



80/No. 1.

January 15th, 1980

The second session of the African meetings on "Recruitment of African Women and Their Formation for Religious Life" will take place on Tuesday, 22nd January. A follow-up on the men's meeting of 20th November will take place on 5th February. A combined session to discuss the findings of both groups will be held on 4th March.

We are grateful to Father Timmermans, cssp, who provided us with Fr. Houdijk's article on African Socialism. Father also recommends "Un Revue...Pour Quoi Faire" (Spiritus, no.74) which reviews changing concepts of mission as reflected in the past 20 years of the review. It should prove good background material for the Mission Seminar.

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Coming Events

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Tuesday, 22nd January<br/>4 p.m. at Sedos<br/>Chairperson: Sr. Maria José Tresch, ssnd</li> <li>-Friday, 25th January<br/>4 p.m. at Sedos</li> <li>-Tuesday, 5th February<br/>4 p.m. at Generalate of the Oblate Fathers<br/>Chairperson: Fr. Stephen Lindemans, cicm.</li> <li>-Monday, 11th February<br/>4 p.m. at Jesuit Curia.</li> <li>-Tuesday, 4th March<br/>4 p.m. at Generalate of Oblate Fathers.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- African Meeting on Recruitment of African Women and Their Formation for Religious Life.</li> <li>- Executive Committee</li> <li>- 2nd session of African Meeting on Recruitment of African Men and Their Formation.</li> <li>- China Meeting</li> <li>- Combined African Meeting</li> </ul> |
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:22nd January - China Questionnaires Due:  
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SEDOS - SERVIZIO DI DOCUMENTAZIONE E STUDI

## SOCIALISM IN AFRICA: A CALL, A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCH

By Krien Houdijk

This article cannot pretend to do more than focus the challenge of African Socialism more clearly. One cannot, within the limit of a few pages, describe minutely the development of socialism in the different countries and that is why it seems better just to make some general comments regarding 20 years of socialism in Africa. Therefore, this is not a complete review. There are no solutions, but rather an effort to situate ourselves together with our missionaries, at the cross-roads where Socialism and Christianity meet one another. It can be very useful to view these new aspects with openness.

A first discovery is that a great deal has already been published on this subject. In 1966, L. V. Thomas wrote two brochures entitled: "Le Socialisme et l'Afrique". "African Socialism", "Socialism in Africa", "the African Way to Socialism," are expressions frequently heard, he says. These expressions describe, although with 'nuances', the same reality: the importance of socialism for the recently independent countries of Africa. We know that Senegal, Tanzania, Guinea, Algeria and several other countries all opted for socialism around 1960. They have looked for a socialism which was not imported from abroad, but which fit into the original structures of African society. President Nyerere of Tanzania is very clear regarding this point. "We, Africans", he says, "do not need to be converted to socialism; Socialism and Democracy are rooted in our past". Senghor does not in any case want to copy Russia. "Our Socialism cannot be exactly the same as that of Marx and Engels. That was developed a hundred years ago with scientific methods adapted to the situation of the 19th century." These first socialists in Africa have clearly been looking for a genuine form of Socialism free from the Eastern Block and China.

### SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

A second group of countries are opposed to this kind of 'African Socialism'. They have, at the start or during their independence, declared themselves in favour of 'Scientific Socialism'. Congo-Brazzaville was one of the first countries to speak out. In 1964, four years after independence, scientific socialism was declared the official policy of the Congolese state. All denominational schools were nationalized and all church organizations disbanded. From then on, there was to be only one school, one labour organization, one youth movement, one ~~women's organization~~ and one political party - the Congolese Workers' Party. Marien Ngouabie, who came to power after the coup of 1968, made the country a People's Republic. He tried for a period of about ten years to apply an adapted form of Marxist-Leninism. This was not without obstacles. He himself declared in 1974:

The Revolution is ten years old now, but during these ten years the Government has been unable to do its job because every year there has been at least one coup. Within the country tribal rivalry is still very strong and within the Party there are strong tensions between radicals and moderates.

The President has repeatedly declared that one should be realistic and this apparently means to him that one should not impose social structures hurriedly and from above. Thus the Congolese Socialism has sometimes been called 'Socialisme à petits pas'.

The second phase of gaining independence shows a somewhat different set-up, and occurred about 1975 when the former Portuguese Territories in Africa become independent: Guinée Bissau (1973), Mozambique, Cape Verde Islands, Sao Tome and Principe, and Angola (1975). President Neto of Angola rejected expressively the 'African Socialism' and unconditionally opted for the scientific socialism of Marx, Lenin and Engels. His criticism regarding the other forms of socialism was that they did not take into account the universal nature of man and that of marxism-leninism. At the first MPLA-Congress in 1977 he said:

Marxism-leninism is the scientific expression of the interests of the classes of workers and peasants which are intertwined. These interests are the same in all parts and regions of the globe, because exploitation is an international phenomenon. This is the reason why neither African nor European socialism can exist, but only one scientific socialism for the whole world.

Apart from the above-mentioned countries, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Benin follow this line.

In every classification and above all every 'rubricing' there is a danger that one passes over the reality as it is. Still it seems possible to distinguish those two phases in the twenty years period of socialism in Africa, each phase with its own emphasis: anxious to keep their own social structures or to accept an unconditional marxism-leninism. This distinction we find also in Africa-Dossier 7/8 of 'Pro Mundi Vita' titled 'Roman Catholics and Politics'. (There is another reason to mention this dossier as it provides an extensive bibliography (1978 included) concerning this subject.)

