

"8 bin" adlı kopyize dergisinde "Çevik
Kuvvetler" adlı yazı. Yukarıda 0D'da
Türkiye, Pol. Harit., İsmet Ar. arasında Sudan,
Fomal. ve Komanin'de destifayla yeni bir
askeri Atış kurulumları planı.

Tenue Afrique

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Isra'îl de ligerdan destilleyeccegi bu bbl.
Camp David tulaşmama karkı olan devletlere
gönderecektir - Suriye, Lübnan, YDHC, Cerayir,
FKÖ, İranın ulusal yaktıkları Gazileri.

13 Ekim 1984, New York Times / Atay Yani bir
bölgesel ittifak kurulumu ve bir ittifakın
"Sınır"ı ve bölgedeki itfaki güçleri
güçleri yitirmesi için yarıyor.

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son gıddında İslam'ın politizesi, politika- de İslam'la-
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- Tarih ve Sanat Serisi -

- Arşivlik İlhan -

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Devletin baskın memurların

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Epistle

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Millennium of Christianity in Rus

THE CHURCH, FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE, PEACEMAKING

Pimen

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

What, in your view, is the significance of the introduction of Christianity in Rus for Russian and European culture and history?

Christianity took shape in Rus in the period of the development of Russian statehood, to which the historical destinies of the Russian Orthodox Church turned out to be closely linked: / in a sense, Christianity provided, / as it were, the ideological basis for the unified state; it helped in the gradual elimination of the old tribal divisions and the emergence of a well-knit people in Ancient Rus, in which the Russians, the Ukrainians, and the Byelorussians subsequently had their origins.

The national consciousness was under the strong influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, and our ancestors felt that the whole of their life, both personal and public, was under the protection of the Christian faith. / There was a religious dimension even to the struggle for the country's freedom. / The Orthodox Church remained virtually the only force keeping the nation united, both as an ethnic entity and as a spiritual and moral whole, from the 13th to the 15th centuries, under the Tartar-Mongol yoke, which threatened Rus with the complete loss of its national identity.

That is also how it was in the tense periods of trial in the history of Russia when it was subjected to external attack: the people were aware of the bonds of blood and spiritual kinship, so that the sense of patriotism welling up in the depths of the popular soul was leavened with Orthodoxy.

The baptism of Rus swiftly led to the flourishing of Ancient Rus culture: a great many finely architected churches were erected, and they were skilfully ornamented with murals, frescoes, mosaics and icons. There are many other similar examples, among them the development of the art of choral signing and book illumination.

The clergy not only acted as guardians of the soul, but worked to spread literacy and knowledge. The monasteries offered opportunities for engaging in research. The records of monastery libraries show that most of the books were secular: chronicles, reports on pilgrimages, philosophical and military treatises, and classical works from antiquity.

The Church educated its flock in the spirit of Christian faith and morality. To this day, the characteristic features of Orthodox people are piety, zeal in prayer and the care of churches, acts of devotion, charity and good works. The Church expounded the meaning of sin, and indicated the ways of spiritual perfection and inculcated love for one's neighbour. The general civic order, including law, was also rearranged on Christian principles.

After its baptism, Rus joined the family of the Christian peoples and acquired a high international authority.

Throughout the entire millennium there has been a mutual influence and mutual enrichment of the cultures developing on the common Christian basis.

The spiritual, historical and cultural influence of the event whose millennium we now celebrate goes well beyond the limits of our Church and of our country. / One could say that the entire Christian world has felt the need to share our joy and to respond to the jubilee.

I should like especially to remark on three international scientific clerical conferences held by our Church which have made a considerable contribution to the study of the thousand-year history of Christianity in Rus. The first was held in Kiev in July 1986 and dealt with the ceremony of the baptism itself and with the initial period in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church. The second was held in Moscow in May 1987 on "Theology and the Spirituality of the Russian Orthodox Church". The third was held recently on "The ^{begin} Liturgical Life and Ecclesiastical Art of the Russian Orthodox Church".

grew a top level mission for design Many of the reports at these conferences dealt with the ^{mission, history, state} missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church, and with the spiritual and cultural interaction of Rus and other Christian peoples. They yielded a wealth of material, which is soon to be published in several volume.

We met with great satisfaction the report that the UNESCO General Conference has ^{with pleasure} designated the millennium of the baptism of Rus as a major event in European and world history and

culture, and called on the scientific and cultural public in the states which are members of UNESCO to mark this significant event.

We regard that as an authoritative proclamation of our Church's real and valuable contribution to the development of European and world culture, which is our common heritage. We have a sense of profound satisfaction that the celebration of the millennium of the baptism of Rus is becoming a factor promoting the spiritual togetherness and mutual understanding of the peoples, and the establishment and strengthening of openness and peaceableness in their relations in the spirit of the Evangelical ^{in the spirit of the protestants?} ideals of peace and love.

Could you describe the relations between the Orthodox Church and the socialist state, and the concrete areas and forms in which cooperation has proceeded, whether at home or in international affairs? How true are the claims that the Church in the USSR is being persecuted and the rights of the faithful are being violated?

