges an *origin*, a *Creator* and an *open future* transcending the categories of space and time.

Christian materialism does not acknowledge the world as a closed system. It is open to the transcendent Future: God.

8. RELIGION

MARXISM

Marxism offers a total explanation of reality in purely historical-material terms. Matter includes the "material" relationships of the forces of production, the dialectical nature of history, class struggle, etc.

Religion is a cultural anachronism, the tool of the oppressor class, the opium of the people, the cry of the oppressed creature. It is doomed to wither away and die as the new man of the revolution emerges.

"The social principles of Christianity have now had eighteen hundred years to develop. . . . The social principles of Christianity justified the slavery of antiquity, glorified the serfdom of the Middle Ages and equally know, when necessary, how to defend the oppression of the proletariat. . . . The social principles of Christianity preach the necessity of a ruling and an oppressed class, and all they have for the latter is the pious wish the former will be charitable. . . . The social principles of Christianity declare all vile acts of the oppressors against the oppressed to be either the just punishment of original sin and other sins or trials that the Lord in his infinite wisdom imposes on those redeemed" (Marx).

Religion is a fraud and is irrelevant to the solving of man's problems. But it can be tolerated and even used for tactical purposes in the service of the revolution.

But only progressive religious and progressive religion can be tolerated even for a marriage of convenience.

The recent political theology and the theology of liberation have provided excellent vehicles for Marxist tactical propaganda based, as they are, on a Marxist analysis of the social problem.

In the Philippines there is a definite strategy for infiltration and use of the religious sector to promote Party goals and assist in "cultural" propaganda favorable to the Revolution.

Ultimately, there is no place for the Church in a communist society. Ideologues laughed and become vague when pressed on these points.

Feuerbach is the highest point of philosophy. There is no mystery in the Gospel or in Christ. To maintain faith is essentially childish or escapist.

Atheism is in this age a human desideratum. In any case, religion after the Revolution will only be tolerated insofar as it can help State programmes.

If it continues to exercise its critical, prophetic function, it will simply be suppressed.

Atheism is required for full consistency between a Party candidate's theory and practice. If a person uses Marxist methodology but does not accept historical materialism, i.e., the *whole* marxist ideology, he is considered inconsistent.

A candidate Party member may continue as a believer for two years. If he wishes to become a fully fledged Party member, the decision about atheism becomes imperative.

In conversations with cadres engaged in guerilla warfare it emerged that often atheism was reached as a practical necessity in situations where killing and violence were required as a way of life. The praxis determined the theory. In a way, it was simply a suppression of conscience rather than an intellectual conviction—at least at the grass-roots level.

Similarly, at the grass-roots level, many young people joined the movement through motives stemming from idealism or love of country.

Many NPA soldiers are simply farmers who often retain their belief in God and the Church.

As the higher levels of organization and Party membership are reached, the more atheism appears as an intellectual conviction or the fruit of philosophical research.

In some cases, rejection of the Church and God was a traumatic emotional reaction to the institutional Church's callous apathy and in some cases, hypocritical oppression of squatters and the poor.

The "Church" here was not the Bukidnon Church but that of more conservative churches in the Visayas and Luzon.

Some ex-religious, including seminarians, were among the Communists with whom I talked.

THE CHURCH

Some Christians have understood Marxism in terms of its "humanism": ethical, economic, communal, scientific. For them it does not necessarily exclude belief in God. They accept a Christian-Marxism.

But precisely because a man is a Christian, he must ask himself to what is his prior commitment addressed: faith in Marx or faith in Christ?

For the Christian, faith in Jesus Christ and not scientific teleology forms the decisive criterion on questions like technology, organization, competition, manipulation.

There are some who, accepting a strictly horizontal and reductionist interpretation of the Gospel, reduce it to a disguised secular humanism, a symbolic explanation of the elemental forces at work in man's psyche and social relations.

Such people accept Marxism easily, sometimes remaining in the Church, and even the priesthood, without any faith or transcendent hope. This participation in the life of the Church is for purely tactical purposes: It has everything to do with the needs of the Party and little to do with Christ.

For complete faithfulness to its historical origins, faith must remain open to the cross and resurrection, not simply seen as human processes but as liberating forces opening up history for man and locating his ultimate fulfillment in God.

Faith in Jesus means a fundamental trust that man is much more than any politics, sociology or economics suggests.

It seems to me that finally for "Christian-Marxist" the choice comes down to the Party or the Gospel. The hyphen between Christian and Marxist (as strictly interpreted!) cannot be sustained. As one American bishop remarked: "It is not even a question of bastardy. The beast cannot exist!"

9. CHANGE

MARXISM

The dynamic of historical change is the conflict between the forces of production and the relations of production.

The class struggle between owners and workers is a social, political and psychological reflection of objective economic conflicts.

The "laws of dialectics" are as follows: (a) If things change enough, they become different, qualitatively, from what they were to begin with; (b) One thing grows out of another and then

comes into conflict with it; (c) History thus proceeds by a series of conflicts and resolutions rather than merely by minute and gradual changes.

These contradictions as expressed in the Marxist system indicate a *total* break with the existing order.

The new arises from the ashes of the old. Thus intolerance for all "gradualism, reformism, revisionism, palliative programs"—for anything that could reduce the revolution's boiling point.

This appears to me as the reason why some young religious attracted by the Marxist vision and having accepted the need for constant *torsion* between societal systems as the condition for authentic change, criticize their fellow workers for paternalism and palliative programs (cooperatives, loan programs, etc.) since these programs do not promote sufficient torsion.

THE CHURCH

The Christian diverges from the Marxist view of change.

Marx interprets history as a steady process (inevitable) by which humanity produces itself. The end of the class struggle will bring a change in man's moral nature. He will produce according to his capacities and demand no more than his needs.

The Christian, however, is convinced that to change history for the good, man must first himself be changed. He of course acknowledges with the Marxist that there must be a synthesis of practice and belief—orthodoxy and orthopraxis—for a real movement to change.

He also agrees with Marx that the point is to change the world not simply to contemplate it, as did the philosophers.

From the outset, the Christian's religion involves the notion of radical change. The call to repent—*metanoia*—is a challenge to realize a fundamental change in the structures of human life.

Through his faith and acceptance of the Good News, man becomes a *new* creature.

This is not simply a private, personal change of heart.

Man's conversion cannot be understood apart from the social and political situation in which he lives. It requires a change in the

domestic, social and political conditions of human existence. Like a classless society, justification is a *social* event which establishes a solidarity between those formerly estranged and creates one people, "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

Thus emerge—the theology of total human development; of creation; of the church as catalyst, its prophetic, critical function; of the Church's hope: to hope is to act, to change the face of the earth as sign and token of the final consummation.

This change envisioned by the Church is evolutionary organic growth, not a destructive, negative unleashing of forces that can only tear down but contain no power to rebuild.

The change envisioned by the Church is for the sake of man. Man can never be used or destroyed as a tool for the change.

10. VIOLENCE

MARXISM

As indicated in the previous section the elements of struggle, warfare, dialectics are built into the Marxist philosophy of change.

Concretely, this expresses itself in armed struggle. Anything less than armed revolution is an inadequate instrument to bring change.

Armed struggle is invoked as a principle and condition of change. Executions of the "enemy" are necessary and logical. They may be required by "security". They are punishment for those who have opposed or damaged the progress of the Revolution.

THE CHURCH

While Christian metanoia does not seem to call for an unconditional renunciation of physical force, such force can never be used as a means to personal or class advantage and aggrandizement.

However, military and other forms of violence may remain,

in a given situation, the only possible way towards social justice and freedom.

Christian faith sees violence as regrettable, but leaves it open as a measure to be employed in extreme circumstances.

Its use constitutes an "ethic of distress."

Absolute pacifism is an ideal and prophetic way that may be taken up by some. It is the most human solution.

This "pacifism" does not imply spineless weakness, passivity or acceptance of unjust or oppressive structures.

It can also be understood positively and actively as with Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Helder Camara and others.

The fragility of all progress should be accepted.

11. "SERVE THE PEOPLE"

MARXISM

This famous slogan of Mao Tse Tung has been used widely and by different groups.

"The people" are: the proletariat, the oppressed, those in need of economic, political and cultural liberation.

THE CHURCH

The Church exists not simply for herself but for humanity (Bonhoeffer).

She also wants to serve the people. The people for the Church also include the oppressed, but its service cannot be for one class alone.

The Church is for all men. It is a Church of saints and sinners, a net of good fish and bad, a field of wheat and weeds growing together. There are many forms of oppression ranging from physical destitution to the apathy and boredom of Western consumer society. The Church exists to serve all, to liberate all.

The good news must be preached to the poor—especially to them—but it is not their exclusive property. *All* have a right to

hear it, and to experience it, in the many concrete forms of service and caring.

One contradiction frequently observed in Marxists is that they are very good at shouting "serve the people", but when confronted with a live human being, destitute and in need of life's necessities, they are inclined to become deaf, dumb and blind! *Men* are ignored so that "the people" may be served!

To provide medicine for a sick child, to bury paupers, to give small charity loans or to engage in other small programs as cooperatives or cottage industries, is to be guilty of "paternalism" and "reformism".

But we cannot escape the fact, that the Christian ethic demands the service of *this concrete* neighbor who is nearest to me. If I refuse him I also refuse Christ!

12. PROPERTY

MARXISM

Property as a source of income is the objective criterion of class: within capitalism the two basic classes are the owners and the workers.

THE CHURCH

Man is steward of the good things of earth. The earth belongs to *all* not only to the rich.

Private property is not an absolute right.

Some property is needed for individuals and families in order to develop as human persons.

Possessions of property need not be the sign of oppression. Socialization and responsible use of property for the common good are also Christian social requirements.

13. THE FUTURE

MARXISM

As stated in previous sections (Individual and State, Freedom) Marx refused to prophesy regarding the nature of post-capitalist society. Only utopians and dreamers draw up detailed blue-prints of the future.

On the other hand, the course of history is structurally limited to the point of being *inevitable*.

Man will certainly arrive at the goal of the classless society and moral metamorphosis. The Revolution will inevitably reach its term in the liberation of man.

This future is totally *this-worldly*.

It is material.

THE CHURCH

Even the Church, while proclaiming a future open to God (thus against a closed history), does not equate the fulness of the Kingdom and the state of the last generation.

The final historical outcome of the human quest is by no means certain. Evil, natural and moral, remains a force to be reckoned with.

History does not move inevitably towards perfection but, does, ultimately, despite all setbacks and sufferings, cascade into the Glory of the One God.

In terms of their historical hopes, Marxists seem to have a greater certainty and (naive?) optimism than do Christians.

COOPERATION?

For this author, the differences between Christianity and Marxism outweigh the similarities.

Apart from all theories of man, society, change, the future, it comes down to a choice between the Party or the Gospel, Marx or Christ.

WHY THE ATTRACTION FOR "PROGRESSIVE" CHRISTIANS?

Marxism offers a simple concrete analysis of society and its problems. It proposes a clear and definite program to solve these problems.

Because it is an ideology and a total interpretation of reality

and because it has a political apparatus (Party), it can coerce its followers.

The Gospel is not an ideology: Its effect is indirect; it is not coercive. It aims at the spiritualizing and humanizing of all aspects of man's life: structures, values, goals, etc.

The impact of the Gospel is indirect. It operates on society through renewed human beings who in turn renew and humanize corrupt structures and relationships.

The Church does not provide a blueprint for social change but supports or, at times, initiates genuine movements towards total human development.

Thus the work of the Church in effecting more just social structures may be much slower than Party methods, but ultimately because it does not force renewal artificially by violent external means, its labors are more respectful of the nature of real human growth and change.

None of this is likely to sound appealing to those who in their deep frustration with the many failures of the institutional Church have abandoned their hope in its message and turned their eyes to a more immediate (and superficial) salvation through Marx.

The failure of the Church in many places to witness to justice is one reason why many young Christians have turned to Marxism as a solution.

But, at this time, there are also other people, mostly very young, idealistic and politically naive, who, while working with the Communists, maintain a hope in the Gospel and the Church.

It is a *matter of urgency* to ask them now: Do they really understand Marxism as a way of life and as the ground of meaning for their world, or do they simply see it as a methodology to work towards a more just society?

It is a *matter of urgency* to ask them: Do they realize that there are fundamental points of conflict between Marxism and the Gospel view of man and change, service and justice, hope and the meaning of the human project?

If they have truly understood Marx and the Party, I doubt

whether they will invest all of themselves in that one system.

Ultimately, the Marxist choice is too conservative as an approach to change when compared to the radical newness of all things demanded by the Gospel.

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24 August 1977

MARXIST AND CHRISTIAN APPROACHES TO SOCIAL CHANGE

VINCENT G. CULLEN, S.J.

1. STARTING POINT

A. HISTORY

MARXIST

Within the framework of historical dialectical materialism human history is predetermined, though human agents can speed up or slow down the process.

CHRISTIAN

Within the present time frame, the course of history is not predetermined, but depends to a great extent on the decisions of men. God in His providence influences the course of history through the Spirit in the hearts of men.

B. MAN

MARXIST

Man is viewed *in globo*; the proletariat, urban or rural, as the progressive sector of society. The oppressor class is not perceived as men having rights.

In the Marxist system the individual is tactically dispensable for the sake of social humanity.

Since Marxism is heavily oriented towards economics, man is perceived as an economic unit, a producer.

CHRISTIAN

Man is perceived as person in community. Thus the person has value both as individual and as a member of community. While the principle of the common good is acknowledged, the basis of human dignity is no less fundamental in community than in the individual. The basis of human dignity is rooted in man's graced nature, which in turn is rooted in God. Man is seen as image, son of God; brother of Christ and possessor of the Spirit. Hence the individual may not be manipulated or sacrificed for the good of the community, though conscious of his rights he may sacrifice himself for the community.

2. GOAL

MARXIST

The goal of the Marxist process is utopian; the workers' paradise at some future time in this world; a classless society of justice and equality. It is a final state to be arrived at, through an inevitable process of dialectical materialism.

CHRISTIAN

The Christian process towards the full establishment of the Kingdom of God envisions no utopia in this world. Christianity is engaged in a continual process of greater humanization, sometimes gaining, sometimes receding, towards a more truly human society, with the full knowledge that perfection will come only with the *parousia*. While the goals are real and worthwhile striving for, the striving itself perfects both the individual and community. This

is implicitly contained in the doctrine of the cross, which is applicable not only to individuals but to communities and nations as well.

3. PROCESS

MARXIST

The liberating process of the masses is a struggle of the proletariat against capitalism: an oppressive economic, political and cultural system.

CHRISTIAN

The liberating process is a struggle against evil, individual and social. It is a struggle against whatever oppresses or dehumanizes; whatever diminishes human dignity or obstructs the movement toward a more human society. In the Philippines at the present time it is predominantly a struggle against the injustice and oppression of a neo-colonial capitalistic system.

4. VEHICLE OF LIBERATION

MARXIST

The vehicle of the liberation movement is the proletariat, urban or rural, engaged in class struggle against the ruling class of the capitalist system. The proletariat is chosen as the vehicle of the revolution as it is considered more progressive than the middle or upper classes.

CHRISTIAN

While all men are called to liberation from evil, both individual and social, the main vehicle of the social liberation will be the poor and the oppressed for the following reasons:

- a) Historically both in the Old and New Testaments, the poor and oppressed are described as being under God's special care, His special friends.
- b) They are the ones suffering from the unjust system.
- c) Since they have no riches or power to lose, they are more open to the message.

5. TARGET

MARXIST

In the class struggle the enemy are those who uphold the capitalist system such as the rich, business corporations, and capitalist governments. Both the local elites and multinational corporations are targets in the struggle.

CHRISTIAN

Since the liberation process is not one of class struggle, though there may be polarization between rich and poor, but a struggle against evil wherever it exists in society, then the target is not people but evil as it exists in economic and political structures and in the minds of the people—whether they be the oppressors or the oppressed. Thus, while oriented to the poor, the Christian conscientization process is not limited along class lines, but determined on the basis of the need and openness to the Gospel.

6. THE STRUGGLE

A. MEANS

MARXIST

The proletariat must wrest control of economic power from the capitalist elite, since an essential note of the socialist society is

the control by the proletariat of the means of production. To accomplish this the proletariat must get political control. This requires that the proletariat be politicized and organized.

CHRISTIAN

Since the enemy is not the men of the upper class but a structured evil in society, then the struggle is against this evil wherever it exists. The process of conscientization attempts to combat this evil by:

- a) Enlightening the oppressed who may share the same attitudes as their oppressors;
- b) In structures in society, assisting the oppressed to organize themselves against injustice;
- c) Enlightening the oppressors, though it would seem that only through a change in structures can there come about a change in the minds of the oppressors.

B. THE ARENA

MARXIST

While the goals are mainly economic, because economics determines political and cultural superstructures, the struggle is mainly political, since the proletariat must seize political power in order to destroy the capitalist system, replacing it with the socialist state.

CHRISTIAN

The arena is neither predominantly economic or political, but one of human rights wherever and in whatever way they are violated. It is not a struggle to destroy a given socio-economic system to be replaced by another already predetermined according to some blueprint. It is a struggle to give the people more participation in the decisions affecting their lives in the economic, polit-

ical, social and cultural areas. Actually the Christian struggle for liberation would be fundamentally the same in Vietnam under Communism as in the Philippines under Capitalism.

C. METHODS

MARXIST

While there seems to be a divergence of opinion regarding the methods to be used in the seizure of political power, the Maoist view now prevailing in the Philippines holds that the use of force is an essential part of the struggle. "Political power comes from the barrel of a gun."

CHRISTIAN

The basic method is the enlightened participation of the people, organized so that they can protest injustices effectively and apply continued pressure on the system in order that its structures may be modified in the direction of justice, more popular participation and more equal distribution. This pressure by the people is applied not only with economic ends in view but basically towards the protecting and furthering of human rights at all levels. While the prime objective is not the destruction of the present economic and political system, neither is it reformism. Reformism holds that the basic structures are sound but require the eradication of abuses, whereas in fact they may be essentially flawed. Nor is it, strictly speaking, evolution, if the term is used to mean that the system has within itself the seeds of something more human which is not manifest in the present socio-economic system. Rather it is a question of forcing the system to adapt itself continually to the will of the people through increased popular participation and pressure.

Marxists tend to put things in rigid boxes, capitalist and socialist. One box, the capitalist one, must be destroyed as a precondition to the construction of a new box, the socialist state.

Actually economic and political systems need not be viewed as that rigid, but as continually in process. The process of changing them is like inflating a basketball by applying from within increased pressure at all points, until the ball takes the desired shape. There is the danger that under excessive pressure the ball will burst. There is also the danger that the system under pressure will begin to break down. However if the source of the pressure is broadly based and the pressure applied not to destroy but to modify the system, it would not seem that the breakdown would be that sudden—though it might.

Since the people are in control of the process, it will be up to them to make the necessary decisions at any given point in the process regarding the future of the system, that is, whether to patch it up or to build a new one. The problem here is that the elite under pressure may make the system more rigid and thus less susceptible to change, or, in the event of change, more likely to collapse suddenly.

D. VIOLENCE

MARXIST

Since the established system uses the military to protect itself, armed struggle is seen as the only effective means of seizing political control and thus control of the means of production. While violence is directed against the establishment it is recognized that such violence may then evoke counter violence against the proletariat. This and the deaths that may occur are accepted in the belief that such violence will heighten the revolutionary consciousness of the people.

In actual practice the people who may not be ready for the use of violence get caught between the establishment and the forces of the revolution. In short they may be forced into the struggle against their will merely in order to survive. Marxist concepts of man and society allow for this manipulation and pressure.

CHRISTIAN

Since the struggle is against evil in people, oppressors and oppressed alike, and as structured in economic and political systems, and not against people or classes as such, the struggle is basically non-violent in nature.

Furthermore:

a) To admit violence as an ordinary means in the struggle presupposes hatred against people or a class, and hatred of persons is always corrosive.

b) Violence operates at the irrational, the animal level, thus defeating the very purpose of the struggle which is humanization.

c) By advocating violence as the ordinary and necessary means, war is declared against the establishment. Since in war there is only one valid rule—and that is to *win*—wars tend to destroy both victors and vanquished alike. In violent struggle the people will be forced to treat the oppressors as the oppressors have treated them, thus making them like the oppressors. However the use of force as a defensive measure to protect life and the most basic human rights cannot be denied, though this right of self-defense might be voluntarily sacrificed by the people. The difficult question is: In the face of mounting brutality from the establishment, when is the aggression to be judged as so oppressive that force should be used to counter it? Only the people can decide this question.

