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FAITH AND FREEDOM

KNOW THY LAITY

IRVING E. HOWARD

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FAITH AND FREEDOM

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KNOW THY LAITY

IRVING E. HOWARD

A KEEN-EYED ECCLESIASTIC CALLS ON HIS FELLOW CLERGYMEN TO GIVE HEED TO THE PROPHETIC VOICE IN THE PEW, AND TO THE LESSON TAUGHT BY CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Protestant laymen are today in a revolt. It is a revolt against churches grown old, leaders no longer leading, organizations become ends in themselves. Many major Protestant fellowships are showing the signs of this debility. The prophetic voice of the non-professional man must be stifled frequently; everything must be "official."

Lamenting is heard because new sects spring up all around. Social coercion is attempted to prevent further fragmentation. Instead of the lamenting and coercing, well might the church leaders start a market research to discover what the common man wants of religion. For the small sects around the corner stand in judgment upon the leaders' neglect of laity desires.

Thus far, the sects have arisen in most cases as attempts to recapture a primitive warmth and simplicity. In their early stages, they have usually been led by sincere laymen innocent of formal training. For the most part, they are retracing the same path trod by our own Protestant forefathers.

At the present time — on a more sophisticated level — America is hearing a lay protest of even broader implications. Laymen are re-

volting against various denominational social action organizations. With the familiar "we know what is best" attitude, social action leaders have been publishing the dogma that the ethic of Jesus implies socialism, and that some form of welfare state is the desire of the people of our churches. Laymen, first amused, have become irritated by this misrepresentation of their convictions.

The laymen have been stirred into action by the realization that these left wing leaders not only have been seeking the support of government, but have been misrepresenting themselves as the accredited spokesmen of their churches. Actually, in churches congregationally organized, it is impossible for anyone to speak for the local churches because of the very nature of the congregational polity.

An Abuse of the Churches

A large percentage of the clergy, as well as the laity, has grown concerned about clergy-laity relations. Unfortunately, this percentage does not extend proportionately into the upper levels of Protestant officialdom. Here one finds a greater interest in achieving a political goal, just as some educators wish to use the school system to manipulate the masses. Meanwhile, laymen are insisting that such policy is an abuse of the churches.

Moreover, left wing religious leaders seem to be unaware of the contradiction in which they are involved when appealing to the force

IRVING E. HOWARD is minister of the Hope Congregational Church, Worcester, Massachusetts. Faith and Freedom has regularly called upon his extensive knowledge of the history of theology and philosophy to help enunciate the ideology of freedom under God.

of government. Can a policeman with a gun force a citizen to conform to an ethic of Christian love? Can the Christian ethic be legislated into structure of society? Hardly. The legislator or the enforcer who deals with social conduct must endeavor to correct the undesirable consequences of unethical behavior. But the Christian ethic concerns itself primarily with motivation, rather than with consequences.

This is not an argument for the abandonment of law, or for the abolition of the priest and of church organization. Anything to endure must be organized, and professional leadership is a necessary part of such organization. This is a plea, however, that we see the function of the church leader as something different from that of a legislator or policeman, and vastly more delicate. For the religious leader is the servant, both of the layman and God. And therefore, he must heed the laity, as well as be heeded.

The voice of the laity will more likely be in accord with God's wishes, than will the declarations of an entrenched religious officialdom. Indeed, if history teaches us anything, it teaches that movements toward greater spirituality have usually come from lay sources. Let us emphasize this point by summarily reviewing Christian history; for that history warrants frequent and lucid retrospection.

Christian History

The truest way to begin, is with the apperception that Christian history forever repeats the same story. A religious personality with a great insight gathers a few followers and forms a loose fellowship. As the fellowship grows, an organization begins to emerge. Gradually, whatever names may be supplied to the two groups, the distinction arises between clergy and laity.

Frequently, the religion survives a period of persecution, to find itself accepted socially and enjoying prestige and influence. Then its leaders seek greater power and privilege through union with government. But whenever religion becomes politically powerful, it loses its primitive passion. Then a prophetic individual, usually not of the priestly class, seeks to revitalize the faith. A movement is started to recapture the lost vision, and this is

either incorporated into the main body and swallowed up, or driven out to become a splinter organization.

The significant element is that the impulse toward greater spirituality commonly arises outside the sacred enclosure of organized religion. The prophetic voice comes from some non-professional like Amos, who boasted that he was neither "a prophet nor the son of a prophet."

Jesus of Nazareth was a layman. He could not claim the formal qualifications of a religious expert; and organized religion joined forces with the power of government to contrive the crucifixion of the Son of Man.

Except for Paul, the Christian leaders of the first century were non-professionals. Driven out of the synagogue, the Christian lay movement spread over the Roman Empire with miraculous vitality. Gradually though, as it developed its own professional leadership, it grew sufficiently lukewarm to provoke the Montanist protest as early as 160 A.D.

Then, in 313, the Emperor Constantine administered the kiss of death to spiritual Christianity by the Edict of Toleration. After that, the interests of the church became entangled with the interests of the state. The church supported the wars of the state, fattened on privileges granted by the state, and consequently was corrupted in spirit.

Attempts were made to recapture the early spirit, all originating from lay sources such as the Waldensians, the Albigensians and the Franciscans. The movements were either destroyed, incorporated into the church, or like the Waldensians, turned into splinter religious organizations.

The Reformation

When the gathering storm of the Protestant Reformation broke in all its fury in the sixteenth century, it was the product of a dissatisfied laity more than it was the quarrel of theologians. The master-mind of the Reformation, John Calvin, was a layman trained for a career in law. In the church polity he pioneered, laymen shared with the clergy in the administration of church affairs.

For all their excesses, the Anabaptists spun

out the practical consequences of the "priesthood of all believers." Our picture of the Anabaptists has been distorted by their enemies, but we do know that they looked upon government as a concession to the sinfulness of man, and called for a separation of church and state. Their own churches were governed by the congregation, and they considered every member a missionary obligated to spread the gospel.

The Separatists continued this lay revolt against the ecclesiastical authority. They demanded the right for congregations to choose their own spiritual leaders, even from among the congregation. The Separatists who sailed to Plymouth on the Mayflower represented a revolt of the pew against the power of a politically-minded church. Yet this lay revolt of the Pilgrims was destined for still another struggle: against the clericalism of Puritan Boston. This struggle brought forth the Cambridge Platform of 1648, supporting the Plymouth idea of independence for the local congregation.

Missionary Activity

Laymen also took the lead in modern Protestant *missionary* activity. The German Pietist movement, seeking to revitalize the sterile churches, founded the University of Halle, which became the birthplace of the first organized foreign missionary effort. The greatest missionary statesman was the pietistic layman, Count Zinzendorf. Unable to bring the Moravians into the Lutheran Church, he organized them into a dedicated army of missionaries.

In England a Baptist cobbler, William Carey, dared to challenge a ministerial meeting at Nottingham with the need for foreign missions. He was promptly silenced, but not deterred. In spite of opposition, he organized the first *Baptist Missionary Society*, and sailed for India to establish the first Baptist mission.

In America, too, missionary activity was born without benefit of organized religion. American foreign missions date their genesis from the

famous "Haystack Prayermeeting." Seven Williams College students taking refuge from a thunderstorm under a haystack, prayed and there conceived the idea of banding themselves together to carry on missionary work. Their efforts resulted in the *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, the first organization of its kind in America.

American Denominations

The two largest American Protestant denominations, the Methodists and the Baptists, also owe their early success to lay activity. The Father of Methodism, John Wesley, founded not churches, but "societies" under lay leadership. Thus arose the Methodist lay preacher, to whom many of the phenomenal results of Methodism in pioneer America can be attributed. The lay preacher rode his circuit on horseback, knowing only one book, but preaching in the language of the people.

The Baptist story differed. Not having an organizing genius like John Wesley, the Baptists owed their success to the Amos-like farmer preachers. They were to be found everywhere on the American frontier, steadfastly insisting upon liberty, local autonomy, and the separation of church and state.

