Panther Modern Society

What Kind of Revolution?

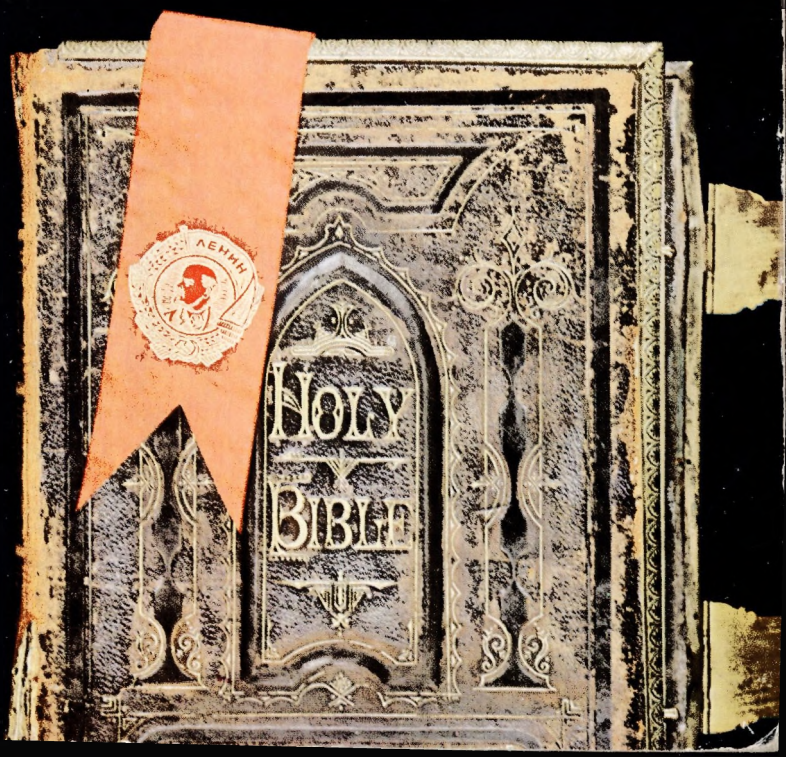
A Christian-Communist dialogue

Edited by

James Klugmann

and

Paul Oestreicher



The Christian-Communist dialogue is one of the hopeful events of what has been a generally tense decade.
Both outlooks are global, both are able to inspire a boundless loyalty, both are in a position to lead vast forces on to a field of battle.
Both, finally, believe 'in the ultimate and *inevitable* victory of good over evil, in the sense that both point man to utopia'.
The problem these ten British participants discuss is:
May it not be possible to work backward, or downward, from that final common aim to a stage where joint action is achieved in a struggle against immediate evils?

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Preface

Paul Oestreicher

WHO would have thought five years ago that in 1968 the main sociological and even a major theological concern of Christians around the world would be with the concept of revolution. And this on the 150th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx. Revolution is not just the almost certain outcome of the suffering and oppression in Latin America and Southern Africa: it is in the air in Washington, Paris, Berlin, Warsaw, Prague – even Moscow. It is on the lips of millions of young (and not so young) alienated men and women. Red flags are flying in the most unexpected places.

Few are sure what it all means. The ideological quarrels of the cold war era which still persist seem laughably irrelevant. Ferment no longer adequately describes the intellectual and emotional climate. Perhaps whirlpool comes a little closer. Little wonder that the power of that whirlpool has drawn many Christians and Communists together both in perplexity and in planning revolutionary action – or, as the self-styled maoists would have it, in reaction.

The essays in this symposium do no more than point to some of the factors behind these developments at those points where Christians and Marxists have begun to get

to take each other seriously. There is already a voluminous literature – all written within the last five years – which can properly be called *dialogue*. It might be said that these essays take that dialogue no further, that they are still in the category of 'dialogue about the possibility of dialogue'.

We make no apology for that. The vast majority of people still hold the naïve belief that Christianity and Communism are two antagonistic and given constants. Almost a century of brainwashing on both sides have assured that particular myth of at least a few more years of life. These essays are written to help dispel that myth. But their purpose is not to establish a new myth of essential congruence. A Christian Marxist synthesis may conceivably emerge one day and prove helpful to mankind. It is not aimed at here. The aim is not even to pinpoint the common tasks in tomorrow's revolutions. Those tasks are not generally hammered out on the typewriters of 'intellectuals'. They are thrown up by empty bellies, black slaves, revolted young men and women, human beings refusing to be brainwashed into consumer automatons.

The dialogue pursued in these pages is inevitably caught up in and to some extent overtaken by the cross-currents of events. To Catholics and Communists sharing Spanish prisons it will simply seem hopelessly obstruse and irrelevant. To Communists (and many more alleged Communists) tortured in the name of 'Christian civilization' in Greek and South African prisons it will simply seem sick. And there are still many Christians on the receiving end of Communist 'persuasion' who would be deeply offended at the very idea of this dialogue. The lunacy of their anti-God campaign has still to gain universal recognition among Communists.

Is the dialogue just an intellectual luxury, then? Not if

that danger is recognized. Increasingly it must become a joint declaration of solidarity with all men struggling to make life more human. Words can have intrinsic power. Words backed by commitment are the stuff of revolution. Christians and Communists have more than their humanity in common. They are both committed to building a new world. The dialogue is both about ends and means. It is practical.

What should it lead to? To anything that brings nearer the brotherhood of man? In the north of England, for instance, it has recently led to a common Christian-Marxist declaration on racial equality. To combat racism *actively* is an obvious common task. Many understandably wonder whether this dialogue will ever make any differences where Communists actually hold power. It has already begun to do so. Most obviously in Czechoslovakia where the able young director of the Marxist Institute of Sociology in the Academy of Sciences was promoting the dialogue at a time when it was frowned upon by the Party 'establishment' and while the Church was still being persecuted. Today in the 'new Czechoslovakia', Dr. Erika Kadlecova, now head of the Secretariat of State for Church Affairs, is making policy. Together with the leaders of the nation's Christian communities (many of them, like her colleagues in the government, ex-prisoners) she is working out how Christians and Communists can creatively co-operate in serving the majority of people who are committed to neither position. The Czech experiment may not be typical. It could, conceivably, become a useful model. Its context is not counter-revolution but the fulfilment of a radical dream, the achievement of a truly human socialism. Is that not Communism? Many to the right and to the left will deny that it is. Time will tell.

Of course Czechoslovakia is no universal prescription.

The anti-communist diehards who now use the Czechs to beat the Russians have not bothered to learn their social history. Peoples are not transformed *totally* even in half a century, not even under the most ideal conditions. Humanization is a slow and painful process. The alienation of articulate and intelligent young people in the rich and developed societies only proves how far all nations are from the goal of social harmony in conditions of freedom.

While two thirds of mankind (ineptly described as 'the third world') struggle for their most fundamental rights, the would-be 'socialist world' and the even more ineptly described 'free world' search for their own identities. Messianism, once so prevalent, is distrusted everywhere – except in China. And there possibly the most dynamic of all revolutions appeared to be struggling to fulfil its own dream in one generation.

These essays do not take us far beyond our British frontiers. Yet they are written in the knowledge that we live in a global village in which frontiers have lost most of their meaning. We will live or die together. The dialogue is in part about the prevention of the latter and the creative fulfilment of the former. There is no guarantee that those who pursue these goals will be loved for it. Mr. Jonathan Guinness (the 'Guinness is good for you' magnate), addressing Mrs. Whitehouse's conservative crusaders for 'clean' television, flatteringly complained of the 'pervading influence' of South Bank style clergy who are Marxists in surplices. If only his fears were a little more justified! Meanwhile the bearded would-be apostles of Che Guevara see in the dialogue just one more proof that the Party has sold out to bourgeois revisionists.

For all that, the dialogue, at considerable risk to itself, *has* become respectable. The World Council of Churches and the Vatican are committed to it. Which all proves to

staunch defenders of the 'Christian West' that these bodies have become part of a sinister left-wing conspiracy. If the dialogue is growing, so is its neo-fascist negation. Struggle, the watch-word both of Christianity and of Communism, is inevitable. Whether it needs to be bloody or can be won non-violently is a major issue for all who believe that the new world is a possibility.

This struggle was seen in microcosm in the London docks during the racialist hysteria fanned by the oratory of Enoch Powell. A young Communist unionist and two priests – Anglican and Roman Catholic – stood shoulder to shoulder as they pleaded for the brotherhood of man in the face of an intolerant mob. They were not thrown into the Thames. Tomorrow they might be. The day after, when three and three and three makes thirty million, 'We Shall Overcome' could be a hymn of hope fulfilled, of human triumph.

Is there any guarantee? None, except the fulfilment already present in committed lives. In those three voices in the docks, in Bram Fisher, imprisoned, in Martin Luther King, killed. In that context Communism and Resurrection begin to mean the same thing.

Marx and Religion

John Lewis

MARXISM took its origin not among the French socialists or the British trade unionists, but strangely enough among a number of young German philosophers, all of them the disciples of Hegel. As the British are distinguished among the nations of modern Europe by their contempt for philosophy, this makes it a little difficult for them ever to discover what Marxism is really about.

What is even more disturbing is the fact that Marx and his friends, just because they were re-thinking the fundamentals of social and political thought, and getting enormous help from Hegel, were all of them concerned with the relation of history and social development to religion.

Marxism did not begin, as many people think, with a simple statement about materialistic socialism and the class war; it began with an argument about history, social development, and the significance of the religious consciousness. This does not mean that it was in any sense a new metaphysical doctrine, on the one hand, or some sort of compromise with religion on the other.

It was nothing of the sort. What it learnt from Hegel was that the world was not a mechanism but a developing organism; that in the course of its evolution it moves

from level to level, from matter to life, and from life to mind. Then, with the dawn of history, these levels represent new forms of economic and social organization, new political forms, new systems of ideas. Hegel himself believed that the world was gradually actualizing, realizing, incarnating, *rationality* – the Absolute *Idea*, as he called it. And if the Absolute is taken to be the philosophical term for God (as it was by many philosophers), then God *is* the developing universe, and 'history is the autobiography of God'.

Of course such a conception has nothing to do with Church doctrines, or hymn singing, or prayers and creeds, except in so far as these are merely the historical expression of religion. The theory is to be understood as a conception of social development, which, however, sees religion as an inevitable phase of historical growth and change, perhaps as a kind of myth or symbol of the unfolding of man's being and the march of history. That was how the young Berlin philosopher David Strauss saw it when he wrote his revolutionary *Life of Jesus*, which treated the whole gospel story as arising from the myth-making consciousness of the early Christian community.

Feuerbach, another of the Young Hegelians, who strongly influenced both Marx and Engels, saw religion as a projection of the unrealized potentialities of man, all that, in Hegelian terms, has yet to be actualized. This is what man projects on to the heavens as God. 'God is but man's highest subjectivity, abstracted from himself.'

The other Young Hegelians saw religious belief somewhat differently as *the illusion of the epoch*, as the inevitable creation of the human imagination at a particular stage in social development. For them the time had now come to pass beyond that stage, and their intention was to proceed by intellectual criticism to destroy the illusions and errors of the German mind which, they believed, were

responsible for all the evils of the times. The function of philosophy was to bring people to critical self-consciousness. Therefore they proposed to begin with a thoroughgoing *criticism* of contemporary German thinking. The first broadside in their propaganda was an attack on religion – a vigorous assertion of the necessity of atheism.

One of their number, very popular with them all and the best friend of Bruno Bauer, had just gone to Cologne to edit the new Liberal journal, the *Rheinische Zeitung*. His name was Karl Marx. Rather to their surprise, he had no time at all for their atheist campaign, which he described, with characteristic polemical vigour as 'Berlin gas-baggery of no use to anybody'. Let them cease playing about with the label 'atheism', 'behaving like children who tell everyone they are not afraid of the bogeyman' [1] The whole thing indeed appeared to Marx as a mere itch for self-advertisement, a kind of intellectual romanticism for which he had no use at all.

Far from being impressed with their savage assault on religion, he told them that if they wanted to criticize religion, let them do it through the criticism of social conditions, rather than try to better conditions by attacking religion.

This does not mean that Marx had the slightest inclination to supernaturalism. None of these young philosophers could possibly think in such terms. Their position, and Marx's, stood in fundamental opposition to all forms of supernaturalism.

The objection on the part of Marx to the anti-God campaign of the Young Hegelians was not simply a disagreement as to the wisdom or utility of such tactics. It arose from a fundamental philosophical divergence from the Berlin Group. For the Young Hegelians were themselves divided into those who saw the enemy of enlightenment

[1] Marx, *Letter to Ruge*, November 1842.

as German orthodoxy and conventional thinking; and those, like Feuerbach and Marx, who related German philosophy to the political, social and industrial backwardness of Germany, and whose efforts were turned towards political and social reform rather than to philosophical and religious discussion.

It is necessary at this point to clear up an important question: was Marx ever a philosophical idealist, an Hegelian? All the evidence is against this. Engels declared categorically that he was not;[1] and pointed out that Marx's doctoral thesis (1841) clearly showed this. So, of course did his very early *Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic* (1844). The curious idea that Marx founded his dialectic on what is supposed to be the Hegelian conception of development, the triad of thesis and thesis, proceeding to synthesis, is also without foundation. Marx only once mentions this idea and it is to ridicule it when it appears in Proudhon's *Philosophy of Poverty*. Marx called his reply *The Poverty of Philosophy*![2]

This is not to say that Hegel had not exerted a profound influence on Marx[3] as he had, indeed, on all his contemporaries, in Germany and the English speaking world in particular. But Hegel was many sided, and one side of his thought was its *concrete* rather than its abstract character. It was his concern with the development of the world and history, which we are compelled to recognize objectively. He called this 'the *concrete* universal'. It was this side of Hegel's thought that Marx and Feuerbach

[1] In his interview with Alexei Mikhailovich Voden, reported in Mehring's *Karl Marx*.

[2] The famous triad is not even Hegelian, but was expounded in this form by Fichte. Not once in the 18 volumes of Hegel's work does it play the part of an argument; nor is any such mechanism exemplified in his *Philosophy of History*.

[3] But Marx was equally conversant with the Greek philosophers and with Kant and Leibniz, who also profoundly influenced his thought.

fastened on. It could be expressed as 'the *realization* of philosophy'; that is to say history seen as the gradual unification of the ideal and the real, as the incarnation of the Divine in humanity. Repudiating the conservative Hegelians, who believed that the rational was already real, Marx insisted that Hegel's rational goal was not a fact, but *a programme*, something yet to be existentially realized. But if the Divine were really to become man this called for *a reorganization of the world that would make it possible for man to experience himself in it as a Godlike being*. Marx saw the world of his day as profoundly *unphilosophical*, that is to say it did not embody the rational and ethical ideals of thought. In such a situation the existence of a rational ideal *above* reality, and in opposition to it, is a necessity and also a promise. So is the existence of the religious ideal, as he intended to show.

But if the world can be liberated from its unphilosophical condition, it will at the same time be liberated from philosophy – philosophy as an abstract conceptual system beyond experience. So the translation of philosophy into earthly reality, the transformation of the 'world of phenomena' into the image of philosophy, spells the end of philosophy's existence, *qua* philosophy or *thought-world*. Its realization is simultaneously its loss.[1]

Hence Marx was prepared to declare unlimited war against the existing world on behalf of the 'realization of philosophy', and to level a sweeping indictment against earthly reality, 'the kingdom of this world', on the ground of its 'unphilosophical condition'.

It was Feuerbach who began the process of relating this conception to religion.[2] He began by examining Hegel's conception of alienation. Hegel, acutely conscious

[1] Marx-Engels *Gesamtausgabe* Vol. 1. Section 1.

[2] Feuerbach. *The Essence of Christianity*. (English translation by George Eliot.)

of man's actual condition as 'lost', 'estranged', interpreted this philosophically as due to man externalizing himself in creative labour.[1] It creates not only an object, but a *loss*; man is drained of himself in creation. It is a process of deprivation, alienation. Feuerbach, who was to give Marx the impetus which was to carry him through the construction of his whole conception of man and his making, now pointed out that the essence of religion is to be found in this estrangement of man, which is, basically, *estrangement from himself*. Real man is an alienated *religious* man. Man gives to God, and sees in the Divine, everything of which he has been deprived in life. The image of God is the manifestation of essential humanity. Man is the being, God is the thought. Bereft of all the ideal attributes that he now conceives as belonging not to him but to God, instead of realizing his human potentialities, he consoles himself with a purely imaginary and therefore pseudo-realization of himself in his idea of God. 'The impoverishing of the real world and the enriching of God is one act.'

What then is to be done? Are the Young Hegelians right, must we at once *enlighten* man as to this delusion, so that at a higher level of consciousness, the lost ideal may return to man? This was indeed Hegel's own view. It was not that of Marx, who by 1844 had met Engels and read Carlyle's essay on 'The Gospel of Mammonism' in *Past & Present* (which was reviewed by Engels in Marx's first published work *The Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* in 1844). Here he saw the economic man of *laissez-faire* capitalism reduced to a cog in the economic machine, driven irresistibly back and forth by the laws of the market – 'The only relation between man and man the

[1] It is the opposition within thought of *thinking* and the *object* of thought.

cash nexus.'[1] This, said Marx, is the real cause of man's alienation. If so it can only be overcome by re-establishing a *personal* relationship between men. 'The social forms of capitalism have become antagonistic to a true society and to the self-achievement of the individual. Only a society in which the means of production are communally and not privately owned provides the basis for genuinely co-operative human relations; only in such a community will man find in his relations with others the realization of his true self.'[2] Was this to set up the state, the community, as the entity with which man is to be identified in order to recover the unity that he has lost in alienation? On the contrary, says Marx, 'Above all one must avoid setting up society as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual *is* the social entity. His *life* is therefore the expression and verification of social life.' [3]

'Man recovers himself in this higher form of society in which society is not an abstraction over against the individual, but the means of his fulfilment. Man is a distinct individual, and his very distinctiveness makes him an individuality, a real individual social being.'[4]

Marx has often been called a materialist, but if this is interpreted in terms of a crude philosophy, which 'reduces' all the richness of life to 'nothing but' atoms in motion, everything else being mere illusion or a secondary product having no ultimate reality, then Marx's position is wholly misunderstood. Nor does Marx's rejection of the supernatural imply the reduction of all distinctively human values, moral, aesthetic and so forth, to blind mechanical conjunctions of material entities – a reduc-

[1] Carlyle, *Past & Present*.
[2] Marx. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* (1844).
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

tion which is in effect the complete destruction of those values.

In point of fact what came to be called long after Marx's death, by the Russian Plekhanov, 'dialectical materialism', stands in fundamental opposition not only to all forms of supernaturalism, but also to all forms of reductionist thinking of the 'nothing but' type. The richness and variety of human experience cannot be explained away and 'reduced' to something else. Human experience is what it is in all its manifold variety, with all its distinctive kinds of activity. Human life in particular displays characteristic ways of action which have no counterpart in the behaviour of other living things. Man's intelligence, his powers of technical mastery of the world, and achievement of social organization for production, his moral responsibility, his ideal enterprises in art, science and philosophy, are what they are, and not reducible to anything else.

Marxists thus advance against supernaturalism a naturalism at once anti-materialist in the sense of a mechanistic, reductionist materialism, and anti-reductionist, extending the scope of the natural to include the whole of man's physical and terrestrial environment from the structure of the atom to the saints and sages of mankind.

There can be no place in the Marxist philosophy for any theory which rejects the activity and control of nature by the mind, the reality of moral values, the ethical goal, the sacredness of human personality, the validity of those passionate feelings of moral indignation which were the driving force of Marx himself and of all his followers.

Indeed there could not have been in the thoughts of any Young Hegelians anything so unphilosophical as metaphysical materialism; nor does Marx anywhere in his philosophical writing advance materialist views of this sort. They were of course vigorously professed by his

great enemy Karl Vogt who once declared that 'thought stood in the same relation to the brain as bile does to the liver', a statement which Marx regarded with some contempt. Moreover, he explicitly repudiates what he calls 'the chief defect of all previously existing materialism', namely the treatment of perception as the passive reception by the mind of sense impressions, whereas, idealism rightly insisted, and, whatever its errors, *this* was certainly true, on the *active* side of the mind in perception. This of course was the position so convincingly established by Kant, over against Locke, and was an essential feature of all Hegelian thinking.[1] Now it must be plain that whereas a doctrine of passive reception of sensations is consistent with materialism (though it does not necessarily *imply* materialism), insistence on the active role of mind in perception is wholly inconsistent with such a position.

When Marx uses the term 'materialistic' it is always as meaning whatever is concerned with man's basic needs for food, shelter and clothing and the other material requirements of existence, which even the most intellectual of us cannot do without! But Marx never implies for a moment that what is necessary for life to exist is all that life is! On the contrary, while he sees the whole structure of human society and its culture, the creation of the human spirit, its art and literature and spiritual achievements, as built up on the indispensable foundation of man's mastery of the physical environment, nowhere is there the slightest suggestion that all this is to be explained by or reduced to atoms in motion.

Materialism is defined by philosophy as *the reduction of all phenomena to simple effects or by-products of matter, so that only physical substances and processes are existent or real, and mental events must be*

[1] Lenin also strongly emphasized the same point in his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.*

explained as merely epiphenomenal, caused by material processes but themselves having no causal effect. If this is materialism then Marx was no materialist. The view that all ideas are the mere product of material or economic events and have no creative or directive role would contradict his basic theory that until a correct understanding of world history is reached by men, the transition from capitalism to socialism is impossible. 'As philosophy finds in the proletariat its material weapons, so the proletariat finds in philosophy its intellectual weapons, and as soon as the lightning of thought has struck deep into the virgin soil of the people, the Germans will emancipate themselves and become men.'[1] It need hardly be added that as his own ideas developed, Marx saw this consciousness as awakening in the working class of every land as the indispensable pre-requisite of social revolution.

Marx did, of course, accept the natural order as excluding the supernatural. But not only is this belief general today among scientists and laymen alike, but many theologians feel that they can maintain an orthodox belief without that implying *miraculous intervention* in the natural world. Some theologians go further and would agree with the Cambridge theologian John Oman that 'the test of a true faith is the extent to which its religion is secular,'[2] and with William Hamilton, Professor of Theology at Rochester Divinity School (USA), who believes that 'we have now left behind the belief that there is in life a dimension where man is powerless and which has to be ascribed to God'. The exclusion of the supernatural from the field of the natural sciences is not a conception peculiar to

[1] Marx, *Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law.*

[2] So also Paul van Buren, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Harvey Cox, Leslie Dewart, The Bishop of Woolwich and many other theologians.

Marxists, it is almost universal today. Nor does this raise any difficulties when the question of the appearances of life, and later mind, in evolution is considered. Matter is constantly rising higher than its source and manifesting new properties at levels of greater complexity of organization.

However, when the scientist, the historian, or indeed the layman finds that he has no longer any need for the concept of the supernatural he does not rather aggressively declare that he is 'an atheist'! Why should he deny the validity of a hypothesis for which he no longer has any use? He might well ask 'What do you call someone who doesn't believe in the devil?' The secularization of modern thought has nothing to do with atheist propaganda or with the efforts of the National Secular Society, it appears to be the inevitable consequence of the development of a scientific understanding of the world. This view, Marxism, of course, shares.

For Marx the steady advance of scientific thinking, (sociological as well as physical), meant, with the shrinking of the inexplicable and the areas formerly regarded as the province of the supernatural, more complete control of his environment by man. The more completely man masters his environment the more he humanizes it, and this for Marx was the beginning of what he called the 'realization' of the essential concept of man; or in religious terms, bringing the ideal down from heaven to earth. Religion is thus not so much abolished as secularized, as Professor Von Buren would say.[1] 'The criticism of religion ends, therefore, with the doctrine that *man is the supreme being for man.*'[2] Blake was surely feeling after the same conception when he said 'God only *acts* and *is* in existing beings or men' and 'does a human form display to those

[1] Von Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel.*
[2] Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.*

that dwell in realm of day'. This implies far more than the control of nature. It continues as the humanizing of economic relations, the end of the exploitation of man by man; and this is the end of alienation, the return to man himself of the lost manhood he had projected upon God. The criticism of religion, for Marx then, 'ends with the categorical imperative to overthrow all those conditions in which man is abused, enslaved, abandoned, contemptible being'. [1]

Marx was not at all interested in attacking superstition or campaigning against religion. He thought that this was getting hold of the wrong end of the stick. This did not mean, of course, that he took up agnostic positions with regard to the supernatural. But he was convinced that magico-religious beliefs arose from inability to understand and control the natural world and, from social frustration – which is the generally accepted position of modern anthropology.

This was very much the case, as far as social frustration is concerned, when what man cannot control are the economic forces of society, so that he suffers exploitation, deprivation and oppression. Marx, therefore, rejected the argument that religious illusions must be exposed *before* sanity could establish itself either in the world of science or in the world of economics and politics, and he rejected the philosophy of the Enlightenment and of the contemporary rationalism which held that the way to social improvement is to overthrow religion. [2]

Marx again took up this question when his friend Bruno Bauer declared that if Christians and Jews would give up their religious prejudices, they would become free men and would establish free political institutions. In *The Jewish Question* Marx said that while of course he wanted

[1] Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*.
[2] Still the view of Secularists and Rationalists.

the removal of all forms of discrimination against the Jews, it was a mistake to tackle the question from the religious end. 'We do not turn secular questions into theological questions: we turn theological questions into secular ones. . . . We explain the religious backwardness of free citizens (he was alluding to the United States where political democracy still left people in poverty) in terms of their social narrowness. We assert that they will abolish their religious narrowness as soon as they abolish their social fetters.'

The most important philosophical clarification of the whole issue, in which he makes clear why he rejected the term 'atheism', is to be found in the *Paris Manuscripts* of 1844[1] where he declares that *Atheism 'no longer has any meaning'*, because if God is the reflection of the essential nature of man, it is our social life today that denies man's essential humanity and it is religion that reflects that denial. We cannot therefore deny such a religion. The way to negate this negation is to affirm and realize man's nature in society, in which case he will no longer project that essentially on to the transcendental.[2]

Fortunately he put the same thing much more lucidly and indeed poetically in the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of rights*:

> 'Religion is precisely the self-awareness and self-consciousness of man who has not achieved himself, or who has lost himself again. Religion is the universal theory of this world, its spiritual *point d'honneur*, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn completion, its universal ground for trust and justification. It is the *imaginary realization* of the human essence, necessary because the human essence has no true reality. . . .'

[1] Paris Manuscripts, *Communism as coinciding with humaneness.*

[2] The German of this passage is very Hegelian; and difficult if not impossible to translate; but the drift of the argument is plain enough.

'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the kindliness of a heartless world, the spirit of unspiritual condition. It is the people's opium.'

'It is the imaginary realization of the human essence, necessary because the human essence has no true reality (in our present social life.)'

'The removal of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is the demand for its real happiness. The demand that it should give up illusions about its real conditions is the demand that it should give up the conditions which make illusions necessary. Criticism of religion is therefore at heart a criticism of the value of misery for which religion is the promised vision.'

It would completely misrepresent Marx's position to detach this sentence '*It is the opium of the people*', from the context which gives it its meaning, as is frequently done. Marx is not saying that the ruling class drugs the unfortunate working class with religion, so that it is a wholly pernicious thing. He is saying exactly the opposite. It is a *beneficient* belief that redeems the misery of the world and makes its suffering bearable (the opium which eases the pain). If it were no more than a despicable fraud imposed by the oppressor, he would of course have called for its exposure – which is what most people imagine he is doing. On the contrary he is doing the opposite. He is demanding 'the removal of the conditions which made the illusions necessary'.

Marx's theory of the origin of religion received striking confirmation in the subsequent theories of anthropologists like Frazer, Durkheim, and Evans-Pritchard, who clearly saw the inevitability and functional significance of magico-religious beliefs in the pre-scientific period. Durkheim showed its importance for consolidating and strengthening social solidarity. Freud and other psychologists saw religion as arising from 'the oldest, strongest and most consistent demands of mankind – the desire for security,

for peace, for welfare.'[1] The secret of religion's strength, he declared, is the strength of man's passionate desire for succour in the face of life's ills.

Durkheim's conception of the *positive* role of religion[2] in society as providing and supporting the common body of values and beliefs and customs which the individual learns, accepts and lives by, and is clearly indispensable for the existence of society, was not seen by Marx. Lenin however realized that historically 'there was a time when the democratic and proletarian struggle took the form of one *religious* idea against another';[3] a view which was developed by Kautsky in his *Cromwell & Communism*, by Max Weber, by R. H. Tawney, and by Christopher Hill in his many studies of the English Revolution.[4]

Marx also considered the ideals of utopian socialism in much the same light. They are the denial of the injustice and inhumanity of the present state of affairs, and the hope of the world to come. But when the conditions have developed which makes socialism realizable, then the ideal must come down to earth and embody itself in the practical. From now on pre-occupation with utopian dreams can be an obstacle to the hard and painful tasks of reconstruction. Philosophers have sought to explain the world, religion to maintain man's faith in the ultimate power of goodness, utopianism to inspire him with hopes in the golden age, *but the real task is to change the world*. Marx always insisted that until 'the material groundwork or set of conditions of existence which are the pro-

[1] Freud, *The Future of an Illusion.*

[2] Also supported by the functionalist theories of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski.

[3] Lenin, *On Religion.*

[4] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic & the Spirit of Capitalism*; R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*; Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution.*

duct of a long and painful process of development' had arrived, the hope and the ideal remain on the level of philosophy, religion and utopianism – ideological abstractions of enormous importance, but not yet capable of realization. So that 'The religious reflex of the real world can only finally vanish when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellow man and to nature.'[1]

You cannot therefore *deny* the religious or philosophical concept when it stands over against a world not yet ready for its embodiment. But in the fulness of time you can *realize* it and then the projection of the ideal beyond the real world is no longer necessary. This is by no means as remote from the Christian conception as is sometimes believed. The vision of the Last Things in the New Testament sees the New Jerusalem coming down 'out of heaven' upon the earth, and the material world is not dissolved or transcended, but transformed so that the common ways of man's life are made splendid: 'The streets of the city were pure gold . . . And there was no Temple therein,' for the transcendent now dwells in the transfigured earth and enlightens it.[2]

A word should be added on *Messianism*. It has frequently been argued by those who have obviously not read Marx and know nothing of his antecedents that Marxism has 'a distinctively Jewish inspiration as the apocalyptic vision of a violent revolution which is inevitable because it is the decree of God himself.'[3] But Marx was not in the least interested in the Jewish religion. His father had early emancipated himself from Jewish orthodoxy and Karl Marx was a baptized member of the

[1] Marx, *Capital*, Chapter 1.
[2] Revelation *XXI*.
[3] Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Vol. V.

Christian Church. The elder Marx always regarded himself as a German rather than a Jew, as did Marx himself. His whole upbringing and education was moulded by the German liberal and intellectual tradition. It is in vain that we search his works for traces of any specific Jewish attitude or sentiment. It is of course, not only the Jews who have looked for the realization of the Golden Age. This is a classical, a renaissance and a rationalist conception, as well as a Christian and Jewish hope. Its philosophical basis was elucidated by Marx in purely realistic economic terms. His own theory as to its realization can only be made to fit the Messianic concept if the usual vulgarization of Marxism is accepted, which is the case as far as Toynbee is concerned. Contrary to what is generally believed, Marx did not regard violent revolution as inevitable, he believed that in constitutionally governed countries the transition to socialism could be peaceful.[1] He rejected entirely the notion of a mechanical necessity bringing it about and made it entirely dependent upon the understanding and will and decision of men; therefore he saw the culmination of struggle as terminating 'either in a revolutionary re-construction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes'.[2] Of course, Marx saw the maturing of the conditions necessary for the transition to socialism, which eventually require it as the only alternative to stagnation or disaster. Even so men still have to understand the situation and make the equally necessary decisions and acts of will.

[1] Marx's speech to the Amsterdam Branch of the International, 1872. In 1848 he believed that the *liberal* revolution in Germany in which he joined might be carried on towards a socialist revolution. He abandoned this belief in 1849 and parted company with the members of the Communist League who still held this. In later years he never returned to a belief in the imminence of a violent transformation of society.

[2] *The Communist Manifesto.*

It is frequently objected that Marx saw the sudden and total disappearance of religion after the apocalyptic victory of socialism and the dawn of the Golden Age; But although socialism was established in 1917, and again in many countries after the second world war, neither has religion disappeared nor has Marx's anticipation of a society which has inscribed on its banner 'From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need', been fulfilled.

But Marx anticipated nothing of the sort. He clearly saw that even after victory, 'only through years of struggle can the class which overthrows cleanse itself of the mire of the old society and become fit to create a new society'. It might take fifty years not only to change the system but 'for men to change themselves and render themselves fit for political rule.' Marx explicitly rejected programmes of 'instant communism',[1] and envisaged a long intermediate period of slow change during which the new society 'emerges from capitalist society still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society',[2] and cannot establish equality or the ideal of distributing 'to each according to his needs' during their time because 'Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined'.[3] Only *after* this transition period does the possibility appear.

Neither, therefore, can we expect religion, or the utopian hope, or the continuing separation of the moral ideal from defective practice, or the fulfilment of democratic ideals and the withering away of the state, to occur automatically, or even rapidly, after the victory of socialism. This can only be anticipated by unrealistic reformers who have no idea of the practical problems of the building

[1] Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme* of the German Social Democrats, 1875.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

of socialism, which only *begins* with political victory. Whoever may have suffered these delusions, however, it was certainly not Marx.