7. AGENTS OF CHANGE**MARXIST**

The main change agent in the people's struggle, the vanguard of the revolution, is the Communist Party.

Functions of the Party:

1. The Party is the custodian and sole interpreter of true Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought. The Party lays down the mass line.

2. The Party through its cadres transmits the mass line to the masses. The mass line may shift radically without prior consultation with the masses. All members of the Party have taken an oath to observe Party discipline which includes following the mass line even when it shifts radically.

3. The Party is mainly responsible for tactics employed in the people's struggle. Tactics, at least as applied to the national struggle, are determined by a central committee.

4. The Party controls the People's Liberation Army in the armed struggle.

5. The Party runs the government once political power has been seized.

CHRISTIAN

The main change-agent in bringing nearer the full realization of the Kingdom of God, that is, a society based on justice and love, is the People of God. The term "Church" admits of varied descriptions, and may not be limited to the hierarchical, institutional Church. On the macro-level the People of God will be the Christian Church or Churches working in concert with other men of good will, whether Buddhists, Moslems, etc. On the micro-level the People of God will be the Christian community, which is seen as the People of God in microcosm. In the Philippines the Christian community will be found at the barrio or sub-barrio level.

Functions of the People of God:

1. They act as the custodian of Christian revelation as contained in Scripture and Tradition and interpret this revelation in the light of the signs of the times. Hierarchy and laity have somewhat different functions in this process.

2. They transmit and symbolize the Christian message of liberation to all men in what is basically a Christian conscientization process. The word "Christian" when added to "conscientization" introduces the notion of a moral judgment on the economic and political system according to the basic Christian norms of human rights. In this process the Christian community continues the apostolate of Christ Himself.

3. Since the Church as People of God has no economic or political blueprint for the coming realization of the Kingdom of God, it seeks no control over the process of the people's liberation apart from the moral guidelines of what is more truly human in the light of revelation and its collective experience. Yet it participates as people in the people's liberation process.

4. Hence unlike the Party, the People of God, or Christian Community, does not seek to direct or dominate the process or run the show when the game is won—if it is won. Thus there are no Christian parties or Christian economics.

8. CULTURE

MARXIST

While the Third World Marxists make a big thing out of liberating the oppressed from the neo-colonial capitalist dominations, economic, political and cultural (and in some cases, notably China, they have actually done so), yet they themselves are practising cultural colonialism by imposing, often by force, a philosophy from the West vastly different from the cultural background of their people. In Cambodia and Laos they are intentionally destroying ancient cultures to form the new Communist man after the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist model.

CHRISTIAN

By its nature the Christian message is valid for all cultures since even though in its transmission it is filtered through different cultures, its basic message stems from the nature of man and his relations to the world and to God. Incarnation of the Christian message in different cultures is possible and recommended in Church teachings. However, in practice, the Church is still weak here. In the past evangelization had a strong colonial coloring, especially in the Third World. Even today the Church bureaucracy really opposes this incarnation process, for the same reason that

the Kremlin opposes Eurocommunism. The reason is pluralism weakens central control.

SUMMARY

MARXIST

Communism by sharply defining the issues, the enemy, the means of struggle and by presenting a clear blueprint of the new society offers a tempting alternative to the Third World oppressed, disenchanted as they are with post-colonial democratic forms of government and neo-colonial economics. Secondly, China, having freed itself from First World neo-colonialism and having put itself on the road to solving certain old problems of maldistribution of wealth and malnutrition, is presented as a model. This reinforces the feeling, at least in the Third World, that Communism is the wave of the future. However, the rigidity of the Communist state and its inability to make total human development possible should make those who are in favor of it pause and consider whether or not they are not exchanging a devil they know for one they do not know.

CHRISTIAN

Since the Christian Community is basically opposing evil as it exists in people, itself included, and in structures rather than a specific economic and political system; and since human dignity and human choice form the basis for human liberation rather than some specific political and economic system; it cannot offer the same clear blueprint for liberation. While the Christian community is clear regarding the basic principles which serve as guidelines in the process of liberation, its approach is of necessity less detailed because the concrete choices lie with the people who are still in the process of growth, and who will have to make subsequent choices as the occasions arise and according to the extent of their growth at that time.

Yet the Christian community is not limited merely to the enunciation of general principles, but as an actual participant in the liberation process, it may help its members in the process of growth by cooperating with them in concrete programs for justice and development. In this way the people can grow in awareness and organization by sharing in the decision-making process. This process, if broadly based, not only helps the people grow in the sense of shared responsibility but applies increasing pressure on unjust structures, in the direction of a more just and human society.

NOTE

While admitting that there may be several interpretations of the term "Christian Left", the writer is not keen on that term when applied to the Church in Bukidnon because, in accepted usage, it refers to an ideological position with definite economic and political coloring, whereas the basis for the stand of the Church in Bukidnon is not ideology but revelation. (If special terms *must* be used, the author would prefer "Church of the Bottom" thus bisecting society not vertically but horizontally.) Perhaps, *Church of the Poor*, a term derived not from ideology but from the Gospel, is the most preferable after all.

VINCENT G. CULLEN, S.J.
Kalabugao, Impasugong
Bukidnon

September 3, 1977

BUKIDNON THEORY AND PRAXIS: BEYOND IDEOLOGY

BISHOP FRANCISCO F. CLAVER, S.J.

1. STARTING POINT

A. HISTORY

We do not believe in pre-determined history, and precisely for this reason, we work with our people to chart our own course. Hence our whole thrust towards the creating of *discerning communities* by the people themselves: critical and aware, allowing for plurality in options of thought and action yet unified in a common concern for Gospel-inspired communities, acting, cooperating, able and ready at all times to learn and grow. And all this they must do in and with the Spirit.

B. MAN

Our general apostolate in Bukidnon has sometimes been dismissed as being too man-centered, not God-centered, because of our stress on human dignity, justice, equitable economic development, genuine participation in political decisions. We are not bothered by the charge. For our apostolate has consciously been in the context of the good of the community but always in terms of Gospel values. We do not deny the primacy of the spiritual in our work. But we look at man in his totality both as a spiritual

and a physical being, and we try to respond to his needs precisely as a totality. We make no false dichotomization between his duties and obligations as a citizen and as a Christian. Hence we also stress what in other places is looked down upon as purely "sacramental" ministry. This is an essential aspect of our work. But it must be exercised completely immersed in, not divorced from, life in the here and now.

2. GOAL

The goal we work for is not an earthly paradise, a once-and-for-all utopia, but community: people striving together, working together, suffering together, towards building themselves up into an ever more human and Christian community.

But we start with the reality, where people are at: the *here and now* with all its negative aspects, its problems, its oppressions and injustices; with all its positive aspects too, its advantages and helps for more human living, its available solutions.

The goal is not ours to set as institutional Church, although we are fully aware we do have a definite role to play in the process of goal-setting, of vision-formation. To the proximate goals that our people set for themselves, it is our constant task to put before them always the finality of the parousia. Without this we would be mere social workers, engaged in a merely secular task, not preachers of the Gospel and all that the term implies.

3. PROCESS

The liberating struggle, as we have it in Bukidnon, is centered on such efforts as our people take to free themselves of what they see in present-day Philippine society as hindrances towards the creation of a more human condition. In the neo-colonial capitalistic system that obtains in the province—a perfect mirror of the wider national picture—wealth and power and all their emoluments and advantages are weighted heavily on the side of an economic and political elite (ranchers, loggers, high government

officials, big landowners, corporate and independent businessmen) as against the powerless but much more numerous "masa" (small farmers, tenants, farm workers, cultural minorities, small businessmen).

How correct the lopsidedness of such a society—and the built-in injustice of that lopsidedness? The situation is essentially one of violence and selfishness, institutionalized to a degree unimaginable to people who prefer to shut themselves off from its conflictive nature. Freedoms are not going to be won by a stroke of a pen, by an edict, by a decree. Nor simply by talking about them, least of all by closing one's eyes to them. They will have to be fought for—by the very people who do not have them. Hence, the struggle. Uphill, drawn-out, but, we trust, non-violent.

4. VEHICLE OF LIBERATION

In a society in which leadership is traditionally vested in the wealthy and powerful, the leadership needed in the struggle for liberation will not come from those who enjoy the wealth—and wield the power—of their established position. It has to come from the weak, the powerless, the disenfranchised. In a word, the poor.

In Bukidnon these are the 80% or more of the province's population who live their lives on a bare subsistence level. The decision to work with them to the fullest extent possible was taken consciously by the clergy and religious of the Prelature from the very start of the setting up of Malaybalay as a separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The Asian Bishops' Meeting of 1970 and its ringing declaration on the Church of the Poor and working for justice gave us the strong impetus we needed for the direction already taken. The minimum understanding we could give the term "Church of the Poor" was for us, the official Church, to be at least on the side of the poor: in the concrete this meant promoting their best interests, cooperating with them in their aspirations for a more human life, always within the demands of social justice and charity, of the Gospel of Christ.

5. TARGET

From the very start, the Church's action with the poor has been interpreted as a deliberate attempt to provoke a vicious class war—poor against rich, tenant against landlord, employee against employer. The charge of Communism has been flung freely against bishop, priests and religious, lay workers in the Church. No amount of preaching or explanation will put the message across to the economically and politically established, in short the rich, that it is *not* against them as such that our action with the poor is directed but against the unjust structure which holds both them and the poor in its grip. And we are inviting all to do something about it, to have at least some concern about the suffering it induces, to look into its roots, and together work out a solution in justice and charity: to do all this because it is a Christian task that is deeply rooted in faith. The rich, because they have obligations to the poor in justice and not only in charity. The poor, because they share in the common guilt by passively allowing themselves to be used and exploited.

A great part of our problem has been our own identification in the past with the established class. Catholic education, a proud tradition in the Philippines, has tended to cater to the needs of the more affluent people of our communities. So too has another great tradition of service—our hospitals. Our parish apostolate is not completely free of the problem either. We have tended to concentrate our ministry in the *poblacions* to the neglect of barrios, to cater to the "spiritual" needs of the better-off segments of even our rural communities.

Any shift in this arrangement will necessarily result in conflict. The conflict, unavoidable and necessary, is an essential aspect of the general struggle against the injustice of our society's structures.

6. THE STRUGGLE

A. MEANS

If our struggling is not against people, however oppressive they may be (knowingly or unknowingly), but against institu-

tionalized injustice, then the first step in the liberating process is for both oppressors and oppressed to become aware of the injustice built into their social relationships. Thus our conscientization approach.

In Bukidnon this has meant primarily educating to justice. Practically all Prelature-wide programs and apostolates have been—and still are—mobilized for this task: the Social Action Center with its legal department, anti-usury loan program, its various economic development (through cooperatives) projects; the Institute of Catechetics with its communitarian and environmental approach to the teaching of religion; the Communications Media Center (radio and press) in its crusading against local violations of justice and its strong championing of the restoration of basic freedoms lost under martial law; the family life apostolate in its stress on enriching familial relations within the context of community obligations and duties; the Cultural Communities program with its prime object of instilling in dispirited people a sense of their cultural integrity; our lay-leadership program and its efforts to develop a dialogic kind of community leaders at the grass-roots level; our health program with its promoting of community health and social medicine in neglected areas; our schools in their efforts to become an integral part of the communities in which they are located.

These “apostolates” taken as a whole are people-centered in quite an extraordinary degree and it is this quality that has forged them into variant but nonetheless cohesive vehicles of not only developing an awareness, among our people, of their life problems as communities but in many places of also instilling in them a readiness and a will to act in concert for the common good.

A further step in the liberation struggle of the poor is the organizing of themselves in common cause. This is by no means an easy matter in a greatly factionalized society such as we have. The difficulty is compounded by martial law restrictions against free association and critical speech, by the general fear brought on by these restrictions and the easy way in which charges of

subversion and rebellion are thrown around precisely to scare people into inaction.

Our conscientizing and organizing efforts have been entirely with the poor. Earlier attempts targeted at the rich through the KC, CWL, other elitist groups in the Church, ended miserably: they were not willing to listen. (It is much easier to talk to them of charity than of justice, to encourage their image of benevolent almsgivers than to speak of their obligations to the poor in justice.) The present approach has led to conflict precisely because it threatens old structures. We feel that what we could not accomplish with the rich by directly dealing with them is beginning to sink into their consciousness now. Opposition and resentment have been their initial reactions but the more thoughtful are beginning to see the point of the whole struggle. Some positive responses are beginning to appear. We trust this is a sign of real change—at least in attitudes.

B. THE ARENA

The striving for liberation in Bukidnon has centered on justice. In practice this has meant demanding that the civil and human rights of the poor be respected by the government and the rich. The attempt to help the poor achieve justice before the law has resulted in open confrontation with the establishment and because of this the accusation most often hurled at the Church is that it has been meddling in something that is not its province at all, to wit, politics.

There is no running away from the fact that the whole question of human rights has political implications. But by the same token, there is no doubt either that it does have very much to do with the economic aspects of life, the religious, the social and cultural, with all aspects of life in fact. For the simple truth is, when we speak of promoting a "more human life", we necessarily must deal with life in all its aspects, with the parts as well as with the whole.

Hence, in a very real sense, it does not matter which aspect

of human living we attack first. And we are not bothered by ideologies which postulate that one part determines all the others, one part dominates all the others. This may well be true, and attacking what one considers the root problem first may conceivably be the pragmatic approach indicated in a given situation. But the fact remains that when we deal with human life, in all its complexity, in all its inter-relatedness, we cannot act from a pre-determined blueprint that must by all means be executed down to the last detail. The variability of human decisions, the possibility of multiple interpretations of the human reality, diverse viewpoints and criteria of judging—these and many other variables enter the picture. And manipulating or coercing people into a blueprint whether of the Left, of the Right, or of the Center, is against our whole Christian sense of what is right.

All this strongly bolsters, we believe, our basic stance: that in any community, under any form of government, basic human rights must remain inviolable. Our zeroing in on the area of human rights as the locus of the struggle for liberation is hence dictated by its essential character. It also is dictated by the prophetic role the Church must play in any situation of injustice.

C. METHODS

Armed struggle as an ordinary method of bringing about change in unjust structures is not Christian. Neither is the passive, fatalistic endurance of injustice. Between these two extremes is an area of human activity that is as wide as human imagination and ingenuity choose to make it. To bring these into full play, people must be given the utmost freedom to think and decide and act, not only as individuals but, just as importantly, as collectivities, as groups, as communities. And if they are not easily given this freedom (as under martial law today), they must assert it by taking it—but peacefully. The peaceful claiming and asserting of rights will not take place unless people are conscious of their rights, and, beyond mere consciousness, are ready and willing to exercise them for the common good—even to the point of civil

disobedience when these rights are arbitrarily curtailed by unjust laws or denied by unjust structures.

In Bukidnon this line of thinking has led to an understanding and appreciation, in the formation of small Christian communities, of the need for people to organize themselves into groups that can, when the necessity arises, exert pressure for change within the social system. The gradualism of the process is not attractive to those who seek immediate and drastic solutions to the ills of our society. But we believe it is more human—and in the end, more substantial and lasting in its results. As long, that is, as it is done with a critical sense.

D. VIOLENCE

If, as we said earlier, we live in a society in which violence is built into the social order, is it a Christian response to counter violence with violence? It is the temptation of frustration and despair. Of impatient zeal too. And we in Bukidnon have not been immune from its strong fascination.

But we know deep down in our guts that the way of violence is not the answer. We can accept on a theoretical level the Church's ordinary stand on the moral use of force and violence under very restricted conditions. We can accept the necessity of violence when those conditions are fulfilled. And we can accept the possibility of "charisms for violence" of conscientious Christians who are convinced that the cause they are fighting for at *this time and place* is the only answer to an otherwise impossible life-condition.

But accepting all this, we pose these hard questions to ourselves: How do we prevent, once we start on the way of violence, its escalation of violence into a general holocaust, one in which all too often the innocent become the sacrificial victims? How do we counteract the hatreds that must inevitably arise once the forces of violence are let loose in an orgy of purges and counter-purges in the name of social reform? Is the aftermath of hatred and endemic conflict, bloody, ruthless, only an imaginative invention of anti-revolutionaries?

We do not doubt that experts and technocrats, ideologues and revolutionaries, have answers to these questions in their development blueprints and political ideologies. —We don't. So we go to the people.

The people we speak of are not people in the abstract. They are flesh-and-blood-and-guts people. The poor, the forgotten, the oppressed of Bukidnon in all manner of structured injustice, the weak, the defenseless. It would be the cruelest joke to talk to them of taking up arms to protest injustice. For the arms of the poor are knives, sticks, clubs, home-made guns at the best. And we would be asking them to pit these against the sophisticated arms of the rich—the whole arsenal of modern weaponry. The very imbalance puts in black contrast what we mean by institutionalized injustice and violence. It also points to an answer.

For if our people are weak and defenseless, this is, paradoxically, their greatest strength: their very vulnerability is their main weapon in the struggle. But only in the context of non-violence. Militant and fearless, organized, programmed, directed by themselves and by none other.

Is this political naivete of the worst kind? Perhaps it is. But our interest as Church is not in countering political astuteness with political astuteness. It is rather in how man can become more man in and with the light of the Gospel. Violence as an ordinary means of humanization is not within our Christian purview. And even as an extraordinary means within the restricted limits set forth by our theology, we have deep reservations about it as an instrument of social reform *taking into full account the actual realities of our people.*

7. AGENTS OF CHANGE

We make much of the notion of Church as People of God. It is a rich concept. But what does it really mean? How does it translate into life?

For those of us in direct pastoral work here in Bukidnon it has meant involvement in the life problems of our people. The

formula has been "building up Christian Communities". In practice this has meant going to the grassroots, to the *barrios* and *sitios*, wherever we have a people with a distinct identity as a community of faith. That identity is more often than not, at least on the surface, centered on the *barrio* or *sitio capelya* (village chapel) and the annual celebration of a fiesta. And the pastoral question has been: Can the faith-life of our people go beyond ritual religious practice, beyond the four walls of their chapel, spilling over into life itself, entering into its problems of social, political, economic, other life relationships? Can faith infuse Christian values and viewpoints into those relationships—structures of society, that is—for greater humanization?

It is a large question. The institutional Church has a definite role in the searching for an answer to the question. So do the laity, the rank and file of Church members. Especially the laity: the people. So we are back to the potent notion of the Church as people.

The theological—as well as pastoral—implications of the Church as People of God are many and profound. One such implication is that people are the architects of their salvation, be it of this world or of the other. The statement sounds banal. It is. But then so is the bald statement that in actual practice it is not the people who are the real arbiters in decisions concerning their common weal. It is always something above them—or at least separate from them: some elite body, some higher power, call it the hierarchy, the technocracy, the military, the political machine, big business, the Party. That quality of *aboveness*, of separateness of elite decision-makers—to put it another way—is part of our general problem: how bring it about so that both "masa" and elite *equally and genuinely* share in the responsibility and burden of decision-making for the good of society?

For the moment, in Bukidnon, the question is focused on the "masa": how make their voice count in the present elitist system of decision-making? The answering of the question is the very process of and struggle for liberation. And it is completely in the hands of our people. It has to be if we are serious about them being the agents of their own liberation.

8. CULTURES

Cultures are particular ways of being human. And because they do not exist apart from people but in truth are part of their inner core, constituting in fact to a large extent their very identity as a people, respect for their dignity as human beings must necessarily include respect for their culture too. Hence any system of thought geared towards action, any restructuring of the social order based on a thought system, any philosophy of people action, all must take into consideration—and treat with great respect—“the way of being human” of a people.

Stating this general principle, we are by no means suggesting that cultures are sacrosanct and perfect in themselves and should not be “tampered” with at all. But we do say that people have a right to live according to their accepted way of being human and no power on earth, not the Church, not the government, not the Party, may bring about change in people, in their way of thinking and living, in their way of being human, *by force or manipulation or deceit*. In other words, as we indicated in the preceding section, people are and must be the architects of their own welfare. But this welfare must be understood in terms of their cultural definitions, present outlooks and understandings. Hence our strong insistence that blueprints for social reform, systems of thought and action, ideologies and even theologies, must be open to modification and change when applied to particular life conditions, to already existent “ways of being human”. If this is *heresy*, practical or intellectual or whatever, we in Bukidnon readily plead guilty to it.