I should say that the relations between our Church and the state are now quite normal. The decree on the separation of church and state, and of school from church is now 70 years old. We regard that as being natural, because church and state differ in nature. We have every opportunity for the pursuit of our ^{mission} ministry in accordance with ecclesiastical tradition. ^{prophetic voice}

The state has, at the same time, done everything necessary to ensure the vital activity of the Church, and has met its

laboratory
daily needs, such as the appropriation of funds for the building and restoration of churches, made available premises and materials for the making of church utensils, newsprint and printing works for its publications, and so on.

In response to our request, the Soviet government transferred to us in 1983 St. Daniel's Monastery in Moscow, on whose territory a monastery has been restored and the administrative and spiritual centre of the Russian Orthodox Church is being created. Two other cloisters were recently transferred to us: the Novovvedenskaya Optina hermitage in the Kaluga Diocese, an outstanding centre of spiritual life in Russia, and the Tolgsky Convent in the Yaroslavl Diocese, which is to be the home of priests and other members of the clergy who are advanced in years and who are in need of care and nursing.

These and many other facts of our everyday life bear witness that the claims about the Church being oppressed in the USSR are not objective. Cases of breaches of the rights of believers do occur, but these are, as a rule, the result of departures from legislation by individuals or local authorities. Breaches of the law on the part of religious organisations likewise occur. The central press has reported on these conflicts and has given them due assessment.

The observance of religious legislation is the concern of the Council for the Affairs of Religions under the USSR Council of Ministers, and it also conducts relations between the Church and the state, which are normal businesslike relations. We have always met with mutual understanding and support on the part of the Council for the Affairs of Religions.

As for cooperation between believers and atheists, I should like to note, first of all, that, while the Church is separated from the state, believers are ^{same dignitary, same rights} full-fledged citizens of our state and are involved in various aspects of their country's life on a par with other citizens.

This cooperation is multifaceted. Believers, ^{parishes} the parishes, the dioceses, the Supreme Church Administration and the entire Church have always actively responded to the problems faced by society, they have not kept aloof from the solution of vital problems, and are daily involved in the country's affairs--morally, through material donations, and by their labour.

The Russian Orthodox Church is an active participant in many social organisations. The Soviet Peace Committee, the Soviet Peace Fund, the Soviet Committee for European Security and Cooperation, the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Culture Fund, the Soviet Children's Fund and other bodies have among their members many dignitaries and clerical and ^{lay} lay members of the Russian Orthodox Church, who have been making a fruitful contribution to their activity.

Our readers would like to know about the attitude of the Orthodox Church to the socialist way of life and to the materialist world outlook. What do you think of the perestroika in Soviet society? Can religion help create a new moral and psychological climate and educate men and women with the loftiest moral qualities? Is there a dialogue between those who take the religious and the atheistic world view?

Let me stress, first of all, that the freedom of conscience principle is a legislated part of the Constitution of the USSR. We do not impose our views on anyone, and our churches are open to all who want to go in. We are prepared, at the same time, to carry on a dialogue on ideological matters. The main thing is that such a dialogue should not divide people, but should help them to gain a better understanding of each other.

As for the Church's attitude to the socialist way of life, our point of departure is that the purpose of socialism is to serve the good of every human individual. Ministering to man is our purpose as well. In some ways we take different views of this ministry, and in others they are identical. That is why cooperation is possible in many concrete spheres of life. The role and place of such common endeavour tends to grow especially when every aspect of life in society is being renewed.

In the past few years, the processes of glasnost and democratisation have given the country what could be called a ^{you can have (give energy)} second wind. We sense imaginative and purposeful creation in the economy, politics, morality, science and culture. The demands on the purity of the moral atmosphere of society have been raised, and spiritual life is becoming more diverse and profound. Truthfulness, responsibility and exactingness are being asserted with fresh vigour. Believers feel that this beneficial process is consonant with their own Evangelical ideals and welcome the government's course of the country's

further economic and social renewal and perfection of socialist democracy.

The Soviet people's peaceful creative labour has the ^{longin desire, talab, inayati} blessings of the Church, whose ^{popayalik} pastoral activity is largely devoted to ^{besleme, baki} fostering the civic activity and sense of responsibility of the children of the Russian Orthodox Church, their ^{derest, dikhrothi} conscientious attitude to work, and their unflagging pursuit of high ethical norms in personal and social life. In this sense, the Church is undoubtedly making a contribution to creating a sound moral and psychological climate in Soviet society. That is why, as religious people, we take especial note of the high ^{ayirmak, hamletmek, atfetmek} purpose assigned to morality in the new system of orientations, and of the fact that the renewed system of values is centred on man as a socially active personality open to the perception and creation of great spiritual values.

Together with our fellow-citizens who are not religious-minded we are ^{igba etmek, massetoruvak} imbued with a profound concern for the future aspect of our homeland. Our Christian activity is designed to serve the true well-being of our ^{yunthay} compatriots and all other people, and to help everyone to fulfil their high ^{mukadder, nasy, kishmet} predestination of seeking "after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" ^{ishik ve teskiye} (Romans, XIV, 19). ^{Kitabi Mukaddes}

^{Arzashda dafaruvak} Reflecting on this mission, we note that its spiritual ^{dey quray} essence is immutable, while its forms are determined by the circumstances of the day and by the specific religious needs of our ^{cemaat} flock. We bear witness with profound satisfaction, for instance, that the perestroika has been having a

positive influence on the development of church life as well, creating a more favourable atmosphere for its ministry. In the new conditions many of the questions and problems relating to the life of our parishes and ^{parishes} dioceses have been solved to the ^{fulfilled} satisfaction of all the parties concerned.