Today again, the laity is taking an active interest in religion. An abundance of literature devoted to the power of faith and prayer, is coming from secular writers. Secular magazines are featuring testimonies of lay people who are sometimes not closely related to any church, but who have found a satisfying faith.

It is justifiable, then, in the light of religious history, to repeat our warning: Unless Protestant leadership adjusts its policies to the present lay demand for personal religion, Protestantism may find itself engulfed in a new and bold reformation. Indeed, that reformation may be in our very midst, in the growing sects and cults that are furnishing multitudes with a faith to live by.



THE DIRECTOR'S PAGE

TODAY'S ADVERSE TRENDS certainly seem to validate the thesis Spiritual Mobilization has consistently held through its eighteen years of service.

Spiritual Mobilization has always contended that the only hope for our civilization is at the spiritual level. We have been critical of political, sociological, economic and other programs insofar as they have obscured the basic spiritual needs.

Our credo has been: "Man, as a child of God, has certain inalienable rights and responsibilities. The state must not be permitted to usurp them; it is the duty of the church to help preserve them." This credo still stands.

To this credo more and more practical thinkers are coming, or more accurately, are being driven. Starry-eyed idealists, on the other hand, have pursued this or that hobby, this or that theory; but as on Mark Twain's road that started wide (then narrowed into a cow path and a squirrel track), they have ended in a knot hole.

Everywhere people are turning to God — are crying out we must have God's help to save our nation and our civilization. But the cry of despair is never enough. Nor is the credo or slogan sufficient. It must be spelled out in simple terms. People must be told and shown what it means to get back to God, to be mindful of the presence of God, to live according to God's laws.

The people have a right to expect us, the clergy, to provide the leadership — telling how to gain God's blessings — telling what conditions to fulfill, — telling this in simple, understandable terms. It is our job to fill the religious vacuum which otherwise fills with Communist ideology.

For today, religious illiteracy is appalling, while the stream of spiritual vitality has dangerously thinned. Parents as a whole are doing decidedly less for their children's faith than parents did a generation ago. Yet we reap as we sow. Both good and evil have cumulative consequences in this world. Many present "bad

crops" are the inevitable result of bad sowing year after year.

It is time for the pulpit and the church program to spell out the remedies for the bad crops, to outline courses of action which can be understood and followed. There can be no effective spiritual mobilization to meet the threats of paganism and apostasy, until issues are clarified and techniques for remedying ills are presented in elemental form.

Despite the fact that there is more good than evil in the world, the good cannot be determinatively effective until problems are understood, and until the channels leading into the Infinite Resource, God's Power, are understandably defined.

Many parents are trying frantically to help their children, but they do not know how to deal with present issues. They attend church worship or parents' meetings but fail to get the specifics. They go home with confusing generalities in their minds, and naturally cannot relate them to their children's problems.

The great need then, is not for more frightening statements about the evils of communism; rather the great need is for simple contemplation of God's will, God's laws, — and as conditions therefor, the discovery of simple, real pathways into God's presence, power and peace. Many are today moving along these lines, but not enough.

There must be a mass movement; and the preachers cannot bring this about alone. Laymen must take up their responsibility to assist the preachers as far as necessary. Only with the religious fervor shown by laymen in past centuries, can a mass movement toward God be developed.

We find the highly regarded Dr. Elton Trueblood recently placing timely emphasis upon revitalizing the laity. How do you feel about these matters? We of Spiritual Mobilization are eager to be more helpful, and would welcome your suggestion as to how we might improve our efforts.



THE EDITOR COMMENTS

A TIME-HONORED RIGHT dear to all liberty-loving Americans has only recently undergone a serious attack in the United States Supreme Court. The right: freedom of the press. The attacker: a committee of our own U. S. House of Representatives.

The case had a happy ending, but not an entirely satisfactory one. Here is the story:

The respondent, Dr. Rumely, was Secretary of the Committee for Constitutional Government, a private organization engaged in selling books and other political literature. In 1950, Dr. Rumely refused to disclose to the House committee on lobbying, the names of bulk purchasers of the CCG's books. For this, he was sentenced to a fine of \$1,000 and to imprisonment for six months.

Deciding in Dr. Rumely's favor, however, the Supreme Court (this March) ruled that the House committee had only been authorized (by the House) to investigate *direct* Congressional lobbying.

But when the court made that ruling, one of the facts it neglected to consider was pointed out by Justice Douglas in his admirable concurring opinion. He observed that the House had had "squarely before it the question of whether a narrow rather than a broad" authority was to be extended to the committee on lobbying. As Justice Douglas therefore noted: "The Court is repudiating what the House emphatically affirmed, when it now says that the . . . Committee lacked the authority to compel respondent to answer the questions propounded."

Then Justice Douglas proceeded to bring the real and important issue into focus. In his words: "I come then to the constitutional questions: The command that 'Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom . . . of the press' expresses the confidence that the safety of society depends on the tolerance of government for hostile as well as friendly criticism . . .

"Once the government can demand of a publisher the names of the purchasers of his publications, the free press as we know it disappears. Then the spectre of a government agent

will look over the shoulder of everyone who reads . . . "The government will cast a menacing shadow "over literature that does not follow the dominant party line . . . "

In our estimation, this concurring opinion put to shame the justices who felt constrained to look the other way when the Bill of Rights was subjected to attack in our highest court.

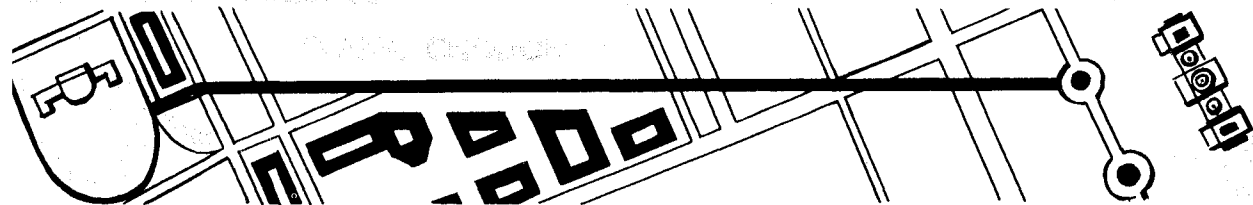
There happens to be a moral to this case; and one that we hope is obvious: The people can never dare put any more faith than is necessary in the man in government. It is, tritely but truly, the ruggedness and integrity of the individual private citizen which must, in the long run, be depended on to keep us free. The Clover Business Letter of April pin-pointed this truth when it declared: "The torch of liberty will continue to burn brightly so long as we have men like Dr. Rumely who will risk a jail term to defend one of our basic freedoms."

Once men in government are given the right to investigate and regulate our private lives, there is almost no stopping some of them. They begin to develop all kinds of queer notions with regard to the extents and necessities of their powers; they become amazingly conscientious in the pursuit of their mighty responsibilities. Listen, for example, to the ranting condition into which the House committee descended, when its driving curiosity to pry and peep into private affairs was frustrated. Note the neurotic busy-body lengths to which the committee wanted to go:

House committee: "Because of the refusal of the CCG to produce pertinent financial records, this committee was unable to determine whether or not" the CCG "is evading or violating the letter or the spirit of the" law "by the establishment of a class of contributions called 'Receipts from the sale of books and literature,' or whether they are complying with . . . law which requires amendments to strengthen it."

If the House committee's real purpose was to investigate possible violations of law (which we doubt), it assumed duties which should properly be handled (under the Constitution) by the Department of Justice. When legislative committees assume executive functions, liberty hangs in the balance.

ALONG PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE



ne of the wiser Congressmen was asked: "What's cooking with your Congress?" "Unfortunately," he said, "too much. So far, we haven't passed a law, which is a most commendable record. We could have improved on that record only by repealing a number of laws. I'm afraid, though, that we will soon spoil it all with a mess of legislation."

This past month, some of the bills that have been taking shape in committees, were displayed on the floor of the House. Some will be disposed of in May and June. Most of them will be argued and amended and returned to committee for more doctoring. It will be July, or maybe August, when weariness and the heat and the urgency to get back home will combine to force a flock of votes. The month before adjournment is the time for decision — the last few days comparing in confusion with a bargain basement at sale time.

