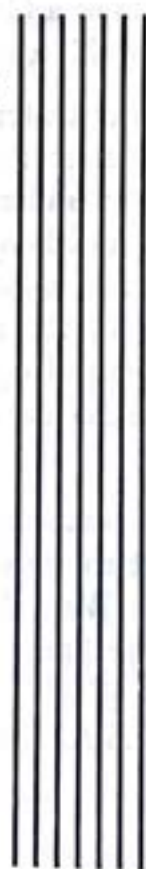


CATHOLICS AND COMMUNISTS

ELEMENTS OF

A DIALOGUE



A Political Affairs Pamphlet

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ABOUT GUS HALL

Born in Minnesota 53 years ago, in a family of ten, Gus Hall worked in his earlier years in mines and mills, on the railroads and as a field hand. He was often in the forefront of labor struggles, organizing and leading his fellow workers. He was a leader of the unemployed during the depression thirties, and later became an organizer in the Little Steel Strike of 1937 and one of the founders of the steel union under Philip Murray. Throughout all these years he was known and respected by his fellow workers as a Communist. He is today the leading Communist spokesman in this country.

Mr. Hall served an eight-year sentence in federal prison as one of the top leaders of the Communist Party who were convicted on a frame-up charge of conspiracy under the police-state provisions of the Smith Act. At present, he and Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., also a leading Communist spokesman, are under indictment for refusing to register under the provisions of the infamous McCarran Act. They face trial and possible sentences of up to \$60,000 in fines and thirty years imprisonment if this fascist-like law is upheld by the Supreme Court.

Mr. Hall has on numerous occasions run for public office. He has spoken widely and has written extensively. Among his numerous pamphlets are *Peace Can Be Won*, *Marxism and Negro Liberation*, *Our Sights to the Future*, *The Summit Failure*, *End the Cold War*, *The United States in Today's World*, *The Only Choice: Peaceful Co-existence*, and *Which Way U.S.A. 1964*.

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Introduction

In the eyes of the average American, the Communist attitude toward religion is summed up in the epithet "atheistic Communism" (or "Godless Communism"). If he knows anything more about the subject, it is probably that Marx once said: "Religion is the opium of the people." In short, Communists have been reputed to look upon religion and religious institutions as unmitigated evils which must be annihilated.

A greater distortion could not be imagined. Marxism, it is true, is materialist in its philosophical outlook and rejects all belief in the supernatural as contrary to science and scientific method. It also sees in religious beliefs a means used by exploiting classes to inculcate resignation and acceptance of the status quo among the exploited. And with the growth of scientific enlightenment and the abolition of exploitation, it envisions the ultimate disappearance of religion.

But this is only part of the picture. Marxism also regards religion as a private affair, as a matter of personal choice. Hence it stands for complete freedom of religious belief and for complete separation of church and state. V. I. Lenin once expressed it as follows:

The state must not concern itself with religion; religious societies must not be bound to the state. Every one must be absolutely free to profess whatever religion he likes, or to profess no religion, *i.e.*, to be an atheist, as every Socialist usually is. There must be no discrimination whatever in the rights of citizens on religious grounds (*Religion*, International Publishers, 1933, p. 8.)

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

Finally, Communists distinguish between the role of religious beliefs and the *social* role of religious institutions. As a social force, the church is of necessity involved in the secular struggles of its day, and in these it may play a progressive as well as a reactionary role. Indeed, such conflicts may find reflection within the church itself, as they have in the debate between the “liberal” and “conservative” wings in the Catholic Church today—a debate which has been brought to a head by the Encyclical of Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*.

Communists see in their position on religion no bar to collaboration with religious groups for common objectives, and they welcome the opening of the door to such collaboration in the Encyclical. Consequently Gus Hall, as the leading spokesman of the Communist Party of the United States, responded to the Encyclical by seeking to open a dialogue between Communists and Catholics—a dialogue designed to explore the possibilities of collaboration on specific questions in the common cause of peace on earth and the advancement of human welfare.

We present in this pamphlet the initial phase of this dialogue, in the hope that it will contribute toward its further unfolding along fruitful lines.

HYMAN LUMER,

Editor, *Political Affairs*.

The Importance of the Encyclical "Peace on Earth"

By GUS HALL

(The following is a somewhat abridged version of a set of notes which served as the basis for a discussion of the Encyclical by a group of U. S. Communist Party leaders shortly after its appearance, and which were afterward mailed in mimeographed form to a large number of leading figures in the Catholic Church. The notes have been extensively edited to eliminate repetition and to make for better continuity. Their substance, however, remains unchanged. — The Editor.)

I THINK everybody understands that the Encyclical *Peace On Earth*, issued on April 10, 1963 by Pope John XXIII, is a very important document. It is important because it is a *political* document. It is an encyclical letter not only to all Catholics but also "to all men of good will, in establishing universal peace, in truth, justice, charity and liberty." We have a responsibility to discuss it and to react to it.

The following are some of its main features:

There is no red-baiting. There are some sections that express sharp differences and opposition to the Communist viewpoint, but no direct red-baiting.

Though some sections lend themselves to interpretation in a number of ways, the important thing is that it takes a stand for peace in a new manner, for democracy in a new way, for disarmament in a concrete fashion.

Some of the strongest sections are those against racism and colonialism.

It gives new recognition to the existence of the working class

as a fact in life, and in a new way it places human rights higher than ever before.

It takes a stand for capitalism, but with proposed restrictions and great pressures for reforms and corrections.

Indirectly, it speaks about socialism and communism in a positive vein. It opens the door to a positive attitude to peaceful coexistence and an objective evaluation of socialism. This is very important for all Americans.

I propose to deal with two main questions: 1) the deeper meaning of the Encyclical; 2) our reaction to it, especially our tactical reaction.

The Deeper Meaning of the Encyclical

There are certain concepts in the Party and its leadership that we could use this occasion to burn out, concepts that are a hindrance to our Party and especially to our united front relations. We must discard all concepts of cynicism, disdain and scoffing in our approach and deal with this Encyclical in the manner in which most Americans are already dealing with it, that is, with the utmost respect and seriousness.

Because of some of our old concepts, especially in regard to religious institutions, there is a tendency to scoff at this document which may well become a hindrance in our understanding, appreciation and use of it. We must restate our position and discard hangovers of syndicalist, anarchist and old Ingersoll attitudes which are deeply embedded in our Party and its leadership. We have to understand that such an attitude towards the Encyclical actually betrays our own lack of understanding of the forces and currents of the new epoch.

We must view the Encyclical as a fresh look at the new epoch and a readjustment to the present balance of world forces by an important world leader and movement.

