

CHRIST OR COMMUNISM

From The Literary Digest

The Church or Communism—it is one or the other, as both a Catholic and a Methodist read the signs.

Not so far down the road they see danger signals flashing.

Charity may cover a multitude of sins, but it is not, they agree, the solution of an economic order which denies to so many, not merely bread and meat, but the opportunity to achieve a more abundant life—room for their souls as well as a roof for their bodies. They see, these two, revolutionary forces already at work, the lowly masses, meek so long, on the march.

The times are fraught with peril, not only in the church, but to the whole order under which society exists today. The church is already unsteady.

The Catholic church is subject today to one of the greatest leaks in its history, says Dr. Louis H. Wetmore, formerly literary editor of the New York Times... "That leakage," he says in an address to the Pittsburgh Council of Catholic Women, "occurs among the working classes of Europe, and is beginning to occur among the working classes in this country." And he warns, as the Pittsburgh Catholic quotes him:

"Unless Catholics make a genuine effort to establish a just society along the lines laid down in very emphatic language in the encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XII, we shall lose by far the greater amount of the laboring classes.

"They will desert definitely, as they are doing all over the world today, to the Socialist and Communist camp. And remember that theirs is the future, for they are the majority. Most Catholics today possess no social conscience, in matters of charity, yes, in matters of social reform, no!

"And charity is but a palliative.

"It will not and can not settle ills of society, and capitalistic society is mortally sick; the industrial capitalistic system is breaking up on every side.

"It is in decay. And if Catholics continue to support such an economic structure of society as capitalism, they will be smashed by the revolutionary forces of the working classes, who are moving today en masse against the injustices of capitalism.

"The working classes—the poor—belong to us. It was among the poor that Christ lived while on earth. He was born in a laborer's family. He is of the people, humanly speaking. And we, as Catholics, must fight for the poor and the oppressed, the wage slavers of our present economic system, for only by so doing can we carry out the desire of the church to establish a sane, balanced, and just human society on this earth."

Amen, says the Pittsburgh Christian Advocate (Methodist), in effect, for that is the whole burden of its comment. "If the Catholic church or any other church can assist in creating for America a social system that is founded in Justice and equity, God speed it! The Church of Jesus Christ, of whatever name, is under heavy responsibility in these times to lead the masses out of the economic bondage in which they suffer. That is its commission as truly as it was the high calling of Moses to free the serfs of Egypt from their industrial slavery."

"This Methodist voice agrees with Dr. Wetmore, that it is the church or a materialistic, atheistic communism. Look down the road:

"The working people of the world are on the move, socially, economically, politically. The economic motive, which is the motive of finding a chance to live, is the weightiest consideration in the minds of millions.

"Religion, unhappily, is already in the thinking of multitudes divorced from the cause of human welfare. If this way of thinking is allowed to continue, the people will turn definitely and finally from the church as an institution in which there is no hope for relief from social injustice.

"Already we clearly see the set of the tide. He is blind who does not see it; he is worse than blind who will not.

"It is drawing steadily and with increasing current away from the church, Protestant as well as Catholic. Surely the lesson will not be lost on the minds of church leaders."

These people coming up the road are hungry for justice. "They want knowledge, education, opportunity, liberty, the larger life." And they are entitled to all the opportunities which the world can offer. "But the church," sorrows The Advocate, "is not using its powers, so far as they can see, to break the barricades that keep them from the life abundant. They must be persuaded that the church is fighting their battles against the wrongs of which capitalism is guilty; that the church is really putting strength into the struggle of the laboring classes to secure an equitable share of that wealth of the world which they have done so much to create."

But, urges The Advocate:

"All this can not be done upon the paltry ground that the church is losing members and must save herself.

"It must be done rather because it is the will of God that these people should be saved; because if the world is to be a new world the principles of Jesus must be revived and applied to its problems; because the foundations of any economic system, where they are rotten with injustice and selfishness, must be removed and new foundations laid in the righteousness of God.

"Only on such foundations can the new order of a Christian society be reared."

—(Reprinted from The Progressive)

General Plutarco Calles
4320 Middlesex Drive
San Diego Calif.

April 12th 1936

Dear General:

Believe me - I have a very favorable impression of You - Your Country - and Your People for whenever I have come in contact with the Mexican people - I have found them Kind and considerate - honest and sincere.

I think both You, and President Gardenas are honest and sincere in your desire to serve your country - but the Greatest Teacher that ever walked among men - said that no man is perfect - so you are no doubt, both right in some things - and both wrong in other things of course you can not compromise on great and fundamental principles - but the welfare of your country and your people demands that You and President Gardenas draw a plan and consider ways and means - in which you can Co-operate for your country and your people.

Yours sincerely

3629 Cottonwood Street

Joseph Schaffer