As one might suppose, Marx's understanding of religion would rule out any direct attacks on religion by communists. This was the case as far as Marx is concerned. After the founding of the International in 1864 the French representatives proposed that it should wage an all-out attack on religion. Marx strongly opposed this at the London Conference of 1865; and at the first Congress of the International in Geneva in 1866 he secured the defeat of the proposal. Lenin too insisted that 'religious beliefs will not be destroyed by anti-religious propaganda, but by the conscious and deliberate planning of all the social and economic activities of the people. The roots of religion are in the social oppression of the working masses.'

Today the constitutions of socialist states guarantee religious freedom. Anti-God campaigns and any interference with religious freedom are contrary to Marxist principles. Togliatti the leader of the Italian Communist Party goes even further. 'We are against the clerical state as we are against state atheism. That is to say we do not want the state to concede any privileges to any ideology, philosophy, religious faith or cultural tendency at the expense of others. We must become the champions of liberty of intellectual life. The old atheist propaganda is a complete mistake.'[1]

But surely, it may be urged, we have seen the most violent conflicts between the Church and the socialist states. This is so, but a distinction must be drawn between ecclesiastical institutions and religious faith. The former may identify itself with subversion and military intervention as it did in Britain after the fall of the Stuarts and with the rise of the Jacobites. At this time the identification of

[1] Togliatti, *Yalta Memorandum.*

the Catholic Church with armed insurrection supported by France resulted in severe measures against Catholicism.[1] In Russia the Orthodox Church became identified with the repressive rule of the Czarist autocracy, which it supported, and with counter-revolution and civil war. In such cases where the Church has so far departed from its spiritual mission as to be indistinguishable from subversive political activities it will suffer the same treatment as the forces it is allied with. Where on the other hand as, conspicuously in Bulgaria, the Church identified itself with the people's struggle, first against the Turks and then against Fascism, it has never been interfered with in its religious activities and indeed has received much financial and other assistance from the State.

Wherever in its history, the Church allied itself with the secular power to secure its own ends by war or the support of state power, it has involved itself on the part of those attacking the government in similar measures to resist the Church and overthrow its authority. But where the Church has been persecuted purely in pursuance of its spiritual role, this is indefensible, no matter what government is responsible; and if socialist Governments are at fault it represents a departure from Marxist principles.

It is no more beyond the bounds of possibility for Marxists to contradict their own principles than for Christians. The wars of Religion and the terrors of the Inquisition, however, do not reflect on Christian principles, with which they are in contradiction, but on Christian conduct. When this happens we do not ask Christians to abandon their faith, but to be better Christians. Where Marxists too are false to their own principles, deny their own philosophy and engage in activities clearly inconsistent with the spirit and precept of their founding fathers –

[1] The Catholic Emancipation Act was not passed until 1829.

no reflection is cast on these principles, but much on the soundness of their Marxism. They in turn must be called upon not to abandon Marxism, but to be better Marxists.

Christian Attitudes to Communism

Edward Rogers

It would be very much simpler if one could write about the Christian attitude to Communism, or even if one could suggest that there are two attitudes, one right and the other wrong. But it would be quite unrealistic. It must be admitted at once that trying to come to grips with this particular theme is rather like trying to eat soup with a fork.

Christians are a mixed lot. Intellectual attitudes range from obedience to the Roman Magisterium to the advocacy of religionless Christianity, from the fundamentalism of the sects in the Bible Belt of the southern States of the USA to the way out 'death of God' theology; with an infinite variety of gradations and permutations in between. There is a wide divergence of political judgment between, for example, a Tennessee Baptist, a Southwark Anglican, and a Bolivian Methodist. But they all come under the broad umbrella of the same generic name.

Communists also are a mixed lot; not quite so mixed as the Christians because they have had less time in which to accumulate divisions and reunions, reformations and counter-reformations. But in the brief half century since Trotsky helped Lenin to seize power and try out Marxism

in practice they have been catching up fast. Already there are those who look back to the heroic days and those who look forward to new patterns of development. There are notable differences between the orthodoxy of Moscow and the orthodoxy of Peking, and varying degrees of non-conformist unorthodoxy in Belgrade, Prague and Bucharest.

Christianity is both a faith and a practice. The two are complexly related, not just as the two sides of a single coin. Altogether apart from the continuing debate about the content of the faith there is the influence of what are now commonly called non-theological factors to distort the reflection of the faith in the practice.

Similarly, Communism is, if not a faith, a coherent body of doctrine and a contemporary social-economic-political system; and there are, according to pure logic, odd discrepancies between the doctrine and the system. A Christian attitude to Communism might, therefore, mean the reaction of a Christian to the complex of ideas deriving from the teaching of Marx and Lenin, which will be profoundly affected by his own intellectual attitude to Christian faith; or it might mean his reaction to the actual and perpetually changing social-economic-political systems of Communist nation-states, which will be profoundly affected by the assumptions of the system in which he lives.

We are, then, considering from one side the elusive relationship between two not precisely definable entities; more suited to the higher mathematics of symbolic logic than to mere words. To bring some sort of order to the flux we must differentiate between the two types of attitude, and deal with each separately. But it has to be remembered that this method inevitably introduces a note of artificiality, for the two attitudes merge in practice. In fact, much of the confusion in the debate or dialogue

between Christians and Communists arises because those on both sides are apt, without being fully aware of it, to slide from one type of attitude to the other.

On the level of doctrine the Christian attitude has, until very recently, been generally critical. (I am not now considering the thousand years of discussion by the Christian Fathers of the pre-Platonic theory of ideal Communism. What they had to say could be summarized as a consensus that 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need' was the right way for men to live, but that sinners would have to remain content with a second best way of living until they ceased being sinners.)

The widespread view was that as Marxism was fundamentally atheistic it was therefore fundamentally wrong. Most believers were satisfied with the blanket condemnation; having, and desiring, little knowledge of the scope and content of Marxist doctrine. With very rare exceptions, the few Christian scholars and theologians who took it seriously noted that the atheism was deliberate and positive. The Communist did not regard religion as a matter of indifference. Unlike the scientist, he did not say that for the purpose of his sociological or economic analysis he had no need for the hypothesis of God. He said flatly that there is no God, and made the assertion a foundation doctrine. Christian scholars were therefore, not surprisingly, disposed to be severely critical.

As the study proceeded it became more balanced and appreciative, though it remained critical. The comment that Communism was a Christian heresy exaggerates but illustrates a dominant attitude in the decade before the second world war. The thesis behind the comment is that heresies arise when some essential element of the total Christian witness has been ignored or obscured.

The doctrine of the Incarnation should make Christianity, as William Temple said, the most materialistic of

all religions. The doctrine of the Laos (The People of God) should, as John Wesley said, make Christianity necessarily a social religion. The doctrine of the Spirit should make Christianity a religion anticipating and welcoming continual change. By the beginning of the nineteenth century it had become largely other-wordly, individualistic, and temperamentally adapted to the status quo.

Some Christian writers emphasized the significance of the fact that revolt against German Protestantism of this type set Karl Marx on the road that led to dialectical materialism. (The influence of Strauss and Bauer and the Doctors' Club in shaping his mind at an impressionable age would repay study.) As one looks back it is notable that the most acute Christian commentators in that decade had moved away from debating-school denunciation to an insistence that the Communists had important things to teach the Christians.

The powerful effect of a social and economic system on the religious thinking of those who lived within it had been vastly underestimated. The thought that change could be for the better, that régimes were transient, that there was purpose in the flow of history, was but feebly held. A too one-sided stress on individual responsibility and individual charity had dulled response to the claims of social justice and social action. The half-forgotten truths lived again in the corpus of Communist doctrine.

But the analysis was still critical. The intellectual integrity and the good intentions of Marx and Lenin were recognized, but the component parts in the body of the doctrine were rigorously scrutinized. It was argued that the Marxists did not study history to find out what had really happened, but rather selected carefully appropriate examples to justify the views they already held. The offhanded dismissal of the influence on social development

of outstanding individuals was sharply criticized. The apparent assumption that social and political problems were simple sums to which a correct answer would invariably be given by the dialectic was an easy target. Above all, the naïve misconceptions of Marx and Lenin on the origin and nature of Christianity could not be accepted. On the whole it is, I think, a fair comment that Christian scholars tried more seriously in the decade to come to grips understandingly with Communism than Communists did with Christianity.

Up to the end of the second world war, and for most of the following decade, the literature was almost wholly Western. Like the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches it was White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. Because of the Cold War, the post-war attitude tended to be more critical and less appreciative, though the shift was more in emphasis than in substance. But in the most recent decade there has been a considerable change, due to the convergence of a number of factors. One is the progress of the ecumenical movement. The list of delegates to the fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, at Uppsala in Sweden in July 1968, speaks for itself. The W.C.C. has a remarkable and expensive facility for creating commissions and committees on an extraordinary range of themes, but in all the discussions, and at every level, representatives from the Communist nations and the newly independent states of Asia and Africa participate fully.

Christians who have grown up within a Communist society are bringing insights and interpretations of immense value to those who have attempted to assess Communist doctrine from the outside. Younger theologians from Asia and Africa are contributing comments not weighted by Western preconceptions. With increasing frequency orthodox Christians and orthodox Commu-

nists find themselves lumped together as the targets of criticism from the revolutionary non-aligned. All this is happening when the drift from the Churches of the West has shaken the complacency of the Christians and the salutary experience of trying to put theory into practice has shaken the complacency of the Communists.

The net effect is at present confusing, but the possibility now exists that what has for so long continued as debate may move into dialogue. So far the tentative steps in this direction have been purely personal or have been semi-official occasions on which it was heavily emphasized that the participants had been invited in their personal capacities and not as authorized representatives. On the whole, the authorities on both sides are wary of the experiments. But if it turns out – and it must be remembered that I am writing from the Christian side – that the Communists are seriously prepared to examine and reassess their assumptions, rather than to justify them, the Christian theologians will meet them half-way.

The report of the April 1968 Christian-Marxist dialogue in Geneva, sponsored by the Department on Church and Society of the World Council of Churches, referred very briefly to 'a certain retreat from integrism and dogmatism'. It had very much more to say about common concern on economic, social and political problems. The participants obviously found it easier to talk about Vietnam than, for example, about the doctrine of creation. In other words, the second of the two types of attitude differentiated at the beginning of this chapter loomed larger; which is both typical and understandable.

It would be a mistake to read too much into the dialogues that have taken place, interesting and potentially significant though they are. The Christians who share in them are those likely to be most closely in sympathy with Communist judgments on political questions.

There would not be a fruitful dialogue if they were not. But a group of the more or less likeminded is apt to underestimate the extent to which it is untypical. Christians generally are not yet contemplating common action with Communists.

The biggest stumbling block is the official Communist attitude to religion. This is not the place to recount once more a too familiar story, or to comment on the constitutional assurances of unhindered freedom to worship. The plain fact is that most Christians are convinced that Communist governments persecute the Churches, and the conviction is regularly reinforced by books like those by Richard Wurmbrand or Michael Bordeaux. There is in consequence a built-in Christian resistance to too active collaboration.

Readiness to overcome the resistance depends less on theological conviction than on the strength and content of political judgments. Right-wingers in California, quite sure that the apparent rift between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China is a gigantic ruse designed to lull the West into complacency before the Communist conspirators strike, recoil in horror from the thought of co-operation. Radically minded members of the US National Commission of the Christian Churches, deeply disturbed by American policy in Vietnam, are willing to see how far they can go together.

The particular illustration given makes the point that there can be difference of attitude within a single country. The breakaway group of Baptist/Evangelicals in the Soviet Union, to take another example from a different setting, do not look on Soviet internal political practice with the same eyes as the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church, but, broadly speaking, attitudes vary according to the economic-social patterns of the country in which a Church is set.

Within the Communist countries there has grown with the passing of the years an acceptance of the declared aims of Communist policy. There is little sign of any disposition to hanker for a capitalist-competitive order. There is a strong conviction that 'imperialist aggression' poses the most dangerous threat to world peace. At the same time there is a not altogether congruous thesis, rather like that which developed in minority Churches under Muslim rule, that the Church can co-exist with a Communist order of society while transcending it because the kingdom of God is not of this world.

So far as one can judge, what little criticism there is is discreetly muted, and is most concerned with discrepancies between the official statements of the régime and official practices that affect the life of the Church. The prompt and enthusiastic welcome given by the ecclesiastical authorities to the liberalizing movement in Czechoslovakia shows that they would have liked to have been more outspoken in previous years, but does not mean that they are eager for a counter-revolution. They want a more freely democratic Communism.

The younger men in the Churches of the newly independent nations in Asia and Africa look at the whole thing from a very different angle. The older generation is not so vocal. Brought up in missionary and minority Churches, which could only be established when converts pulled out of the tribal or non-Christian nexus of the society in which they lived, and living in colonial régimes, they tended naturally to withdraw into closed communities outside the normal life of the national community. National independence and ecclesiastical autonomy have changed the picture.

The younger men are much more involved in political debate. They recognize the importance of developing a strong national economy. Freed from colonial rule, they

are alarmed at the possibility of neo-colonialism through economic infiltration. They are encouraged by the belief that the Soviet Union lifted itself by its own efforts from backward agrarian feudalism to become one of the world's two major powers. They do not always realize the extent of Russian industrial development in 1917. They rarely compare the rate of economic development in Britain after the Napoleonic wars, in the United States after the Civil War, and the Soviet Union after the Revolution; to ask if Stalin's draconic methods were inevitable. The feeling – which can be more important in politics than a calculated and rational assessment – is that Russia became strong because it turned Communist. The predisposition therefore, aided by the fact that nineteenth century Russia was neither colonizing power nor missionary centre, is to a sympathy with practical Communism that can outweigh the resistance to atheistic propaganda. Both the sympathy and the resistance are clearly marked in recent political judgments made by the East Asia Christian Council and the All Africa Christian Conference.

Christians from the minority groups in Latin America share the sympathetic mood of the Asians and Africans, but add their own distinctive colour. Their nations have been independent for a century. But during the past decade the more adventurous of the leaders – the majority of the members are evangelistically non-political – have come to the conclusion that political revolution without economic revolution is a delusion. They have been working out theories of the 'just revolution', comparable to the classic doctrine of the 'just war', and have been advocating them vigorously in ecumenical assemblies. They are also deeply concerned about economic justice within a nation as well as about the more popular call for economic justice between nations. One suspects that they are

sometimes too ardently revolutionary for the taste of Western Communists.

In Western nations which have large and constitutionally permitted Communist parties, such as France or Italy, there is sharp political argument, but a considerable amount of practical co-operation at local levels. The Communist is neither external threat nor remote attraction. He is a next-door neighbour. It may be added – a point seen more clearly close to than from a distance – that tacit co-operation is easier because, outside the dedicated cadres in each group, the average Communist's grasp of the ideology is much on a par with the average Christian's grasp of the theology.

In the Western nations without large Communist parties the dominant attitude is one of watchful suspicion. Opinions rooted during the Cold War, and nourished by the fearful expectation that it would lead to global nuclear war, die hard. Christians in constitutional democracies acknowledge the weaknesses of their political systems, but are firmly convinced that they are superior to the rule of a self-elected single party. Even those who, aware for example of the peculiar problems of some African States, are beginning to concede that there may be situations in which constitutional democracy is not the most effective form of government, do not imagine that their own situation comes into such a category. They believe, not troubling overmuch to make factual comparisons, that their economic organization is at least as efficient as that of the Communist states, and probably more efficient.

The ramifications of the conflict between Moscow and Peking are modifying this climate of opinion. The idea is slowly gaining ground that some Communists are better than others. The Chinese are the villains. The Russians, coming steadily closer to modest affluence, are more

reasonable. They are still awkward and dangerous, but it might be possible, if they calmed down just a little bit more, to come to terms with them. This is a long way removed from wholehearted admiration; but it is also a measurable distance from Cold War hysteria.

To survey so rapidly a congerie of disparate attitudes necessarily involves recourse to sweeping generalizations. For a precisely accurate picture nearly every sentence should have an entire chapter of conditional and qualifying clauses. But I believe that the broad impression is fair. It is not very satisfactory. The question is: Where should we go from here?

Turn aside for the moment from the bickerings of two generations, from the accidents of history, from the rationalizations on both sides that seek to justify past errors. Consider instead the two problems that immediately confront the whole of mankind: the threat of devastation by nuclear war, and the less spectacular but no less cruel threat of devastation by poverty and hunger.

Barbara Ward has graphically described Earth as a spaceship; plunging through the universe, carrying a load of nearly four thousand million human beings dependent on a thin layer of soil and a thin envelope of air. The message she is trying to convey is that the planet is comparatively small and with large but finite resources, that the problems are global, and that there are too many quarrelling crews on the spaceship. The message is valid, but it has not yet sunk in. With so many nations younger than the century this is not a good time to be talking about the limitation of national sovereignty; but nuclear power, speed of communication and economic interdependence make it necessary. Whether they like it or not, Christians and Communists ought to be getting together to re-examine their assumptions about nationalism, seeking to set the profoundly cherished aspirations of the nations within

a supranational context. The probable alternative is a conflagration that will set back for generations the aspirations of all nations – capitalist, Communist, or all shades between.

The problem of world poverty is soluble for the first time in human history, and may remain so till the end of this century; but not for much longer if no effective global action is taken. The knowledge and resources are now sufficient if they are intelligently applied. But the rapid growth in world population, outstripping productive advance, could change the whole situation tragically for the worse. Even now there are not enough resources to enable mankind both to prepare for war and to create a constructive peace. Unless human beings co-operate now their grandchildren may well starve together.

Co-operation is admittedly difficult, not so much vis-a-vis Christians and Communists as vis-a-vis capitalists and Communists, because each believes that his own radically different economic method offers the only ultimately satisfactory solution. It is possible that each is deluded by unexamined fixed ideas. The Communist economy is a centralized capitalism geared to production, but as it has become more sophisticated profit cost accounting and decentralized managerial initiative have been injected. Capitalist economy is a dispersed capitalism geared to consumption, but automation and Government contracts have speeded the tendency to centralization. The two types of economy – apart from the important matter of ownership – are different rather than contradictory.

The change, necessitated by economic development and technical advance, is considerably modifying official Communist economic doctrine. In an electronics factory, or an artificial fabrics mill, the facts of a scientific revolution have to be faced. But the reality of the wider accelerating revolution, or network of revolutions – in-

tellectual, cultural, moral, social, political – has not yet been recognized. The ferment within institutional Christianity and the questionings of the younger generation of Communists in Eastern Europe have the same originating causes. Many of the traditional concepts of theologians and dialecticians are no longer valid. In a sense that is much more urgently true than it was when a few Christian thinkers were saying so thirty years ago, Christians and Communists have a great deal to learn from each other. In a world that has apparently come, with the flowering of the scientific revolution, to one of its millennial eras of decision, they have much to gain and to give from honest co-operation.

The World Council of Churches, and, more cautiously but still impressively the Roman Catholic Church after Vatican Two, are showing the way. The World Conference on Church and Society, held in Geneva in 1966, ended with more questions than answers, but was a remarkably widely representative Christian gathering that was not scared by controversial judgments on economic justice, world peace, and social change because it was convinced that the great global contemporary problems demanded Christian action. It was taken for granted in 1968 that the World Council of Churches should be interested in, and competent to assess, the detailed disputations of the second United Nations Conference on Trade, Aid and Development. The theme of the 1968 Christian-Marxist dialogue in Geneva was 'Trends in Christian and Marxist Thinking About the Humanization of Technical and Economic Development'.

This is top level stuff. It is more representative of radical Christian thinking than of general Christian thinking. For instance, the great majority of those taking part in the Christian-Marxist dialogue came to the conclusion that economic, cultural, political and military oppres-

sion by the imperialist powers allied with national oligarchies in different parts of the world constituted the most widespread form of dehumanization. Put in the form of a resolution it would not win the uproarious approval of most Christian congregations or denominational assemblies. The permissible themes of dialogue are carefully limited. It will be some time before civil rights in Georgia (USA) and civil rights in Georgia (USSR) can be debated with equal candour, or before all participants can nerve themselves to admit that peace-keeping American (Russian) nuclear bombs and aggressive Russian (American) nuclear bombs are identical items of hardware.

If my estimate of actual contemporary attitudes is anywhere near correct, there is a long way to go. If my estimate of the urgency of global problems is justified, there is not much time for the journey. But at least a start has been made.

Marxists, Christians and Society

Jack Dunman

In their approach to society, Marxists and Christians find heart-warming agreement, but encounter also their acutest differences. Dialogue must enlarge the agreement and face up to the differences.

The organic nature of Society and the dialectical relationship of the individual to it was expressed by Christians centuries before Marx was born. For example:

> 'If any man be so addicted to his private, that he neglects the common state, he is void of the sense of piety, and wisheth peace and happiness to himself in vain. For, whoever he be, he must live in the body of the commonwealth and in the body of the Church.'

and

> 'No member (of the Christian body) holds his gifts to himself, or for his private use, but shares them among his fellow members, nor does he derive benefit save from those things which proceed from the common profit of the body as a whole. Thus the pious man owes to his brethren all that it is in his power to give.'

Marxist readers will perhaps be surprised to learn that the first of these is from a sermon by Archbishop Laud, afterwards executed by the Parliament for diehard royalism, preached to the king in 1621, and the second from

the *Institutio* of Calvin, who can be thought of as the theological ancestor of extreme individualism.

This concept of mutual responsibility is valuable. Although it was used to defend the stratification of feudal society, and the exploitation which went with it, it is opposed to the total destructive competition which is the basis of capitalism. The simpler and more forthright phrases of the New Testament are better, and exclude exploitation: 'Ye are all members one of another' and the second commandment of Jesus – 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself', especially if the word 'as' implies, as it surely does, not some kind of arithmetical equality in loving, but the idea that thy neighbour *is* thyself, because of the bonds of society.

These ideas were always true, but they are a thousand times more true today, through the development of technology, the application of the various forms of power to production, and modern forms of distribution, transport, and communications. The Division of Labour, in spite of many painful consequences, was a necessary step in human progress. As a result, the motor-car, which may soon be an essential part of the equipment of every family is produced on such a scale only through the co-operation and joint efforts of thousands of workers in one factory; of many factories, and of many parts of the world. The same applies to the basic necessities, food, clothing and shelter, and it becomes increasingly clear that the worst blot on our civilization, the continuance, and even intensification, of world hunger, cannot be overcome without much more effective co-operation between people and nations. Even those with vested interests in the present system, and therefore prone neither to progress nor to charity, are becoming uneasily aware that if famine is allowed to happen anywhere in the world, it may bring their own comfortable system down about their ears.

No one did more than Marx and Engels to expose the beastliness of the birth and development of capitalism in the industrial revolution. Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in 1844* is a classic of indignation and denunciation. But neither of them ever countenanced the many suggestions that the solution was a return to some earlier, allegedly better, but certainly less developed, previous age. Thus, on the one hand, Engels described the achievements of capitalism as follows:

> 'to concentrate and enlarge these scattered limited means of production, to transform them into the mighty levers of production of the present day, was precisely the historical role of the capitalist mode of production, and of its representative, the bourgeoisie' (*Socialism; Utopian and Scientific*)

or again:

> 'Into this society of individual producers, producers of commodities, the new mode of production thrust itself, setting up in the midst of primitive *planless* division of labour . . . the *planned* division of labour organized in the individual factory: alongside of *individual* production, *social* production made its appearance' (*Ibid*)

But he clearly saw that the development of capitalism necessitated its replacement by a still different system, and continued:

> 'The solution can only consist in the recognition in practice of the social nature of the modern productive forces, in bringing, therefore, the mode of production, appropriation, and exchange into accord with the social character of the means of production, and this can only be brought about by society, openly and without deviation, taking possession of the productive forces which have outgrown all control other than that of society itself.' (*Ibid*)

Capitalism was a necessary stage in developing productive capacity, although it may not be a necessary stage

for the countries which are now trying to catch up, and now, its replacement is equally necessary. Hankering after Utopias, whether past or future, can weaken and delay the struggle for the required changes, which the nature and momentum of society itself presents to us.

On the basis of this analysis, Marx and Engels proceeded to construct the system which is known as Marxism. From the period when it became possible for men to produce a surplus above the minimum necessary to keep them alive, there has been a struggle for the possession of the surplus, because it has been insufficient for the wants of all. Under slavery and feudalism, the division openly and obviously resulted in the exploitation of the majority by the minority, the robbery of the producers by a much smaller group. Under capitalism, Marx insisted, the exploitation continues and although it is concealed, it is intensified.

He made it his life's work to demonstrate how the robbery is made and how it is intensified; and he showed that at all times it is related to the ownership of the means of production: of slaves under slavery; of the land under feudalism; and of capital under capitalism.

This led him to his concept of class and class-struggle, for a class is defined as people having the same relationship to the means of production. Classes are not the multifarious strata we find in modern society, with varying incomes and responsibilities, which are discussed at such length by sociologists. This simply confuses the issue. Class is determined by relationship to the means of production. If a substantial proportion of your income comes from the ownership of property, you belong, whether you like it or not to the capitalist class (although, of course, like Engels, Lenin and Marx himself, you may decide to join the other side). If the greater part of it comes from the work you do, whether by hand or brain, you are

a member of the working-class. There may be borderline cases; there are in most countries peasants who perhaps can be thought of as a third class, but in Britain, we are without this complication. My short account of Marx's view may sound like an over-simplification, but it is not. It is a simplification absolutely necessary to understanding of the society we live in. The nature of our present society is determined by the fundamental conflict between those who own the means of production, and those who do not; by the class-struggle.

Mr. J. K. Galbraith has totally failed to shake this concept with his new word 'technostructure'. The 'ruling class' has always succeeded, indeed been compelled, to absorb large numbers of people such as judges, soldiers and civil servants, who may or may not possess property personally themselves, but are totally identified with the class which collectively owns capital. With modern technology, an ever greater number of technicians, scientists and organizers join them in the collective. But its wealth and privilege continue to be based on the 'private ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'.

This does not exclude members of the technostructure being flung aside if they displease or fail the lords of capital. If they have neglected to provide themselves with the ownership of some of the means of production, these unfortunates may even become poor.

We notice, that according to Engels it is 'society' which has to 'take possession of the productive forces', society being the collective of individual men, in their various relations. One of the points at issue between Christians and Marxists, and one that can be very fruitfully examined, is precisely the relationship between society and the individual. Marxists, say many Christians, tend to exalt society at the expense of the individual. Christians, say

the Marxists, exalt the individual at the expense of the society.

In theory, at any rate, Marxists should not make this mistake. They claim to be *dialectical* materialists, and to be specialists, therefore, in the interconnection and interdependencies of things and ideas. For them, society and the individual are inseparable concepts, interdependent opposites, which cannot exist without the other. Society is made up of individuals and cannot exist without them; but ideally society should exist *for* the individuals which make it up.

The real problem, in practice, is seldom between the individual and society, but between individuals, or groups of individuals, inside the society.

If Marxists have given the impression that they put society first, it is because they believe that, under capitalism, a minority of people are able to manipulate institutions of government and economics against the majority, and thus can loosely be said to be operating against society. The Protestant Churches grew up largely in reaction against the fixed and hierarchical values and institutions of feudalism, at a time when the free-enterprise of the individual really was the mainspring of economic development. It is therefore natural in much modern theology, including Roman Catholic theology, for Christians to continue to reflect the same tendency to be jealous for the individual. Sometimes this becomes exaggerated, and the dialetical relationship is forgotten. Marxists can say, on the other hand, in extenuation of their errors, that they have in the last 50 years been concerned with struggle and revolution, with consolidating a new social system in the teeth of bitter hostility from the rest of the world; and with the combating of espionage and sabotage, of which the cataclysm of the German invasion of Russia was in a sense only an incident.

Little wonder that for people who for the first time in history could feel they were fighting for themselves and for a country which really belonged to them, the defence of 'society', the 'Socialist Fatherland', seemed at times the only task, to which all else had to be sacrificed.

Little wonder, also, that attitudes formed in such searing experiences should be hard to relinquish when the need for them is past, which partly explains the harm that Stalin did in his own country and the fact that similar things could happen in all the socialist countries. It is in view of this that Marxists should value the emphasis which Christians place on the individual, which arose as we have seen from past history, but remains an extraordinarily important and necessary reference-check in our own day.

While Marx looked at society as a scientist, William Morris, our own great and neglected[1] Marxist, brought the perception of a poet to bear on it. His word was 'fellowship', and in John Ball's sermon, in *A Dream of John Ball* we read:

> 'Forsooth, ye have heard it said that ye shall do well in this world that in the world to come ye may live happily for ever; do ye well then, and have your reward both on earth and in heaven; for I say to you that earth and heaven are not two but one; and this one is that which ye know, and are each one of you a part of, to wit, the Holy Church, and in each one of you dwelleth the life of the Church, unless ye slay it. Forsooth, brethren, will ye murder the Church any one of you, and go forth a wandering man and lonely, even as Cain did who slew his brother? Ah, my brothers, what an evil doom is this, to be an outcast from the Church, to have none to love you and to speak with you, to be without fellowship! Forsooth, brothers, fellowship is heaven, and lack of fellowship is hell: fellowship is life, and lack of fellowship is death: and the deeds that ye do upon the earth, it is for fellowship's sake that

[1] Neglected, I am sure, by Christians as well as Marxists!

> ye do them, and the life that is in it, that shall live on and on for ever, and each one of you part of it, while many a man's life upon the earth from the earth shall wane.'

and

> '. . . This shall he think on in hell, and cry on his fellow to help him, and shall find that therein is no help because there is no fellowship, but every man for himself.'

Morris was not a Christian, but his thoughts chime in extraordinarily with the development of progressive Christian theology and sociology today: Hell, for him, is 'every man for himself'; he understood co-operation, working together, 'each for all and all for each', as the old-time co-operators say, as the basis of life and the very essence of the good society.

But – and here we reach to the very crux of the problem as Marxists see it – John Ball's sermon was not preached to 'all mankind' or to society in general. It was preached to a band of men about to engage in a bloody battle with the tax-gatherers and the soldiers of an oppressive state. 'Fellowship' was realized inside a group; but *not* in society at large. Only the strictest pacifist could fail to be moved by Morris – John Ball's argument, or rather, sublime assumption, that it is sometimes right for the oppressed to use violence in defending themselves against oppression, or in seeking to remove the oppression.

This is a point at which differences between Marxists and Christians are likely to persist for a long time. Marxists observe that all Christians are not pacifists, although it appears to them there are strong elements of pacifism in the teachings of Jesus and the doctrines of the Church. But this is a matter which need not be pursued in this essay. What we must agree about, if Dialogue is to lead to action and beneficial change, is that the constitution of our present society totally prevents the realization of 'fellowship', and limits the development of good

relations between men to smaller groups who, to help themselves and each other, must make war, in one form or another, on the rest.

I think today, with the various horrors of napalm and hunger in the world, that progressive Christians make no difficulty about giving assent to this proposition; but often only in general terms. And I think they lack an understanding of the fundamentally evil basis on which modern capitalism rests. Marx gave the best part of his life to elucidating exactly this, giving it priority over practical organization and the philosophical and literary studies which would have charmed him, and enriched us. But the understanding is necessary. It is easy enough to hate hunger and napalm; no decent man or woman can help it. And indeed, emotion often takes command to such a degree, that it leaves no room for asking why they should exist in a world in which every technical possibility exists for both peace and universal prosperity. If horrors are the inevitable product of a system, it is more important to hate the system than its products. But it is less easy and, with some hesitation I will say, less pleasant, than the simpler indignations. It requires study and thought in unfamiliar disciplines, and battle against natural habits and prejudices which are very dear to every one of us.

But Morris said it, more simply but no less accurately than Marx: Hell is 'every man for himself'. And that is the classical basis of the capitalist system, and it remains the basis today, in spite of spectacular changes since Engels observed the murderous exploitation of the British industrial workers in 1844.

In the early days of capitalism 'every man for himself' was not only the basis for the rapid growth of the system, and acknowledged as such; it was venerated and almost worshipped as a basic law of the Universe, and a justifica-

tion of the sometimes mystifying ways of God to man. What a lot of problems, difficulties and doubts could be thrust aside, if conscience, kindness, and lingering notions that one should *love* one's neighbour, could be recognized as harmful interferences with God's own mechanism for the optimum adjustment of human relations!

Adam Smith told his readers in 1776 that 'It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We adress ourselves not to their humanity, but to their self-love . . .'

Fair enough, but theory was soon telling them that 'self-love' was a 'hidden land' which, if only it was left to itself, would automatically make everything for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Smith was a humane man, and there is still something refreshing, even amiable, in the arguings that the 18th century used to speed the break-away from the suffocating rigidities of feudalism. But it is not so easy to feel amiable to Herbert Spencer, who, in 1893, after over 100 years of the industrial revolution, was able to write:

> 'The entire industrial organization in all its marvellous complexity has risen from the pursuit by each person of his own interest."

But that was the basic principle; and if modern business men could be somehow compelled to take an interest in basic principles, that, they would have to admit, is what it still is today. 'What is good for General Motors is good for the United States' said an American tycoon, highly representative of his class and its philosophy.

A lengthy book would be needed to catalogue the wickedness of the system under which we live; how it violently tears society into two warring sections, and tries to promote strife and emnity even inside those sections. It prides

itself on fratricidal conflicts inside the privileged, owning class, as one great business group 'takes over', or destroys its rivals; it seeks to divide even the masses of the people it exploits, as being the most effective, and the cheapest way, of keeping them in order. Rivalry between Trade Unions, for example, is not really uncongenial to management and in the heyday of Britain's empire, sensitive points were always the scene of bitter antagonisms between sections of the subject people; Ireland, Palestine, Cyprus, India, where the 'Moslem League' was largely the creation of the British themselves. The three volumes of Marx's *Capital* are in part just such a catalogue.