#### CLASS-STRUGGLE IN AFRICA?

According to some great leaders of the African Socialism, e.g. Senghor of Senegal, Sékou Touré of Guinée and M. Keita of Sudan, there are no classes in Africa and so there is no room for class-struggle. If opposition between individuals and groups comes into existence, they prefer dialogue to conflict and violence. Nyerere, too, rejects class-struggle as a means as doing away with opposition. "The real African socialist" he says, "does not see one class of people as his brothers and another as his natural enemies. He is not looking for an alliance with his brothers to exterminate his now-brothers. Rather, he considers all people to be his brothers". What, however, is being felt in these countries is the opposition between capitalistic countries, which dominate the world-market, and the Third World, which feels itself exploited. According to Senghor the problem is not to do away with the classes within the nation through struggle, but to remove the gap between the developed and undeveloped nations.

Completely different is the sound of the language of Party Congresses of countries like Angola and Mozambique. At the first MPLA-Congress in December 1977, President Neto said that the essence of the People's Democracy and of Socialism was in the

intensification of the class-struggle within the country as well as internationally. The workers' class and those united with them need political power and it will be necessary to increase this power in order to break the resistance of the exploiting class and to stop all efforts to reinstate the former power.

In one of his last speeches on July 31st of this year, Neto said again:

The small bourgeoisie still has a big influence within our Party and within our Government. This has to be stopped. What we want is that the workers and the peasants have the power and not the bourgeoisie.

The same opinion we find in the Congress Documents of Mozambique. There is between the exploited and the exploiters a radical contradiction, an irreconcilable antagonism which shows itself at all levels of society. With the leaders of African Socialism they have in common that in nearly all their speeches and documents they preach the struggle against the world-imperialism of capitalism. They do it, however, in much stronger terms of war and menace, struggle and attack.

In order to start the class-struggle and to continue it, it will be necessary that the workers and peasants become class-conscious. That is why this conscious-raising is seen as one of the most important tasks. They know very well that this class-consciousness is not rooted very deeply within the masses. That is also why the Workers-Party is an indispensable organization, but it has to be kept as pure as possible. Only convinced Marxists are allowed as members. In both countries an ample strategy has been worked out to prevent that bourgeois-elements entering secretly. To discover the 'enemy' is a task of continuous vigilancy because, says Samora Machel, the enemy wears the same uniform as we do and parades with us on Labour Square. The enemy has to be tracked down and denounced without excuse; one has to discover his tricks to prevent him persuading others. The exploitation of one by the other can only be eradicated through a relentless class-struggle. That is why continuous purges are being executed in all ranks, and there are re-education camps to bring the weak to repentance. There is only one party with only one ideology, and there is no room for pluralism.

#### RELIGION AND SOCIALISM.

Is the class-struggle directed against the economic estrangement of man, religion is then, according to Marx, the deeper ground of the total estrangement. Religion falsifies human insight and does it so fundamentally that man's outlook on everything is falsified. To be really human and to see everything in right proportions, one has again to break with religion. Religion is a "dream born out of misery". Religion is "opium for the people". An estranged man looks for religion as an unhappy man seeks opium and other drugs. This kind of marxist atheism is rejected by the leaders of African Socialism. One sees reference often to the longing for religion, which is deeply rooted in the African.

At the intersection of Christianity and Marxism the discussion regarding this problem is still going on. On various occasions Julius Nyerere has made a stand against marxist atheism. To a meeting of Higher Superiors of Religious Institutes he said:

We reject atheism in principle because we reject in principle the idea that we would have the right to ask members of the party whether they do or do not believe in God. We say that (communists) they have no right to ask "Do you believe in God?", and then purge you from the party when the answer is 'yes'. And therefore, as a member of the TANU I am not asking nor am I being asked whether I believe in God or not. As member of the Church I am really convinced that God exists.

In the countries where marxism-leninism has been declared party doctrine this question is seen in a different way. On a theoretical level the theories of Marx and Lenin regarding religion are repeated without any addition. The influence of religion on people can only be changed when the world of misery is changed. And this change is to be the result of relentlessly applied scientific socialism. Lucio Lara, the Secretary General of the MPLA Worker 's Party of Angola, in February 1978 expressed his confidence in the victory of science over religion.

We will go and announce our message to the people that will also receive the message of the various religions. Then we will see whom the people will follow...to whom the victory goes, to science or religion.

In practice this atheism is coupled with severe attacks against the Church, especially against the Catholic Church, which is presented as historically hand in hand with colonialists and even now is said to continue as lackey of imperialism.

In his address on 1st May of this year, Samora Machel attacks the Catholic Church, which, according to him, is being used by the enemy. Thanks to the liberation movement the Bishops now have come into the picture as trying to mould themselves into "slaves of the political and ideological opposition." They are really anti-patriotists, reject liberation, go around inciting the people against socialism.