The changes under way in the country have extended the limits of cooperation between believers and non-religious citizens. The Russian Orthodox Church now maintains fruitful contacts with wide circles of workers in culture and science, and has the use of the mass media. It is now commonplace for dignitaries of our Church and for members of other churches and religious associations in the country to take part in various press conferences and public meetings, which gives everyone who is interested an opportunity to receive at first hand ^{extra, accurate} exhaustive answers to some of the questions which it was not the custom to air publicly in the recent past.

What are the relations between the Orthodox and the followers of other religions in the Soviet Union and in the world?

Throughout the entire thousand-year history of its existence, the Russian Orthodox Church has, in one way or another, come into contact with other religions, both at home and abroad. And today we have close cooperation with their ^{members} adherents in our works for the good of our ^{Homeland} / and for the strengthening of peace among the peoples.

The first Conference of the Churches and Religious

Associations in the USSR was held at the Troitse-Sergiyev Monastery in Zagorsk in 1952, at the time of a dramatic increase of international tension, for the purpose of consolidating their efforts in strengthening peace throughout the world.

Even then one could draw the conclusion that the kindred religious and moral positions of the various creeds, despite their doctrinal differences, could unite believers for fruitful cooperation in peacemaking. Since then such meetings have been traditional. Today, no one can any longer deny that the followers of the various creeds are united in their ministry to their neighbours, near and distant, in their common civic and human striving to ward off the danger of war.

Our inter-creed cooperation with the churches and religious associations in the USSR has been steadily growing wider and stronger. We have also joined in peacemaking efforts with our numerous brothers who are followers of other creeds abroad. Our wide-ranging and frank discussions have led us to the unanimous conclusion, which abounds in hope and optimism, that there is now in all the creeds an urge for cooperation in serving the good of mankind and in solving its vital problems. We believe that this common effort is based on the recognition by the various creeds that the ideas of brotherhood, justice and peace are the supreme principles of human relations. There is also the inherent tendency of religious people to comprehend the meaning of human being, an effort which cannot be separated from putting these ideas into practice.

What is the view of the Russian Orthodox Church of the problems in the defence of peace today? What has the Orthodox Church been doing? What is your view of the future of civilisation?

Our view of the moral problems of war and peace today was most fully expressed in the ^{for sale} epistle of the ^{Orthodox Russian Church} Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church "On War and Peace in the Nuclear Age" of February 7, 1986. / Without commenting on that document in detail let me merely say that we are now most keenly conscious that the idea of peace can no longer remain an abstract ideal; it must acquire the degree of reality which is inherent in life itself. / For the time has already come when without peace there can be no life either. / The time has come, accordingly, when the very idea of war must be totally excluded from international relations. / The global threat to life demands of mankind global solutions as well. It is now more timely than ever before to replace the ^{miser, rebel} baneful mistrust and the ^{killer regime} barren rivalry by a coordination of all the efforts and of all the resources to create more favourable conditions both for the material and for the spiritual perfection of people.

In this situation we, believers, guided by our religious principles, are led to multiply our efforts to avert the danger of a universal nuclear holocaust. / Evil demonstrates its power in dehumanised human relations and neglect of the ethical and moral values of civilisation. But ^{for} evil has met and will continue to meet with resolute rejection on our part, because for us, Christians, peace is a supreme good.

Peace is the word used in the language of the Church to express the wish of every kind of good, the ^{totality} totality of good. It is also the concept used by the Bible to designate just relations between people, their cooperation and their right to enjoy the ^{ihsan, armağan} gifts of nature and the results of their own labour. We flatly reject hostility, exploitation and murder as a violation of ^{ilahi} divine law and regard peacemaking as its fulfilment. In other words, our Church regards the ^{hizmet} ministry of peacemaking as a form of its being, as the basis of its ^{tezahür} manifestation, as a necessary condition for fulfilling this ^{hikmi, yasa} precept of Christ's: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew, V, 9).

True to this ^{emir} commandment, our Church has worked hard in its daily activity to create a moral atmosphere in which any ^{shale} infringements on human life and ^{kadri, hürmeti} dignity will become impossible. The Russian Orthodox Church, preaching and carrying profound and ^{devletçilik} inalienable peace from its spiritual depths, continuously ^{buluşmak} prays for the granting of peace to the whole world, and inculcates the ideas of peace in all believers. In this peacemaking of its, our Church is at one with the entire Soviet people, with all people of good will.

The forms of the Church's peacemaking ministry are now highly diverse. Divine service and ^{vazir} sermon are outwardly the simplest, but also the most profoundly effective and never ^{görgeniz} flagging form. The rule of our Church contains no divine service without prayers for "the peace of the world". Indeed, there is hardly a sermon or archipastoral epistle that does not

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in one way or another, directly or indirectly, enjoin the Christian to gather peace within himself, peace with his neighbours, peace in the collective, peace in society, peace between nations and peoples. / This divine service and homily, in which the word "peace" may sometimes not even be mentioned, helps ^{to} create in the congregation what is best and most important for the cause of peace: an atmosphere of active yearning for peace, for its preservation and consolidation.

