

AMERICA's editorial on Pope Paul's encyclical *Priestly Celibacy* (7/8) suggested that a papal letter addressed above all to the bishops of the world "calls for a response from them, given in full freedom," and that September in Rome "will be a good place and time for that response."

The next few weeks will tell whether that response is made, and what it will be. But the four representatives of the American hierarchy will fly to Rome very conscious that an unambiguous response has already been given by some of their priests.

A Notre Dame symposium sponsored by the National Association for Pastoral Renewal concluded on September 8 with resolutions calling for: freedom of diocesan priests of the Latin rite to marry; admission to the sacraments and, if they wish, to the active ministry, of married priests now barred from both; and the possibility of honorable departure from the ministry.

Though attended by only slightly more than half the expected 400, the meeting was a decided step forward for NAPR and its campaign for "optional celibacy." Eight generally first-rate papers (to be published by Herder and Herder) by well-known speakers; extensive coverage by the news media; and the very fact of a public challenge to the Church's present discipline just a few months after the encyclical, make this an event not to be ignored.

It might almost be said that there were two meetings, one scholarly and one political. Much of the scholarship supported the politics. As one who came biased in favor of the present discipline, I found ample material to make me question my bias. Still, the strong prior commitment of the sponsoring group and most of the participants hardly created a climate of openness and careful distinctions.

Thus, the veteran Fr. John A. O'Brien of Notre Dame was vigorously applauded when he cited Pope Paul's assertion, in *The Development of Peoples*, of the inalienable right of every man to marry, in support of the view that the present celibacy law is an infringement of human dignity. But surely such a view must confront the fact that no Christian has a "right" to the priestly office, and that the Church, too, has its freedom to ordain only those

THOMAS E. CLARKE

Symposium on Celibacy

who have also the call to celibacy. This is not to say that this right of the Church exists independently of pastoral values, or that pastoral values today necessarily call for a continuation of the present law.

Fr. Joseph Fichter summarized his recent survey of priestly opinion on celibacy. Here the intriguing thing was his correlation of attitudes on celibacy with attitudes on Church renewal, seminary training and other topics. He suggested that psychologists might find in the strong proponents and opponents of a married clergy two differing personality types.

Dr. Joseph English, former chief psychiatrist for the Peace Corps, fully supported optional celibacy, and proposed moving back the age of ordination to 30. The twenties, he felt, were years for rich experience, not for life-decision. Here, too, the lack of challenge was notable, and we never found out Dr. English's view of the optimum age for marriage.

Many in the audience found the paper of Dr. John T. Noonan Jr., of *Contraception* fame, unexciting, as indeed it was from an immediately pragmatic point of view. For me, however, it was a highlight, illustrating how a serene and unbiased scholarship can serve the present. A primary need of the hour is a solid history of celibacy by someone who shares Dr. Noonan's feel for complexity and development.

AND NOW—what about the bishops? Their Chicago meeting in April charged a committee of bishops with a study of priestly life, including celibacy. Concrete steps at this top level now seem unavoidable. The Notre Dame meeting, and a similar resolution of seminarians

at Eaton Hall in late August, cannot be met by silence.

Admittedly, much more research and reflection will be needed before the Church, nationally or universally, can come to a prudent consensus on so profound an issue. But certain things can be done almost immediately. Here are some that occur to me.

First, the American bishops could authorize an open and thorough interdisciplinary study of the question.

Secondly, the machinery for regularizing the invalid marriages of priests could be made more humane and uniform.

Thirdly, the possibility of release from the obligations of ministry and celibacy of those priests who, after due reflection and consultation, want such release, should be studied.

True, a move in the direction of these last two measures would increase the likelihood of the eventual cessation of the celibacy requirement for ordination. This likelihood will have to be faced realistically; but it is not a valid argument against the study.

Finally, it is not too early—it is in fact very late—to begin to educate all our Catholic people on this issue. The far from happy story of the liturgical movement and liturgical renewal should by now have taught us that major changes sprung on a confused people by a divided clergy are an invitation to chaos. Presently, for the average Catholic of middle or upper years, the very thought of a married clergy is traumatic. Millions of Catholics—and not a few bishops and priests—need to learn that a loyal, devoted priest can, from his very loyalty and devotion, question the wisdom of continuing the ban on priestly marriage.