SUMMARY

Fighting ideological battles is not our forte in Bukidnon. Simply because we do not believe in ideologies as the end-all and be-all of all action for improving the social order, for working with our people to help make their hard lot more bearable. Ideologies can be useful, true, at times even necessary, but only to the

extent that they are subservient to a wider and greater end—the common good of the people. It is for this reason that our main focus has been the building up of people through small Christian communities. The term sounds most innocuous. It certainly is not in Bukidnon (as in many parts of Mindanao). To the government it is equivalent with sedition and rebellion, with all sorts of crimes against the state. So we must be doing something right.

For the Christian community means people thinking for themselves—and hence intolerant of any form of thought control. It means people talking with one another—hence against anything that will curtail their right to free speech and criticism of wrongdoing. It means people acting in concert with one another for their common good—hence unaccepting of any impositions that limit their freedom to associate with one another in common cause. It means people who are concerned with one another, who share burdens with one another, who care for justice and human dignity, who stand up together for anything that makes people's lives more human.

This is not theory. This is, in different ways, in different degrees, hard praxis in many a community in Bukidnon. The possibility is there, then, for a more human society. Under present frustrating conditions in our country and province, that possibility is enough. And given the choice between totalitarian systems of the Right and of the Left, that possibility is alternative enough.

Hence we are not troubled overmuch whether, in our unswerving aim to be with our people in their deepest aspirations for a more human life, we are used either by the Right or by the Left or by whatever power, political or economic, is in the ascendancy. The danger of being used and manipulated by interested groups will always be there—it is a given of our human condition. We will resist manipulation, strive hard to overcome it, but the fact of manipulation itself will not stop us from doing what we believe is right, what we are convinced must be done at any cost. The Church's mission to preach the Gospel goes straight to the heart of our involvement with people, with their hopes and fears, with

their very lives. This involvement is of the essence of the supreme loyalty we owe to Christ—and to one another. It is in this same involvement that we work out with our people what it means to be human and Christian in the Philippines today. It is a task that goes beyond ideology—any ideology. Because its impelling force is faith in the Lord Jesus.

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September 8, 1977

message, if it is to be rightly proclaimed today, must mean for us this "being with the poor", his "witnessing to justice and to the rights of man."

A PANORAMA OF OPTIONS—AND THE FILIPINO CHRISTIAN TODAY

What concerns the Church today is not whether we are willing to live out in deeds what the Church declares in faith, but whether we are willing to live out in deeds what the Church declares in faith as simply as that.

ANTONIO B. LAMBINO, S.J.

What concerns the Church today is not whether we are willing to live out in deeds what the Church declares in faith as simply as that.

INTRODUCTION

You have invited me to spend this time with you so that we might reflect together on Christian faith vis-a-vis political positions and options in the Philippine Church today. It is a theme of large dimensions and of urgent importance, because so many priests and religious, young men and young women are now facing it in their lives. I come to you not as an expert, even if I have wrestled with these issues for a long time now. I am here as a fellow religious, a fellow Christian, a fellow Filipino trying (with some agony) to search for the right way of being a true Christian in the Philippine situation today. I know that many of you are engaged in similar searching, and all we can do, with the help of the Spirit, is to search together.

Let me begin with two prefatory remarks:

"BEING ON THE SIDE OF THE POOR"

1. If we consider political stances and options at all as religious men and women, I believe it is because we are trying to make our own the discernment of the Church today that "being on the side of the poor" and "promoting justice" are an integral part of evangelization, especially in our time. That the Christian

message, if it is to be rightly proclaimed today, must mean for us this "being with the poor", this "witnessing to justice and to the rights of man."

Were this all, however, it would seem to be quite simple. It would merely come down to whether we as Christians, as religious, were willing and ready to implement this or not, whether we are willing to live out in deeds what the Church declares in word and text. But it is unfortunately not quite as simple as that. What complicates the issue is that, in concrete reality in the Philippines today, "being with the poor" involves inserting ourselves into a network of very complex political forces and issues, of difficult and significant political options. For example, it means thinking out for ourselves whether we believe that Communism as political-economic regime is the solution for the troubled Philippine situation, is "the best thing" for our people today and Filipino generations to come.

You have seen or read about a series of demonstrations and rallies held in Manila during these last few days and weeks. One would be woefully naive to think that these rallies have cropped up by some spontaneous process,—simply because the students and workers are restless and want to let off steam. As a matter of fact, if we are to believe quite reliable sources, they form an integral part of detailed plans worked out months ago in secret meetings by leaders of certain political groups. This does not mean (let me immediately say) that therefore we are to stay away from all such gatherings. But it means that we should realize, if we are responsible agents, that these rallies form part of a planned interplay and struggle between political forces and that they are in fact inserted into the dynamics of the power-struggle going on in our country today. That is, when one marches or takes part in this or that demonstration, one inserts himself or herself within the struggle of definite political-ideological forces and counter-forces. We should be clear about that, and not deceive ourselves.

Once again, this does not mean that we are to keep ourselves untouched by these power-currents, and withdraw henceforth

from all participation in conventions and rallies. But to act intelligently and responsibly, we must know the facts, we must make clear-headed and deliberate choices. We must not allow ourselves, because of sheer moral passion and psychological impatience, to be pulled into certain positions without realizing what we are getting ourselves into. We must quite coolly recognize this reality: that to work, to take stances, for the poor in the Philippines today, involves taking significant options about what one really wants for our people. It involves a choice of lines of action which imply collaboration with the real forces and political blocs which are jockeying for the power (present or future) to direct the destiny of our people.

"THE REAL GOOD OF THE PEOPLE"

2. Secondly, I believe that inspite of many talks you will by now have heard on this question, yet another try at it might be of use. For I do not think we ought to presume that to love people via structural action (action to change structures) is a very simple thing. All of us will admit that on the interpersonal level it is very difficult to tell when we are, in truth, loving disinterestedly and unselfishly. We know the many wayward turnings of the human heart, the many confusing twists of the human psyche that make a person seek himself or herself even when he or she commits the self to someone in what seems to be truly disinterested love. Anyone who does not know that, has no experience in human relations or in the spiritual life.

I believe it is equally difficult to truly love the people—perhaps it is even more difficult to love them—via the action which seeks to transform structures. Sometimes you hear people talk as if it were the easiest and least complicated thing in the world to "love the masses" and to love them in a way that leads to their genuine human liberation. The claim, "I am really working for the good of the people" is not, I believe, one that can be easily and facilely made. "Am I really working for the good of the people?" That is in fact a very difficult question to answer, because it

means not only knowing myself, but also knowing the structures I want to change and what I want to change them with. "My involvement is certainly for the good of my people!" It is not so easy to arrive at such clarity in Christian discernment. It is not so easy to carry out the true choices of Christian love. That is my second prefatory remark.

3. THREE LEVELS OF POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

With regard to *political involvement* I see it as having three different levels:

a) The first is *total ideological commitment*. This is when someone accepts as a basic attitude, undergirding his life-position in this area, the basic tenets of an ideology: marxism or one of its variants, capitalism (whether fully explicitated or not) or one of its variants, or some other ideological construct. A basic view of reality, of man and of history is accepted and the norms and tools of analysis of that ideological system are applied. In the case of a conflict between the tenets of one's faith and the tenets of ideology, it is the faith-norms which are re-fashioned to fit, or the ideology simply wins out. See, for instance, some of the interviews with "Christian Marxists" in the October 1977 issue of IMPACT.

b) The second level would be *political organization*. Here I use some of the elements of a certain ideological system (e.g. tools of socio-political analysis) as at least partial basis for forming political groups for planned and concerted action on social structures. Often enough here no total ideology serves as a base. The group seeks rather, with a certain eclecticism, to do what seems called for, here and now, for the good of the people.

Here the question is asked regarding the marxist analysis which was formally introduced into our Church circles by the FERES seminar of 1974 held under Canon Houtart in Baguio. From that seminar it was picked up by various agencies of the Philippine Church and disseminated very widely especially among priests, groups of religious women and lay leaders in Church-

affiliated organizations. The question raised is whether or not one can accept the marxist analysis of society as a fully coherent unit and not logically accept the full marxist ideology as well. Bishop Claver, in the paper reproduced in this volume, asks rather probingly if the analysis does not precisely emerge from the ideology, and in its turn lead inevitably back to full acceptance of that ideology. However, some Christians claim that they can accept the analysis as a coherent whole and yet not accept the communist ideology as a whole.¹

c) The third level is *political action*, where as far as possible one works very pragmatically in given circumstances, and involves oneself in concrete actions—of protest, solidarity, *ad hoc* organization—in the face of clear and present violations of people's rights, e.g. against unjust detention, torture, unjust repression of organizations, or workers' rights to organize or strike, etc., without definite personal tie-ups with ideological groups. One performs these actions as arising from one's faith commitments as seen in one's own conscience. The AMRSMWP once published a paper enumerating some ways of involvement through political action.

By way of clarification I am not saying that it is entirely possible to avoid contact and even involvement with ideologically-defined groups which are working with the poor in the Philippines today. I know that if you are working with slum-dwellers in Metro-Manila, or working as a community organizer, some groups with definite ideological and power-bloc allegiances will try to co-opt you into their fold or ask you to collaborate with them.

These are, roughly, the three depths or levels of political involvement as I see them. What should be said about us, in relation to these various degrees of political participation and involvement?

Let me say that I believe it is necessary to be open to the

¹I have addressed myself to this question, and the larger question of the Christian-Marxists in an earlier talk (in LP 4), and must for the present leave the point here.

necessity of getting involved—at least on the level of political action—in the Philippines today if one seeks to be a concerned and committed Christian. But I do not believe that it is necessary to be involved either in the first or second levels, if one is to be an authentic and committed Christian in our country today.

After I had given a talk like this one at Tagaytay a seminarian asked me, “Can one be a real Christian in our country without *ideological* involvement?” My reply to him was: One might say perhaps that one can not be a genuine Christian in the Philippines today without openness to the need of *structural* changes, radical transformation of unjust structures. It is not enough, that is, to concern oneself merely with helping individuals in need by way of “charity” or “relief”, or within the context of “I-and-thou, Christian charity” relationships. One must concern himself with structural and institutional changes, toward the creation of a more just society, to the extent of one’s position in life, one’s capabilities and opportunities. But one need not be ideologically committed to do this, and it is not a Christian obligation to be so involved. One must be concerned with structures, true, but not necessarily by aligning oneself ideologically. That was the position I took in reply to the seminarian, and it is the position I reiterate today.

PANORAMA OF POSITIONS AND OPTIONS

With this preface, I shall now indicate what seem to me the more significant political options which people in the Philippine Church face today, and I shall try to comment on each one of them in turn.

You have the Right (the “far right”, the position our leftist activists call “Fascism”): the Martial Law government. You have the Right of Center—the “Civil Libertarians” (for want of a more exact label) and the “Message of Hope” group. At the (far) Left you have the Communist Party of the Philippines (CCP), the political arm, and the New People’s Army (NPA), its military arm. Then there is the National Democratic Front,

which is the alliance formed by CPP/NPA with their collaborators. Left of Center you have the "Soc Dems" or Democratic Socialists. I believe the various political positions in the Philippines today may be reduced to these four.

I: "THE RIGHT"

About Martial Law, I think it should be admitted that in the present atmosphere among many concerned and committed Christians (the people the Far Left calls "Progressive Christians") there is not much favor or sympathy for the Martial Law government (ML).

In all fairness to the ML government's supporters, we have to say that their position is more nuanced than many—especially among those strongly opposed to ML—would let it appear.

True, there are those who positively accept and support it, saying it is the best thing that has happened to our country, and that it has brought about definite and undeniable benefits to our people. There are such people, I think I don't need to tell you, among religious and priests today.

But there are those (perhaps the larger number) who say: I do not take the entire package and say everything in it is good. There are a good number of concrete realities I am unhappy about, and there are many factors I deplore, but realistically, it is the least evil that we can have, under the concrete circumstances, and given the concrete world situation.

They will say, for instance, and a recent FORTUNE magazine article supports this thesis strongly, that developing countries especially in Asia need authoritarianism to survive and go forward. "The kind of martial law being imposed on Asia today is a form of democracy: not the Western-style of democratic society, but an authoritarianism supported by the majority of the people" which has made possible, in the Philippines, greater stability of government, less red tape and bureaucratic corruption, improvement in living conditions for a greater number, a good climate for foreign investment, more progressive attitude among the population, a more peaceful way of life. In the trade-off of costs and benefits,

the ML government comes off relatively well (in comparison, certainly, with the near chaos of pre-ML days). It is far from an ideal state of affairs, but it seems to be concretely "the lesser evil" for us.

They will say that no matter what happens, in the real world, our economy cannot function without the links it has (lopsided though they may be) with the capitalist structures of the United States and Japan, and the omnipresent Transnational Corporations. No matter what happens, we will need some sort of support from the United States, and our industrialization and trade cannot push ahead without collaboration with the multinationals, their know-how, their funds, their international networks. Under any form of government, we will have to play ball with them. (They will point out also the well-documented fact that Communist countries have increasingly joined in the one "capitalist-trade-and-commerce-network", and that they are increasingly playing the identical game with the Western nations in international trade, and in this game also—exactly as the capitalist countries—subordinate the interests of underdeveloped countries to their own interests. The 'free market' has emerged as the only trade market in the world.)

They will hold further the present government is trying, given our need of inviting the Transnational corporations to collaborate in our industrialization, to work towards eventually increasing economic self-reliance and relative maneuverability. The very best of the nation's technocrats and economists, they say are working within this government, and trying their best to chart a difficult gradualist course toward eventual relative self-reliance and strength in the world scene. But this will take a lot of trying, of trial-and-error, a lot of time. Authoritarian control of economic and political life is necessary, to ensure that the programs move forward (what will the Communists do, in this regard, when they take over?).

Politically, they add, the ML government is trying to broaden our international contacts (take the diplomatic links with Red China and some other communist states) and taking steps to

affirm greater independence vis-a-vis United States dominance (e.g. in the matter of military bases, preferential trade agreements, etc.).

Besides, they hold, at present there are no viable alternatives to the ML government. If it is toppled, we can only expect the less desirable ones of probably an even stronger and more repressive military junta rule, or communist control as in Vietnam and Cambodia.

So much for a brief indication of *some* things pro-ML people say—albeit with reservations—in its favor.

Let me say at once that this argumentation is not my own, I give it here to indicate that people who defend ML have some valid and reasonable things to say in its favor, and that this position is not as simplistic as some among us want to make it.

On the other side, the most telling accusations levelled against ML are to be conveniently found, I think, in the text, "The Gospel and the Citizen, Towards a Christian Socio-Political Option" which a group of Christians—Bishops, priests and laymen, published on 12 June 1976:

1. The concept of development of the present government is defined in sheerly economic terms. Economic development is the New Society's supreme value. Basic human rights are subordinate to a materialist and economicist understanding of the people's good; GNP and PCI come ahead of everything else.

2. There is no room for genuine "people participation" in decision-making. The various civic bodies which have been set up are an attempt to give people "a feeling of participation", but "deep down in their guts the people know" this is *not* genuine participation. Thus the true conduct of affairs, the true decision-making process is "government by decree", "one-man rule"—hence "we are fast becoming a nation of sheep."

3. Social engineering carried out with skill and force: the absence of any true freedom of information and discussion; the media—press, radio, television, even the schools—made instruments of government propaganda; the use of "popular assemblies" to teach the government's line, to indoctrinate by various means

of thought-control. "Thus there is widespread deception of the people, and this deception is a form of violence."

So much for a rather summary presentation of the Martial Law (what the Left's activists call "Fascism") side of our panorama; its pros and cons—in very sketchy fashion, to be sure.

II: THE CIVIL LIBERTIES GROUP

Now we turn to the "Civil Liberties" group—to which we could attach the statement "A Message of Hope" of 1 October 1975. ("A Message of Hope to Filipinos Who Care" by a representative group of citizens devoted to the cause of Truth, Justice and Freedom.)

This sector is strong on its insistence on the best traditions of democratic government, understood in the American manner: accent on traditional institutions of western democracies, structures and processes which have also been part of our Filipino past for well-nigh a century now.

"Where we stand: our basic commitment" sets down the basic pillars to which these citizens are committed: human dignity; order, justice and political freedom; an open society of true freedom of information and discussion; a pluralistic society of truly free association; a free and responsible press; the right to true participation in government; the widest possible distribution of income and wealth, and the consequences of this for private ownership, state-ownership of key industries and public services, private enterprise, cooperatives, agrarian reform; government really responsible to the people through the ballot,—and so on. The ideals of democratic government, in a word.

Perhaps the strongest factor present in this group is the very quality of some of its leaders, men who have proved that they are willing to suffer for their convictions—for not a few of them have been jailed or detained at Crame and Bonifacio: men whose devotion to democratic institutions and the good of our people has been a life-long endeavor.

But it would seem that the weakness of the group is its lack

of any organization—at least for the present—with and through which it can evolve a realistic strategy to work out the relationships of power. It is strong in vision; its statements are ringing words. But in the concrete circumstances it is not strongly organized, it is weak in concrete program, strategy, tactics. It is reduced, in a way, to performing the Socratic function of being gadfly. (One of its leaders has, in fact, said this is one of its main services to our people today.) They prepare position papers, statements,—various ways of asking the embarrassing and difficult questions that are not allowed by the government: about human rights, civil liberties, economic and cultural nationalism, and the like.

One might ask if this group has an operative base. Its leaders would argue that the vast majority of the people—the Filipino civic community that has had the experience of western-style democracy for a good fifty years or so—is, at heart, on its side. The generations which learned, in school and in practice, to cherish human rights and civil liberties as more valuable than life itself. They would say that if the vicissitudes of history should make a change of government possible or real, that the vast majority of Filipinos would be found on their side.

And perhaps there is much truth to what they say. If we were to consult our married brothers and sisters, most of our white collar population and the ordinary working people,—we might perhaps find that there is a large “silent majority” which is basically “in this column” of our panorama.

And now we come to the more crucial part of this talk: the Left—the “far Left” and “Left of Center”.

III: THE “FAR” LEFT

THE CPP AND NPA

First, a prefatory remark, which applies to the foregoing descriptions and evaluations as well as to those that follow. I would like to ask you to keep this in mind, and I speak with all sincerity.

My remarks in this talk are directed to (what I might call) the “objective aspects”—the objective validity—of each of the

given positions, how it stands up to rational analysis and to realistic scrutiny. How it comes out, when one balances off benefits and costs, when one examines objectives, programs, strategies, consequences. It is not my intention, in the least, to impugn or question the personal commitment and dedication of those who make up the various groups. There are many in every one of these groups—without exception—whom I admire and respect, people who (I have no doubt) are better citizens, better Filipinos, better Christians than I am. But my purpose here is to try, hopefully with a genuine sense of objectivity, to evaluate the positions each group has taken, the stance each group represents. There may be some among us here who belong to one or other group; many more, I am sure, who support or are in sympathy with this or that option. Let me assure you, with all honesty, that I do not here try to judge your sincerity, your patriotism, your devotion to cause or country, your Christian character. I address myself, I hope, to issues, to the positions you have accepted for your own personal reasons, your Christian convictions and discernment. I hope you will bear this in mind, in all that is to follow.

MARXISM. Let me begin by saying that I have no problem engaging in a dialogue with Marxism as an historical phenomenon, philosophy, and movement. I believe that much of the Marxist analysis of bourgeois capitalist society, of institutional religion, of structural injustice, of class interests,—is illuminating and perspicacious. That there are patterns and structures of domination, exploitation, oppression, favoring dominant sectors of society; that the economic base has a very large influence on religion, culture, politics—our attention has been called to these and other key features in the social reality in which we live mainly by marxist theory and analysis. We have learned much, we have much to learn from Marxism. But to engage in dialogue with Marxism is not the same thing as dialoguing and dealing with the Communist Party—that is something else again.

THE CPP/NPA. The Communist Party is a definite group seeking to gain access to power in this country, with a core leadership which—in the end—calls the shots. This group which is the

real leadership of the Party has a script for the revolution and the accession to power by the Party. They have the *complete* script. We might say that *their* script has the full five acts in it; they have the complete blueprint for the revolution and what leads up to it, and what follows on it—the blueprint for the communist society, based on the marxist-leninist-maoist theory accepted with the commitment of a faith, taken as a total ideological system.