In these countries there is freedom of religion, but there is no restriction against the continuous and relentless anti-religion and anti-church propaganda which the leaders see as a necessary marxist-leninist strategy. On the whole, every freedom is given to the purely in-church activities, unless it regards religious organizations which are seen as dangerous to the normal course of events. For example, the sect of the Jehovah Witnesses has been banned in Angola. From Mozambique comes the information that even those in-church activities are subjected to rigorous regulations in some regions. In the document that deals with the role of the Catholic Church in Mozambique we read that the Church is not authorized to conduct any religious activity or to found places of worship in the so called production-areas, in educational institutes and in military barracks. As the 'social-villages' are production-units they too come under this regulation. Lastly, the first liberation zones are closed areas to religion except within the buildings of worship. Congo-Brazzaville shows a better picture. Although atheism and anti-religious propaganda is promoted here as well, the Church is left sufficient freedom to do her work. It is possible that here the Church has already found a new course.

## REACTION OF THE CHURCHES.

Here again, an important matter should be discussed which is filled with all kinds of nuances. Let us start with admitting that in various countries the reaction of the hierarchy regarding the introduction of socialism has been both positive and negative. It is positive in as far as one discovered some evangelical values in that socialism. That is why the bishops of Tanzania in 1968 endorsed the spirit of fraternity and sharing, service and work. They endorsed the participation of everybody in the development of the country, the wider attention given to the rural areas, the policy of -Ujamaa and the control by the whole nation over the most important means of production. But in the end the bishops are of the opinion that they have to add a warning concerning the guarantee of personal freedom, the danger of exploitation, the granting of real equal rights to women and the need of international brotherhood.

Four years later the Bishops of Congo-Brazzaville wrote in the same spirit, that the Christian has to live in the national society without losing his identity, being able to express his faith through active participation in the national development of the country. They state that the socialist way is not contrary to the Gospel but complementary. At the same time they reject atheism and also all kind of ideologies which are contrary to human dignity and the supernatural destiny of man. In Angola and Mozambique the bishops have taken stands which are mainly critical and now and then they have even undertaken real protest. Thus they protested against atheistic propaganda in schools and political rallies, against the way in which the right of the parents to educate their children is being violated, and against the treatment of people in prisons and re-education camps. All this criticism does not prevent the bishops from continuing to look for areas of understanding and cooperation. They confess their faith in Independence and they declare that there is no objection to cooperating in the building-up of a socialist society.

## PROPHETIC VOICES.

In the Africa Dossier 7/8 of Pro Mundi Vita, we read that the voice of one prophet is more important than many official declarations of bishops. Those more prophetic voices have not been wanting in these countries. It would also be strange if in these countries undergoing radical changes the Spirit was not at work. Here are some examples:

--Bishop Moleka from Rulenge in Tanzania is perhaps such a prophet. He goes regularly to an Ujamaa village to participate in the life and work of a group of families. He is of the opinion that there is no better policy for this country and that Ujamaa creates a unique opportunity for the Christians in Tanzania.

--Father Joseph Gross, missionary in Congo-Brazzaville, ventured himself in 1975 to give an evaluation of the response of the Church to the Socialism in that country. He writes:

Our first reaction was opposition, but it is not sure whether this was the right reaction. And I even believe that it is part of the Marxists' tactics to raise such reactions so that they can call us 'reactionaries' and can react against us. There was even a small persecution, raised through our resistance, hence the accusation: "you are contra-revolutionaries, you have to be eliminated".

He is also of the opinion that the socialist revolution has had a beneficial effect for the Church. Losing the schools and youth movements has brought into existence a completely new type of 'communautés chrétiennes' which leaves much scope for lay people and for creativity at the basis of the level of prayer, celebrations and community-building.

--There is in Mozambique, Bishop Manuel Vieira Pinto of Nampula. Many of his letters are of international importance especially the recent ones which deal with church-presence in a marxist country. In his Pastoral Letter regarding Faith and Revolution of 27th July, 1976, he writes among the other things:

Instead of giving in to the temptation of arguing against atheism, we have to ask ourselves first of all, how we, according to the demands of our faith, have to live in a society which is being menaced by atheism...

The faithful can have contributed in a real way towards the coming into existence of atheism, in so far as one has to admit that they, by means of misleading explanations of the doctrine or even by means of a poor religious, moral and social life, blur the real face of God and of religion. In this way atheism presents itself to us as an invitation to serious self-criticism.

#### TESTIMONY

Finally we may expect that many African lay people are facing the problem how to be and to remain Christian in a socialist or marxist country. Mainly in countries like Angola, Mozambique and Congo-Brazzaville, people face this problem nearly every day. Examples of heroic testimony of belief in God and the Church are known. There are other examples of looking for a compromise between being Christian and at the same time participating in the building of the nation. There are also people who have opted for the Party. It is still a question whether or not in all cases this means a renouncing of their being a Christian.

There are some comments regarding 20 years of Socialism in Africa: some opinions, some voices and facts brought together. It is very incomplete, of course, as nothing has been said about a number of other countries which too face these problems, about the real meaning of the experience of Angola and Mozambique, about the Cuban influence, about many things that have been realized in these countries, about the self-criticism of Julius Nyerere when he reconsiders 10 years of the Arusha Declaration. Also very little has been said about the way in which Islam and the Protestant churches have faced their meeting with Socialism and Marxism. This article is meant as a call for our further consideration, not as a decision regarding an explicit choice in reference to the meeting of Christianity and Marxism-Leninism. It is intended to sketch in rough lines an outline, which calls not only for our attention, but also for our serious study and dialogue to fill in this outline more completely. This outline has introduced us to people who are at the crossroads of christianity and socialism. It is very worthwhile if we have grown in our appreciation of their laborious search.

