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Dr. Higgins Says:

Left of the Kremlin
THE NEW REPUBLIC of October 26 there is a feature article about which some of my friends in the labor movement, non-Catholics and Catholics alike, are literally up in arms. Believe it or not, they are actually accusing the editors of the New Republic of fostering religious bigotry.

Well, I wouldn't know about that. Offhand I hesitate to believe it, because the New Republic calls itself a "liberal" magazine, and "liberal" as I understand it, are not supposed to be bigoted. Frankly, however, I must admit that there is something suspicious about the article on the face of it. For the author uses a pen name, and "liberal" as I am told, are not in the habit of using pen names—not in America, at least. After all, this is a free country—or at least it was when the New Republic last editorialized on the subject. And, believe you me, the New Republic is an authority on this question of freedom.

LAST I REMEMBER, the title of the article is "How Can We Live with Communism?" and it's by James Higgins. It's all about the trouble that the Catholics (some Catholics, to be more exact—not Mike Quill of course, or Harry Bridges) are causing within the CIO. Seems as though the Catholics (excuse me—some of the Catholics) in the CIO are badgering poor Phil Murray and trying to needle him into a fight with the so-called "left-wingers" (not "Communists"—perhaps the thought). And so on, and so forth. Read it for yourself if you're interested.

Personally, I found it rather dull and inexact (see suspiciously?). Inaccurate on a couple of scores. And also, incidentally, somewhat insulting to Mr. Murray who emerges from the article as something of a dope. If I were in Mr. Murray's position, I would certainly put my foot down once and for all on this Catholic monkey business. I simply wouldn't let those Catholics push me around—particularly in view of the fact that the blackguards haven't the courage to stand up at a convention and fight for their principles.

PARDON THE clumsy irony. I am merely calling to the attention of the editors of the New Republic, with no charge for my services, that the only delegates who fought with the "left-wing" on the floor of the recent CIO convention in Boston were non-Catholics: Van Blin, George Baldanz, Jack Altman and Walter Reuther. But then that's probably just what you would expect those Jesuitical Catholics to do—hide behind a non-Catholic camouflage. They'll do it every time.

Well, enough about Mr. Higgins. Much more interesting than this alleged article are the drawings with which the staff artist of the New Republic has decorated the pages on which it appears. At the top of the third page there is a black and white sketch of the Vatican and another of the Kremlin. One of my associates, who is much more observant than I am and who probably has a better sense of humor, suggests with a twinkle in her eyes that the editors, in effect, have canceled out the message of the article by putting the Vatican at the "left" of the page and the Kremlin at the "right."

WHICH CALLS to mind a statement made by Secretary of Labor Schweinfelt in his address at the Boston convention of the CIO. He urged the labor movement to rid itself as rapidly as possible of all the "reactionaries" ("rightists," shall we say?) within its ranks. Can you guess whom he had in mind? Correct. He was talking about the Communists, although he didn't identify them too specifically until later on in the afternoon, at his press conference.

The secretary, like some of the rest of us, has a pretty good memory. He probably remembers, with a certain amount of nausea, that the Communists within the CIO opposed our entry into the late "imperialist" war, and that after the war miraculously and very suddenly ceased to be "imperialist" they flitted with a legislative proposal for a national labor draft and were a little too much opposed to strikes—suspiciously so, as a matter of fact. In short, he remembers a lot of things about the so-called left wing which author "Higgins" conveniently seems to have forgotten.

MR. "HIGGINS," it is suggested, might take an evening off—soon, or at least before he writes another article—and meditate on the significance of Schweinfelt's use of the word "reactionaries" to describe our friends the Communists; and even more important, meditate on the significance of the fact that his editors have perverted doublecrossed him by suggesting to the unwary reader that the economic and social policy of the Vatican is to the "left" of the policy of the Kremlin! Actually it is, of course, although frankly I had never suspected that the editors of the New Republic were particularly aware of the fact. After reading their magazine for years, I had been forced to suppose that they had never even heard of the social and economic teaching of the Church.

Well, good luck, Mr. Higgins. But for your own sake be careful, please be careful, of that religious stuff. You're playing with fire. For a lot of trade unionists are going to get God and mad at the New Republic if you insist on insinuating into your articles a type of bigotry which is foreign to the magazine's tradition (isn't it?) and which, as you undoubtedly know from your extensive studies, is strictly verboten in the American labor movement.

CURE FOR ATHEISM
One day an atheist approached a peasant and began arguing the subject of religion. His mode of procedure was something like this: "How can you say that there is a God? Have you ever seen Him? No, of course not, so why stick to your foolish delusion? You say, too, that man should be punished for his acts. How can this be, since man cannot be anything but what God wills, has no free will, and is consequently not responsible for his actions?"

To this the peasant said nothing, but he calmly stooped down, picked up a lump of earth and heaved it at the atheist.