One of the standard operating strategies of the Communist Party is to build up alliances and line-up collaborators (to whom, however, the complete script is not revealed) for the revolution, share with them a common methodology and strategy for overthrowing the present society with its undeniably unjust structures. And it is equally standard operating strategy everywhere (learn the full story of communist takeovers anywhere in the world!) to form these National Democratic (or Popular) Fronts, and to make all the standard promises that the “partners” will have their say and their share of power once the revolution is over, and the “new society” established. Always the promise is, “Don’t pay attention to what has happened elsewhere; that’s not our concern. If you cooperate now, it will be different here!” And yet it has never been different, and there is simply no evidence from past history, not a single instance, where it has been different, the promises have been kept.

We must touch on the point that communism is an international reality, with a definite “specificity” of its own. We might, for the sake of illustrating this, draw the parallel with Catholicism. Of course there are varieties of Catholicism: there are Italian, German, Spanish, North American, Filipino “versions” of Catholicism. But if you’re a Catholic, you know that there are some definite features of the Church and the Catholic religion which are realized, and must somehow be realized and made present, as basic and constant, in every form of true Catholicism. There is the primacy of the Roman Pontiff, the fundamental dogmas—the Trinity, the definitions of Nicea and Chalcedon, the core teaching of Trent, and of Vatican I and II . . . dogmas like the Incarnation

of the Son, the divine institution of the Church, the authority of the bishops . . . and so forth.

An analogy, we said, can be drawn with Marxism-Communism. It also has "dogmatic bases": for instance, dialectical and historical materialism, the class struggle, the role of the Party as embodying the proletariat, the tolerance (if that) of institutional religion only to the extent that it does nothing contrary to the purposes, interests and programs of the Party. Thus the Church has no possible role or participation in what we would call social and political action in Communist Society; it may not play its "prophetic role". These are some of the constants, the basics, and one can bet one's neck, I believe, that when the Communist Party takes over in the Philippines, these will be the constants in their regime also. I think we can be quite certain of that, and there is nothing we can point to as indicating the opposite.

In a recent analysis and evaluation (in *DER SPIEGEL*) of the Latin European movement of Eurocommunism, a Polish professor of philosophy, now living in England, but who taught in Warsaw till 1968,—writes that:

"Up to the present, the only communism in power that we have experienced is the totalitarian type. There is absolutely no exception to that rule. Wherever communism has come to power, whether through internal forces or through power struggles from the outside, both civil liberties and democratic institutions have been abolished. At the same time a totalitarian type of social organization has been forced on the country (although this has not met with the same success everywhere). Although it has not proved possible anywhere to achieve a complete totalitarian system, including control of all private human relationships by the state, communist types of government have never ceased to strive towards such completeness and to impose state control on all aspects of life."

"It is going to be different here" is a refrain sung before the revolution. After that the curtain descends on the scene, and the next act follows the regular script. Vietnam and Cambodia are only the latest examples, very close to home. "It is going to be different

here" is an illusion, an illusion with a long history behind it. It is part of soberness and common sense to learn our lessons from that history, lest we be condemned—in unpardonable naïvete—to repeat that experience, to our own sorrow and tears.

Let us repeat it: communism is an international movement, with its definite features and lines of "progress", and no matter what the promises are today, these features will certainly establish themselves in short order once the Party has effectively assumed power.

ATHEISM? My problem with Communism is not exactly its atheism, in the sense of its explicit denial of the propositional truth that God exists. (The *Party* is, of course, officially and explicitly atheist, and any Communist state is and must be officially and explicitly atheist.) —However, even the Second Vatican Council tells us, in some of its texts, that it is the life and deeds of a person rather than his explicit conceptual or propositional profession of belief or disbelief that shows us best whether he believes in God or not. Hence my main concern is not so much "propositional atheism" but "existential atheism". My main problem with Communism is not its explicit propositional atheism, but with the fact that we could—justly—say that it has a god of its own to which everything is subordinated and which relativizes everything else: the Party and the Revolution.

This is not a mere "turn of phrase" which I'm making up to sound clever. The texts of Bishop Claver and the two articles which accompany it tell us quite clearly, if in other terms, the same truth. The absolute is the Party. The absolute is the accession of the Party to power, and the maintenance of the Party in power. That is the god of Communism. This determines everything else, relativizes everything else.

"The good of the people" is seen always through the Party's eyes. The Party and the Revolution determines even the meaning of "people" as some priests were clearly told, in Vietnam, after the fall of Saigon. Those who foster the Party and the Revolution are the people; all the rest are merely numbers in the population. The Party and the Revolution, and the promotion of both,

determines whether people or groups are revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, oppressors or oppressed.

Many of you must have had the experience of going through seminars where you are asked to draw up two columns: the progressive forces—which foster the Party and the Revolution, and the “enemy forces”—those which do not. —Sometimes (in response to criticism like the present one) room will be made for in-between “auxiliary groups” which benefit little, or much, or somewhat, from the present society. —You are asked to place persons, groups, institutions, in one or other column: oppressor or oppressed, good or bad, ally or enemy.

We must admit, for a fact, that there is an economically dominant sector or class and an economically dominated sector or class in our society. This is true, and we can't explain it away. —But this “the good and the bad” division is simplistic and manichaeistic, and its norm for dividing people into “good guys or bad guys” is the ideological analysis,—which is really *one* interpretation of the reality.

We are in the presence here, I believe, also of a defective theological anthropology. The objectives of the revolution demand this simplistic labelling of people and groups, because the “heating up” of the situation or the “heightening of contradiction” is called for. When one is pushing for the revolution, there is no place for recognizing the complexity of issues, there is no time for nuance. The contradiction must be heightened continually, so that the oppressed can see with utter clearness and unambiguity where the enemy is, and what the revolution must encircle and destroy.

A THEOLOGY OF SIN

Sin thus belongs to one side of the division only: sin is exclusively with the oppressor, with the oppressor class. And yet we as Christians know that sin is present wherever men are, wherever the human heart is. There are oppressors and oppressed, sinners and saints in all human groups, among the wealthy and

the established, as also among the "auxiliary groups". So Christianity teaches us. Thus a simplistic, exaggerated socio-economic analysis (which is rooted in the ideology and its understanding of man) in its turn leads to a kind of "sin-theology" which identifies sin (understood as "social sin") with the oppressor class alone. (Those in "auxiliary groups", benefiting from the unjust situations, are linked with the oppressor class.)—You may say I miss the point of the analysis: it is the *class* which, pursuing its own interests, is the oppressor class, *not* individuals in it. But we must ask the question of individuals too, since the analysis would (to be consistent) have us see all members of the class as oppressors.

A point to consider: I would imagine that the families of most of us in this gathering belong to the "auxiliary class". Our parents are probably middle class—rural or urban teachers, rural physicians or professionals, and the like. Is a rigid class analysis which would simply label them "oppressors" really meaningful, is it true to *reality*, to the full reality of the situation? Our parents may live in frugal comfort, not in the mansions of the wealthy, but one serious illness or some other setback in the family would eat up all their life's savings and maybe put them into most dire straits. Is a structural analysis true to reality which, in the interests of the black and white ideology, make them "oppressors" too, due to their alleged silent tolerance of the system? I know there will be logical arguments drawn from the ideological system to explain why they are oppressors by consent. But my question is: are they so, in fact, outside of the simplifications of the ideology?

Read the story in Fr. Corrigan's article about the dead army soldier and the NPA guerillero who had participated in the encounter in which the army soldier was slain, and reflect a little on it, and ask yourself again, if the ideological black and white is true. Ask if this oversimplification is deliberately done for a purpose—to create attitudes and angers from which revolution is to be born and pursued? The analysis is thus a reading of the realities through the ideological distortion, for the sake of the ideological objectives.

Bishop Claver says it well in his text: the structural analysis is

premised on the ideology, and in turn is meant to lead back to the ideology itself—and the revolution which is its purpose, the accession to power by the Party which is its goal. *Let us be conscious of this; let us be conscious of this!*

RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT

There is a special problem for religious, of course, in collaboration with the CCP/NPA, or even more, in joining its ranks.

There is, first of all, the process of the formation of the Communist Party member. The process involves the progressive eradication of the “bourgeois mentality” through relentless indoctrination, self-examination, correction by others, mutual confession of defects and mistakes,—a relentless process of formation and deepening of attitudes until one’s mindset and reactions eventually reflect, as much as possible, the ideology and what it demands, its vision, its programs, its strategies, its reflexes, its spirit.

Secondly, as one enters more deeply into active collaboration with the Party, or within the Party, one is of course making oneself part of a “different community” than that with which one bound himself or herself through the covenant of religious vows. This new commitment to a different community involves a different loyalty, a different vision, different modes of action, different lines of obedience. Eventually one must keep one’s activities secret from one’s religious community, one cannot share one’s involvement in Party-activity with one’s superiors, or be guided by them. At this point one might ask, Where is one’s real community, now? Where is one’s real loyalty and allegiance? Who commands one’s deepest obedience? To what way of life does one, finally, commit himself or herself? When the crunch comes, and there is a conflict of interests between the Party’s demands and one’s religious community,—which one finally counts more with me?

Let me say that I am willing to affirm this: a religious could, out of personal conviction, after much soul-searching and reflec-

tion, decide, in all sincerity, that he or she should join the Party. He or she might come to the decision that *this*, for him or her, is what dedication to the Gospel demands. The religious in question has such an understanding of the Gospel, such a view of its meaning, that this step seems to him or to her what is most consistent with Gospel authenticity. In such a case, I believe the choice is to be respected, and that religious might be in fact making a decision manifesting genuine Christian commitment, even a heroic Christian commitment. —But if such is the case, then the person, in honesty to himself/herself and the covenant which the vows and membership to a religious community constitute, should leave the religious congregation and go underground or join the Party. To do otherwise, to remain within the congregation without being bound to its community and obedience, is to deceive others, and to instrumentalize one's membership in the order—making it a cover for activities done under the Party's orders and for the accomplishment of its goals. This is dishonest, and it is unjust to the other members of the community.

But even if the subjective decision of the individual religious is to be respected, still—addressing myself to the “objective validity” of the position—I must say that this sort of collaboration with the CPP/NPA cannot be the right option for the Church to take: in the light of the final basic incompatibility of Communism's spirit and goals with the integral Christian Faith (a basic incompatibility genuine Marxists themselves do not deny), and in the light of all historical testimony from all the continents of the world.²

²Fr. Pedro Arrupe, in a recent message to Jesuits, had this to say: “We cannot ignore many negative aspects of Marxism/Communism which are in direct opposition to Christianity and which contradict our mission which is essentially a religious and apostolic one. We can't close our eyes to all the atrocities and injustices which have been committed against the Church, religion, and Christians in general—and not only Christians, but men in general—in so many of the Communist countries. Unfortunately we cannot speak clearly about this. We have to be careful not to compromise (put in jeopardy) our brothers and our people in these countries, and sometimes we give the impression that we don't care. No, we care very much for them, and we want to work as much as we can to defend them. But *they* ask us

THE 'NDF': NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT

The difficulty we meet most often among priests and religious at present is not that there is widespread desire to join the CPP/NPA itself, but rather the temptation to form part of the National Democratic Front, the NDF,—the alliance between the CPP/NPA and other groups actively working towards the same objectives, as set by the CPP leadership.

To try to illuminate this problem: it was found by in-depth surveys some years ago that many people will not buy large chocolate bars because they have guilty feelings when they eat them; they feel they are indulging themselves. So the chocolate manufacturers started turning out bite-size chocolate pieces. People could then say "Well, I'm just taking one or two bites, *isang kagat lamang naman.*" There is an analogy here with the "NDF temptation". The NDF people say, "Look, we're not asking you to become card-bearing CPP candidates. Remain 'Christians in good standing' if you so wish. But right now there is this primary obstacle to the good of our people—Martial Law, the Marcos-US-multinationals combination in power. Any Filipino who loves his country and is committed to his people can and must join the united struggle to overthrow it. We have one common enemy, one common objective, one common struggle. Join the struggle now, and when the revolution succeeds, you will have been part of it, from the ground floor (so to speak) and thus you will have a say in what will happen after the revolution."

True, many religious (sisters) and priests are "NDF-fers" without knowing it. That is, they lend themselves to the execution

not to do much because the opposition and repression in some places is so organized that anything which happens or is said in foreign countries have immediate repercussions there. Even today in many of these countries freedom—including religious freedom—is subject to serious and unjustified limitations and violations. (But we keep silent.) I know in some western countries today there is talk of types of Communism which will respect the so-called democratic freedoms, including religious freedom. But after so many painful experiences, it is hard to believe in such promises and guarantees—at least if we are to speak from experience. We have, until now, not one example of that."

of strategies and activities programmed by the Party, but without knowing that they are doing so. Suppose that the objective of the moment laid down by the Party chiefs—for Metro-Manila—is to foment as much unrest and disruption as is possible in the present situation, among students and urban laborers, and that the on-going task is to organize rallies, demonstrations, strikes, and so on. In line with this, a priest-NDF-fer asks you to lend your school's facilities for a rally, or get a busload of sisters to march in a demonstration. The priest-friend gets what he wants, and you lend your auditorium to a demonstration planned by the CPP directorate, or you march in a rally whose final direction derives from the CPP's present programs for Metro-Manila—in pursuit of its present series of objectives.

As I said earlier: I don't say you should not have anything to do with these demonstrations and mass actions, if you believe in conscience your 'being with the poor' demands it. But I do say you should know what you are doing, what you are choosing, what you are supporting, and realize your responsibility before God and country.

The next question: what will happen to the Church, to the Christian religion, when after the revolution the CPP/NPA install themselves in power? The NDF propagandists say today: "We will chart our own independent course in the Philippines. Never mind what has happened in other countries; that's not the Philippines. It will be different here. Filipinos are 92% Christian, 85% Catholic, and thus it will be different here. Surely we can make sure our people remain Christian, and the Church will be free to preach the Gospel, free to do its true evangelizing task." This is the promise made, and on the credibility and validity of that promise, many priests and sisters are willing to stake the future of our people and our country.

We have to remember this, when we choose to foster the aims of the CPP/NPA through the NDF: we are deciding something by this choice of ours, and that something is the future of our country, what will underlie the very structures of the society which will come "after the revolution." —You may tell me that

you do in fact want a Communist future for our country, that you think it is the only way of transforming the unjust structures in our society. You will, we trust, make up your mind responsibly: I ask only that you try to realize fully the burden of personal responsibility which is yours, which your conscience must bear, for the choice you make *for your people*, for future generations to come.

In every case where these promises have been made, once the Party has come to power, it has gradually shunted aside, and often enough eliminated, other groups which could compete for its absolute hold on power and control. Little by little all possible opposition to its policies has been destroyed or rendered impotent. And as far as a militant Church exercising a "prophetic role" is concerned,—even in the measure allowed by the present ML regime—the Party once in power simply cannot allow this.

If you ask NDF recruiters if the Church (and any organized religion or religious group for that matter) will be allowed, under the Communist regime, to preach the integral Gospel with full freedom, including the freedom to take public stands for basic human rights and civil liberties, the guarded answer you get is, "One cannot be sure of course. The only way to assure this is to get involved now, and thus earn the right to an active role in the revolutionary society." And they add, "In any case, can the situation and lot of the poor be any worse than it is now?" (Parenthetically, the answer to that question might be, quite simply, 'Yes, it could be worse, especially as far as the human spirit and human freedom are concerned.')

This is the strength, the real power, of the CPP/NDF position today. Not so much the quality of its ideology as the situation of poverty and suffering of the majority of our people, the present situation of denial of basic freedoms and violations of human rights. The strength of the far Left and the cry for revolution now is the reality of the life-situation of the poor which surrounds us, which we see going on unchanged and even worsening year after year.

Cardinal Kim of Korea has said that if Communism comes

to us today, it will not be mainly because armies will cross our borders as they did in Poland (in Eastern Europe), but because of the suffering, injustice and exploitation that we allow to continue in our midst and do nothing to remove from our societies.

It is the "cry and tears" of the poor and oppressed that moves many today to take the option of the "far Left". The "cry and tears of the poor" (the phrase is Pope Paul VI's) should move us; it is a noble motivation of both anger and compassion, and the choice that follows on it compels our respect and even our admiration. We know of people of the far Left who have given up comfort and security to place their lives at stake for those who suffer and are victims of injustice. —But once again we must remind ourselves that to take the CPP/NDF option is to choose, not only a methodology of overthrowing the present society and its political-economic systems, but also an ideology which will form the "infrastructure" of future Philippine society in a long-term, permanent way. Do we really want that for our people?

THE GOOD OF OUR PEOPLE?

At this point we could ask: is a Communist take-over the real good of our people? On previous occasions when I have given this talk I have been asked to give my own convictions on this.

Let me begin by saying that I have agonized long and discussed with many others and prayed much over the present situation of our country and what our "way out" should be. I have tried to envision (I have wanted to foresee!) the evolution of communism in the Philippines towards "a more human form"—the kind of socialist society Eurocommunist advocates speak of today—"communism with a truly human face". What positions I have come to have not been lightly taken. I believe in my heart of hearts that to choose Communism for our people, and thus to take the CPP/NDF line today, is to choose to leap from frying pan into fire. Before God and man, I do not see "total salvation" for our country or our people coming from the choice of the Communist society.

Elsewhere I have developed my reasons which I will simply indicate here: I think that the experience of other countries—including that of Vietnam and Cambodia “next door” to us—is that the human costs of some basic economic restructuring and redistribution in Communist society are so great that the overall price in terms of human freedom, of our family life and human relationships, of trust and friendship in human society, of the pursuit of the spiritual and the religious in our personal and community life—are such that they do not outweigh the benefits in terms of relatively greater economic equality. And that the benefits of relatively greater economic equality might be won, at lesser human costs, through other means than those which Communism must use in fidelity to its ideology.

IV: THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS

There is this final column in our panorama of options, the Democratic Socialists. (Incidentally, just for your information, I do not belong to this political group. Some of my friends and fellow-priests are in it, and I will admit that I am in sympathy with their declared objectives. The means they have laid down for attaining them seem to me to manifest an effort to work within the spirit and norms of Christian ethics. But for reasons I do not think necessary to go into here, I have deliberately chosen not to align myself with any of these political groups. I believe, for one thing, that my task as a theologian at *this moment* is better performed as service to the Church without any political affiliation.)

The Democratic Socialists try to combine the political features of democratic states with the economic aspects of Socialism—workers’ socialism, which they believe in (rather than state socialism: the Party in full control of all means of production). Hence their blueprint is: politically democratic but economically socialist along workers’ socialism patterns. Historically, western democratic states have evolved with structures of capitalist economy; and the socialist economic system (state socialism) has been

coupled with totalitarian communist regimes. The democratic socialists want to combine features of genuine democratic government (e.g., genuine pluralism of parties) with socialist features in the economic sphere. Hence there is the effort to equalize the distribution of economic power among the citizenry, which should lead to substantially equal participation in the determination of laws and the choice of public officials. "Formal political democracy" is affirmed to be, not a mere by-product of the capitalist ideology, but rather a permanent achievement of mankind an authentic expression of the freedom of man.

They are thus, as is evident, rather eclectic in their approach. They would perhaps say, that they represent a synthesis—"a third way" made up of the best features of both systems, and the effort to eliminate or reduce those elements which have proved themselves dehumanizing, and in this way they embody the best hopes of men today. They accept the need of controlled distribution of both the means and benefits of production, but also the distribution of power. Their attitude toward Party control, state ownership of the means of production, the use of force and violence in the achievement of goals differs from that of the Communists.

As we have said, they tend to be eclectic and centrist. They do not have the kind of attitude toward a closed ideological system that you find among those of the 'far Left'. Their strength is that of a reasonable, moderate position: a more open, more flexible ideology, an attempt to blend the better features found in both major camps together with the elimination or reduction of features which are counter-human. Thus they can claim that they represent the present moment of mankind's search for a truly human society, that they stand where the best human aspirations are placed at this point of history, with mankind having learned the lessons that the inhumanity of uncontrolled capitalist individualism as well as those of totalitarian communism have taught men in today's world.

But they suffer, of course, from the lack of "living models" they can point to, in the past or the present and they suffer too from the weakness of all centrist positions: balance appeals to

reason and moderation, but it rarely galvanizes people to action. The clear dogmatic position can call forth a passionate commitment, but the balanced center lacks this power. It seems ideologies thrive best when tension and unrest are raised to the highest point. The nuanced position is not like a flag that people rally around. Militants go for clear blacks and whites, clear lines dividing the good and the bad, with no gray in-betweens.