Here are one or two of the most modern examples. 'My word is my bond' is the motto of the Stock Exchange, the nerve centre of British capitalism. But it is mocked by capitalist practice. Millions of pounds are made out of records of popular music. The profits of the very big business which make these records depend on building up the reputations of the selected individuals or groups; the BBC and television help by publicity. But there are a great number of unknown professionals who can give much better performances than the acknowledged stars, and some of the recording companies, now give us the best of both worlds – the names of the most popular artist on the label, and the sounds made by unknown but more competent musicians. A spokesman of Page One Records told Mark Fordham of the *Morning Star*:

> 'We often use session musicians on our records here. The reason we do is to make the record sound better. I don't think the youngsters care. If what they hear is good, then they will buy it. The Love Affair group did not play at all on *their* [my italics, J.D.] record— If the sound is better, the record will sell better.'[1]

And so the allegedly 'affluent' teenagers are parted from

[1] *Morning Star*, 15/2/68.

some of their affluence. Let us hope that, when they encounter in the flesh some idolized artists that they heard on records, and are disappointed, some of their anger goes to the right place.

There is something comical as well as disgusting about this; but there is nothing comical about the fishing industry. At the best of times, this is organized in a brutal and degrading fashion, this year it cost 59 lives in three spectacular, and therefore adequately publicized, disasters. There is nothing old fashioned about the economic and business organization of this industry. In the last 30 to 40 years, there has been a steady concentration of ownership. Small firms have been taken over by large, and the little worlds of the Grimsby and Hull fish docks have come under the effective domination of two large firms, monopolies in their own sphere.[1] People reading the discussion of the disasters in the press have reacted against both a lack of feeling among the spokesmen of the trawler-owners, and an untimely readiness to justify and defend the system under which the disasters occurred, even during the first shock of death and loss.

What they *should* realize is that these deaths and this loss were in fact the direct result of the 'pursuit of self-interest' according to the most sacred canons of capitalist 'morality'. The skipper is paid entirely, the mates and crew partly, by receiving a percentage of the catch.

[1] According to the Report of the Monopolies Commission on the proposed merger between the Ross Group and Associated Fisheries, which was refused, these two firms 'would own 117 distant water trawlers of the total British distant water-fleet of 196. In 1964 their landings of cod at Hull and Grimsby accounted for 54 per cent of total Humber cod landings. In other words they would, immediately following the merger, be a great deal larger than any other company operating in this field.' These two firms were the result of many previous mergers. Furthermore, in 1964, six owners out of fifty-nine owned 60 per cent of the 496 vessels of over 80-feet fishing from ports in England and Wales. This increased to 62 per cent in 1965

Everyone from skipper to newest deck-boy is directly interested in catching the maximum amount of fish in the shortest time, and getting back to the fish dock at the earliest possible moment, chased there by a large number of similar small ships, all in the fiercest competition with each other; the other ships of their own firms as much as with the ships of other firms.

This is the reason why men agree to work the standard working hours during fishing of 18 hours on and 6 hours off – which may go on for two to three weeks in darkness and bitter cold. That is why safety regulations in no way compare with those in ordinary merchant ships; and why such regulations are there and are often broken. This is why skippers and crew unite in aversion to the elementary safety measure of frequently reporting their positions. It might show others the whereabouts of a rich shoal of fish. This is why 59 men died early this year. This is the homicidal free-for-all to which capitalist principles lead.

In other fields, death is not so often the immediate and obvious consequence. But it is so when physical conditions make it a trifle difficult, or costly, to avoid.

Truth is a victim, too. I have often wished I could be a silent listener at a debate between a capitalist moralist and a capitalist newspaper proprietor. The moralist would propose the motion: 'That this house believes that it is the first duty of the press is to tell the truth.'

The press man, if he were honest, and here we are deeper than ever in the world of fantasy, would oppose the motion on the grounds that while telling the truth is not in itself an objectionable or immoral activity, it is likely to affect circulation one way or the other, and if the effect on circulation were adverse, it would reduce profits and thus damage the interest of the shareholders. These good people had entrusted their money to him; and his first duty was to protect them. Truth came second to this

obligation; in fact, candour overcoming him, truth was quite irrelevant to the whole business. All present who really understood the principles of capitalism would agree that he was right.

This example of the press is extremely important. It is extraordinary that there is so little sense of outrage at the situation with which 'private enterprise', to give capitalism one of its pseudonyms, provides that ability to start, or maintain a newspaper, depends simply and solely upon the possession of an enormous sum of money. So, in a society which is being compelled to question whether the private ownership of the means of production is a suitable basis, the furthest reaching and still most effective means of influencing and creating public opinion continues to be in the hands of half a dozen or so private individuals, who enjoy a position of fantastic wealth, luxury and power precisely because of that basis, and would lose that position if the basis were changed. We recall the words of Engels, already quoted: the necessity for 'society openly and without deviation (to take) possession of the productive forces, which have *outgrown all control other than that of society itself*' [my italics, J.D.].

There is indeed no alternative, not only for newspapers, the other 'mass media', but for all the main means of production, distribution, and exchange. The present arrangements have served their purpose and achieved a mighty and rapid increase in productive power at the expense of untold human misery; they have now become both a hindrance to further advance, and a source of corruption which turns 'fellowship' into its opposite, and begins to threaten the future existence of the human race.

This is not the place to elaborate on the consequences of 'society taking possession of the productive forces', except to say that it does not point to some hideous 1984 society, perhaps worse than capitalism itself. Social

ownership does not involve universal nationalization, and an impossible attempt to plan and control everything from the centre. There are municipal and co-operative forms of ownership which are just as 'social' as the nationalized form, possibly closer to the people concerned in them, and more easily subject to democratic control. At any rate, for some time in some fields there is a place for individual enterprise. The alternative to newspaper tycoons is not two newspapers, one belonging to the Government and the other to the Party. Newspapers should certainly not be in the hands of individuals, but any responsible organization – a Trade Union, a political party, a Church, a co-operative or an educational establishment should be able to produce one, if there was a demand for it. And this should not exclude generous government assistance in materials and machinery.

In effect, in this way we should enable an undivided society to employ the diverse, but not basically antagonistic organizations which it contains, to provide its own apparatus of information, education and entertainment.

I have provided one or two particular examples to illustrate the inherent wickedness of capitalism; but it has to be understood that antagonism and exploitation are basic to it. The history of our country in the twenty or so years since the Second World War, and especially in the last four or five, demonstrate this perfectly. A period of reconstruction and development provided some years of full employment and rising standards for the people, although pockets of poverty persisted, the elimination of which would have presented no serious problem if the natural callousness of capitalism had not ignored them. But capitalism in its old age, besides being immoral, is impotent to develop its own resources any further, so re-

cession and crisis stopped the unexpectedly long period of steady development. The high priests of the system declare that progress must be halted for a time, and call for sacrifice. There are a few mumbled words about the sacrifice being fairly and equally shared by all; but in fact, it falls heavily and inescapably on those least able to bear it. To those who have is (still) given; from those who have not is taken away even that which they have. Thus, Leylands and the British Motor Holdings are to receive £25 million to facilitate their merger, almost exactly the sum which is to be taken away from the sick by way of prescription charges. A page is taken in the *Times* and other papers by leading representatives of capitalism to advocate, among other things, that to help their country, children should voluntarily renounce their milk at school. A leading newspaper states that, one class of person may be grateful to the Government for what they have done, namely the holders of equity shares; roughly those who can be called the 'capitalist class'. The crisis budget of March 1968 makes no secret of its intentions to lay the main burden on the wage-earners, and the value of shares has rocketed on the Stock Exchange. 'Equality of sacrifice' is out. Capitalist crisis is combated with sacrifices by capitalism's victims, and wage-freeze is the main weapon. And as other capitalist countries feel the same pinch, they resort to the same measures, so that the attack on ordinary people of their own country, will, if effective, frustrate the measures of their fellow capitalists in other countries to scramble out of the crisis. Class-struggle within countries leads to competition and enmity between countries, however much they claim to be Christian.

Others in this book are dealing with the international effects of capitalism. But there is one aspect closely connected with those with which I have been dealing, and

with which Christians have already deeply concerned themselves.

This is the growing gulf between the developed and the developing nations: between those that have and those that have not. And here, the validity of the fearful Bible formulation of the curse of capitalism is not in dispute. The advanced countries are growing richer, whatever may be happening to the distribution of wealth inside them, and the poorer are becoming poorer. This is not simply a relative phenomenon: Many countries are contending with hunger, famine and death by starvation; and it is a real possibility that the situation will deteriorate and spread. Poverty can hardly reach a lower depth.

This is a fact in a world in which knowledge of how to produce things, including food, is increasing rapidly each year; and in which a number of advanced countries suffer difficulties and embarrassment because they are producing 'too much' food: too much, that is, for the 'system' to cope with. Thus, in various countries food has been, or is, destroyed, or buried in caves; teams of economists work out elaborate plans for paying farmers good money for not producing. In Britain, we are very good at producing milk; and milk powder is a universal food, needed by babies and old people from the Poles to the Equator. But the greatest fear among farmers and the Government, is that they will be encouraged to produce too much of it. The mind boggles at the insanity of the situation; and yet, somehow, we have become conditioned to it. Is there not an obligation on all men of good-will to probe until they find an explanation?

Just now, I used the phrase 'too much for the system to cope with'; and this really means 'too much for the system to make a profit out of'. It cannot be expressed in a way more damning to capitalism and all its works; Farmers need to produce more food, their security and their

own living standards depend on it. People are dying, slowly or suddenly, through the world, for the lack of it. Why cannot these two needs be married? Is it beyond the intellects of those who have conquered space and are on the way to conquering disease and death, to devise economic measures to solve this simplest of all equations?

It is. No international discussions, except perhaps those on the related question of disarmament, have encountered such dismal and continual failures. There is at present not the faintest foreshadowing of an international agreement to encourage farmers to produce as much food as they can, and to see that it gets to hungry people.

And the reason is that it is impossible to arrive at international agreements to provide the maximum profits for *everyone*. But that is what capitalism demands; it requires the impossible, and will condemn the human race to slow or quick extinction if it cannot get it. And so it is impossible for the advanced and nominally Christian nations to find more than 0.61%[1] of their national incomes to help the less fortunate countries; less fortunate, because they have been consistently robbed in order to lay the foundations of the wealth of those very countries which now find it impossible to help them; or, as with unhappy India, had an unprogressive, but working, economy destroyed in its own territory to provide raw materials and markets for the industrial revolution in England.

Capitalism is not just uncongenial to unselfishness, fellowship, love: it absolutely prevents the practice of these qualities, even by people who are eccentric enough to want to. Many, including wealthy tycoons, would like to do something about world hunger, for, as well as providing disagreeable pictures for Oxfam to send to the papers, it threatens the existence of their own comfort

[1] Average 1965. U.K. figure happened also to be exactly 0·61% of National Income.

and privilege. But they cannot: no man nor organization nor government can put the system into reverse.

It is Hell as described by Morris – 'every man for himself' – and leads rapidly back to that 'state of nature' described by Hobbes, in which the life of man is 'nasty, brutish, and short'. It is utterly destructive of Christian virtues, and inimical to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. Christians cannot support it.

All that has been said so far applies to the direct economic consequences of capitalism, and it is fatal to lose sight of the fundamental fact that capitalism was, and is, massive robbery. We sometimes do lose sight of it, and thus weaken the whole indictment. But there are also grievous effects in the cultural and moral spheres, without some mention of which our examination would be incomplete.

'Alienation' has become a popular, perhaps an overworked word, among sociologists especially. It is used in several senses, and this can lead to confusion. Marx was greatly concerned with it especially in his earlier writings, though it should not be assumed because of this that later his view changed or interest slackened. His concept was the broadest possible and one that can be summed up as 'not-belonging': 'I, a stranger and afraid, in a world I never made.' He relates the moral effects, of economical exploitation to the physical ones. Men, under capitalism, spend their lives in making things; but what they make does not belong to them: it is appropriated by the owners of the means of production and exchange, by the capitalists. And because they give their very life-blood in production, this has a profound effect on their whole outlook, reinforcing most powerfully every tendency to feel apart, to lose enthusiasm, to fail to understand the system which keeps them alive, to feel outside; to lose the sense of membership of one body, and to distrust their fellow men, in short, to be alienated.

'Work,' said William Morris, 'which *should* [my italics, J.D.] have been the helpful companion of all men.' And as it is so basic, the basic activity, the moral effects of something going wrong with it, of disappointment in its results, go very wide and very deep, and spoil men's whole relationship with their environment. These effects are directly and obviously reinforced by the nature of the modern work process itself. Physically arduous, dangerous, and degrading as it was in the last century, modern methods of production make a much greater barrier between the worker and his product. If you are tightening an endless succession of identical screws on a conveyor belt, you cannot feel much connection with the final product, however cheap, beautiful, and efficient it may be.

This effect must operate under socialism also: it must require a prodigious effort for the socialist worker on the socialist conveyor belt to understand that his product really belongs to him, and is not alienated from him. This may explain the fact that a fierce controversy is going on in the socialist countries as to whether 'alienation' can happen under socialism.

If it does, it can be explained and combated. But capitalist alienation cannot be combated. The Rolls-Royce worker cannot be persuaded that the product belongs to him in any sense whatever: it belongs to the magnate who has the money to buy it, and, in some sense, to the shareholders who sell it to the magnate. But not to the worker, who receives enough in return from his labour to keep him alive (at a certain standard), in a position which is very much closer to that described by Ricardo and the classical economists than we sometimes think.

Too many people today fail to see the robbery inherent in capitalism. Very much easier is to miss the subtle, powerful and far-reaching effects of 'alienation', although

the press, radio and television are full of puzzled discussions of its effects and symptoms. Christians, we think, must wrestle with this concept of alienation just as hard as with the simpler, but sharper one, that capitalism is based on exploitation of man by man. Comprehension of it is essential for the conviction that revolutionary change is the only possible step beyond the frustration and wickedness of the present system.

They can take comfort in the magnificent declaration on the nature of work under socialism which Marx made in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* – 'after labour has become, not merely a means to live, but has become itself the prime necessity of life'.

Finally, Marxists do not now claim that the establishment of socialism leads to the disappearance of all problems, and the immediate establishment of the 'kingdom of God' under that or any other name. Human nature will not suddenly be released from, and forget, the evils and distortions which the old society bequeaths to it. Experience has already shown in the Socialist countries, that the path is a long and difficult one, not without zig-zags and retreats. But Marxists are not defeatists because of this, as I am sure some of my colleagues in this book will show. We will accept criticism from anyone, and not least from Christians, whose background is in part distilled by humanity from its experience in the long struggle to reach the light of day, and whose vision of the future in many respects resembles our own. But we will not retreat an inch in our demand that they recognize that the fundamental nature of capitalism is that it divides society into warring groups; that it is opposed to many of the teachings of Christianity and that it cannot but set one member of society against another. This must be overcome, or else the body dies. Christians must seek the revolutionary transformation of society; and the negative reasons for this,

which it has fallen to me to deal with in this book, are by themselves more than sufficient.

And when they have realized that, there is one more 'hard saying' which they must accept; which did not originate with Marx, but which Marx and his followers have made their imperishable contribution to history. In simple, almost childish language, it is that you cannot make things better for the mass of people without making them worse for those who had enjoyed privilege at their expense. There is no room for mental pacifism in the socialist revolution. The dispossessed must rise up and take their own, even if robbery and legal structures have made it the 'private property' of someone else.

Those in positions of privilege and power will be found not to have wasted their time. The whole structure of the state, and a great part of the cultural superstructure – philosophy; the arts; religion as institutionalized – is designed to confirm them in possession; and to discourage attempts at fundamental change; and, in the last resort, destroy those who resort to revolution. Fortunately, Socialism is already strong enough in the world to ensure if all goes well, that they do not resort to world-wide counter-revolution and destruction.

The revolutionary idea was expressed in its noblest and its most honest form in the first poetry of the new Gospel:

> 'He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree:
> 'The hungry he hath filled with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.'

The good things are not divided up equally, as the non-revolutionary reformist would wish; and in the end, he becomes the counter-revolutionary reformist, with a seat in the Labour cabinet. The rich are sent away empty; and that is a law of history, not to be abrogated by softheartedness or pious wishes. There were strong revolutionary

elements in the birth and development of Christianity as its first hymn indicates. It must be revolutionary today, because it cannot operate its principles, achieve its aims, or indeed exist at all in any real sense without a revolutionary change in society.

If we want a healthy society, we must understand that today it is torn by incurable division and conflict, which can be ended only by removing the cause of that division. That cause is the economic system which is still the basis of life in the capitalist world; and it cannot be reformed.

The consequences for Christians should be clear.

Ethical Aspects of the Christian-Marxist Dialogue

William E. Barton

INTRODUCTION

JUST before a meeting at which I was to speak on 'The Moral Challenge of Communism' a Christian member of the audience came up to me and said, 'Until I heard your title I would never have associated Communism with anything moral'. As he made this comment I recalled the Communists who during conversations in Eastern Europe and China had emphasized to me that a central feature of Marxist-Leninist society was its moral quality both in social organization and in a capacity to encourage the moral dignity and growth of its citizens. Indeed, I myself saw considerable evidence of positive ethical factors both in the lives of the Communists I met and in some of the facets of Marxist-Leninist society which I was able to observe at first hand.

In the light of my experience in Communist countries this essay is an attempt to disprove the assumption that we should not associate Communism with anything moral. Within the confined space available here, this will not be an easy exercise and the static image conveyed by a brief treatment cannot give the feel of the important movements now changing traditional patterns of both Marxists and Christians. I cannot take adequate account of

the increasing diversity among Marxist-Leninist societies, a diversity which often has ethical implications. Almost every use of words like 'Communist' and 'Marxist' demands special definition and qualification and this is impracticable in an abbreviated sketch. Again, however strenuous the effort to break away from the prison of personal experience and background, one interprets from a particular and incomplete view of the field. I write as a Western Christian conscious that it is impossible for me to represent the wide spectrum of Christian thought in the non-Communist world. There is too the chastening reflection that I cannot claim to have the experience of those Christians living in Communist countries, Christians for whom reaction to the moral climate of Marxist-Leninist society is no mere academic temperature record but a challenge woven into the stuff of their daily lives. Moreover the compression and swiftness of this analysis produce the appearance of giving an over-optimistic gloss to positive comment and of making an exaggerated emphasis on contrast in a 'black and white' treatment of negative aspects. Perhaps it is specially important to say that any critical statements in my text are made in a sense of mutual involvement and failure and as a small contribution to the search for truth seen as a common task.

The overwhelming weight of non-Communist comment on Marxist-Leninist society is concerned with political and economic considerations. There is some justification for this, especially if one remembers the high priority given to political factors within the Communist countries. Nevertheless, the Christian in particular should not be guilty of inadequate attention to moral issues in this field. He will have an incomplete and distorted picture of the contemporary world and of his responsibilities in it unless he can focus more sharply on ethical aspects of Marxist-Leninist society.

The Christian's attention to these aspects should be stimulated both by his own moral convictions and by the evidence – theoretical and practical – from the Marxist side. Before examining some of this evidence, let us look at one or two fundamental assumptions of Marxists and Christians in their ethical attitudes.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF MARXIST AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY

Although contemporary Marxist philosophers are sometimes willing to speak of certain basic moral conceptions applicable in all ages, they still emphasize Marx's rejection of absolute and unchanging moral principles. For the Marxist, morality changes with the forms of the social order and has, as its essence, a class character. Lenin's stress on victory in the class struggle as the basic moral criterion reflects the Marxist view that morality is a matter of consciously participating in the revolutionary process of society and that there is a high moral priority on truth realized in action. This practice leading to truth and the good life is to be achieved by man's unaided efforts. Man is self-sufficient and has no need of external supernatural aid just as human morality requires no divine sanction.

The Christian should be committed to love and justice in the social order. Responsibility to the poor, neglected and oppressed and an emphasis on sharing, as contrasted with selfish use of property, are important parts of the fellowship and brotherhood proclaimed in the New Testament and practised by early Christians. However, Christian morality is not in essence a matter of producing a human utopia. Rather it is a conscious participation in God's action in history through obedience to His will and in response to God's love as expressed in the life, death and

ever-renewed presence of Jesus Christ. The Christian has no facile recipe for discovering God's will in every context of life. But there are some signposts to help him along the path to moral decision, such as the Bible, the accumulated wisdom and renewed insights of the Church, the Christian's own conscience as well as the views of others on ethical issues, and the search through prayer and meditation for more sensitive perception. With the assistance of these guides, the Christian should find himself responding to God's will by actively sharing in it – above all through his attitude to others. At the heart of Christian morality is the ethic of love, a love which must find practical expression of a concern for every facet of the well-being of his neighbour as a person of unique value and eternal significance. In trying to implement this love, the Christian does not share the self-reliant and self-righteous belief of the Marxists that they can master history on their own. The Christian rejects this belief because of his prior obedience to Christ as a living reality.

The fundamental differences between the Marxist and Christian approaches to morality should not lead the Christian to a smug complacency or to an underestimate of the weight of the ethical challenge from the Marxist side. Christian involvement in a dialogue with Marxists on ethical issues is seen in its major perspective if we recall Georges Casalis's reference (in a speech at a session of the Regional Committee of the Christian Peace Conference in Hanover, 1967) to the Church's 'role in the world as co-bearer of the human conscience'. Georges Casalis goes on to comment – 'we say co-bearer of human conscience because daily experience shows us that there are also other people in this world who are . . . serious bearers of humanity's conscience'.

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM

The Christian would do well to accept the fact that Karl Marx was a 'serious bearer' of humanity's conscience. His denunciation of capitalism and his vision of the ideal society had a profoundly ethical content and fervour. In spite of Marx's assault on the Church, there seems little doubt that his moral tone and apocalyptic perspective were influenced by a Judaeo-Christian background.

Just as Marx's thought glowed with moral indignation against capitalism, so the social organization in Communist countries today is seen by its supporters as the expression of a revolt against the evil of the bourgeois way of life. There is a revulsion against the selfishness, the exploitation and the deification of money in bourgeois society. From the rejection of the wickedness of capitalism, the Marxist-Leninists plan a society based on moral values. Socialism prepares the way for the building of Communism, the ultimate ideal of the classless society where men in a system of co-operation, brotherhood and freedom will attain their full moral stature. Measures like the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production, of financial speculation and of the large-scale accumulation of capital, are seen as removing immoral distress and exploitation and clearing the way for the material-technical basis of Communist ethics.

There are important differences (with moral overtones) between the Soviet Union and China about the correct Marxist attitude to the affluent society. However, Marxist writers unite in emphasizing the danger that the new society might be seen exclusively in terms of more food and clothing. In a *Pravda* (Moscow) article (17th May, 1965) Vasily Stepanov has written – 'It is ... a

great mistake to reduce the purpose of Communism to "filling the belly", to a narrow practicalism blind to the broad horizons of the future, to the highest ideals.' These ideals are related to the ethical qualities considered as essential to the 'new man' who will construct Communist society.

The general principles of this ultimate society (as distinct from the means of achieving the goal and from present practice) contain much that could appeal to the moral sense of the Christian. Similarly, the Christian can find some congenial elements in the ethical precepts enunciated for the 'new man' who is to develop the ideal community based on co-operation, brotherhood, equality and freedom. The 'Moral Code of the Builders of Communism' (proclaimed at the 22nd Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1961) includes (along with political exhortation) such phrases as 'conscientious labour for the benefit of society', 'lofty sense of public duty', 'comradely mutual assistance', 'humane relations and mutual respect among people', 'man is to man a friend, comrade and brother', 'honesty and truthfulness', 'moral purity', 'unpretentiousness and modesty in public and personal life', 'mutual respect in the family circle and concern for the upbringing of children'.

There are other aspects of this Communist moral teaching which will evoke a much less sympathetic reaction from the Christian and we shall refer to these in a later section of this chapter. However, before leaving our review of positive features in the Marxist exposition of desirable moral qualities, we should note the strenuous effort to inculcate these qualities in the schoolchildren of Communist countries. The Soviet school rules for pupils not only proclaim the need for such virtues as diligent study, obedience, disciplined behaviour, politeness and cleanliness, but also emphasize community relationships

– e.g. the schoolchild is asked 'to be attentive and considerate to old people, small children and the weak and the sick; to give them a seat on the bus or make way for them in the street, being helpful in every way'. Soviet pupils are encouraged to co-operate with each other and to assist those who are backward.

The serious and determined approach to moral education in Communist schools is complemented in a variety of ways including the use in China of popular heroes as examples of the officially-sponsored ethical attitudes. Figures like Lei Feng and Wang Chieh are commended to young people because of their unselfish service for others. We can find in the history of European Communism parallels with the self-sacrifice and selfless devotion to a great cause characteristic of these Chinese hero figures. Rudolf Hlobil, beheaded by the Nazis in Vienna in 1942, was an idealist in this mould. Another was the anti-Fascist Italian leader, Eusebio Giambone, who said – 'I'm not a believer . . . but I'm not afraid of dying . . . I have peace and calm for quite a simple reason . . . because I have a clear conscience . . . during the whole of my short life I have done good not only in a limited way by helping my neighbour but by giving myself completely, with all my powers (however modest), in fighting without respite for the great and holy cause of oppressed humanity.'

As we shall see later there are elements (e.g. concepts of hate and struggle) connected with the moral commendation of Communist heroes which the Christian would probably want to challenge. Nevertheless, it is important that the Christian should not overlook or underestimate the moral power represented in these hero figures and also the overlap with some aspects of the New Testament ethic – e.g. unselfish service and sacrifice for others.

PRACTICAL ETHICAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF MARXIST-LENINIST SOCIETY

Searching criticism will prick many of the bubbles of illusion in the Christian-Marxist dialogue. But it should go along with frank recognition of the positive ethical achievements of the 'other side'. Initiatives in such recognition can encourage an open and creative atmosphere in the dialogue. I would, therefore, like to suggest a few areas where the Christian can salute moral progress in Marxist-Leninist society. The churches have usually moved slowly towards equal status for women and in some ways are still far from their destination. Marxist-Leninist society has accorded women equal rights in economic, cultural, political and other social activity. I found the practical effect of this reform specially impressive when I visited Asian areas such as Soviet Uzbekistan and China. The dignity and self-confidence of the women I met there witness to a liberation of personality and an unfolding of repressed talents. A related practical aspect of earlier Marxist-Leninist society had been government campaigns against brothels and the intensive efforts for the treatment, re-education and re-employment of prostitutes.

Communist countries give high priority in the use of national resources to education. The moral importance of this priority becomes specially significant in view of the enrichment of personality resulting from the campaigns against the illiteracy inherited by Marxist-Leninist society particularly in Asia. Moreover, there is a strong moral element in this educational provision corresponding to the ethical vision of the 'new man' in Communist society.

One of the moral virtues advocated by the Marxist is practical care by the state for its citizens, by the group for

its members and by the individual for his neighbours. There has been real progress towards what Milan Machovec, a Czech Marxist philosopher, has called 'the practical effort to prepare for millions of suffering men a life of human dignity'.[1] We should certainly acknowledge the sense of mutual responsibility expressed in Marxist-Leninist society through the community medical service, the care of the young, handicapped and old and the firm assurance of work and holidays. There is more here than cold official provision. In visiting kindergartens, old people's homes and workshops for the handicapped, I have sensed a caring relationship based on mutual aid and respect.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN OF POSITIVE ETHICAL ASPECTS OF MARXISM

New vistas in a Christian-Marxist dialogue can develop when both sides are willing to learn and when they are open to new light even from unexpected sources. The Christian can find fresh implications in his own faith if he studies perceptively some of the positive ethical characteristics of Marxist-Leninist teaching and social practice mentioned above. In spite of the persistent intervention of political factors, there is a basic desire (influencing the whole of Marxist-Leninist society) for the application of moral principles to the full spectrum of the social environment. As they examine this moral emphasis and the degree and manner of its implementation, Christians may well feel they must reject much Marxist theory and practice. Yet they should also emerge from this exercise with a willingness to rethink their own theory and practice of social ethics in a mood of repentance and readiness for fresh initiatives. Recalling the moral fervour of Marx's

[1] *Student World* No. 1, 1963.

onslaught on capitalism, the Western Christian may find himself face to face with searching queries about the motivation of the economic and social life around him. He may wonder whether the private ownership of the means of production and capitalist competition and profit are essential or desirable ingredients in the social order. In this connection the Christian might also reflect on R. H. Tawney's assertion that 'the quality in modern societies which is most sharply opposed to the teaching ascribed to the Founder of the Christian Faith . . . consists in the assumption . . . that the attainment of material riches is the supreme object of human endeavour and the final criterion of human success'.[1]

The Marxist has a profound concern for the restoration of human dignity to the poor and oppressed everywhere. What is our Christian duty in this respect? In order to help the under-privileged, is the Christian prepared to consider – and if necessary implement – a radical reorganization which may severely impair his social status and material interests as well as those of his family, his class and his church?

In relation to the under-privileged, have Christians been over-committed to the kind of charity which the Marxist attacks as disguised selfish individualism? For the Communist such charity feeds the emotional complacency of the giver while degrading and separating the receiver. The Marxist further claims that 'bourgeois charity' of this kind is a smokescreen diverting attention from the large-scale national and international revolutionary action required for social justice. Such a Marxist interpretation may well be unfair to the positive aspects of spontaneous giving. All the same, Christians must face the fact that such giving has often accompanied a view

[1] *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (John Murray, 1936 edition, p. 286).

(sometimes supported by the Church) which backs vested social interests and blocks reform to redress privilege in favour of those in need.

Here we come to the acute moral dilemma which confronts the Christian as he seeks the right action in areas where social change seems long overdue and where the Marxist struggles for swift revolutionary transformation of the existing social order. Latin America is one of these areas which deeply exercise the Christian conscience sensitive to social injustice. In situations that do not wait for gentle gradualism, has the Christian a genuine alternative to the Marxist insistence that only struggle (and if necessary violence) can overcome the resistance of those whose self-interest leads them to defend an unjust order of society?

There are many valid ethical criticisms (as we shall see later) of the Marxist methods for achieving quick social change. But these criticisms do not entirely dispose of the commendable emphasis in Marxist-Leninist philosophy and society on implementing theory in practice, especially in less-developed areas of the world. Communists can justifiably quote massive social improvements in their countries (accomplished in a comparatively brief span of time) through at least partially overcoming hunger, poverty, begging, unemployment, exploitation for profit, illiteracy and disease. These improvements have offered significant possibilities of moral as well as material progress for major sectors of the world's population. Such Marxist claims may be accompanied by jibes about the past and present failure of the Church to play a radical, effective role in the secular world. These jibes reflect an inadequate appreciation of Christian social witness. Yet there is a real ethical challenge to the Christian here which should effectively deflate complacency. The Czech Marxist philosopher, Milan Machovec, has formulated the

challenge in this way – 'Our criticisms of Christianity are of an historical nature. Christianity did not bring its best ideals to fulfilment. In the course of its expansion nothing fundamental has changed in human life. For 2,000 years the Bible has called for change and for love between one another but is there today in our world more love, more peace, more forgiveness than 2,000 years ago?'[1]

There are many other ethical challenges for the Christian in the Marxist-Leninist theory and practice of social organization, for example the fostering of a sense of community in Marxist-Leninist society. One gets the impression there that often the individual feels a sense of belonging to a group and of sharing in a communal purpose. Of course, one could quote examples of alienation, frustration and repression which threaten personal fulfilment. Yet it is possible to make a favourable comparison between the Marxist-Leninist 'community' and the loneliness and aimlessness which pervade much non-Communist society. The sense of belonging in Communist countries is stimulated by a high level of active participation in communal life. This may seem like regimented activity to the Western observer and indeed much of the participation does not fit into the categories of Western political democracy. But, in fairness, one should recall that Marxist-Leninist society aims at conscious and voluntary involvement of its citizens.

Other factors which help the sense of belonging in Communist countries are the idea of mutual care between the community and the individual and the emphasis on patterns of service and self-sacrifice for the group. Again, the Christian might find he has something to learn from the Marxist stress on the community as a force for moral improvement and as an arena for the exercise of criticism and self-criticism.

[1] *Student World* No. 1, 1963.

Another social objective which the Marxist sees in moral terms and to which Christians have sometimes given insufficient attention is the aim to overcome barriers in work created by divisions into such categories as manual and intellectual and rural and urban. This aim is envisaged as an ethical contribution to the classless society and to the fully developed individual. China provides some of the most interesting contemporary examples of efforts to bridge the gaps between different kinds of work. Staff and students from the universities go into the rural areas for agricultural tasks and public officials such as judges share in menial duties with manual labourers. There are personal, technical and economic dilemmas involved in any attempt to develop an all-round man, especially in societies with an advanced technology. Yet such attempts should remind us of the moral aspects of the alienation and frustration arising from the status (and other) barriers between various types of employment.

Many Christians will feel sympathetic to the comparative absence in Marxist-Leninist society of sensationalism based on pornography or crime. There is a jolting contrast between the puritanical 'Great World' entertainment centre I saw in Shanghai and many of the cynical and erotic cinema and theatre programmes offered in the Western world.