Cooperation with Orthodox and other Christian churches and religious associations, and participation in the ecumenical movement, which is also expressed in efforts to strengthen peace, is an important element of the peacemaking activity of the Russian Orthodox Church, whose representatives have been making a considerable contribution to implementing the peace-making programmes of the World Council of Churches, the Christian Peace Conference, the Conference of European Churches, and other ecumenical organisations of which the Russian Orthodox Church is a member.

The world conference "Religious Leaders for Saving the Sacred Gift to Life from a Nuclear Catastrophe", which was held in Moscow in 1982, was the most significant of recent events in the peacemaking history of our Church.

It was attended by representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Judaic, Buddhist and Shinto creeds, and of Sikh Sikhs, from almost 90 countries, and adopted a number of documents stressing the need for cooperation of all the religions and all people of good will for the establishment of peace on

~~Howard Fast~~
~~Upton Sinclair~~

earth. By arranging the conference, the Russian Church imparted a fresh impetus to religious peacemaking activity on all the continents of the globe.

In pursuance of the ideas of that conference, round tables of theologians and experts, which are attended by prominent Soviet scholars and public leaders from our country and from abroad, are now held in Moscow every year, and there have been five such conferences up to now.

Numerous bilateral contacts with various Christian churches and organisations are a special page in the present record of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the important thing to note is that in all these meetings and conversations with representatives of these churches and organisations the most diverse aspects of peacemaking activity are always an important element of the dialogue.

Let me emphasise in conclusion that we are profoundly convinced of the ultimate triumph of the ideas of good and peace over the forces of evil and destruction. The religious views underlying this conviction induce us to raise our voice in protest against nuclear war, which could lead mankind to self-annihilation, and to call on all people of good will to brand war and the arms race as a crime against God and mankind.

I mentioned earlier some, perhaps the most important, facts, initiatives and tendencies in the activity of the Russian Orthodox Church aimed to preserve and strengthen peace in our unstable and eternally quavering human society. We are clearly

shake, tremble

Yokanda, Rus Ortodoks kilisesi'nin faaliyetlerinde
dikkatimizi ve ezelden beri saldırgan düşman topluluklarında
barış, barınma ve gözetlenmeye yönelik baskı, baskılar
mükemmelen en önemli olgular, görüşler ve eylemler, mükemmel
gözetmeye çalıştım.

aware that people of good will still have a long and hard way before them. / Much needs to be done to create a world without international conflicts, a world in which the peoples will build their relations with each other exclusively on the principles of trust, friendship and brotherhood.

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH ARAŞTIRMA VAKFI
TÜSTAV

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News and ViewsPATRIARCH PIMEN GREETES PERESTROIKA

Igor TROYANOVSKY, Novosti analyst

The perestroika effort in the Soviet Union benefits the Church and improves the atmosphere in which it fulfils its noble mission. The new conditions helped to solve many parochial and diocesan issues in the interests of all parties involved, said Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, in an exclusive interview Novosti Press Agency is about to publish in the next issue of its bulletin, Religion in the USSR.

The Patriarch will be 78 this summer. He took his monastic vows at the age of fifteen. He headed a church choir, was senior priest in a number of churches, Father Superior of the Pskov Cave and the Trinity St. Sergius monasteries, was Bishop, Archbishop and Metropolitan, until the Local Council of 1971 elected him Patriarch.

The Church has every condition to freely fulfil its mission in keeping with the ecclesiastical tradition, said Patriarch Pimen. The state willingly satisfies its needs. State allocations allow the Church to purchase materials necessary to erect new and redecorate old places of worship, to buy printing paper, churchplate raw materials, etc.

Apart from the medieval St. Daniel Monastery in Moscow, two more were recently passed back into the Church jurisdiction on its request: the Optin Monastery of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, one of Russia's foremost spiritual centres, in the Kaluga Eparchy, and the Tolga Convent, Yaroslavl Eparchy, with a shelter for old clergymen in need of care. The authorities are now considering the request of the Church to regain the Kiev Cave Monastery, cradle of Russian monasticism.

Those and many more facts disprove the current

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brings ever more people to the bosom of the Church. They come with their problems and demands. So the clergy face ever more tasks. A priest has to be up to his pastoral duty of the day. He must be well-versed in current issues and able to give the right advice.

The Russian Orthodox Church had a tremendous impact on Russian national awareness, culture and statehood. Russia earned formidable international prestige after it embraced Christianity. Cultures sharing the Christian basis influenced and enriched each other throughout the millennium.

The official Patriarchal residence will soon move from a mansion in a by-street near Arbat to the St. Daniel Monastery in Moscow's centre. Many state-owned construction firms took part in its redecoration effort and in building new premises.

