

Big Head
or Big Heart



By Father Paul J. Cuddy

The Church: 1970

Priests Assn.
Questioned

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



The spread of priest associations and councils is one of the most fascinating phenomena of the post-conciliar Church and one of the most promising. The various priest groups, however skillful or unskillful some of them may have been, are a clear indication that the priests of the country are willing to assume professional responsibility for their life and work and are ready and eager to cooperate responsibly with the leadership of the Church — even if at times that leadership is something less than enthusiastic about the prospect of cooperation.

But if the priest organizations are a promising phenomenon, they are considerably less than perfect which, of course, makes them no different from any other human organization. Hence, they should be subject to criticism and, indeed, eager for such criticism because criticism will facilitate their more effective operation. If any of their leadership should claim the organization should be free from criticism, or that the criticism should be made only in private, they are falling victim to the standard ecclesiastical temptation to claim that some things are too sacred to criticize.

It seems to me that three major points could be raised in a critical evaluation of the priest groups, and particularly, the National Federation of Priests' Councils: the absence of any long-range goals, the tendency to amateurism, and the risky temptation to adopt the confrontation strategy and rhetoric of the American New Left.

The priest organizations have been remarkably successful in winning ad hoc victories. The working conditions of the American Catholic clergy have been notably improved in the last five years, most because of the effective activities of the priest groups. But if the priest groups have any long-range goals for the Church or any profound interpretation of the meaning of the Christian life in our times, they have kept these matters a secret to themselves.

Their leadership seems as incapable of thinking in long-range terms as does the official leadership of the Church and one wonders what substantive difference in the direction of the American Church would occur if the leadership of the priest associations was admitted to the decision-making councils of the American hierarchy.

We would continue, one suspects, to respond to ad hoc problems.

As far as prophetic and charismatic leadership, then, there is little to choose between the hierarchy and the leadership of the priest associations. Both groups of men grew up in a Church where there was no need to think in the long range because the long range was immutable. Both groups are apparently temperamentally and intellectually incapable of thinking beyond immediate issues and problems (with, of course, some notable exceptions in each group).

Priest association leadership seems also to be cursed by the amateurism which is so rampant in all sectors of the American Church. Like many of their opposite numbers in the hierarchy, the priest association leadership not only is not aware of professional standards but does not consider professional standards an issue worth considering.

The embarrassing amateurism of the so-called "surveys" being conducted by various priest groups illustrates not merely that the men responsible for such surveys know nothing of social research; it is also clear, I think, that they don't care to know anything about it and look on the survey as a simple-minded tool for gathering support for a preconceived decision.

Similarly, their publications are embarrassingly amateurish and seem to be victim to the ecclesiastical temptation to cover the pages with pictures of their leaders.

Finally, I have grave reservations about the apparent trend in the priest associations to move towards a "New Left" strategic style. I understand they are under pressure from some of their more militant younger members to do so. I also understand that the refusal of many of the hierarchy to engage in much meaningful dialogue with them makes confrontation look tempting but if there is one thing clear to any serious observer of the American scene it is that the tactics of the New Left have been an abject failure and in most instances in the last couple of years have been counterproductive.

If the priest associations embrace such strategy they are, it seems to me, running the risk of losing far more than they gain.

1920
President Wilson signed into law this week a bill which included certain motion pictures in the category of "obscene, lewd, lascivious or filthy matter", and provided penalties for the transport or import of such films. The chic woman this spring wore her hat "covered with a loose, flowing veil," encrusted with fruit designs made from "raffia, oilcloth, black patent leather, and dyed kid." St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum on Clifton St., Rochester, was heavily damaged by fire and water. Spontaneous combustion was listed as the cause.