This message sheds new light on the struggle within the Catholic Church and broadens the struggle in the Ecumenical Council. Because of it, the reconvening of the Council will take on a new meaning.

We must give the Party as clear an understanding as possible of the issues involved in the struggle which came to the surface in the Ecumenical Council. It is plain the struggle is not only over interpretation of theological dogma or ethical practices. Rather, in a more fundamental sense, it is a struggle over the basic direction of

the Church and its attitude and relationship to the new realities of our time.

It is important to understand this deep struggle because it is going to continue. This Encyclical will sharpen it. For the Encyclical is more than a reassessment; it is also a product of the new relationship of world forces and will in turn have an effect on these forces.

On the Role of Religious Institutions

It is true that social institutions like the church tend to conform to the idea that "might is right" and so to become instruments of the dominant class and serve it. Thus, historically the church has been an institution of feudalism or capitalism. Most of the upheavals in religious institutions have been reflections of economic-political upheavals of transition from the dominance of one class to that of another.

Because the Catholic Church has had a special relationship to feudalism, it has certain distinctive characteristics as a religious institution. And to the extent that it has been an instrument of the feudal and capitalist classes during their declining periods, it has been an instrument of reaction. Thus the Catholic Church has been a mass base for Franco in Spain and Salazar in Portugal. Thus, too, an earlier Pope openly praised the bombing of Ethiopia by Mussolini and played a generally reactionary role.

The Church in the New Epoch

Though we have been generally aware of the new historical situation of today, we have not drawn the full conclusions from it. Because this is a period of transition from one system to another, we will have many new developments of which we must take account. We know that a new class has become dominant, and we must look into the full implications of that fact. All socialist forces must readjust to this new reality. And so must all other forces, including the Church.

This readjustment of the Church is now taking place. It is a struggle — part of the general upheaval now going on, of the historic transition from capitalism to socialism.

We must constantly strive to deepen our understanding of the qualitative leap that takes place in all things when the tipping of the scales between the two world forces is altered. This qualitative leap gives the forces of progress new leverage and makes possible escalated dividends from their actions.

More, the new objective reality itself now works for the further changing of the balance of forces in the new direction. Before the shift in the balance of forces, objective conditions made it possible to advance only by uphill struggle. Now, since the dominant element influencing human affairs is a progressive one, a new quality is added which is itself a factor in moving the balance of forces toward the side of progress.

The change in the position of the Vatican is not the result of one individual's subjective reaction, but is due to the pressures of the qualitatively new objective conditions. This, as the world discussion has made very clear, dogmatism does not see or understand. Dogmatism fails to grasp the new reality, the role it has played in the struggle, and the fact that there has been a qualitative change not only in the Marxist world but in the world as a whole. If we want to take full advantage of all new developments, *we* must grasp fully the leap that has occurred and its effect on *all* social forces.

Eradicate Stereotyped Concepts

We must uproot a stereotyped concept of many years' standing concerning the role of institutions such as the Catholic Church — a concept that still has a heavy hold, and because of which we fail to take initiatives and lack boldness in taking new positions.

Of course, what Marx said about religion in general still holds. But we must make a clear distinction between religion as a philosophy and the social role of religious institutions. We must avoid a dogmatic, doctrinaire, or mechanistic attitude to religious beliefs, and to people who hold such beliefs.

We have not publicly stated our position on this question, and most Americans mistakenly think our attitude is the same as the old anarcho-syndicalist attitude. We must find occasions to make our true position clear.

Religion as a set of beliefs and a code of conformity remains basically as Marx described it, though we should perhaps restate it in more modern terms. But we must make a clear distinction between this and the church as an institution, and between our attitude toward religious belief as such and that toward members of the church and clergy. We must do so if we are going to be a vanguard party that leads, by and large, religious people.

The moral, ethical and humanitarian concepts of religion are not evil, and have not played a negative role in history. Indeed, many

have joined the Communist Party because in it they saw the practical fulfillment of these same concepts. Many see the Communist movement as a vehicle through which they can work concretely for the realization of the essence of the sermons they hear on the Sabbath.

We cannot accomplish anything with the conception that we lead only those who are not religious. This is a fallacy, of which we must rid ourselves.

Experience should have prepared us better for this kind of understanding. The role of the church in the struggles of the Negro Americans should have given it to us. The role played by the clergy and the church in many instances in the struggle for peace should have prompted us to change, as should the role of the church in many socialist countries.

The present struggle in the Catholic Church and other churches will continue, as a process of readjustment to the fact that a new class is moving into the forefront. This is the meaning of the Pope's message and of the struggle in the Ecumenical Council. The Encyclical indicates that the forces that want a readjustment are in the dominant position in the Council. Its new attitude towards peace, disarmament, racism and imperialism, and its reassessment of the Church's attitude towards the working class are indications of this.

Tactical Consequence of the Encyclical

1. *Among Catholics.* The effect of the Encyclical within Catholic ranks, clearly, will be to sharpen the struggle over policy. On a world scale, while there will be strong resistance in some Catholic circles, it also will shake up old alliances and create new ones. As in the splitting of an atom, all kinds of new particles will come into being.

In the United States, this message will land on well-prepared soil, and will start many fires in Catholic ranks. There have been great pressures for exactly such a new direction and there have been feelings of frustration over failure to move into the fight for peace. The Encyclical will give new strength and status to the forces in the Catholic Church who have been trying to move in this direction.

Of course, there will be resistance on a world scale, as well as in the United States. It is no accident that Cardinal Spellman has been silent for some time, and it is to be expected that he will most likely continue to struggle against this change. The Catholic War Veterans, with their ties with the ultra-Right, will have problems,

as will the Knights of Columbus. But there are other top forces that will wholeheartedly support it.

2. *In the Trade Unions.* Possibly some of the best effects will be evident in the trade union movement. We should carefully study the attitude of the ACTU, which will possibly play a different role in the future.

3. *In the Civil Rights Struggle.* The Encyclical will give new strength to the struggle for equal rights. The Catholic Church will be emboldened. Those elements which have been moving in this direction will be strengthened, and they can be a very important factor in raising the struggle for human rights to new heights.

4. *In the Peace Movement.* The peace forces will be alerted and the struggle for peace will be greatly advanced. We have already discussed this question in *The Worker*.

5. *In the Struggle against the Ultra-Right and for Democracy.* It will have a powerful effect on the struggle against the ultra-Right, some sections of which have concentrated on winning over Catholic organizations. It will likewise greatly affect the struggle for democracy, and against such laws as the McCarran and Landrum-Griffin Acts.