At this time, when the hubbub concerns the doings of the investigational committees, (which will offer their suggestions for remedial legislation as late as possible), the real interest of both Houses is in the House Ways and Means Committee. It is struggling with the budget. Every rumor that leaks out of its room is listened to with bated breath, for in the final analysis the policy of the Administration will be largely determined by the amount of money it gets from Congress. Hence, while the public is regaled with headline stories of communistic influence in the Voice of America, the members want to know how much money Ways and Means intends to appropriate for that agency.

It was a matter of importance, therefore, when the chairman of that committee wag-gishly said to a non-member (in the presence of this reporter), "Larry, would you object if we cut the appropriation for the Voice to two million?" "That," was the response, "would

mean its liquidation." "I know," said the chairman, and walked away.

There is no assurance, however, that the budget which finally emerges from Ways and Means will be the one passed by Congress. In fact, when one reflects on what will happen to it one feels that the present labors of the members are of little use.

There are 1300 agencies in the Executive Branch, and it is obvious that the committee cannot interrogate all of them. Only the few that have come in for much criticism can be heard, and even with these the committee cannot do more than ask a few pointed questions. None of the members can encompass the meaning of a billion dollars (and there are seventy-nine billions in the agency prepared budget).

The best the committee can do in the circumstances is to close its eyes, and cut on an arbitrary percentage basis. (As everyone here knows, the estimates anticipate such cuts and are prepared accordingly.) When the budget finally gets to the floor, the cuts will come in for criticism — not only from the affected bureaus, but from House members who have been hearing from back home.

Somehow (perhaps the bureaus can explain it), a number of citizens will have heard about the cuts before the House as a whole is aware of them; and these citizens, cognizant of the effect of these cuts on their personal affairs, will write indignant letters to their representatives. Then, in the cloakroom of Congress, will come a period of horse-trading: "You vote to restore this cut and I will vote to restore the one you want."

And so, while at this writing there is talk of cutting Mr. Truman's left-over budget to sixty-one billions, it will end up looking more like the seventy-nine billions.

The Donnybrook over the nomination of Charles E. Bohlen as Ambassador to Russia was interpreted in Washington as a continuation of the campaign fight for the Republican nomination. Whether deserving the designation or not, Taft was the standard-bearer for the anti-collectivist sentiment in the country; Eisenhower was the hope of Republicans of New Deal persuasion. That's the way it is under our system of elections: we vote for candidates, not principles, and we hope that the candidates embody the principles for which we stand.

Political seers here knew that the nomination and election of Eisenhower did not bring peace in the Republican ranks. They have been predicting a flare-up between the Administration (hemmed in by New Deal bureaucracy) and those Congressmen who are committed to stopping the interventionist trend. For three months this expected explosion was kept under control. There was a sort of undeclared truce between the two sides, a truce induced by political considerations: first, the country had placed its faith in Eisenhower — was for “giving the guy a chance” — and would have resented open opposition to him. Second, the Republicans were hoping against hope that the basic issue could be kept out of the arena until after the 1954 election. For these reasons, the anti-New Deal section of the Senate, holding its nose, helped to confirm several presidential nominees who were definitely representative of the philosophy that had been apparently repudiated at the polls.

But Bohlen was too much; not because of the suspicion of “disloyalty” attached to his name, but because he is unmistakably committed to the Acheson-Truman foreign policy. That cannot be questioned. He was not only a Yalta man, he traces his thinking back to Harry Hopkins, whose protege he was. That was the real reason for the revolt in the Senate. And the revolt was more pronounced than the final vote on his nomination indicated. Privately, a number of senators who voted for confirmation expressed dissatisfaction with the nomination; they went along with the President for the political reasons above mentioned. Mr. Taft, in particular, urged the wait-until-after-1954

argument, and as a result his prestige among Republicans is beginning to wane.

The opinion along Pennsylvania Avenue is that the Bohlen affair was the detonator of the fight that had to come. From now on, they say, Eisenhower will find the going tough; Conservatives in both houses will concentrate on his legislative proposals, opposing anything that smells of new dealism just as vigorously as they opposed similar legislation asked for by the Democratic president.

Last month the headlines blared out the “news” that Chairman Harold H. Velde of the House Un-American Activities Committee had advocated “an investigation of the churches of America.” The remark was supposed to have been made in a radio broadcast. It was never made. What the congressman had said, in answer to a question, was:

“I cannot tell which direction it [a possible investigation] would take, whether it would be into some of the organizations which are affiliated with various church organizations, or whether it would be individuals. I rather presume it would be individuals.”

What the newspapers deemed “good copy” was the wild charge of Bishop Bromley Oxnam of Washington, later echoed by other local clergymen, that Mr. Velde proposed to investigate the churches and religion. Not a word in the radio broadcast supported such copy.

This reporter paid a visit to Mr. Velde's office to learn about the reaction of the ministry to Bishop Oxnam's false charge. In one pile there were perhaps a hundred letters supporting the Bishop's idea; while another pile, two feet high and pressed down by a heavy book, consisted of letters and telegrams from clergymen of all denominations urging the congressman to get at the Communists. At least two of the telegrams asked the congressman to call on the senders, if he needed money to carry on.

The true story of this incident should end with the obvious: the clergymen of America, being good Americans and good Christians, are not easily taken in by the unrepresentative “organizations and individuals” in their midst.

TWO AUTHORS COME IN AT CLOSER QUARTERS TO COMPLETE THEIR DEBATE-BY-MAIL ON THE ALLEGED VIRTUES AND VICES OF A SOCIETY UNDER POLITICAL COERCION.

**EDMUND A. OPITZ
JOHN C. BENNETT**

DEAR DR. BENNETT: DEAR MR. OPITZ:

PART TWO

Dear Dr. Bennett:

In your gracious and helpful letter, you put your finger on several points at which the issues come into focus. This is most helpful, as it induces each of us to produce a more precise formulation of his views.

You have numbered three sections of your letter and I shall take them up in turn.

1. I know that you are not an absolutist and are concerned to limit the state. But certain questions were raised in my mind as to whether or not your thought gave evidence of any norms by which the state might be limited on principle. In my previous letter I questioned your relinquishment of *a priori* principles for judging what is and what is not within the competence of the state.

You list devices for limitation; and there I am all with you, but then you confirm my original doubts by saying, "We have to work here experimentally rather than dogmatically." This is not as explicit as one might wish, but it reads as though you are endorsing the prevailing view in these matters, that the moral principles by which individuals are judged do not apply when individuals act on behalf of government.

This is bluntly put in the book which you recommended in your speech as the best in the field, *Christianity and the State*, by William Temple. The author quotes the saying "What is morally wrong cannot be politically right," and

comments "This maxim is usually intended, by those who make use of it, to declare that it cannot be right for the state to do what it would be wrong for an individual to do; and this is completely untrue." In short, the state is beyond the human judgments of good and evil which are relevant to individuals.

The Right of Self Defense

I would take sharp issue with this point of view, which I gather is, or is close to, your own understanding of the matter. The reasoning behind the philosophy which holds that there are *a priori* moral principles which are relevant to politics runs somewhat as follows: If the individual has any inherent, God-given right to be on this earth at all, then he has the corollary right to defend his life. This is true of all men equally. They are within their moral rights to use force if need be to defend themselves against violence initiated against them.

If men individually have this moral right, they may severally delegate it provisionally to an agent. This agent, government, has the moral right to use force only as the delegating individuals have a right; namely, defensively to neutralize force. This accords with the basic principle that no man has a right to impose his will on another, and with its corollary that every person has a right to resist the imposition of an alien will over his own.

2. The true prototype of government is the constable, a man whose specialized occupation is to perform the necessary and social function of defense for members of society. Government is the social apparatus of coercion and compulsion. A law is not a mere suggestion; it has a penalty provision as a rider. There is no need to

DR. JOHN C. BENNETT of Union Theological Seminary is a widely known professor of theology and an able speaker for social planning. **THE REVEREND EDMUND A. OPITZ** of Spiritual Mobilization recently won an award from the Freedoms Foundation for his essay, the "Theology of Freedom."

pass a law to make people do what they do naturally or can easily be persuaded to do.