And yet it seems that this position appeals 'almost instinctively' to an increasing number of thoughtful and moderate people, and the movement seems to be growing. It is beginning to meet opposition from the far Right and the far Left in our country. Attempts are being made, from both these sides, to discredit or deride it. So maybe this force is gaining strength in the political arena.

Its possibilities? Who can tell? If a power vacuum should develop, if for any reason the present regime falls, might the large "silent majority" rally to it? If people turn away in recoil from the present regime, and in distrust and fear from the far Left, will this centrist position be just the one that people will find to their liking, if by then it has developed a sufficiently clear image and a sufficiently strong presence on the local scene?

AN OBLIGATION OF CONSCIENCE?

As I come to an end of this panorama of options, it might seem to you that my conclusion is one of immobility, "how *not* to be politically involved." Let me assure you that it is not. I have said that political action (as I have described it at an earlier point in this conference) can be and sometimes ought to be taken by us, even as church people, as religious. I have indicated a text from the office of the AMRSP which enumerates some examples of this kind of political action. What I did want to say clearly is this: that I do not believe that we are obliged by our Christian commitment to join political groupings or organizations which are working (as definite power groups) toward structural change or even toward revolution in the Philippines today.

I repeat: what I would like to state very clearly is that it is wrong, and manipulative, to tell people—as many sisters and seminarians have in fact been told in workshops, seminars, teach-ins run (often enough) by Church-related groups,—that one cannot be an authentic Christian in the Philippines today without joining ideologically-committed groups. I am not speaking of this as a possible happening: in some of these workshops religious have been explicitly told that not to take such option (often enough that of the CPP/NPA or the NDF) is to fail in genuine Christian commitment. People have thus been thrust and pressured into an agony of conscience which, I say again, is a manipulatively and falsely-induced agony of conscience.

I would like now, as a theologian, speaking with all the seriousness and strength at my command, to say here that by no means is any Christian in the Philippines today bound in conscience—by virtue of his or her faith or commitment to God—to take a definite ideological commitment, in order to be an authentic Christian. A Christian may wish to do so, but the choice is not a requirement for Christian authenticity. I would like to affirm this with all clarity and firmness, for the sake of your conscience.

CHRISTIAN PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR POLITICAL OPTIONS

With regard to Christian theology in relation to political options and political activity, we will here try to give briefly certain guidelines—we might call them Christian presuppositions or premises—for political involvement.

We might summarize what we have to say under three headings: 1) The perspective of faith; 2) the perspective of patriotism, or the good of the Filipino people; and lastly, 3) the perspective of the religious life and religious community.

I. THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAITH

First, political action for the Christian flows, paradoxically enough, from a non-political source: in other words, it flows from

the religious experience of God as Father and Lord, the fulfillment of whose will is the only thing considered as *absolute* by the person who has this experience. This experience is a share in the experience of Jesus.

The Cross of Jesus had (as the liberationists say) political significance, political repercussions. Jesus went the way that led to the Cross, but not (we might say) directly; his way was not directly political activity. Rather, he sought his Father's will, pursuing it relentlessly, and it was this single-minded accomplishment of his Father's bidding which, in the concrete society of his time, had consequences in the political realm, and these consequences were realized by his enemies (those who made themselves his enemies) who then saw to it that he was put to death.

If there is anything we can say about Jesus, the Jesus of the Gospels, it is that. That his one desire and passion was to do the will of his Father. He called it his food, his meat. And the will of the Father called for him to proclaim the love of God for all men, his concern for them, especially for the poor, the little ones of the earth. And if this is true, then does it not follow that there is something wrong when there are "masters" and "slaves"? So, in a true sense, the later abolition of slavery as unconscionable, and still later the universal declaration of human rights can be traced right back to the teaching of Jesus, to the Cross of Jesus.

Here we see something of the true understanding of the Gospel portrait of Jesus. He was not "the wholly spiritual Jesus" whose single concern was the interior life and man's eternal lot. Nor was he "the directly political Jesus"—a sort of Che Guevara of his own time! First and above all he was bent on accomplishing the will of his Father, bent on giving witness to the truth that was from his Father, and it was because of this, *via* this religious commitment, that his life and teaching took on political significance and had political implications. He proclaimed the sacredness and dignity of every person, founded on the Father's love and care for every person, and this led him to his death. In this context, the statement made about him bears

reflection: "Jesus was a Saviour who spilled no drop of blood but his own."

Secondly, political effectiveness for the Christian is patterned—again, paradoxically and maybe incredibly—after Jesus' epic failure in "efficiency": his defeat on the Cross at the hands of his enemies.

This has something to do with our choice between "powerful power" and "powerless power". There is powerful power which does not scruple to use arms in exactly the same way that men of this world do ("*Power grows out of the barrel of the gun*"). And there is what is called "power in weakness"—the powerless power which was Jesus' way, and the way too of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Dom Helder Camara—the way which some in the Philippine Church are choosing today (as we will hopefully see in our concluding remarks).

Thirdly, the dignity of the human person is the theological basis for our involvement as religious in political action.

"Christianity was born to give witness to this one truth: that man possesses a dignity equal to no other on the face of the earth, a dignity which almighty God himself holds in reverence to the point of loving man unto the end, unto death on the Cross." This is the reason why a religious particularly may and should involve himself or herself in political action, for in a true sense the meaning of our faith translates itself into the dignity of the person. But that dignity is ultimately founded, not in man himself, but in God who has given final and definitive confirmation of this dignity by dying on the Cross. As Kevin Kelly has said, "Good Friday is a gift of love from one who adores us. A Christian understands that the ultimate basis for the dignity of the human person lies in the truth that man is of value to God." Hence the Christian realizes that the final ushering in of that society which will be the fullest realization of human dignity, while it is partially the work of man whose free collaboration God asks for, is ultimately the gift of divine initiative and freedom.

Fourthly, the final Christian presupposition with regard to

political options is that the total promotion of human dignity is an "eschatological reality".

We have just indicated this: the coming of God's Kingdom is begun here, and God calls on man to collaborate in the building up of the earthly city. Any work for the fostering of human dignity and the promotion of justice among men is an integral part of the task of evangelization and the realization of the message of the Gospel. From this it follows that neither capitalism or communism, or any temporal order envisioned by any of the political/ideological groups, is going to be the human community which will be the perfect regime of truth and freedom, justice and love—Pope John 23rd's four pillars of human society, which hold up the edifice of true peace among men.

Summary: Once again, briefly, these are the faith-presuppositions which must underlie our political options and our political action.

1. If we enter into political involvement, it must be because of our religious experience, *via* our religious commitment. We do not first choose this or that option, and then ask God to sanction what we have already decided to do. It must spring from a conviction in faith and in all honesty that God's will is leading me here, that God is asking this of me.

2. The Christian pattern of "efficiency and success" is the Cross of Jesus. When you see people getting ready to liquidate and eliminate "the Enemy"—the oppressors—, you must ask whether this is the Christian way of "solving the problem". True, the way of the gun and the bullet may be the "efficient" way. But is it the Christian way?

3. Ultimately it is because of the God-given dignity of the human person that Christians and religious take part in political action. The Christian knows that the perfect human society which will be the full realization of human dignity and human rights and freedom cannot, finally, be only man's doing, but truly God's gift.

Hence the Christian holds that the marxist utopia, or the capitalist utopia, or any other *-ism's* utopia, will never be fully

realized. The Christian knows that in time and in history all solutions are partial. Should any ideologically-committed group take over our country or even the world, it could not eradicate—not in a hundred years, not in a thousand years—all the poverty, the injustice, the blind self-interest which we see around us, and which we are trying to change in the name of justice and love.

This does not mean we let our hands drop in total inaction. It means we give our work, our time, ourselves, in the effort to make this world more human, more just, more fraternal,—but we do not put our faith in ideologies which promise us “structures so perfect that men and women no longer need to be good.” This kind of utopia the Christian, with a realism born of faith, cannot accept.

4. The perfect human community, the Kingdom of God on earth, is an eschatological reality. Inchoately, partially, with God’s help we can begin it here on earth, but its true and total realization will come only beyond temporal history—in the next life, in God’s gift of the Kingdom, where every tear shall be wiped away, and all things shall be fulfilled in God.

II. THE TRUE GOOD OF OUR PEOPLE

The perspective of true patriotism.

We have already dealt with this point. Merely to recapitulate: our personal option is not a *merely* personal option. It is a choice, to be made in all seriousness and responsibility, of what we believe is the true good, “the best thing” for our people.

Our norm cannot and may not be “that which gives me a sense of fulfillment”—the satisfaction that I am now on the side of the poor. This may be a praiseworthy motive; I do not minimize it. But as we said earlier, it is not easy to love disinterestedly, either in inter-personal terms, or in structural and societal terms. In all honesty and sincerity I must ask myself this question: Have I chosen this because I “feel that *I* am more relevant, more involved, more generous”? Because “I have thus set aside my guilt feelings”? Or—if I opt for the far Left,—am I really choosing

“what is best for the Party” rather than what is best for the whole of the Filipino people? Or—should my option be for the *status quo*—am I really choosing only what is best for “the Establishment”, for those who now hold wealth and power in the unjust society?

III. OUR POSITION AS RELIGIOUS AND/OR PRIESTS

Once again, we have already taken this up. Ask myself: Where, in the final analysis, does my true allegiance, my true obedience, my true community lie? With those to whom I have vowed fraternal covenant in the religious life, or with the Party? In a conflict of loyalties, which one comes first in my life?

CONCLUSION: WAYS OF “BEING WITH THE POOR”

Let us come now to our conclusion. We are involved in this entire concern because we are trying to work out in practice, in our lives as religious, the Church’s discernment that (as the Synod of Bishops of 1971 expressed it) “action in behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of society is a constitutive (or integral) dimension of the task of proclaiming the Gospel”. This is a great responsibility on our part.

No matter what option I myself choose in this area, let me at least be open to the legitimacy of opinions which other Christians, other religious choose. As Pope Paul VI has said in *Octogesima adveniens*, within the Christian community, in political choices, Christians will rarely reach unanimity, and we will normally be faced by a plurality of social and political options taken by different Christians. It is false to say that trying to live out “action for justice and transformation of (unjust) structures of society” means that there is only one option open to the genuine Christian: the CPP/NPA or NDF option,—or, on the other side, support for the ML-regime.

“OTHER WAYS OF BEING WITH THE POOR”

“Being with the poor”, “choosing to be on the side of the poor”, “being on the side of those who suffer poverty and in-

justice"—in the effort to bring about a more human, more just, more fraternal society, is (at least derivatively) a faith-option, a theological position deriving from Christian faith, a Christian position which the Church has re-affirmed in various ways in the last few years.

But, as we have indicated, some seminars are made to lead to one conclusion only: (a) To be an authentic Christian in the Philippines today means "to be on the side of the poor". (b) This Christian position is then so inextricably interwoven with one form of structural analysis that the seminar-process ends up with this obligation of conscience: (c) to commit oneself to the overthrow of the present regime by joining the CPP/NPA or collaborating with it in the NDF. No other option is possible for the Christian conscience, the seminar-leaders hold. It is only one's bourgeois mentality, one's bourgeois fears which keep one from this choice demanded by fidelity to the Gospel and fidelity to Christ.

We must point out, with all clearness, that such a process is railroading, is inducing a false situation of conscience; that a plurality of options is still open to the Christian in the Philippines today.

To join these options with real people and real alternatives, we might give some concrete examples.

1. Bishop Claver's "communities of dialogue" approach, which he explains in the paper found in this volume. Here the all-out effort is to conscientize the poor and oppressed, to awaken them to their legitimate rights and obligations, and to help them realize that voice and power can be theirs through united, *peaceful* and purposeful action. But there is the continually ongoing effort to awaken and keep alive the Christian realities of faith, hope and love, nourished by reflection on the Scriptures, strengthened by the sacraments and Christian worship, by personal and communitarian prayer consciously open to Christian conversion, forgiveness, to a search for justice not powered by hatred or vengefulness, without recourse to violence as an *apriori* means. This endeavour has no formal ideological base; its effort is to try to personally appropriate the Gospel—with God's grace—to interior-

ize it in one's life, personal and social. The Christian Gospel is explicitly kept in front; its values are consciously and deliberately the primary values. The objective is to have the citizen develop himself into a person truly free, able to evaluate and criticize others' positions for himself, capable of reaching decisions within and with the community, allowed to make the mistakes which are inevitable with free agents, not dictated to by elites, no matter who they might be. —We are informed that Bishop Labayen too, moves in this direction in his diocesan programs.

2. Secondly, there is Mother Teresa's approach: to manifest as directly and as incarnately as possible God's love for people, especially for the suffering, the abandoned, the poor. I have dealt with the significance of Mother Teresa's apostolate more fully elsewhere. Here it will suffice to repeat one consideration: her kind of apostolate is not to be seen as merely a form of almsgiving and relief work. No, the core of it is the personal embodiment through a total gift of the self in the most genuinely self-forgetting way Christians are capable of. It is a living testimony of God's care and love for his little ones, for the poorest of the poor. What matters here is the core of total self-gift out of love, the quiet proclamation by life-witness of a true way of living out the two great Christian commandments: the love of God and the love of one's brethren. "Is it structural?" In a way it is no more and no less structural than Christ's own life-witness and the teaching which accompanied it: it is, if you will, a bomb detonated at the depths of the heart—it cannot fail to have in time its structural consequences.

3. Thirdly, there is the way Bishop Tuftud has chosen. With the Holy Father's consent, he has given up his diocese of Iligan, and has chosen to live as a poor, simple, lowly Christian with a small group of Christians around him, in the midst of the Moslems in Marawi. His model, I believe, is the way of life that Brother Charles of Jesus (Charles de Foucauld) shaped for himself: life witness, human sharing, contemplation. This small community intends to share as much as possible the material conditions of life that ordinary Muslims have, trying to be, in the most deeply

human and Christian sense of the term, brothers and sisters to them.

4. Some religious congregations of women here in the Philippines have adopted a way of "radical living", going to some of the poorest sections in the country, to share the life of the poor, trusting wholly on Divine Providence, without assured means of support. —In the same line, some lay persons I know are forming the beginnings of small Christian communes, where they live a life of great simplicity, close to the soil, with as much total sharing of material goods as they can work out, consciously and deliberately joining this with meditation on the Gospel, prayer, works of helping and caring in relation to the sick, the suffering, sharing with those who have even less in life than they have.

Of these various efforts at evolving Christian alternatives, which do perhaps strike us as somewhat utopian and naive, one might wonder: are not these Christians, in fact, doing more ultimately in the effort towards creating a more human and more brotherly world, than those who sit at the conference tables of the UN, or the UNCTAD, or the SALT discussions, where at the highest level a new international order is being attempted, or new international agreements are being forged? We do not want to talk down any sincere and intelligent efforts whereby men of good will gather together to try to create better conditions for justice and peace among men. But one wonders where the truest way to justice, peace and brotherhood lies, and who, in the end, do most for it.

The effort to change structures is absolutely necessary today; we must affirm that. And the Christian and the Church must participate in this effort. I have myself stressed this again and again. But let us not now allow ourselves to fall into the opposite temptation, and assume a form of megalomania, where we see ourselves as the chosen agents of transformation of the order of the world and our country by our own self-sufficient deeds,—a megalomania which sometimes thinks that demonstrations and rallies, conscientization seminars, collaboration with

political power blocs, participation in fostering revolutionary change (all of which have their own excellence)—constitute the supreme form, even the sum-total of Christian presence and action in the world. The temptation today is to despise every other form of Christian presence and action, every other genre of Christian involvement, as out-of-date, as palliative, as supportive of the status quo. The temptation is that we can so change structures and recreate political and economic life so that the new structures we build up will be so perfect that it will no longer be necessary for men and women to pray, to be sorry for their sins, to strive for deeper conversion of heart, to seek the way of the beatitudes—mercy, gentleness, forgiveness, simple goodness, the lowliness and death to self-righteousness, which the Gospel of Jesus and the Cross of Jesus have pointed to as the way of being Christian, for all men, at all times.

No, there is *not* only one way of being authentically Christian in the Philippines today, the way of ideological commitment. Instead one must say: the “same old” Christian way is the only way today: to give one’s life totally to God and to the brethren, especially the little ones, along the way of the Cross—in whatever form we believe God calls us. But at the heart of our commitment must be the Gospel in our hearts, the integral Gospel in our lives. This way is “beyond ideology”, and ideological commitment is only Christian to the extent that “within it, beneath it, and beyond it”, the meanings and values of the Gospel and of the Christ-life are truly present in our deepest selves, as individuals and as communities. This may be an unfashionable thing to say today, but it must be said. And I here say it.

For, as St. Paul wrote, “It was to shame the wise that God chose what is foolish by human reckoning, and to shame what is strong that he chose what is weak by human reckoning, those whom the world thinks common and contemptible are the ones that God has chosen—those who are nothing at all to show up those who are everything. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.”

STUDY-OUTLINE:
A PANORAMA OF OPTIONS—
AND THE FILIPINO CHRISTIAN TODAY

Paper by ANTONIO B. LAMBINO, S.J.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 *Pre-notes*

1. "Being on the side of the poor"; "being with the poor": the Church's discernment of her task in today's world demands this.

The difficulty and complexity of this option, when one tries to realize it within the Philippines today.

The need (and duty) of awareness of the struggle for power going on and the different groups (and corresponding options) vying for support of the people and access to power.

2. "Working for the good of the people": the difficulty of knowing as Christians committed to the poor what that truly means for us in practice.

I.2 *Three levels of political involvement*

1. total ideological commitment;
2. political organization;
3. political action

— The Christian's duty in the Philippines today?

It includes this: to be aware of, and to participate in, the necessary structural changes and in the necessary transformation of unjust social (economic, cultural, political) structures in our society, to the measure of one's capacities and situation in society, where called for, at least on the level of political action.

— Thus *no* "Christian obligation" to be ideologically aligned or committed to an ideologically committed group.

PANORAMA OF POLITICAL OPTIONS/POSITIONS
IN THE PHILIPPINES TODAY

II.1

Prenote: The necessity of distinguishing between:

— personal options and commitments of individual persons, and the respect due to such choices made, at least vis-a-vis the subjective dispositions and sincerity of the person(s) making the options;

— the option itself, seen objectively, in its “objective validity” in the concrete situation.

II.2 The four positions to be taken up:

The (“far”) Right: The Martial Law Government (III)

Right of Center: Civil Liberties/Message of Hope Group (IV)

The (“far”) Left: Communist Party of the Philippines, the New Peoples’ Army, the National Democratic Front (CPP/NPA/NDF) (V)

Left of Center: Democratic Socialists (VI)

III. THE (“FAR”) RIGHT: THE PRO-MARTIAL LAW POSITION

— present attitude of many “committed Christians” generally unfavorable;

— hence: objectives and goal of ML often not fairly examined; general skepticism towards its “achievements”;

— *PRO* support: some, “all out”; others, generally with reservations: given the concrete Philippine, Asian, world situation, “the most viable”, “the lesser evil”; “the only way to survive”, etc.

FORTUNE magazine’s thesis of the need and popular support of authoritarian governments in Asia today.

— *CON*: from 12 June 1975 text of some Christian laymen, priests, religious and bishops:

a) concept of development almost entirely economicist, materialist;

b) no *genuine* “people participation” in decisions affecting their lives;

c) social engineering and thus "deception and violence to true freedom".

IV. CIVIL LIBERTIES AND "MESSAGE OF HOPE" POSITION

— *Features*: strong for restoration of human and civil rights, democratic institutions and processes; commitment to traditional ideals of (western-style) democracy;

presently: reminder of democratic forms, processes; Socratic "gadfly" role

— *PRO*: commitment to democratic goals; quality of proponents who have proved their genuine dedication to freedom and democracy

— *CON*: at present weak, apparently not cohesive or organized; what is its real strength? in spite of strength of "vision", of objectives and moral appeal.

— *Evaluation*: its strength is in our democratic traditions, people's devotion to democratic ideals, the mind and heart of the "silent majority" (?)