I learned this myself at Notre Dame this month, in contact with vital, hard-working priests who love their Church and its people. Impatient they surely are; but they are not rebellious—at least not yet. We may owe them the charity of challenging their oversimplifications (of which they have no monopoly). But we certainly owe them the justice of honoring their good intent, and the freedom, human and Christian, to say what they think about optional celibacy.

[THOMAS E. CLARKE, S. J., is an associate editor of AMERICA.] ■

Happening in São Paulo

**In a country where social inequities cry
for attention, the government concentrates
its energies on the detection of subversion**

Imagine a situation in the late 1930's in the United States. The National Student Union, of markedly left-wing orientation and controlled by Communist leaders, has been banned by a law of Congress. It threatens to hold a national convention in Chicago in defiance of the law. Police and FBI mobilize forces to prevent the meeting. The students make good their boast, holding their convention in the Franciscan Retreat House at May's Lake. Discovering what has happened, the police haul the Franciscans off to headquarters for questioning, and arrest the prior. The prior of the Dominican Convent in River Forest, who has spoken out in support of the students, is also arrested. Dominican priests and brothers picket the police station in protest. Forty members of several religious orders picket the FBI headquarters, carrying placards demanding the release of priests and students and calling for freedom of speech and of association. The *Chicago Tribune* urges the government to expel Catholic religious orders from the country. Cardinal Stritch vehemently protests and defends the Orders. Archbishop McIntyre condemns the action of the priests. Cardinal Spellman calls attention to the subversive character of the Student Union and upholds the principle of respect for authority. Sev-

eral other bishops issue statements supporting the priests and the students.

Plot for a comic light opera? Fanciful description of something that could not happen here? Perhaps, but it did happen in Brazil.

Prior to the March, 1964, military revolution, the União Nacional dos Estudantes (National Student Union, or UNE), was the principal university student organization in the country. Perhaps even more than its counterpart of the 1930's in the United States, it had developed a pronounced Marxist orientation and succumbed to Communist leadership. This is not the opinion only of conservative prelates like Dom Jaime de Barros Câmara, the Cardinal Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, or of conservative journals like the *Estado do São Paulo*; it is also the opinion of such liberal newspapers as the *Jornal do Brasil* and *Correio da Manhã*. In an editorial on August 5, the *Jornal do Brasil* says:

"Only one who suffers from intentional amnesia could forget the role of this organization in the last years of the Goulart regime. Vanguard of national communism, directed by Red agents perennially matriculating as

phony students, it was in the front line of every movement in this country in those turbulent times to subvert the democratic regime. In the midst of its tireless activity, the one thing the UNE never did was concern itself with student interests. . . . But in all the demagogic and pro-Communist campaigns . . . the UNE displayed a zeal and an activity without equal." The *Correio da Manhã* on the same day made much the same editorial judgment.

Predictably, the UNE was one of the prime targets of the revolutionary forces. Its headquarters in Rio were raided and burned. A government decree declared it an illegal organization. During the regime of Marshal Castelo Branco, whose stern administration offered little encouragement to outlawed individuals or organizations, the UNE showed few signs of life. Last March, General Costa y Silva succeeded to the Presidency. He has conveyed the impression, more by words than by concrete deeds to date, that he is disposed to establish a less authoritarian regime than that of his predecessor. Since then student protest activity, often inspired by real grievances, but increasingly of a political nature, has multiplied.

When leaders of the legally extinct UNE announced that they intended to hold a national Congress in São Paulo during the month of July (the month of winter school vacations in Brazil), the Minister of Justice announced that such a meeting would be in violation of the law. Federal and State authorities warned that police action would be taken to prevent such a meeting from being held.

In view of these stern warnings, the revelation that the students, numbering some 400, had actually held their meeting came as a great surprise. Adding to the surprise was the news that the Congress, lasting from Tuesday to Saturday, had been held in a house of retreat attached to a Benedictine monastery. Adding spice to the surprise, in view of the decidedly anti-American bias of the UNE, is the fact that the monastery is a dependency of St. Vincent's Abbey in Pennsylvania and that five of its nine monks, including the prior, are Americans.

The students hoodwinked not only the police; they apparently hoodwinked the Benedictines as well. According to

the prior, the monks had no idea they were playing host to the banned Congress of the UNE. Since they did not ask for their spiritual services, the Benedictines thought it best to leave them to their own devices, and consequently did not know what was going on. Perhaps the police cannot be blamed for viewing the tolerant lack of curiosity on the part of the padres with some skepticism. One cannot, however, question the veracity of Fr. Leo, the prior, who recalls with sorrow that when leaving the United States two years ago he was warned to be on his guard against "scoundrels in Brazil." Despite the warning, he said, he had "always preferred to believe in the honesty of people until the contrary is proved."