Patriarch Pimen is the fourth head of the Russian Orthodox Church in this century. The Church had no Patriarchs for two hundred years, up to the Socialist Revolution of October 1917. It was governed by the Holy Synod, headed by the Chief Procurator, an official appointed by the Emperor. The Church was part and parcel of the state machine. The Patriarchate was reinstated only with the fall of the autocracy. Early in 1918, Lenin signed the decree separating the Church from the state and the school from the Church. From then on, the Church was entitled to self-government. Orthodoxy lost its status of official religion and became equal to other creeds. Thus the Soviet state laid the practical foundations for freedom of conscience to be enjoyed by all citizens. Under Stalinism and later, those principles were violated. The current restructuring of and democratic change in all spheres of Soviet life have a great impact on religion. Fully guaranteed civil rights are becoming a norm of Soviet life.

(APN, May 17. In full.)

VOREO-880607DR42

INTERVIEW WITH IMAM OF MOSCOW CATHEDRAL MOSQUE

We Soviet Moslems are pinning great hopes on the ongoing drive for perestroika, said Ravil Gainutdinov, the Imam of the Moscow Cathedral Mosque, in an interview with the newspaper Vechernyaya Moskva. We have been overwhelmed with the ideas of perestroika permeated by concern for man. The believers have accepted perestroika and are trying to make their contribution to the overall drive to accomplish its objectives. There are many Muslims in Moscow, probably, hundreds of thousands. During our major holidays, such as the recent Idul-Fitr and the Idul-Adha to be held in July, the mosque is attended by eight to ten thousand people. We pray for this year to be peaceful and for our hopes to come true.

All Muslims in our religious community of Moscow and the Moscow Region are Sunni Muslims. But we are often visited by Shiites, too. There are no conflicts between us. We all pray in one mosque. And our ideas are similar. The Koran, our holy book, calls for peaceableness.

We have warm relations with the Russian Orthodox Church and with other religious communities in Moscow. We have been invited to partake in the festivities held on the occasion of the 1000th anniversary of Christianity in Russia. It will be an event of world significance not only in the religious but also in the public and political context.

We often meet with the leaders of the Christian Orthodox Church and other clergymen and together partake in the drive for peace and in the activities of the Soviet Peace Fund, the Culture Foundation and the Children's Fund. In the past few years I participated in an international conference Muslims for Peace, held in Baku, and in the Moscow international forum For a Nuclear-Free World, for the Survival of Humanity.

I think that a dialogue is always useful because it leads

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to better understanding. Even convinced atheists or people professing other religions would do good knowing a few things about Islam. Islam has greatly influenced the culture of a large part of humanity. I think this knowledge is necessary for understanding social and political developments in many regions of the world.

I have grown up in a religious family strictly observing all religious rites. I studied at a Moslem religious school in Bukhara where I finished a seven-year programme during four years. After finishing the religious school I became Imam-Khatyb but was soon appointed executive secretary of the Moslem Religious Board of the European USSR and Siberia. In 1985 I made a pilgrimage to the Moslem holy places--Mecca and Medina. I have worked in Moscow since last year. There are three Imams here, one with a senior rank, myself and a third one. I am 29 and the youngest of the three.

My working day starts at 10 in the morning. We hold sermons and religious rites. We also visit the believers to give names to newly-born babies, conduct wedding ceremonies, read the Koran and pray for the dead. It often happens that I do not come before eight in the evening and during the month of Ramazan at one o'clock at night. Our salaries are paid by the executive body of the Moslem religious community and depend on its income. I earn 350 roubles a month. I am married with two children and I want my children to become good citizens of our country.

The Imam was interviewed by Y.Kazarin

(Vechernyaya Moskva, May 31. Abridged.)

Tue May 03 1988

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GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV MEETS PIMEN,
PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA,
AND MEMBERS OF THE HOLY SYNOD
OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Some time ago, Patriarch Pimen addressed to Mikhail Gorbachev a written request to meet him in honour of the coming millennium of Russian Christianity.

On April 29, Mikhail Gorbachev received in the Catherine Hall of the Kremlin Patriarch Pimen and the following members of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church:

Filaret, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia; Alexi, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod; Yuvenali, Metropolitan of Krutitsa and Kolomna; Vladimir, Metropolitan of Rostov and Novocherkassk; and Filaret, Metropolitan of Minsk and Byelorussia.

As he opened the meeting, Mikhail Gorbachev said:

"I am glad to see you and willing to talk with you and answer your questions.

"Our meeting is taking place ahead of the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Russia which received not only religious, but also social and political significance, for this was an important milestone along the centuries-long path of the development of national history, culture and Russian statehood.

"This was a long and complicated path, rich in dramatic events and keen political collisions. I would single out a period of seven decades that became for the Russian Church one of the most important stages in its history. These are the seven decades of Soviet government when the Church has been living and operating in social conditions that have no analogues in history.

"The decree on the separation of Church from state and

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of school from Church, proclaimed by the young Soviet Republic, marked a sharp turn in relations between Church and state in Russia. The Lenin decree, the 70th anniversary of which was recently observed, enabled the Church to carry out its activity without any outside interference. To use a figure of speech, the liberation spirit of the Great October Socialist Revolution reached all religious organisations in our multi-ethnic society.

"Not everything was easy and simple in the sphere of state-Church relations. Not all hierarchs were able to perceive the essence of the decree. It took time to comprehend the ideas contained therein.

