

LAUGHOUT



"I'm all for lowering the voting age. Then the kids can't blame everything on us!"

The Morriss Plan

True Conservatism

By Frank Morriss



Publicity attendant upon the sale of the once-great National Register to Twin Circle was mostly composed of half and quarter-truths with conclusions drawn to fit the special pleadings of those involved. This is not the place to detail the whole truth, but there is one of those conclusions that should be refuted, in fairness to Catholics of my own particular philosophic persuasion. That conclusion maintains that such Catholics are desperately afraid of and resistant to all change, and that therefore a journal or paper that is truly in the spirit of Vatican II is bound to fail until such fear is overcome.

Those who assert these things hope it will work something like this:

Major premises: Average Catholics are foes of the good and progressive changes advocated by Vatican II.

Minor premise: Average Catholics will not buy the new publication Gung Ho edited by I.M.A. Prophet.

Ergo: Gung Ho's failure results from its being in the spirit of Vatican II, and its editor I.M.A. Prophet is simply ahead of his time and will undoubtedly be honored by history at some future time when average Catholics have cast off their fear of change.

I treat the matter thus to expose its absurdity, but please believe I do not mean to make light of the situation. When the future of Catholic publication efforts as a whole is at stake the matter is indeed serious. Unfortunately, this seriousness seems to escape the editorial prophets of our day, who seem stubbornly to prefer the death of Catholic letters to facing some facts of life.

One of those facts is that no sane man or woman opposes or resists change simply because it is change.

In the very earliest days of Christianity, it was the constant practice of the faithful to compare what they were told with what those who had actually known Christ said. This practice in fact continues to this day, so that a Catholic reading some startling and sensational claim by some thinker that editor I. M. A. Prophet admires will instinctively compare that claim with what the Church has always taught.

The publications and publishing houses that are in the

deepest trouble unfortunately have specialized in presenting this innovative thought which the Catholic instinct finds indeed new but not Catholic. And such publications and publishing houses soon lose the confidence of much of their readership.

There is no reasoning and competent conservative who does not accept the Second Vatican Council. It is an appreciation for what the universal Church said at that council that makes conservatives reject much of the claims being advanced in the council's name. They have weighed these claims and found them wanting in genuineness.

Most Catholics (like most humans in general) are, I am convinced, persons of thought and/or good instinct, and their negative reaction to certain editorial efforts by the I.M.A. Prophets is based on respect for the objectivity and permanence of basic religious truths. But it perhaps is stronger among Catholics because of the depth and antiquity of Catholic respect for ascertainable metaphysical truth. So ancient and deep-rooted is that respect that it has become an integral part of the Catholic sense or feeling that serves to put a true Catholic on guard against innovators who claim to have uncovered some new prescription for salvation.

One of the defunct publications mentioned in Time's coverage of the Register affair had a young editor who told me that Pope Paul VI was simply wrong in Humanae Vitae, and that therefore Catholics need not heed that encyclical. Another publication which is losing its subscribers stops at practically no attack or insult against the Papacy. The Register itself in its final years served up yards of the ill-thought musings of an avantgarde theologian. And so it went.

But those of Catholic feeling refused to go along. Thank God!

The Mouths Of Babes

The word don't is a con-trap-tion.

On The Right Side

Fight For Humanity

By Father Paul J. Cuddy



Last week you called for action about abortion laws. What do you think should be done?

1) The decent citizen cannot shrug his shoulders with a "what can I do" indifference. Unlike the Germans under Hitler's fist, we are free to vote for legislators and legislation.

2) Since abortion on demand is a perversion of medicine, the decent citizen should keep up an unrelenting insistence toward Blue Cross and other insurance companies, a) against raising rates because of free-wheeling abortion of babies, which scarcely comes under medicine; b) for increasing maternity benefits which do come under true medical care. Honest mothers and fathers are being shortchanged by insurances in comparison with mothers who present their unborn for destruction.

3) We, not just Catholics, must constantly work to help the poor and underprivileged to a decent living.

4) Citizens must not become so accustomed to this legal criminality as to abandon the struggle for change of the law.

Has there been much rebellion?

Who knows? I have heard that many doctors, nurses and aides have refused to be connected with abortions. They are Jews, Catholics, Protestants and some of no religious affiliation. While I think the Catholic Church in our State has failed miserably on her part to prevent abortion-on-demand legislation, I surely do not consider the abortion evil is any more a Catholic issue than Dachau and Belsen were a Catholic issue in Germany. This is a humanity issue.