The effect of the Encyclical can be tremendous, but we must have no illusions that it will all be smooth going. There will be attacks against it and distortions. There will be attempts to interpret sections as meaning an attack on communism when they are actually an attack against fascism, or to interpret the document as an attack against all "totalitarianism."

Our Attitude

As for ourselves, we should not be bashful about getting into this debate. More concretely, we should take the following approach:

1. We should give it a wholly positive interpretation, as I have already indicated. We should not hesitate on the grounds that it may be demagogic or that "they do not mean it" but should accept it at its face value.

2. We have to find ways to help bring it to the Catholic masses and to others in the United States, and to do it in a way that is understandable to the Catholic masses and will create the greatest unity.

We should see this message as a new instrument with which to press for our policies on every front—to fight against the ultra-Right

pressures on the Kennedy Administration, and as a means of pressure on the Kennedy Administration itself for peace, equal rights, disarmament, etc. Our Catholic comrades in particular must get into the debate and discussion in every possible way.

One of the important new sections in this document is that dealing with the question of united front relations with us. It opens the door to such relations and we must accept this bid in its fullest sense and extend our hand to the Catholic masses in the most positive fashion. We must utilize this Encyclical to the utmost in the struggle for peace.

We should send a special letter to the Catholic leaders in various cities in reference to this Encyclical, suggesting speakers and debates on the document, on the Communist position and on those sections in which the Pope indicates we have a positive contribution to make. We should encourage discussion in Catholic colleges. And we should discuss its effects in the trade union movement.

The Catholic Church is mainly a working class church of the big cities, of the workers in heavy industry and transport. The Democratic Party has its base largely in the Catholic Church. Think of the advance of the Catholic Church in the South where it has 750,000 Negro members. This the base for a broad coalition in America, toward which the document can be very effective.

Many Catholic organs will take up the struggle for the new outlook. For example, the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, which has been the most advanced on these questions, expressed its initial editorial reaction in these words:

... we have seen enough of the Encyclical to feel a real excitement for its contents. Plainly, the document is infinitely more than a collection of occasional exhortations and generic remarks about peace on earth; it seems a systematic blueprint on how peace can be secured in an orderly world.

The Encyclical is certain to disappoint many, including those Catholics who have attempted to link their nationalist and supremacist positions on the United Nations and on racial matters to the alleged or imagined dispositions of the Holy See. *For them the Encyclical is a complete rout.*" (Emphasis added.)

There are many avenues, if we take the time to explore them. And if anyone is inclined to argue that the Encyclical was put out just to get members for the Church, the answer is: as long as it is done on the basis of working for a progressive program, what of it? If there is any party that has to keep fighting for realistic tactics

based on confidence in victory and to do away with abstractions that are basically wrong, it is our Party. There must be no underestimation of the role of our Party on this issue, and on our relations with Catholics. It is not a static role. There is need for initiative, for a positive and bold approach.

Most Catholic workers are enthused and excited about the Encyclical. They feel that their Church is moving away from its ties to a reactionary past.

This can become a source of new strength for the forces of peace, progress and democracy, of a new outlook for millions.

Gus Hall and the Pope

(Reprinted from America, the National Catholic Weekly Review, November 9, 1963.)

The present head of the Communist Party in the U.S.A. is Gus Hall. Since last April, when Pope John's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* appeared, Mr. Hall has been sending out appeals to Catholic college presidents and others, asking that a dialogue be started between Catholics and Communists on the subject of the papal message. Several such letters were addressed to us here at AMERICA.

Toward the end of October, Gus Hall mailed a ten-page set of "Notes in Opening a Discussion of the Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*" to his card-carrying faithful, one of whom promptly took his copy to the offices of the *Washington Post*. The *Post* in turn promptly published a long summary of the secret document. (The incident illustrates one of the problems that beset American Communists these days: when they sent out a hundred sets of confidential memoranda to the tried-and-true, they have to count on the possibility that 25 of the comrades are drawing pay from the F.B.I.) At any rate, Gus Hall's "note" made it clear, by implication, that the Communist party thinks it has "a good thing going for itself" in this encyclical, and wants party members to grab every available opportunity to turn the papal letter to the advantage of international communism. Mr. Hall's "notes" explain in some detail how these maneuvers are supposed to be carried out.

One possible reaction by Catholics to this disclosure may be to

panic on the subject of Pope John's message, to suspect the worst of the Pope himself and to imagine that anyone who from here on says a good word for *Pacem in Terris* is in league with the Soviet Union. In fact, there are many misguided people of the John Birch fraternity who in all probability will say, write, or at least think, just these absurdities. Such a reaction would be an absurdity indeed; for as any serious reader of *Pacem in Terris* will immediately recognize, this superb papal social document is one of the most effective and challenging contradictions that has ever been hurled in the face of totalitarian Communist dogma.

Gus Hall is reported to have made this significant statement in his "notes":

Whereas the party still disdains religion, it should now become more friendly with religious institutions and religious people. We must make a clear distinction between religion as a belief and the Church as an institution—if we are going to become a vanguard party that leads, by and large, religious people. We are not going to accomplish anything with the conception that we lead only those who are not religious.

Such, then, is the new Communist line. Thanks to the *Post's* exposé, we know what to expect and shall be ready to counter it. As we prepare to do so, let's note what else Gus Hall has to say of the encyclical: "It takes a stand for peace. . . . Some of the strongest sections are those against racism and colonialism. . . . It gives the working class a new recognition as a fact in life." In fact, he calls the encyclical "a new and fresh look at the new epoch by an important world leader and movement."

Strange, isn't it, that the head of the Communist party seems better able to appreciate Pope John's message than some Catholics?

America and the Red Terror

(Reprinted from *Continuum*, an independent quarterly sponsored by the Saint Xavier College, Chicago, Ill., Winter 1964.)

Before commenting on *America's* editorial, "Gus Hall and the Pope," it is perhaps necessary to note that the present writer does not

qualify as a member of the "card carrying faithful" to which the editorial referred; he does probably qualify, however, as a student and teacher of several years' standing, of the social teaching of the modern Popes.

In the early summer, long before the date mentioned in the editorial, I received a copy of the "secret" document of Mr. Gus Hall. Mr. Hall included with the notes, a courteous personal letter, explaining that the notes were being sent to interested Catholics and to all members of the communist party throughout the country, to encourage a study of the great new encyclical, *Pacem in terris*.