Every law supersedes the wills of some individuals, forcing them to do what their own will and conscience would not lead them to do; or, conversely, restrains them from doing what they want to do or think they ought to do. It is morally right to use legal force to frustrate criminal action for the protection of peaceful citizens. But the use of legal force against peaceful citizens is something else again. It impairs the moral principle which should guide political action.

There are two groups of men who tend to be unaware of the coercive nature of political action; those in the apparatus who actually carry out the compulsion, and those who, like yourself, advocate the extension of government functions, regulations, and controls.

When you advocate that a given social end be accomplished by means of government action, the construction of housing, say, you will persuade a few people. You would not, however, persuade people like myself who would regard your scheme as morally and economically unsound. Even though you could not persuade me, you could, if you succeeded in capturing the machinery of government for your purpose, force me to go along with you. I would be legally deprived of my property to further your scheme. If I decided to cast prudence aside and stand by my principles to the bitter end, I would be the victim of physical violence by agents of the state, and might even be killed resisting the officers who came to attach my property.

Helping Some by Hurting Others

This is not what you advocate, but it is the end product of your advocacy. If you are opposed to this end-product, you should desist from advocating the course of political action which produces it.

The sincere intention of the collectivist or the planner is to help people. But he chooses to help people through political action, which when spelled out means helping some people by hurting others. This injury to people can be made legal, and if there are only pragmatic and experimental sanctions for political activity, then

I have nothing more to say. But if, as I believe, there are *a priori* moral principles by which political action is judged, then there is a real issue here.

3. Government is an instrument of freedom when it secures each person in his rights. To carry out this function, it may have to use coercion on individuals guilty of injuring other people.

You talk of another kind of coercion, that resulting "from the blind working of economic processes—the working of the business cycle." You use this phrase as if it is self-evident that men are put upon their mettle to consciously direct these processes by political action. One might speak about the blind working of the digestive processes, but when he does he recognizes that this means they are in good shape.

What you speak of as "the blind working of economic processes" is really the resultant of millions of individuals making voluntary decisions as to how they will dispose their limited energy so as to maximize their material and spiritual satisfactions. A planner can deprive them of this power of choice only by using force on them. His seizure of power brings economic chaos, but that is not all. Power ministers to human pride and brings spiritual disaster.

Tyranny of Power

In the economic field, the only thing political power can do is grant privileges; that is to say, it can confer advantages on some at the expense of others. This has always and everywhere been a feature of political action.

You speak of "the tyranny of private centers of economic power." Examine anything you regard as a private center of economic power and you will find it rests upon the prior grant of political privilege, a tariff, for instance, or a subsidy. Or else it represents the failure of government to enforce laws against predation. So long as there is political interference in the marketplace, which you advocate, there will be this kind of injustice and the resulting economic dislocations.

Your recommendation for fighting totalitarianism is to accept a little of its philosophy. I don't know what you intend to mean by the

phrase “ineffective state,” but I have some idea of what you mean by an effective one. An “effective state,” in your view, is one which throws a vast network of regulations over economic activities, such as housing, insurance, medical care, electrical power, and so on. The libertarian does not want even an “ineffective state” in these realms, he wants the state out of these realms altogether. In these areas government cannot positively intervene without being an instrument of injustice. The libertarian does not want a weak government. He wants a government sufficiently virile and alert to perform adequately the functions within its competence.

The Planned Economy

The collectivist or planned economy philosophy has a grave defect. It tends towards a fixation, at the level of comprehension in social affairs men have now attained. It gives legal sanction to practices which trouble the sensitive conscience, and it places legal obstacles in the path of the gifted innovator. The libertarian philosophy, on the other hand, is open-ended toward life. It is so keenly aware of human limitations and pretensions to finality that it declares: No man has a right to impose his will on another.

The point of view that government should accept extended and accelerated functions in modern society, working experimentally and pragmatically, means that people will be politically directed and controlled in ever-widening areas of their lives. The logical end of such a scheme is a society in which whatever is not forbidden is compulsory. Practically, of course, it is recognized that things will stop short of this impossible ideal. But no matter the point at which an experimental equilibrium is reached, the individual is confronted with a considerable network of laws which severely narrow his choice of alternatives.

When government intervenes in the peaceful activities of its citizens, the range of human choice is limited. Thinking and action on a problem tend to stabilize around the government’s provisional solution. Alternative means of accomplishing similar ends are penalized. Research on alternative solutions tends to dry up.

The libertarian philosophy aims to give every person full scope for the exercise of his faculties by allowing him the complete range of alternatives from which to choose. In order to secure this freedom for every person, one condition is laid down: No man has a right to impair the freedom of another. If a man, out of the wide range of alternative choices, elects to injure another, the law rightfully comes into play. It is morally right to use the coercive apparatus of government to defend each person in his life and possessions against the murderer, the thief, the libeller, the fraud. Men are free to make criminal choices, but in justice to other men, criminals must face the consequences of their actions.

A peaceful society is the equilibrium achieved under a system of the division of labor, the marketplace, the free exchange of goods, services, and ideas. This equilibrium is constantly threatened by private acts of initiated violence on the part of those who cannot or will not abide by the rules—and by government itself when it perverts its true function. The true function of government is to defend individuals by neutralizing this private violence with a display of whatever legal violence may be necessary. Government curbs the peace-breakers so that the peaceful business of society can go on, and in this action conforms to the moral norms which we recognize as binding upon individuals.

The issues of the modern world come down to a clash of principles. The appeal and apparent strength of the totalitarian philosophy is mainly in its bold logic. Accept its basic assumptions about the nature of man and society, and its conclusions about government follow in order.

I don’t think men can confront it adequately unless they have a set of contrary principles and are willing to stand by the logic implicit in them. Those principles need further elucidation and the logic needs criticism, and I am grateful to you for the stimulus your comments will provide for men of an inquiring mind to sift these matters again. EDMUND A. OPITZ





Dear Mr. Opitz:

I shall begin my answer by trying to clear up one apparent misunderstanding and then I shall deal with several major issues which divide us so completely that in our thinking about society we seem to live in two quite different worlds.

The misunderstanding has to do with your discussion of *a priori* principles. You assume that my experimental attitude toward the discovery of the precise limits of the state indicates that moral principles may apply to individuals in private life, but not to the policies of governments. I believe that the difficulty lies not in the absence of permanent and relevant moral principles, but in the fact that on most concrete issues in life we find that there is tension between the very principles by which we must act.

The most common tensions are between justice and freedom or order and freedom. Over and above all of the particular principles which should guide the actions of the Christian is the commandment of love for the neighbor, for all neighbors. The complexity of our moral decisions comes in part from the fact that there are conflicts between the interests and sometimes the real needs of our various neighbors. So most Christian decisions have to be made within very complex and rapidly changing situations with no *a priori* principle to settle for us exactly how we are to relate those competing principles and interests to each other at a moment of decision.

I do not believe for a minute that "the state is beyond the human judgments of good or evil which are relevant to individuals." It is true that the state has functions which are different from the functions of individuals. It should perform those functions for the sake of moral ends but the complexity of the conflict between values and interests is greater in the case of the state than it is in the case of the individual. The individual citizen who helps to make decisions about state policy, or the statesman who tries to implement policy, if he is a Christian, will be guided ultimately by a concern for the welfare and dignity of all of the people affected.

Motives controlled by this caring for all neighbors affected, humility before God which keeps us from allowing any *idea* of a social system or a social goal to become absolute or frozen, and continued sensitivity to the needs and interests of all the others who are involved—these are the Christian moral resources rather than *a priori* principles which are so precise that we can deduce concrete decisions from them in each situation.

Now, as to the issues which seem to divide us most deeply:

1. I fail to see that you have much place for the community or society as having value in itself. You deal with individuals who form states in self-defense but you have very little to say about the living community as such. Paul's words about our being "members one of another" applies to the church in the context of the epistle, but in a less complete way it applies to the community at large to which we all belong. The actual interdependence of men in community is obvious enough, but I have in mind something more: the possibility of realizing common values in society. A society is a better society, for example, if it is not divided into the very rich and the very poor, if there are no families within it who lack a certain minimum of protection against the hazards of unemployment, sickness and old age.