1945
In an exclusive story, the Courier-Journal revealed this week that an American priest, Fr. Leopold Braun, had been arrested and was on trial in the Soviet Union. He had been charged with assault on a Soviet workman. The story surmised that Father Braun was arrested in "reprisal for his unsuccessful tests of the widely-publicized 'religious-freedom' policy of the Soviet Union." The U.S. State Department would later this week confirm the story. Father Lawrence B. Casey, of the chancery, addressed Holy Name men in Waverly.

1960
Eight Rochester men were ordained to the priesthood, including the first Rochester black. Susan Murphy was crowned May Queen at Nazareth Academy; and St. Boniface Church was planning the festivities for its centenary. Johnny Unitas spoke in Canandaigua at St. Mary's parish annual sports dinner.

Scholarship is not the same as holiness, and is certainly not synonymous with Christian love. It should lead to devotion and holiness, but history, past and present, teaches that scholarship often leads a man to exaggerated self-esteem, which is pride, and to carelessness in prayer, in charity and in honesty, which is sloth.

Karl Rahner wrote in his "Servants of the Lord": "I set more store by the unrelieved mediocrity of a stupid bishop — who will deny that there are such?—because it is more open to the whole truth, than I do by the brilliant ideas of a scholar who in the intoxication of discovery, cuts down truth to the dimensions of his system."

Next to St. Paul, St. Francis of Assisi is considered by spiritual writers as the man most like Jesus Christ. When the Franciscans were hard pressed for a priest to teach theology to the friars, St. Francis wrote to St. Anthony of Padua: "To Brother Anthony, Brother Francis sends his greetings. It is my pleasure that you teach the theology to the brethren, provided, however, that as the rule prescribes, the spirit of prayer and devotion may not be extinguished. Farewell." (1224) And with his prayerfulness, no one was more faithful to the Catholic Church than St. Francis; no one more loyal to the Holy Father and to the bishops.

Karl Rahner writing to priests said: "First of all let us not mince words: no Catholic priest may harbor a faith that openly or covertly (like a falsebottom trunk) differs from the faith of the Church as explicitly formulated by the magisterium.

"We modern Christians and priests must not let ourselves be dragooned into neurosis, as though Christian faith today were fighting a desperate rear guard action against ever multiplying difficulties and dangers. That is not the position at all, and we must not let such an idea paralyze us. . ."

There is a theory that "the Church speaking" means "the bulk of the Catholic people speaking." I do not believe this. If the bulk are speaking what the Church Magisterium and tradition speaks, then it is Catholic teaching. But the bulk — or the People — includes not only literate and religiously educated Catholics, but e.g. the whole continent of South America with its bulk riddled by illiteracy, superstition and ignorance.

It seems more sane, and more orthodox to hear the teachings of the Church from our Holy Father and our Bishops. This was the way of St. Thomas, St. Francis, St. Ignatius, St. John Bosco. This is the way of any Catholic who loves the Church.

The Morriss Plan

Lenin Cues
Protests

By Frank Morriss



Those who sowed the wind should be held responsible for the whirlwind harvested at Kent State University.

The young protesters, whether all or many of them realized it, were putting into action two axioms of Lenin:

- 1) "A revolutionary class in a reactionary war cannot but desire the defeat of its government." (August, 1915);
- 2) "We say that the terror was forced on us . . . that terrorism was provoked . . ." (Dec. 5, 1919).

Before I write further, understand that I am not saying the protesters on the campus are Communists, although it is a matter of record that a core of Reds in certain organizations can always be found providing fuel for the trouble.

But the theoreticians and professors who have shaped the thought of these young people have taken their cue from Lenin.

Thus they have convinced the students that our fight in Southeast Asia is a "reactionary war" and that therefore the new revolutionists (a term gladly accepted by the campus militants) must oppose it and seek their own nation's defeat.

The only evidence for what we are doing in Southeast Asia being a "reactionary war" is that we are fighting Communists and upholding free men who will inevitably maintain a capitalistic economic system. This is a capital sin to our new revolutionists, and not to be

tolerated. It matters not at all that we are fighting in behalf of the self-determination of various peoples who have appealed to us for protection. Self-determination has become reactionary, since it almost inevitably amounts to a rejection of socialism.

