

Labor's Rights, Responsibility

(Continued from Page 1)

The Summer of 1967 wove connections between the question of strikes and the issue of the Negro's status in society. In New York, telephone repairmen went on strike not for higher wages or shorter hours but for protection while working in volatile ghetto areas.

On the national level, after repeated episodes of rioting, looting and violent demonstration by Negroes in large American cities, Dr. Martin Luther King announced that, pursuing his ideal of non-violence, he would try to offer an alternative to riots by using a technique similar to that of the strike — "mass civil disobedience," employing "rage as a constructive and creative force" to "dislocate" northern cities rather than "destroy" them.

The methods outlined in his suggestion — school boycotts, blocking plant gates with the unemployed and a "camp-in" by Negro youth in Washington, D.C. — paralleled some of the techniques used by organized labor in earlier years when it was a relatively small and weak section of the American population.

Perhaps it was this parallel that led so many religious statements to refer to organized labor's responsibility in the civil rights struggle.

A. Philip Randolph, who is both a Negro and a labor leader, cited this responsibility in a statement issued by the Protestant Council of New York, which he serves as chairman of the board of directors.

The church "must stress the fact that workers who are unable to enjoy freedom unless they too assume the responsibility for fighting to achieve and maintain a free democratic

society," Mr. Randolph's statement said.

The Catholic statement linked business and labor in its appeal to "the organized economic groups of our nation" for quick and effective action to solve racial problems.

"Surely," it said, "the loss of life, livelihood, and property which has mounted so tragically this past Summer poses both a moral and economic challenge to these powerful forces in our society."

Responsibility also lies with agencies of government, religious bodies and the communication media, the Catholic Conference said. It praised the media for showing "balance and good taste in reporting upon the disturbances of the Summer" and asked them to "probe and report in depth the underlying causes of the anguish of the ghetto."

"This is a necessary step in the education of our people," the statement said. "It can open lines of communication where they do not exist today, and it can help predispose citizens and Congress to take the necessary steps, whatever their cost."

The Synagogue Council's statement, which said that "all Americans have a responsibility" for social inequalities and racial tension, assigned organized labor "a large and crucial role" in solving the problems.

Organized labor "has skill and experience and wisdom," the Synagogue Council said. "It can be at the center of the struggle to remove the blight of estrangement and alienation which is dangerously close to destroying the abundant harvest of the American way."

"It is confidently expected that the American labor movement

will play its noble part in bringing harmony where there is present disharmony, trust where there is now enmity, cooperation where there is now antagonism. The time is now long past when America can withhold a job from a man because of the color of his skin, or deprive him of the opportunity of a decent education, or deny him the right of living in a house that will be for him a pride instead of a shame."

A DETAILED treatment of both the causes and the suggested solutions for America's present racial problems was contained in the U.S. Catholic Conference statement, which mentioned organized labor only in passing.

Its specific proposals included:

• "Concerted efforts at every level of society to build bridges of communication between the races where today there are mostly barriers."

• "Intensive family counseling and rehabilitation programs for both parents and children," including day-care centers, to aid working mothers and welfare programs which do not "penalize" people for taking temporary employment.

• A program to "raise the educational quality of our inner-city schools," to retrain drop-outs and unskilled workers.

• An expansion of efforts to improve housing for Negroes.

In contrast to the other statements, the NCC's Labor Sunday Message dealt entirely and in detail with a question specially related to the problems of organized labor: "When the freedom of workers to strike causes injury to the public at large, should this right be curtailed in the name of the general welfare?"

Its treatment of the subject paralleled the year's other Labor Day statements, however, by putting a strong stress on the idea of responsibility.

"Concentration of economic power in either union or management hands requires responsibility as a corollary of freedom," it said.

"Where joint responsibility is adequately accepted, contracts are usually achieved peaceably; only where responsibility is abdicated its bitterness, violence and public injury the results."

In some cases, the statement indicated, special responsibility is redlined from the nature of the work involved; in others,

from the sheer size of the enterprise.

"Corporation-wide and industry-wide bargaining give some strikes a national scope and affect the entire economy," it said. "Growing unions of government and service workers — teachers and social workers, hospital employees, nurses — are producing strikes which directly affect the public as a third party bystander."

The actual damage suffered from strikes is relatively small, the NCC statement said, observing that "time lost from strikes has been less than two-tenths of one per cent of total working time since 1960."

"In 1966," it added, "time lost from strikes was only one tenth that lost from industrial accidents."