V. THE "FAR" LEFT: THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY

— Pre-note: Crucial distinction: Marxism and marxists; the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Marxism and Marxists: Many elements of marxist analysis insightful and true: marxist analysis of relationships of production which give rise to classes, tensions, exploitation, antagonism between classes, ideologies, class struggle, super-structures;

marxist insistence on importance of praxis;

Marxism as a "contemporary symbol of the eternal human cry for societal justice"

V.1 CPP/NPA

— The Communist Party of the Philippines the core group calling the shots, with its own plans and programs for the future;

the NDF strategy, with real control in the Party's hands;

the dated slogan, with its long and tragic history: "It will be different here."

the specificity and definite features of Communism as an international movement: “absolutely no exception to this rule: the only communism *de facto* in power that we have experienced is the totalitarian type, with the effort (sometimes not wholly successful) by the Party and State to control all aspects of life, including private human relationships, in accordance with ideological tenets.”

— the “atheism” of Communism: the Party and the State *must be* explicitly and professedly atheist; no exceptions to this;

but the *real* atheism: the God is the Revolution and the Party which is in charge of the revolution:

equivalently, the good of the people and the good of the Party are coterminous; the absolute is the Party and its power.

— the ideology: manichaeistic oversimplification of the ideological opposites (an “ideologized anthropology”): oppressor-oppressed; auxiliary groups with oppressors, by consent; all “sin” on one side (an “ideologized theology of sin”); contradictions heightened for purposes of generating conflict, etc.

Realities much more complex forced to fit the ideological Procrustean bed; marxist structural analysis arises from ideology, and is so presented as to lead back to the ideology as its “dogmatic base”.

— Members of religious orders and congregations and collaboration with, or/and membership in CPP/NPA and NDF (cf. below):

incompatibility of religious vows, membership, community with CPP/NPA allegiance and obedience.

— Non-acceptability of CPP/NPA option and its promises:

— basic incompatibility of ideological “absolutes” and Christian faith;

— promises: “It will be different here”: not one example of this being kept, as to democratic freedoms, and true freedom for Church and religion.

V.2 THE NDF. The “great temptation” today for many Filipino priests and religious: instrumentalization for objectives of CPP/NPA.

V.3 SOME REFLECTIONS

a) The *Church* in the future Communist society: "It will be different here": the long and tragic history of this promise, especially with regard to basic human rights (the Gulag Archipelago!) and true freedom of religion and freedom to preach and live "the integral Gospel" including the right of the Church to pursue its "critical and prophetic task" in Communist society;

— nothing in past or *present* history grounds credibility for this promise.

b) The *Filipino people* and the future Communist society:

— economic needs: meeting these; human costs involved;

— religion, education (under State control; thought control)

— family, human relationships, trust within society (Party and State control)

"A leap from the frying pan into the fire"; "total salvation" for our people does not lie in a future Communist society.

c) Hence: *important*: the grave responsibility each one of us bears, before God and our people, for choices and activity which foster the access to power of the "far" Left (CPP/NPA/NDF)—or any other of these options.

What is involved here is not merely a methodology of change of regimes, but the permanent "infrastructure" and shape of future Filipino society.

d) Final note: the strength of the "far" Left in the country today: not its ideological tenets, but the terrible realities of poverty and misery among our people; the injustices rife in our present society; the violations of human rights and freedoms.

Our duty to do something as far as in us lies about this, to heed "the cry and tears" of the poor. What are we *doing*?

VI. DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS

— *Features*: attempt to combine features of democracy (political institutions and processes) with economic features of socialism (workers' socialism).

— *PRO*: its goals, its humanism, its attempt to operate

within Christian norms—both in objectives, humanism, political programs and strategies; an attempt to synthesize best features of each of existing systems (capitalism, communism), attempt to remove dehumanizing features of existing systems.

— *CON*: lack of concrete models in existence and from history; relatively weak position and organization; ‘centrist’ position does not have *appeal of extremes*;

— *Evaluation*: Appeal to the reasonable and moderate; the embodiment of mankind’s truest aspirations today; appeal to our people, in case of power-vacuum?

VII. FINAL QUESTION: after the panorama: “Do not be involved”?

No; need of involvement in efforts at removal of unjust social structures in Philippine society: a true Christian obligation and task.

But: there is no obligation on the Filipino Christian today, by virtue of his/her Gospel commitment, to align himself/herself ideologically, to commit himself/herself to an ideologically committed group and power-bloc.

VIII. CHRISTIAN PRESUPPOSITIONS FOR POLITICAL ACTION AND OPTIONS

VIII.A The Perspective of Faith.

1. Christian political action flows from the religious experience of God as Father and Lord; patterned on the life-experience of Jesus.

2. “Effectiveness” in the political action of the Christian is patterned on the Cross of Jesus, and chooses “powerless power” over “powerful power”.

3. The basis for involvement in political action is the dignity of the human person, which is founded not in man but ultimately in God’s love for each person.

4. The coming-to-be of the perfect human community where human dignity, human rights and freedom will be perfectly realized is “an eschatological reality” and ultimately God’s gift.

VIII.B The true good of our people.

The norm for choice is not *my* self-fulfillment or *my* guilt-feeling or *my* need to be involved, but the true good of our people. The need to be most honest about our motivation.

VIII.C Our position as religious.

Where does my true allegiance and true obedience lie? With my religious community, with whom I am bound in vowed covenant, or with the ideological group?

IX. CONCLUSION: BEING WITH THE POOR

Deriving from VII, above: varieties of ways of "*being with the poor*" through living Christians witness relevant to our Filipino situation today:

a) Forming "communities of freedom and dialogue" (Bishop Claver): conscientizing the poor to their rights and obligations, to *peaceful* action for their rights and participation, non-ideological, with *Gospel* values *explicitly* stressed;

b) direct Christian witness through total self-giving lives for the poor and suffering (eg, Mother Teresa of Calcutta);

c) Christian communities as fully as possible "sharing the life and lot of the poor" through living Christian presence and witness (e.g., Bishop Tutud); in "radical living" and "radical sharing"; deriving its inspiration and constant strength from the Word and the Christian community.

Finally: action for "structural change" important, but the way of the Gospel, the beatitudes, the Cross, must inform and animate such action. The radical self-gift to the Father and to the brethren, in whatever way God calls us, remains the fundamental duty of the Christian, "beyond ideology".

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Loyola School of Theology



CHURCH, STATE AND CONFLICT IN THE PHILIPPINES

BENJAMIN A. McCloskey *

In September of 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines, bringing to a close that nation's 26-year experiment with American-style democracy. By some standards the experiment could be termed a qualified success: the Philippines, for example was the only nation in Southeast Asia ever to have voted an administration out of office, and it had done so quite regularly. As an instrument of social progress, however, democracy had proved less successful: wealth and power were highly concentrated in the hands of local and national oligarchies and there was no sustained response to the obvious need for a far-reaching programme of social and economic reform. The distribution of income which was one of the most unequal in the world was becoming even more unequal as time passed and economic development progressed. A 1971 study estimated that about 25% of urban families and 48% rural families could not buy an adequate diet if all family expenditures went for food alone; a high

proportion of school children suffered from malnutrition and preschool malnutrition was in a disturbing number of cases severe enough to cause permanent brain damage and mental retardation. Maoist-oriented student organisations dominated campuses throughout the country, and fed recruits into a small armed underground in the hills. The government seemed incapable of controlling the rising tide of social unrest and violence. Thus the President, who was approaching the end of his second and constitutionally final term of office, was able to declare that a clear and present danger threatened the security of the state and the constitutional process, and justify the imposition of martial law.

Its continuation has been based on the claimed that it is necessary to bring about social reform and eliminate the causes of subversion, and more recently by the claim that 'constitutional authoritarianism' constitutes 'our' way of governing ourselves, a way adapted to 'our' circumstances and for which 'we' need make no apologies. President

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Marcos' own continuation in power has been legalised by the introduction of a new constitution and a series of referenda; these latter have been carefully organised and controlled by the government, and in one of last October a refusal to vote was punishable by imprisonment.

Actual government policy under martial law seems much more orientated toward political survival for President Marcos and a traditional form of economic development, than toward social reform. Contrary to the recommendations of a major study of the economy conducted under the auspices of the International Labour Office, economic decisions have favoured high-capital urban industry and the tourist trade rather than agricultural development and rural small industry. The land reform programme has bogged down, urban jobs cannot absorb the influx from the rural areas, and inflation has drastically eroded the living standards of the poor. Urban squatters have been summarily ejected and their homes demolished in order to beautify the city of Manila for occasions such as the International Monetary Fund meeting of last year, for which fifteen new hotels and a magnificent conference centre were built. Labour and peasant organisation, and even credit unions and co-operatives are strictly controlled; strikes are effectively forbidden, and four foreign priests who were supporting organisational work in the slums of Manila were deported last year.

The constitutional guarantees of freedom from arbitrary arrest and

imprisonment, freedom of speech, of assembly, and of the press, have been suspended or otherwise rendered ineffective. Thousands have been held for extended period — many months or even years — without trial. Torture and abusive treatment of prisoners suspected of subversive activities have been well documented and appear to be common practice. Many prisoners have disappeared without trace or have died violent and painful deaths in the process of interrogation.

For the First Four Years of martial law, the main opposition came from the remnants of the Maoist underground which regrouped and continued to operate in the more remote provinces, and from an opposition made up of Church-related groups which persisted in exercising free speech, a free press, and criticism of government abuses. They continually raised the issue of political prisoners, treatment of slum-dwellers and other disadvantaged groups, and the whole policy of government, and development, by presidential decree. An outspoken minority of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of the Philippines (CBCP) came to support this critical stance, together with the leadership group in the Associations of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP), and the great majority of those priests and religious who had been associated with the Church's social action programmes. The major superiors were the best organised and most active element in this opposition: task forces of religious visited the military stockades, located and assisted political prisoners and their families, documented and

publicised cases of abuses committed against prisoners, against urban labourers and squatters, and against labourers on the sugar plantations. Their weekly mimeographed news-sheet, circulated without the government's approval, became a major source of annoyance to the latter. Moreover, some of the most dedicated religious in this field of social action began collaborating with Maoist elements in labour education and organisation work, while some former seminarians and teachers in Catholic institutions joined the armed underground and a few of them were killed in encounters with the military.

During this period the government frequently showed its displeasure at criticism coming from Church sources, but hesitated to move strongly against it, probably for fear of antagonising the Church as a whole, and also because it was heavily involved in fighting a Muslim rebellion on the southern island of Mindanao. Moreover, the leadership group of the Bishops' Conference, and the Apostolic Nuncio, clearly wished to maintain friendly relations with the government. On the basis of material collected and forwarded to Rome by the Nuncio, Mgr Bruno Torpigliani, the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes in 1975 wrote to the members of the AMRSP warning of an 'almost exclusively socio-political' orientation of the leadership group; the latter defended itself in a meeting with the Nuncio and was later sustained by the membership at the annual meetings of the Associations.

In the Months from September

of last year to January of this year, the situation became more polarised, largely as a result of the government's referendum-plebescite held in October. Although participation was obligatory, a group of bishops and the Joint Executive Board of the AMRSP denounced it as a farce and an insult to human dignity and declared that they would refuse to vote. The Administrative Board of the CBCP, on the other hand, declared that it was a Christian duty to vote. An angry series of open letters signed by bishops and religious superiors followed, and the 'dissident' bishops explained their stand in a document *Ut Omnes Unum Sint* which was personally handed to the Pope by one of their number. There was in fact a massive boycott of the referendum-plebescite, which clearly angered and embarrassed the government. Shortly afterwards, a letter was addressed to the bishops, signed by Cardinal Baggio for the Congregation of Bishops and Cardinal Pironio for the Congregation of Religious and Secular Institutes, sharply criticising the AMRSP for 'activities of a socio-political character' which were causing 'confusion' in relations between the Church and civil authorities 'with consequent serious damage to the common good that they are called to foster'. The bishops were urged to exert their authority in maintaining unity in the Church against the undisciplined activities of some religious.

The Baggio-Pironio letter was given wide circulation in the Philippines by officials of the Bishops' Conference. At about the same time the government moved sharply

in retaliation against its 'enemies' within the Church: two religious priests who had been active in organisational work in Manila's slums were summarily expelled from the country; two prelature radio stations in Mindanao and two National Catholic publications centred in Manila, including the weekly news-sheet of the major superiors, were raided by the military and closed; and some 70 Catholic lay leaders in the Maryknoll Fathers' mission district in Mindanao were arrested. The national spokesmen for the Hierarchy quickly dissociated themselves from the groups under attack, and with regard to the expelled priests the Cardinal Archbishop of Manila was quoted as saying 'You have to give the authorities the benefit of the doubt.' Moreover, certain Roman authorities chose this moment to move against two key leaders of the religious opposition to martial law. The Superior General of the Religious of the Good Shepherd intervened in the election of a provincial for the congregation in the Philippines, declaring Sister Christine Tan, who was completing her term as provincial and president of the Major Superiors of Women, ineligible for re-election. And the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ordered that Fr Benigno Mayo, director of the Jesuit social centre and former provincial and president of the Major Superiors of Men, be removed from the Philippines for a year as punishment for an apparently invalid dispensation from celibacy granted by him as provincial to one of his men. Since Sister

Christine and Fr Mayo had been mainly responsible for the orientation and activities of the AMRSP under martial law, and had participated in various confrontations with both government and ecclesiastical authorities in this connection, the actions taken against them were inevitably given a political interpretation.

Nevertheless, several new episcopal voices joined the usual dissidents in protesting against the arrests of Church personnel and the attacks on the media. And, as the annual meeting of the Bishops' Conference scheduled for late January approached, a petition asking that the Hierarchy take a stronger stand on issues involving human rights was circulated among priest and major seminarians, receiving many hundreds of signatures.

The Government, for its part, seems to have contributed toward healing, whether permanently or only temporarily remains to be seen, the rift within the Hierarchy and that between the bishops and the major, superiors. In January, an unsigned order of arrest for more than 100 Church-related individuals seems to have been leaked by the military; and included among those to be cited for various crimes against the security of the State were four bishops. Seemingly in reply to this and other provocations, the Bishops' Conference in its annual meeting at the end of January issued a pastoral letter to be read in all the Churches of the country, a letter which, although very diplomatic in tone and focusing largely on issues in which the Church was

directly involved, was understood as a rebuke to the government for its harassment of those who were attempting to improve the lot of the poor. The letter was seen also as a rejection of the position of the Nuncio, whose remarks at the opening of the meeting on the danger of infiltration by communists were interpreted as a defense of the government's position. The religious superiors in their own annual meeting gratefully endorsed the stand of the Hierarchy.

The Church-State problem was by no means resolved with the issue of the January pastoral: the radio stations and publications remain closed; the renewal of visas for missionaries is being delayed; an order of arrest for 209 Church-related individuals, including priests and religious as well as lay workers but no bishops, was signed and preliminary hearings are under way against many of them. In fact the problem has been swept by the tide of events into the vortex of another national issue: the government's move to resolve the Muslim question in Mindanao, and free itself from the burden of a rebellion which it has been unable to put down, by granting autonomy and perhaps Muslim rule to 13 provinces — many of which actually have Christian majorities. However, rather than discuss the headlines of today and tomorrow, it may be useful to analyze in some detail the various positions, ideological and theological as well as political, which have emerged within the Philippine Church as it has attempted to confront the changes taking place in the wider society.

For convenience, the positions may be characterised by the conventional terms Right, Centre and Left.

Right: This has been the habitual stance of the majority of the bishops, some religious superiors, and an undetermined number of individual priests and religious. With some simplification, it may be characterised as follows.

Politically: Support of and co-operation with the government is regarded as normal, except in those instances (such as the latter's family planning programme and proposals to tax Church property) in which Church doctrines or interests are directly involved. The areas of tension are to be dealt with through discussion and negotiation between representatives of the Church and those of the State.

Ideologically: The benefit of the doubt goes to the government in political matters, and on most issues there is some room for doubt. Not all American-style civil rights are basic human rights; before martial law these were enjoyed only by the upper and middle classes, and they would not be enjoyed by anyone if the communists should come to power. Peace and order and economic development are more important to the masses of the people than abstract rights, and are in fact the primary objectives of government policy. Abuses occur and should be corrected, but they occurred before martial law also and they are not intended by those in power nor intrinsic to the system.

Theologically: Emphasis is placed on the spiritual role of the Church, which can adapt to any form of

government which allows it the freedom to carry out its mission of preaching the Word of God; on the importance of authority and unity in the Church; on the essentially spiritual and subordinate role of religious.

Centre: This has been the position of the minority group within the Bishops' Conference, the leadership of the AMRSP, and again an undetermined number of priests and religious. Its chief elements would seem to be the following.

Politically: The initial stand of 'critical acceptance' vis-a-vis martial law has shifted in the course of time to one of qualified opposition on the grounds that martial law has been protracted for too long a time, that it produces unjustifiable violations of human rights, and it promotes a style of development 'from above' which is not genuine human development. Those who hold this view have been active in defending freedom of expression and the rights of political detainees and other disadvantaged groups, and in promoting organisations of peasants, labourers, and slum-dwellers. Many of their activities overlap with those of the Left (see below), and on this level the groups are difficult to distinguish, and in fact they intermingle. It is only within the past year that some members of the Centre groups have become concerned about possible manipulation by the Left; the result has been a growth in sophistication on the part of the Centre but also a certain amount of suspicion and mutual secretiveness among the various groups opposing the martial law regime.

Ideologically: There is a strong com-

mitment to the ideal of self-development of people. As a group those who hold this position do not subscribe to a particular ideology or a concrete and detailed programme: many will say that people themselves must develop ideology and programmes out of their own experience, and that for the churchman it is enough to insist on the principles of the Gospel and to provide leadership in attempting to apply these principles to concrete situation. Some on the other hand feel the need of a guiding ideology and programme, and are trying to develop one along the lines of democratic socialism.

Theologically: In the words of the document *Ut Omnes Unum Sint* which has been mentioned above, the Church is:

not only *Institution*, jealous of its authority, of its prerogatives and rights. It is also *People* — the people of God, the Community of Believers ... For if we are serious about the people-part of our definition, we will have to pay more attention to their life situation, to their life problems, to events that help - or do not help - them to live a more human and Christian life. We do not deny the supremacy that the spiritual must have in the life of Christians. But accepting that supremacy does not mean that we neglect the physical ... It is a paradox, but it seems to us that the less involved in politics the Church professes to be, the more it is actually involved - but in a way that is more detrimental to its primacy task of preaching the Gospel. We cannot conceive of a Church that

preaches a Gospel which has nothing whatsoever to tell people in the political aspects of their life.

Left: The following position seems to be held, explicitly or implicitly, by a few bishops and/or religious superiors and by many of the priests and religious — including some of the best and the brightest — who have been involved in grass-roots social action.

Politically: This group tries to maintain contact and cooperation with the Centre, in the interest of a united front of opposition to the martial law regime. It also collaborates in various ways, e.g. in educational, organisational and mass media work, with members of the revolutionary left who are working 'underground' for a violent revolution guided by Marxist-Maoist principles. It is probable that the government's attacks directed mainly against the highly visible leaders of the Centre have caused a further polarisation and movement from the middle position toward the Left.

Ideologically: Members of this group have been favourably impressed by dissident leaders with whom they have come in contact, and they value highly the latter's dedication and closeness to the people. Some have already tested their own commitment in prison, and in dealing with them one senses that they are judging not just the cogency of one's ideas but the extent to which one is willing to risk and sacrifice for them, and the extent to which the ideas themselves are relevant to the cause of the poor and the marginalized. They feel that the im-

possibility of peaceful reform is shown by the whole history of the martial law regime, and that the basic question is 'Whose side are you on, that of the government or that of the people?' From this follows the next question 'Who is the most effective opposition to the government?' And it is suggested that those priests and religious who want to work for the people but hesitate to work with the revolutionary movement are really 'vacillating elements' chiefly concerned about the survival of their institutions. At the same time, one observes a certain narrowing of perspective among some who seem to have adopted this point of view, a selective reading of history and an unwillingness honestly to face up to inconvenient facts: an attempt to raise the question of the fate of united front movements elsewhere is likely to be brushed aside by the claim that 'We Filipinos are doing our own thing; what happened in Yugoslavia or Vietnam does not concern us. Christians are influencing the movement from within and can prevent it from becoming entirely anti-religious.'