Angered the atheist hailed his assailant into court and there the magistrate asked the peasant to give an account of his action.

After looking at the atheist squarely for a minute the peasant answered: "I do not know why this man is hailing me into court. He says that he has a headache; I do not see it. Let him bring it with some evidence. If he has a headache, why does he even complain about being hauled before a magistrate? Only a fool would tell me that man has no free will and is not responsible for his actions. And he says that he was hit by a piece of earth. Does he not know that he is also made of earth, and that earth cannot harm earth?"

For Services Rendered



As We See It By Dan Patrick

SHOULD OUR WAR DEAD be returned home? That recurring question rises again with the arrival in the United States of the first bodies of the dead of World War II.

In every community deeply impressive public services are being held in symbolic tribute to all who have paid the supreme price which war exacts from victors and vanquished alike.

Wounds which have been healed to some degree by the passage of time are reopened as relatives and friends bow in fearful tribute before sealed, flag-draped caskets which encase the remains of their loved ones.

The bodies of these heroes have been brought back from the dusty battlefields of Europe and the Pacific. The deaths of some of these men date back as far as December 7, 1941—nearly six years ago.

Some people wonder what is achieved in the colossal task of returning our war dead to their homes and loved ones. These people point out the tremendous cost and what is more important in their opinion, the recurrence of the emotional disturbance which is associated with death.

It is argued further that it is more fitting that these dead should rest with their comrades in cemeteries near the spot where they fell in battle.

THESE ARGUMENTS, however, are somewhat cold and academic when measured against the yearning of a mother or wife for the return of their dead to the sacred soil of a home cemetery.

If there is any solace left relatives of fallen soldiers, it must be found in the nearness of the mortal remains of these men. Perhaps that is an emotional argument. Perhaps it is not rational. But it certainly is decisive in the minds of most relatives and friends of the deceased. In the final analysis, theirs is the decision that should prevail.

THE BEST ARGUMENT we have run across on the return of the war dead is contained in a letter written to a New York newspaper columnist. It reads as follows:

"As I sat in St. Mary's Church, looking at the flag-draped casket of my brother, first of the war dead returned to Fort Chester, it came to me that here he had been christened, made his first Communion, then Confirmation, and now he was receiving his last blessing. Toward the end of the Mass, the color-bearers stood just outside the altar rail while the choir sang 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' and I thought of the time, after the First World War, Armistice Day, when my brother and I, two skinny kids all dressed with patriotism, stood on our lawn in Brooklyn waving American flags and singing 'God Save the King.' At Valhalla, the Gates of Heaven Cemetery, when the officer presented my sister-in-law with the flag 'From a grateful country,' and she in turn handed it to her son, I thought to myself—how much better this than a lonely, hot island 7,000 miles away in the Pacific. Not bring them back? How could there be any doubt?"

Just Between Us

Is Religion Mere Superstition? + + +

Not too long ago, one very fashionable fable traced belief in God to thunderstorms and earthquakes. These frightened people into believing in a terrible supernatural being whom, for some reason unexplained by the Theorists, people began to venerate as a loving father— "The Good God"—whom they honored by "feast-days."

Still, religion speaks of a God exiling those who hate Him in a place of eternal torment.

IS IT POSSIBLE, then, that the race has been stammered into embracing a superstition through fear? Hardly. Cicero Lord Bacon, Pastun, Washington, Lincoln—these were great men, believers in God, and too big-souled to be panicked into acceptance of error by any threat, however terrifying. To say that religion is fundamentally fear is to belittle the character of the whole race.

To say, as it has been said, that it was an invention of priests is to tumble even more obviously. The priesthood is an effect—not a cause. Religion came first—then a priesthood.

Hero of Bataan
Notre Dame
Notre Dame—(NC)—Major Blas A. Alexandre, Filipino army aviator expert and one of the Japanese-imprisoned heroes of Bataan, has realized a longtime ambition by enrolling this fall in the Notre Dame Graduate School. The officer, 35, is studying for a master's degree in mechanical engineering. He has his wife and three children with him in South Bend.

In 1945 Major Alexandre came to the United States with a committee to study American military schools. After visiting West Point, Annapolis and the Virginia Military Institute, he returned to the Philippines, where he helped to reorganize the Philippine Military Academy, inactive during the war.

Dr. Gillis Says:

What the Russians Are After
JAMES BYRNES' "Speaking Frankly" is written dispassionately, indeed with such complete absence of emotion that the reader must wonder what has happened to the Irish blood in the author's veins. He narrates the most amazing incidents without (so to speak) an oar or an oar. Also he refrains from moralizing. Doubtless it is better so, because somehow we Americans have become suspicious of rhetorical and oratorical utterance. Even in the face of Russia's wild accusations we have remained calm. If Mr. Byrnes' book had not been in the hands of the printer before Vishinsky opened up his recent barrage, it would have seemed the perfect answer.