Fr. Leo probably now feels that the contrary *has* been proved, because, among other headaches, the students left him with an unpaid bill for room and board. According to one of the domestic employees of the monastery, they also left the retreat house and surrounding area "looking like a pig sty."

The events following the student meeting were more dramatic than the congress itself. The nine Benedictines and the monastery employees were carted off to police headquarters for quizzing. Also arrested and held for two days was Br. Terence Edward Hill, a member of the Order of the Holy Cross who teaches in the College of Notre Dame in the neighboring city of Campinas. The police claim that he served as intermediary for the students in arranging things with the Benedictines and that he chauffeured student delegates from Campinas to the meeting. He and the prior are charged by the investigating officials of the Division of Political and Social Order (DOPS), a kind of combined Un-Brazilian Activities Committee and FBI, with having violated the Law of National Security.

Meanwhile the police arrested the prior of the Dominican convent, Francisco Araújo, who had expressed solidarity with the students. Fr. Araújo, familiarly and widely known as "Frei Chico," had been in the headlines some weeks earlier when he proposed from his pulpit that the working people of the world stage a 24-hour general strike

for peace. The 18 Dominican priests and brothers of his convent picketed the police station to protest his arrest.

The next day, 40 priests and seminarians, including Dominicans, Augustinians, Benedictines, Camillians and members of the diocesan clergy, picketed the DOPS headquarters, carrying placards demanding freedom of speech and association, and the liberation of arrested priests and students. (The police had also taken some students into custody. A week later the parents of one of them, whose older brother had once been president of the extinct UNE, were still trying to find out where he was being held.)

Manifestations of solidarity came from many quarters. Jesuit seminarians drew up a manifesto, subscribed to by seminarians of 12 different religious congregations and of the diocesan major seminary, denouncing the police action and defending the students. Eleven priests and 15 nuns in Rio de Janeiro sent a telegram to Frei Chico expressing solidarity with his "courageous testimony in the cause of justice and liberty." Some 230 priests and nuns, gathered in Curitiba for a regional meeting of major superiors, issued a statement criticizing the police and supporting the students.

Dom José Delgado, the Archbishop of Fortaleza, in the far north, expressed surprise at the invasion of monasteries and convents to arrest priests. "I cannot believe," he added, "that the political situation is so bad as to justify such severe treatment and such drastic measures against student youth." The Bishop of Volta Redonda, Dom Valdir Calheiros, thought it altogether natural that priests and seminarians should defend the right of students to express themselves. The secretary general of the National Council of Bishops of Brazil, Dom José Gonçalves da Costa, declared the arrest of Dominicans and Benedictines an "unpardonable act."

There were a few dissident voices. The Cardinal Archbishop of Rio underlined the subversive character of the UNE and spoke of the obligation of the police to preserve public order. Dom Vicente Scherer, Bishop of Pôrto Alegre, in the far south, accused the priests of "using the prestige conferred upon them by the Church to promote their personal ideas." This statement

provoked a spirited reply, signed by Dom Jorge Marcos, Bishop of Santo André, and 19 priests. The letter affirmed their intention of preaching "Jesus Christ and His message by words and deeds that unite us with the poor, the oppressed and the victims of injustice." It also suggested that if the Bishop of Pôrto Alegre would put himself "in contact with the reality" of his own people and, facing this reality, attempt to "preach the full lessons of the gospel," he would suffer the same fate as the priests he had criticized.

An editorial in the *Estado de São Paulo*, organ of the conservative classes and industrial interests, bitterly assailed the Benedictines and the Dominicans, whose activities it linked to the forces meeting in Havana. It concluded by suggesting: "It is time for the government to reflect upon the action of the Marquês de Pombal, who expelled the Jesuits from Portugal and its colonies—including Brazil—in the 18th century." This was an ominous note. As Yves Congar, the noted French Dominican theologian who was in São Paulo to deliver a lecture, wryly observed: "Pombal does not have a very good reputation even among Dominicans."