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## CHURCH LEADERS IN ZAMBIA SOUND THE ALERT ON MARXIST INROADS

"Criticising one brand of socialism does not turn us into capitalists," the Church leaders of Zambia maintain in a joint 22-page letter on the current situation in their country which over the past years has been following a policy of Humanism.

The recently issued letter by the Catholic Bishops of Zambia, the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambia Evangelical Fellowship sounds the alert that "an open determination to reject Humanistic Socialism in favour of Scientific Socialism has been expressed in our country," and adds that "it is not clear where the demand for this has come from." (p.19)

"It is certainly not the result of that participatory democracy," the letter continues, "which is central to our political process. What is happening is very much in line with the Marxist-Leninist idea of a 'vanguard party' that claims to know what is good for the people and proceeds to give it to them whether they like it or not. Not only what is being done but also the manner in which it is being done confirms our fear that there are those among us who are trying to force our country along a communist path and are prepared to manipulate people and politics for that end." (pp.19-20)

Some may also attempt to manipulate the Church by trying to stifle its voice. One reaction to the Church leaders' letter, as reported by the All Africa Press Service, stated:

"Replying to the Church's accusation, a member of the central committee for the ruling United National Independence Party, Mr. Reuben Kamanga, warned Church leaders against dabbling in politics, and frightening people unnecessarily. He asked them to remain within their spiritual domain rather than venture into politics - a domain for politicians." (24/9/79)

But human society is wider than politics and anything that touches on human society must be judged by those who live in it including the Church which is the conscience of society. Christianity must be lived and not just preached. "Christians," they state, "condemn a system that does not try to protect basic rights at all times, even in the midst of the struggle for a better society." (p.14)

The denial of some of these basic rights is pointed up in the questions the Church leaders ask about the shift to ~~scientific~~ socialism:

- From the fact that courses where Marxism is taught are being held for Party leaders and 'political educators', it seems that a decision has been made to give the Party a Marxist ideology. Who in the Party has taken this decision?
- Are the views of the 'common man' being sought? If he expresses them will they be listened to? If not, what becomes of participatory democracy?



- Are even the leaders free to disagree with the new policy? The emphasis on 're-educating' them suggests that they are not...
- One of the purposes of the recently established Young Pioneers is precisely to indoctrinate young people with scientific socialism. Have parents been asked about this? In this context we record our alarm at the proposal that all youth organisations should be suppressed in favour of the Young Pioneers..." (pp.20-21)

"Let no one pretend," the letter warns, "that scientific socialism and humanism are the same." (p.11). It goes on to alert the public to the danger arising from those who "lull people into a false sense of security" by claiming that both are the same. This is akin to the Marxist tactic of pacifying opponents by saying one thing and doing the opposite, which the Church leaders call "doublespeak." (p.20)

To put these current dangers into context, the first part of the letter gives a concise analysis of the main ideologies in today's world including democratic socialism, scientific socialism, capitalism and various forms of humanism. "Criticising one brand of socialism," the leaders state, "does not turn us into capitalists...We condemn equally the materialism of liberal capitalism and the materialism of totalitarian communism because both fail to acknowledge the sanctity and value of the human person." (pp.4-5). Humanism in Zambia, on the other hand, maintains that "man is the centre of all human activity...while man himself is centred on God." (p.9). This is at opposite poles to Marxism:

"Marxism does not value human beings for their intrinsic worth nor because of their personal relationship with God. It thinks men and women are valuable only in so far as they contribute to the development of humanity...the only rights they have are those which enables them to serve humanity and the classless society." (p.14)

"Religion" to the Marxist "is an obstacle to the advancement of the revolutionary process." (p.6). "The religion," however, "Marx rejected was a caricature of the faith that has been given to us..." (p.18). By rejecting religion, the Marxists reject the only force that can combat evil in human society.

Marxists "misunderstand the origin of evil and think that a humanist society can be established merely by political and economic action" whereas "the origin of evil is found not on the level of matter but in the human spirit with its selfishness, pride, greed, hunger for power." (p.15). "Unless we renew ourselves with God's help, there can be no new society because society cannot be better than those who compose it." (p.16)

"Our first main reason for rejecting scientific socialism" the Church leaders state, "is that as a philosophy it denies God. Our second is that this rejection of God necessarily leads to a rejection of man." (p.12)

"Before it is too late," they conclude, "we call on all our Church members to take a stand so as to protect our present liberties. Many members and leaders of the ruling Party are Christians. We ask them to do all in their power to keep the Party true to its own principles...We need to reflect seriously on our traditional values, on the social teachings of the Churches and the Gospel....This is the challenge of the present hour." (pp.21-22)

Reference: AMCEA DOCUMENTATION SERVICE, ADS 10/79/182,  
17th October, 1979.

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### A CHRISTIAN PROTEST IN ZAMBIA

The Christian leaders of Zambia have given the world a striking example of how the Christian voice can be lifted to comment on political affairs in a way that rejects mealy-mouthed generalisations, calls things by their proper names, deals in specifics and offers a clear-cut view of the difference between right and wrong. The recently issued letter entitled "Marxism, Humanism and Christianity" is all the stronger because it bears the signatures not only of the Catholic bishops but also of the leaders of the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambian Evangelical Fellowship. The need for the letter arose because the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) appears to be calling the nation to a shift of direction in favour of "scientific socialism". There is a prospect that the party itself will become a "vanguard party" which "claims to know what is good for the people and proceeds to give it to them whether they like it or not," and will then seek to impose a Marxist-Leninist social order - all of which makes little sense in a country governed by President Kaunda whose Christianity is beyond question.