The second axiom recognizes the desirability of terror but counsels that the blame should always be shifted from those who use it to those who oppose it. Terror is what these campus agitators have turned not only against college administrators and professors, but against their own fellows.

We are all shocked at pictures of invaded university offices, vandalism, burning of banks, etc.; but we should be even more shocked at the picture showing the terror being visited upon a young true patriot on the University of Kansas campus whose crime was trying to defend the American flag. No better evidence could be found of the intolerance of the new revolutionists and their willingness to employ force and violence not against just "the establishment" but against any dissent even from student ranks.

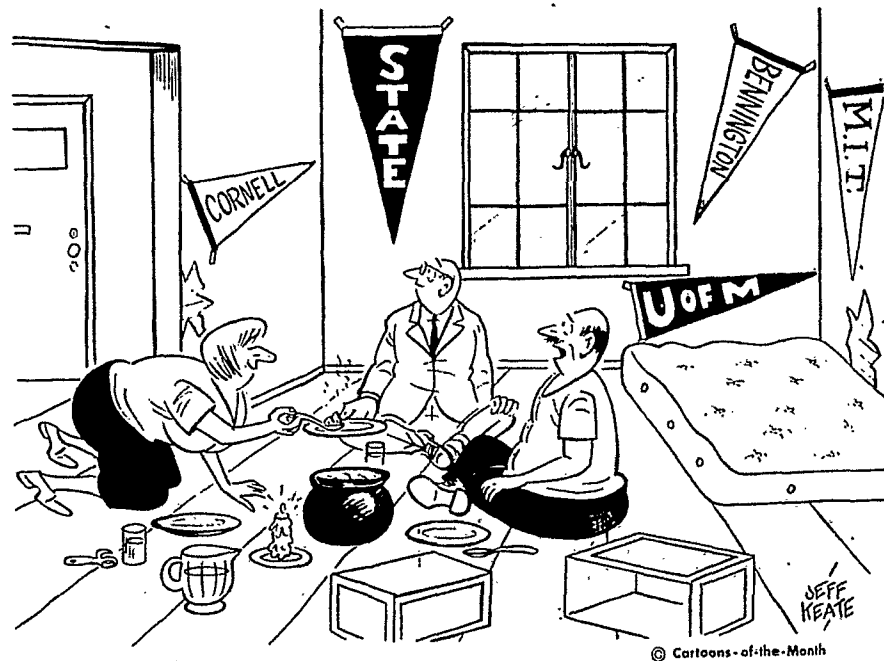
As I say, those who have made such attitudes respectable must bear a large part of the responsibility for the spilled blood at Kent State. I include the fashionable writers, artists, and lecturers who advance the idea that what the protesters are carrying out is a kind of new American Revolution. Thus the Kent State episode is their "Boston Massacre."

I also include the liberal or timorous college presidents who join with the protesters in their aims and thus provide them with an undesired cloak of respectability.

As for this being anything comparable to the American Revolution, let me point out that there is not a statesman, lawmaker, or jurist of any stature who has yet appeared in this cabal. Its precepts have been borrowed from the unscrupulous revolutionists of the Communist world; its philosophy is the reactionary and decadent structure of terror, overthrow, and absolutism that marks the success of Marxist socialism.

The American people could end this terror almost overnight. They can end it by assuming the rightful control they have over state institutions such as universities; by learning more about their children and not defending them when it is obvious that, no matter how idealistic they may be, their idealism is misdirected; by standing up against those clergy and nuns who themselves have been badly deceived and are consequently deceiving congregations and students.

As for solving this for the future, the philosophies of anti-truth that agree with Lenin about there being no objective truth must be rejected, and in their place must be restored some healthy system that recognizes and respects the intellect and truth.



"Of course, Helen and I have had to make sacrifices to see our kids through"