The intemperate editorial brought an immediate protest from the Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo, Dom Agnelo Rossi, who said, in a letter to the editor, that he was "frightened by the conclusions of the editorial, which recalls the fury of persecution and evokes the specter of a new 20th-century Pombal." The editor refused to modify his statements. The clergy of the archdiocese sent a message to the cardinal expressing their unanimous support. Charging that even papal encyclicals and statements of the episcopacy dealing with social questions have been seized as subversive material by public authorities, they urged the cardinal to request the Nuncio to intervene with the government.

The cardinal's reaction to what he described as a brutal, violent and indiscriminating attack by the *Estado de São Paulo* upon the religious orders, especially the Dominicans, is easy to understand, as is the general protest over the arrest of the priests. Neither

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is it difficult to understand the tendency of many to align themselves on the side of students in their conflicts with the government. Undoubtedly many of them feel, as the Archbishop of Fortaleza put it, that it is their mission to "save youth from complete loss of faith and confidence in adults."

The government, although it has more than once expressed a desire to enter into a dialogue with the students about their problems, has failed to win their confidence. Its lack of comprehension and the heavy-handed methods employed by military police in suppressing student demonstrations play into the hands of extremist elements.

A spokesman for the engineering students of the University of Rio de Janeiro, who, he says, are opposed to UNE, severely criticizes government policy. According to him, UNE actually represents only a small fraction of national student opinion. "Its only effect," he says, "has been to unite the students against the government, something years of left-wing propaganda had not been able to achieve. Every constructive criticism or attempt to present a grievance is dismissed as the result of 'inexperience,' or as 'subversive provocation.' The 'dialogues' turn out to be boring monologues. Solutions are put off and the truth disguised. This lack of good faith aggravates the general lack of confidence."

In this situation the sympathies of many priests are engaged on the side of the students. They have more than once protested the repressive tactics of the police.

More complex—and calling for some analysis—is the apparent support that some of them give to the legally proscribed UNE. The prior of the Dominican Convent in Belo Horizonte, André Muniz Resende, for example, in deploring the action of the police in São Paulo, praised the "great achievements of the extinct UNE in its efforts to serve the Brazilian people."

That the UNE continues far leftist in its orientation is clear from the political charter, summarizing its position and program, that it released at the conclusion of its meeting in São Paulo. The enemy is capitalism, which is synonymous with imperialism. Both are identified with the United States, which, therefore, becomes the principal enemy.

Its analysis of international events explains everything—the overthrow of Nkrumah in Ghana, the anti-Communist coup (*sic*) in Indonesia, the American intervention in Santo Domingo, the “war against the heroic people of Vietnam”—as “extreme attempts to maintain by force an economic system that exploits the masses for the profit of a few.” Describing the revolution of March, 1964, as a coup engineered by American capitalist interests allied with the dominant class in Brazil, it rejects any compromise with the existing regime, which it calls a dictatorship. It repudiates as illusory all solutions based upon reform and calls for an alliance of workers, peasants and students to launch a revolutionary struggle for power.

In at least two respects, it aligns itself with Havana and Peking rather than with Moscow. Thus, contradicting the present position of the Brazilian Communist party, it spurns any united-front collaboration with bourgeois elements. It also endorses the guerrilla activities in Bolivia and by implication everywhere else. “We make our own the struggle of the people of Vietnam, of Bolivia and of all those who today resist with arms the penetration of imperialism.”

This document seems to establish the orientation of the UNE. Does the sympathy of the clergy, described above, reflect ideological agreement? In many cases it does, in the sense that they share many, if not all, of the convictions of left-wing student opinion.

An important aspect of Brazilian reality today is the existence of a strong current of left-wing Catholic thought. It was much in evidence before the 1964 revolution, following which it shared the fate of all left-wing movements, from slightly left to far left of center. Some of its exponents were jailed, others were deprived of political rights. This kind of repression does not encourage public expression of views. If it has been, as a consequence, less in evidence, it has not ceased to exist. The president of the UNE, who called the recent congress, is himself a former seminarian and currently a law student in the Catholic University of São Paulo.

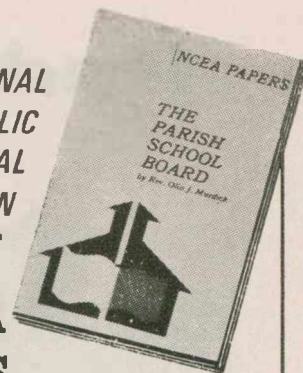
This Catholic left wing includes members of the clergy as well as of the laity. Its influence is most in evidence among Catholic intellectuals and students and among those priests who are more sensitive to the social, economic and political realities of the modern world and to the panorama of anguished multitudes they reveal.