Despite these statistics, "the right to strike is vital to organized workers," he statement said. "Its ever-present shadow over the bargaining table often compels extra effort toward compromise. No man, no group of men, can be compelled to work without a loss of freedom. The strike is a last resort of free workers in self-defense against

what they believe to be unjust employment."

It concluded that "public employees should not be denied the right to strike solely by virtue of their public employment."

"In areas such as fire, police, or other services where a strike would seriously endanger the public health or safety, other alternatives must be found," the NCC statement said.

"Voluntary (not compulsory) arbitration, mediation, and 'continuous negotiation' are among such avenues.

"Only in the rare cases when genuine damage to the general welfare clearly outweighs the values of freedom in labor-management relations is denial of the right to strike justified; and then viable alternative methods must be found for securing freedom and justice for workers. Otherwise the right to strike remains a desirable element of our national labor policy."

Angry disputes, threats to the common good and disrespect for the rights of others formed the background for this year's Labor Day statements. But even in this context, with their common theme of responsibility, America's major religious bodies saw hope for solutions.



Rome Envoy at WCC Meeting

Herakleion, Crete — (RNS) — Father Pierre Duprey, a French priest on the staff of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity, was one of two official Catholic observers at the meeting of the World Council of Churches' Central Committee in Herakleion, Crete. The priest is shown with Greek Orthodox Archbishop Eugenio of Crete. The other official Catholic observer at the sessions was Father Jerome Hamer, a Belgian Dominican, also a member of the Vatican unity secretariat. Father Hamer is a co-secretary of the WCC-Catholic working group engaged in dialogue.

Now Take the Coals Off!

Portland, Ore. — (NC) — "The most important mound in the world" covers an ancient city called Ugarit on the Syrian coast, from which new insight is being given to translations of both Old and New Testaments, a professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome said here.

Tablets found in the city, uncovered by accident in 1929, have given new meaning to biblical phrases and expressions, said Jesuit Father Michael Dahood.

In an interview with the Catholic Sentinel, newspaper of the Portland archdiocese, the priest said that for understanding of the Old Testament, the Ugarit discoveries take precedence over those of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

"And whenever you clarify an Old Testament text, you are going to have to reexamine the New, because it draws heavily from the Old Testament," said Father Dahood, here to lecture at Maryhurst College's sixth annual Biblical-Ecumenical Institute.

Ugarit, a wealthy commercial city of the Canaanites, was destroyed for the last time about 1200 B.C. Destruction apparently was sudden, Father Dahood said, because a detailed picture of life in the city has been found by archeologists.

Tablets were discovered bearing mythological texts and legends, economic texts, records of business transactions and judicial texts recording such matters as land transfers and divorce cases.

Tablets were written in an alphabetic cuneiform — a system of writing in 30 signs shaped by an arrangement of wedges. While cuneiform tablets in other areas have taken years to interpret — or have not been decoded at all — the Ugarit language was deciphered in five days. Father Dahood said two military code experts, one French, the other German, broke the code immediately, largely because of the language's unusual alphabetic construction.

"My contention is that Ugarit is ancient Hebrew, ancestor of the Hebrew language of the Bible," Father Dahood said. "It is most likely that Moses would have understood perfectly well a man from Ugarit."

"The Hebrews used the language of this old tradition to express the new religion," the priest continued. "It helps explain why a phrase in Ugaritic is used in the New Testament 1,400 years later."

Father Dahood noted that the biblical phrase "heaping coals

of fire on the head" of an enemy has puzzled Scripture scholars for centuries. Since in biblical usage, "hot coals" means punishment, it is difficult to see how such action could be considered a work of charity.

He said that a close examination of the Ugaritic texts — and the Phoenician — indicates that the correct rendering of the phrase is to "remove coals of fire" from the enemy's head and God will bless you.

Another phrase in both the Old and New Testaments — "weeping and gnashing of teeth" — takes another meaning discovered in the Ugaritic usage. To people of Ugarit, it denoted not a frustrated rage, but a profound sorrowfulness.

"Like the sorrow of a son upon the loss of his father," the priest said.

Father Dahood, a Jesuit of the New England province, studied Semitic languages at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, under Prof. William Albright whom he credits with being "the first man who recognized the significance of Ugarit for Bible scholars."

Father Dahood has been invited to take part in digging at the Ugaritic site, called Ras Shamra in modern Arabic, but he has declined. He prefers to work at the Institute in Rome where he is professor of Ugaritic language and culture.