"Religious organisations were also affected by the tragic developments that occurred in the period of the cult of personality. This period was unequivocally assessed as departure from socialist principles that have now been restored in their rights.

"Mistakes made with regard to the Church and believers in the 1930s and the years that followed are being rectified. Our newspapers and magazines write about this with candour and objectivity. From their pages we hear the voice of the Church, the voice of those present here.

"The Constitution of the USSR guarantees equality for all citizens. In the name of real equality and real freedom, the religious and non-religious working people carried out history's first socialist revolution, worked side by side building the edifice of socialism and fought in the Great Patriotic War and heroically worked on the home front.

"The common destiny, the hardest trials rallied together all Soviet people defending socialism in a life-or-death fight against fascism.

"We remember the patriotic appeals of the clergy to its flock in the dire war years. We remember mass subscription campaigns for the defence fund. Worshippers collected enough money to build planes for several air squadrons named after Alexander Nevsky, and a tank column named after Dmitri

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Donskoi.

Designed to perform purely religious functions, the Church cannot keep away from complicated problems that worry mankind, from the processes taking place in society.

The peace-making efforts by the country's religious organisations, their contribution to the campaign for nuclear disarmament deserve the highest praise. The movement of the clergy for humanism, for fair relations between peoples, in support of the home and foreign policy of the Soviet state deserves as much appreciation. All this is close to the aspirations of religious people, who hold dear the humanist ideal of socialism. Our whole community understands and appreciates their stance.

"The overwhelming majority of the believers accepted the policy of perestroika, making a considerable contribution to implementing plans of the country's social and economic acceleration, to promoting democracy and openness. These conditions promote a wide-range public dialogue. They allow religious activists to take greater part in the work of many public organisations, like the Culture Foundation, the Children's Fund named after Lenin, Motherland Society, and others. The Soviet state granted believers' request to pass back under Church jurisdiction the St. Daniel Monastery in Moscow, the Optin Monastery in the Kaluga Region, a major historical monument, and the Tolga Convent in the Yaroslavl Region. The state provided every condition for the celebrations of millennium of Russian Christianity.

"A new law on the freedom of conscience, now being drafted, will reflect the interests of religious organisations as well. These are all tangible results of new approaches to state-church relations in the conditions of perestroika and democratisation of Soviet society.

"We are restoring in full measure now the Leninist principles of attitude to religion, Church and believers. The attitude to the Church, to the believers should be

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determined by the interests of strengthening unity of all working people, of the entire nation.

"We clearly see the entire depth of our differences in world outlook, but at the same time we realistically assess the existing situation. The believers are Soviet people, workers, patriots, and they have the full right to express their conviction with dignity. Perestroika, democratisation and openness concern them as well -- in full measure and without any restrictions. This is especially true of ethics and morals, a domain where universal norms and customs come in so helpful for our common cause.

So, we have a lot of common points for an earnest and, I hope, fruitful dialogue. We have a common history, a common Motherland and a common future. So let us think together about all that.

A little more than a month remains before the anniversary celebrations.

In anticipation of that event, I would like to express the wish that it should pass under the sign of consolidation of all believers and all working people in our country in the name of the great common cause of perestroika, renewal of socialism and full exposure of its humanistic moral potential. That is inseparable today, too, from active participation in the struggle against the nuclear threat, for the survival of mankind.

Let the guests invited to the celebrations and all believers of the planet see the peaceful aspirations of the Soviet people. It is the supreme blessing for mankind to live in peace, never have a fear of a potential nuclear war and feel safe about the future of one's children.

I hope that the efforts undertaken to that end will find support with the church, too, from which we expect new positive moves in upholding the peace cause and in its peace-making efforts.

On the eve of the historic event for the Russian Orthodox Church I wish you, members of the Holy Synod, good health and

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further success in all your efforts meant for the good of man and for the preservation of peace on Earth!

In the return speech addressed to Mikhail Gorbachev, Patriarch Pimen of Moscow and All Russia said:

Please, accept our heart-felt gratitude for finding the opportunity, despite your exceptionally busy schedule, to receive us and thereby show your attention to the Russian Orthodox Church.

This year comes a millennium of the baptism of Russia. Since then our church has been providing spiritual food for its children, educating them in the gospel principles and instilling in them civic virtues. The church has always combined its service with concern about the integrity of our Motherland, about its protection from foreign encroachments, about the assertion of justice in society and about the development of spiritual culture.

This June we will officially celebrate that remarkable jubilee. We are completing the preparations in order to mark in a worthy manner that great event in the history of Christianity and in the history of our Motherland.

Esteemed Mikhail Sergeyevich, on behalf of the Episcopate, the clergy, the monks and the laymen of our church who are all citizens of our socialist Motherland, I pledge full support to You, the architect of perestroika and the herald of new political thinking in that gratifying process. We, the church people, ardently pray for the success of that process and are seeking to do everything within our power to promote it. The church dedicates its efforts to the moral education of believers, to the assertion in them of human dignity, to the consolidation of the sanctity of the family hearth and to the conscientious attitude to work for the benefit of one's neighbours and the whole of our society.

