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What To Do About It : Communist-Controlled Groups Pose Problem For Catholics

By REV. JOHN F. CRONIN, S.S.
 (Written for NCWC News Service)
 (This is the third and last of three articles on the theory and practice of communism in the light of the recent papal decree. The writer is assistant director of the Social Action Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, a labor relations expert and an authority on U. S. communism.)

Since communism is opposed to the Church both in theory and in its practice, it is obvious that Catholics should have no part in this movement. Quite apart from formal excommunication, the opposition between faith in God and acceptance of communism should be clear to all. When it comes to putting this position into practice, however, the task is not always easy.

DR. CRONIN

THUS, THE decree under discussion forbids, under penalty of refusal of the Sacraments, enlisting in or showing favor to the Communist party. We may assume that no American Catholic is likely to join the formal party of communism. But, what about organizations which follow the communist line? What should a Catholic worker do when he suspects his union is communist? Would his union paper come under the prohibition in regard to reading? Could a Catholic vote for a political party under communist control? These may be practical questions to thousands of Catholics who

would never dream of becoming formal communists.

In regard to organizations which show some Red tinge, many distinctions are necessary. There is a difference between groups which are little more than branches of the Communist Party and those which are front organizations or infiltrated by communists. In the first class, one might consider the International Workers' Order, cited as a communist front by the Attorney General. For all practical purposes, this is a communist insurance agency. No Catholic should use its services. Groups which are virtual branches of the Party clearly come under the ban.

NEXT THERE are communist fronts in the strict sense. These are organizations, secretly founded and controlled by communists, which mask as groups seeking reputable ends and general public support. There are hundreds of such organizations, cited as such by the Attorney General or other governmental agencies. Since front organizations are actually controlled by the Communist Party, Catholics would be forbidden to assist in any way. Any Catholic who had joined an organization cited as subversive should withdraw his name.

Moreover, we should be cautious about groups which follow a communist line, even though not officially labeled as Red fronts. A rough test would be the foreign policy of a group: front organizations usually manage to find the Soviet Union right and the United States wrong on all points where they conflict. In the judgment of this writer, the Progressive Party would meet this test as a communist front, even though not on the official list. Other groups would be the National Lawyers' Guild, the Congress of

On Guard

(Continued from Page 1) duty of the State. Indeed it is the easier and more reasonable method of procedure, to leave free scope to the initiative of the Church and the family, while giving them such assistance as justice demands.

"That this can be done to the full satisfaction of families, and to the advantage of education and of public peace and tranquility, is clear from the actual experience of some countries, comprising different religious denominations. There the school legislation respects the rights of the family, and Catholics are free to follow their own system of teaching in schools that are entirely Catholic. Nor a distributive justice lost sight of, as is evidenced by the financial aid granted by the State to the several schools demanded by the families."

IN THESE WORDS of Pope Pius XI we have the Catholic principles on federal aid to education stated with unmistakable clarity. This is the philosophy which guides Cardinal Spellman when he defends the right of Catholic school children to share in government aid to education.

Congressman Jacob's disagreement with Cardinal Spellman is not simply a case of opposition to an individual churchman. It is opposition to the principles of the Church.

Undoubtedly the profession of Catholic principles in the field of education, labor-management relations and on other social issues may be embarrassing to the professional, fraternal and economic interests of some Catholics. But this is hardly a worthy excuse for Catholics ignoring the social teaching of their Church.

Ignorance of Catholic social principles is even less defensible, particularly in the case of Catholics who exercise positions of responsibility in American life. This we suspect explains Congressman Jacob's. He does not know any better. But he should!

Italian Encyclopedia Rome -- (NC) -- The first volume of a new Catholic encyclopedia, "Enciclopedia Cattolica," which will fill a long-felt need in Italy for a modern encyclopedia on Catholic subjects, has been issued. Ten more volumes are scheduled to be published at regular intervals.

Priest, Ex-Judge, Dies Bangalore, India -- (NC) -- The Rev. J. A. D. Rozario, who once served as a judge in the Madras government, has died here at the age of 78. He resigned his post of judge at the age of 50 and went to Rome for his priestly studies.

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