In a nation-wide telecast on August 8, Dom Hélder Câmara, the famed Archbishop of Recife, said: “Today the priest cannot be satisfied only to say his prayers, standing with folded arms before the problems that afflict the masses. . . . For too long we have acted as a brake; now we must be an accelerator; for had we spoken out more plainly in the past, millions of human beings would not today be experiencing penury and misery. . . . I am not a partisan of violence, but I am of the opinion that we cannot be content with the lyricism of fine phrases that solve none of the grave social problems that confront Brazil.”

The Archbishop expresses the view of those members of the clergy who move with the left-wing current of Catholic thought and who also share his conviction that “time is running out.” Among their other convictions is the belief that capitalism cannot supply the answer to Brazil’s problems. In fact, they hold capitalism responsible for those problems. They are consequently inclined to be anti-American and anti-capitalist. They share the opinion of many Brazilians that American capitalism is exploiting Brazil.

On August 6, in a lecture delivered in São Paulo, Yves Congar made the sweeping charge that “North American companies take all the profits and fix all the prices, subjecting the countries of Latin America to their economic power.” Yves Congar, who is a theologian, speaks with greater assurance on this subject than he perhaps would were he an economist. It is difficult to reach a firm conclusion about whether American interests extract more from Brazil than they invest. Expert opinion is divided. Overlooked in Yves Congar’s general indictment is the fact that while American investments greatly exceed those of any other single nation, they are considerably less than the combined investments of other foreign nations, and that, among the non-American

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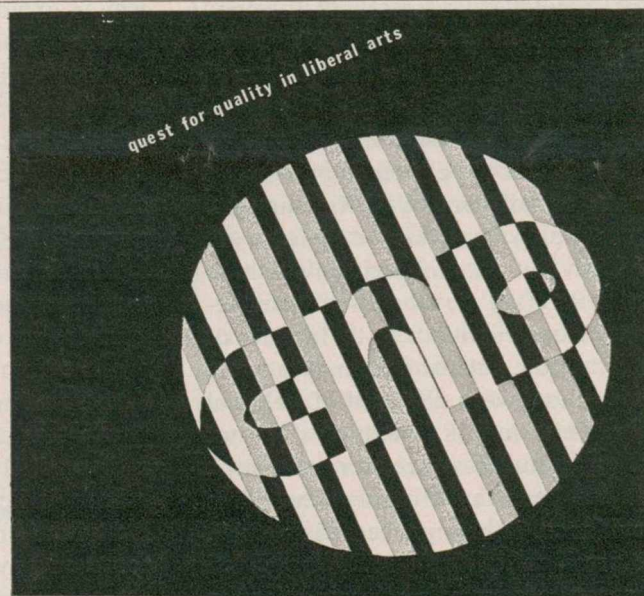
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group, French capital investments, along with those of Great Britain, top the list. (See "Os Grupos Bilionários Estrangeiros," by José Antonio Pessoa de Queirós, in the *Revista do Instituto de Ciencias Sociais*, Jan.-Dec., 1965, p. 117 ff.)

Yves Congar was on less controvertible ground when he went on to say: "It is easy to verify the economic and military dependence of Latin America upon the United States." All varieties of left-wing thought in Brazil resent this dependence, which they attribute to American "economic imperialism."

The resentment is not confined to the economic area. Almost any kind of American activity is suspect. A USAID agreement to supply technical advice in the reform of Brazilian universities is branded "cultural imperialism." This agreement has been denounced by Dom Hélder himself. At a student meeting in Belo Horizonte—where UNE officers reported on the São Paulo congress and where Black Power partisans in the United States, guerrillas in Bolivia, the Vietcong and armed revolution in Latin America were cheered—a Dominican and a Benedictine who were present, while not commenting upon these aspects of the demonstration, agreed that the USAID educational accord was "by its very nature clearly destructive of the Brazilian university."

The distrust of capitalism is not surprising. Brazil's historical experience with capitalism, both in its domestic and in its international form, has been no happier than that of other Latin American countries. It has not been such as to inspire confidence that capitalism is able or willing to effect the profound changes in the economic and social structures that the Latin American hierarchy, among others, agrees are required.