The bishops and their colleagues go to great pains to analyse the difference between democratic socialism (of which they approve), capitalism (of which they do not), various forms of humanism, and scientific socialism (which they strongly reject). "Criticising one brand of socialism," they insist, "does not turn us into capitalists...we condemn equally the materialism of liberal capitalism and the materialism of totalitarian Communism because both fail to acknowledge the sanctity and value of the human person." It is clear that the church leaders are prepared to accept a high degree of socialism in the sense of state direction of the means of production in essential industries, but they equally insist on the form of humanism personally proclaimed by President Kaunda in the past, which maintains that: "Man is the centre of all human activity... while man himself is centred on God." This, the letter continues, is at the opposite pole to Marxism which "does not value human beings for their intrinsic worth nor because of their personal relationship with God."

The letter complains with considerable courage that UNIP leaders and political educators are being pressed into courses on Marxism which seems to imply that a decision has been taken to give the party a Marxist ideology. The church leaders want to know precisely who has taken this decision and whether the views of the common man have been sought. If not, what, they ask, becomes of "participatory democracy." They also deplore the proposal to indoctrinate the recently established Young Pioneers with scientific socialism and suppress all other youth organisations altogether.

This remarkable document openly accepts that there are positive values in the Marxist analysis of history and that there can be a degree of practical collaboration between ~~Marxists~~ and Christians, but it firmly draws the line at their rejection of God which, it argues, will inevitably lead to a rejection of man, his essential value and rights. Equally, the letter does not reject the notion of private property but puts it in its proper context as subordinate to the right of all men to enjoy the fruits of the earth. It understands ownership as stewardship, and proclaims the sinfulness of subordinating human well-being to profit. It points to what has happened in neighbouring Angola and Mozambique where liberation, hailed with joy, has turned sour under Marxist governments to the point where religion and the values it defends are being systematically repressed, despite reassurances contained in the constitutions.

This is leadership of a very high order which repudiates with scorn the suggestion that the Church should surrender its role as the conscience of society on the ground that it should not "dabble in politics." It appears that a central committee member of UNIP has already warned church leaders against such activity and urged them to remain within their spiritual domain. The church leaders are taking the line that Christianity has to be lived and not just talked about.

This action of the Christian community in Zambia contains a great many lessons for the Church in the West, particularly the refusal to gloss over problems with pious bromides, the determined adoption of an "unbalanced" point of view and the total refusal to be intimidated. It also poses some major questions which we have tended to sweep under the carpet. What is the exact status today of the traditional doctrine of subsidiarity? To what extent are the Church's insights leading it to view free enterprise as un-Christian if it dominates the economy? On the other hand, has the high degree of democratic socialism favoured by the Zambian church leaders also to be looked at warily on the ground that it could easily lead to totalitarianism?

Pope Pius XI firmly rejected the idea of a Christian socialism. Popes John XXIII and Paul VI plainly did not. What has happened in between and where does Catholic social teaching really stand today? Is there any validity in the assertion that a high degree of state socialism is immoral and that the Christian prescription would favour cooperatives which involve both personal proprietorship and a strong community sense of responsibility? Should state intervention continue to be seen by Christians as a last resort or is there a sense in which it should be a positive national philosophy and a vocational way of life - always with provision for the man in the street to play his part in decision-taking?

This whole area is nowadays very far from clear and there is an urgent need for theologians trained in economics and political theory to work together with businessmen, trade unionists and political militants to see what direction our teaching should now take. The traditional social teaching of the popes has tended to favour moderation, stability and the preservation of personal as well as social property. We do not say that this has been wrong, but we do say that the Church's social teaching should now be stepping out, applying itself to the actual human crisis facing us and seeking to promote a new social order altogether, for the old familiar categories no longer make sufficient sense.

Reference: TABLET, Volume 233 No. 7269, 3rd November, 1979.

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Available from the Documentation Centre:

Marxism, Humanism and Christianity--a letter from the leaders of the Christian Churches in Zambia to all their members about Scientific Socialism (Sedos Documentation No. 4/3663).

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ADVANCE NOTICE OF A RESIDENTIAL SUMMER SCHOOL ON ISLAM AND CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS.

Dates: Monday, 23rd June - Friday, 4th July 1980  
Place: Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, U.K.  
Residence: Fircroft College  
Charge: Residential: £150  
 Non-Residential: £110

The programme will include in the first week:

- intensive introduction to Islam and the Muslim world in terms of religious faith and practice, social and political perspectives, and regional characteristics including Islam in Europe and North America.
- discussions between Christians and Muslims on Christian faith and practice.

In the second week:

- workshops on specific issues of society which confront both Muslims and Christians, and challenge them to co-operate with one another in reflection and action.
- exploration of the resources of relationship between Christians and Muslims at all levels: personal, practical, political, social, spiritual.

The detailed content of the programme, particularly in the second week, will not be decided until the interests and concerns of prospective participants are made known.

The working language of the Summer School will be English, but special arrangements can be made for German and French speaking workshops if requested.

For application forms and further information please write to:  
 The Secretary, Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak Colleges, Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LE.