There is a *common good* which can only be obtained by common action. The state is in many cases the most useful instrument of common action. It should never become an end in itself and the common action which it makes possible should always be under moral criticism. Coercion of individuals who are unwilling to be taxed in order to make possible this common good may have its evil aspects, but it seems to me that you exaggerate it out of all proportion and that you never weigh it realistically against coercion by circumstances, which is often a far greater human burden. Moreover, I think that you do not take account of the fact that, when some forms of this common good are embodied in actual institutions and social habits, the vast majority of those who at first see only the fact that they are coerced come to

recognize the common good for what it is and accept it as just.

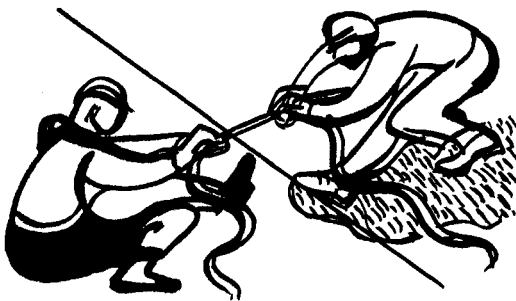
2. Just as you seem to me to fail to emphasize society and the common good, also you seem to me to fail to emphasize the corporate, large scale threats both to the common good and to the welfare of individuals. Modern life is so complicated that its problems cannot be solved by many individuals acting independently. You apparently believe that the *laissez-faire* conception of economic life is still relevant and that individual decisions, freed from all interference by the state, can be counted on to assure a stable economy and a just society. I believe that you are consistent in this and that you would be as hard on the use of the state by business groups to gain special privileges such as tariffs for themselves as you are on those who argue for a measure of economic planning. I believe that you are as much opposed in principle to private monopoly as to state intervention. Perhaps there would be much to be said for your position if we could return to a very simple individualistic economy with no vast enterprises and with very small units of interdependence. Actually you allow that picture of a simple economy to which it is now impossible to return, to obstruct the kind of action that is necessary to prevent disaster in the only economy which we are likely to have.

Take the one most obvious problem—the prevention of large scale and long continued unemployment when the defense spending begins to taper off. Do you believe that we can prevent a serious depression with socially disastrous unemployment if the nation as a whole fails to use government to devise corrective policies? If we were dealing with impersonal counters and

not with people we might say: “let the deflation and the unemployment come until we get stability on a quite different level.” But that is to ignore the human consequences of policy. The state will have to act with boldness and imagination to coordinate the efforts of private enterprise and to supplement private with public enterprise. For you to invoke *a priori* principles to inhibit such activity by the state is to assume responsibility for the immediate suffering which would result, and for the political and social consequences which are likely to follow.

I believe that we have a chance in this country to preserve large areas of private enterprise but there is one condition that must be met: there must be sufficient cooperation between government and the various elements in the economy to prevent socially disastrous inflation or deflation. If we fail at this point, the alternative to such a mixed economy is not your program of decentralization and of complete individualism but rather a state of tyrannical collectivism.

3. There is a basic difference of emphasis between us in connection with the question: with whose freedom are we most concerned? You seem to put all of your emphasis on the freedom of those who already have well established rights and privileges in society, who already have property or private sources of security. Your whole program neglects the people who are always in the vast majority and who have not yet won such a position of privilege or security. You may think that organized labor is catching up in this respect but this is a very recent development and it is doubtful if the gains of labor would survive a long depression without help from the state. The state often is able to defend the weak against the strong. You cannot appeal to an earlier and purer capitalism in which this function of the state was not necessary. The past century has seen the very slow correction of the horrible exploitation and injustice of capitalism by the use of democratic processes. Karl Marx believed that this was impossible for he thought that democracy was a mere facade, but he was proven wrong and as a result we are developing in this country a real



alternative to Marxist collectivism.

Central in this development is the opening up of opportunities for all children so that, as far as possible, they may have access to the kind of education and medical care and other advantages which will enable them to develop according to their capacities. There is still much more to be done along this line in this country. If you believe in equal opportunity for all, it is essential to do what can be done to counteract the inequality of opportunity for so many children resulting from the poverty of their parents.

Private Charity Not Adequate

This extension of opportunities, of rights and of freedom should not be left to private charity. One reason is that private charity is not adequate for the size of the problem. To me a more important reason is that this extension of opportunities should be regarded as a matter of justice. Christian generosity often shows itself best in the willingness to be taxed or to cooperate in the interests of justice. You may say that this is merely a case of "robbing Peter to pay Paul." But Peter's wealth is itself the product of a complicated social process to which the community as a whole contributes. The community has a responsibility to weigh many values and interests here and it must give great weight to the claims of Paul who, as a child, should have opportunities that are as good as those of Peter's child. If our American experience means anything it is doubtful if Peter will either suffer personally or lose his incentive.

Children have rights before they earn anything. But any citizen who works should be regarded as having rights which are the moral equivalent of the more familiar rights of property. In a complicated industrial society the rough and ready methods of determining who gets what are always in need of correction. Society owes it to itself that there be no large body of unemployed, but one can go beyond that and say that the individual worker wins, through years of work, something like a property right in his relation to his job. Even more obviously the man who has worked all of his life has a right to social security as one of the results of his labor.

In conclusion I shall bring together two criti-

cisms of your position which underlie all that I say. The first is that you are so one-sided in your emphasis upon the economic freedom of those who are now strong enough to exercise it that you neglect many other values and needs to which the community must do justice. The second is that you look in only one direction for the threats to freedom. Freedom to be real must be accompanied by actual opportunity and to keep the door of opportunity open for all does require corporate action by the community through its instrument, the state. But even more important is the threat to freedom that comes when the problems of a complicated and dynamic economy go unsolved. It is in such a situation of popular frustration and despair that the promises of totalitarian shortcuts get their best hearing. Insofar as you are successful in preventing experiments in the solution of the real problems of our economy and of our people you and your movement will help to destroy freedom.

JOHN C. BENNETT

EDITOR'S NOTE: At the close of his letter, Dr. Bennett said, "If you find that in this letter I misrepresent your thought in any way, feel quite free to add a reply."

This is a temptation difficult to resist, especially when one is given the opportunity to get in the last word. But although Mr. Opitz (and no doubt Dr. Bennett) have pertinent rebuttal they would like to make, it was thought best to conclude at this point and invite contributions from our readers.

We would welcome the opportunity to carry criticism — pro or con — to any of the ideas or concepts developed by either of the parties in this debate. We are sure both of the debators would be happy to have your expressions. Will you give us yours now?

It would be helpful, too, to have your guidance in planning future debates-on-paper. Is this type of feature useful? What topics and what participants would you like to see appear in these debates?

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE LORD IN THE HALLS OF THE PEOPLE?

THIS IS THE LAST OF A THREE PART SERIES ON THE CHURCH IN WASHINGTON POLITICS

There is a controversy in virtually all the churches of America over the matter of "religious lobbying." It doesn't break into the newspapers very often, but the ferment is always at work.

The Methodist Federation for Social Action exemplifies the reason why the controversy has arisen. This federation has issued resolutions and made moves as if representing the entire Methodist Church. Actually, the federation does not even represent the views of a substantial minority of the Methodist bishops, much less the thousands of ministers and millions of laymen. In all candor, it seems to represent only the views of Harry Ward, its long-time executive secretary, and a few scattered adherents who believe it is wise for the federal government to do everything for the people.

Counter Actions

The Methodist bishops finally ordered the group to use the word "unofficial" after its title, and denied it office space in official Methodist buildings. Even so, many Methodists have formed an organization called the Methodist Circuit Riders, in order to combat "left wing" tendencies they say are still apparent among the official agencies of their church. Virtually the same conflict may be noted in the Congregational-Christian Church. Its Council for Social Action followed a party line hardly distinguishable from that of the Truman Administration. As a result, a Committee Opposing Congregational Political Action was formed.