The restrictive moral element which one finds in this aspect of Communist thinking is related to a positive Marxist concept of the ethical role of art, literature, music, entertainment, leisure and sport. This role is achieved by an overriding purpose, plan and control with powerful moral and didactic elements. These elements are linked with the development of character required for the building of Communist society as in this excerpt from official Soviet documents – 'Literature and art play a big part in moulding the new man. By upholding Communist

ideas and genuine humanism, literature and art instil in Soviet man the qualities of a builder of the new world and serve the aesthetic and moral development of people.'[1]

The Marxist-Leninist view of the moral contribution of the arts and of creative leisure includes approval of wide participation by all sections of the community. This participation is facilitated by the liberal state subsidies for the arts and for sport, especially where young people are involved. The issue of journals, books and gramophone records is related to the general moral purpose and low prices help to secure an immense distribution. The positive provision of culture and leisure facilities is accompanied by campaigns against immoral ways of seeking relaxation such as drunkenness.

In stimulating participation in worth-while cultural pursuits and in discouraging antisocial and degrading leisure activities, Marxist-Leninist society has a longer perspective in mind. This is a vision with considerable ethical content and one that is not always adequately represented in Christian thought. The Austrian Marxist, Ernst Fischer, has sketched this vision in his book *The Necessity of Art* where he writes (English version, p. 225) – 'In a truly human society the springs of creative power will gush forth in many many more; the artist's experience will no longer be a privilege but the normal gift of free and active man.'

The lurid entertainment hoardings of the Western world are examples of the moral problems posed by advertising based on commercial criteria. Certainly, one could hardly claim that the right moral alternative was to be found in the self-righteous political posters which dominate the urban scene in some Communist countries.

[1] *Documents of 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (English version), p. 268.

The Marxist techniques of public persuasion may be equally offensive (and some would argue more dangerous) in comparison with those employed by the capitalist system. Yet the absence for example in Marxist-Leninist society of the provocative sex poster designed to exploit for private gain should stimulate the Western Christian to probe the ethics of advertising in his own community. In such a probe, he may find himself considering moral issues such as the degree of compatibility between the freedom to issue information for commercial profit and objectives such as honesty. Indeed, the Christian may wonder how far such freedom can be blended with the total range of the moral and educational responsibility which should be borne by those using public media.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF MARXIST ETHICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

We have seen that there is much in Marxist-Leninist theory and practice to prick the Christian conscience and to spur it to look at new horizons of relevant and practical witness. But in the dialogue it is essential that the Christian should raise the substantial points of moral criticism which will be an important part of the encounter with his Marxist partner. Thrust and counter-thrust are inevitable but there need not be bombardment from fixed positions ending in arid stalemate. The whole process can be part of a creative period of mutual learning.

Some of the deepest chasms (and paradoxically enough some of the bridges) between Christian and Marxist ethical views become apparent when one explores attitudes to the nature and destiny of man. With his rejection of Christianity, the Marxist is unable to accept a perspective which can give the individual his true worth. Without such

a perspective, where life, death and the after-existence are seen in a context which has eternal meaning, the individual can be more easily sacrificed to immediate necessities especially when these are regarded as steps to a social utopia. There is a constant danger in Marxist-Leninist society that other priorities will overwhelm the concept of the individual as a person of unique value and an end in himself. One must concede that Marxists make frequent reference to the full flowering of the individual personality under Communism. Nevertheless, the main stress in Marxist theory – and even more in practice – is on the utopia of the ideal community, and there is a tendency to envisage man as a product or function of the social order. Marxist-Leninist society, whether in education, work or the arts, postulates dogmatic claims for the needs of the community and it has little hesitation about riding roughshod over the individual in order to implement those claims.

The limited Marxist perspective on the spiritual destiny of man is combined with an almost boundless horizon of optimism about the potential achievement and development of the human character. The Marxist also has an uncritical faith in the ability of man to adapt environment so as to produce higher ethical standards. This perfectionist optimism takes little account of the will to sin and refuses to recognize that this will is often expressed in spite of good environment. There are of course aspects of the Marxist search for the full realization of human potential which are attractive to the Christian. But the Marxist's failure to accept the fact of sin or to recognize the necessary challenge to spiritual pride in the Christian experience of God and of Christ leads to lack of humility and a disturbing self-confidence.

Another area in which Marxists display an intolerant self-confidence is in the assumption that they possess the

key to truth. This assumption relates to the Marxist concentration on scientific truth and to a corresponding neglect of a humble sense of mystery before the infinite and the intangible. Such an assumption can lead to unwillingness to listen with a learning spirit in encounters with ideological opponents (a failure not unknown among Christians!). There are of course elements of scepticism and self-criticism among Marxists but they often set out their conception of truth in self-righteous, uncompromising terms of right and wrong. A related factor is the confident Marxist belief that the needs of the class struggle constitute a basic element in the truth of any particular situation. A belief of this kind helps to produce an intolerant attitude of irreconcilability towards political opponents whether at home or abroad.

From such unyielding positions the Marxist is able to make an exact, uncompromising separation of the world into foe and friend. Despite frequent failure to practise his own faith in reconciliation, the Christian cannot accept the absolute Marxist division between friend and enemy. I believe the Christian must emphasize the duty to work across all boundaries for mutual understanding between individuals, groups and nations. This duty springs from the recognition that God's family embraces the whole human race and that Christ's compassion and reconciling work reach across all man-made barriers. True the Marxist attitude here is an astringent corrective to appeasement and superficial amity. But the Christian will find it hard to recognize the moral value of hatred which the Communist perceives in the struggle against ideological enemies. Reinhold Miller, the East German philosopher, claims that – 'Love for working men and irreconcilable hate against the exploiters are the characteristics of socialist humanism ... From this hate ... there grow outstanding human qualities like readiness to

sacrifice, and selflessness, courage and constancy'.[1]

The emphasis on the ethical value of struggle and hatred together with the assumed possession of the orthodox truth help to account for the inadequate place given by the Marxist to compassion and forgiveness as desirable qualities for exercise in dealing with political enemies or transgressors of the Communist moral code. Those who search for something of the Christian quality of mercy to opponents in Marxist-Leninist society may find this quality largely submerged in a devotion, mostly humourless – and at times fanatical – to the ruthless struggle against the foes of Communism.

Although ultimate Communism is seen as a society where war has been abolished, the principles of Marxism-Leninism recognize that the revolutionary struggle may involve physical violence, both for the individual and the community. Such violence is not sought as an end in itself but neither, when reckoned necessary, does it pose an ethical dilemma for the Communist. The need for violence in order to achieve political objectives is stated in its most extreme form by Chinese Communists. Mao Tse-tung almost gives armed struggle an aura of inevitability in particular situations – 'Experience in the class struggle of the era of imperialism teaches us that the working class and the toiling masses cannot defeat the armed bourgeois and landlords except by the power of the gun . . .' [2]

Even non-pacifist Christians will feel deep concern about the achievement and imposition of political power by military force. Among the many qualifications they should take into account is the fact that, when a *status quo* of questionable social justice is embattled against

[1] R. Miller, *Vom Werden des sozialistischen Menschen* (in German), pp. 228–9.

[2] Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works* (in English), 1954, Vol. II, pp. 272–3.

change with the aid of military and police protection, it can provoke violent attempts at removal. Nevertheless, when the need for force is given high priority there is a danger that other ethical considerations will be swamped. Here, we touch on a moral objection to Communism of central importance – its willingness to impose fresh political and social organization on large numbers of people who do not freely accept the change.

Such imposition is of course related to the pressures of the central state authority on the citizens of Communist countries. Attempts at genuine – and even gentle – persuasion accompany these pressures but the individual is often forced into a prescribed mould with all the techniques available to modern social organization. Some words of an early Quaker (John Audland, 1630–64) sum up part of the objection to those who enforce patterns of life without compassionate respect for the individual – 'Force and compulsion may make some men conform to that outwardly which otherwise they would not do but that is nothing of weight, their hearts are never the better but are rather worse, and more hypocrites than before . . .' [1]

Related to these hesitations about Communism is the ethical criticism that Marxist-Leninist society subordinates moral values to political criteria. It is fitting that one of the most cogent statements of this subordination came from Lenin with his supreme emphasis on the achievement of revolution – 'We say morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society'.[2] Such a definition opens a terrifying vista of reasons for ignoring, in the cause of the class struggle, values like the unique worth of the individual personality, respect for truth and honesty or mutual trust in personal relationship. Because Com-

[1] *The Memory of the Righteous Revived*, 1689, p. 204.

[2] V. I. Lenin, *Marx, Engels, Marxism* (English edition, Moscow, 1951), p. 538.

munism is seen as a goal of unparalleled righteousness, the Marxist-Leninist feels justified in using (if required) such methods of achievement as violence, conspiracy, deceit and the ruthless exploitation of opponents' weaknesses. To ensure ultimate success, the Communist can envisage the possibility of the individual being compelled to accept the postponement of liberty and endless self-sacrifice.

Incalculable personal suffering has in fact been inflicted in order to push through relentless campaigns like the Soviet collectivization of agriculture. For the protection of their new social order Communists have used severe restraints on the expression and exchange of information and on travel. Barriers like the Berlin Wall, imposing the anguish of family separation, are interpreted in Marxist-Leninist circles as justifiable measures against the threats of capitalist aggression. Capitalist hostility does indeed bear some moral responsibility for the repressive aspects in Marxist-Leninist countries. But it is by no means the only factor in any assessment of restrictive control in these societies and the other points noted earlier are also of decisive significance – e.g. the inexorable demand to destroy – at all costs – the old exploiting order.

The intense pressure to achieve and safeguard the revolution has opened the way to a moral and political weakness in the face of a dangerous use of over-concentrated state power. Stalin's inhuman and ethically degraded measures against political enemies illustrated the peril of obsession with power. Without emphasis on the rights of individuals and minorities this obsession could use the argument of political necessity to crush opponents and employ the frightful sanction of the Siberian labour camps.

The over-centralized state power in Marxist-Leninist society encourages an identification of political and moral

orthodoxy. There is a persistent infiltration of political factors into all channels of life and such factors often have dominant priority. We find evidence of this priority in areas like education, work, the arts, leisure and the penal system. Personal conscience must not clash with political criteria. L. M. Archangelski, a Soviet philosopher, has said – 'On no account must the proletariat justify weakness against its class enemies by reference to an abstract humanity and an abstract conscience'.[1] The heading of the final section of a Soviet work on ethics (by A. F. Shishkin) is 'The Communist Party – the Mind, Honour and Conscience of our Time'.[2] With moral priorities of this kind it is hardly surprising that the unorthodox author (like others, including Christians, who show signs of dissidence) can suffer the full weight of state authority.

Indeed, some of the most acute differences between the Christian and the Communist in the ethical field arise from the demand on citizens in Marxist-Leninist society that their final loyalty should be devotion to the current policy of the ruling political party. Such loyalty involves acceptance of the fluctuations which the varying needs of the class struggle may demand. Many Christians would prefer to express their ultimate loyalty in terms of spiritual experience giving rise to moral criteria which cannot be adjusted or ignored in order to implement particular objectives. The Christian loyalty here usually grows out of encounter with the life of Jesus as a major historical event of great practical, moral significance and also out of spiritual communion with the living Christ.

There is still much in the moral world of the Marxist which the Christian understands imperfectly. The Marxist will only fully appreciate the Christian ethical position

[1] L. M. Archangelski, *Categories of Marxist Ethics* (German version), p. 196.

[2] A. F. Shishkin, *The Foundations of Communist Morality*, 1955.

when he comes with a more open mind to the fact of Christ and of spiritual experience.

COMMON MARXIST-CHRISTIAN INVOLVEMENT IN MORAL PROBLEMS

The Christian-Marxist dialogue on ethical issues should be much more than the identification of separate areas of agreement and disagreement. A sense of urgency, realism and mutual involvement will develop with the recognition that there are major problems common to both sides. As affluence comes to Communist countries, they will face (and indeed are already facing) some of the ethical problems involved in access to higher material standards. In an environment of prosperity and attachment to personal comfort, how does one encourage the virtues of self-denial for others and of thrift and simplicity? The divergent use in Marxist-Leninist countries (e.g. in China and Yugoslavia) of work incentives shows that they share some of the Western dilemmas about the comparative role of financial, prestige and moral stimuli in the ethics of employment.

Another common moral problem is that of juvenile delinquency. This problem is related to wider ethical issues involving the whole complex of queries affecting the 'permissive society' in the West. Some British Christians still cling to the moral restraints characteristic of the Victorian age in Britain. In the Soviet Union there is a massive official resistance to the permissive society expressed in the puritanical restrictions of the moral code advocated by the government. Have Christians in the West anything to learn from these restrictions? How far do they represent part of a useful moral code which our Western society is abandoning in favour of permissiveness? Does the way forward in a more mature approach to moral practice

involve some compromise between the attempt to prescribe and regulate behaviour and such alternatives as greater reliance on free moral choice and self-discipline? These are questions which both Marxists and Christians have to face in practice and which they can fruitfully explore together in the dialogue.

There are other issues of mutual interest which are partly brought into 'common ground' by the widening range of thought and the increasing flexibility in the Marxist world. One such issue is the degree of attention to be paid to the individual's striving for personal fulfilment in contemporary society. East European writers like K. Kosik of Czechoslovakia now acknowledge that alienation can also exist in the Marxist-Leninist world. Adam Schaff is one of the Communist authors who has frankly recognized that there must be more intensive consideration of the needs of the individual. Commenting on Adam Schaff's book *Marxism and the Individual* Jan Gorski (in *Polish Perspectives*, No. 1, 1966) writes – 'The crux of the matter . . . is the awareness that problems of the individual are not automatically solved by social and political change and that against the background of great social groups and processes his destinies must be clearly discerned. The individual is not a cipher in the shadow of history and his problems cannot be dismissed. They demand careful analysis and action.'

Even when an optimistic faith in the ethical view of Communism is re-affirmed, there is a growing willingness by Marxists to refer to current moral problems in their society. Although expressing his confidence in 'the banner of reason and humanism', Academician Alexander Alexandrov (in a *Pravda* article on 'The Ethics of a New World', reprinted in *Soviet News*, 9th January, 1968) says – 'It would be contrary to our ethics . . . to gloat over our own successes and virtues . . . We have many out-

standing problems and particularly moral problems. We shall steadily fight against all kinds of evils, boorish presumption, careerism, smug stupidity, irresponsibility, deception and dishonesty, for human dignity in all its fullness and richness . . .'

The sense of common involvement in contemporary ethical problems can be extended and intensified with the inclusion of the international context. What, for example, are the moral obligations of the 'have' countries to the 'have not' areas of the world? Should and can these obligations be fulfilled in economic and social terms, with or without the accompaniment of Christian evangelism on the one hand and Marxist propaganda on the other?

The ethical problems of common involvement in developing countries are of course related to the greatest moral issue of our time – the threat of nuclear war. In much of the Marxist-Leninist world (although not in Chinese Communist policy) there is now a real awareness of the danger of pursuing ideological confrontation to the brink of nuclear conflict. Despite the relaxation of the 'cold war' in Eastern Europe, the dangers of this confrontation persist especially in relation to China. In a recent article in the London *Times* (12th February, 1968) Richard Harris has described the threat in this way – 'The war between the world's two ideological civilizations has been going on for over 20 years. This war has long since superseded all other threats which might at one time have led to a world war; it bars all chance of a détente with Russia and eastern Europe; it impedes relations between the western world and the developing nations; it has become the world's canker . . .'

Richard Harris refers to the 'moral basis' of the doctrines involved and says – 'By ideological civilization is meant an area where government is conducted in accor-

dance with a particular set of beliefs about the nature of man and society whose truth is thought to be both rational and self-evident'. Richard Harris proceeds to concentrate on the China-USA confrontation, but the moral considerations to which he refers are of general relevance to the encounter between the Marxist and the non-Marxist. In particular, one hopes that the Christian and Communist will feel that the shadow of nuclear war adds a sharp urgency to their moral considerations and especially to the need to seek what is ethically best in the partner rather than to assail him with doctrinaire denunciations.

ETHICAL FACTORS AND THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE DIALOGUE

We have noted in analysing ethical aspects of the Christian-Marxist encounter some points of criticism and agreement, as well as special areas of common involvement. Here, we have an almost endless agenda for the dialogue and innumerable opportunities for intellectual probing. But equally important is the degree to which ethical factors (some of which we have been discussing) can enter directly into the conduct of the dialogue. Such factors include a passion for truth and a courageous frankness in speaking as well as sympathetic patience in listening. The partners should be intensely loyal to their deepest convictions but must also accept as ethically justifiable the risk that they will discover new – and possibly disturbing – facets of truth. A dialogue in this atmosphere affords creative opportunities for the Christian to reach out to the Communist as a man – and vice-versa. There is a basic difference of moral quality between long-range ideological battles and the personal encounter of the dialogue. Mauricio Lopez defines the differences in this way – 'The dialogue demands a new point of departure. Until now the tendency was for a confrontation at the level of

Marxist ideology ... But just a position of ideas is not dialogue; dialogue happens *between persons*. This is a new departure which obliges each party to delve deep into their faith or conviction ... This makes it impossible for the debate to be entered with prefabricated plans and ready-made answers ...'[1]

On hearing that I was a member of the Religious Society of Friends, a teenager in Moscow once asked me – 'What is the connection between religion and friendship?' That swift piercing arrow of a question was a reminder that some of the most penetrating queries (with profound moral implications) in the Marxist-Christian confrontation can be posed outside the wrestling of ideological experts. But the attempt to reply to this question also pointed to the possibility in the dialogue of mutual enrichment in a search for the spiritual wealth of man; to the possibility that even out of the fog of traditional misrepresentation from both sides there might arise a fresh mutual understanding by Marxist and Christian of their common yearning to respond to man's highest ideals and deepest needs.

[1] *Church and Society*, background paper on Christian Encounter with Communism, pp. 32–38.

Marxism, Democracy and Revolution

'The task of the proletariat is to win the battle for democracy'

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

Sam Aaronovitch

In the advanced capitalist countries we seem once more to be as in the late 20s and 30s, in a period of increasing criticism and contempt for democracy. The existence of such a parallel should give us cause for alarm.

Using the discontent with the two-party system in Britain Lord Robens (an ex-Labour Minister turned technocrat) calls for Britain to be run as by the board of a business corporation and in a 'businesslike' way. Some call for a coalition or 'national government'.

The criticism of democracy as we know it in Britain, is not blunted by those who defend the status quo. On the contrary the attempt to defend the existing political, social and economic framework of Britain is the root cause of the criticism of democracy.

I am certainly saying that democracy in Britain is in danger and that the danger comes from the framework within which it lives. That is why I shall argue that the effective defence and development of democracy requires a social revolution, more exactly, a *socialist* revolution.

There is a trend among Christians to see the full development of man as a Christian aim and to link that with man's increasing control over his destinies. It is a good proposition with which to begin a discussion on democracy.

Since Lenin is regarded by (nearly) everyone as a great revolutionary but not so widely as a great democrat, his comment on the relation between democracy and revolution deserves to be better known.

> 'The socialist revolution is not one single act, not one single battle on a single front, but a whole epoch of intensified class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e. battles around all the problems of economics and politics which can culminate only in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a fundamental mistake to suppose that the struggle for democracy can divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution, or obscure, or overshadow it, etc. On the contrary . . .'

Agreed, few words have been given such complex and disputed meanings as the term 'democracy', but if one examines the various meanings one can distil from them the twofold idea that first, democrats must believe in human dignity and therefore reject racialism for instance. And secondly, that it refers to a process by which people increasingly seek and gain control over their affairs individually and as part of a wider collective.

The process however, by which this comes about is itself contradictory, has its various levels and must always be studied in the concrete, historical circumstances.

To illustrate this let us draw on that period in which the modern ideas of democracy evolved – the period of struggle against feudalism, associated with such events as the English Revolution of the 17th century, the French Revolution of the 18th century, and the events which followed in these and other countries.

Democracy is often defined as the 'rule of the people'. But *who* are the people at any moment?

The English Revolution of the 17th century was fought essentially to free the productive powers from the restraints of feudal power. To extend this freedom meant involving much wider popular forces. And these forces in the course of the revolution were in turn not satisfied with the content of the new freedom but sought to extend it.

Each section however, saw the extension of freedom in concrete terms, within the framework of the society they understood even though the language often appeared absolute and without qualification.

Milton, eloquent spokesman for complete freedom of publication, was clear enough that 'I mean not tolerated Popery and open superstition which as it extirpates all religion and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpated, provided first that all charitable and compassionate means be used to win and regain the weak and misled; that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or manners no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw itself . . .'[1]

John Lilburne, leader of the Levellers and to the 'left' of Cromwell, did not in fact call for universal suffrage but proposed to exclude from the franchise servants or wage-earners and those receiving alms or beggars. 'The Levellers assumed,' wrote Professor C. B. Macpherson (*The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, OUP 1962), 'that those who became servants or beggars thereby forfeited their birthright to a voice in the elections.' (p. 124.)

In Cromwell's eyes to be free and independent involved having sufficient property and limited this to par-

[1] See the brief but valuable comments on this in Herbert Aptheker's *The Nature of Democracy, Freedom and Revolution*, New York, 1967.

ticular groups. The Levellers wanted to extend the groups involved but nevertheless to exclude other categories on the same basic ground. Their conception of democracy was limited by their concepts of class and property. Servants and wage earners were not properly speaking people: their rights were subsumed in those of their masters.

The English Revolution marked a step forward for democracy but kept it within a restrictive framework.

The same kind of process could be seen in the French Revolution but more sharply and distinctly.

The commercial and manufacturing interests in France sought to throw off the vicious feudal rule: in conditions of economic crisis masses of impoverished artisans were drawn into the battle. The bourgeois classes sought to extend their freedom. To achieve it the masses in the towns and the peasants were involved. These in turn sought an extension of these freedoms to meet their interests. The bourgeoisie sought to hold back the further development of the revolution; failed, and then later succeeded.

The slogan of freedom, fraternity and equality had for them a conditional meaning. As Roux, one of the French Levellers declared, in bitter criticism of the stage reached by the revolution:

> 'Freedom is only a delusion if one class is able to starve another, if the rich man, through his monopoly, has powers of life and death over the poor ... It is the bourgeoisie who have enriched themselves out of the Revolution for four years; worse than the landed nobility is the new nobility of commerce ...'

The Constitution of 1795 was characterized by Babeuf, writing from prison as follows:

> 'According to this constitution, all those who have no territorial property, all those who are unable to write, that

> is to say, the greater part of the French nation, will no longer have the right to vote in public assemblies, the rich and the clever will alone be the nation.'

This experience led men like Babeuf to believe that real democracy could only come with the abolition of private property and the class structure based on private property.

Freedom for bourgeois development had certainly been won in France. But the development of democracy was limited within a particular set of class and property relationships.

One could draw a similar picture from the efforts of the British industrial capitalists to secure their leading position in British society in the 19th century and how they sought to exclude from the extension of the franchise the greater part of the adult population of Britain. Thus John Stuart Mill, regarded as a classic writer on democratic rights, opposed the secret ballot; opposed paying Members of Parliament; considered only taxpayers should vote and that employers should have more votes than workmen, etc.

The bourgeois interests regarded themselves as being the people.

The development of democracy had been connected with the change from feudalism to capitalism, from one kind of property relationship to another, with the transfer of power from one class to another.

The system of private property in the means of production of wealth necessarily produced a contradiction. It led directly and inevitably to *inequality*. Not everyone after all could be a capitalist: most had to be workers. The great bourgeois theorists of individual rights such as Locke considered that a man without property in things loses that 'full proprietorship of his own person which was the basis of his equal natural rights' (Macpherson, p. 231).

It should be clear therefore that questions of property and class so far from being peripheral are as vital to the issue of democracy as they are to the question of revolution.

It is in the light of this main point that I turn to the position of Britain today.

That which has profoundly changed the situation is the rise of the working class as one essentially propertyless as far as the means of producing wealth are concerned, though constituting the majority of the population. The extension of democracy could involve power passing into their hands in which case what if their interests did not coincide with the interests of existing class society? Hence the bourgeoisie, having involved working people in the fight against the aristocratic caste, themselves feared the extension of the franchise even before the working class had evolved clear class organizations of its own. Bagehot wrote that:

> 'A political combination of the lower classes as such and for their own objects, is an evil of the first magnitude; a permanent combination of them would make them (now that so many of them have the suffrage) supreme in the country; and their supremacy, in the state they now are, means the supremacy of ignorance over instruction, and of numbers over knowledge.'

The working class and radical movement was able however to extend the franchise; the point at issue was to prevent that extension from being a threat to property. How that was and is being done is not the purpose of this essay except to say that an immense ideological effort is made to encourage the view of the mass of the people that the private profit system is both moral and necessary and that this view is shared by many leading people in the Labour Party. As Gordon Walker wrote in his *Restatementy of Liberty* – 'Typical of the totalitarian concepts

to which the worker may fall prey, is the idea that private profit can be abolished, and there can be work for use and not for profit.'

In spite of this however, the challenge to capitalism as a system of society is certainly growing.

In such a situation, the extension of democracy threatens the existing economic social and political framework. All the more because society is in fact not static but in continuous development.

Modern capitalism has seen economic power increasingly centralized. Substantial parts of our economy are dominated by a small number of large firms. The financial system is highly centralized. In spite of the spread of share ownership, effective control of the bulk of share capital is in the hands of a limited number of top executives, large shareholders and financial institutions.

This centralization is powerful in the very means of influencing public opinion and behaviour; the press radio and television. The economic exploitation of vast areas of the undeveloped world is still carried on.

The criticism of corruption itself is often corrupted by its commercial success. Cultural and spiritual life has been increasingly commercialized. Criticism and satire are too often bought out by their own financial success.

Corresponding with the economic centralization, goes a political centralization. Parliament has increasingly lost its importance. The Cabinet, the top layer of the civil service, take the key decisions often with no public debate whatsoever. And even the Cabinet does not operate fully as a collective team in major decisions.

The adult population has achieved with universal suffrage the full *formal* power to make and break governments. It is doubtful if they feel they have this power in reality.

The political party system which grew up with the coming of universal franchise and modern capitalism has become a two-party system, both run by caucuses and both understood to be part of the 'establishment' as signalized by the formal rights of the Opposition party and the salary of its Leader.

To keep the masses inert means making democracy passive not dynamic. It is the policy of five yearly plebiscites and not the policy of continuous involvement. It makes democracy the sphere of the 'elect me and leave it to me' representatives who dominate both Parliament and the local councils (and for that matter any number of voluntary organizations).

For those who should become restive at this conflict between formal democracy and hierarchical class system there are other ideological shafts. There is the more obviously reactionary view that goes right back to Locke and Burke that private property is the basis of freedom and democracy. This is the essentially Tory view of democracy and the apologia for preserving the existing division of wealth. It is a view that has had some attractions for Christian thought but on which much rethinking is taking place.

A second view is associated with notions of the technocracy and meritocracy. The existing system employs the 'best brains' to run it; all those suitably endowed and motivated, so runs the argument, can 'get to the top'. All those not at the top are unfitted to make it. Decisions are now, it is said, so complicated that only a high class mathematician, computer expert or what have you (or those who can afford to buy such expert service), are able to judge the wisdom of decisions which affect our entire being and future.

This still leaves millions with others they in turn can look down on, that is the mass of white people can recog-

nize the basic inferiority of the coloured people. Elitism and racism become twin rockets with which democracy can be blasted. There is nothing fanciful about this. The process can be observed both in Britain and the USA only too plainly.

Taken by themselves these paragraphs have a pessimistic air about them. But they are not to be taken by themselves. The very reason for the threat to democracy is that forces are at work for developing democracy.

The expansion of modern capitalism has expanded the force of working people and increased their self-consciousness. The working people are, after all, the actual majority of the population. They possess large amounts of *personal* property (though that should also not be exaggerated in the light of the present growth of poverty) but very little property in the means of producing wealth.

The growth of socialist ideas in the working class is in our view a recognition by the working class of its true position in society. The growth of modern capitalism involves an enormous extension of state intervention, added to by the social demands of the working people. World wars and the Second World War in particular has increased the desire for a greater say in all aspects of life – not only political, but social and industrial. The national independence and liberation movements have extended the ferment. The growth of socialist economies have suggested alternative methods of planning and developing society.

The thesis that I am presenting is that the existing framework of society is restricting democracy and threatening it.

Yet every major problem facing the people of Britain involves a real extension of democracy. The right to a job is under threat. The right to an effective say in conditions of work is under threat and often simply denied.

The validity of conference decisions on MPs is simply rejected. Regional and national rights (as in Scotland and Wales) are neglected. It is not true that all we are waiting for is the money and the resources to provide these rights. They are not provided in the much richer society of the USA.

It is the *structure* of our capitalist society that is hostile to these rights, and, this is basically the case for a socialist revolution.

Social ownership of the means of production is the only rational alternative to private ownership. It permits rational, socially formed decisions and planned development. It allows us to see the development of the individual as inseparable from the development of the community of which he is part.

It is capable of overcoming the fatal contradiction of individual liberty based on private property which ends in the destruction of liberty for millions.

The possibility exists in such a society of effective and continuous involvement of the people. The extent of this clearly depends on the conditions and traditions out of which the struggle for a socialist society has come.

The readers of this essay will be familiar enough that certain crimes and abuses have taken place in the socialist world. The revolution in property is a necessary condition for a major advance in democracy, but it is *not in itself* sufficient for this. I shall refer to this later.

In the opinion of British Communists the road to such a revolution in Britain is by way carrying forward the 'battle for democracy'. Let me elaborate on this.

The dominance of big business and the logic of seeking to maintain the private profit system and everything connected with it, generates a series of deep problems for the great majority of the people – problems partly touched on

above. Problems of peace and war; of national independence and of neo-colonialism; of racialism; of the role and scope of the social services; of urban life and development; of democracy at national, regional and local level and in the workplace itself.

All these issues are concerned with the community's control over its own character and future – hence *all* are democratic issues. Examine some of these more concretely.

Racialism. The recent Commonwealth Immigrants Act bases the country's immigration laws on racial discrimination. This fosters insecurity among the immigrants and racialism among the rest of the population, damaging the prospect of improving 'race relations'. Discrimination in housing, jobs and credit facilities are only too real. Such discrimination creates second class citizens but it damages the outlook of those who think of themselves as first class citizens.

Planning and urban development. Unplanned growth of towns, unplanned location of industry, unplanned growth of private transport and the decline of public transport – all have conspired to make millions spend miserable hours travelling to and from work; generated vast urban sprawls marked by lack of community living. Great state planned projects like airports (see the battle over Stansted) are marked by an attempt to ignore local interests or any kind of democratic procedures. Some areas are blighted by decay as in parts of the North East, Scotland and Wales and others are blighted by congestion.

Lack of democracy in the factories. Only determined trade union and shop steward resistance prevents factory life from being a scarcely restrained dictatorship. The view of 'exclusive managerial functions' which is a product of private ownership but has often been taken over

by state enterprises (working, after all, within a private property social system), dies hard; in fact, it's not dead at all! In such giant firms as Fords for instance, workers have very little control over their working conditions, speed of line, work-load, etc. Close downs, run downs and redundancy take place often with no or little consultation. Effective negotiation on future plans is negligible.

If the picture seems gloomy it should also be remembered that I have only picked out three from many other vital problems which face people in Britain.

Here is the case for a broad democratic programme around the following: living standards and economic affairs; public ownership and democratic controls; peace and national independence; the defence of democratic rights; the maintenance and extension of social rights.

By and large, one need not be a socialist to support the different parts of this programme but to carry it through means attacking the vested interests and powers of big business. More than that it involves questioning the existing political structure and developing a battle not only for state policy but for state conrol. That is why it is no accident that it is the Marxists who have sponsored such a programme and are the most consistent fighters for *it as a whole*. Experience in working for the real extension of democracy makes democrats into socialists.

The democratic advance to socialism, mass action and violence. Armed struggle (and civil war by way of armed struggle) is not for Communists a matter of principle. In April 1917, Lenin wrote in an article on *A Dual Power* –

> 'In order to obtain the power of state, the class conscious workers must win the majority to their side. *As long as* no violence is used against the masses, there is no other road to power. We are not Blanquists, we are not in favour of the seizure of power by a minority.'

British Communists have summed up their approach in their programme *The British Road to Socialism* as follows:

> 'First, that socialism can only be won by the combined action of the working people led by their socialist and democratic organizations. The Communist Party has a vital part to play but it does not seek an exclusive position of leadership.
>
> Second, decisive advances towards socialism will be achieved to the extent that the mass of the people carry through large-scale struggles to secure improvements in their living standards, for full employment, a wide expansion of democracy, and a genuine policy of peace.
>
> Third, that in the course of this many-sided struggle, the labour movement will find the way to throw off its right-wing leadership, that new political alignments will come about, and create the conditions for the election of a Parliamentary majority and government pledged to a socialist programme.
>
> Fourth, that a democratic advance to socialism, as outlined in our programme, entails a multi-party system in which parties contend for the people's support. We believe socialism can be achieved in Britain, not without prolonged and serious effort, but by peaceful means and without armed struggle, and this is our aim. The working people and their representatives in Parliament will have the strength and the means to deal with the resistance of reaction whatever form it may take.
>
> Fifth, we firmly believe that the people of Britain and the world can prevent a third world war. War is in no sense a condition for the advance to socialism.'

We consider that the conditions for advance to socialism are the results of the intersection of two sets of forces; the balance of forces on an international plane and the internal balance. If on a world scale, imperialism is weaker and, internally, the working class is more powerful and better organized, then the conditions for socialist change without armed struggle become more favourable.

Such a concept of democratic advance presupposes mass activity, involvement and participation in the struggle for change by millions of people in whatever variety of forms.

But such mass activity is often counterposed to 'formal' democracy.