## NICARAGUA AFTER THE REVOLUTION

### I. A time of decision for Nicaraguan clergy

By Fernando Cardenal, sj

(In response to a letter from a supporter of Somoza, Father Cardenal wrote this article that was published in Managua's leading newspaper, La Prensa, on September 1st of this year. He heads the literacy program under the Ministry of Education in the new government.)

When faced with the Sandinist revolution, the clergy working in Nicaragua in the service of the Christian faith, for the creation of a Church community and the establishment of justice and brotherhood among all Nicaraguans, have come to a crossroads. They must make a choice. They may become the spokesmen of those who want no radical change in Nicaragua and at the same time argue for a Sandinist government castrated of its radicalism. Or they may serve the exploited and oppressed people's hope and in humility recognize that the clergy are not as good interpreters of sandinismo as the poor and those who risked their lives by giving leadership until the victory was won.

There are already representatives of both alternatives in the clergy. Only two weeks after the triumph of the revolution, the message of some priests is more a warning about phantom dangers than a celebration of the hope and solidarity that encourages the people to keep up the difficult march toward justice and fraternity. And others are already denouncing in their homilies the errors and abuses of the revolutionary process.

Errors and abuses are certain to take place. This is a revolution of men, not angels. There is also a temptation for the clergy to tuck their heads under their wings or bury them in the sand. But to focus on abuses and accidental errors and destroy the global vision of this revolution is petty and lacking in the paschal Christian jubilee spirit. At the same time, it reveals an inability to understand the historic perspective. Let me explain.

It is difficult to find smashing revolutionary victories, such as the Sandinist triumph in Nicaragua, that have not been followed by a bloodbath. Even in 1979, bloodshed has followed other revolutions. In this country, however, Tomas Borge, the Minister of the Interior of the National Reconstruction Junta, said at a people's jail: "The Nicaraguan Revolution does not want the death of sinners nor the destruction of people. It only wants the destruction of sin." These words, heard on the radio August 12 by hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans, were implemented with the release of more than 250 former national guardsmen.

This is the reverse of what happened in the Somoza era when to free a prisoner, say a Sandinist fighter, it was necessary to hold government hostages or occupy the National Palace. We are dealing with the opposite of that horrible contempt for the lives of millions of exploited people, for thousands of political

prisoners and kidnap victims of the oppressive regimes of Latin America. It is an effort to make the slogan "generous in victory" a reality.

It is true that there have been abuses. And there has been spontaneous uncontrollable popular rage; but the Sandinist leaders of this revolution, those who were savagely tortured in the dictator's prisons, have neither encouraged nor approved them. "We have forged this revolution so that there will be no more torture and no more murders in Nicaragua." It was in this vein that the Minister of the Interior talked for 20 minutes to a maddened crowd demanding lynchings. He calmed down the people by appealing to the noblest ideals in this Nicaraguan struggle.

Nevertheless, there are some among the clergy who cannot see the forest for the trees and who are being unfair toward this revolution or blind to its historic innovation. Worse, they are turning away from the paschal jubilee of the people who have come alive after 50 years of dictatorship and despotism.

Among the clergy are some who have cried out: "Where is democracy? When is La Prensa going to be published again?" Their cries could not wait even a month. And now, barely a month after the triumph, when the network has been dismantled and La Prensa is again on the streets, they refuse to recognize that this revolution is faithful to its promises. Instead they hasten to denounce other weaknesses. For them, freedom to live in favor of justice in a free country is not democracy. Nor is freedom to be partial on behalf of an exploited and oppressed people and to establish structures that restore to the people the rights that have been denied them for centuries.

Perhaps they have not understood the justice of the God of the Bible who "will judge the poor with righteousness and will save the children of the needy and crush the oppressor," thus handing down an "equitable judgment" (Ps. 72).

Even worse is the pretension of this small group of the clergy to usurp the right of interpretation of Sandino's philosophy and with an almost ridiculous arrogance promote something that is the product of their imagination. In their efforts to cast the leaders of the revolution as betrayers of Sandino's philosophy, they carefully avoid quoting him directly. The people are not being deceived by this promotion of a pseudo-philosophy. The people of the barrios and factories of Managua and of the rural areas and haciendas know that the ideal of the revolution in Nicaragua is not the bourgeois democracy of freedoms bestowed by economic privilege.

The exploited people know that the ideal of this 20 year struggle is justice and rights for all who before were marginalized and deprived of every good. And, above all, the people know who "had to resist sin to the point of shedding their blood" (Heb. 12:4). We need still more humility and veracity.

It would be good for members of the clergy to ask those who express fear of the Sandinist revolutionary victory: for whom are you speaking, the exploiters (whether or not they be somocistas) or the exploited? Maybe we should ask if the complaints being expressed today, the denunciations after a month of the revolutionary process, are not a provocation (perhaps unconscious) so that the revolution might turn against the Church

and stifle the clergy's freedom of speech. Then they would be able to shout more powerfully: "We were right; they were Marxists and atheists."

Let us join in prayer. Let us meditate to see if we are close to the rejoicing people or close to the saddened oppressor. Let us reflect whether the faith of the clergy is Mary's faith in the God who "has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of low degree, filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty" (Lk. 1:52-53). If not, is it faith in an idol that crushes the weak, treats the common people like children and applauds the historic progress of the exploiter?

We should have patience, humility, hope and historic vision at this time of decision in Nicaragua.