The American Council of Christian Laymen (headquartered in Madison, Wisconsin), which is composed of Protestant laymen of all possible churches, has been seeking to gain adherents to fight against "social action," and particularly, social action in Washington.

It isn't generally realized, but the same basic conflict has been going on in the Roman Catholic Church and among Jewish groups. While in the Roman Catholic Church no formal organization has been formed to combat the self-styled "liberals," there has been a quietly-determined movement under way inside the hierarchy to give precedence to statements emphasizing other than radical objectives. The National Catholic Welfare Conference six years ago was against the Taft-Hartley Act, and its spokesmen said so. Now, very little is heard on this score from that source.

The American Council on Judaism, too, has for years battled, on the intellectual plane and in the field of public information, the ideas of other Jewish groups that seemed to come perilously close to ideas once found in the defunct *New Masses*.

A New School

This conflict relating to religious lobbyists ranges from compulsory social security to foreign policy matters. A new school has grown up in recent decades whose adherents believe that the churches should do good by getting the federal government to spend more money in various ways, at home and abroad. This group either overlooks or ignores the fact that such a policy intrinsically consists of using the police power of the state to collect money for Christian purposes.

LARSTON D. FARRAR, editor and publisher of "The Washington Religious Review," is one of the top-flight reporters in the nation's capital today.

Yet churchmen who are striving for the heavier spending — to get Uncle Sam into more and more areas of enterprise (including public housing, public charity, and socialized medicine) — are not hesitant about claiming New Testament authority for their work. Listen to Monsignor John O'Grady, secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, who claims to speak for some 3,000 individual members and 1,000 Catholic organizations that support him.

Monsignor O'Grady

When Monsignor O'Grady was asked by Congressman Smith of Wisconsin whether he *found* any support for his position in the New Testament, he did not directly answer the question. He preached as follows:

Harbor the harborless; feed the hungry, clothe the naked. . . . If I believe in Christian charity, I am supposed to help people who do not have sufficient food; . . . I am supposed to provide clothing for them; I am supposed to provide shelter for them. Yes, I think that is my sacred obligation . . . to go out and struggle and try to find it for them, and to prevail on the Government, and try to bring it to the attention of the people . . . I think I have a firm foundation in the New Testament.

First, I am supposed to exhaust my own resources. I am supposed to try to prevail on my people . . . But when we reach the point where we cannot handle it ourselves, then, we have to go out and talk to the citizens, and say: 'This is now a responsibility of the people as a whole, and Government ought to take care of this' . . .

The Church is in Politics to Stay

The ferment in the churches is related to the fact that the churches have been in politics ever since the U. S. was founded, that they are in politics to stay, for good or bad, whether anyone wishes it or not. As it is impossible to separate a man's beliefs from his actions, it also seems impossible to separate his religious feelings from his political actions, or how he votes on any of a hundred issues.

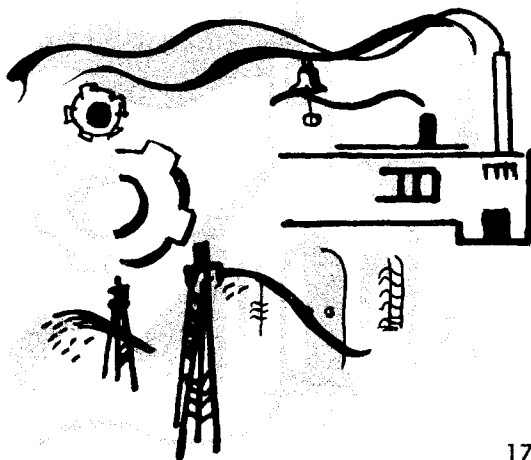
There certainly seems to be no good reason why, if they stay within certain bounds (and most of them do, of course), religious lobbyists cannot fulfill a very valuable function for their denominations, or organizations, and for the church community as a whole. Washington, in

the past five decades, has become a vast complex field for study. The trouble hasn't been — and won't be for some years to come — that the people know too much about it, but that millions of them are woefully and incredibly ignorant of the powers, prerogatives and prerequisites of the politicians who now rule us. Church people cannot be hurt in any way from learning more about Washington, and there is every reason to believe that religious representatives of all faiths can perform a useful and vital role in reporting on Washington affairs, as many do, through bulletins, columns in church publications, and in many other ways.

The Case for Religious Lobbies

Religious lobbyists are here to stay, and it is likely that there will be more next year than there are now. Better that there should be a multiplicity of aware, informed representatives of all valid viewpoints in the nation's capital, than that one or two groups should rule the roost, and thereby unduly influence the course of government.

There's a good case that can be made — from the purely business standpoint — for church representation in Washington, just as U. S. Steel, or any other big company, can make a case for their representatives who haunt the bureaus and the halls of Congress. Every church in America is a business, and most of them have a secretary, a treasurer, and/or a business manager. Denominational headquar-



ters of the organized churches handle millions of dollars each year. This money is used for mission work at home and abroad, for eleemosynary institutions, for investment purposes, etc. The large church organizations such as the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the National Council of Churches, have hundreds of employees and annual budgets running into the tens of millions of dollars. Some church annuity and pension groups handle huge sums of money, making investments in office buildings, textile mills, oil wells, or shoe manufacturing plants, to mention only a few cases.

The churches of America, with church-owned properties, represent an investment totalling tens of billions of dollars. It is natural that the various faiths should have representatives in Washington to observe the course of government — both before laws are passed and when the laws are in the hands of administrators for “interpretation.”

The Need for Social Action

If there are missionaries, they must have passports and visas. There must be someone to cut through the maze of red tape so that the messengers of God can make their boat — or plane — schedules on time. If there are investments, there must be someone to keep up with the latest tax rulings. If a factory has been left to a denomination by some departed brother, some one must keep up with legislation and interpretation that may impinge upon its tax status. If there are eleemosynary institutions, there must be someone to keep check to see whether or not these are operating in line with federal statutes relating to grants-in-aid, special funds, or other financial matters.

Many ministers and laymen, taking these facts into consideration, narrow their opposition to “social action” lobbyists. The hub of their complaint seems to be that church representatives frequently plug for objectives to which they, as citizens and as churchmen, are opposed. They say that they have no objection to the lobbyist speaking as an individual — if it is possible — but that they definitely are opposed to having him speak in their name, or in the name of their church.

Some laymen even deny that Jesus taught

“social action.” These opponents of “social action” lobbyists, when they learn that the problem intrinsically is one of semantics, seem to agree that they are not opposed to social action, *per se*, but only to the kind of social action some religious lobbyists propose, and the methods used by some social action groups which speak frequently in the name of entire church constituencies.

After all, working *against* federal domination can be “social action” just as much as working in favor of it. There is no copyright on the use of the term “social action.” The phrase is used in different ways, by different people, for different reasons. For instance, when Harry Truman was President, he took a stand squarely in favor of church social action and challenged the churches to “keep pace with . . . our changing social problems.” He took it for granted, of course, that such “social action” would follow the legislative recommendations he made, including socialized medicine, socialized farming, and, in fact, a socialized America. He specifically mentioned the Point Four program in a speech to a church gathering, as an example of “ways to carry these spiritual concepts into the field of world relations.”

On the other hand, the Brethren Service Commission, an organization of the Church of the Brethren, has “a comprehensive *private* relief and rehabilitation program,” as a sample of the “social action” its members have undertaken lately.

Two Kinds of Social Action

It is thus apparent that when Harry Truman talked about “social action” for churches, he was talking about enlisting the political support of churchmen in certain spending projects, such as Point Four, in which tax money would be used. On the other hand, it is apparent that when the Brethren Service Commission speaks of its “social education and action,” it is referring to private work carried out by individual Christians working together with no thought of taking funds from taxpayers.

The Brethren’s private type of “social action” would seem to be more in keeping with Christian principles. For Jesus did not advocate the doing of good by e.g. having Roman legion-

naires go to the rich, take their effects and give them to the poor. Rather, Jesus taught that good is to be done voluntarily, quietly, and in secret.