Certainly in Britain there is no point in being a constitutionalist. For one thing there is no written constitution. For another we certainly reject the convention that the party system works as long as all parties accept the basic economic and social framework within which they operate. In the much quoted statement by Lord Balfour (in his introduction to Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution*):

> 'Our alternating Cabinets, though belonging to different Parties, have never differed about the foundations of society. And it is evident that our whole political machinery pre-supposes a people so fundamentally at one that they can safely afford to bicker; and so sure of their own moderation that they are not dangerously disturbed by the never-ending din of political conflict. May it always be so.'

It is in fact our clear intention to seek to win majority support for a fundamental and revolutionary change in Britain.

We may not have a written constitution – but what then of our attitude to laws? Again, we are not legalists any more that we are constitutionalists. These are concrete questions. Our loyalty is to the development of genuine democratic processes. And the decisive question is whether the body of laws, of any particular law, facilitates this process or stultifies it and whether, if it stultifies it, such laws can be changed by the democratic process. So as not to beg the question I repeat that by democratic processes I mean the process of continuous popular in-

volvement and pressure and not only the annual, triennial and quinquennial polls.

For instance, Communists do not accept laws which deny to the working people the right to organize in defence of their conditions of life. If trade unions were banned we would help to organize them illegally as those did who challenged the Combination Laws. Very much of the law in Britain, stated Dr. Jennings, comes from the time 'when the country was governed by a small section of the population, and when the "lower orders" had no function but to obey'. (Quoted H. J. Laski, *Parliamentary Government in England*, p. 58.)

The bulk of what are thought of as rights of assembly, of agitation, etc., are backed not by law but by the active exercises of such rights by people and the readiness of the Government at any time not to suppress them. Our rights are those we demand and exercise. To take one small point with which the writer was involved. The authorities involved fully intended to sweep away the traditional meeting site in Lincolns Inn Fields in favour of parking meters. It took a considerable and concerted effort to preserve the right to assemble in one small corner of that space.

Since our democracy operates, as I have argued, within the framework of a class society which continuously presses against democracy, then such popular action becomes of critical importance.

How would or should the politically aware people of London have challenged the rise of fascism without the mass demonstration in Hyde Park in September 1934 or the action and barricades of Cable Street in 1936? The latter was the direct result of police efforts to enable Mosley to march through the East End. Is this not the same as the action of the French people in their massive actions of 1934 which paved the way for the Popular Front Government?

In innumerable rent struggles all over Britain, tenants have organized themselves and used a variety of forms of action to resist rent increases. Some have carried out rent strikes and in the case of the St. Pancras tenants maintained barricades against eviction.

Among the students, faced with institutions which treat them as non-citizens, we have seen the various sit-ins as at London School of Economics. We have seen American students 'illegally' burning their draft cards.

Such organization and activity based on people's needs, however local, breathes life into democracy, alone makes it real and responsive to change. Equally it hits up against the opponents of involvement.

This conception leads logically to the view that where such democratic processes are not available, more violent forms of action become unavoidable.

Few progressive minded people will deny that the African population of South Africa or Rhodesia for instance or of many Latin American states can hope to establish democracy only through armed struggle.

It seems to me that the argument of involvement and participation as vital to democracy is not less but even more applicable to socialism. It is clearly possible to construct the basic material conditions for socialism, i.e. public ownership of the decisive part of the means of production, distribution and exchange with many limitations on democracy still remaining as well as with many developments of democracy. But the full development of socialist society is impossible without the conscious effort to enlist and fully involve increasing numbers of people. The signs are that the socialist countries are able to overcome restrictions on socialist democracy in a way that strengthens the socialist foundations of their society, but not without struggle.

To conclude; we are for a socialist revolution in Britain. Socialism in Britain will be what the British people make it. Its character will be shaped by the fact that it arises from the struggle for democratic advance.

Christian and Marxist

Laurence Bright OP

I GREW up a moderate Tory and a moderate agnostic – not very surprising from a middle-class English household in the 'thirties'. Oxford through the war (I was a physicist, doing rather remote research towards the bomb) at first sharpened both of these: but then they began to react on one another. I had learned from Gibbon (despite his mockery) that Christianity has an intellectual content: my conservatism led me to begin to practise an Eliot-like Anglo-Catholicism and then, through Newman, what I saw as 'the real thing' – *Securus judicat orbis terrarum* – you must shout with the bigger crowd. All the wrong reasons: in the same way they led me, two years after the war, at twenty-seven, into the Dominican Order: pure chance had taken me to the Dominicans when I wanted 'instruction' as a Roman Catholic. I don't give these autobiographical details because I imagine them as having much interest in themselves: they may help to show that the connection between Christianity and Marxism is at least not an obvious matter of logic.

It was among the Dominicans that my Christian ideas began to bite the hand that had formerly fed them and move me towards the political left. There is a certain tradition of this in the English province: *Blackfriars* had

been the only Catholic journal against Franco during the Spanish Civil War. I find a certain irony, today, in being accused of closed dogmatism as a 'Catholic Marxist': it took me, after all, over forty years to get there. The impressions I had gained from friends in the Order was reinforced when, in 1954, I began the work with students which has occupied me ever since, and two or three years later it didn't seem odd to be helping to set up a conference which, so far as I know, first brought together Catholics of the left in any organized way in Britain. This was the December Group, meeting as it still does through a week-end in early December at Spode House, the Dominican conference-centre in Staffordshire.

The 'Slant' movement was originally independent of this. In the early sixties I was in Cambridge, and one of my jobs was to run a student group called, of all things, the Aquinas Society. It tended to attract left-wing undergraduates, the more so as the official chaplaincy was at that time dominated by people brought up at Catholic public schools, which effectively excluded boys of a more normal frame of mind: girls were kept out by the chaplain. Half-a-dozen of us decided that the situation might be improved by the production of a journal three times a year – *Slant* was born. The most difficult decision (after the title – we had first decided on *Bias* but discovered it was taken, by a journal I have never heard of since) was whether to risk trying to sell it in other universities, which implied a fair outlay to produce something reasonably good-looking; we decided to try, and to our surprise it caught on. Even so, after two years the business became too much for a group of part-time amateurs, especially as the original nucleus began to move on to post-graduate studies, and we were glad to be taken over by the catholic publisher who over the whole period has, by his interest and encouragement, put us incalculably in his debt.

Slant then was very different from what it is today, a serious *political* journal: but what it was then has given it the reputation it still has among that body of Catholic laity, priests and bishops who have probably never read a line of it. Although British Catholics traditionally vote labour, being mainly working-class of Irish immigrant extraction, this doesn't bring them within striking distance of socialism, and the word 'Marxist' tends to produce almost the effect it would have on an American senator. They equate it, quite wrongly, with Communism, persecution of Christians, and so on. Increasing access to the universities since the 1944 Act doesn't seem to have changed their children's views on this matter, and it was to them we had most directly to appeal. Our appeal, then, was mainly theological: why a Catholic ought to be of the left. This in itself wasn't particularly alarming, but writing for a student audience some of us cultivated a rather forceful tone, as Newman says the earlier writers of *Tracts for the Times* did: and it was this tone, rather than the content, which the less perceptive of our critics picked up. We weren't too worried: the most violent of these attacks, in the *Spectator*, followed by faithful echoes in the Catholic press, probably did more than anything else to put us on our feet just after we had begun to be produced on a professional basis.

Theological arguments of this kind have got much rarer in *Slant* today, partly because repetition is a bore, partly because today many of us (as will be seen later) would have serious reservations about arguing to Marxism in this way. Nevertheless, writing here (I hope) for a rather larger readership, I'd like to say something about this theological approach. After all there is a pretty strong *prima facie* case against Christians being Socialists: everywhere on the whole they have been for keeping things as they always used to be over the last thousand years, and

the majority of them still probably are in countries such as Portugal, Spain, Poland or Ireland, to come no nearer home. But this, it seems to me, is because the version of Christianity which most people still cling on to, despite the Vatican Council and similar reform movements in other Churches, is on the whole a distorted one. The distortions cut right across denominational differences. There are in fact greater differences within each of the Churches (including the Roman Catholic, though we used to be better at covering-up) than there are across them, but the majority of people in any Church probably still subscribe to a Christianity with the following characteristics.

(1) Fundamentalism. Problems, whether intellectual or practical, are to be solved by a straight appeal to authority. In the evangelical tradition this is the authority of the Bible, but often treated as if it were a document written in Western Europe by men of much the same view-point as ourselves; in the Catholic tradition it is the authority of a hierarchy, pope, bishops, priests and even nuns, their statements past and present, whether through ecumenical councils or in encyclicals, catechisms, from pulpit or through confessional grills, but often without properly assessing their relative importance.

(2) Supernaturalism. God is conceived of as a very powerful being who can none the less be manipulated if one has enough know-how, petitionary prayer of a crude kind in the evangelical tradition, appeal to a large selection of intermediary saints in the Catholic. Christ hardly comes into the picture as a separate being; he has been absorbed into God, except for his life on earth as a wonder-worker, who is nevertheless an example to be followed – how, in the very different situation of today, is never quite clear.

(3) Individualism. My relationship with God is far more important than my relationship with my fellow-man. I

am in direct communication with him, and my whole concern is to save my soul, conceived of as the real, if spiritual 'me'. It is curious how even in the Catholic tradition, with its insistence on community forms of worship, this attitude has taken firm root, so that the mass is still commonly thought of as basically an opportunity for private devotion on the part of priest and people alike.

(4) Spiritualism. The present world is but a pale shadow of the world to come; our behaviour is regulated, it is true, in moralistic terms basically those of the ten commandments, but it is intention which is all important. What goes on in the mind is more important than what we do. The neighbour whom I have to love becomes an object by which to love God and win the reward of heaven, so that love itself seems to have little to do with other men's actual needs. Love is debased into 'charity', which you can continue to exercise even while helping actively to exploit and impoverish its object.

I haven't the space to give examples of these, and related, characteristics, though it would be easy enough to do so from what Christians of every Church have both written and done. I think the picture is easily recognizable, above all by those who have rejected Christianity because in this form it has repelled them. It isn't easy to convince them that Christians today are also increasingly rejecting the whole picture and all that followed from it. For everyone prefers a stereotype to something vaguer and more shifting: is hard to accept that the views of a large group of people can be in process of change, and where the change is radical it is hardly surprising that non-Christians as well as Christians are upset. One's refusal to accept the stereotype is frequently met with polite incredulity: 'everyone knows you are bound to believe that.' Let me however now set out what a growing number, if still the minority, of Christians today be-

lieve, and because truth is always more coherent than error, I shall also indicate the connections between the points I make. Once again I shall have to leave out the supporting evidence that Christians do in fact believe these things, which would range from the documents of the second Vatican Council to the paperbacks of popular theology written in such numbers for ordinary laypeople today. I shall then consider what effect these changes have on Christian attitudes to Marxism.

(1) The break with fundamentalism has been a gradual process over more than a century. At its roots lies the recognition that no text, least of all an ancient one in a quite different tradition of thought-pattern, yields its meaning to the casual observer; to recover the true meaning, that given it by the original author, requires long critical research – though its results should still produce the reaction 'yes of course it must mean that' in ordinary readers. One important result of such critical work on the Bible has been to make it clear that it was never intended to be an authority in the sense of giving solutions to contemporary problems. If the Old Testament in its later development (and another critical conclusion, vital for making any sense whatever of the writings, has been the sorting out of their chronology over periods of constant re-editing and, before that, of long oral tradition) shows a certain hardening in this respect, Christianity claimed to bring freedom from this kind of external authority: the Spirit of Christ replaced the legalism of the ten commandments. With the strong community-sense natural to Judaism and Christianity this didn't, of course, mean the anarchy of every man for himself: it meant that personal decision, the decision of conscience, was part of a greater whole, guided by the contemporary community, in its heirarchical structure, and by the tradition of its past life. The replacement of community sense by individualism was what

caused counter-appeals for an unthinking submission to authoritative voices that would do away with the pain of decision.

(2) Correctly understood, the Bible turns out to be not a series of dogmatic statements about the private life of God but an account of how men have behaved, through a particular history, believing themselves to have been called into a special relationship with God. All that is known of God, then, is his effect upon men, and in the New Testament this relationship is both contracted to relationship with one man, Christ, and at the same time expanded to include every man, since we believe Christ to represent the whole community of mankind throughout its history. This is to concentrate attention on human history in the ordinary sense by contrast with 'supernaturalism'. Certainly the concept of God cannot be reduced to terms drawn exclusively from this world, but we cannot claim to state what 'more' he is than what he allows us to discover of him through human encounter with him. He refuses to let us categorize him as 'supreme being', designer', a being we can manipulate to eke out the failure of human explanation or human endeavour.

(3) Again the Biblical emphasis – and here it links with modern philosophical thinking – is on men as essentially 'members one of another', interpersonal rather than isolated units who happen to form connections when it is convenient. While the Old Testament put an important emphasis on love of neighbour, this was still isolated from love of God, so that both were impoverished. The New Testament carefully restricts mention of the Old Testament two-fold command 'love God, love your neighbour' to a suitably rabbinic context, its own emphasis is simply 'love one another', with the recognition at the same time that this is to love God. This is the abolition of 'religion'; Christianity is a secular movement, a way of life for people

together, recognizing the demands of justice. What is the use, the New Testament asks, of saying to your brother in need 'go in peace, be warmed and fed' while doing nothing whatever about it? Men are judged by what they do for others, not simply by what they think, for it is this which through Christ brings them into relationship with God, irrespective of whether or not they believe it to be so.

(4) The emphasis on a future world in isolation from the present one is equally false to Biblical thinking. The Christian believes in a world to come, but he believes that it must first be realized in the present world. Whatever is most real about life here, human relationships that break division and build community, is the kingdom of God as it already exists in Christ for our future: as with the understanding of God himself, its only 'cash-value' is in ordinary secular terms, and while we deny that it can be reduced to these, we cannot state what 'more' is involved in 'eternal life' with God.

(5) Let me add a final positive characteristic of Christianity, its revolutionary demands. Because the world is unjustly divided so that men cannot freely enter into relationship with one another, the world is in constant need of being changed. Throughout the New Testament there is this call for a change that is total, not mere patching-up: we are told that new wine won't go into old bottles, as the reformist always hopes it will.

Now it ought to be clear enough that the prevalent but officially rejected view of Christianity which I first set out is quite inconsistent with any kind of Marxism. As Marx himself said, it is simply a projection into a spiritual realm, and after that a justification, for the human situation as it is, with all its exploitation of man by man. He therefore attacked those who thought it was enough to abolish religion and all would be well, without going to the root causes which made this pale reflection of the real

situation possible: 'The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly a struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion.'

What is far less clear, and what I must now discuss, is the relationship between Marxism and genuine Christianity. If Christianity is a revolutionary movement rather than a belief in abstract doctrinal statements, if it is concerned with change in man's actual situation, with political ways of breaking down unjust divisions between men, then it is at least not incompatible with Marxism in a broad sense. In fact people now often suggest that it is sufficient in itself simply to follow out Christian principles and these will transform the world: nothing more is needed. That is a mistake. It is just because Christianity is broad and general, able to survive from a totally different age into the present, able to exist today in widely different forms across the world, that it needs to find its concrete realization through something much more specific. Even in the first century of Christianity its institutional forms were widely different in, say, the Jersualem community described in Acts and in the communities of Greece described in the Pauline writings: neither form is remotely imitable today. We have to use the forms of institution worked out by contemporary secular thinking in order to make Christian ideals a reality in the world.

Would it then be true to say that Christianity leads into Marxism by a process of reasoning, provides a kind of justification for it? Again people have suggested this; some of the earlier *Slant* articles came near to thinking in this way. But a Marxist will at once repudiate such idealism.

Indeed this is one of Marx's own central positions: it is action that determines thought, or at least action and thought are always bound up together. 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.' Marxism, then, grows

from the situation, with all its contradictions, in which men find themselves: it needs no theoretical justification from outside itself. A Christian has to recognize, first of all, that in itself Christianity is not enough; it can only be realized in a practical way through detailed analysis and strategy. But the detailed analysis and strategy which Marxism provides must then be judged, however critically, in its own terms; the Christian who accepts some form of Marxism judges it as a Marxist, not specifically as a Christian. What I have said so far only shows that he doesn't need to modify his Christianity in order to do so; he doesn't have to be a special sort of Christian, a Marxist Christian.

But neither does he have to be a special sort of Marxist, a Christian Marxist. This is the point at which many Christians get stuck. They are prepared, today, to end the cold war with Marxist groups and enter into dialogue, but they are not prepared to take the necessary step beyond ecumenism and join the other side. Partly this is a historical problem for the west. To be a Christian and a Marxist is normal enough in, for example, South America where the culture is Catholic but the social situation is sufficiently bad to make revolution an obvious necessity. When one is dispossessed one is not revolutionary simply on principle; what has to be done is clear, and one sets about doing it without waiting for justification from the Christian gospel or Marxist philosophy. One is Christian and Marxist because that's how things are. At the heart of a possessor nation, with a smooth modern capitalism that has gone a long way to absorbing the working-class movement into its own structures (the dream of Socialism has ended here in the reality of Labour Government) things are very different. Marxism itself is bound up with the Russian betrayal of Socialism, the New Left offers solutions only to academics, and so on. Who is there to join?

Once again this is probably to put the problem too theoretically. There are a number of points of growth and all that can be done at present is to put every effort into developing these. The struggle within the trade unions as seen in the shop-steward movement; the struggle within education to destroy categorization; the struggle to help the third world free itself from the stranglehold of British neo-colonialism are obvious examples. At the moment they are isolated from one another not for want of theoretical justification – the analysis of the *New Left Mayday Manifesto* is only the latest example of that – but by their ineffectiveness. They are not significant enough to draw people by their very obviousness – as, for instance, the growing strength of Black Power in the USA may well be doing. This is why it seems so important for Christians to overcome their prejudices and enter fully into appropriate forms of the struggle. The way in which, for instance, the Catholic working-class in Britain has been hindered, by religious prejudice derived from its mainly Irish background, from playing as effective a part as it could have done in the British working-class movement is peculiarly tragic. The new strength that full Christian participation would bring to those engaged in the struggle to attack the neo-capitalist system at its weak points wouldn't overthrow it, wouldn't bring about the revolution, but might well bring matters to the point at which it became possible to organize politically effective structures that would eventually bring about more radical change. Why do we hold back?

Certainly on both sides there are prejudices which dialogue will break down. I have suggested that it was a distorted theology which made possible the long historical connection between the Christian Churches and social-political establishment. Then in countries where the revolution has occurred in violent form the Churches were

inevitably attacked for their connection with the land-owning class or colonizing power. Dialogue is needed to demonstrate on the one hand that Christianity is not to be identified with some of the forms it has taken in history, on the other that Marxism is not to be identified with particular Communist parties or the particular forms that revolution has so far taken. But to my mind the dialogue must go beyond the attempt of two world-powers to come to terms and live together; Christians must be actively exploring how they can, without compromise to their beliefs, actually take part as Marxists in the struggle to transform the world.

We have a long way to go before Christians are convinced. I have tried to deal with the problem of Marxist atheism, seeing it as an attack, which Christians can share, on a distorted view of Christianity. Another obvious stumbling-block is the question of violence. It could hardly be necessary to repudiate the common myth that Marxists are prepared to use any means to gain their ends; where this has happened, under Stalin, for example, it has been recognized by others as an abuse of Marxism as great as the inquisition was an abuse of Christianity. On the other hand a Marxist certainly holds that the use of force may well be necessary. When a tyrannical group holds absolute power, as in Tsarist Russia: when a colonial power possesses the land, as in Ireland or Algeria, they can only be thrown out by force. Such situations are already violent, even when outwardly all seems calm because the people are too cowed to resist. There is violence in Smith's Rhodesia or Vorster's South Africa; often it shows itself in internal quarrels among the subject people (murder is a commonplace in South African townships) which provide excuse for further repressive measures by the regime; but it is the regime which is the cause of the violence, and only violent means will overthrow it. The ultimate responsi-

bility, indeed, lies with the West, since these regimes are supported by our capital investment, and in the end the violence will be turned against ourselves. The fact that within our own highly organized and stable systems revolution will almost certainly come about more gradually and without force (for under neo-capitalism power is widely diffused among the managerial class of the international corporations, the banks, the civil service, government, the armed forces and so on) doesn't absolve us from seeing this problem as one of vital concern to ourselves.

I don't think there is any very clear Christian position in this matter. The New Testament seems to reverse the teaching of the old on the use of force: and the first generations of Christians, so far as we can see, refused to serve in the Roman armies. But then they also refused to take any part in civil government, and few of us today would want to imitate them in this. In the fourth century it was recognized that the changed situation required different solutions, and from that time on only a minority have refused on Christian grounds to fight. The fact that they have so often fought against the people, to maintain the privileges of those who hired them, need not concern us here. It would be hypocritical to turn round now and refuse to take up arms to restore to their rightful owners what Christian arms in the past have helped to seize. I believe it is wrong, for Christian and Marxist alike, to acquiesce in the nuclear or biological weapons: I don't think we should refuse to use limited force where nothing else will cure a wrong situation, as in Ireland before the Republic or in Rhodesia today. This is not to say that I don't respect the views of those Christians who think otherwise; in that sense the question is an open one. But for the majority, in this matter as in others, I see no difficulty in professing Marxism without requiring any special modifi-

cation to it ('Christian Marxism'). It is enough for it to be true to itself.

This is why I think that, while dialogue remains essential, we must go beyond it. Otherwise the whole thing will remain idealistic, in the head. That was what caused us to publish *Slant*. But *Slant* is still only a group of writers and a group of readers. The next thing to be done is to create a movement at once Christian and Marxist. A movement only comes about when people join together and do things. As a preliminary *Slant* has begun to encourage groups to form in various parts of the country. If such a movement does in fact begin and grow, not apart from other groups of the left in Britain but within them, there may be enough of us to bring about change within a generation.

Peace on Earth

Ivor Montagu

DELAYED on Prague airport one day, at the height of the Cold War, I got into conversation with a Dutch business man, a buyer and seller of textiles.

'You English are a queer lot,' he said. 'Noticing my passport had a lot of visas on it, your immigration people stopped me and asked me why I was going to Bradford. "For my business," I replied. Then they grew stern and asked me what my politics were. I said I had none, wasn't interested. "You must have some political views," they insisted. I replied that, like most people, I supposed, I considered that peace is better than war. Then they got quite angry, took me into the next room and stripped me to the skin.'

I am not of course qualified to speak for Christians, but I think that most Christians, as well as Communists, share the preference of our Dutch friend. Indeed, Communists agree with him in thinking it likely that this preference for peace is shared by most people. Further, they think that this circumstance can be made a potent means of preserving it.

Before we examine this possibility, however, perhaps other aspects deserve priority. In this paper I propose to look, however briefly, at the following questions: why we think peace better; how we think war can be abolished;

what we think can be done now; how we think ordinary people can go about doing it. Of course, to some extent these questions interlock, but if we try to look at the answers separately this may make them clearer.

Despite certain differences, Communists do share with most Christians of today their basic approach to the first question. This is a common conclusion, based on experience and reasoning, that peace rather than war is favourable to the prosperity and development of the community, the happiness and freedom of the individual, and a common conviction that the action of individuals can promote it and that it is their duty, therefore, to undertake activity to do so. I would call this basic approach a heritage of humanism. Both Christians and Communists do polemize, from different viewpoints, with 'humanism' in certain senses. The former in the traditional sense of attributing their own pattern of conscience to extra-material, extra-human agency; the latter in noting 'humanism' serves sometimes as a blurring of what they regard as the essential role, in this period, of a particular class in advancing the interest of the whole.

Nevertheless, the important division in the general approach is not between those who derive their faith from an extra-human source, and might find revealed authority ample to justify – beyond the justification of experience – a preference for peace, on the one hand, and on the other those who – while respecting their own sort of texts – subject them, even the little Red Book I hope, to criticism by reason and experience. The significant division is between those, faithful or of no faith, who await fate either in hope of divine beneficent disposition or in secular pessimistic despair, on the one hand, and those, on the other, who believe fate can be influenced favourably by their action and that it is their duty to try.

The Communist does not believe that either human

nature, or the development of the individual, or the prosperity of society requires war. Ideologies associated with militarism and fascism, asserting that conflict and competition is essential to the development of the character of the individual and the progress of mankind[1] have nothing in common with Communism. The whole point of the current bitter joke *Report from Steel Mountain*, purporting to be the conclusions of a high-power Pentagon-promoted research group, deciding that war is valuable and necessary and beneficial to society, is that this value is precisely to avoid the *alternative necessity* of Communism, and that, alas, the arguments furnishing the base for this conclusion in the parody are only too plausibly in line with those in real documents of the kind.

Nor does the Communist for a moment believe that war is either a necessary or even a desirable path to Communism. Historically, it is true that the first break-through from capitalism in a great social unit – the October Revolution of 1917 – was hastened by the strains imposed by the First World War – and its extension to one third of the population of the world followed the Second. Hostile voices, by sincere assumption or for propaganda purpose, draw the conclusion that the Communist must therefore be awaiting, or even hastening, a Third in the hope of further progress. It is odd how a belief that 'the end justifies the means' becomes attributed by opponents to the most diverse groups as a plausible denigrating slander. When I was young, I remember, this belief was supposed to be a peculiar self-justification of the Jesuits. There is a sense in which the principle is commonly and justifiably acted upon in everyday life by almost everyone, i.e. the 'white lie' used to keep a hurtful fact from knowledge of a dying person. The accusation against Communists comes

[1] Cf. Hitlerite theory of superior races; the indoctrination of the American air arm in the 'naturalness' of killing.

particularly ill from those who favour retention of nuclear weapons and even refusal to engage not to be the first to use them. It is quite true that Communists believe – in a phrase used by Molotov after the war – 'all roads lead to Communism', in the sense that they believe that, granted peace, the superiority of Socialism as a system of society will become manifest by experience and that, if the enemies of Socialism should launch a Third World War in the endeavour to prevent it, the revulsion of humanity will be so decisive that such human beings as survive will destroy capitalism instead. But the common slander is, as a matter of fact, particularly inappropriate against Communists. Dialectical materialism bids the Marxist see the whole of reality as interconnected, causes as inseparable from, and therefore to be judged together with, effects. No Communist would be guilty of the absurdity of decapitating someone to cure a cold in the head. Communists are not idiots. They know perfectly well that the devastation caused by modern war must make the building of socialism by its survivors immeasurably more difficult and that the attendant misery must redound upon and create an impassable barrier of discredit against all, who have not striven to do their utmost to avert it.

A final point, and not a small one. Even if Communists do lack sacred texts, they already have a tradition. It is not forgotten by them, and a matter of some significant pride, that the first act of the Bolshevik Government on coming to power in October 1917 was to propose peace with no indemnities and no annexations in a message opening: 'To all! To all! To all!'

Second question: how do we expect that war can be eliminated? Here we must say frankly that we do not believe that war can wholly be eliminated, and peace permanently established, until Socialism is the general system of society.

We do not believe that war is due to something innate in human nature, whether it be connected with 'original sin' or the secular disguise of this conception, a latent quality in man's animal make-up. We certainly do not reject man's nature as an influence on his behaviour, or its study as important for the better understanding, and consequently self control, of himself as an individual or a group. But we note that those who prate of man's natural belligerency ignore the fact that his tendencies toward co-operation have certainly played a much more significant part in the peculiarities of his development than has mutual slaughter and consider that those who seek to explain sociological phenomena by other than social factors are either deliberately deceptive or self-deceived.

We believe that the capitalist system contains an inborn drive to war. There is not room here to go into the matter deeply, but the logic of this opinion can be outlined simply thus. Profit is the motive force of capitalism. A capitalist economy cannot exist indefinitely without a favourable balance of payments. Simple arithmetic shows that not all can have favourable balances simultaneously, the consequence is ultimate conflict. Further, in a period (the period of imperialism) in which the available resources of raw materials, labour and customers are being already divided up among the various capitalist economies, whose respective rates of development, and therefore mutual pressure, vary, the clashes are constant.

This, and not the co-existence of a capitalist and a socialist sector in the world in our era, we regard as the primary cause of wars and tensions. We point, as we are entitled to do, to the fact that wars between capitalist states have taken place throughout the period of capitalism, that the First World War (1914–1918) was of this character, and that even the Second World War (1939–

1945) began in the same form and concluded with the Socialist state a powerful ally in defeating and enabling alteration of the more aggressive of the forms of capitalism involved.

The sudden disappearance, by some miracle, of socialism overnight, could not, therefore, be expected to end wars. A general socialist order of society, on the other hand, from which this inbuilt drive was absent, would at least not merely eliminate this source of conflict but also the groups and classes of persons who profit directly from the manufacture of weapons and their discharge, as well as any who may benefit from the private acquisition and control of resources in other lands and who, to put it at its lowest, exercise a certain influence on the policy of their respective countries.

We have no illusions that world-socialism could be brought about by a wave of the wand, either. Or that, if it were, all the tensions based on history and the present uneven division among humans of the enjoyment of 'goods' (spiritual as well as material, health, rest, knowledge, education, etc., as well as consumption, of course) would instantly disappear. We simply note that through 2,000 years of teaching and exhortation and not a few regimes and governments professing the faith Christianity has not found it possible to prevent the tensions exploding into war, and we feel that a different social system, without those classes or that inbuilt drive, might give a better chance for restraints to be effective. In fact far from the legend being true – that we seek war for an offchance of Communism, the reality is that the offchance that the world will thereby attain peace is by no means least among the reasons why Communists pursue Socialism.

For the time being, however, world-socialism is not on the order of the day. This brings us to our third question. Does this mean that Communists look on war as inevit-

able? Certainly not. War is not inevitable because it can be hindered.

For the time being we have the world that we have. In that world are inherent many drives to war, the worst and most powerful among them – in the Communist view – those inherent in capitalism, especially in its present imperialist stage. This stage we define as that in which the concentration of capital has been intensified so as to give increased strength and differing rates of acceleration to those conflicting ambitions to profit, and the world available for economic exploitation has already become so divided that its division can only be readjusted by explosive confrontations of force. Such drives can be combated and thwarted. It is human organization that has shaped the drive to war. Human organization can devise, and operate checks. Man decides. As Ilya Ehrenburg put it at an early meeting of the World Peace Movement: 'War is not a catastrophe of nature, like a tempest or an earthquake. War is man-made and man can prevent it.' By anticipating and forestalling wars, by limiting them and stopping them when they occur, by applying remedial even if not perfect solutions, time can be gained for the various processes – conducive to the triumph of commonsense – leading to the transformation of society into forms that contain no such drive. By apparently setting immediate sights lower, we adopt the only practical means – a possible and effective means – to reach the goal.

In the centre of this immediate programme is what has come to be called 'Peaceful Co-existence'. The world contains capitalist states, many in an imperialist phase of development, and socialist states or states moving towards socialism. Is war between these two camps inevitable? Certainly not, they can co-exist. In fact they do so.

There are two opposite illusions about 'peaceful co-existence'.

One is that it consists of the betrayal of revolution and the crystallization of society as it is, the abandonment of the 'third world' to increasing misery and exploitation, the agreement of the imperialists of the USA and the reactionaries of the USSR to rule the world together by a nuclear duopoly. This might be designated the 'Chinese' fantasy. In this sense it is said to have been invented by Khrushchev.

The other is that it is a diabolical plot to lull the fears of capitalism while the latter is systematically undermined by world subversion, especially in the colonial and former colonial countries and by strikes, etc., in the developed countries. This might be designated the 'American' fantasy. In this sense also, curiously enough, it too is said to have been invented by Khrushchev.

In actual fact, peaceful co-existence was not invented by the unfortunate Khrushchev, nor does it take either of these forms. It was urged by Communists as not only possible but necessary from the very first days of the October Revolution and explained in many speeches and writings by Lenin. (The first use of the phrase itself was probably by Chicherin at the time of the Rapallo Treaty of 1922.)

Peaceful co-existence does not involve the idea that capitalism and socialism are likely to co-exist permanently, but simply that the issue between them must not, and need not, be decided by armed conflict. And that, while they co-exist, the more ties that can be constructed between the states concerned by means of trade, conciliation machinery and cultural exchange the better for everyone and the better chance of regulating such conflicts as do arise.

This conception is not a trick of world socialism to

strengthen itself until surviving capitalism can be overthrown by force. When Mr. Khrushchev used his characteristically melodramatic phrase: 'We will bury you,' he was not gloating over some future Götterdämmerung of capitalists when he personally would share the pleasure of spading shovelfuls of earth on to the graves of the unrighteous. He was simply, in his graphic and somewhat hyperbolic fashion, giving epigrammatic form to the unconcealed and generally shared expectation of Communists that socialism will turn out so far superior to its predecessor systems that, by one route or other eventually to be selected by mankind, the former will generally prevail. Prevail, that is, in the sense of 'becoming prevalent'.

It is precisely because of this belief that the Communist, with the more single heart, sets peace right in the forefront. Not for him the proselytizing crusade. *His* founding fathers were forever coining such phrases as: 'Socialism is not for export', 'Socialism cannot be built upon bayonets', 'Only a people itself can build Socialism'. I am far from desiring to reproach Christianity with its forcible conversions and its crusades, not only for religion against unbelievers, but among Christians in an endeavour to identify by force of arms what was heresy and what true faith. Such behaviour in the past was a function of contemporary historical circumstances now largely vanished, and advocacy of the same kind of thing nowadays in Cold War terms has little to do, I am sure, with anything that can properly be labelled Christianity. I bring up the point to emphasize that Communists have always taught that Socialism can only be constructed by the will of those people themselves who will have to operate it and that this *will* will only arise when they have *sufficiently* lost faith in their preceding system and become *sufficiently* determined to replace it.