Theologically: 'Christ had a beautiful vision. So did Marx. Both visions fell into the hands of bureaucrats.' Vast changes are necessary in the structure and functioning of the Church if it is to meet the needs of our time. The Gospel must be linked to the realities of the situation through a scientific analysis of Marxist inspiration which will indicate a concrete programme of action; else it remains entirely abstract

and the Church becomes only a group of liberals constantly protesting against the violation of individual civil rights. The method for a relevant theology is praxis, i.e. action and reflection on action in the light of the Gospel. The action in turn must be a liberating action like that of God in the Bible who takes the side of the poor and the oppressed; hence it links up with the class struggle, and both the Old and the New Testament can usefully be read in these terms. Thus liberation today means revolution; inculturation means conscientisation and politicalisation; the local church becomes a populist church guided by the needs of the people. There is also an impressive effort to develop a spirituality suited to the circumstances through extended periods of recollection, reflection on the Gospel, and shared prayer: 'The Spirit plus an opening to Marxism; prayer plus immersion in historical reality.'

Analyses of the type, which we have attempted necessarily involve some oversimplification of the reality; concrete individuals tend to be both more complex and less consistent than the categories which we set up, and resist being inserted into them. This being admitted, I should like to note that each of our categories has a place within the structure of the Philippine Church and corresponds to a certain type of experience or to particular priorities and concerns. Even theological positions may not be accepted for theological reasons alone, but also because they provide coherence and spiritual legitimation for the individual's political and ideological choices. Thus it is quite intelligible

that the ordinaries of large and long-established dioceses, the Apostolic Nuncio and those Roman authorities who receive their information through him, give high priority to the doctrinal and organisational structure of the Church and tend toward the Right. The Centre position on the other hand has been accepted by many of the younger bishops and prelates apostolic, particularly in the frontier regions on the southern island of Mindanao, where the Church has few major institutions but a strong tradition of innovative social action and where it has attempted to respond to the needs of a burgeoning migrant population through the training of lay community leaders. Finally, the strongest voices on the Left belong to those who have been personally most involved in social action, who have experienced the frustration of their efforts by the martial law regime and have witnessed the intimidation, imprisonment, even torture and death of simple people who were finally becoming conscious of their rights.

This is not to say that one's political, ideological or theological position is wholly determined by personal circumstances and experience, and that all three positions are therefore equally right and equally wrong. To say that would be to ignore the important contributions of individual leadership and creativity, painful personal decision, and ideas imported from elsewhere. Moreover it is not a question of all positions being equal, but of all being limited, and no one of them doing full justice to the reality of the human situation. Hence fact of disagreement and debate

within the Church should not be seen as surprising or scandalous. (This is a conclusion which extends beyond the boundaries of the Philippine Church.) Hopefully as a result of such debate the churchman may be better prepared to confront the ugly realities of

hunger, torture and brutality that characterise much of our world today; to act in defence of human and Christian values while remaining aware of one's own limitations; to draw inspiration from a personal experience of God and not to make of the Faith a passive instrument of any ideology.

(Reprinted from THE MONTH, London, August 1977, 263-267)

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Marxism formulates the tensions of a dying civilization. But at the same time it obscures the issue. What is at stake is the future of freedom.

LOOKING OVER THE PAPERS: SOME (LOOSE) NOTES

C.G. ARÉVALO, S.J.

These pages, which close this issue of LOYOLA PAPERS, make up a kind of footnote to this number. That is all they intend to be, a footnote of sorts.

As Father Lambino noted (cf. introduction), the "Bukidnon papers" really need no added theological reflection; they are themselves fine essays at theological reflection, done at the 'grass roots', — which give them a value all their own. Father Lambino's extended treatment of the 'options' issue, once again an attempt at a concrete answer to questions posed to him — with increasing frequency, by priests and religious from all over the country — is theological reflection arising from real problems and real issues facing scores (maybe hundreds) of real people in the Philippine Church today. Since my positions are in substantial agreement with most (though not everything!) of what is said in this issue, I can limit my comments to a few points.

Two local publications have, in the last two weeks, come out with important numbers on the very themes we are taking up here. I would like to recommend:

— the October 1977 (Volume 12, Number 10) issue of IMPACT magazine, "Christianity/Marxism". A quick look-over of contents: Editorial, "Christian-Marxists"; Jaime Reyes, "Christian-Marxist" — a review of the Christians for Socialism position and that of their critics; "Interviews with Christian-Marxists in Asia" — of first rate interest; "Laymen's Guide to Ideological Jungle"; "Religious Freedom and Equal Rights under the New Regime" — Bishop Philip Nguyen Kim Dien's letter on the self-immolation of Buddhist monks in Saigon to protest restriction of religious freedom under the Communist regime in Viet-Nam; "National Security State and the Christian" — on the National Security State and its ideology and tactics; "Kim Chi Ho's Philosophy of Unification." — Impact, 202 Balagtas St., Pasay City, P.O. Box 2950, Manila.

— Numbers 3 and 4, 1977, of TEACHING ALL NATIONS, East Asian Pastoral Institute, dedicated almost entirely to the "Christians for Socialism" theme. Contents: Felipe Gomez, SJ, "Christians for Socialism" — a survey of the movement and a critical analysis of its positions; the 1975 Quebec document of the "Christians for Socialism" movement, with an important commentary — which I would urge our readers to study — by Pierre Bigo, who has been an active collaborator of the Jesuit magazine *Action Populaire* in Paris and is at present a professor of sociology in the Pastoral Institute of CELAM (Latin American Bishops' Conference) in Medellin, Colombia; Romeo Intengan on Christian-Marxist relations in the Philippines today (a good summary of "local theses" of Philippine Christian-Marxists, with a response by the author); Claude Lange on "The Catholic Church in (South) Vietnam"; Jurij Malcev, A Soviet dissident, "God is popular again militant atheist countries": finally, a chapter from a recent book, written by a team of French specialists on collaboration between Christians and Marxists, "Christians and Marxists in Action", — For individuals or groups who wish to do some serious reading and reflection on these themes, this issue can be recommended most highly.

TEACHING ALL NATIONS, Volume 14, Numbers 3/4, 1977, East Asian Pastoral Institute, P.O. Box 1815, Manila, Philippines (EAPI is located on the Ateneo de Manila University Campus, Loyola Heights, Quezon City).

Not everything in the following paragraphs is my own; some of it has been lifted almost bodily from some things I have recently read, but they give at least the present positions I would myself take on some of the issues raised in the "Christian/Marxist" encounter in our country today.

ON MARXIST IDEOLOGY, STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS, AND SOME "CHRISTIANS FOR SOCIALISM" POSITIONS

As far as "structural analysis" goes, *Bishop Claver* has these points to make:

1. The Marxists themselves say that marxist structural analysis cannot be divorced from marxist ideology.
2. It is only one way of dissecting society of study. There are many ways — each "valid" according to one's premises (one's ideology).

(We might add: there are other approaches to human social reality, from other sciences, which — from their diverse viewpoints — modify considerably, relativize considerably the severely socio-economic perspective of Marxism. Hence marxist analysis is *one* approach to social reality, which has to be corrected and modified — and where necessary even contradicted — by findings of other disciplines.)

3. It seems marxist analysis (as accepted *on faith*) is so rigid

that facts and people are made to fit into the ideological givens rather than the other way around.

Hence the suspicion and more than mere suspicion, that *"The whole aim of structural analysis, it seems, is to lead people to the very ideology that it springs up from."*

Father Lambino in his turn reaffirms the position: it seems clear that the structural analysis is premised on the ideology, and in turn is meant to lead back to the ideology itself — and the revolution which is its purpose, the accession to power by the Party which is its goal.

Pope Paul VI, in *Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 31, distinguishes, with regard to socialism, "various levels of expression":

1. a generous aspiration and a seeking for a more just society;
2. historical movements with a political organization and aim;
3. an ideology which claims to give a complete and self-sufficient picture of man.

He holds that each of these levels is interlinked with the others.

In no. 33 of the same Apostolic Letter, he enumerates *four levels of expression of Marxism*:

1. the active practice of class struggle to be pursued and stirred up in a permanent fashion;
2. the collective exercise of political and economic power under the direction of a single party, which would be the sole expression and guarantee of the welfare of all . . .;
3. a socialist ideology based on historical materialism and the denial of everything transcendent;
4. a rigorous method of examining social and political reality, and as the rational link, tested by history, between theoretical knowledge and the practice of revolutionary transformation.

Pope Paul VI goes on to say that *it would be illusory and dangerous to reach a point of forgetting the intimate link which radically binds them (these levels of expression) together, to accept the elements of marxist analysis without recognizing their relationships with ideology, and to enter into the practice of class struggle and its marxist interpretations, while failing to note the kind of totalitarian and violent society to which this process leads.*

When in early 1976 Bishop Matagrín of Grenoble wrote a

a text affirming in clear terms that "Communism . . . is a remedy worse than the evil it seeks to cure", and that there were fundamental incompatibilities between Christianity and Marxism, a group of "committed Christians" responded by saying that Bishop Matagrín had overlooked the differences between:

1. marxism as a philosophy,
2. the marxist method of analyzing society,
3. revolutionary *praxis*,
4. Communism and totalitarianism.

It has been pointed out that Marxists themselves and Marxist writings constantly lay down the connection between these elements, and that this interconnection is borne out by history. No one has yet been able to demonstrate that marxist philosophy (ideology) is *in practice* separable from the marxist analysis of society, and that Communism *in practice* is separable from totalitarianism.

It seems to me simply undeniable that marxist analysis, *taken as a whole system*, is inseparable from marxist ideology. True, there are elements of marxist analysis, which are quite simply valid insights into social, economic, political realities. But when all these elements are taken together in a *unified, systematic marxist* view of social reality, you have the ideology already present as the structuring element itself.

It seems to me also simply undeniable that whenever and wherever the Party has consolidated its power in a Communist State, totalitarianism follows, and the *attempt* to control all aspects of human relationships, both private and societal. I do not think we have any single example to the contrary, past or present.

It has been noted that marxists themselves will not say that Christianity and the Gospel (as a whole) are compatible with the ideology and reality of Marxism/ Communism. It is only "Marxist Christians" who affirm this. The real Marxists (without the hyphen: —*Christian*) deny it. In Europe, as IMPACT magazine has noted, most marxist theorists and Christian theologians deny that Marxism and Christianity are 'compatible systems'.

One criticism which could be made of at least some forms of the theology of liberation is the thorough-going dualism which, strangely enough, is present within its "no two lines of history, sacred and secular" approach: *some* theologians of liberation will

say that in the analysis of social reality, one can and must simply accept the "scientific" analysis that Marxism gives us — an analysis which is, in fact, (as a total systematic analysis) inextricably tied up with the ideology. These theologians affirm that faith has *nothing at all* to say about the "scientific analysis": this analysis is that of an independent science, regarding which belief or unbelief has nothing to say.

And yet, the Marxists themselves claim a total consistency between their analysis and their ideology, their ideology and their praxis. And the theology of liberation, to be consistent with itself, should claim an inextricable interlinking between faith and science, faith and practice.

What the fact of the matter seems to be, is this: many so-called Christian-Marxists do in fact *not* accept some basic Marxist tenets: e.g., the totalitarian dictatorship; some will not even accept the total "collective ownership of all the means of production". And yet, in the same breath, they will say that there is absolutely no middle ground between "capitalism" and "marxist socialism". The true Marxists are much clearer, and much more unambiguous: they accept clearly and unambiguously as necessary, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the total collectivization of the economy.

Once again, I believe that if the socio-economic-political marxist diagnostic and analysis is accepted in its entirety, it has the ideology already immanent within it, and the basic categories of the ideology are already operative within it. — If the theology of liberation is quite simply "built over" this analysis, without the prior, critical mediation of a Christian anthropology and a Christian understanding of society and of history, which will cancel out or modify profoundly some basic elements of the ideology and the analysis, to be sure, — then there is a "forced fit" created, which will either produce a reductivist theology (e.g., the entire Gospel is reduced to the effort to create a socially egalitarian society within history), or a theology which Marxists cannot accept as truly marxist and compatible with a genuinely marxist ideology.

This is not the place to develop these ideas at length, but I believe true Marxists will agree with this, unless for strategic purposes they merely want to foster "Christian-Marxist" groups

as (at present) helpful to the present stage of the revolutionary process.

What can and must be said is that there are insights into social and historical reality which are genuinely valid and valuable, in the marxist analysis, and that there are methods of analysis from which much can be learned by any serious student of society. These insights and methods can be most helpful toward understanding the structural evils in our present society and their genesis, and toward drawing up policies and strategies for changing or transforming these unjust structures. But (as the theologian David Tracy says) "To affirm these genuine insights and methods . . . is not necessarily to believe in the 'wisdom' of Marxism as a system for ordering society." "One must deny that such analysis — once systematized into an ordering principle for societal reality itself (a contemporary 'wisdom') — can possibly suffice. The difficulties here are . . . too well tested in both theory and praxis."

It would seem that the Church, the Christian community, the Christian have *their own* specific vision of man and of humanity (and human history) which proceeds from faith, and which modify in its very basics the "marxist political economy". The Christian faith has its own insights, its own perspectives, its own criteria for judgment and action with regard to society and social change which profoundly influence any analysis of social and historical reality.

A NEW GOSPEL?

In an earlier article (in LOYOLA PAPERS No. 9) we referred to the "glissement of vocabularies" which Christian-Marxists employ to make possible and operative a "radically new reading" of the Gospel and a new interpretation of Christianity.

There is in truth a "Marxist-Christian" interpretation of Christian existence and action which will have it that "revolutionary praxis, according to marxist understanding" of this, is Christian existence itself. Thus the forms of theology of liberation which clearly fit the definition, "A re-reading of the Gospel and Christian life through the optic of the class struggle." The praxis of Christian life and action is the furthering of the class struggle.

It has been noted that the Quebec 1972 declaration of Christians for Socialism have these and like statements:

“Commitment to the liberating and revolutionary historical praxis is the arena of experience, reflection, communication and celebration of our faith in Christ.” “The revolutionary task is the place where faith acquires its true dimension and its subversive force. In it we assume all the demands of Jesus’ practice and we recognize in him the foundation of a new humanity.” “To adopt the subversive praxis of the exploited which seeks to build the earth means to live the experience of an evangelical conversion, and to find a new human and Christian identity.” “The identification with the struggles and interests of the popular classes constitutes for the Christian the axis of a new way of being a man and of accepting the gift of God’s world.” (In this way we reach) “A militant theology, begun from a class option, and employing the same rationality which we utilize to analyze and transform history.” “Hence the importance which Marxism has in this task of reformulation of the understanding of faith.”

Those opposed to this interpretation would say: What is at stake here is the “total reinterpretation” of the Christian faith, then. The basis for interpretation is the marxist reading of reality and history; this is (one might say, to those trained in the scholastic mode) the “basic metaphysics”. The Word of God and Christian teaching is then reviewed, revised and reinterpreted in terms of, and in function of, this “basic metaphysics”. Thus it is marxist vision and praxis which restructure Christianity and Christian life. “Revelation, tradition, Church” do not shed light on human existence, life and history, — but it is the other way around, that marxism and marxist praxis oblige us to revise fundamentally and basically our understanding of the faith and our practice of the Christian life.

Those arguing the opposite case then respond that this “interpretation of their interpretation” caricatures their position, or draws it to extreme consequences. Their position is more nuanced than this!

What is to be said, then?

Critics of the “Christian-Marxist” position are drawing out what in fact is the inevitable implication of the marxist theory in operation within the “re-interpretation” of Christianity. True, the actual proponents of the interpretation may not want to draw fully the consequences intrinsic in the re-interpretation. But it

seems to me true that *there has been a substitution* in the "basic metaphysics" underlying the position: the ideology has become primary, and there has been a short-circuiting of categories of the ideology and Christian notions. The Christian "thing" has been 'forcibly' integrated into what a recent work has called "the trap of marxist monism, which identifies knowledge, ideology and consciousness". An "equivalence" has been created between marxist ideological notions and Christian notions which materially and *partially* (but only partially) cover the same ground. But then all these Christian notions are "purified" so that they assume *the marxist meaning as their only and real meaning*. And then they are reinserted into the marxist system, and are henceforth "transformed" by it.

There is, at basis, a "conversion" to marxism, which then transmutes the entire system of notions, insights, etc. Then everything is seen and evaluated from this transformed vision and made functional to its revolutionary praxis.

Is this a *legitimate* criticism of the "Christian-Marxist" position? As I see it, I think the criticism is substantially valid. I think that in the "Christian-Marxist" position (as I have heard it expounded by local people) there is an inbuilt dynamic that gradually reduces the meaning of Christianity and Christian life and action, to, quite simply, the revolutionary *praxis* that is to lead to access to power by the party in the marxist socialist state. Everything else becomes secondary, and even the Gospel is measured according to this *immediate* objective. In talking with some, I find a greater faith in marxist revolutionary *praxis* than in (say) the Gospel Beatitudes, or the Word of Revelation. In the interviews reported in IMPACT, we read these interesting comments:

* *From IMPACT, October 1977:*

* *From an interview with a priest who had joined the Communist Party ("diocesan priest in his early forties"):*

"Religion is the struggle of the proletariat and the revolution. Jesus was revolutionary."

* *From a "diocesan priest in his early twenties, with the guerrilleros in the mountains":*

"Most of my comrades have lost their Christian faith. But I would say that most of them never really understood it, nor were they able to conceptualize it. So, given our milieu in the moun-

tains, they simply exchange it for a Marxist-Maoist viewpoint which is well presented and conceptualized. They only see the weakness of Christianity."

"The Church exists in a changing society. It will either be transformed by the changes or it will be washed away. That's why I went to the hills originally. I wanted to give substance to the things I was saying as a priest. I wanted to express my faith in a revolutionary way. There are still vestiges of that motivation. Now I'm being made free of all the things I used to cling to. So much of the theology I had has gone down the drain; for example, the theology of sin.

"What will happen to my beliefs in the next five years? I haven't thought much about that; there's so little time to think Christianity should not be discarded too easily. It has survived 2000 years and surely has some truth."

* *From a "religious priest in his mid-thirties":*

"If Christianity is an absolute need of man, if 'our hearts are restless until they rest in you,' it will endure. I'm not too worried. We have looked to the future too much. Marxism is good now. Christianity is on trial by history. If good, it will survive."

To me, what has happened and does happen to the Christian beliefs and Christian practice (prayer, the life according to the Beatitudes, et al.) of "Christian-Marxists" is (I believe) the clinching argument that the inbuilt ideological base of the position does eventually end in a radically reduced "Gospel reading" which, finally, is simply marxism "with a few drops of holy water sprinkled on it." - I do not intend to contest the fact that a *theoretical position* can be (and is) elaborated which can show the compatibility of "Christian-Marxism" or "Marxist Christianity". (We can create a good theory of almost anything, if we try hard enough!) But the actual position of "Christian/Marxists" in the Philippines (as I have spoken with some) seems to me to lead inevitably to the almost total reduction of Church and Gospel to what fosters and is functional to marxist revolutionary praxis here and now.

A NEW ECCLESIOLOGY

A word must be said here on the *Ecclesiology* which "the

Christian/Marxist" position is evolving. In a meeting I attended not many months ago, an NDF-follower said: "I consider the People of God as those people—and only those people—truly committed to the *true Gospel* which is that of the liberation of the oppressed. The message of the Gospel is that God is on the side of the poor and the oppressed. Thus those whose lives and deeds are not committed to the liberation of the poor and the oppressed do not follow the Gospel. Their faith is not the true faith. I do not consider them as part of the People of God. Cardinals _____ and Bishops _____, for instance, are obviously with the fascist government and the military dictatorship, and thus are not committed to the liberation of their people. They do not belong to the true People of God." (These are not his words verbatim, but the reproduction of the thought is, I believe, exact.)

It is correct, I think, to say, that for many "Christian/Marxists" the Church is preferentially "the People of God". (The contempt for "the institutional Church" is open and explicit.) And "People" here means—"the Christians committed to, and engaged in, the class struggle as understood in the marxist view." The Church is not the parish, made up of priests and their parish community, or the diocese with its bishop and the Christians in that diocese. Rather, the Church is made up of those people, and only those, who are "true believers in the true Gospel": the Gospel of revolutionary praxis and action to liberate the poor and oppressed. Hence the hierarchy in this country (especially) for the most part is outside "the people of God".