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## II. 'LOVE BECOMING A REALITY'

By Beatrice M. Zaragoza, mm

(Sister Beatrice shared the joys and sorrows of the Nicaraguan people during the many years she worked in their country. She is presently associated with the Latin American Pastoral Center in San Francisco, Calif.)

Nicaragua has always been of special concern to me, especially so at the time of her great suffering during the recent revolution because I spent 17 happy, busy years in mission work there as a Maryknoll Sister. Being in Nicaragua at this period of her history was an exciting, exhilarating experience. To me it is mind-blowing that such a tiny nation has such great dreams and aspirations of creating a new and just society based on brotherhood and love, generosity and forgiveness, equality and freedom for all. To dream of the possibility of a new social order in today's world, where seemingly there is room only for capitalism and communism according to traditional divisions, and to start from zero to develop it, is so inspiring and awesome that I stand in admiration of this new Nicaragua.

Having just returned from a two-weeks's fact-finding mission in Nicaragua, I would like to share what is happening in our courageous sister nation. I was first impressed by the immense joy of the poor in barrios, on the streets, in the public transportation systems and later in rural cities. A certain spirit of freedom is sensed and felt. As the people themselves said, "We are breathing free air; we go to ceremonies and dedications because we want to, not because we are forced to, as before." There is an air of happiness and pride in their "Christian revolution" as they call it. Many streets are being dedicated and renamed after fallen heroes, heroines and martyrs, which usually means a Eucharist service or prayers, colorful paper banners and flags lining the street, a short speech about the virtues of the particular martyr, a gun salute and singing some revolutionary or liberation songs and the national anthem.

Already now the people are looking forward to their first "free" Christmas celebration. It is good to see them out in their rockers in the evenings, to watch children playing and shouting in lighted streets, to hear even the toddlers singing liberation songs. One whole week of television was dedicated to appreciation of Nicaraguan culture, featuring native songs, dance and arts of different Indian groups. There are plans for a massive alphabetization program using Paulo Freire's method, with Freire himself scheduled to come to Nicaragua to take part in the planning stages.

In spite of the tremendous optimism, joy and idealism generally prevalent among the poor, the professional class and the ruling Government of Reconstruction, all admit realistically the problems they face. Most pressing are the great shortage of basic foods, the lack of medicines to supply hospitals and clinics, the inherited bankruptcy and international debt. The rich can and do buy anything they want but about one million poor depend daily on the distribution of food which is very inadequate because other countries, including the U.S., are not sending what was promised.

Several editorials have been printed in the newspaper, La Prensa, asking the people to make great efforts at work and production in order to reestablish the flow of basic goods in the economy; and secondly, asking for greater austerity in all levels of society in order to satisfy basic needs of the whole population for food, health, public services, education, etc. "The sacrifice which this effort entails must be understood as part of the price which we must pay for our liberation," said one editorial.

The people, on the whole, are very conscious that their victory is only the start of the revolution and that the transformation must take place only with their active participation. They are also conscious of the errors that inevitably will be part of this whole process. As Father Fernando Cardenal, sj., wrote in his open letter to the clergy of Nicaragua: "Errors and abuses are happening and will be happening. This is not a revolution of angels but of men. Let us meditate to see if we are near to the joyous poor or near to the saddened oppressor." (Some of the rich, apprehensive, unhappy and critical of this whole change, are not ready to share even a little of their great wealth for the common good.)

As usual, following the Somoza line of propaganda, the fear of communism is raised as the big argument, but this fear is denied by most of the persons whom I interviewed. Father Miguel d'Escoto, Minister of Foreign Affairs, called it part of the "smear campaign" against the ideals of the new Nicaragua. He listed four elements which constitute the fundamental ingredients of "Sandinismo," this new political-social Nicaraguan ideology: nationalistic, democratic, Christian and committed to social justice.

In another interview, Roberto Sanchez, Director of Public Relations, spoke of the army's and the government's intent of serving all the people, of defending human rights, of being generous with the enemy, of forgiveness, of brotherhood, of social justice, of liberty of movement, of a moral army, of eradicating prostitution, etc. All this, to my mind, is



Christian terminology and ideology rather than the threat of "communism" so greatly feared by Americans. This has been proven initially by the absence of harsh reprisals or summary mass executions.

One American religious describes the Nicaraguan revolution as "love becoming a reality" through the deep political commitment of the people. Perhaps the words of I John 3: 7-11 apply: "Little ones, let no one deceive you; the man who acts in holiness is holy indeed, even as the Son is holy; the man who sins belongs to the devil....That is the way to see who are God's children, and who are the devil's. No one whose actions are unholy belongs to God, nor anyone who fails to love his brother. This, remember, is the message you heard from the beginning: we should love one another."

Let us make this a real America without frontiers, let us too make love become a reality for our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters by helping them with money, food and medicines through personal donations; by written campaigns pressuring Congress for a rescue plan to pull Nicaragua out of its \$450 million debt and to finance the imports needed to maintain its economy, or to agree on another plan; by praying and passing on the "good news" of what is happening in Nicaragua and by denouncing all "smear rumors." If the new Nicaragua fails with its high ideals, it will not be due to its lack of faith and courage; it will be due to the lack of help, belief and interest of the rich nations of the world.

Reference: WORLD PARISH, Maryknoll's World Apostolate Bulletin for Priests, Volume 19, November/December, 1979, Number 176.