The Catholic Church as a body strove manfully and successfully against the abortion law in 1969. She allied with others and saved the lives of the unborn. But we Catholics tend to be a one-shot people. Having achieved success once, we lean back on our oars, while the enemy keeps quietly rowing, and "whango," they win the race. That's what happened in 1970. Several legislators who supported human rights in 1969 turned tail and voted against the unborn child in 1970. A brilliant Jewish doctor once said to me: "The Catholic

Church is a symbol of stability to the world. If its disintegrates, it will have terrible results on the whole world, not just Catholics." But Catholics are citizens of the State and must ally with others for good.

You seem more concerned about abortion than about FIGHT, housing, Vietnam, etc.

So some think. I am also concerned about alcoholism which has over 5,000,000 victims in the United States; with Catholics generously represented. Did you know that 25,000 persons were killed in the United States in 1969 from drunken drivers? I am concerned about pot in all its forms, and the future effect upon our youngsters. I am concerned about the stability of the family, noting the statistic of one third of our marriages ending in divorce. I am concerned about the VD rate and even more about what brings about VD, the disregard of sexual morality. When was the last time you heard a sermon on sinfulness of sex outside marriage from the pulpit? I am concerned about many things, but only God can do all things. Give me the grace of acknowledging my limitations.

The Church: 1970

The Populist Position

By Fr. Andrew Greeley



The author of a column like this ought to make explicit periodically the context of convictions and commitments within which he is writing. While the reader may, if he is patient enough, be able to deduce over the long run where a columnist stands, he ought not to be required to engage in such an exercise of "form criticism."

Further, when a columnist manages to be viewed with dismay both by his own religious superiors and by the paragons of official Catholic liberalism, the reader has some right to know what philosophical principles have led the columnist to his marginal position.

At a recent meeting of a number of social scientists who were discussing ways in which the Peace Movement might communicate with the various segments of middle America I was arguing with considerable vigor that the Peace Movement, to begin with, must shed its contempt for middle America. Finally, one of my colleagues pointed a finger at me and observed, "I know what you are. You're a Populist!" He meant it as a compliment, and I took it as such, for Populism is perhaps the most powerful and elemental political movement in the whole of the American tradition.

It has at times produced rather bizarre leaders, and it can be a violent, bigoted, and destructive force. But it has also produced some of America's most creative political leadership: the Roosevelts, the LaFollettes, Hubert Humphrey (a quarter of a century ago and perhaps even today), Eugene McCarthy and, in his last years, Robert Kennedy.

I think I might have preferred even more the title of Jeffersonian Democrat because this would have cleared me of the anti-intellectual and chauvinist strain which is latent in

the Populist spirit, but I'll settle for the title Populist, so long as it is understood that my Populism is more of the variety of Thomas Jefferson than it is of Andrew Jackson, or of Hubert Humphrey in 1948, rather than George Wallace in 1968.

But what do I mean when I claim to be a Jeffersonian Democrat? There are three convictions which are at the root of this philosophy (at least for me), and which affect not only my political but also my religious attitudes:

1. I believe in the fundamental dignity and decency of the people; not all of the people all the time, but enough of the people enough of the time so that with the proper leadership the people will in the long run be more likely to make the correct decision than the incor-rect one.

Indeed, they will be more likely to make or support the correct decision than will be a self-anointed elite which has decided to make the people's decision for them. (I am not altogether out of sympathy with William Buckley's claim that he would rather be governed by the first two thousand names in the Boston phone book than by the faculty of Harvard University.)

2. I believe in the ability of men of good will to work out their differences. I do not think social conflict can ever be eliminated from society, but I am convinced that there are in all social groups substantial majorities which are disposed to settle conflict by discussion and compromise rather than by violence.

3. I believe, finally, in the dignity, integrity, and uniqueness of people and, hence, reject any attempt to manipulate them, violate their dignity and integrity, reduce their freedom, turn them into objects or cate-

gories, or make judgments on whole classes. I view as mortal enemies of the people those demagogues of whatever color or of whatever social class who appeal to the hatred, the fear, and the resentment that smolders in the people.

I do not approve of those enthusiasts who would attempt to make feelings of guilt the beginning of social action. I denounce those bigots who generalize about categories of people whatever their race, or nationality background, or religion, or economic class. I further denounce those who would hold certain classes of people today guilty for things that were done in the past.

I abhor those self-satisfied "missionaries" who are so convinced of their own rightness and righteousness that they manipulate people. Hence, my profound suspicions of the forms of manipulation that go on in the abuses of group dynamics.

Finally, I despise those snobs who despise the people, particularly the strutting mosquitoes of the liberal journals, whether they be the clearly first-rate mosquitoes of the New York Review of Books or the clearly third-rate mosquitoes of such Catholic journals as Common-wealth.

There are a number of risks in the Populist position to which I will turn next week.

Editor's Note

The Courier-Journal attempts, by the wide variety of opinion columns, to give both sides of the major issues of our day.

No one column, however, is indicative of the editorial position of the paper.

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