The process of perestroika is having a good effect on the growth of the international prestige of our Motherland. It is received with enthusiasm in the churches of the world and we are contributing to that by explaining to religious people the

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importance and the objective of the renewal of life in our society.

We see the success of perestroika in that the ideals of a nuclear-free and non-violent world proclaimed by our country have started materializing. We strongly welcome the Soviet-American Treaty on the elimination of two classes of missiles.

We dedicate our zealous prayers today to your coming meeting in Moscow with the President of the United States of America and give our blessing to its success. For our own part, we are working in every possible way to create a favourable atmosphere for it in the religious and public circles of the world.

The positive results of the process of perestroika and renewal are having a reflection on the life of the Russian Orthodox Church and of the other churches and religious associations of our country. We see that in the all-round assistance to the preparations for our jubilee, in the opening of several monasteries, in the registration of communes, in the construction of new temples and in the easing of the settlement of other pressing problems of church life. In this connection we note with gratitude the great assistance given to us by the Council for Religious Affairs of the USSR Council of Ministers. For all that we express sincere gratitude to you, esteemed Mikhail Sergeyevich, and all other leaders of our country.

However, not all the problems of church life are being resolved or duly attended to. We hope that with the development of the democratic principles of life in our society they will get a solution favourable for the church and useful for our state.

May God bless you and your efforts for the benefit of our dear Motherland and for the glory of peace and justice all over the world.

In the discussion that followed members of the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church expressed their full support for

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the efforts aimed at perestroika and moral renewal in society, undertaken in our country. They raised a number of specific questions associated with the guaranteeing of normal performance of the Orthodox church.

Mikhail Gorbachev said that he would pass on those requests and considerations to the government which would carefully examine them and pass appropriate decisions.

The meeting was attended by the assistant to the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, I.T.Frolov and by the chairman of the Council for Religious Affairs of the USSR Council of Ministers, K.M.Kharchev.

(TASS)

(Pravda, April 30. In full.)

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH ARAŞTIRMALARI
TÜSTAV

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH ARAŞTIRMA VAKFI

TÜSTAV

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News and ViewsPATRIARCH PIMEN GREET'S PERESTROIKA

Igor TROYANOVSKY, Novosti analyst

The perestroika effort in the Soviet Union benefits the Church and improves the atmosphere in which it fulfils its noble mission. The new conditions helped to solve many parochial and diocesan issues in the interests of all parties involved, said Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, in an exclusive interview Novosti Press Agency is about to publish in the next issue of its bulletin, Religion in the USSR.

The Patriarch will be 78 this summer. He took his monastic vows at the age of fifteen. He headed a church choir, was senior priest in a number of churches, Father Superior of the Pskov Cave and the Trinity St. Sergius monasteries, was Bishop, Archbishop and Metropolitan, until the Local Council of 1971 elected him Patriarch.

The Church has every condition to freely fulfil its mission in keeping with the ecclesiastical tradition, said Patriarch Pimen. The state willingly satisfies its needs. State allocations allow the Church to purchase materials necessary to erect new and redecorate old places of worship, to buy printing paper, churchplate raw materials, etc.

Apart from the medieval St. Daniel Monastery in Moscow, two more were recently passed back into the Church jurisdiction on its request: the Optin Monastery of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, one of Russia's foremost spiritual centres, in the Kaluga Eparchy, and the Tolga Convent, Yaroslavl Eparchy, with a shelter for old clergymen in need of care. The authorities are now considering the request of the Church to regain the Kiev Cave Monastery, cradle of Russian monasticism.

Those and many more facts disprove the current

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allegations that freedom of conscience is violated in the Soviet Union, said the Patriarch. The few actual violations by no means reflect the state policy with respect to the Church. Individuals or local governing bodies are to blame for such infringements of the law--sometimes, religious bodies, too, for that matter. At any rate, members of the Russian Orthodox Church enjoy full rights as citizens and take no lesser part in community life than other Soviet people, the Patriarch stressed.

Religious believers quickly respond to all social tasks and contribute to the national cause by dedicated labour, money donations and moral support, the Patriarch went on.

He quoted Mikhail Gorbachev who addressed hierarchs at their April 29 meeting as saying that Leninist attitudes to the Church, religion and believers are being reinstated in their rights to promote national unity. Believers are Soviet people like any other, honest workers and patriots, and they have every right to follow and express their convictions. The Russian Orthodox Church flock enthusiastically responded to the Soviet leader's statement, said Patriarch Pimen.

The Patriarch described the extensive program of celebrating the millennium of Russian Christianity, and said that the June 1988 Local Council will adopt the new Charter of the Russian Orthodox Church. The acting Church Statute, adopted on January 31, 1945 in a war-devastated country with dislocated ecclesiastical and social patterns, is long outdated. Its fragmentary nature also demands it to be replaced by a more comprehensive document. A statute elaborated in keeping with canonical norms which lie at the basis of all Statutes of Local Orthodox Churches, with the acting Soviet legislation on cults, and the vital needs of the Church, will help it to cope with the many tasks at hand.

The growing secular purport of community life puts before the Russian Orthodox Church the same problems all other Christian Churches are facing, said the Patriarch. The Church shall use no artificial means to enlarge its flock. Providence

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brings ever more people to the bosom of the Church. They come with their problems and demands. So the clergy face ever more tasks. A priest has to be up to his pastoral duty of the day. He must be well-versed in current issues and able to give the right advice.