Precautions for Lobbyists

It is true that there can be no sharp line drawn as to what a religious lobbyist should not do or should do under *all* of a thousand given sets of circumstance. But it seems reasonable to assert that if the controversies going on are to be quelled, the churches and religious lobbyists are going to have to take certain precautions in the future. These precautions might be listed as four in number.

1 — Every spokesman for a church group before Congress must be extremely careful to tell the truth, the *whole* truth, and nothing but the truth about whom he represents and how many there are in the specific groups for which he speaks. He ought to be extremely wary about speaking *ex cathedra* on what Methodists ought, or ought not, to believe about any of a thousand-and-one economic and political subjects, most of which are open to dispute and are subject to debate from many angles.

2 — Religious lobbyists ought to be extremely careful about identifying their program with that of a particular political party, no matter what party may be in power. A layman naturally resents it when someone speaks out, in *his* name, to endorse the activities of political leaders whose objectives he may despise.

3 — Ministers and laymen ought to bring this whole subject out into the open at local, district, regional and national church meetings. By so doing, all churchmen can be made more fully aware of how the average church member feels about representation in Washington, and the limits to which lobbyists can and should go when speaking for the church, or when working to obtain information for the church in the bureaus and in Congress.

It is only fair to say that in some instances, today, all of these three precautions or rules for procedure seem to be getting attention. For example, The Baptist Council on Christian

Social Progress has made the following frank statement, in regard to its own legislative efforts:

“Always this Washington outpost operates strictly within the democratic framework of our Baptist practice. Never does it presume to authority and power which Baptist churches do not assign to any person or office. It moves modestly and quickly with a minimum of publicity. It does not make pronouncements for itself in the name of Northern Baptists, but confines its statements on behalf of the Convention to presenting and explaining the official expressions of the Convention, as contained in resolutions of the Convention and the General Council, official pronouncements of other agencies, and polls of opinion . . . Any board or agency, any state convention, any church, any Baptist, may ask this Washington Office of the Council on Christian Social Progress for information concerning proposed legislation, or to convey an expression of Baptist convictions.”

The Fourth Precaution

4 — Religious lobbyists in the future are going to have to display more discernment about the people and groups with whom they become connected. For one thing, there have been just enough evidences of Communist participation in some fringe church groups, or just enough religious participation in some Communist-front activities, to make the church member wonder.

Observance of this fourth precaution may be more difficult than the observance of the first three. But it is part of the job that churchmen have to do, as individuals and in groups, if they are going to help cleanse our society of the evils that infest it. Everyone knows — or should know — that the Communists are not the only deceivers in our world. There are many others in our midst who want to take advantage of our system for their own selfish benefit, without thought of the nation's interest today and tomorrow, and of course, without the slightest consideration for the teachings of Jesus.

WITH THE OPINION MAKERS

Secretary of State Dulles has changed his mind about the Bricker Senate Resolution. In testimony before Congress, he has said he now opposes any move to limit the extent to which our American domestic laws can be changed by means of treaties. As far as we can tell, he has adduced no sound basis for his change of heart, but why should he? He has the obvious reason.

At the time Mr. Dulles favored the Bricker Resolution, just a year ago, it would have limited the power of his predecessor. Now it is different—it limits his own authority!

Mr. Dulles has simply taken the time-honored position of those in power. He wants more of it.

o us communism is so brutal, so ugly, unreasonable and destructive, that it is hard to believe it has any appeal. Yet in much of the world it is still regarded as a dynamic religion, full of promise and idealism. In *Advance*, Mary Ely Lyman has recorded this startling excerpt from the letter of a young Chinese Communist written to a Christian missionary who was once his teacher.

"Now I am no longer the former man you knew. Apart from my body which is the same, my whole mind and thoughts have changed. I have become a new man in the classless revolutionary pioneer corps; a loyal believer in Marx-Leninism. I shall never live for myself but for the masses. In this new teaching I have found unimaginable blessing and happiness . . . "

Even the Red conquest of China is not, somehow, nearly so terrifying as is this evidence that the conquest is backed by genuine conversion from Christianity to communism. Military power will decay, but ideas will prevail. Christianity faces a real challenge—but a live evangelical faith has the answer.

year ago Supreme Court Justice Douglas said America was becoming hysterical. He meant "liberals" were afraid to speak their minds. Since then the literati have been devot-

ing much of their time and energy to this subject.

We have, at last, found a genuine case of hysteria, though of different complexion. Reverend Herman F. Reissig of the Congregational Council for Social Action said recently in *Christian Community* that "these attacks on the U.N. — as distinguished from friendly suggestions for improving it — *are attacks on the Christian faith itself.*"

Mr. Reissig means this. But fellow Christians who still dare to differ will not judge him too harshly.

The impulse to silence the opposition is a common one, frequently traceable to hysteria.

lder statesmen of all kinds—including the United States Chamber of Commerce — have been urging enactment of "stand-by controls," on wages and prices. These are to be inoperative until the government decides an emergency has arisen which warrants their being put into effect. They use the argument that while we don't need controls at the moment, they'll be mighty handy medicine to have on hand when the economic going gets tough.

F. A. Harper, in an incisive pamphlet, "Stand-by Controls," published by the Foundation for Economic Education, asks why, if the medicine of controls is good in emergencies, isn't it good all the time? If the government is a better arbiter of price than traders in a free market, then why do we so bitterly resent these controls?

First, he answers, because they are unjust and dictatorial. No price is just unless it's freely arrived at. Controls enslave the market for they allow no real bargaining. Second, because they don't work, even in emergencies. Third, because if really enforced, controls will destroy production, making it unprofitable to produce. To enact such laws is nonsense.

If it were just nonsense, we would not mention it. But it would constitute a permanent endorsement of the socialist principle that government must control commerce. This is much worse than nonsense. It is tyranny.

s a maker of opinion in this generation, Friedrich A. Hayek need bow to no one. His *Road to Serfdom* has had as much effect as any single book in convincing America that its New Deal was a highroad to national socialism.

Pondering the effects of American governmental economic aid to Europe, Dr. Hayek concludes, in a new article in *The Freeman*, that this must stop—not only to relieve American taxpayers, but because it is accelerating the socialization of Europe. Henceforth, he says, new capital abroad should come from American private investment, but it won't, because American business will take no such chance. It knows by sad experience that it is apt to be either taxed out of existence or expropriated by a socialist government.

Professor Hayek suggests as a substitute for public spending abroad, that our government indemnify American private business in foreign lands, against any loss due to political changes. He says this would be infinitely preferable to the present bad situation.

No matter how good this might be compared with the existing mess, it is sadly short of what is right. It is an angle-playing palliative which in the long run can only invite corruption and do further harm, for it accepts the principle that government, to shore up foreign relations, should guarantee private investment.

Those who have been seeking a rationale for the existence of the United Nations, looked for it eagerly last month in a *Christian Century* article written by Charles Malik entitled "Reflections on the United Nations." Dr. Malik is not only chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, he is a scholar whose opinion commands wide respect.

His verdict is that the United Nations "must" continue. He tots up a long list of its achievements, and then gives three main reasons: 1. the world has become so small; 2. smaller nations must have security; and 3. aggressive communism must be blocked.

But Dr. Malik's roster of "achievements" includes such dubious accomplishments as Korea, Iran and Palestine. These might be more aptly

cited as condemnation than as justification. And his three principal reasons, while they point to the urgent necessity for international cooperation and collective security, do not make a case for a United Nations which aspires to be a world government.

Incredible as it may seem, Dr. Malik has left unanswered all of the most urgent questions Americans are raising about the United Nations. How can we have a "united" nations, when there is such basic disagreement that delegates do not mean the same thing when they say "God" or "government" or "peace."

resident Walter Reuther of the CIO last week expressed apprehension that peace in Korea might mean a threat of depression. This is a point of view that is being echoed throughout our land today.

The opinion-makers ought to think this one through. Since when do wars bring prosperity? President Eisenhower last month stated:

This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. He adds that every new warship deprives the cold of clothing and the hungry of food.

Whence, then, comes this widespread fear of the economic consequences of peace? Mere business *activity* does not mean prosperity. It doesn't, unless we're busy at the right thing. Suppose everyone in the United States spent a year feverishly making fireworks. At the year's end we'd have a magnificent stockpile of firecrackers, but nothing else. When it was all over, we could have a bang-up celebration, but we'd be mighty hungry afterward.