What is deeply regrettable in the editorial is the dismissal, out of hand, of the possibility of sincere interest in the social thought of Pope John, on the part of communists. Any yet, curiously enough, *Pacem in terris* is filled with the very hope; the hope that just such interest will be awakened, both among Marxists and Catholics. The words of paragraph 159, tentative and delicately stated as they are, refer to that hope; otherwise they are without sense. In the non-Catholic symposium of CONTINUUM (Summer, 1963), the distinguished commentators who wrote on this section of the encyclical, were in unanimous agreement that the Pope referred to Marxism alone. John was clearly taking cognizance of an historic evolution of the first importance; communism could not be exempted from the inevitable differences which time and events bring to pass, between dogmatic primitive teachings on the one hand, and on the other, the "changes, even of a profound nature" which arise in movements because of "consistently evolving historical situations."

Indeed the question of a new relationship between Marxism and the Church is of such labyrinthine difficulty as to try the stoutest heart. The Church has suffered so much at communist hands, her hopes have been so often brutally extinguished. But her greatest temptation at present would be to allow the massive, murderous evidence of the past years to cloud her visionary openness; to allow Marxist betrayals to betray her too, to the point where she is too sick at heart to see that a new point of history, a new opportunity, has in fact arrived.

For a door is open. The opening is the work of a great Pope. And the American Marxists have shown in a remarkably fair way, that they are willing to match Pope John's giant step in the direction of a detente. It should be mentioned, in passing, that the American move is duplicated in Europe. Last March, speaking in Bergamo,

Palmiro Togliatti, secretary general of the Italian communist party observed:

It is entirely necessary that we consider the communist world and the Catholic world as a complexus of forces in the real world, involving states, governments, organizations, individual consciences, movements of differing natures. It is necessary to study all these, in order to see if, in some way or other, faced by the revolutions of our times and the future opening before us, we might come to a mutual understanding of one another, a mutual acceptance of certain values; and if a lessening of hostility might be arrived at. Finally, our end ought to be an agreement in the attainment of common purposes which are part of the present striving of all of humanity . . . Let me also say that the numerous occasions on which Pope John has shown his real concern for peace, and for lessening of international tensions, his invitation that all investigate the possibilities of peaceful coexistence—that these acts are of the greatest value, and that we appreciate them deeply.

Now if *America's* contribution to these events, is simply to assure readers that its editors stand at distance from the grotesqueries of the Birchites, then most of us still must stand with empty hands. Indeed, it may be suggested that the tone of the editorial in question, places us squarely back in the area of the Stalin-Catholic stalemate of fifteen years ago. But events since then have clearly shown that the wall (indeed it is still there) is now a barricade with a difference. It has a door in it.

To refuse to converse, to question the possibility of trust before it is fairly born, these are ways of shutting the door once more. To imply (as it appears the editorial implied) that no service could be rendered to Catholic college students, innocent as they almost invariably are of the facts of modern life, by listening and conversing with a Marxist on their campus, is to exempt students from abrasive contact with the real world — a world which, as *Mater et magistra* insisted, must also be considered their educator. But inviting a Marxist to campus is only a minute beginning, in the light of what Catholics could be doing through their university network. Cultural and student exchanges, summer tours of Russia, exchanges of professors, these are only a few of the doors that could be opening.

Indeed, *America*, is right. "This superb papal social document is one of the most effective and challenging contradictions that has ever been hurled in the face of totalitarian communist dogma." But I seriously doubt that Pope John ever intended to hurl anything

at anyone. Moreover, praise costs us very little. What really costs us Catholics heavily, is to keep an open mind and heart; not to reject as inadmissible the possibility that even the Marxists may change, and that perhaps Catholic presuppositions are in need of change too; as indeed John did not hesitate to modify the earlier writings of Pius XI and Pius XII, in their emphases on Marxism.

In the light of the foregoing, I submit that the "exposé of the *Washington Post* is in the nature of a dud; and that *America* might be engaging in something more hopeful and prophetic than strapping on the sword. "We know what to expect and shall be ready to counter it." Would it not be fair to say, in an effort to gauge the reaction of Marxists to such a statement, that they also know now, what to expect from American Catholics, since the door by our own choice, seems to be closing once more?

I read the following words in the famous "presupposition," written by a Saint who will be familiar to the editors of *America*. ". . . it is necessary to suppose that every good Christian be more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it as false" (St. Ignatius). This large breadth of readiness to believe, to trust, to communicate, is the very heart and mind of the encyclical. "Certain historic movements, insofar as they conform to the dictates of right reason and are interpreters of the lawful aspirations of the human person, contains elements that are positive and deserving of approval."

Not having taken a first step toward realizing Pope John's hope, it would be tragic if American Catholics were to be absolved from taking the second step. Our late President stood under no such absolution. He recognized an open door when he saw one; and what he was willing to attempt in consequence, his magnificent address at American University in June, shows beyond doubt. One step at a time, one act of trust at a time, successive refusals to ignore human hope for peace and decency and survival, a civilized, nuanced awareness of "the dignity of the person who errs" (Pope John again) — and in a few months, a moratorium on nuclear testing allows the world to breathe again. Surely we had in President Kennedy, the example of a man who was realistic, prophetic, and open; an example that must stand with us, as Catholics face a changing Marxism in a Church which is herself explosive with change.

"Pacem in Terris" and American Communists

(Reprinted, in abridged form, from *The Catholic Worker*, March, 1964.)

Pacem in Terris is only beginning its career. Its impact has already been extraordinary, in every country and in all walks of life, but we must above all hopefully anticipate that this influence will go on expanding until it engenders a new way of conceiving of the confrontation of the Christian with the realities of the world. The time factor is essential here, for the Encyclical is effecting a veritable Copernican revolution in these matters, whether by encouraging Christians to rid themselves of the kind of disembodied supernaturalism that all too often serves them for an ideology and drawing their attention to human problems or by liberating them from the spirit of the obsolete "Christendom" (a polite word for the ghetto) and enabling them to live, evangelically and without strain, in a world whose necessary pluralism they will respect. We can, in any case, expect further development.

But it is already clear that it is not only Christians who feel themselves affected by the Encyclical, which shows, it may be noted in passing, that when there is a determination to make a pontifical document readable and easily comprehensible, success is not difficult; things have changed since the time, not too long ago, when an Albert Camus was forced to complain, when somebody mentioned to him the numerous interventions of Pius XII during the war, that he had never heard them or understood them. The Pope is succeeding in making himself heard and even, in some quarters, understood, and in this connection, we should like to acquaint our readers with the reactions of Mr. Gus Hall, . . . of the Communist Party of the United States of America. . . .