The Communist does not *need* war for any purpose. He believes the future is Socialism's, if mankind lives. An opposite slogan equivalent to 'Better dead than red' is impossible for him. Life itself (a phrase he is fond of using) teaches redness. Socialism is so much better a method – whatever the spots and imperfections due to its operation by fallible human beings under stress and hostile pressures in an imperfect world – that in the long run it must prevail by example, just as capitalism so contains intrinsic immoralities, insufficiences, weaknesses and drives towards increasing injustice, repression and bloodshed that in the long run it must be rejected by experience.

How much the more, then, must he oppose war in a period when technology gives the possibility, not only through nuclear weapons but by other means of mass destruction also, of inflicting upon man misery beyond measurement and a set-back incalculable and even jeopardizing his survival.

Hence the concept of Peaceful Co-existence, to limit conflict between the two systems developing from the stresses that do arise. For such stresses are inherent in the world as it is. In 'peaceful co-existence' there is also competition, even if this is – as is its target – successfully maintained at the level of 'peaceful competition' resulting from the contrast of the respective merits of the two systems in the minds of men. There is 'ideological conflict' – a fine term for how this competition is going.

But the main point is that the world will not be crystallized, it is always developing, a mass of pullulating change. No effort to hold it back could be fruitful any more than was Canute's famous deterrent to wind and wave. Metternich's Holy Alliance would not work in the first half of the nineteenth century; if *that* were the meaning of 'peaceful co-existence' how much the more meaningless in the second half of the twentieth, when the

process of change is infinitely more complex, powerful and convulsive.

This is why both caricatures of it – those nicknamed 'Chinese' and 'American' are equally inept.

Where there is oppression, there indeed will be revolution. Where there is national oppression there will be struggle for liberation. This is not a tap that Communists can turn on and off at will, that 'Russia' can promote by encouraging it from outside or avert by calling off its jackals. The thesis of Foster Dulles, the John Birchers, Mr. Forster, Mr. Smith, Colonel Papadopoulos – that if it wasn't for Yankee agitators the slaves would be happy – is a mere cry of 'Stop thief!' raised for distraction by the pickpocket himself. Force in struggle for freedom is a function of the degree of rigidity with which repression is applied to maintain, or restore, a status quo. The class in power always repudiates democratic forms and liberties, the power with an imperialist relationship always intervenes, when their control and perquisites are in jeopardy. Russia 1918–21; Hungary, Italy, Germany, Spain after World War I; Guatemala, San Domingo, Indonesia, Vietnam, Greece after World War II, these are only names turned up at hazard in an index pages-long.

There were revolutions and struggles for liberation long before there were Communists. Not Communism alone, but by principle all democrats *per se* and many Christians from their faith, have held armed revolution justified whenever no democratic means exists for a people otherwise to end a system of injustice and oppression to which it is subjected. It was Abraham Lincoln who most clearly and forthrightly declared this moral right of rebellion, and a famous English Liberal statesman who scarified colonialism with the dictum: 'Self rule is better than good rule'. It is not Communists alone who distinguish a 'just war', who accept that, in certain circumstances, de-

fence against aggression can be better than acquiescence, a struggle for justice and freedom – even on the narrowest criterion of reducing suffering and death – better than a continued endurance of misery and oppression.

There are Christians who find in scripture a justification of absolute pacifism. There are other Christians who find it right to fight against evil. There is still a third attitude, that I heard from a white-bearded Gandhist saint standing by Gate of Heavenly Peace at the National Day celebration in Peking. As the people in their colour and might and rejoicing rolled by, wave upon wave, he stood impassive until at last tears came into his eyes and he said: 'I believe in non-violence, but to those who do not have strong enough inner strength never will I preach that they are not to use force in their struggle to be free.'

The Communist believes that the choice of method in struggle to be free is a matter not of a supernaturally-sanctioned code but of choice, based on reasonable assessment of all circumstances of time and place, primarily those determining the least course of suffering. Human beings, fallible by nature, can calculate wrong, but this does not exempt man from trying to reckon as best he can, with the last word always to the potential sufferer, to him who must wage the struggle and bear the burden, never to the outsider (whether geographically or by intellect) far away. The Communist does accuse of hypocrisy him who sees bloodshed only in struggle and not in passivity. For example, the Communist is said erroneously to be bloodthirsty because, supposedly, he preaches class war. But this is a complete misuse of terms. The class war exists, all he preaches is that we should be aware of it. The class war claims its holocaust of victims in the total absence of Reds or resistance, e.g. in the ten times higher infantile death rate for so long[1] from such

[1] Before the National Health Service.

simple diseases as measles in North Kensington than in South Kensington, in the periodic millions of deaths from famine in pre-Liberation China, in the distorted children's bellies and infant mortality statistics throughout South America and great tracts of Asia and Africa today.

The struggle to end this, to protect the weak, to discomfit those who derive profit from their poverty – the fight, that is, against colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialist exploitation – is, in any sense that can be attached to the adjective by those who use it, a sacred struggle. It does not divide Communists and Christians. It should unite them.

'In Guatemala, the United States is standing militarily behind an oligarchy of 2 per cent of the Guatemalan people who possess 80 per cent of the land and resultant power . . . because we do business with them and because we are taken in by the cry of anti-Communism.

'Over half the Guatemalan people are suffering from malnutrition. A wage of 50 cents a day in Guatemala is above average, but meat is 40 cents a pound and eggs 50 to 60 cents a dozen. This means that people don't eat and children die unnecessarily. Of the 70,000 a year who die in Guatemala, 30,000 are children. Guatemala's child mortality rate is 40 times that of the United States . . .

'Violence is institutionalized in Guatemala. We don't talk about whether there will be violence; there is violence, the life is violent . . . The way the government relates to the people, and the way the army relates to the people, is violent.

'The so-called extremist right is directed and approved of by the army. I recall a visit to the town of Gualan in the department of Zacapa. I went there with a team of students from the National University to establish a new youth centre. A week after the group was organized, its president received a death warning from the Mano Blanca (White Hand). I went alone to visit the head of the Mano Blanca and asked him why he was going to kill this lad. At first he denied sending the letter, but after a bit of discussion with him and his first assistant, the assistant said,

"Well, I know he's a Communist and so we're going to kill him."

' "How do you know?" I asked.

'He said, "I know he's a Communist because I heard him say he would give his life for the poor."

'With such a definition of Communism, we find many new names in the Communist ranks, including Christ's.'[1]

To withhold oneself from this struggle is not pacifism, it is desertion. Passivity means, in effect, the comfort and aid of toleration for the oppressor. He who knows, and acts not, has guilt on his hands. And how act? It is a credit to the British people of that time, and to the channels of influence upon their rulers that then stood available in their political system, that Gandhism could shake British India. It would not have worked against Hitler, against Smith, Verwoerd, or those that the Pentagon delights to favour in South Vietnam or South America. If the Communists did desert, it would not make 'peace', man's spirit would yet rebel but his path could be ten times longer and more bloody. The Communists will not desert, they are proud that with others, of faith as well as no faith, their names stand among those of the heroes and martyrs.

'Peaceful co-existence' is not a prediction that such things will not arise, nor an implicit promise that Communists, thereby becoming less than other men, will renounce the human right of sympathy and aid to those whose cause they think is just. It is the determination that the potential conflicts associated with these developments need not, and must not, result in a confrontation of the two systems by a general – inevitably under present circumstances – all-destructive war.

[1] Father Blase Bonpane, priest of the Maryknoll Order, withdrawn from its mission in Guatemala, in the *Washington Post*, Feb. 4, 1968 (as quoted in *I. F. Stone's Weekly*, Feb. 19, 1968 and *The Nation*, Mar. 4, 1968).

Certainly there are other possible sources of war beside the drives inherent in capitalism. Tribal, racial, national differences. Mistrusts and hatred springing from past history, for instance. But these are secondary so far as explosive quality is concerned. How often are they fomented, nourished and exaggerated by their context-relation with the basic drives.

Again the confrontation inherent in co-existence, with all engaged piling up arms, keeping their powder dry and eyeing their security, brings about a situation in which the justice inherent in the particular may be submerged in deduced needs of the strategic general, and which every decision – since it is made by fallible human beings, is liable to miscalculation.

All these by-products emphasize the need for strengthening international ties, international consultation and international co-operation.

We reject as premature at this stage ideas for finished structures of co-operation, such as 'World Government'. If ever to be ripe, this can only follow, not precede, an equal relationship and accord of its constituent parts. Without this, it could only be a basis for the forceful suppression of dissentients – war in a sanctified form – and annulment of the cherished independence of new nations. An international police force would work wrong for the same reason. So would compulsory arbitration. Controlled partial disarmament is impossible while the main defensive capacity of the lesser-armed depends, in a nuclear age, on the potential opponent's ignorance of the exact location of its arms. The urging of such impractical proposals is not serious but a part of the ritual of Cold War.

We urge a return to the Charter of the United Nations in its all-inclusiveness – which means the presence of China, not a puppet simulacrum, and forbids partial and exclusive

alliances, so that European security would become a common business for all concerned, not an ever more flimsy by-product of two contesting blocs, and solutions in such areas as South East Asia would at last be those of their peoples, not of distant strategists or crusaders.

We press for precision in treaties. 'Aggression' is debased to a term applicable at will to the opponent, never to your own deeds. The apologists for American action in Vietnam claim that North and South are two nations, and that the US acts in Vietnam only to repel the 'aggression' of the former on the latter. But the Geneva international agreement declared that North and South were one nation and that a plebiscite must be held on their unification; the US Government undertook not to interfere with the agreement by force, introduced and installed as ruler a puppet who – with its backing – crushed, arrested and mass-poisoned opponents and refused the plebiscite, and, when the people objected by counter-force, has introduced half a million soldiers, used napalm, anti-personnel devices, gas, defoliants and laid waste cities, slaughtering thousands and rendering millions homeless, in the effort to subdue them. Is this 'aggression'?

Communists recall that it was a Communist government – that of the USSR – which strove at the United Nations to put meaning into peace agreements by defining aggression – its proposal, boiled down, amounted to outlawing the use, under any pretext, of troops or weapons outside one's own frontiers – and that it was others, unwilling to tie their own hands, who defeated the proposals.

Imagine the significance not only for the security of South East Asia but for the stability of the Middle East had this proposal been adopted. Appreciate the contrary significance of its refusal, together with the pretence that Bonn represents all Germany and the German Demo-

cratic Republic does not exist, for encouraging the revengist dreams of German nationalists that today prevent a settlement in Europe and tomorrow could prove the focus of a Third World War.

Treaties are not of paper only but as strong as world opinion makes them. Never in history has the role of man been so important as today in questions of war and peace. Men fire guns and pilot planes – men and women make munitions, grow food, transport them. In the old days kings and emperors could fight private wars with private armies. Who, reading Jane Austen's novels, can realize that while the events described were happening, someone else, somewhere off-stage, was fighting the Napoleonic wars? Now total war demands total assent of populations. Herein – for all their modern means of 'opinion-forming' by control of the communications 'media' – lies the Achilles heel of every warmonger.

The Dutch textile merchant of my beginning was right. The great majority of the peoples of the world do not want war. How to assemble this power? How to make it vigilant, informed, untiring in its pressure so that, at last in history, man may deliberately influence his fate?

Communists believe in the value of direct activity of people for peace, their organization, their discussion, their finding of common ground on which they may work in parallel or all together. Communists certainly have their own ideas of what causes, and may cure, wars and they do not conceal these. But they have no desire to 'control' movements, or impose such ideas on any one as the price for common action. Of what use a peace movement of only one side or that merely adds a few to a minority. The point of all-in discussion and participation is to find policies promoting peace that will unite, and modify those that unnecessarily divide.

Public opinion has shown its power already many times in this modern age. The London dockers put an end to the military intervention against the young Soviet republics when they refused to load munitions on the *Jolly George*. When the Indian struggle for freedom reached its climax in naval mutiny, British public opinion would no longer have supported further forcible repression. The conscience of France moved, both after Dien Bien Phu and to end the savagery with which the *colons* tried to maintain their reign in Algeria. World public opinion stopped the war in Korea, secured the atmospheric-test ban and constitutes a difficult barrier for those who hanker to use nuclear weapons to breach. US public opinion has not said its last word on Vietnam.

Of its nature, public opinion is slow to rouse except to meet great threats and tragic events. But it must. 'Peace will not be delivered to us on a platter, the peoples must take it into their own hands', said Professor Joliot-Curie.

The problem is to convince people that peace needs protection not just when the crisis occurs, and that the events that give rise to the tragedies must be anticipated. We cannot turn our backs. We must not think only of our own problems, but of those of others. Peace must be sought on a world scale, and there are no easy times.

I should like to conclude this exposition with another anecdote. I remember well a discussion at a World Council of Peace meeting in Vienna. It took place in the days when the British were still occupying Egypt. There was a goodly attendance of participants from Western Europe. Their chief concern – and how reasonable-seeming – was at all costs to prevent destruction of their loved ones and cities by world war and nuclear weapons. Other conflicts were only distractions, divisive and hindering the neces-

sary unity at best, at worst potential seeds of escalation to the ultimate disaster. A tall Egyptian stood up, tears in his eyes. 'We do not wish to shoot at British troops. But tell us, please tell us – how else can we get them to leave our country?' A Quaker replied that this was a fair question and convinced him that, after all, perhaps a peace movement should concern itself with the question of justice and freedom for oppressed nations, but, if so, only in the degree that their oppression threatened a breach of the peace. An Asian stood on his chair and interrupted excitedly: 'You cannot say that. Such a position means that we must all shoot at the forces occupying our respective countries in order to obtain your sympathy, or even attention.'

Many and diverse are the opinions to be found among peacemongers. They are of all kinds and all persuasions. Even a capitalist who gains his own bread grinding down the faces of the poor (if such have survived from Dickens' day) may not wish his factory (and hence capacity for further grinding) to be wiped out by the atomic bomb. Hence a peace movement that would unite the maximum force against war cannot be crudely anti-capitalist. Even the absolute pacifist Christian or the non-violent Buddhist may find the way to stop a war or diminish violence is to co-operate with those, faithful or faithless, who, though they do not share this principle, likewise seek a just solution to prevent one and forestall the other. Peace movements betray their purpose if they prescribe an orthodoxy. Time is not altogether on our side, for though the experience – and thus wisdom – of mankind accumulates, so do his numbers. Under present conditions the gulf between the nations industrial and relatively prosperous on the one hand and undernourished and so-called 'undeveloped' on the other increases and with it the tensions that tendencies to war make burst. We must attend

to politics, we must attend to economics, we must seek to understand one another's points of view and in a sense all be 'our brother's keepers', we must be honest, and we must try to work together.

Teilhard de Chardin and the Christian-Marxist Dialogue

Anthony Dyson

THE purpose of this essay is to discuss the 'and' of its title. Is it legitimate to link the name of the Jesuit thinker in a special way with the various discussions which are taking place at the present time between Christians and Marxists? It is important to try and give a careful and balanced answer to this question lest my title should seem unduly pretentious, lest Teilhard be given an eminence in this respect which is neither deserved nor appropriate. In the first place, some space must be devoted to a clarification of the phrase 'Christian-Marxist dialogue'.

This is not a movement of thought which can easily be described or evaluated. But it can now be regarded as a matter of fact that in the last few years there have been signs of a new kind of relationship between *some* Christians and *some* Marxists. In itself, dialogue between Christians and Marxists is no new phenomenon. There has in the past been a sporadic discussion at the literary level, though it is doubtful whether this has affected the man in the pew or the local party-member in a direct way. There has been contact between Christian Socialists and Marxists. And of course the Christian Churches have counted a few Marxists among their own ranks. In Eastern European countries there has been some kind of dialogue, however

strained, on the question of the Christian's role in a socialist society. It would therefore be quite wrong to see the present phase of the debate in radical discontinuity with what has gone before, even if as yet it is difficult to trace out the lines of connection. But when all this has been said, it still remains true that a different spirit marks the current tentative rapprochement between the two sides.

In the past the Christian has, for the most part, seen Marxism as blatantly and unambiguously atheistic. In turn the Marxist has inveighed against Christianity as the creator of illusions which inhibit the realization of man's true nature in human society. In a well-known phrase, religion is the opium of the people. Moreover, in the period of the 'Cold War' the Christian Churches have, by and large, identified themselves with the implacable hostility towards Communism and all its works which has marked the 'free world'. In turn, the socialist countries have linked the Churches with the forces of imperialism, colonialism, reaction and bourgeois capitalism which supposedly characterize the Western 'bloc'. Again, one has only to read some of the post-war Papal documents, to observe the anti-Communist platform of Moral Rearmament, and to note some of the Christian reactions at the time of McCarthyism, to appreciate the extent to which an anti-Communist attitude has been built into the general viewpoint of Western Christians. On the other hand there has been the long and undeniable history of the persecution of Christians in socialist countries. All these and other factors have created a tense and hostile relationship (or, better, irrelationship) between Christians and Marxists which has been nurtured by the general political situation. There have been relatively few signs of a rigorously independent Christian analysis of the situation.

However difficult it may be to account for the emergence

of a new, if modest, spirit of dialogue, there is no gainsaying the fact that on both sides former attitudes are now being questioned and, to some small extent, are even being broken down. For example, there is a growing awareness that Christianity and Marxism are both subtle and complex phenomena taking different forms in different situations. In retrospect one cannot but feel sympathy with Marx's criticism of the kind of Christianity which he found and observed, even if one cannot exactly share the form of his criticism. But we now live in an age in which Christians are by no means uniformly associated with forces of reaction. Instead many participate in an active way in social action and social protest over problems of war, race, world-hunger, etc. We have also seen the slow and steady growth of the ecumenical movement which, whatever its present uncertainties and loss of direction, has brought about a new measure of Christian fraternity, a new insight into major differences internal to Christendom, and a richer understanding of the way in which social factors shape the dogma and polity of the various church-bodies. In the present century there have been countless and important efforts on the part of Christian theologians to come to theological terms with the advent of technology, with the fact of man's growing mastery over his environment, and with the possibilities of global destruction. Moreover, the recognition that a numerically diminishing Christianity is set amid what is in terms of population-growth a 'runaway world' has, paradoxically, led to an important shift of theological emphasis in many quarters whereby the world rather than the Church is seen as the object of divine creation, restoration and activity. Contemporaneously the Churches have experienced a series of major challenges to their primary articles of belief. The time now seems irrevocably past when the Christian, by appeal to Bible, Church, or Confession,

could treat his belief as a set of clearly-defined, unalterable propositions. Whether we look at Christianity from the standpoint of dogma, ethics, spirituality, worship, or polity, it can no longer be regarded as a monolithic unit, but as a mixed body, thinking out anew its beliefs and policies, in terms of a commitment to Christ, amid a rapidly-changing world. Among those Christians who have not seen these modern movements simply as prophets of doom, there is a new sense of awareness about the world outside the Church and of the Christian's total responsibility towards that world.

It is not really the Christian's task to analyse comparable changes within the world of Marxism, since changes of this kind are only truly experienced and evaluated from within. But it is apparent to anyone that, both in theory and practice, Marxism has moved far from its early days. There are marked differences among different socialist countries. The economic bases of Marxism which, when all is said and done, are its *raison d'etre*, have undergone material transformations. There have been many signs of growing liberalization in social and political life which amount to nothing less than fundamental questions about the place and worth of the individual person within a Marxist society. There are also signs that Marxism is experiencing, like Christianity, genuine difficulties in making its voice heard in societies whose criteria of action are largely pragmatic.

In this kind of overall situation, it is evident that the time is indeed ripe to open up, in a quite basic way, the questions as to how Christianity and Marxism differ, where they share concerns, and where they may, without dishonesty, work together for common ends. Such a programme of mutual inquiry is fraught with extraordinary difficulties. It meets with deep and perhaps justifiable suspicion from both Christians and Marxists. In view of

a long history of enmity and opposed beliefs, there is a real fear lest the respective birthrights should be renounced in order to allow a few eclectics on both sides to foster short-term goals. There is a real suspicion about the other's motives, as to whether, for example, the dialogue is no more than a subtle form of proselytism. On the Christian side there is also the feeling that the debate is being conducted only by 'radicals', i.e. by those (it is thought) whose version of Christianity bears little relation to the 'normal' Christianity of the past. Such theologians (the argument goes) turn to the Christian-Marxist dialogue bent on nothing less than the continued erosion of their faith in favour of an immanent humanism loosely tied to Christian vocabulary.

All these fears, securely founded or not, make the initiation and conduct of dialogue very difficult. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when the dialogue does occur it should for the most part be in informal settings among people who have come to know and trust each other. The public response to more formal meetings is such that leaders on both sides are likely to feel threatened and insecure.

A more sophisticated criticism of the Christian-Marxist dialogue comes from those who see such dialogue as being itself an inadequate response to the urgency of the present situation. A Christian may, for example, point to the fact that, whatever the domestic profits of decades of ecumenical activity, the time and energy expended has inevitably detracted from the time and energy which should have been spent in facing up to the serious problems which confront Christians and all men in our society. Is not the Christian-Marxist dialogue likely to lead to the construction of further in-groups which, however well-meaning and whatever their internal value, can have little impact upon the world around us? If there is to be dia-

logue, must not it be dialogue about urgent questions of human and political involvement in the world? Undoubtedly this criticism must carry a lot of weight. In our rapidly changing society it might indeed seem as if a more reflective, even philosophical, dialogue can only lead to agreements which will, for all practical purposes, be obsolete as soon as they are concluded. At the same time, there might be serious dangers and losses if a long-term perspective is eschewed. While in one sense it might seem as if the world is threatened by imminent disaster, there is also the possibility (if the past is anything to go by!) that the world might go on for some time yet. In a longer perspective the present Christian-Marxist discussions seem, and are, puny. But however puny, they symbolize a concern for the future of nations and peoples on a global scale. They begin to take account, for instance, of the destiny of China as part of an international society, a question which is hardly posed amid the provincialism of the West. If Christians and Marxists must be bold about facing some of the urgent practical problems which confront human society, they must also seek to come to terms with the basic questions about the kinds of beliefs and values which undergird their different ways of life and which condition, and will continue to condition, their response to practical issues. Moreover, only in this way will the Christian-Marxist dialogue be able to work forward constructively and patiently in face of the set-backs, the ice-ages, which will surely come as ecclesiastical and political leaders seek to clamp down on practical co-operation, for political purposes, at different points in time.

My introductory discussion has led to the point at which it becomes thoroughly apposite to consider the role and significance of Teilhard de Chardin for the Christian-Marxist dialogue. But at first sight, his relevance to this matter is by no means obvious. What is the immediate

impression that is given? A Jesuit, who died in 1955, basically loyal to his order and to his church; a paleontologist of distinction; a writer whose published work is concerned with an attempted reconciliation between the claims of Christian faith and natural science, and with 'spirituality'; a theologian to whom the person of Christ and his resurrection are fundamental. Further, the abstraction and poetic quality of his vocabulary, and the cosmic sweep of his vision, might suggest that he is more concerned with building castles in Spain than with the brute facts of human existence. A careful scrutiny of Teilhard's writings, published and unpublished, reveals precious little reference to Marxism, and even then only in the broadest terms. By no stretch of the imagination may he be regarded as an expert in Marxist philosophy or Communist affairs. Marxism apart, there is no consensus about Teilhard's stature as a thinker. For some he offers a profound, for others a facile, solution to the antinomies of religion and science. He has/has not made false scientific claims; he has/has not distorted the Christian faith. For some, these things are irrelevant since Teilhard is first and foremost a mystic. But for others he belongs to that company of 'radical theologians' who propose a materially new shape and content for Christianity.

In consequence, at a scholarly level Teilhard presents a perplexing phenomenon. If a thinker's importance is to be estimated by the amount of heated controversy provoked by his work then Teilhard graduates *summa cum laude*. But the debate continues, and it will require passage of time, the publication of the rest of his writings, and a long task of exegesis before Teilhard's overall significance can be appreciated.

Even when we turn to his life, little help can be gained for evaluating his significance for the Christian-Marxist dialogue. Apart from the years spent as a geologist and

paleontologist in China and other parts of the world, the outer course of his life was comparatively uneventful. He was not active in practical politics; he engaged in little open intellectual debate, not least since he was not allowed to publish his speculative writings during his lifetime.

All these negative and limiting factors about Teilhard's relation with Marxism must be carefully noted. For they point us towards the *kind* of influence which Teilhard can, and to some extent, does exert. It is not primarily an influence upon formulations of particular doctrines or political theories; it is rather a general and pervasive influence upon fundamental human attitudes. For the Christian-Marxist dialogue, it constitutes an influence at one remove. That is, he communicates a certain vision of human life which, when taken up independently by Christians and Marxists, is found to have an extraordinarily seminal influence when these come together in debate. Even more, his vision of human life is such that, if Christians and Marxists did not engage in dialogue, the quintessence of Teilhard's thought would be denied and betrayed. In other words he presents a comprehensive vision of life in the cosmos, within which the coming-together in dialogue of Christians and Marxists marks a crucial and constitutive element. He brings the two sides together, not as simple opposites, not as two isolated movements with certain affinities, but as significant parts of a greater whole.

These bare assertions call for expansion and clarification. But first it may be worthwhile briefly to indicate one or two of the practical and concrete ways in which Teilhard's thought has entered the Christian-Marxist dialogue. It is first of all worthy of note that Marxists as well as Christians have called upon Teilhard to testify. Perhaps the most notable example of this is Roger Garaudy, a lead-

ing French Marxist and a Professor at the University of Poitiers. His slim volume *From Anathema to Dialogue* (Collins, 1967) was a response to the call put out by Pope John and the Second Vatican Council for dialogue with unbelievers.[1] It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Garaudy's book takes as its starting-point and as its *leit-motif* an informed and sympathetic encounter with the thought of Teilhard. But Garaudy is not alone in this respect. Every year in Vézelay (France) a Teilhard de Chardin Colloquium takes place. It is significant that for the last few years the paper-speakers have included an impressive representation from Eastern European countries. Marxist scholars such as Varga, Tordai, Tertulian and Pluzanski have taken up and developed characteristically Teilhardian themes from a Marxist standpoint. Teilhard's ideas have also come to the fore in the proceedings of the *Paulus-Gesellschaft*, a society founded by a German Roman Catholic priest for the promotion of contact between Christian faith and the modern world. In the past few years the main annual meeting has been devoted to Christian-Marxist-Humanist discussion with widespread representation of Marxists from Eastern and Western Europe. The main Christian protagonist has been the distinguished Roman Catholic scholar Karl Rahner who shows a remarkable affinity with Teilhard's thought at many points, although he never admits as much. On this side of the Channel the Pierre Teilhard de Chardin Association of Great Britain and Ireland has been instrumental in introducing some of the concerns of the continental dialogue. Inevitably there is no space to mention how many individuals have projected themselves into the dialogue at a local level under the stimulus of Teilhard's

[1] See also Garaudy's essay 'The Meaning of Life and History in Marx and Teilhard de Chardin', in *Evolution, Marxism and Christianity*, Garnstone Press, 1967.

thought. Such head-counting is anyhow impossible; but in Europe the number must be very great.

All the same, it would be quite mistaken to claim for Teilhard any sort of proprietary interest in the Christian-Marxist dialogue. There may be some grounds for thinking that, if the dialogue is extended in Great Britain, his thought may prove less influential than on the continent. For in some respects Teilhard belongs to a distinctively European cultural tradition whose ways of thought are not our own. But this reservation does not have the force that it once had, since scholarly reflection more and more assumes an international character. In whatever country, it seems more accurate to say that Teilhard's thought will exercise an influence less among those who wish to begin the dialogue from a consideration of specific problems, and more among those who are trying to ask wider questions. I have already suggested that I regard *both* approaches as essential and complementary. The first thing to be said, therefore, is that for the dialogue Teilhard is a subterranean influence.

But such a judgment, however true, does not do justice to the role that Teilhard has already played. For, however unpalatable a thing it may be to say, Teilhard points unequivocally to the existence of important common ground between Christians and Marxists. It is not entirely clear whether Teilhard was fully conscious of the implications of his ideas in this respect, or whether these are unconscious implications of his attempt to renew Christian thinking. It is probably something of both. But in a sense this is an academic question since our task is to test the validity of those implications rather than to discover their motives and sources.

In what, for Teilhard, does this common ground consist? For the Christian it might seem as if the only common ground that matters is 'God', and that if Marxists reject

'God' then areas of agreement can only be peripheral. Teilhard would not exactly share this logic, although there is no doubt in his own mind that Christianity stands or falls by belief in the God revealed in Jesus Christ. But for Teilhard, the supreme possession shared by Christians and Marxists is their faith in man. 'By "faith in Man" we mean here the more or less active and fervent conviction that Mankind as an organic and organized whole possesses a future: a future consisting not merely of successive years but of higher states to be achieved by struggle' (*The Future of Man*, p. 185). As this quotation makes clear, Teilhard's 'faith in Man' is neither vague nor romantic. It is a vision of man as a dynamic being, actively engaged in the construction of his communal future. This is central rather than peripheral for Teilhard, but not because it is a belief which Christians and Marxists happen to share in some way. It is central because Teilhard's whole vision is articulated around man as a phenomenon. According to Teilhard, man issues from his long biological past, where he is the object of evolution, but, passing the threshold of reflection, he then becomes the author and subject of evolution. To talk about the centrality of man, and of the cruciality of 'faith in Man', is not simply an arbitrary conclusion based on man's sense of his own importance, but is instead a conclusion reached on the basis of a detailed and many-sided analysis of man in the total context of evolution, an analysis in which theology, philosophy and science combine without infringing improperly upon each other's preserves. For Teilhard the cosmological and the theological pictures cohere. Creation is no once-for-all act in the past but a continuing event (cosmogenesis). It is at heart, whatever the appearances and the diversions, a purposive process in which the whole cosmos, if it takes up the challenge to promote evolution at the psycho-social level along the trajectory which that evolu-

tion has so far followed, will eventually find its fulfilment in a divine-human climax (Omega). In Teilhard's view, the source and energy of this process is nothing less than Christ. Thus seen, Christ is no external agent compelling a static and passive humanity towards its destiny, but rather a stimulus, animating the process from within, an influence to which man may or may not choose to respond. The possibility of response is not confined to the Christian, as the latter is normally defined; it is possible for 'anyone who expressly or implicitly believes in Love', for anyone who is active in furthering at its deepest level the social, interpersonal unity of mankind. It follows that man's future evolution is not, for all practical purposes, plotted and assured in advance. It is possible for man to undo the work of millions of years, for him to 'capsize' evolution. Teilhard was therefore no facile optimist. Paradoxically, he could as a Christian hold that to *faith* (more precisely, to faith in the resurrection of Christ as the genuine anticipation of a future humanity) the successful outcome of evolution was assured. But this conviction, he believed, should not cause the Christian to relax, but rather stir him to bring to realization a future now seen through a glass darkly.

Now while recognizing that it would not be faithful to Teilhard's thought to abstract parts from the whole, it is obvious that the decisive feature of this way of thinking for the Christian-Marxist dialogue lies in the realistic way that it relates the future of man to empirical human community and concrete action. There is no question of God's future for man being achieved by a *deus ex machina*. It is achieved not by a sudden, climactic deed, but by a slow and laborious process as men in communities modify their natures (anthropogenesis). Thus, for all its apparent threats to human personalness, Teilhard was able to view the modern technological world with equanimity and

with hope. For it provides the means of technical mastery by which the 'socialization' and 'unification' of man can be realized, as they must be realized, on a global scale. In Teilhard's vision of things, Christianity is essentially directed towards the future. All the suffixes which Teilhard appends to his scientific coinages, in order to imply process and movement, must also be applied at the theological level (e.g. Christogenesis).

It is certainly true that Teilhard does not make exact prescriptions as to what is needful to bring about this common future. If he had done so, there is no doubt that such prescriptions would now be obsolete – such is the rate of human change. At the same time he never suggested that this human future could be brought about except by particular and concrete policies of an economic, political, social and educational kind. It is on these grounds that Teilhard's deep interest in the founding of UNESCO must be explained. In Teilhard's picture, the past, present and future are interlocked. In conformity with Christian belief he expects a 'new heaven and a new earth'. But this prospect must never be separated from the human tasks which must now be undertaken, by individuals and by groups, in order to bring this about. Offensive as it may seem to the 'spiritual' man, and utopian as it may seem to the 'materialist', human work, scientific research, political activism, social planning, future-research,[1] prayer and worship are all servants of the coming of the Kingdom.

It is against a background such as this that we can appreciate Garaudy's call to dialogue: '. . . we must determine whether at this fundamental level there are sufficient intersecting areas to allow us, together and without hidden motives, to build a city where men live in common and to build a future for man in which he will not be de-

[1] I have in mind the sort of project discussed in the Summer 1967 issue of *Daedalus* under the title 'Toward the Year 2000'.

prived of any of his dimensions, where he will be in Marx's phrase a "total" man, and in Teilhard's phrase a "whole" man' (See *From Anathema to Dialogue*, p. 39, my tr.).

In all this it is evident that Teilhard is at once very near to, and very far from, the Marxist credo. He is close to Marxism in his radical human hope and in his belief in the radical possibilities of human change. But he is far from the Marxist, since for him the hope is unthinkable apart from his belief in God and in the immanent working of Christ in the cosmos. Nothing will be gained by smothering these basic differences. At the same time it would be criminal to minimize the measure of agreement. Moreover it is difficult to see how Teilhard's view of things merits the charge that the Christian doctrine of divine transcendence alienates man from his properly human concerns, distracts and weakens his human effort in favour of an other-worldly bliss. God, the absolute Future, towards whom the cosmos moves, stands before man as the measure of his possibility, requires him to enter history and so change it, and beckons him to build the earth as the necessary pre-condition for His own final act of consummation.