It indeed seems unrealistic to expect such changes to be initiated by those whose privileged position of wealth and power is due to the very structures that need to be replaced. It is as futile to expect the large landowner to provide schools for peasant children as to expect the millionaire Texas bean grower to provide schools for the children of migrant farm workers. It is futile to expect him, on his own initiative, to turn part of his vast acreage over to landless peasants and provide them with the

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Again, it is futile to expect the private building industry to erect decent housing for the millions who live in wretched urban hovels. It is futile to expect industry first to teach these same millions the alphabet, then train them and finally provide them with jobs in which their newly acquired skills can be employed. A deeper question is whether, in an increasingly automated world, private industry could ever provide such jobs; in other words, whether capitalism can exist in an automated world. It seems more likely to be destroyed by the very machines it has created. A system that ties income to work seems fated to disappear when it can no longer provide work.

It does not follow from the fact that the Catholic left wing is anti-capitalist that it is pro-Communist. There are at least as many alternatives as there are possible combinations incorporating features of both capitalism and socialism. The Scandinavian Middle Way is only one of these. The American system itself today bears little resemblance to the system rationalized by Adam Smith and still idealized by classroom professors of classical economical theory. One does not need to have a long memory to recall the angry outcries of “Socialism!” that greeted TVA, social security, rural electrification and many other innovations of the 1930's that are now established features of the American Way.

The alternative the Catholic left wing in Brazil envisages would incorporate the kind of “urgent reforms” and “bold, profoundly innovative transformations” called for by *Populorum Progressio*. What are the prospects of bringing about this sort of nonviolent revolution of the economic, social and possibly political structures of Brazil? They are not very bright.

Almost everyone in the higher echelons of government has paid lip service to the encyclical, but this cannot be taken too seriously. A columnist, commenting upon the São Paulo incident in the *Jornal do Brasil* of August 9 acidly observes: “In Brazil, papal encyclicals, especially in their entirety, are read by very few people. Nevertheless, scarcely has a new pontifical document appeared in Rome, especially if it deals with so-

cial doctrine, when all Brazilians, of the most diverse social classes and different political and religious creeds, immediately declare themselves in full agreement with the Pope and assume a solemn commitment in newspapers and in Congress to put in practice without delay the ideas of the head of the Church." This reaction is taken seriously, he says, only by those who do not know that Brazil is the land of "pretentious discourse and artful manipulation."

Today power is in the hands of the military. More than once in Brazil's history, movements calling for progressive reform have originated in military circles. One cannot therefore arbitrarily rule out the possibility of such a movement. Today, however, the temper and character of the military are not promising. The current preoccupation is with subversion. One is reminded of the McCarthy era in the United States, when every progressive idea was suspect. As Dom Hélder, who has himself more than once been called a Communist, remarked in his recent telecast: "That which is only a thirst for justice is labeled subversion."

The legislature offers no hope. It has been, in the graphic words of a writer in a recent issue of *Manchete*, "castigated of its attributes and competencies." Even were this not true, substantially the same forces are represented there that blocked the reformist program of the gifted but unstable Janio Quadros, provoking his petulant resignation from the Presidency in August, 1961, after only seven months in office, with disastrous consequences to the country.

The Christian Democratic party, which would seem the logical standard bearer for such a program, was suppressed along with all other parties following the 1964 revolution. There are only two parties today, both artificial creations, one in support of the government, the other in opposition. Both are made up of what might be called refugees from all the extinct parties; they represent a variety of different, and sometimes contrary, political persuasions. It is not surprising under these circumstances that, apart from a position of rather restrained criticism of

the government, the opposition party has had difficulty defining its position. It is an unlikely vehicle for a program of basic and sweeping structural reforms.

A leader with the charismatic gifts of popular appeal of Vargas or Quadros or Kubitschek, but without the demographic faults from which not all these men were free, might be able to accomplish such a revolution. But if such a leader is in the offing, he has not yet appeared upon the horizon. Nor is he likely to so long as the present political climate remains unchanged.

This, of course, enhances the prospects of those who subscribe to the thesis of Che Guevara. Brazil is not, to be sure, in any immediate danger of armed revolt. The masses of the people are politically apathetic. Political apathy, however, the state of mind of those who having no stake in society are not committed to defend it, strengthens the hand of those who wish violently to destroy it. It is the state of mind that characterized the Chinese masses in the 1930's and 1940's. It is the state of mind that characterizes perhaps the majority of South Vietnamese peasants today.

