

# Italian Catholics, Communists Wage Ideological War

(The author of the following article is a member of the editorial staff of L'Osservatore Romano, Vatican City daily.)  
By FEDERICO ALESSANDRINI  
(Written for N.C.W.C. News Service)

Rome — (NC) — To Catholics elsewhere it may seem paradoxical that communism should develop into a serious threat in an almost completely Catholic country like Italy. That communism persists as a real threat, especially to the nation's religious life and traditions, has been underscored in warnings to Catholic citizens that voting against the Communists in the in the coming general elections is a duty in conscience.

Interest in the unique problem of communism in Catholic Italy has been intensified of late by reports of increasing defections from the Italian Communist Party. There is talk that these defections have led to a crisis in the party. Some clues as to whether these defections are likely to grow may be found in probing (1) the factors which have led to the phenomenon of an aggressive Communist movement in this land of ancient Catholicism, and (2) the reasons why those who have avowed communism may, in turn, renounce it.

Virtually all Italians have been baptized and may be called Catholics, but it is an open question how many are truly practicing Catholics, frequenting the Sacraments and striving to live according to Christian morality. However, it may be said that even among those who are, if not hostile to the Faith, at least indifferent, there is an elastic spirit of Catholicism which makes them value goodness, justice, fraternal love and peace.

IT IS WISE to remember because they have felt that Catholicism cannot achieve a more just and better world that so many have looked to communism as the road to social justice, without concerning its ideology too closely. No doubt many were deceived by the pretensions of communism into mistaking it for a form of practical Christianity.

It would be superficial and rash to say that the Church is itself to blame for this state of affairs because it is alleged that in the movement for economic and social reform, for centuries, the

Church has been forced to concentrate on other problems, chiefly that of resisting recurrent efforts to bring it under the domination of secular authority. Through no fault of its own, the Church has had to neglect the social apostolate among the masses.

IT WAS NOT until the early years of this century, with the inauguration of Catholic Action, that the Church was able to launch a decisive and consistent movement to bring the Gospel into the market place, the factory, and even to the halls of government.

In seeking to evaluate the Communist strength in Italy it must be remembered that the Party seeks an appeal to the imagination of the lay informed as being a great and powerful group, with tremendous numbers of card-carrying members. Reliable information is that the party leadership has issued a directive ordering members to take out cards also for their wives, mothers, daughters, and others at home, so that they can cite big figures for electioneering purposes.

SENTIMENT AND lack of a proper understanding of communism have induced many to enter the Red ranks. Conversely, cold reason and the realization of communism's true nature have caused not a few to withdraw. Many cases of individuals and small groups surviving communism and turning to the Christian Democratic Party have been reported in the press, especially in Southern Italy.

The withdrawals from the Party do happen, but mostly they are not reported in the papers. They happen when individuals have the courage to break free. The Communists do not admit that these defections are taking place, because they want to be able to say that no one leaves the Party except by expulsion.

## Catholic Psychiatrists Elect Officers



Los Angeles—Dr. John Cavanaugh of Washington, D. C. (seated, right) was elected president of the Guild of Catholic Psychiatrists at its annual meeting here. He succeeds Dr. Martin H. Hoffmann of Detroit (left). In center is Magr. John J. Hayes of Hartford, Conn., the Guild's chaplain. Other elected officers are shown standing. Left to right: Dr. Francis Kelly of Cambridge, N. Y., vice-president; Dr. A. Vincent Garty of Pasadena, Cal., secretary; and Dr. Thomas I. Greenwald and Edward Brennan, both members of the Guild's executive committee. (RNS Photo).

## Sin, Mental Illness Differ, Catholic Psychiatrists Told

Los Angeles — (NC) — The Guild of Catholic Psychiatrists was told at its fourth annual convention here that one of psychiatry's great basic weaknesses is its failure to distinguish between sin and mental illness.

Dr. Frank R. Baris, director of the psychiatry department of the Creighton University School of Medicine, Omaha, declared that "if Freud were correct, mental illness would be due to sin—or more inconspicuously still, it would be the price we pay for virtue." Addressing 600 guild members and their guests at a banquet in honor of His Eminence James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, Archbishop of Los Angeles, Dr. Baris said: "Actually, we know there is a species of behavior which is involuntary and therefore not sin, which is referred to as mental illness."

Another speaker, Father James H. Van Der Veldt, O.F.M., associate professor of psychiatry at the Catholic University of America, echoed the recent address of the Holy Father to an international meeting of psychoanalysts in Rome. "Psychiatry has thus far remained a torso, and will remain a torso until it recognizes that the subject of mental diseases is the whole man—composed of a material body and soul, which, being spiritual, aims at spiritual values," he said.

## 'Pier Priest' Opens Strike-Bound Port

Philadelphia, Pa. — (NC) — Using the "unlimited authority" granted to him by dockyard management and labor, pier priest Father Dennis J. Conroy, S. J., opened the Port of Philadelphia after a two-day shutdown.