We shall first undertake to summarize the "Notes in Opening a Discussion on the Importance of *Pacem in Terris*," a document that has come into our hands through the courtesy of the Communist

Party of the United States of America, and we shall then try to see whether, and how, these "Notes" can bring about a better understanding between Catholics and Communists.

The Communist Analysis

Deeper Meaning of the Encyclical. Mr. Hall believes that the Communists must take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Encyclical to revise certain attitudes that are injurious to the Party and to the activities it has organized. "We must discard all concepts of cynicism, disdain and scoffing in this approach, and seriously deal with this Encyclical in the manner most Americans are already dealing with it . . . That is, with the utmost deep respect and seriousness." Mr. Hall is of the opinion that if the Communists do not make this attempt at seriousness, if they do not abandon their old habits of systematic criticism in regard to religious institutions, they will have betrayed their own incapacity to understand the forces and currents of the "new Epoch." "We must view the Encyclical as a new and fresh look at the new Epoch by an important world leader and movement. . . . A readjustment to present balance of world forces by an important world leader and movement." A readjustment in line with the dominant tendency of the Ecumenical Council. For Mr. Hall it is clear that this effort of the Church to adapt itself to a new situation is not only in the domain of dogma and morality, but that it is aimed at bringing the Church closer to the new realities of the world. "This Encyclical is a reassessment—but more, it is also a by-product of the new balance relationship of world forces."

The Role of Religious Institutions. After having recalled that, for a Marxist, the Church belongs to the category of social institutions that base their action on the idea that "might is right" and so become instruments of the dominant class in its determination to maintain itself in power, Mr. Hall asserts that the upheavals that shake the Church are only the echo or reflection of the real upheavals that shake the world of economics and politics. And it is because of this interaction, Mr. Hall thinks, that the Church has been, and still continues to be—in Spain and Portugal, for example—the instrument of the dominant classes at the very moment when they sense that actual power is escaping them. The world stirs and one part of the Church clings desperately to the old dominant classes, while another takes up a position in favor of the ascending new classes: hence the upheavals evident at the heart of the Christian world.

The Church in the New Epoch. Today, when a new class is well on the way to becoming dominant because of the achievement of socialism, it is natural that the Church should seek to adapt herself to it. She is aware that the world is slowly gliding from capitalism to socialism, and she is opening up a parallel movement. This change-over is not the work of a few far-seeking intellectuals; it is due to the pressure of objective conditions. That is why it is unnecessary to oppose Christian dogmatism with Communist dogmatism in a fruitless ideological struggle—it is enough to let the objective conditions act, for they can be relied upon to bring about the necessary evolution of the Church.

Uprooting Stereotyped Concepts. What Marx said about the phenomenon of religion is still valid, but Mr. Hall believes that Marxists must make a clear distinction between religion as a philosophy and the role of religious institutions and a "doctrinaire" attitude to religious beliefs, and towards people who hold such beliefs.

The American Communists want to demonstrate that their thinking on this question is not that of the old anarcho-syndicalists. For the Communists, the moral, ethical, and "humanitarian" concepts of religion are not necessarily evil and have not always played a negative or reactionary role in history. Many people have even joined the Communist Party because they were anxious to realize such ideas as justice and love of one's fellow man.

Lessons from History. There are many examples, Mr. Hall continues, of truly positive actions that have been accomplished by Christians. They are present, for example, in the struggle of American Negroes, in the pursuit of peace, and in the administration of several Socialist countries. Within the Church, as well, there are countless Christians who are struggling for peace and trying to bring about the evolution of the community as a whole. The reverberations of this struggle extend all the way to the Ecumenical Council. The Encyclical, by taking a stand in favor of peace and disarmament and struggling against racism and imperialism, is making its own, at the most exalted level of the Church, this positive determination shared by a great many Christians. It is in the direct tradition of certain progressivist demands. This is why the Encyclical must be attentively examined and its influence effectively extended.

Among Catholics. Certain Catholic circles throughout the world will of course resist the teachings and the stands contained in the Encyclical, but *Pacem in Terris* will act like nuclear fission and disintegrate the negative attitudes of the mass of Christians.

Mr. Hall then discusses the repercussion of the Encyclical among American Catholics, among the trade unions and among other movements in the United States. On the whole, he believes that *Pacem in Terris* will "thaw" American anti-Communism and put the "activists" of the ultra-Right in an awkward position.

The Attitude of the Communists. Mr. Hall enjoins American Communists to grasp what is at stake in the debate and to adopt a positive attitude towards the Encyclical, not to regard it as purely demagoguery; he indicates that the objective is to find ways of promoting common action with Catholics and other Americans.

To do this, it will be necessary to rely heavily on the Encyclical and to invite Christians into the common struggle for specific goals: against unemployment, for peace, against the extreme right, etc.

And Mr. Hall concludes by sketching a rapid analysis of American Catholicism: it is composed of members who belong, the vast majority of them, to the working class and vote for the Democratic Party; it has a dynamic position in the South, where there are 750,000 Negro Catholics. It must therefore be counted on if any large-scale action is to be undertaken.

Some Remarks

It is unnecessary to recall here those passages of the Encyclical that explicitly deal with the possibility and the conditions of eventual common action between Christians and Communists. They should be carefully examined. Let us note, however, this paragraph, which provides some clear indications: "It can happen then, that a drawing nearer together or a meeting for the attainment of some practical end, which was formerly deemed inopportune or unproductive, might now or in the future be considered opportune and useful. But to decide whether this moment has arrived and also to lay down the ways and degrees in which work in common might be possible for the achievement of economic, social, cultural, and political ends which are honorable and useful, are problems which can only be solved with the virtue of prudence, which is the guiding light of the virtues that regulate the moral life, both individual and social. Therefore, as far as Catholics are concerned, this decision rests primarily with those who live and work in the specific sectors of human society in which those problems arise, always, however, in accordance with the principles of the natural law, with the social doctrine of the Church, and with the directives of ecclesiastical authority."

As far as we are concerned, therefore, the question has been resolved. It is up to American Catholics, and the American hierarchy in particular, to evaluate the circumstances and decide whether or not common action for limited ends is called for at this time. We do not have to play the role of arbiter, even if, on account of the Christian and human solidarity that binds us to them, we are party to the debate. We shall therefore content ourselves with some remarks that will be valid for all Catholics.