May I quote from a TEACHING ALL NATIONS' article (by Pierre Bigo), because I think what it says holds true for the Philippine situation too:

The People of God (the whole context forces us to translate this expression as the Christians engaged in class struggle according to the marxist pattern) need to reappropriate Scripture: hence, a new magisterium. It tends to take on the responsibility of directing their ecclesial action: hence, new pastors. They need to reappropriate liturgical symbols and the sacraments: hence, a new liturgy.

Thus a new ecclesiology can be—is being—fashioned: with, indeed, a new interpretation of the Scriptures and the "essence of

Christianity"; with new pastors—those who lead in marxist revolutionary praxis, and hence the attempt to instrumentalize the "new ministries" taking shape in the Church today: and a liturgy being refashioned to create revolutionary consciousness and to motivate to revolutionary praxis. Finally, Christian 'apostolate' is totally equated with the fostering of the same revolutionary praxis.

Perhaps when we have more time we can return to this "new populist ecclesiology" which (I am told) is already very much present within the Church in the Philippines, especially in certain areas. Such an ecclesiology can be a powerful attempt to instrumentalize the Church totally to the purposes of marxist revolution: doctrine and morality can indeed be reshaped especially among *inadequately instructed* Christians (the majority of our people are such—unfortunately!); liturgy and Christian assembly can be made instruments of marxist conscientization and motivation to revolutionary action; ministries can be made functional to revolutionary praxis; basic Christian communities can be made cells for marxist teaching and formation; Church institutional channels can be taken over bodily for instrumentalization as revolutionary networks . . . Such is the position taken by some Latin American theologians and Church people with regard to the "possibilities for instrumentalization" of a Church viewed according to the new "marxist/populist ecclesiology". Some priests believe the same process is rather far advanced in some parts of the Philippines too. I believe, it is the part of our Christian leaders to find out if this is true, and to ask themselves, what their attitude must be, with regard to this new ecclesiology and this new vision of the People of God.

ON SOME POINTS OF MARXIST PRACTICE

* Many believe that the Marxist/Maoist participation in the struggle for human rights in non-Communist countries today must be seen principally as a strategic move. The violations of human rights present in so many countries today ("right wing dictatorships") are—undeniably—many and terrible, inhuman and indefensible. But there certainly are as many, if not more, such violations of human rights going on in Communist countries today. Where, in any Communist country today, will one find

the free exercise of those same rights whose violation local Maoist groups decry:

the freedom to set up political parties opposed to the ruling party, as well as other free political organizations (mass or otherwise),

the right to demonstrate and to strike,
 freedom of association, political, civic, cultural, even when opposed to positions and policies of the ruling party,

true freedom of information, freedom of expression, press, mass media,

the right to a defense before an open court,
 protection of the human person against arbitrary arrest, detention, torture,

(free visitation and) liberation of political prisoners,
 freedom to denounce the suppression of these freedoms before public opinion—access to the media of information for this denunciation,

freedom for the Church to take public position criticizing or denouncing the State or the party for violations of these human and civic rights,

access to the mass media (radio, television, the press) given to the Church and any free groups which may exist to criticize the policies and actions of the State or the party, and the like.

* If we must (in all truth) hold that there are valuable insights regarding capitalist society in marxist theory and analysis, still (in the service of the same truth which compels us to affirm the former)—we have the duty to affirm no less clearly that the actual praxis of most (if not all) Marxist regimes is far from respectful of the human and civic rights we have just enumerated. No one can deny that there is more than enough evidence of powerful political repression carried out in Communist countries—carried out in sometimes open, sometimes subtle ways.

A strange double-standard seems to be followed by Marxists/Maoists with regard to violations of human rights, then: insistent, fiery denunciation of such violations when they occur in non-Communist societies, but “general absolution” and silence regarding them when they occur in Communist countries. Or, even perhaps more frighteningly, the dismissal of them as an “unfor-

tunate necessity". One NDF-leader told me once, outright, in private conversation, that he found it perfectly acceptable that we might have to sacrifice those who opposed the new socialist regime—we had been speaking of the nearly two million people already slain in Cambodia in some 18 months—and the sacrifice of a couple of generations, if need be, "for the sake of the future of the nation,"—as well as the total disregard of the human rights of those opposed to the programs of the new regime: once again, as a painful, but "inevitable necessity".

In a recent article (published 2 May 1977 in DER SPIEGEL), Leszek Kolakowski, until 1968 a professor of philosophy in Warsaw, now a lecturer at Oxford, set down the following "theses":

1. *Despotism is not a kind of "degenerate" communism.* Up to the present, the only communism in power that we have experienced is the Leninist-Stalinist totalitarian type. There is no exception to this rule. Wherever communism has come to power, whether through internal forces or through power struggles from the outside, both civic liberties and democratic institutions have been abolished; at the same time a totalitarian type of social organization has been forced on the country—although to be fair I must add that this has not met with the same success everywhere.

Although it has not proved possible anywhere to achieve a complete totalitarian system, including control of all private human relations by the state, communist types of government have never ceased to strive towards such completeness and to impose state control on all aspects of life.

2. *Communism functions according to its own principles.*

Leninism has declared—openly, not tacitly—a dictatorship based exclusively on pure power, rather than on law. It has further declared the abrogation of the separation of powers and the end of democratic institutions. And it also declared that the abolition of private property is equivalent to the abolition of classes, and this in turn to the abolition of conflicts of interest and to the unification of society.

All this conforms to the Marxist doctrine that all significant class conflicts are based on the class structure of society which will disappear once the state has taken over the means of production.

This form of communism presupposed further that "negative freedom" (i.e. the kind of freedom limited to the area which the social order still left to the individual) would become meaningless in a classless society, particularly since classlessness would mean a uniform society.

Communist doctrine expected that all means of production would come under the central control of the state and government of the people would be succeeded by an "administration of affairs". But because the centralized administration of all forms of production must include the administration of the workers and therefore of everyone, it was inevitable

that this form of Marxist communism could only result in a kind of labour camp.

It is quite untrue that only historical accidents have been responsible for the actual process which has brought about the embodiment of the doctrine in a Leninist-Stalinist form, and that the doctrine itself is therefore innocent and only "distorted" through a whim of history which chose an unsuitable testing ground for its experiment. Many anarchist authors of the 19th century had recognized (long before history chose the, supposedly unhappy, testing ground for the new idea) that Marxist communism would inevitably lead to state control of human beings and an extremely despotic form of government.

3. *The ideology is dead but indispensable.*

In the Communist countries of Europe, communist ideology is dead, in the sense that neither the rulers nor the ruled still take it seriously. For the ruling party, however, it is absolutely indispensable, since, in the absence of any form of democratic institutions, it provides the only basis for legitimizing the tyranny of the single-party system.

Communist faith came to an end with the so-called revisionist movement which believed for a time that it would be possible to restore democratic principles in the life of society and intellectual and moral standards within the communist power system.

Nowadays communism is a matter of power and not of intellectual discussion. Demands for human rights, civil liberties, freedom of opinion, education, trade associations and similar things are no longer made for the sake of a better communism. People do think about concepts like representative democracy, national values, religious ideas and material welfare, but they do not think of these as a return to "true Marxism" and certainly not to "true Leninism".

At the end of this extended footnote, one simply must say: Does not all this show us the urgent need for action, on our part, as Christians and as Church, to take stands in defense of human rights and to effect truly basic changes in our unjust structures? Is it not this inaction, this lack of concern for justice, this complacent do-nothing attitude on the part of Catholics, "from the top down", which drives so many of the most committed, the most idealistic Christians, to the Communist Party, the New Peoples' Army, the National Democratic Front? Is not this crisis in the Church—the crisis of credibility, of deeds—the challenge that we must either face,—or perish? The words IMPACT cites from the young religious priest must haunt us: "If Christianity is an absolute need of man, . . . it will endure. We have looked to the future too much. Marxism is good now. Christianity is on trial by history. If good, it will survive." —Once again we can repeat,

"Christianity has never been tried." But the real question is whether we have enough faith, hope, and love in us, brought to life, brought to deeds, so that the Church and the Gospel will survive—and not in the persecuted existence it has in Communist countries, but in freedom, through its deeds of justice, brotherhood, self-given love . . .

Somewhere in this book one of our authors says that the power of the "temptation of the Left" is not in the tenets of the ideology, but its *lived response*—in deeds—to the injustice that is all around us. The challenge is to deeds, to effective effort and action. Beyond doubt, this is where the keenest edge of challenge is for us.

By way of a last remark. One point which we may perhaps be allowed to add: the remarkable convergence of views (as we noted earlier) which emerges from these papers. There was no previous communication between the authors of the "Bukidnon papers" and the theology professors at Loyola School of Theology. I think it is only fair to say that the Bukidnon pastors have tried to keep in touch with relevant theological writing, both local and from abroad, through seminars, reading and personal contact. It is also true that the "classroom men" have tried—at least vicariously—constantly to know "what's going on at the frontiers, at the grass roots". Talking with those who are "at the frontiers" of action and struggle is surely not as good as *being there*, but if one is reasonably intelligent, genuinely concerned, open to what others have to say,—one can learn a great deal . . . sometimes more than others would like to believe. Surely the "I am more exposed and conscientized than thou" game is only a way of having the upper hand, when one does not wish to enter upon genuine discussion and reasoned argument. (There is no substitute for experience, granted. But experience can also be vicariously shared—it's not as good, true, but it isn't nothing.) Too, one can define *praxis* so narrowly that only what one is himself/herself doing is finally considered praxis. Perhaps reflection on these papers, written on the one hand by people who do not need to prove their credentials as far as "being with the people" is concerned, and on the other hand by others ("academic men!") who have tried in every way possible to them "not to lose touch" with the realities this book addresses itself to, will show that the theology here, though

remaining search and discourse that is not afraid of theory, is not divorced from the questions and anguish, the problems and struggles of our people and our time.

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power of the "temptation of the Left" is not in the terms of the ideology, but the least response—in deeds—to the rejection that is all around us. The challenge is to devote to effective effort and action. Beyond doubt, this is where the heaviest duty of change is for us.

By way of a last remark (One point which we may perhaps be allowed to add: the remarkable convergence of views (as we noted earlier) which emerges from these papers, there was no previous communication between the authors of the "Theology papers" and the theory professors at Johns Hopkins of course. I think it is only fair to say that the "Theology papers" have tried to keep in touch with relevant theological writing, both local and from abroad, through seminars, readings and personal contact. It is also true that the "classroom men" have tried—at least visually—constantly to know "what's going on at the frontiers" of the grass roots. Falling with those who are "at the frontiers" of action and struggle is surely not as good as being there, but if one is reasonably intelligent, genuinely concerned, open to what others have to say — one can learn a great deal. . . . sometimes more than others would like to believe. Surely the "I am more exposed and conscientized than they" game is only a way of leaving the matter behind, when one does not wish to enter upon serious discussion and rational argument. There is no substitute for experience, growth, but experience can also be reasonably shared—it's not as good, true, but it isn't nothing. For, one can define growth as growth only what one is humanly/ethically doing as finally unexamined parts. Perhaps reflection on these papers, written on the one hand by people who do not need to prove their credentials as far as "being with the people" is concerned, and on the other hand by others ("academic men") who have tried in every way possible to "be there" not to "lose touch" with the realities this book addresses itself to, will show that the theory here, though

Appendix I:
FATHER PEDRO ARRUPE, GENERAL SUPERIOR OF THE
JESUITS, ON THE ATTRACTION OF COMMUNISM
AND MARXISM FOR MANY CHRISTIANS
AND RELIGIOUS TODAY

This interview, given by Father Arrupe, in the summer of 1977, to Father M. CAMPBELL JOHNSON, head of the Jesuit Secretariat for the Social Apostolate, was given *for Jesuits*. Those who saw the text thought it would be of much wider interest—especially for religious in the Philippines today. Hence we are including it here, transcribed “as is”, with the “deficiencies” of an informal oral conversation,—hoping it will be of some use for other religious men and women in the present moment in the Philippines.

MCJ: *Regarding the attraction of Marxism and Communism for Christians and especially for certain younger (religious and priests). What is your reaction? Does it worry you?*

FR. ARRUPE: Yes, frankly, this worries me very much. I am not worried about (religious and priests) with a good grounding in philosophy and theology, men of faith and deep religious conviction, who become interested in Marxism and study it, in the attempt to read “the signs of the times” and to discern what the Lord is saying to us. Sometimes they will also make use of certain elements of Marxism to analyze society in the attempt to seek more just structures. But I am worried and deeply saddened by those who seem to find in Marxism their *main inspiration* for the promotion of justice. They so often unknowingly fall prisoners of ideologies and methods of action far removed from a Christian view of man and society and very different from the teachings of the Gospel. Unfortunately, experience shows that those who follow this path sooner or later lose the apostolic zeal which should be their mark as (priests and religious) and that is really a very sad experience and not so infrequent in the

Church, especially in the last three or four years. Sometimes they also lose even their faith or reduce it in some of its essential points. That is, they do not dare to preach the Gospel as a whole, the whole truth of the Gospel, or they color the Gospel very much with politics and ideologies.

MCJ: *How can you explain this?*

FR. ARRUPE: In the case of those few who go astray, who do lose the sense of direction in their lives, perhaps the philosophical and theological training that they had was not as solid or as serious as we would like to think. Sometimes we judge things from a merely formal point of view, from the number of hours spent, from the way of making examinations and so forth. But how much do they penetrate in the real Christian philosophy? I also wonder about the depth and seriousness of their spiritual and religious training, of their personal faith and the part it plays in the active life. I ask myself if they have the mind of Christ, the *sensus Christi*, which is so necessary in our modern world, with all its ideological and political conflicts. That is always for us necessary, but in such a politicized world, in so materialist a world, we have to be transparent for this *sensus Christi*, this mind of Christ. But some of these cases of extremism and deviation have other causes as well, not so easy sometimes to localize, to individualize, to understand. Often it is our own timidity and cowardice, our insensibility to social injustice, from the other side, our inertia, our resistance to any change (we don't change!), our lack of real solidarity with the poor and the oppressed: we speak very much but we do very little . . . which causes these extremist positions. Some of our younger (priests and religious), in their contact with poverty and oppression, lose faith in the power of the Church to (help) change unjust structures and help build a better world. That is an important point which has really forced us to face our responsibility. We must really do something, because you see the sensibility of a man who is in direct contact and experience with poverty and injustice—he feels very strongly, and he wants to do something . . . We have to show in our dynamics of this Gospel that we have also effectiveness and we go to reality and we mind not only words but really action, as

the Holy Father himself says in the apostolic letter *Octogesima adveniens*: it is not enough to condemn injustice by words, we must necessarily put in actions (sic). It is not enough just to deplore extremists or unjust situations: we must also reflect seriously on why they have arisen.

MCJ: *In the light of this, what should be our attitude toward Marxism and Communism—fight them or just ignore them?*

FR. ARRUPPE: We certainly can't ignore them. But nor can we merely fight them in a negative way, pay no attention either to the causes which nourish them or to some of the undeniable positive values they contain. As you remember we (recently) discussed some of the positive aspects of Marxism and Communism which constitute for us a continual challenge.

Since these are values which we find in the Gospel—in a much more radical (I would say that!)—in a much more radical, perfect and even more human way. Sometimes it makes me sad that we praise in other ideologies even in opposition to the Gospel what we already possessed in the teaching of Christ and have possessed for nearly two thousand years.

On the other hand we can't ignore many negative aspects of Marxism and Communism which are in direct opposition to Christianity and contradict our mission which is essentially a religious or apostolic one. We can't close our eyes to all the atrocities and injustices which have been committed against the Church, religion and Christians in general . . . and not only Christians, but men in general, in so many Communist countries. Unfortunately we cannot speak clearly about this. We have to be very careful not to compromise (put in jeopardy) our brothers or our people in these countries, and sometimes we give the impression that we don't care. No, we care very much for them, we want to work as much as we can to defend them. But *they* ask us not to do much because the opposition and repression in some places are so organized that anything that could happen (or be said) in foreign countries have immediate repercussions there. Even today in many of these countries freedom, including religious freedom, is subject to serious and unjustified limitations and violations. (But we keep silent.) I know in some western

countries there is talk of types of Communism that will respect the so-called democratic freedoms, including religious freedom. But after so many painful experiences, it is hard to believe in such promises and guarantees, at least if we speak from experience. We have until now *not one* example of that.

It is also true that in many other countries which are the very opposite of Communism, the poor suffer much and are oppressed also, and when we want to help them for a more just society, we meet with opposition and even open persecution.

We have so many examples in these last few years.—I call them martyrs because I am convinced that they are really martyrs—the Holy Father himself spoke of martyrs in Rhodesia . . . but men like John Bosco Bourmier and Rutilio Grande who were killed for standing up for the poor and oppressed in countries calling themselves Christian and anti-Communist. But we have to be clear and we have to remain evangelical always and therefore one injustice does not justify another.

Our aim is not merely justice in the economic, social or political field, but justice in the full and complete sense of the word. We seek the total and Christian freedom of man and society. Therefore . . . that's important, because sometimes the tragedy of this situation is this, that we are very much inclined to fight for evangelical values with methods which are not evangelical—which is violence, for instance.

For all these reasons, we need today much courage and strength. But we need also a great faith and a great hope in the power of the Gospel we preach, to set us free—the Gospel in all its purity and integrity. That is what we are lacking in, sometimes we don't believe in the things we are preaching, or even we have not the courage to preach—because we ourselves seem to be, in the bottom of our hearts, not so convinced that these things are really fundamental in the Gospel and in our faith.

We need more men like John Bosco Bourmier and Rutilio Grande, men who with that clear and full commitment to Christ and their brothers, especially the poor and oppressed,

with the purity and true evangelical quality of their lives, give an unequivocal witness to the message of love and justice that Christ brought us. That is for me one of the very interesting observations or sentiments I could discover in all this: the Lord, in these last martyrs of the Society . . . chose people (regarding whom) there cannot be any objection in this regard: they are really good priests, good apostles. One of the Brothers also who was killed in Rhodesia . . . a man fully committed to the Gospel . . . no ideas of ideologies or politics or parties: *just the Gospel!* That is this clear and transparent faith that is really needed.

Without being the only reply, I think this is certainly the most Christian, the most effective, the most liberating reply we can give to the challenge with which both Communism and Capitalism face us today.

MCJ: Rev. Michael Campbell Johnson, S.J.

As our last note in this issue, we wish to make these words our own and apply them to every page of this book. It is the Lord, in his knowledge of man's heart, before whom nothing is hidden, who can alone give us the judgment of persons and the personal commitments which they make in all conscience. No Christian will deny that.

We have here taken definite positions with regard to options, "objective positions", not in past judgment on people's sincerity or lack of it but in what we believe has to be said from the viewpoint of Christian faith and experience from the standpoint of what we learn from history, and what we believe to be best for our people—today and tomorrow. We trust our readers have been taken "in all reason and conscience," before the Lord who searches man's hearts.

EDITORS' AFTERWORD

On pages 69-70, one of our Editors prefaces his "panorama of options" with these words:

"My remarks in this talk are directed to (what I might call) the "objective aspects"—the objective validity—of each of the given positions, how it stands up to rational analysis and to realistic scrutiny. How it comes out, when one balances off benefits and costs, when one examines objectives, programs, strategies, consequences. It is not my intention, in the least, to impugn or question the personal commitment and dedication of those who make up the various groups. There are many in every one of these groups—without exception—whom I admire and respect, people who (I have no doubt) are better citizens, better Filipinos, better Christians than I am. But my purpose here is to try, hopefully with a genuine sense of objectivity, to evaluate the positions each group has taken, the stance each group represents. There may be some among us here who belong to one or other group; many more, I am sure, who support or are in sympathy with this or that option. Let me assure you, with all honesty, that I do not here try to judge your sincerity, your patriotism, your devotion to cause or country, your Christian character. I address myself, I hope, to issues, to the positions you have accepted for your own personal reasons, your Christian convictions and discernment. I hope you will bear this in mind, in all that is to follow."

As our last note in this issue, we wish to make these words our own, and apply them to every page of this book. It is the Lord, in his knowledge of men's hearts, before whom nothing is hidden, who can alone pass unerring judgment on persons and the personal commitments which they make, in all conscience. No Christian will deny that.

We have here taken definite positions with regards to options, "objective positions"—not to pass judgment on people's sincerity or lack of it, but to say what we believe *has* to be said: from the standpoint of Christian faith and experience, from the standpoint of what we learn from history, and what we believe to be best for our people—today and tomorrow. We trust our stands have been taken "in all reason and conscience", before the Lord who searches men's hearts.

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