The 57-year-old Jesuit ordered longshoremen to resume work on 20 vessels docked in the Delaware River after attempts at arbitration during a visit here.

The shutdown had involved 6,000 workers of the International Longshoremen's Association, A. F. L. cannot be answered without a sound philosophy. We Catholics possess this sound philosophy." Cardinal McIntyre, in his address, also stressed the idea that man must be considered as a whole, and warned against the tendency in science to dissect the whole and attribute cause and effect to a single part.

## Red Peace Bid 'Insincere', Says Archbishop Cushing

Boston — (RNS) — Current Communist peace moves were called "insincere" by Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston in an address to 1,000 members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul here.

He said the latest Red tactics are "designed to lull, seduce, confuse, divide and destroy the free world in its nascent solidarity." The Archbishop deplored the tendency of peace-loving peoples to credit "Malenkov and Company with the peace offensive and to think wishfully that they are a new management."

"All they are doing, in reality," he warned, "is to carry out, perhaps with a fresher energy and a more marked initiative, possibly under the spur of more immediate practical urgency, the master plan of Stalin."

Russian leaders are "playing for keeps" for the highest stakes in all history, Archbishop Cushing said. "Their goal is a spiritual as well as a physical empire," he said. "The means to this goal is world revolution, which means the destruction not only of every existing conservative state but of every liberal government as well. The end beyond this revolution is not merely the production of the new Soviet man. It is the emergence of a new man everywhere—the slave man."

## Cardinal Mooney Praises Cleanup Of Newstands

Cleveland — (NC) — A new-stand cleanup campaign by Catholic women in Detroit was praised as "remarkably successful" by His Eminence Cardinal Mooney during a visit here.

"The Detroit Diocesan Council of Catholic Women is doing a wonderful job," the Cardinal stated, "and they are doing it by sticking to the job and displaying as much patience with the dealers as they do with their children."

The prelate noted that the drive to remove indecent literature from newstands and drug stores was especially successful in residential areas, but remarked: "We may never be able to do much with the downtown

## Catholics Expected To Withdraw From N. Y. Social Unit

By JOHN S. PATRICK  
(Correspondent, N.C.W.C. News Service)

New York — Catholic welfare agencies are expected to withdraw from the important Welfare and Health Council of New York following the election of a board of directors that favors admitting birth control groups.

The slate of directors, pledged to admit the Planned Parenthood Committee of Mothers Health Centers, was elected by a vote of 317 to 259, after Catholic units had maintained that they "would not be justified in the circumstances in cooperating with Planned Parenthood."

"Planned Parenthood has an absolute right, if you so desire, to be members and you have a right to vote them in," Edmund George Butler, Catholic attorney and educator, told the council members. He added, however, that if such a vote were registered "with great regret, we must withdraw."

Admission of the birth control unit, previously opposed by the council's board of directors, appeared to be assured with the election of 14 new board members. Remaining on the board, however, as representatives of the Greater New York Fund, are three Catholics—Magr. James J. Lynch, director of Catholic Charities in the New York Archdiocese, T. J. Ross and John H. Schmidt.

THE ELECTION ended a 2-day conference during which Catholic groups were accused of using "pressure tactics" against admitting the birth control group. Answering the charges, Thomas F. Keogh, secretary of the council board, speaking before the balloting took place, stated:

"Under the democratic process of government both the right to associate and the right not to associate in voluntary organizations are equally recognized and protected. Surely the same and these freely to exercise a right must be of that moment when conscience, guided by reason and divine revelation, dictates that a matter of serious moral import is involved."

Catholic agencies voiced their opposition to the birth control units only when specifically re-

quested for an expression of their attitude, he stated.

Explaining the Catholic stand, Keogh pointed out that Catholic people consider the birth control program to be seriously in violation of the Law of God. In making that moral decision to withdraw, he stated, the Catholic agencies "do not question the high social motivation of many in disagreement with them."

MISS MARY GIBBONS, a delegate for Catholic Charities, asked the council members to treat the issue carefully with "a period of hard, devoted, concentrated work to reach a real solution."

"A moral issue cannot be resolved by the majority vote of any group," she said. An opposition group—which included a number of Protestant churches—rejected a slate of directors by a nominating committee, and endorsed a new slate favoring Planned Parenthood in a specially-called steering committee meeting. After a long and tedious ballot vote, the opposition group was elected.

The Council, organized in 1938 with Catholic support, is composed of 391 member agencies, 85 of which are Catholic.

The delegate body of the council was reminded by Keogh that the Catholic agencies have been a vital part of the council since its beginnings. He said that these agencies wish to "preserve unity and harmony in the council by all feasible and proper means."

Keogh explained: "The Catholic agencies have always been willing—and they are now willing—to meet and work with responsible persons and groups of every race, color and creed in honest efforts to serve the welfare and health needs of the community. They consider such cooperation to be proper and desirable in the promotion of worthwhile welfare and health activities and not to involve the promotion, for ex-

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