The analysis, which has been attempted by the Mr. Hall of the Communist Party of the United States, of the objective importance of the Encyclical and of its political situation at the interior of the play of political forces in present-day life, although resolutely Marxist, does not seem to me erroneous for all that. It is clear that *Pacem in Terris* is not primarily an Encyclical of "piety" or "dogma" and that it has not assigned as its unique end the missionary advancement of the Church or the inauguration of a "Christian city" in the "medieval" sense of the term; it seeks to take the tensions of the modern world and turn them in the direction of peace and social justice, and it consequently bases itself on the objective movement of men towards well-being, equality, and freedom. In this sense, it is "progressist" (there is no need to be frightened of the word), for its basis consists of the "progressist" movement of today's world: towards democracy and equal rights, against imperialism and racism. It then forges ahead, abandoning nationalism, colonialism, and authoritarian regimes to the rear-guard of history.

It is likewise true that the Encyclical, starting from within the different tendencies of Catholicism, has chosen to favor the desires and efforts of what may be called, for short, "social" Catholics, those who are anxious that the Church not sulkily withdraw from the modern world, and, in particular, not shut itself up in a sterile anti-Communism. Let us note also that this is the direction taken by the dynamic majority that disclosed itself at the Council.

It is gratifying to see Mr. Hall (and the Italian Communists make the same distinction) effecting a separation between the activities of the Church and her teaching on the one hand, and between the different activities at different moments of history and in various countries on the other. Which means that we are no longer being lumped together as reactionaries and "lackeys" of capitalism. It could even be that we sometimes travel in the direction of history.

The fact remains, I will be told, and the Communists would not try to conceal it, that their intention is to "make use of" us and

our "progressist" good will, with an eye to the progress of peace and justice in the world (perhaps) and the triumph of Communism (certainly). Truly, everything depends on the balancing, the connection or opposition between those two goals, which will decide the henceforth classic, and never to be resolved problem of collaboration between Communists and Christians. As for myself, I refuse to deny to the Communists, *a priori* and axiomatically, the inclination and the drive to human betterment and world peace. By the same token, I refuse to see in capitalism what it claims to be, namely, the fine flower of human grandeur and freedom. I judge according to the evidence, and I declare that the Communists all too often retrieve from the dust, where we have let them fall because of ignorance or cowardice, fundamental human claims. And I also declare that the "solid citizens" and the well off give the impression of rejoicing at this state of affairs, thinking to themselves that now that these claims have been labelled Communist, Christians will no longer have to recognize them. Which, on the whole, is very convenient. It is this maneuver that I denounce and reject.

So much the worse for us! But we have been so slow to act that the Communists have already taken over the most splendid causes. We are driven to a common labor. We did not choose them, any more than they chose us; it is history that compels us to work together.

(Translated by Martin J. Corbin)

Tr. Note: Father Chaigne's article appeared in a special issue (No. 3-4, 1963) of *Freres du Monde* (208, rue de Pessac, Bordeaux Gironde, France), the Franciscan missionary publication, which was devoted to commentary on *Pacem in Terris*. A translation of his article "The Cuban Revolution: a Mirror of Our Times" appeared in the March 1963 *Catholic Worker*, and the Spring 1961 issue of *Cross Currents* included his article on "The Spirit and Techniques of Gandhian Non-Violence."

Myths or Realities: Communists and Catholics

By GUS HALL

(Reprinted from Political Affairs, May, 1964.)

“MYTHS” is an old word which is acquiring a new meaning in the political lexicon. Myths are the ghosts of yesteryear’s realities.

Policies and attitudes based on what was once real but is now non-existent are based on myths. Those who persist in them are like people desperately pulling at the oars of a boat on a lake which has long ago gone dry. Such policies and attitudes are based on wishful thinking, on a make-believe world.

Our government’s cold war foreign policies, for example, are based on myths; hence they are in growing contradiction to the realities of today’s world. This is why Senator Fulbright’s myth-busting speeches have had such deep reverberations.

Policies out of touch with reality are by no means a new phenomenon. But they have become an increasingly prominent feature in the capitalist world. The basic reason for this is that in these days, when the old world system of capitalism is being replaced by a new world system of socialism, reality is changing at record speed. Policies that do not keep up with this changing world and are not rooted in the revolutionary upheaval which is taking place become policies engulfed in myths.

That class in society which resists change and progress and strives to hang on to the past—the capitalist class—becomes the bearer of policies based on myths. On the other hand, that class whose self-interest is identified with change and progress—the working class—tends to base its positions on the changing realities. In this contest, reality is stronger than myth. Positions and concepts based on myths become schipwrecked on the hard facts of reality.

The subject of this article is the abandonment of certain myths

within the Catholic Church, a development of tremendous significance for the whole world.

The New Encyclical

The reason the Encyclical of Pope John XIII, *Pacem in Terris*, created such a stir in the world is that it has opened the doors of the Catholic community to the realities of this day. It has subjected to serious questions and discussion old policies based on generations of myths. In effect, Pope John opened the door and said, "Look, and you will see how the world has changed." The Catholic community, he declared, must learn to understand these changes. It must adjust to the new reality and find its place in it.

The debate that has been raging around *Pacem in Terris* since it first saw the light of day is now itself a part of the record. I want here to discuss briefly a small segment of this debate, namely, the dialogue which has developed over the Communists' reaction to the Encyclical.

The Dialogue Opens

Two days after the Encyclical was issued, I presented a report on the significance of this historic document to a group of leading Communists. These remarks were delivered from a set of rough notes. There were later mimeographed and about a thousand copies mailed out. In response to numerous requests for more copies we mailed out another thousand. They were sent to both Communists and non-Communists, but mainly to the latter.

An indication of the estimate of the Encyclical presented in the notes is given by the following brief excerpts:

The important thing is that it takes a stand for peace in a new manner, for democracy in a new way, for disarmament in a concrete fashion. Some of the strongest sections are those against racism and colonialism. . . . It gives the working class a new recognition as a fact in life. . . . It places human rights higher than ever before. . . .

Because of some of the old concepts we have in our Party, especially in regard to religious institutions, there is a scoffing and cynicism which may well become a hindrance in the understanding, appreciation and use of this document. . . . We must view the Encyclical as a new and fresh look at the new epoch by an important world leader and movement, as a readjustment to the present balance of world forces. . . .

This document will sharpen the struggle. The Encyclical is a reassessment, but more, it is also a by-product of the new balance

in the relationship of world forces and will in turn have an effect on these forces.

Shortly after the mailings, the *Washington Post* ran an "exposé" on the so-called "secret" Communist notes. As is the standard practice of the commercial press where Communists are involved, they did not publish the notes, for if they had, it would have been impossible to present them as something "sinister" and "secret."

A few days later in its issue of November 9, 1963, the Catholic weekly *America*, the conservative voice of the New York diocese, took the cue and even embellished on the "exposé." The editors admitted that they had received four copies of the notes. How then could these be turned into a plot? Simply by falsely inferring that it was F.B.I. agents in the Communist Party that had sent them these "secret" documents.