It will be obvious that Teilhard's vision extends beyond Christians and Marxists. Although theologically there is some uncertainty as to whether or not he was a universalist (i.e. one who believes that all men will be saved), Teilhard was certainly thinking in very big categories about the destiny of man. At the same time, this does not mean for Teilhard that one faith is as good as another. He draws a sharp distinction between world-denying and world-affirming faiths. The latter must be the pioneers of evolution at the human level. It is because Christianity and Marxism can be the pioneers *par excellence* that they are singled out for special treatment.

Indeed there are places where Teilhard seems to commend a merger of the two. Thus, 'as I like to put it the

synthesis between the (Christian) God "above" and the (Marxist) God "in front": here is the only God whom we can henceforth adore in spirit and in truth' (letter of 2nd April, 1952). In fact Teilhard does not commend a merger, and it is with a discussion of this point that I bring this essay to a close. It is of immediate relevance to the intentions of the Christian-Marxist dialogue.

In *The Future of Man* Teilhard has a diagram consisting of a right angle whose horizontal line is OX and whose vertical line is OY. The first represents 'Human Faith, driving Forward to the ultra-human'. The second represents a version of Christian faith 'aspiring Upward, in a personal transcendency, towards the Highest'. Out of this right angle, at 45 degrees, a third line OR goes upward *and* forward. This refers to Christian faith 'rectified' or 'made explicit', reconciling OX and OY. It seems clear, therefore, that Teilhard regards OY as an inauthentic form of Christianity, as he regards OX as an inadequate version of faith in man. Certainly OR does refer to Christian faith but it is a Christian faith which does not yet exist. The way to the future consists not in a merger or coalition of Christianity and Marxism, but in a new quality of Christian faith which will arise from a genuine synthesis of the upward and forward pressures which mark Christianity and Marxism as these are known today. 'But let there be revealed to us the possibility of believing *at the same time and wholly* in God *and* the World, the one through the other; let this belief burst forth . . . and then . . . a great flame will illumine all things: for a Faith will have been born (or re-born) containing and embracing all others – and, inevitably, it is the strongest Faith which sooner or later must possess the Earth' (*The Future of Man*, p. 268f.). It may be that in this quotation the words 'or re-born' point to Teilhard's conviction that a belief 'at the same time and wholly in God and the World'

is nothing less than authentic Christianity. But Christianity has become 'so lukewarm in human terms' that a rebirth is needed. Thus we are concerned with a new faith, different from Christianity and Marxism as we now know them, which holds together the thoroughly transcendental and thoroughly terrestrial elements of the two.

In this respect Teilhard's thought bears a genuinely *revolutionary* character. There is no question of the two faiths trimming their respective credos in order to reach some kind of working agreement. It is rather a question of Christianity and Marxism coming together in dialogue to renew and to re-create themselves, by a mutation, for the sake of the world's future. Now this may smack of utopianism. But the whole range of Teilhard's vision provides a backcloth against which such a programme can be thought through. Indeed it has already become apparent that to talk at all of Teilhard in respect of the Christian-Marxist dialogue involves talking about the *whole* of Teilhard.[1] Once his vision of a world, including the human world, as in process and movement is accepted, then it becomes apparent that *all* Christian and Marxist presuppositions must be inspected afresh. In a world which does not stand still, these two faiths can only stand still at the price of dissolution, at the risk of becoming ideological dinosaurs. The attempt to believe wholly and at the same time in God *and* the world involves a thorough reconsideration of what is meant by God, Christ, man and the world. Inevitably it will also mean that the Marxist will have to think through, with the Christian, his own positive and negative responses to these and other items. If this project seems in some respects utopian, in other respects it is marked by a sturdy realism. Teilhard wrote

[1] For a general introduction to Teilhard's thought the reader is referred to N. M. Wildiers, *An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin*, Fontana Books, 1968.

that 'this surely means that the faith which finally triumphs must be the one which shows itself to be more capable than any other of inspiring Man to action' (*The Future of Man*, p. 208). In their more honest moments there must be many Christians and Marxists who would doubt whether their respective faiths measure up to this criterion. There are certainly millions of people, neither Christian nor Marxist, who see neither Christianity or Marxism, as they are at present, as pioneer faiths of human action for the sake of the world's future.

It is to be hoped that the Christian-Marxist dialogue will go ahead and gain strength, and that it will be fostered by those who are loyal representatives of their respective faiths. The dialogue must be very practical, must face up to urgent problems, must discuss unpalatable topics. But perhaps in all this Teilhard has a role to perform as the 'conscience' of the dialogue. He can remind Christians and Marxists that bigger issues are at stake than the immediate search for *Lebensraum* by Christianity and Marxism. It is a question of the unity of mankind, of the controlled development of a contracting planet, of the concern for human and humane values amid what of absolute necessity must be a highly organized and mechanized world. Above all it is a question of human *responsibility*, individual and corporate, for the world out of which man has evolved, in which he lives, and towards which he moves.

Communism – the Future

James Klugmann

DURING the past three years some thousands of British Christians and Marxists have found themselves involved in common discussion on aims and ideals. They have met in 'dialogue', in school and university, public hall and public house. There have been some unaccustomed venues. Marxists have spoken in Southwark Cathedral, Unitarian Church, in monastery, in Roman Catholic Seminary, and Christian Ministers and nuns have sat in the Marx Memorial Library with the massive head of Karl Marx's bust looking quizzically down at them, wondering why he was receiving such unusual guests.

Perhaps the most important step of all was the first – the very acceptance of the need to meet and discuss together, that there should be dialogue. Once the dialogue opened, in nearly every case, agreement was rapidly reached that between Christians and Marxists there should and could be practical co-operation on such issues as peace, opposition to racialism, struggle against poverty at home and abroad. The world of the bomb, the world of growing gap between poverty and wealth, the world where the achievements of science could remove sordid misery and poverty from the whole of humanity or blow humanity

up – such a world shouted aloud for common Christian-Marxist action.

But then the question began to arise – must this co-operation be limited to certain restricted practical ends? Could Christian-Marxist co-operation be longer lasting? Was there not something in common in their deep approaches to the nature of man, his potentiality, his role in the world? Did the Marxist belief in the need for revolutionary social change make such long term co-operation impossible?

And, again and again, discussion turned to our mutual long-term aims. If these were utterly incompatible clearly the case for immediate co-operation still persisted but many problems of mutual distrust would arise. To what end would we be co-operating? Was it to be only an uneasy truce before renewed battle? Or was there something similar, parallel, or at least not mutually destructive between the Marxist conception of Communist Society and the Christian view of the Kingdom of God on earth?

Others will write in this volume on Christian eschatology. What I want to attempt to do, all too briefly, and not in text book language but my own, is to touch on my understanding, my vision if you like, of the future society of Communism, a vision which has lit up the life of so many millions of Communists, and, not so rarely, led them to accept imprisonment and death. But surely, I can hear some sceptical Christian say, you, a respectable materialist, are not permitted to dream of, have visions of the future! Communists like to dream, but their dreams are linked to reality. Men make their own history, and have by their own efforts to make their dreams come true.

SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

As early as 1875 Marx, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, envisaged two stages in the development of Communist society, a lower and a higher, an earlier and a later, two successive stages of society the one arising out the other. In common Communist parlance we usually speak of the first stage as Socialism, and the succeeding, higher stage, as Communism, a stage which has not yet been reached in any Socialist country.

The first stage – Socialism as we call it – emerges from capitalist society, after prolonged, complex and difficult struggles both in bringing capitalism to an end and in building socialist society. It inevitably still carries with it many of the material scarcities and moral deficiencies that belong to capitalism. It is in Marx's words 'in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges'.

It is only after a long period of socialism, a period made still longer when socialism develops in a hostile capitalist world, and on the basis of a very high level of technique, that men and women can transform socialist into the higher form of communist society.

This conception of stages of development of socialist society is, in my opinion, extremely important. When you compare the earlier Utopian socialism that preceded Marx, the socialism for instance of Robert Owen in Britain or Fourier or St. Simon in France with that of Marx and Engels, one of the essential differences is that the early (Utopian as we call them) socialists dreamed of jumping straight into an advanced Communist society inhabited by men and women with an advanced Communist outlook. This was one of the reasons, though of

course not the only one, that all the little Communist colonies and settlements, pockets of Communism in a hostile society, set up by the Utopians, were doomed inevitably to collapse. It is, in my experience, one of the most frequent bases of Christian-Marxist misunderstanding in the course of dialogue. For many Christians seem to expect each socialist country, that has begun to develop socialism after and amidst what are often the most appalling difficulties, to be a fully communist society, and to be judged as such.

What are the essential similarities and differences of Socialist and Communist society?

First with regard to production. The most fundamental argument for Socialism is that it corresponds to, is demanded by the new level of science and technique, of the means of production, that, at a certain stage in the level of technique capitalism, the private ownership of the means of production, begins to be a brake on further development.

Certainly in all Socialist countries without exception there has been a steady advance of production compared with the preceding capitalist or imperialist system. Despite all difficulties and all manner of mistakes (for no Marxist would argue infallibility), the standard of living in say the USSR is immeasurably superior to that of Tsarism, in socialist Bulgaria to the old militaro-fascist Bulgaria, in contemporary China to the incredible poverty of the war-lord or Kuomintang China, or in Castro Cuba to that of Batista. With common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, with a planned economy, production rises and unemployment begins to be a thing of the past.

In 1875 already Marx envisaged that under Socialism the productive forces would rise to a new level, to a level of *abundance*, and abundance in this sense is the *economic*

basis for communism. The conception is that, at a certain level of science and technique, it becomes possible not just to improve the material position of the people, but to meet, first in simpler goods, then in more complex ones, all their essential needs.

In Marx's day, and still more in the days of early Utopian socialists, the conception of an abundance of material goods must have often seemed visionary. But in these days of automation, cybernation, nuclear physics and scientific advance which takes us to the edge of unlimited sources of power, it does not seem difficult to grasp.

Of course an abundance of goods is a relative conception. As man's needs are met he will always find new needs to be fulfilled. There will always be some things in short supply and others newly invented. But it is no longer difficult to envisage a country, and then a world, where the most essential needs of food and shelter and clothing and household goods and transport, along with care for health, education, old age, and complete security, is available for all without exception. The problem is no longer in the main one of *natural* science; it is above all one of *social* organization, of finding the form of society, that can make use of the vast potentialities of science and technique for the good of man.

Socialism compared to capitalism marks a great advance in the method of distribution of goods. It is hard in a few phrases to summarize the basis of distribution under capitalism. It took Marx much space in his three volumes of *Capital* to elaborate it. Perhaps an over-simplified but not too inaccurate picture can be given in the Christian words that to him that hath shall be given. Wealth begets wealth at one pole, and at the other poverty poverty. In the most general terms, *and if you take the world as a whole*, outside the Socialist sector, those that work most tend to get the least, and those whose work is least,

or of least social value, tend to get to be most richly rewarded.

The watchword of Socialist distribution is summed up in the words 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work'. Provided the old and the young and the sick who cannot contribute to society are properly provided for by society, this seems to me, not only an essential economic step, but an immense moral advance on the tenets of distribution under capitalism, and infinitely nearer to the approaches of early Christianity. But as Marx explained in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, it is still based on an insufficiency of goods and an inadequacy of social outlook. Advanced though it is on capitalism, it is only a transition step to distribution under communism, where the watchword is 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. The conception is that in a Communist society, in a society technically equipped to meet men's essential needs, in a society emerging out of years or decades of socialism in which men and women, step by step, have come to shed much of the old selfish, competitive outlook of capitalism, to adopt a more and more *social* outlook, reward 'according to work' will itself become outdated, and whilst some special form of distribution will always be needed for goods of special rarity, men and women will for all their essentials – *take them as they need them*. Let me recommend to those that do not know it William Morris's moving picture of this in his vision of a Communist Britain in his *News from Nowhere*.

A point where, it seems to me, Marxists can meet with most, if not all, Christians, is in their belief in the limitless potentiality of man. I became a Communist as a student at Cambridge University some 35 years ago. Many of us belonged to a sort of elite – erudite, 'civilized', sophisticated, and with it, intellectually arrogant. The Communist

Party brought us in contact with the working-class – the unemployed hunger marches, the workers on strike, or in the anti-fascist movement. I worked from 1935–39 in the world student movement against war and fascism – in the Balkans, Middle East, India and China. From the working-class movement, from the underground anti-fascist struggles, from the national liberation struggles of Arabs and Indians, from the Chinese workers and peasants led by the Communist Party and fighting in the guerrilla forces or behind the lines of the Japanese occupation forces, I learned a certain modesty.

That is to say that I learned that the most high-powered intellectual had very much to learn from workers and peasants. Let me put it in another way. You can see a piece of uranium ore, and you will have no conception what fantastic force lays within it *if you know how to release it*. In every human being, who is not mentally sick, there is a fantastic power of invention, innovation, of art and humanity, once it can be released. The problem is how to release it, and this is not in the main (thank God) a question for psychologists, it is primarily a social question.

This may seem like a diversion, but it is in my opinion very relevant indeed to the points at issue and to the whole dialogue between Christians and Marxists. For capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, immensely *narrow* and *restrict* the human capacities of the vast majority of the people who come under their sway. It is not just a question of poverty, though this is an important part of it. Capitalism restricts the human capacities of rulers as well as ruled. It is hard to envisage anything more 'savage', narrow, restricted than the capacities of the majority of the ruling section of the United States. And for the Third World, often more aptly referred to as the 'Two-Thirds World', imperialism has meant for, and still means, for

hundreds of millions, an expectancy of life of under 30, disease, hunger, and an existence which is animal or vegetable rather than human.

Socialism, whatever may have been the mistakes and injustices in this or that socialist country, has meant an immense release of human capacity. Many Christians, will have many criticisms of this or that socialist country, but compare the USSR today with the old Tsarism, or Cuba of Castro with that of Batista, or today's China with the China of the Kuomintang, and you will find an *immense* release of human capacity.

In my experience it is above all in the struggle against capitalism or imperialism, for living standards, for work, for peace, for independence, national liberation, that men and women both learn to adopt a new more *social* outlook and to become aware of and develop their manifold capacities. Under Socialism they develop further and faster, draw deeper on their potentialities. As Socialism moves into Communism, we can envisage more and more the all-round development of man.

Imperialism, colonialism, tend to divide men, to turn, by exploitation, class against class, nation against nation, race against race, often religion against religion. In the history of class society there has been a deep division between town and country, mental and manual labour.

With Socialism we envisage that class antagonism will end, that the gap between mental and manual labour will narrow, that the economic basis for racial and national hatred will step by step be moved. But this is a long and complex process. Gradually as we move from Socialism to Communism, as the working day is cut, and machines take from man monotonous repetitious drudging labour, as education extends, the gap between skilled and unskilled work will disappear, there will be no essential class dif-

ference between work in town and country. The basis will be laid for a classless society without exploitation of man by man, but with free responsible citizens.

CAN HUMAN NATURE BE CHANGED?

The vision of a Communist society begins to crystallize out; a society where men and women can develop to the fullest possible extent their manifold capacities, where there is no more class or exploitation, nor hatred between race and nation, where men and women are in general neither manual nor mental workers but practical and theoretical workers, giving to society according to their capacities and receiving (and that means taking) according to their needs.

As the Communist case is developed, we meet from some of our Christian friends, criticisms of two opposing orders. Some say 'You are too material, you attach too much importance to material goods'. Others, in the same context, that Marxists are not sufficiently 'idealistic'. Why must they, they ask, accept that for a long period, under Socialism, incentives and money wages are still needed? Why cannot one go straight into a *Communist* society. Still others argue that Marxists are much too optimistic, that they forget man's 'fall', his innate sinfulness, and seek to solve by purely *human* means things that can only be solved with the aid of God.

We find ourselves again and again discussing the question (which has vexed man for several thousands of years) of human nature, its nature, and the extent to which it can be changed.

It would seem to me that it is easier to find the correct approach to this complex problem, when we see the more obvious of the incorrect attitudes. Two common incorrect approaches are found, the one mostly with Christians

and the other often with Marxists who vulgarize, oversimplify their Marxism.

Both Marxists and the big majority of Christians accept that human nature and human society are not something for all time fixed, but they can be changed and improved. The question, then, is how?

Sometimes, amongst Christians, you find the approach, that *first* you must change man, and only then society, that changing man is essentially a *religious* question, and that only when that is done can we come to the social and political problems. I must confess a healthy suspicion of this sort of 'change'. I have found it in its extreme (and rather unpleasant) form in the old Oxford Group (Buchmanite), now Moral Rearmament, supporters. The more they declare themselves 'changed' the more they seem the same. There were similar trends amongst old sectarian Socialists. First, they declared, you must educate men for Socialism, and then, when they are all sufficiently educated, you will have the social revolution. But the revolution never came.

Sometimes amongst Marxists, and I expect we have all at times been guilty, you find an exactly opposing view – first you must make a revolutionary change in society, and as a result man will change into truly socially-minded socialistic man. But this latter approach, which is perhaps more correct than the former, is nevertheless utterly incomplete. And it leads again and again to grievous disappointment, because the sins and crimes and selfish outlooks of class society in general, and of capitalism in particular, do not automatically, nor rapidly, disappear under socialism. Socialism only provides, unlike capitalism, a framework within which they *can* be gradually brought to an end.

I would think the correct approach more subtle, more what Marxists would call dialectical. Men and women

are not 'changed', *they change themselves*. How many Christian missionaries or Marxist propagandists will be able to tell you sad tales of the rapid relapse of those 'converted' in a moment of sudden enthusiasm!

Men and women fully to develop their manifold capacities need a revolutionary change in society. This is true. *But men and women in the action, practice, struggle, of changing nature and society change their own nature.* And this is a permanent process. It begins under capitalism, continues under socialism, and will continue under communism.

Like all things in the realm of nature, society and thought, human beings are in a continuous state of flux. They have vast potentialities, but how far will they recognize and exercise them?

To this question, I think Marxism gives the best answer both theoretically and practically. Within the working class, socialist, and revolutionary movement millions of workers and peasants have become aware of their potentialities, and in effort, struggle, organization, changed themselves out of all recognition. This is so individually and collectively. In the British Museum there are hundreds of tomes by life-long, linguistically proficient, experts explaining why the Russian people are backward and the Chinese people unchangeable. History has again and again confounded such capitalist experts (and capitalist armies) as it is confounding them today in Vietnam.

Again, this discussion on human nature is not a diversion from the points at issue, nor from the Christian-Marxist dialogue.

Our vision of Communist society, we will be told again and again, is Utopian, unreal and unpractical, impracticable. But, of course it *is* impracticable *under capitalist society*, or even in the early stages of building socialism. Of course if in societies of scarcity and imperialism, where

men and women were deficient in material goods and still dominated by the selfish, individualistic, competitive, outlook of capitalism, people suddenly found themselves in a position to 'take what they needed', they would begin to hoard. Some would stagger home with innumerable pints, others (myself I suspect) with vast loads of books, others with clothes, or cars, or grand pianos.

But this is the experience of scarcity and the outlook of a society where property-ownership is the greatest 'virtue'. Scarcity and insecurity makes us hoard. Thirsty soldiers in the North African desert in the last war, coming upon abundant water, drank themselves sick. And serving with UNRRA (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association) in Yugoslavia towards the end of the war and immediately after Liberation, I have seen people on the Dalmatian coast, almost mad with lack of salt, break open the UNRRA sacks and cram salt in their mouths.

To those who doubt the possibility of Communist society, the answer is I think, that Communist society in order to work demands a new sort of man and woman, but men and women, banded together, in the long and difficult struggle to build Socialism, change themselves and fit themselves for a Communist society. One can catch sometimes a whiff of man's capacity to be different, a breath of the new man of the future, more social in outlook, more human, if you like, more moral. I have witnessed this personally in the student movement of the '30s, in the Chinese liberation struggle against the Japanese aggression, with the Yugoslav Partisans, at a Communist Party residential school, in the course of a difficult strike. Thousands of examples could be given that in this way, contain in embryo, the future.

COMMUNIST LIFE AND SOCIETY

This said, we can return to Communist society and discuss with our Christian friends what in our vision is comparable to theirs.

It is difficult sometimes to explain to workers under capitalism and still more under colonialism or neo-colonialism, that with communism we envisage that work will become a pleasure and not a burden, or in Marx's words 'the prime necessity of life'. There is no contradiction between fighting, under capitalism, for shorter hours and better conditions of work, and going on strike, and envisaging the joy of work under socialism, and still more under communism. Under capitalism many a skilled worker is a dual personality torn asunder. His craft, his skill, gives him pride in his work. His status as exploited worker gives him fear that his own efforts will be used to depress his own conditions or those of his mates. There is little satisfaction in working for the profit of a capitalist corporation. Moreover, *if you take the world as a whole*, the majority of those who work for imperialist concerns are working at hard, repetitious, monotonous work, for what is quite often a poor existence, and sometimes considerably less.

Given socialism, when each man's work for society profits society as a whole, and still more advanced conditions of socialism or communism, when machinery takes away the dullness and drudgery from work, when work becomes challenging, varied and skilled, when men and women can have, in the course of a lifetime, various trades and not be tied down as so many are today to a single trade or a piece of a piece of a trade, the barrier between private personal work and work performed for society will begin to fall, and it is not so difficult to see that work will be-

come less and less of a burden, more of a pleasure, a need and a pride of life.

A characteristic of class-divided society, including capitalism, is the inequality of men and women. Women, Marxists have always considered, are, under capitalism, doubly exploited. Is it unfair to say that this is an aspect of injustice that has been all too little examined by the Christian Churches and has to an extent been perpetuated within the Church itself?

In many countries, and Britain has been among the foremost, the struggle for the *political* rights of women – the suffrage, equality before the law etc. – has been boldly conducted and to a large extent has been victorious already under capitalism, though it was a hard and very bitter struggle at times.

But even in those capitalist countries where a large degree of *political* emancipation has been achieved a very great deal of *economic* inequality remains. For equal pay for equal work the battle *begins* under capitalism, but, in my opinion it will take socialism for this problem really to be solved, and the solution is something much more than winning equal opportunities with men to enter all trades and professions, and equal pay for equal work performed, it involves removing from women the deadening drabness of domestic drudgery summed up in the old song that 'a woman's work is never done', and making this real in terms of communal services for cooking, cleaning, and sewing and help with the care and education of children almost from birth. It is easy to orate about the joys of family life, but the double exploitation of women more than often makes such orations a hypocritical mockery. It seems to me that it will take socialism and then communism to make this joy, and the love and affection that go with it, a reality available for all.

There is yet another aspect of the emancipation of

women. Alongside *political* and *economic* equality is the question of what could be called *ideological* equality, i.e. the acceptance by women and by men of this equality. Long after women win political freedom and even economic freedom the acceptance of the superior status of men can endure as an ugly hangover. Despite equality of work and pay and suffrage women's inferior status can still be assumed. It can be taken for granted that there is something called 'women's work', from which men by law or the Lord are exempted, or that men have the priority of leisure or in deciding the use of it. It will be well into communism, in my opinion, that the last remnants of all inequality will finally be shed.

Some might think that this inequality of the sexes was a trivial matter to raise in a general discussion of the long term future of man, but it is a discussion of man *and* woman, and women are half the human race. Because of this inequality which has been built into our society over thousands of years, it is harder under capitalism for women to be conscious of their manifold talents, and still harder for them to make full use of them. When we think of the future of mankind, of a Communist society, we think of a society in which politically, economically and ideologically, the emancipation of woman has been achieved, and the *whole* human race, not just part of it, is developing in brotherhood its manifold talents.

I said *in brotherhood*, and this brings us to a problem of the future that lies close to the mind and heart of Marxists and of Christians, and to problems that must deeply concern us today.

If we can look forward to a classless society, and to a society where men and women have equal status in society, must there still be racial division, racial hatred, and must the world always be divided into frontier-divided states with national rivalries and war?

Racialism seems to me deeply rooted in economic conditions, and so is national hatred. Imperialism both rules by division and economically exploits this division. There is nothing in 'human nature' that sets say, Serb against Croat, Hindu against Moslem, Turk against Armenian, Jew against Arab, Orangeman against Catholic, black against white. Socialism will, alas, inherit racial and national and inter-religious prejudices which have emerged and been fanned and inflamed in centuries of class society. It will set itself resolutely against them and this will not be easy. It will involve difficulties, setbacks and time and struggle. New cultures and races and nations that have been limited, restricted, oppressed, will emerge, develop and flourish. Socialism will see at first a great flowering of many national cultures, not the standardized society of which anti-socialists have always liked to warn us, but of infinite many-sided variety, living in equality side by side in mutual respect, and learning from one another.

And as we move into a world of communism it seems likely that frontiers will begin to fall, passports relegated to museums, and racialism to the textbooks of ancient history along with cannibalism, which after all was in the main an economic question.

Flying by plane over some areas of the world one can still look down at the criss-cross pattern of strip agriculture – little fields and plots of land divided by hedges, ditches or fences. And it seems, in these days of the giant tractor like a relic of the past. Our proverbial space traveller regarding our earth today from the superiority of his alien saucer constructed in distant space, would find it puzzling as he looked down on earth. Why, would he ask, the queer criss-cross divisions into many lands, why these deeply delineated and defended frontiers, why do the men and women who have made the machines to subordinate the earth to their needs use them to divide the earth – into little

pieces, one turned against the other?

Modern science and technique shout aloud for a single world. It seems to me that capitalism which divides the world into classes, brings with it racial hatreds, religious feuds and warring nations. At the root is not the frailty of human nature, not an innate aggressiveness of man, nor unpleasant unconscious urges, but the roots are in our class society. Socialism, slowly, and *with very great difficulty*, will *begin* to overcome the racial and national hatreds which it has inherited, and Communism will continue the process towards a single united humanity.

When Christians and Marxists together look this far into the future, a number of questions inevitably arise.

Some ask will not man, freed of poverty, war, insecurity, man leisured and educated, be man saturated with satisfaction, wanting in motive force, without stimulus? Will not, in a word, communist society stagnate?

I cannot myself sweat with fear or pass sleepless nights at the idea of a 4-hour day, freedom from drudgery, or the lack of hunger and racialism and war. Those who have such fears are usually themselves of a privileged group who consider that leisure and culture is good for *them*, but dangerous for the *others*, the unwashed multitude, once known as the *mob*.

On the contrary, in a sense, *really full human* life will only come in something like a communist society. It is not just a question of science, space travel, the prolongation of life, the grappling with the questions of life itself. But art, in its infinite variety, will become the property of all, and more and more a part of work and life. People will want beauty not just in picture, sculpture, at concerts and cathedrals, but in their homes, in dress, furniture, and even in factory. William Morris saw this well when he looked to the future of man.

Will it all be uniform, some ask, frightened by the horror of mass American commercialized commodity culture, or by some dire nightmare of an Orwellian 1984? But this is the opposite of communism. To say that all men and women have a vast creative capacity and that this must be released or that we must get rid of the inequalities of class, or sex or race, is not to say that all men are the same. No Marxist I have met to date has claimed nor certainly desired that men and women were identical. All people have talents but not the same talents, an infinitude of different talents. The journey to communism will be away from uniformity.

Some fear that socialism and communism will mean the imposition of a rigid and dictating state authority. Others will be discussing in these essays problems of democracy and the state.

The achievement of *national liberation* and socialism in a hostile capitalist world has meant the need for bitter *organized* struggle, for centralized power, at times for strong socialist armies, for strong socialist states. The Russian and Chinese people know this to their cost and so do those of Cuba and Vietnam.

No Marxist will deny that in the necessary process of bringing about a revolutionary change in society and in defending the new societies of socialism, from those that would in one or other way destroy them, the power and authority without which such a change was impossible, has sometimes been unnecessarily prolonged, and sometimes sadly distorted, misused or abused. This is not socialism but a distortion of socialism. Christians, in the course of dialogue, will certainly criticize this or that aspect of abuse of power, and they have every right to do so. But three things it seems to me, in so doing, they should remember. The first is the historical context of such mistake and abuses. It is not a gentle process to move to

socialism in a hostile world of imperialism. Secondly, that revolutionary violence is never an end in itself (many become Communists through their hatred of violence), but an answer to this violence, overt and covert, of imperialist society. And lastly socialist society sooner or later comes to recognize, overcome and remove such abuses. Perhaps, though I do not want this to become a debating point, it will be easy for committed Christians to understand that Marxism should not be judged by the abuses of Marxists sometimes in the name of Marxism, any more that Christianity by the crimes that Christians have committed in the name of Christ.

The state arose with class society as an instrument of the ruling class. The socialist state is a transition state, a step towards what Marx and Engels and Lenin always liked to discuss, the withering away of the state classless society, under communism. Administration will then of course remain, but men and women of the future will live without armies, police, peculiar and pervasive MI5's and MI6's and MI9's, Field Marshals and Air Marshals and Admirals. Confused Communist children will regard perplexed in the museums of history the complex ramifications of the machinery of the old class state and their parents may find it difficult to make them understand. Their very ignorance will perhaps be bliss.

Some Christians discussing the Marxist vision of future society find it hard to accept that it seems to have no end, it stretches, ever-changing into infinity. In this it differs from aspects of Christian eschatology. There is no communist *last* day or day of judgment, no *final* reckoning, no end. What, we are often asked, is our *ultimate* view of society? We have no *ultimate* view, in fact our Marxism prevents us from having an ultimate view of the infinite process of social change and development. Men

will always be engaged in struggle against nature, will always find new aims, new needs, and in changing nature, will always change themselves.

But what we can see, or think that we can see, is that men *can* end the divisions within society, class divisions of society, relations of exploitation, and conditions of racial and national hatred, and of war, which in the last analysis derive from class divisions. Man can end sordid poverty, insecurity, people who are not people but vegetables, animals, narrowed, distorted, only partly human. Men can become conscious of and release their own vast potentialities. They can become truly human. But that is a beginning rather than an end.

Sometimes, talking of the future, of infinity, of the end of things, Christians and Marxists in dialogue find themselves speaking of death. Is not death, we are sometimes asked, for you who are atheists, the end of everything? How can you face death? In a moving speech, I heard a Christian ask in the national discussion between Christians and Marxists at St. Katherine's in October 1967, how is it that the Communists have so many martyrs? How do they, who have no belief in life after death, yet die for their beliefs?

I would answer that Communists have a belief, if you like a *faith* in man. A faith in the capacity of men and women to change their world and in so doing themselves, to build a world where men and women as part of society can fully develop their infinitely varied human talents, can enjoy art in its every variety, and love and affection untrammelled by cash and commerce. The aim of a communist and of a Communist Party is to further such an aim. Death is never easy, never welcome except to escape unbearable pain. But a Communist who helps to bring about the advance of humanity sees himself living in those that he leaves behind. Armed with the feeling that his con-

tribution has been worth while he can look death in the eyes.

Marxists have always been critical of that type of religion that seems to be an *escape* from the harsh realities of the world in which we live. They welcome every trend in Christianity that accepts responsibility for *man in this world*. Christians and Marxists will differ on their attitude to God, but on man and as men we can meet. Marxist and Christian humanism have many points of difference but many meeting points.

What characterizes Marxist, revolutionary humanism? Firstly we see man as part of society, as real living men and women with different relations to society and to each other, and not as some abstract bearers of an abstract 'human essence'.

We see men in their vast potentiality and in their continuous development.

We set ourselves the task of helping men to become truly human, to become conscious of, and to use and to develop our infinitely varied capacities.

But we are *revolutionary* humanists. We study man's present limitations, what alienates him from his work, from society, from his fellow man and sometimes from himself, what restricts him, limits him. We find ourselves confronted above all by the limitations of capitalist and imperialist society. As humanists we find it necessary to end the forms of society which so much crib, confine, distort and limit man and his capacity. We find that men need a new form of society which modern science, technique, the level of the productive forces, makes possible and necessary. The advance of man's humanity demands a revolution in his human condition, a social, a socialist revolution.

It is fashionable today to pay homage to the young Marx, the Marx of 'ideology' and 'alienation' and to dis-

credit the older Marx of 'class struggle' and 'Capital'. But Marx was Marx, not two or three Marxes. It is true in a sense that he started from the problems of the individual and of his alienation. But it was in order to permit man to overcome his alienation, to develop his individuality, that Marx was led to study history, class struggle, the nature of capitalism, the need for socialism and the tactics and strategy of revolution. And through his study of society and how to change society, he was able to solve the problem from which he started of how man can become human.

A consistent humanist, one really interested in humanity, one to whom nothing human is alien (Terence's phrase was Marx's favourite motto), one who wants man to release his own human potential, must inevitably go beyond the vocal exercise of discussion of abstract man towards the practical action needed for changing man's condition.

A point of meeting for Marxists and many Christians in the dialogue has been the recognition of the unity of theory and practice. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' 'Be ye Doers of the Word and not hearers only.' 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.'

A revolutionary humanist is not limited in his interest to the *future* of humanity, nor to the advantages for man that can be brought about through a revolutionary social change. But he is interested in man and woman as they are *now*, how they can in effort and struggle, improve their own conditions, and themselves in the course of it, *now*.

Therefore a real revolutionary, as distinct from a purely vocal one, is concerned *now* with living standards, wages, reduction of working hours, education, health, pensions, civil liberties. He is an active trade unionist, co-operator. He is a militant. He will fight against every oppression,

for man's freedom and dignity *now*. He will be concerned to help people to struggle to improve their lot rather than in bringing charity from without, though he will fight to help the young and the sick and the aged. He will work for men and women to understand, rather than charity, the solidarity of struggle, national and international. Marxism from the beginning proclaimed the international solidarity of the working-class and the working people.