That's just the way it is with war production. It does not improve the lot of anyone. If real peace ever comes, we will be able to spend as much time on vacation as we now spend on war effort—and the country will be just as well off economically. What will happen is that we'll turn our efforts once more to improving our lot—and with it, that of the whole world.



CURRENT READING

GOALS OF ECONOMIC LIFE

A. DUDLEY WARD, Editor

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This is the first volume of a significant study of the relation of economics to Christian ethics. The study was projected in 1949, when the Church and Economic Life Department of the Federal Council of Churches secured a sizeable subsidy for the enterprise from the Rockefeller Foundation. The concrete result will be six books, which should provide an extended and skillful discussion of the points at issue.

It will not be an unbiased discussion, judging from several indications, but rather a study slanted heavily toward an ideological and religious justification of the extension of government powers and controls. The leanings of the Church and Economic Life Department are well known, as are the viewpoints of names associated prominently with the project. This study will be as definitive a statement of the philosophy of Christian social action as ample funds and academic prestige can make it.

A Broad Study

The volume under review is a symposium by fifteen scholars. In addition to chapters by economists and theologians, there are contributions by a biologist, an anthropologist, a psychologist, and others. The essays are uneven in importance and merit, a few giving the impression of having been hastily compiled from classroom notes to meet a deadline. On the other hand, there are several of interest.

Only one of the contributors in the economics section is usually classified as being within hailing distance of the free enterprise school — Professor Frank Knight of Chicago — and he is far from being as uncompromising and powerful a proponent of free enterprise as a number of other economists. Of interest, however, is the section in his essay where he demonstrates how every person in a free economy, even under specialization and division of labor, receives wages equivalent to

the full value of his contribution. "Ideal market competition will force entrepreneurs to pay every productive agent employed what his co-operation adds to the total, the difference between what it can be with him and what it could be without him." [222] This is quite at odds with the surplus value theory held by most men in the social action camp.

The psychologist, Professor Donald Snygg, uses the techniques of the "psychological field" approach. His conclusion is like those reached years ago by economists of the Austrian School. He supports the view that economic exchange is mutually advantageous to all parties concerned, unless political coercion enters.

Snygg's words are: "From the individual-field point of view, however, both parties to a transaction may, and usually do, profit from it. Objects are valuable to people if they assist them in the satisfaction of their individual need for self-maintenance and enhancement. Since different people strive for satisfaction of this need in different ways, objects and experiences will have different values for different people, and both parties to an exchange which is free from coercion can be expected to profit from it." [357]

From the vantage point of this concept, such slogans as "a just price," "a living wage," and "a fair return" are seen to be empty of intellectual content. They camouflage the natural human desire on the part of the individual to command more for his goods and services than other people voluntarily give him.

A Competent Job

Michigan Professor Kenneth Boulding does his usually competent job in discussing the concept of economic progress, relating it to religious and sociological factors. Rapid economic advance, he finds, occurs in eras when religion stresses conversion and individual newness of life. Boulding calls attention to the fact that many of the inventions and developments of the so-called Industrial Revolution were the work of men in the evangelical and nonconformist sects.

Boulding criticizes the reasoning of the social gospellers for starting from the premise of a stationary economy, so that they conclude that

one man's gain is another man's loss. "To an astonishing extent, the exponents of the 'social gospel' seem to believe that the actual economic system is, in fact, stationary . . . In a progressive society, however, economic competition is not generally a zero-sum game, but is a positive-sum game, in which the activity of the players results in an increase in the total to be divided, so that my increase is not taken from somebody else but is a net addition to the total pot." [75]

Scholarly Freedom

The center of gravity, or at least the center of interest of the book, is in the contribution of Professor Niebuhr who writes of "The Christian Faith and the Economic Life of Liberal Society." The depth and penetration of Niebuhr's insights on theological themes seem much less in evidence when he comes to political and economic matters. In this area, I would submit, he has come under the sway of the academic community which is so subject to stampedes and tropisms, so eager to seize upon slogans and pat solutions, and so far from steadfastness.

Somebody gave the all-clear signal, and it is now all right for our scholarly class to be anti-Communist and anti-Marxist. So Niebuhr speaks of "a social creed [Marxism] which contained even more miscalculations than the liberal creed which it challenged." [435] But in the mid-thirties when Marx was mandatory on the campus, Niebuhr wrote, "The program of the Marxian will not create the millenium for which he hopes. It will merely provide the *only possible property system* (italics mine) compatible with the necessities of a technical age." [*Interpretation of Christian Ethics* 184]

For many years, Niebuhr has thrown his weight into a class struggle on the side of the "workers." He has given the impression that "the possessing class" maintains its place by violence, and that therefore counter-violence and deceit are justifiable on the part of the "submerged." He has regularly denounced the motives of anyone who professes the philosophy of freedom.

But now he says, "The debate about the limits and possibilities of a free economy has,

in short, not been an academic one. It constitutes the very stuff of political life and controversy in the Western world in the twentieth century. *The debate has been inconclusive, and must continue to be so.*" [457] (Italics mine). Later in the same passage he says, "For both sides in this ideological struggle obviously have hold of a truth which must be supplemented by the truth which the other side cherishes." [438] It is evident from the context, that by both sides, Niebuhr means on the one hand, those who urge consistent socialization, and on the other, the proponents of free enterprise.

Columbia's Professor MacIver has considerable stature among present-day political theorists who wish to add new powers to government. He says, "The functions of government under a democratic constitution, are those that the people sufficiently approve by voting for their representatives." [184] Judging by the context, MacIver is not making a simple observation that this is the way politics is, a power operation; he is sanctioning the concept that there is no limit to what government can do except the resistance of a counterforce.

One service MacIver renders; it is to point out that "pure capitalism does not exist and never has existed." [201] But the knowledge of this fact does not discourage even MacIver, much less the other contributors, from asserting that an excess of freedom, encountered in *laissez-faire* capitalism, made government intervention mandatory.

Rarely has the uniqueness of the person been dismissed so cavalierly as by MacIver when he says, "All men owe everything they become to the heritage of their community." [187]

Young Lady of the Theater

Nearly every contributor makes some reference to the so-called "economic power" argument. Their desire is, as Dr. John C. Bennett phrases it, "the prevention of any private centers of economic power from becoming stronger than the government as the political organ of the community." [427] There is a faulty analogy here. What is called "economic power" is analogous to the power possessed by a young lady of the theater to impel young men toward the purchase of front row seats. It is not

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analogous to the power which can conscript young men to die on a battlefield halfway around the world.

In addition to confusing the analogy, the users of the "economic power" argument, to justify extended political power, are guilty of a non-sequitor. Although every seeming example of "economic power" will be found to repose on a political privilege — such as a tariff or a subsidy, assume for a moment that there is no political privilege in the equation. Assume instead, that the objection to "economic power" is the feeling that some men are being subjected to the wills of other men. Assume that this can take place in economic situations — which it cannot — and then consider the remedy. To overcome this relationship of power, it is urged that a *political* power relationship be installed. We are not warned of the compulsion and thwarting involved in all political action. In brief, to rid ourselves of "economic power" we are to submerge in a far more rigorous and extensive power set-up. We are asked to believe that one alleged wrong plus one admitted wrong add up to a right!

The Libertarian's Answer

This is a formidable book, if only because of the amount of wealth and aggregation of academic prestige behind it. What can the individual libertarian do who does not have the leisure for thought and writing afforded by academic chairs, and who never gets in on the money disbursed by the gigantic foundations? The answer is — plenty. The dedicated individual is still more than a match for any symposium of persons in positions of academic privilege.

Two instances in the past few years support this judgment. There is more real penetration and understanding of political and economic philosophy in two books produced by working journalists than in this symposium. I refer to Isabel Paterson's *The God of the Machine* and Frank Chodorov's *One is a Crowd*. Moreover, when one opens these books, he meets a person, not a committee!

EDMUND A. OPITZ

1521 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD
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