America also did not reprint the notes. But it did conclude its editorial by saying: "Strange, isn't it, that the head of the Communist Party seems better able to appreciate Pope John's message than some Catholics?"

The editors of *Continuum*, a scholarly Catholic quarterly published in Chicago, commenting on the notes and the editorial position of *America*, wrote (Winter, 1964):

In the early summer, long before, the date mentioned in the editorial, I received a copy of the "secret" document of Mr. Gus Hall. Mr. Hall included with the notes, a courteous personal letter, explaining that the notes were being sent to interested Catholics and to all members of the communist party throughout the country, to encourage a study of the great new encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*.

They went on to say:

What is deeply regrettable in the editorial (in *America*) is the dismissal, out of hand, of the possibility of sincere interest in the social thought of Pope John, on the part of communists. And yet curiously enough, *Pacem in Terris* is filled with the very hope; the hope that just such interest will be awakened, both among Marxists and Catholics. . . .

For a door is open. The opening is the work of a great Pope. And the American Marxists have shown in a remarkably fair way, that they are willing to match Pope John's giant step in the direction of a detente.

Soon after there appeared in a special edition of the French Franciscan Missionary publication *Freres du Monde* (No. 3-4, 1963),

devoted to *Pacem in Terris*, an article on the notes by Father Herve Chaigne, O.F.M. This article was translated and published in the March, 1964 issue of the *Catholic Worker*.

Father Chaigne welcomes the notes as indicating that on social questions, Catholics and Communists may travel the same road. He cautions the church not "to shut itself up in a sterile anti-Communism" and he concludes:

... we have been so slow to react that the Communists have already taken over the most splendid causes. We are driven to a common labor. We did not choose them, any more than they chose us; it is history that compels us to work together.

This dialogue has since further expanded, including personal discussions and exchanges of views between Catholic and Communist spokesmen as well as other articles and editorial reactions in numerous publications throughout the country.

What is the significance of these exchanges? The first positive result is the dispelling of myths on both sides. The participants are acquiring a new understanding of one another's viewpoints. As the exchanges develop, the areas of agreement keep expanding. And they will continue to do so to the extent that the participants all start from the same basic premise—that they are all sincerely interested in the betterment and progress of mankind.

Continuing the Dialogue

We Communists, of course, are always ready and willing to take an additional step along this path. It is our conviction that as long as there are areas of agreement, there is no reason why we cannot initiate united activities to achieve these aims.

This dialogue has opened up a discussion about attitudes as they are related to the realities of today. That we have critical things to say about each other's attitudes is an understandable, in fact, a necessary element of serious dialogue. The purpose of such criticism should, of course, be to seek the path to an even closer understanding. Criticism that is slanderous serves no purpose. With this in mind, then, let us continue the dialogue.

The bedrock condition for the continued existence of reality as we now know it—in fact of any conceivable reality—is the ability of mankind to find the path ahead without in the process blowing itself into oblivion, or at best into a world in which its deformed remnants are left to struggle through untold generations for bare survival. Past generations did not have to deal with reality in such dimensions. *We*

must. To evade this responsibility, to ignore this qualitatively new element, is not only to perpetuate attitudes and policies founded on myths. It is also to do so in a world in which such policies can swiftly bring mankind to a point of no return. Today the choice is truly "to be or not to be."

There are some who contend that the menace of nuclear destruction dictates a policy of accepting the *status quo*. But this is falling prey to the grandfather of all myths, for change and development are inherent in nature and in human society. Social progress today is as inevitable as it was in the days of the destruction of chattel slavery. That enslaved nations and peoples will continue to move unalterably to eradicate all forms of bondage is an inevitable feature of today's world. That the working class will strive to end a system of exploitation that forces it to be the producer with no say in the disposition of its product is equally incontrovertible. Is there anyone today who cannot see that Negro Americans and other oppressed minorities in our country will no longer accept second-class citizenship in any form, now or in the future? Is there anyone who cannot see that the Latin American countries will not endlessly submit to domination and robbery at the hands of the U.S. monopolies? Is it not clear that counter-revolutions like that in Brazil can only retard the struggle for liberation but cannot alter its direction and final outcome?

What gives this epoch its distinctive character is that there are now two world systems—the old system of capitalism and the rising new world of socialism and communism. Both systems have available a one-hundredfold overkill of nuclear weapons. To behave as if these two world systems did not exist is indeed to fall victim to the most dangerous of myths.

All these are features of progress, lying at the very heart of today's process of change—a process that nothing can halt. The question, therefore, is not one of preventing nuclear war in a static world, but rather of preventing it in an *advancing* world. Policies based on anything less than the recognition of this are futile policies.

We Communists are ready to be judged by our fellow men on the extent to which our attitudes and actions reflect the fundamental realities of today's world. And we are the first to admit that in order to bring our own policies into closer harmony with these realities, we too must discard some deep-seated myths.

Conflicts In The Catholic Community

Is not the underlying theme of *Pacem in Terris* that the Catholic

community should readjust *its* attitude so that it will better reflect the world of today? The Encyclical clearly pointed toward the need for ending the cold war. It therefore struck a responsive chord in the ranks of Catholics, since it corresponded to their assessment of reality.

But it must be said that there has developed a strong resistance to this theme of *Pacem in Terris*. The attacks on our notes are in actuality attacks on the Encyclical. This opposition to the line of Pope John is of great significance for the whole world.

I believe it is correct to say that in the United States the majority of the leading figures of the Catholic community have in fact rejected *Pacem in Terris*. These leaders continue to take their political and social guidance from the statements of earlier Popes, especially Pope Pius XI. The overall theme of these earlier messages is one of opposition to all liberal tendencies and all democratic currents under the guise of anti-socialism and anti-communism. In practice these earlier pronouncements have given a lead for the support of all ultra-Right, conservative and anti-democratic elements. It is not surprising, therefore, that in some areas it was the bookstores handling Marxist literature to which even Catholics had to go to buy a copy of *Pacem in Terris*.

One should, of course, not give undue weight to isolated facts, but I believe the following illustrates the difficult path that the message in *Pacem in Terris* has traveled in the Catholic community. In their attempts to bury the theme of *Pacem in Terris* with Pope John, some Catholic spokesmen are conducting a rather persistent campaign against what they call "the cult of the personality" of Pope John. For example, unusual attention is being given in U.S. Catholic literature to an article on the "cult of Pope John" by the editor of the French Jesuit review, *Etudes*, appearing in English in the *Catholic Mind*, November, 1963. The editor deplors the "astonishing sociological phenomenon that the man in the street has been caught up in a kind of a cult for the dead Pope," and then adds: "But this creation of a myth is *not* without *danger*."