But the struggle in a strike on wages or hours, for improved education, for peace, in solidarity with the people of Vietnam or the Negroes of the United States, or against *apartheid*, is also preparation for the struggle to build a socialist and communist society, just as the vision of socialist and communist society can illumine and give courage to all the immediate struggles. Present and future are linked, interdependent. We learn from the past, to change the present and forge the future. 'Make your tomorrow' has sometimes been the slogan of the Young Communist League.

A consistent humanism is concerned in such immediate matters, however humble, and not just with homilies on abstract man. Are there not meeting points here for Marxist humanism and progressive trends in Christian humanism?

What then of religion itself? The Marxist conception of religion is discussed elsewhere. But perhaps to this essay belongs at least the personal expression of a Marxist view of the place of religion in the future communist society.

I write as an atheist and a materialist. I believe personally that one day in the future when men have no longer to project their desires for a good life from this life to the next because life on this world has become sweet, though challenging, and when science in general terms is taught to all, and superstition goes, that belief in religion as belief in a supernatural force or forces, outside man and nature,

will gradually fade away. There will always be mysteries, things not yet known, but not things unknowable. There will always be loves and passions, and contradictions, and new and old in conflict, and problems yet unsolved. But these will not be religion in the sense I speak of.

Others, who are religious will not agree with me. Let our views conflict! Let us test our beliefs in working together to make man human, to help him realize his vast potentialities, in this world.

We must make it clear to Christians in our attitude and conduct that Communists (and here for once I will quote – from a resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of March 1967) 'will fight now under capitalism, and work in the future under socialism, for complete freedom of religious worship, for the right of all faiths to worship in their own churches with their own sacred books and for making available the resources necessary for ritual articles', that 'we consider that both under capitalism and socialism, religious and non-religious views should freely contend', that we 'welcome people of any religious faith including those who are ministers, not only working side by side with Marxists in common causes, but as members of the Communist Party, provided they accept the political programme of our party'.

We do not conceal our criticism, which is shared by many religious people, of the reactionary role so often played in the past by religious establishments and institutions, nor the fact that at times religion has been used to secure the obedience to and acceptance of unjust and evil rule. But religious faith, we know, has also inspired men and women to courageous action and sacrifice for progressive, and even revolutionary causes. Religion cannot and must not be reduced by those who are not religious to its institutional and establishment side.

Is the Christian conception of Love incompatible with

the Marxist conception of class struggle? Can one love one's neighbour and fight him? Marxists are deeply motivated by their vision of a future world of brotherhood and love, but they equally deeply feel that to reach a world of love, they have to fight those that stand in its way – exploiting employers, ruthless colonialists, those who wage aggressive wars. To stand aside from such struggle is in fact to condone the violence of exploitation, colonialism, aggression. I was deeply moved at the World Marxism-Christian Discussion, held at Geneva in May 1968 under the auspices of the World Council of Churches, to hear Christian theologians from France, Italy and Spain, Latin America and India, and the Middle East, justify class struggle and national revolutionary struggle against imperialism, and solidarity with the people of Vietnam, in terms of their own faith, and face up to the bitter fact that Love demands struggle.

Christians and Marxists will have many deep differences in their approach to life. On neither side in the dialogue are we trying to forget these differences nor to secure some phantom Christo-Marxist synthesis. But as we discuss, many old frontiers will fade. As we act together on common progressive causes – against racialism, or poverty, for peace – many old hostilities will ebb. As we turn to our deep convictions on man and his destiny and to our long-term aims, still more barriers will drop.

This is the case for dialogue. The more it develops now, within our capitalist society, the more it is translated into common action and better understanding, the more chance there is that Christians and Marxists will still be working side by side in building the future society.

Christians and Communists in Search of Man

Fifty Years after the Russian Revolution

Paul Oestreicher

'"WILL you come into my parlour?" said the spider to the fly': it is still in these terms that many people in the Church and in the Communist Party see the Christian-Marxist dialogue which has proceeded in recent years at an unexpected pace. It is, in fact, a complex sociological, political and theological phenomenon.

A century after the publication of *Das Kapital* and half a century after the Russian Revolution a truce is being called between Christianity and Communism. Their antagonism is by no means dead. Generations of bitterness cannot be either surreptitiously or solemnly buried. Reconciliation is slow and painful. For Christians it is a process at the heart of their faith, of 'dying to live'. Communists accept as basic the dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis – also a form of reconciliation.

But both Christianity and Communism are committed to unremitting struggle. Reconciliation with error is ruled out by both Church and Party. Every Christian is committed by faith and baptism to fight 'the world, the flesh and the devil'. Demythologize the language, and the obligation remains unaltered. The 'class struggle' is at the heart of Communism. At the same time, both Christianity and Communism – using different terminology – believe in the

ultimate and *inevitable* victory of good over evil. In that sense both point man to utopia, whether described as the Kingdom of God, the classless society or anything else. The two faiths are closely related. Their prescriptions for a return to paradise are comparable. Yet neither admits to being idealistic. Christians claim 'divine' justification for the hope that is in them. Marxists claim 'scientific' justification. To the outside observer, both are fired by idealism. The immediate question is: do their ideals (or whatever term they prefer) permit them or even oblige them to move from anathema through dialogue to co-operation?

To say that Communism is a heresy of the judeo-christian tradition is sufficiently true to be taken seriously. It is not an insult to Communism. Alleged heresies have often been valid protests against apostasy and, in what they have affirmed, have come closer to the truth than the orthodoxy which gave them birth. But invariably the 'true faith' and the protest have been locked in conflict which is generally only resolved in radically changed conditions.

It is probably premature to talk about taking Communism into the ecumenical movement. And to any self-respecting Communist, the very idea must smack of intolerable Christian pride. It need not be. To speak of Marxists as part of the latent Church is not to hitch them to the Christian band-wagon but to assert that *by intention* they are part of that humanity which, for Christians, is summed up in God incarnate, Jesus of Nazareth. The Communist (and not only he) who tries to live his faith is – by intent – like every sinning and forgiven member of the Church, a citizen of the Kingdom. This much spiritual 'imperialism' can conceivably be tolerated in good humour even by those Communists who take their atheism seriously. The process works in reverse too. The Party is, in most countries, no longer closed to believers. And

those Christians who do not choose to join it are readily accepted as fellow workers in building Communism – which, as Communists never fail to point out, has not yet been achieved anywhere.

It is this mutual 'embrace' which to many Christians and Communists smacks of betrayal. It would be surprising if it were different, particularly to those in Church and Party who have vested material or intellectual interests to protect. They inevitably still see the dialogue in terms of 'will you come into my parlour?' – with the other side as the spider. To write off this doctrinaire left wing of the Party and the equally rigid right wing of the Church as 'finished' is too facile. The dogmatists must be allowed for, but not to the extent of letting them impede the dialogue.

The talking has now moved out of the attics and the back rooms into the parlour. It is respectable: very much so in the Church, increasingly in the Party. Nevertheless only a minority are aware of it, and many are still appalled. A century of conflict has left deep scars. But the tide has turned. On the Christian side Pope John stands as the symbol of the change. But pioneers in every part of the world had preceded him. He vindicated them and their understanding of the will of God. He lifted an un-Christian anathema and inaugurated a new era of Church history. Fittingly the eminent French philosopher, Roger Garaudy, with a human warmth and humility to match Pope John's, has pioneered the dialogue for Communists, and in his book *From Anathema to Dialogue*[1] has provided a basic text for both sides. Fittingly it has a preface and an epilogue written by eminent Catholic theologians.

It is worth examining briefly the roots both of antagonism and of identity. Antagonism first: its origins are primarily sociological. The rival philosophies are derivative.

[1] Collins, 1967. 125 pp. 25s.

Seldom has a problem been easier to reduce to its essentials. Nineteenth-century industrial Europe was a human jungle. Wealth was amassed by the few who exploited the many. It did not require exceptional insight to reject the *status quo*. It required compassion. The industrial system was a form of indirect slavery, worse in some respects than the more blatant variety. The chasm between the rich and the poor within nations was as great as it is today between nations. Whatever the position of a minority of compassionate Christian individuals, the churches as institutions – Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox – were on the side of the upholders of the *status quo*. Unconsciously, and at times consciously, religion was used to comfort the discontented, to make them afraid of demanding justice and to offer them eternal bliss as a reward for earthly passivity. Pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by-when-you-die. This is not a caricature. This wretched distortion of Christian truth was part of the warp and woof of much nineteenth-century preaching. There were eminent exceptions, nineteenth-century prophets. They do not, however, provide the Church with a restrospectively valid alibi. 'Religion' was on the side of the exploiters. It is not surprising, then, that the secular prophets of change concluded that religion was one of the impediments to man's true realization of himself. Karl Marx wedded atheism to the concept of a new society and a new man. This new man was to be his own master and, according to the laws of nature, was to reconstruct the new and perfect society. He was at the same time to be remade by it. In creating the basis of the intellectual edifice that we call Communism, Marx inevitably made mistakes. His economic prognoses have proved fallible, his anthropology wildly over-optimistic and his dialectical philosophy no more, or less, credible than any other brain-child of the human imagination. But Marx's social analysis was at most points strictly accurate. Mo-

dern sociology owes him a greater debt than is generally conceded. It was on this analysis alone that he based his call to revolution. However much Marx attempted to objectivize his conclusions, he could never suppress his passion for social justice. It is significant that he stemmed from a rabbinic family. This secularized, baptized Jew stood, albeit uneasily, in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets and of Jesus of Nazareth. Had he lived in the Middle Ages he might have been burned or canonized, or both. His private life had all the qualities of passionate dedication and personal goodness that is the stuff of hagiography. The same, incidentally, can be said of his only great successor, Lenin. (Some would now want to add Mao.)

Significantly Marx did not take long to dispose of the Church. The 'new man' had far more important things to do than to fight religion, which would soon become redundant. 'Let the dead bury their dead.' The god Marx was rejecting was not the compassionate Christ who had died for him. This Christ he never had occasion to know. What he knew was the poverty that had led to the death of his own children. That is where the roots of hatred lie. But Marx was *not* consumed by hatred. He was driven to work himself to death, devising means to change, as quickly as possible, the evils he had diagnozed.

The god that Marx rejected is a god every Christian also would do well to reject.

The Communist believes himself to be fully responsible. His resentment of Christians stems in part from his thinking that they do not. Many of them deny, for instance, that justice in this world is a valid objective. The privileged go further; they do not even think it desirable. Rightly Marx observed that men do not voluntarily surrender their privileges. So, he concluded, they must be dispossessed, by violence if necessary. A glance today at South

Africa, Rhodesia or most of Latin America makes plain what he meant. The profound hatred of bourgeois society for Communism is based on man's apparent inability to surrender privilege. The fact that Communism can also be labelled atheistic – 'anti-God' – helps tender consciences to hate it without inhibition. It is largely this that has helped to turn anti-communism into a crusading ideology. It threw many Christians into the arms of fascism. It nourishes heresies like Moral Rearmament.

Communist rejection of religion has more to feed on than the Church's inadequate concern for social justice. For a century those Communists who meant to implement their vision have been to a greater or lesser degree treated as outlaws, not always unjustly: the advocates of violent revolution cannot expect to be treated benevolently by the 'class enemy'. Their treatment has varied from disdainful toleration in places like Britain to brutal persecution wherever fascism has been or is in control. When persecution was at its worst, as in Nazi Germany, the Church did not show the slightest concern. Even where persecution is not a problem, social ostracism is. It takes as much courage to be a practising Communist in the United States as it does to be a practising believer in the Soviet Union.

But now we must turn the coin around. Communist theory is a hundred years old: Communist practice is fifty. Christians do not resent Communists merely because they fear for their privileges, but also because in that half-century the disciples of Marx have committed almost every crime in the catalogue. Once in power Communist orthodoxy established its own inquisition and, on the principle that 'anything you can do we can do better', it persecuted its enemies and supposed enemies. That persecution was never hard to understand psychologically. The record of the Russian Church in Czarist days, for

instance, had been abysmal. Christians were reaping the reward, not of having been Christians, but of having betrayed the Gospel. Yet in the process Marxists had ceased to be Marxists. Stalin's Russia was a cruel dictatorship. What is relevant for today is that, as in the so-called 'free world' many Communists suffer unjustly, so in the 'socialist world' many men who do not bend to the will of the Party suffer. Of these some are Christians. Indeed in Russia the indications are that the last decade has been much worse for Christians than the one before it. It is therefore true today that the anti-communism of many Christians continues to be nourished by the un-Marxist conduct of at least some present-day Communist rulers.

What does this mean for the dialogue? It means that neither side has cause for self-righteousness. Neither side is in a position to accept the other uncritically, let alone sentimentally. A dialogue that is not both rigorous and honest is a waste of time. There is no place for the naïvete of the 'fellow-traveller'. The unhappy background makes it necessary above all that the dialogue be a commitment of human beings to each other, not so that one side might score off the other (which is tantalizingly easy) but that both should explore their common responsibility for man together. If the object of the dialogue is not to serve other men, most of whom are neither Christian nor Communist, then it becomes an intellectual luxury. The critics are already saying that the dialogue represents no more than the adherents of two tired, played-out faiths, seeking solace in each other's company. There is enough truth in this for it to hurt. They should challenge each other to live up to the faith each side purports to hold.

It is at this point that the dialogue can become creative. There is no going beyond it, without discussing the nature of man. Can man do what he wants to? What of St. Paul's problem: he knew the good, and still did not do it. Simply

to say that this is sin is not an answer but merely a label. To say it is entirely due to bad 'class conditioning' will also not bear scrutiny. To explain away Auschwitz or the 'sorry no coloured' small ads in our papers by mere reference to man's depravity is far too easy. To explain the reintroduction of the death penalty in the Soviet Union *for economic offences* after forty years of socialism by reference to 'temporary contradictions' is equally unconvincing.

At a deep level of human experience Communists and Christians must explore together what it means to be truly human. In this process the person of Jesus, whom Christians believe to have been perfectly human, will not be rejected out of hand by Communists. On the contrary, given half a chance, they will see in him an ally – often against the Church as it is. But once that has been discovered, the judgment of absolute love hits the Party just as hard. In the dialogue both sides claim to represent true humanism. The exploration of what that means, and then its implementation, is sufficient justification for the dialogue.

The idea of alienation, so integral to Marx, has its parallels in both theology and sociology. Men are as alienated from society, from each other and from themselves as ever they were. And Communists know that this is also true in socialist societies. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, the suicide rate is steadily rising. Not surprisingly Communists are beginning to accept the validity of sociological research to discover why things are not working out as the doctrine had predicted. At this point there is perhaps a contribution which Christians can make; there are perhaps theological insights for which Marxism has no categories. And the Marxists – those who are secure enough in their faith to be open to others – are eager to hear what we have to say. In answer to what Marxism stands to

gain from dialogue Roger Garaudy gave this significant reply:

> Christianity raises questions which, even if they are wrapped in mystery, require answers. There are areas which Christianity has explored, where the fruit of its experience could be enriching for Marxist thought. Take for example the problem of death. I am invited to a colloquium with the Dominicans on this question and *I arrive with empty hands*. (italics added). As a Marxist philosopher I shall probably learn a great deal about this question from Christian experience. In short, I think that all the answers which religion gives are out of date, and I think that some of its questions have been wrapped up in mystification, but I believe that the human experience which underlies these questions cannot be ignored by any doctrine, including Marxism. Perhaps the role of religion is to go on raising questions indefinitely, and the perversion of religion is to provide answers. By the questions which it raises, Christianity prevents the Marxists from going to sleep. I find that very beneficial. While the Christian faith is being cleansed of its Platonism, thanks to Marxist criticism, Marxist atheism is being enriched by the need to answer the objections of faith.

This answer is both humble and assured. Assurance and humility are prerequisites for dialogue. Happily, the monolithic nature of both Church and Party has collapsed, for all the remnants of fundamentalism and intolerance left in both. There is no longer *a* Christian prescription, nor *a* Communist one. Where there is room for debate it can no longer be assumed that all the Christians will be on one side and all the Communists on the other. This is true at a philosophical level. It is even more true at a pragmatic one of 'applied humanity', of practical ethics, whether personal or social. In matters of sex and family life the Communists are obviously heirs to post-Christian bourgeois moralism, faced with all the same problems that bewilder Christians. There is no unanimity on either side. This is now also true in political

ethics. Some Christians today find themselves even to the left of some Communists in their advocacy of revolution, for instance. In Latin America in particular, with societies consisting only of the rich and the dispossessed, only revolution can apparently make any difference. Christians and Communists become allies seeking to change the *status quo*.

Camilo Torres is a martyred hero of Latin American revolutionary youth. He was both priest and leader of a guerilla band. When young Latin American Communists recently spoke at a world meeting of Communist youth in the Soviet Union, they spoke in praise of violent revolution. Their hero is not Kosygin, the manager-technologist, but Che Guevara, the jungle fighter. European young Communists were embarrassed. Young Christians from Brazil or Bolivia would not have been.

The massive problem of world poverty can only be mastered if Communists and non-communists *work* together. Communist propaganda slogans about neo-colonialism will not put bread into people's mouths. Only co-operation and the rational use of the world's resources will.[1] A radically rethought socialism, tailored not to suit the textbooks but the economic realities of a world divided between rich and poor, is probably the only way forward. The rich capitalist powers are at present demonstrating that they have neither the will nor the vision to defeat the world's hunger. The crying need is for Communism today to redeem itself not by internecine battles but by applying socialism imaginatively to the problems of feeding men. The dialogue on this has hardly begun. Significantly the man who has done most to stimulate it is Pope Paul. His encyclical letter on 'the progress of people',

[1] See 'Towards Starvation', *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 Aug. 1967, p. 733, a review of *Nous allons à la famine* by René Dumont and Bernard Rosier (Paris: Le Seuil).

populorum progressio, shocked the *Wall Street Journal* into calling it 'Marxism warmed up'. Here are two extracts from the document:

> It is unfortunate that a system has been constructed which considers profit as the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right. ... This unchecked liberalism leads to dictatorship ... producing 'the international imperialism of money'.

And, quoting St. Ambrose:

> You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all ... you have arrogated to yourself. ... Thus private property does not constitute for anyone an absolute ... right.

That is no more than basic Christianity. Yet the Communist Party rather than the Church has been preaching it, if not practising it. It is inevitable that those who accept the challenge of the dialogue should enter into another dialogue: that needed to convert the Church – and the Party – to their own principles. For Christians all this is inherent in the Gospel. In other words, if the dialogue is to bear fruit – and I speak as a Christian – the Church must be persuaded that what some deride as 'mere social Gospel' is an essential part of the faith and not the brainchild of a few idealists. Most Christians have still to learn what in parts of the ecumenical movement is already being taken for granted: that matters of faith and order divorced from practical politics are theologically meaningless. A doctrine of the Eucharist without economic implications borders on blasphemy. A doctrine of the Incarnation without political teeth is impotent. There is nothing new in this. We need not go to Communists to learn it.

But we have learnt it only very partially from our own prophets, from Isaiah to Martin Luther King. There are many Anglicans in that succession, not least in this century and the last, but corporately we have *not* learnt the lesson. We cannot with integrity call Communists our friends until we do.

We are forced to admit that the Church lives as though it did not believe in the Kingdom, other than as an eschatological dream. That God's will *can* be done on earth is either true, or everything is in vain. 'The works I do you shall do also . . . and greater still.' We do not believe Jesus. Why then should anyone else? The political world is capable of transformation, transfiguration, like all the rest of creation. Whether Christians or Communists will be God's instruments in working such change in tomorrow's world is to me very doubtful. I still dare to hope.

The dialogue will lack integrity and reality if it gets bogged down in speculation. Like ecumenism, it is always in danger of becoming a fashionable method of escape from decisions and commitments. The dialogue is always about the responsible use of freedom. Freedom is an important concept to both Christians and Marxists. To curb freedom is a betrayal whether by Church or Party. Both have a bad record. But what is freedom? No single definition will suffice, yet the classic Marxist one is as good as any: 'the recognition of necessity'. This definition is only valid if it is not understood in a deterministic way. St. Thomas Aquinas would have preferred to speak of 'the recognition of the good'. For a Christian, freedom has always been understood as a recognition of the will of God (necessity). To be truly free is to know what we should do. To be truly *human* is to do it. Not to do it (in other words to sin) is subhuman. If Christ is the essence of true humanity, then to be truly human is also to be divine, an insight

common to the Eastern Fathers, neglected by the theological pessimism both of the Schoolmen and the Reformers. Theologically then, the fruit of the dialogue is a sharing (in this case with Communists) of God's own work of building the Kingdom, not from a position of superiority but from one of brotherhood, the *same* brotherhood that Jesus shares with us and through which he serves us. If in this process our Communist friends receive the gift of faith (in a dimension hitherto unknown to them) we shall be glad. This will not be a conversion *from* Communism, but (initially through their faith in humanity) *to* Christ. Faith in man is something we all stand in need of, but stripped of the romanticism that does not allow for the power of evil. Neither we nor Communists can explain evil. The question is: can we defeat it? Marx says yes. The Cross and the Resurrection point to the same conclusion.

What of the practical questions facing us together? They cannot, in detail, be discussed here. The centrality of economic justice on a global scale has already been mentioned. So has the fundamental issue of human rights, including religious and political freedom. No Communist should rest while a Christian is in jail for practising his faith in a socialist State. No Christian should rest while a Communist is in jail for practising his. Further the issue of poverty cannot be resolved without peace. Yet there is no easy way to peace when peace itself can be a cloak for maintaining injustice and stifling justified revolt. It is easier to be concrete when the problem is specific. But even the defeat of a specific evil such as *apartheid* is a baffling problem. For every battle, if we are prepared to wage it, there are appropriate and effective weapons. Perhaps man's limitless power to destroy will teach us that military hardware is seldom if ever appropriate. Missiles will not win humanity's battles. To devise and use the

weapons of the human spirit will be the real test. This will call for our total resources, spiritual and material.

The dialogue took its first major step forward in the Church when the Second Vatican Council set up a special secretariat for non-believers. This body is already immersed in discussion with those who call themselves atheists, Communists foremost among them. In the spring of 1968 the Department for Church and Society of the World Council of Churches held its first consultation with Marxists. So the Churches now officially incorporate into their structures the dialogue which individual Christians have long been pioneering. It is well to remember the Christians of the 'left' who have for generations not hesitated to stand and be counted with Marxists. Today perhaps the most significant co-operation is going on in Spain where Christian and Communist workers and intellectuals – many priests among them – work together for the extension of freedom and justice in their country. Theirs is a brotherhood of action and of suffering.

It is not possible to end without reference to Asia and to China in particular. Nothing in this article is directly applicable to this very different part of the world: yet indirectly everything is applicable. If our children and their children are even to survive, if any vision of peace and justice is to become real, then not only must the people of India have food – which perhaps only some form of Communism will give them – but the West must learn to live in harmony with Asian, and specifically with Chinese, Communists. It will be a different, much more complex dialogue; it will call for immense patience and limitless humility. But there is no alternative to it that bears contemplation.

History will not wait for us. We must move fast from mere co-existence to creative pro-existence (a theological term of East German origin). Unless we destroy our wasteful arsenals of destruction and pool the resources which

are not ours to squander, our children will die. Between one dead child and another there is no difference. A mother's tears are the same in Hanoi and in Chicago. There can and must be a new world.

Epilogue

James Klugmann

To the growing dialogue between Christians and Marxists we hope that this book of essays will modestly contribute.

One shortcoming arises from its very nature. These are ten separate essays each on a different subject, and though, of course, their ideas meet at many points and cover common ground, they lack cut and thrust, question and answer, interruption and aside. They can help towards, but do not, cannot, replace real living spoken dialogue.

And so, inevitably, bringing this book to a close, one's thoughts naturally turn to the state and hopes and future of the dialogue itself. Where does it stand? And where will it go?

Measurement of progress is always relative. Compared with the position in Britain two or three years ago we seem to have made a fairly rapid advance. There is so much new – meetings in church and monastery, in trade union and Communist Party branch; discussions at school and college and university; a national conference; articles, books, debate on television. But, compared with the ground still to be covered, what has been to date achieved seems but the first few steps in a thousand mile march.

Compared, too, with the dialogue in some other lands

our own efforts may at times seem small. In Spain Communists and Catholics have not just talked but become close allies in a difficult illegal struggle against the Franco régime. Here and there in Latin America the Christian-Marxist dialogue goes on in the course of bitter common struggle against reaction, sometimes in the form of guerilla warfare in the hills.

Here in Britain the beginning of our dialogue was very modest. In our conditions it had to be so.

Indeed, the point of departure was often a sort of pre-dialogue discussion, an exploration of territory, a mutual sounding out, posing the simple question – is dialogue possible and, if so, is it desirable?

Almost everywhere that the question was posed the immediate answer was yes. Only a very few said no. A few dogged dogmatists on the Marxist side saw in dialogue with Christianity a betrayal and some sinister Jesuit plot. A few fearful fundamentalists on the Christian side saw in dialogue with Marxism (in almost identical language) apostasy and some devilish red conspiracy. Life tended to brush them both aside.

As meeting, discussion, symposium began to be held, the opinion was quickly reached that, whatever the deep differences of outlook between Marxist and Christian, agreement *could* be reached on common action on such burning immediate issues as peace, opposition to racialism, struggle against poverty at home and abroad. Much still has to be done to make this a reality. Perhaps it is fitting that I should take up the point, raised by Paul Oestreicher in his introduction to these essays, that the best achievement to date in the field of practical common initiative of Marxists and Christians has been in the field of opposition to racialism.

History has shown again and again that racialism is that type of diversionary issue that can be used to stir up

prejudice and hatred and all that is most reactionary in men, that it is a challenge to the attitudes which Christians and Marxists alike would claim, and that, therefore, the measure to which we confront it together, along with other progressive people, is a test of the depth of our dialogue.

It is, in my opinion, no criticism of the dialogue in Britain that it had a modest beginning and began with practical things. But it is good that it should not be reaching out to deeper and longer-ranging problems.

The first contacts made, the first confrontations held, Marxists and Christians began to ask each other (and themselves) whether perhaps common ground could be found not just on immediate issues but in our long term aims for society and man.

If, as was clear, we could not agree on life after death, could we examine together our hopes for life on earth? If we could not agree on God, could we in any way find common faith in man? What was man? What his potentialities? Could human nature change?

Here our discussion (for instance at the Christian-Marxist conference at St. Katherine's in October 1967, or at the various Marxist-Quaker exchanges) have been interesting, at times fascinating, though of necessity inconclusive.

I must unrepentantly express my joy that Marxists, so often in the past accused of crass materialism, of pandering to man's unspiritual baser urges, should, in the course of the dialogue, come under Christian fire at times for undue optimism, for undue confidence in man's capacity to change the world and in so doing change himself. I hope that we deserve this reproach.

Precisely one of the approaches, it seems to me, that can win Marxists and many Christians closer together is that we not only share opposition to many of the injustices that exist in the world but that we have the vision

of a future world, a better world as man (or God) can make it. We can welcome the rejection of Messianism only in the sense that this means rejection of an otherworldliness that reduces man's responsibility for this world in which we live or projects the good world and life of the future from this world into the next. But we would not want to see Christians turning away from the vision of achieving a better man and a better society.

In the course of the dialogue we have discussed the present and our mutual responsibility to make it better. We turned to and discussed our long term view of the future of man and society. Here too we often found glimpses at least of common ground.

But then the really difficult problems began to emerge. How do we go from here to there, from present to future, in Marxist terms from capitalism to socialism and communism, in Christian terms to the Kingdom of God on earth?

So we find ourselves amidst the deep political issues that confront our generation. What is that capitalist or imperialist society in which we live? Are war and poverty, exploitation and immorality built into it as Marxists would claim? Are socialism and communism better forms of society? Why have there been abuses and crimes still under socialism? How could we move from capitalism to socialism? Does this mean revolution and if so what does revolution mean? Must revolution be violent and is violence ever justified?

We would be wrong, stupid even, to expect full agreement in the course of dialogue on such issues as these. Marxists as Marxists (though amongst Marxists there will be much difference on tactical lines) will be able to find agreement on at least fundamental approaches. Christians who are not as Christians in any sense a political party, will, it seems to me, of necessity (and for a very

long time at least) on many of these issues be divided.

We would be quite wrong to make agreement on such issues a condition for dialogue or a condition for immediate practical co-operation. But we would be equally wrong to hide these issues away, to avoid them, or seek some superficial verbal concord. Revolution is in the air, the word is almost fashionable, but when we speak as Marxists or Christians of revolution, we owe it to ourselves and to each other to be quite clear of what we are speaking.

To strengthen our feelings of reciprocal sincerity, to know where we stand with each other, to make firmer our common actions wherever we find common ground, we need to delve into uncommon ground on which agreement is not yet possible.

We need to discuss not only the injustices, distresses, insecurities, alienation, which are the symptoms of the society in which we live, but the possibilities of attacking their fundamental causes, the roots of the disease.

I find hopeful in this respect the recent Haslemere Report, prepared mainly by young Christians, on the relations between the developed and under-developed countries and our responsibilities towards that Third World. Certainly Marxists will contest what seems to us a certain slurring over of the differences between socialism and imperialism in an over-simplified division of countries into rich and poor. But they will feel deep sympathy with the essence of this Report which is to demand the replacement of the facile, pseudo-solution of stingy dollops of dubious economic 'aid' with the ending of the exploitation of so vast a sector of the world.

An indication too of the movement of Christian opinion in many countries were the discussions in May 1968 at the Geneva Marxist-Christian confrontation held under the auspices of the World Council of Churches,

and referred to several times in the course of these essays.

We were discussing what was needed to make modern society more human (a dozen Marxists and some thirty Christians from many parts of the world). The Marxists and a great majority of Christians found agreement, in the terms of the communiqué, that:

> 'economic, cultural, political and military oppression by the imperialist powers, allied with national oligarchy in different parts of the world, constitute the most widespread form of dehumanization, and that it is not possible to speak of humanization without expressing active solidarity with the struggle for national liberation of oppressed people. The most significant example at the present time is the people of Vietnam'.

I do not in any way cite this communiqué as something we should demand all dialogue gatherings to underwrite, but as evidence that our discussions are turning not only to the surface of contemporary phenomena but also to the roots and underlying causes.

It would seem to me that in the last two years we have together learned much of the methods and approaches for successful dialogue. There is a great difference (or should be) between dialogue and debate. Dialogue is *not* (or *should* not be) aimed at quick resolutions or snap votes. Winning majorities in the dialogue context has little meaning. It *is* (or *should* be) long term, perhaps very long indeed.

Dialogue between groups of people approaching things in very different ways, who inevitably have mutual suspicions, and have sometimes seen themselves as bitter enemies, demands utter sincerity, the capacity to listen as well as to preach (both sides have their hopeless sinners in this respect), a desire to seek common ground, but a refusal to conceal differences however deep.

The worst that could happen would be sugary concensus achieved by artificial agreement between half-baked Marxists who had renounced the class struggle and confused Christians who had ceased to believe in God.

Both sides in entering dialogue must accept the possibility of making or losing 'converts' in the course of discussion. Both will appreciate, I think, that this or that individual may feel that he or she can embody some sort of synthesis between Marxism and Christianity, but we should not aim at such a synthesis, nor will most of us think it possible or desirable.

Let me end on a simple note without peroration. With all the progress made, we are in this country, only beginning. Some in this dialogue have played an important part. But we do not aim at an élite of professional 'dialoguers' darting from place to place, meeting one another with regular ritual, set ceremony, scoring the same points.

Above all we want the dialogue to pass to base level, grass roots.

We have some good examples. In the Merseyside, for instance, between Catholics and Marxists. Or at Ilford in that habitual meeting place, the Cauliflower Inn, where one day last year the Bishop of Barking took the chair with on the platform Protestant and Roman Catholic ministers and Marxists (of whom I was one). On the floor two hundred and fifty local people, probably half Christian, half Marxist (perhaps some neither), crowded in. Some, both Christian and Marxist, came from the great Ford's factory in the area. The main discussion from the floor, was vigorous, passionate at times, asking awkward questions on both sides but almost unanimous for dialogue, for co-operation on peace and better conditions, for the mutual programme of long term aspirations and aims.

I write these words in my home in South London. My

house adjoins the garden of a local Protestant church. Yesterday (Sunday) the vicar had the courage to open his church for a public discussion on the issue of emigration, and within its walls Marxists and many Christians found themselves on the same side combating racialism.

Of such is the real stuff of dialogue, as well as high level philosophic-theological exchanges on transcendence, eschatology, and the nature of God and man.

Nuclear bombs have little respect for ideological incompatibility. Nor has hunger. Marxists and Christians together make up quite a sizeable part of the world. With other religions, too, Marxism is in process of dialogue. The world of the Bomb shouts aloud for every dialogue that can help to strengthen the fight for peace, against poverty, racialism, insecurity and for a world where the vast resources of science and technique serve humanity and not profit, where war has become a museum-piece and brotherhood a reality.

About the Authors

SAM AARONOVITCH, born, brought up and educated in Cable Street, Stepney. Married with four children and worked for the Communist Party in many fields and many capacities including membership of its National Executive.

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This essay represents William Barton's personal views and is not an official statement on behalf of the Society of Friends.

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Five years in armed forces, 1940–45, ranging from private to major and R.A.S.C. to S.O.E. and military mission to Yugoslav partisans. This followed by 1½ years in U.N.R.R.A. Yugoslav Mission.

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