"Once you pick up a shovel, your scholarship may go out the window," he says. "The adventure gets hold of you and you don't do anything else, because you think every shovel stroke will uncover some great new text."

Anglican View

Yes -- to Papal Supremacy; No -- to Infallibility

San Antonio, Texas — (RNS) — An Episcopal clergyman told an ecumenical gathering here that he saw papal infallibility — not papal supremacy — as the barrier separating the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.

The Rev. David Douglas, assistant rector of St. David's Episcopal church here, spoke at St. Peter's Catholic church in a series of "Bridge of the Future" addresses by area religious leaders.

"In my opinion," he said, "the Catholic doctrine of infallibility of the Pope is the barrier to church unity. I said infallibility, not supremacy. I believe the Anglican Church would accept the Bishop of Rome as head of the Church, but not infallibility."

"Of course," he added, "infallibility is open to definition and here we get bogged down in semantics. You, as Catholics, must answer the question, 'What does the Church mean by infallibility?'"

"I believe firmly that the church must be united," he said, "because it is the very nature of the church. I believe the future of the church is in this unity. I believe it is the expressed will of God and Jesus Christ."

Listing three reasons for the present division, Mr. Douglas said: "One is ignorance. Our ignorance of one another is astounding. But this series of speeches is an example of what can be done to defeat this ignorance in one another."

A second reason is "our mis-

placed loyalties" — the confusion over what really matters in the world and the third is "our splintered organizations that just seem to reproduce themselves," he said.

"I see no technical theological point as a barrier to unity," he stressed.

Pirate Radios Sunk; Faith Ads Scuttled

London — (RNS) — Britain's official clamp-down on "pirate" radio stations operating around its shores has saddened some Roman Catholic authorities as well as millions of teen-age pop music listeners.

According to Father Kevin O'Brien, director of the Catholic Enquiry Center here, nearly 700 non-Catholics are taking a course of instruction in Catholicism as a result of religious broadcasts from the "pirates." All transmissions from these stations have now ceased, and with them the religious broadcasts.

The "pirate" stations operated on commercial lines, with ads interspersed between pop music discs. The government forced their closure by means of a new act, partly because

the stations allegedly operated on unauthorized frequencies and interfered with stations in other countries.

Father O'Brien said that one station, Radio Caroline, broadcast two 45-second "religious spots" daily over a period of two weeks. As a result of these spots, private sought instruction from his center. Another station, Radio London, broadcast two religious programs which resulted in 91 queries to the center in Lent and 171 during Holy Week.

"We found both stations most helpful and cooperative and it is sad that they should be suppressed," he observed. His center offers guidance to non-Catholics by means of advertisements and personal contact cards.

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Two M

By JAMES C. O'NI
Vatican City — (NC) women, one Australian other American, are 1 very effective hand, in ing for the third Inter Congress of the Lay A which opens in Rome (

They are Rosemary Sydney, Australia, and Herger of Vallejo, Cal

Miss Goldie, a veter apostolate work in Ron of the two underscore the Vatican's new Co the Laity.

Miss Herger is on s signment from the Council of Catholic W the U.S. to help org technical aspects of gress, which will bring more than 2,000 top lay leaders from 52 for eight days of mee discussions.

The two women wor her own area, but ture of things they i do work closely toget instance, while Miss G concentrates on the org 40 separate discuss

Portland, Ore. — (NC) "vanishing nun" notion has led to a myopic religious life — was attri sensational reporting i media at the annual Conference on Spiritu the University of Portla

About 200 nuns, most superiors of religious c ities throughout the co United States, Hawaii a ada, agreed that ill gossiphism had been cr sensationalized and stories in the press.

The conference was st to point up new thinki the Church pertinent to of the Sister.

In each workshop di a Sister and a priest sh platform as a team, go sociological, psychologi theological background igious life for women.

Sisters from all areas e a belief that any "mass of Sisters from specific orders was due either ity of rule — where no c renewal has been att or to a too complete which led to confusion

It was evident, they s those orders engaged in ary work and work an poor or in hospitals tained vocational perce

One team, Sister O'Keefe and Father Eyo, S.J., who have s various sections of the States and in South. emphasized that commu makes it possible for to develop her talents,

Seminar in Ghana
Cape Coast — (NC) tional seminar on the 1 tolate will be held at Aug. 31 to Sept. 4, theme, "The Christian aian Life."

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