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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 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.

FINALLY, THERE are infiltrated organizations, under varying degrees of communist influence or control. These differ from fronts in that they were not founded by communists and their aims are really legitimate. Examples would be labor unions or reform organizations. In judging such cases, several principles must be used. In the first place, Catholics need not adopt a policy of automatic withdrawal from a group when communist infiltration, even to the point of control, is established. Such a general policy would often leave the field wide open for communist raids on all types of reform groups. It is often better to remain in and expel the communists. This would not apply, of course, if a labor union had been organized by the Communist Party in the United States. Our problem is rather the dozen or so unions which they have taken over subsequent to their founding.

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

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.

THE SECOND rule applying to infiltrated organizations involves a determination of their importance and of alternative courses of action. If any organization is important to the individual member, and there is no suitable substitute, it is normally better to remain in the group and to seek to remove Communist control.

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

Workers Union was under Red domination. New York transportation workers had no real choice of another union. They had either to remain within the union or lose the definite gains it had brought them. Since the activity in question was, of its own nature, morally good or neutral, namely, trade union activity, workers might in conscience claim that they were seeking a good objective and only temporarily tolerating the evil connected with it. Such a procedure, for serious reasons, is morally acceptable.

THE 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.

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### 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.

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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.

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 Jacobs. He does not know any better. But he should!

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