I cannot in this brief space give an adequate review of "Speaking Frankly." I content myself with recommending that everyone read it. But on the subject of the second last chapter, "What are the Russians After," I should like to say a few words.

IT SEEMS to be hard to convince the American public that Russia is after nothing less than the conquest of the world. How and why anyone who keeps up with the literature on the subject could doubt that fact is beyond comprehension. The Communist Manifesto written by the two chief sponsors of Communism has been in circulation for 99 years. That manifesto says bluntly that Communism cannot exist side by side with capitalism. One or the other, say Marx and Engels, must conquer. All later Communist authorities, including Lenin and Stalin (and of course Trotsky) have reiterated that Communism involves world revolution. Nor was the revolution to be philosophical or sociological. It was to be bloody. "The ends of Communism," say its originators, "can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions." In an attack upon moderate socialism, as exemplified by Ramsay MacDonald (and now by the Labor Government in England) Lenin said, "legal work must be combined with illegal. The party that does not carry on systematic, all-sided illegal work in spite of the laws of the bourgeoisie and of bourgeois parliaments is a party of traitors and scoundrels."

FOR FEAR THAT in the course of time Communist leaders might accept a milder program, Stalin repeats every year at the tomb of Lenin that he will be faithful to the original program, bloody revolution on an ever-expanding scale, until all the world is under the hammer and sickle.

When James Burnham, some six months ago, hammered home the thesis that "Communism must conquer or perish," Max Lerner in P. M. said Burnham hadn't proved that Communism had any such ambition as conquest. The weekly magazine Life, which had reprinted a great part of Burnham's "The Struggle for the World," retorted that the author had proved his point conclusively in five chapters—the best chapters in the work. That was also my impression.

BUT WHY TALK of books and official documents? Anyone who really cares to learn what Soviet Russia is after need only look at the present map of Europe and Asia. As Mr. Byrnes says (pp. 282-283) the Soviets took up a career of conquest where the Czars stopped. He says "The total territorial gain of Czarist Russia between 1853 and 1914 was 971,277 square miles which brought the prewar area of the Russian empire up to 8,645,000 square miles. Between December 4, 1939, and the end of 1945 the Soviet Union took control of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Bessarabia, South Sakhalin and the Kuriles, parts of Finland and of Poland, the Königsberg area in East Prussia, the Transcarpathian Ukraine and Tannu Tuva. In all nearly 300,000 square miles of territory have been acquired since 1853 bringing the area of the Soviet Union to 8,935,939 square miles."

YET SOME people are asking what does Russia want? And some, whose sincerity is under suspicion, are denying that Russia is out for world conquest.

A more important feature of "Speaking Frankly" is Mr. Byrnes' factual description, with details, of the methods employed by the Soviet to effect their advance. Those details we need not repeat. Suffice it to say that Machiavelli taught nothing that Lenin, Stalin, Molotov, Vishinsky and the rest of that group of inveterate and unabashed prevaricators have not put into practice.

Space has run out and I have only commenced to hint at what Mr. Byrnes has to say. His final chapter is headed "Where do we go from here?" Perhaps I may speak of that in a later piece.

Calendar of Saints

SUNDAY, Nov. 9—Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome, which was dedicated originally to the Saviour and at a later date to St. John.

MONDAY, Nov. 10—St. Andrew the Apostle, Confessor. He lived in the 17th century and was a member of the Theatine Order. In his work, he was blessed with the gifts of miracles and prophecy. At the age of 80 he died at the altar.

TUESDAY, Nov. 11—St. Martin of Tours, Bishop-Confessor. He was noted for his charity, particularly for sharing his military cloak with a beggar. After five years in the army, he converted his mother to Christianity. He placed himself in the hands of St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers and eleven years later became Bishop of Tours. He was blessed with the gifts of miracles and prophecy.

WEDNESDAY, Nov. 12—St. Martin I, Pope-Martyr. He occupied the Roman See from 649 to 655. His opposition to the Monothelite heresy incurred the enmity of the Byzantine Court.

THURSDAY, Nov. 13—St. Didacus, Confessor. A native of Seville, Spain, who lived in the 15th century, he was a Franciscan Brother, who attended missionaries of his Order in the Canary Islands and aided them in their work.

FRIDAY, Nov. 14—St. Josaphat, Bishop-Martyr. The first of the Orientals to be canonized formally in Rome, he was a native of Vladimir, Poland, and became a priest of the Order of St. Basil. He worked tirelessly and performed rigorous penances for the extinction of the Eastern schism. He was put to death by enemies of the Church on November 12, 1623.

SATURDAY, Nov. 15—St. Albert, the Great, Bishop-Confessor-Doctor. This famous Dominican philosopher and theologian, who was the teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas, was a German and one of the greatest of the Mediaeval scholastics.