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PROCLAIMING THE KINGDOM

...A slide presentation based on Chapters 4 and 7 of Evangelii Nuntiandi prepared by Sedos and Multi-Media International as part of the Catholic preparation for the Melbourne Conference of 1980. The text used is that of the document Evangelii Nuntiandi.

Suggested uses: prayer services, chapter and congregational meetings, renewal sessions as well as preparation for the Melbourne Conference.

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## NEPAL

We have recently received a request from Fr. J. Dressman, sj, for a congregation of sisters to work in Nepal. Father supplied the following information--

### The Church of Nepal:

**Nepal:** The country has been opened up only since 1950 to outsiders. A Hindu kingdom where according to the constitution it is unlawful to change your traditional religion. Sometimes this provision has been overlooked. The Church has always respected this concern of the government and has not proselytized openly.

**1979:** There are 16 sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Mary Virgin; three Indian Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Mokameh, India; twenty-five Jesuits and five Maryknoll Fathers. That is all for 14 million people. There are 265 Protestant missionaries working in various parts of the country.

**Works:** IBMV sisters run a school from K.G. to senior high school for some 2000 girls. The Jesuits have one school all boarding for 265 boys of class one to six; another school for class one to ten day scholars and boarders from class 7 - 10. A Research Centre of three fathers writing on the culture of Nepal; an alumni center for college boys and girls; an orphanage for 73 boys. The Maryknoll Fathers run three centres for mentally retarded children; work in adult literacy and alcoholics anonymous.

**Catholic population:** about 300-400 in Kathmandu valley. Others scattered throughout the country. No indigenous vocations.

### Possibilities:

**Education:** the country is asking for more schools which will offer quality education, especially with boarding schools. Opening new institutions may be possible; working with the existing Jesuit institutions is possibly easier at first.

**Social Work:** almost infinite possibilities; there are no orphanages for girls, or training centres for small crafts to speak of.

**Catechetics:** very limited because of the small number of catholics.

**Language:** Nepali is close to Hindu. Six months of intensive study gives one a very good speaking knowledge of the language.

**Relations with government:** the government is cooperative. Visas can be obtained.

**For Contact:** Fr. James J. Dressman, S.J.  
Sevashram  
G.P.O. Box 50  
Kathmandu, Nepal

NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY:

- Recent Visitor: Sr. Marie Goldstein, the co-ordinator of the Hope Center for Peace and InterFaith Understanding in Jerusalem. Sister left some interesting material on the centre which was established in 1973 as an effort on the part of Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Centre aims to provide a Forum in which spiritual activities, intellectual discussion and community experiences can occur. It is monotheism as expressed in the three faiths of Abraham which is the common dimension and which hopefully can serve as a cohesive force. (Address: Hope Center P.O.B. 19056 Jerusalem, Israel.) Sedos Documentation No. 4/3664, 4/3665 and 4/3666.
- Recent Publications: Education for Justice--packets designed to assist the reader to enter more fully into the process of conscientization. The articles provide a mixture of information and reflection from an interdisciplinary perspective which highlights the values and social justice dimensions of the various issues. They are designed for use in discussion groups and classrooms, as well as for private study. Available from Center of Concern, 3700 13th St. N.E., Washington D.C. 20017. Price: \$4.25 U.S. for each one of the four packets. Postage \$1.50 U.S.
- Namibia: the Strength of the Powerless available for 10,000 lire (before 31st January) from IDOC International, Via S. Maria dell'Anima, 30, 00186 Rome. Airmail postage is 2,000 lire.
- Letters from Vietnam by Piero Gheddo (in Italian) available from EMI, Via Arcoveggio 80/7, Bologna - price 2,000 lire. "Many letters have reached us from the interior of the country, often by clandestine means, attesting dramatically to experiences undergone and to the failure and cruelty of a regime which many awaited with confidence and hope."
- Gospel in Context. The April issue was on the subject of "Sexism and Mission". There is a half price subscription offer for \$5.50 U.S. Write to 1564 Edge Hill Road Abington, Penna. 19001, U.S.A.
- La Cina Contemporanea, nuova dizionario enciclopedico ed. by G. Melis and F. Demarchi, published by edizioni paoline, 30,000 lire.
- Classics of the Christian Missions, a 468 page one volume study and reference book as an introduction to the literature of Christian missions. Among the selections are such classics as Bede on Augustine of Canterbury; the letters of Boniface; Las Casas, and Xavier; the journals of Brainerd and Livingstone; Carey's Enquiry; and Henry Venn's writings. Available from Broadman Publishers, 127 Ninth Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee 37234.
- Informations "Education" News published by the International Catholic Center for UNESCO, 9 rue Cler, 75007 Paris. The bulletin is to provide those involved in education with information on UNESCO's activities in the field of education and will be concerned solely with formal education that is to say, education provided by schools and universities.
- Help Available. Various people have asked us to notify you of their services; For translation from English and French into Italian and English and Italian into French, ring Mrs. Catarenella 65.73.66. Two women are looking for work; one as receptionist, one as secretary. Inquire from Sister Joan at the Sedos Secretariat, Tel. 57.13.50.
- Course offered: La Vie Religieuse Consacrée - 25 Fevrier - 8 Mars, 1980, Unité Chrétienne - 2 rue Jean Carriès 69005 Lyon, (Tel. 84.21.167).