The only successful way to resist genuine subversion today is, as it was 40 years ago, to build a society in which the masses of the people—the "povo" who are invoked tenderly and usually cynically in almost every Brazilian political pronouncement—have a real interest.

"My way of fighting communism," says Dom Hélder, "is to fight misery. Many who think they are Communists will come to understand that at bottom they are only Christians, thirsting for justice."

Some of the positions adopted by the Catholic left wing are open to challenge, but it is difficult, surveying the Brazilian scene, to escape the conclusion that if Brazil manages to achieve a society in which the masses have been freed from the slavery of penury without falling into the servitude of totalitarian communism, it will be because the ideas today represented by the Catholic left wing have prevailed.

[GEORGE H. DUNNE, S. J., who has been on an extended tour of Latin America, writes this report from Rio de Janeiro.] ■

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Contraception and the Council

By his article "Vatican II, Contraception and Christian Marriage" (7/15), Fr. Theodore Mackin stirred sharp reactions. Here are some of them

Amen and Alleluia to Fr. Mackin's article. It is a beautifully balanced and really true picture of the heart of the matter. For years it has made me inwardly seethe to hear all the arguments about why rhythm and total abstinence were certainly superior—in fact positively holy—things in Christian marriage. I felt this was wrong, but couldn't express why without sounding like a complete libertine in sexual matters.

Thanks very much to you and Fr. Mackin for expressing so clearly what was known at least implicitly by many couples who have had to "suffer in silence."

MRS. R. T. MEAKER
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Fr. Mackin's views on marital love and its implications are well put and, I believe, valid enough. His attempt to derive them from the chapter on marriage in *Gaudium et Spes* is another matter.

True, the Council document emphasizes the role of love in marriage and says that married love "finds its unique and perfect expression in the marital act." This is surely a notable advance over patristic teaching. But the Council document also expressly states twice that marriage and conjugal love "are by their nature ordained to the procreation and education of children."

Nor does the document fail to make this more specific. Acknowledging that there is a need of "responsible parenthood," in the sense of family limitation, and that the ultimate judgment in this regard rests upon the parents, the document nevertheless declares: "A true contradiction cannot exist between the divine laws pertaining to the transmission of life and those pertaining to authentic conjugal love." This is made still more specific by the further explanation that parental judgment as to family limitation must operate within divine law as interpreted by the Church; specifically, sons of the Church "may not undertake methods of birth control which are found blameworthy by the teaching authority of the Church."

Thus, in spite of the ambiguous and platitudinous style, so caustically commented on by Archbishop Heenan during the Council discussions (Oct., 1964), the entire drift of the chapter clearly links conjugal love and responsible parenthood with previous norms on contraception; so much so that the famous footnote 14 seems quite superfluous, or even inconsistent.

Certainly there is no need to be fascinated by the phrase "in the light of the gospel." It is clear from the context that conclusions *already reached* in regard to contraception represent divine

law as interpreted by the Church "in the light of the gospel," whether this interpretation be described as moral philosophy or as immediate or oblique theological judgment.

Personally I am not inclined to accept this interpretation of divine law final or infallible; but I will not demur myself by attempting to convince myself that the Council document supports such a view.

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Fr. Mackin is to be commended. Some issues that he raises, however, are not specified as pointedly as they might be. He expresses broadness of mind yet neglects definiteness. I also take issue with him for half-truths and the distortion of traditional doctrine.

In his first inference, that man is a social being and therefore marriage is natural, a misinterpretation is given. Marriage is based on a specific aspect of man's sociability, namely his sexuality. That should be stressed. Man is sociable with every human being, but his marriage sociability is restricted to one of the opposite sex.

Why should theologians make so much of the Council's omission of the first and secondary purposes of marriage? The heavy emphasis that the Council places on the procreation and education of children might just as well have been termed its primary purpose. The Council by no means denies that the procreation and education of children is the primary purpose of marriage as an institution of the Creator, in order to fulfill His order: "Increase and multiply and fill the earth." The Council treats of marriage as a whole, or unit, into which various aspects enter, such as love of husband and wife and the effects of their love. People may marry primarily for love of one another, but that does not mean that they may exclude procreation of children.

I cannot understand why Fr. Mackin should make such an obviously incorrect statement as: "Nor, by the same token, can marital intercourse now be judged in terms of whether, before all else, conception is possible in a given incident of intercourse." Why the *now*? Such a thing was never taught by the Church. If it had been taught, or held,