It is clear that this attack is not on Pope John's "cult" as a religious leader, but rather on the political theme in *Pacem in Terris*, for the editor adds, in a red-baiting vein, that Pope John "was on friendly terms with politicians, *particularly with the men of the Left*." (Emphasis added.) What frightens the editor and others, obviously, is not the "cult" but rather the response of the "man on the street" to the Encyclical's appeal to adjust to the new realities of our times.

Within the American Catholic community, the struggle is sharp. Most of it takes place below the surface. Books are being banned on

critical grounds, articles are being screened, Catholic professors are being barred from teaching in Catholic institutions, priests are being transferred and shifted—all in the effort to hold on to the old positions.

Again, one should not exaggerate the meaning of an isolated fact, but how is one to assess the following? At the very moment when college students in even greater numbers all over the country are taking part in peace activities of all kinds, a Catholic student newspaper at St. Louis University applauds as heroic the action of the student body of another Catholic school, Marquette University, in voting overwhelmingly that they would be willing and ready to fight a nuclear war against the Communist lands.

In this connection, it is worth noting that as a rule neither the student bodies nor the faculties of Catholic schools are to be counted in the ranks of the peace marchers. In 1962 I witnessed a parade of about a hundred students who openly proclaimed that they were from a Catholic college in Cleveland, Ohio. Their signs called for more, bigger and dirtier nuclear bombs—their answer to the local Easter peace parade that had called for a test ban treaty.

Or consider the recent pronouncements of Cardinal Cushing, reiterating his support of the John Birch Society and apologizing to its leaders for having only a week before denounced it for having called John F. Kennedy a Communist. He ascribed the denunciation to a "hoax" and said: "With regret at the temporary worry caused many good people by the hoax perpetrated on me, I send you and your associates all good wishes and kind regards." (*New York Times*, April 25, 1964.) Thus he returns to his original endorsement of the blatantly neo-fascist, anti-democratic, anti-Negro, anti-labor organization. In the face of this professed support to everything the Birchites stand for so long as they do not call the late President Kennedy a Communist, do not his statements of support for the civil rights movement become sheer hypocrisy and a hollow mockery of the victims of racism?

Do not these actions reflect an official atmosphere, and was not *Pacem in Terris* a call for a change in this atmosphere? There is a growing number of voices in the Catholic Church that support the call for such a change. This was expressed in the editorial statement in *Continuum*: "For the door is open. The opening is the work of a great Pope." On the other hand, the "Maginot line" of diehard defense of the old is represented by the editors of *America*, who grimly say: "We know what to expect and shall be ready to encounter it."

The Judgment Of History

History judges individuals and organizations not on the basis of

generalities but by their expressed attitudes and by the concrete actions they take regarding the central issues of the day. In the thirties, these issues grew out of the menace of fascism and war and out of the economic depression. In the struggle against fascism and for world peace, one had to take sides on such concrete issues as: for or against democratic institutions; for or against the right of trade unions to exist; for or against the rights of Communists; for or against the murder of millions of Jews; for or against the democratically elected government of Loyalist Spain; for or against the raping of smaller nations by the fascist Axis powers. History will record neutrality on these issues as actions favoring the aggressor, in this case fascism.

In the course of the struggle to change its policies, the Catholic Church will have to reassess its record during those crucial years. This is necessary in order to learn from one's own history. Indeed, such an examination is already taking place among the public, for example in the intense discussion prompted by Hochhuth's play "The Deputy."

Life now presents us with a new set of specific issues, and history will judge each of us by our attitude toward these. First among them is preservation of world peace. And once again, to be for peace in general is not enough. History will ask: "What did you do in the struggle for disarmament, for the test ban treaty to relax world tensions? What did you do in behalf of the ending of colonialism in all forms, of holding back the hand of U.S. aggression against Cuba, of getting the U.S. forces out of South Vietnam? What did you do to press for a policy of support to independence for the peoples of South America and to the democratic movements fighting for that independence?" And so on.

A second key issue is the struggle of Negro Americans for full equality and freedom. On this score, history will not accept as proof of one's intentions mere pious pronouncements about the brotherhood of man. Its accounting will include the presence or absence of actions for the ending of specific forms of discrimination, in jobs, schools, housing, for civil rights legislation, for the right to vote. Only such active participation in struggle leaves its imprint.

One must, of course, take positive note of the very active role of large sections of the Catholic clergy in the civil rights struggle. This has helped greatly to create a better moral climate for the struggle. The task that now confronts the clergy is how to influence the white members of the church to become active fighters for civil rights. This is a test of the Church's ability to meet the new and higher level of responsibility imposed by the specific features of the struggle today.

A third key issue is the destructive impact of automation on large sections of the American working people. The concrete tackling of this problem demands clearly defined positions on such specific issues as the thirty-hour week, labor and government control of automated processes, large government economic programs for jobs and social welfare, etc.

Finally, there is the struggle against the dangerous ultra-Right, neo-fascist movements and for the preservation and extension of democracy. This, too, demands specific answers. What is the Church doing to expose and root out these movements? More specifically, what are the Protestants doing about such fascist-oriented movements as that of Billy Hargis? And what are the Catholics doing about those ultra-Right elements that make specific appeals to Catholics, such as Buckley's *National Review* and the *Brooklyn Tablet*?

History will ask: Did you give these elements encouragement either by active support or by neutrality, or did you actively oppose them? Did you hide behind the smokescreen of anti-Communism, or did you take part in the struggle for democracy? Did you take a stand against the McCarran Act, the Smith Act, the Landrum-Griffin Act and other anti-democratic laws?

Such are the alternatives which confront the Catholic Church, as they do all of us. With regard to these, Pope John's Encyclical has truly opened the door to a new direction, a new course of action for the Church. And with this it has opened the door to meaningful dialogue between Catholics and Communists, for the basis of such a dialogue can be provided only by a common purpose in the all-important struggle for peace, freedom and human progress in our day.

In this dialogue, some have quoted Scripture as a basis for our working together, in particular the following: "And all that believed were together and had all things in common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they—continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." (Book of Acts, II, 24) These are indeed humanistic concepts that should make it easier for us to see eye to eye and work together in joint efforts for the betterment of humankind. With this aim in mind, it is incumbent on both sides to pursue further the dialogue already begun, and it is hoped that this article will contribute to that end.

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political affairs

Theoretical Magazine of the Communist Party of the United States

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