The Russian Orthodox Church had a tremendous impact on Russian national awareness, culture and statehood. Russia earned formidable international prestige after it embraced Christianity. Cultures sharing the Christian basis influenced and enriched each other throughout the millennium.

The official Patriarchal residence will soon move from a mansion in a by-street near Arbat to the St. Daniel Monastery in Moscow's centre. Many state-owned construction firms took part in its redecoration effort and in building new premises.

Patriarch Pimen is the fourth head of the Russian Orthodox Church in this century. The Church had no Patriarchs for two hundred years, up to the Socialist Revolution of October 1917. It was governed by the Holy Synod, headed by the Chief Procurator, an official appointed by the Emperor. The Church was part and parcel of the state machine. The Patriarchate was reinstated only with the fall of the autocracy. Early in 1918, Lenin signed the decree separating the Church from the state and the school from the Church. From then on, the Church was entitled to self-government. Orthodoxy lost its status of official religion and became equal to other creeds. Thus the Soviet state laid the practical foundations for freedom of conscience to be enjoyed by all citizens. Under Stalinism and later, those principles were violated. The current restructuring of and democratic change in all spheres of Soviet life have a great impact on religion. Fully guaranteed civil rights are becoming a norm of Soviet life.

(APN, May 17. In full.)

MARXISM AND RELIGION

CHRISTIANS IN THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE

Orlando MillasCC Political Commission member,
Communist Party of Chile

Early last year our country was visited by Pope John Paul II. He displayed a friendly attitude to Pinochet, but also to the popular movement. The tyrant entertained the illusion that the Pontiff's visit would change the stand of the Chilean Catholic Church in his ^{favour}, but it attuned its hierarchical dependence on the Vatican with its stand in defence of human rights, denounced the crimes of the regime, and did not refrain from coming out in support of the unity of the anti-fascist forces for the restoration of democracy. This singular case ^{of} / Chile, where there is a growing urge among members of the Christian grassroots communities,¹ parish priests, members of religious orders and many bishops for joint action in defence of liberty, indicates that their new frame of mind is a matter of more than passing importance.

Developments over the past half century show the reflection in the minds of millions of Christians of the great revolutionary changes of our epoch, of the growing role of socialism as a social system, of the general crisis of capitalism, and of the sharpening historical contradictions in Latin America, a continent

which has the majority of the Catholics of the world. This is a wide-ranging development, and one could, perhaps, speak of a whole range of renovative processes, of which there are new manifestations every day. The Communist Party of Chile has watched these developments with great interest, and has taken account of them in its theoretical analysis and practical policy.

We are concerned with this matter above all from the standpoint of the struggle against imperialism and reaction. We fully accept Lenin's profound idea, which he expressed when the working class of Russia was faced with totally different conditions, that the Church was one hundred per cent identified with the society "based on the endless oppression and coarsening of the worker masses". We recall that he went on to stress: "No number of pamphlets and no amount of preaching can enlighten the proletariat, if it is not enlightened by its own struggle against the dark forces of capitalism. Unity in this truly revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class for the creation of a paradise on earth is more important to us than unity of proletarian opinion on paradise in heaven."² That was when Lenin drew a conclusion which remains valid to this day: "That is the reason why we do not and should not set forth our atheism in our Programme."³

That does not signify any concessions in theory or the Marxist view of the world and the society. We are guided by Lenin's firmness and clarity in rejecting any ambiguity in matters of principle. Whenever Lenin attacked bourgeois anti-

-clericalism, he always deemed it indispensable to reiterate that dialectical materialism, the basis of scientific socialism, is indisputably atheistic.

We, Communists, regard with close attention the fact that the old reactionary religious conceptions are being criticised within the Church itself, by the great mass of the faithful in the first place. The rigorously scientific Marxist method helps us to understand in depth the changes under way in contemporary Christianity. In his "Theses on Feuerbach", Marx formulated the essential point of departure in explaining the religious phenomenon. In Thesis 6, he says: "Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations." In Thesis 7, he gives an explanation of the "religious sentiment"; "Feuerbach, consequently, does not see that the 'religious sentiment' is itself a social product, and that the abstract individual whom he analyses belongs in reality to a particular form of society."⁴

In his well-known Section 4 in Chapter One of Volume One of Capital, which is entitled "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof", Marx speaks of the "fantastic" form of the relations between things, which human beings believe to be similar to their own social relations, and adds: "In order, therefore, to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent things

endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands."⁵ There he obviously has in mind the most traditional, conservative and apparently immutable and timeless products of the human intellect, but these are ultimately the social products of a world in continuous movement, which often tends to be out of joint.

Marx never took the mechanical approach to relations between the economic and social basis and the religious superstructure, and in each of these two great autonomous spheres he found

thought-provoking historical parallels, as he went beyond individual phenomena to examine the tendencies over entire periods and epochs.⁶ Nor was he ever in doubt that religious ideas had to be studied in the context of the historical process, the real basis which had to be reckoned with in an analysis. He was quite clear on this point: "Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with Nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them. Every history of religion even, that fails to take account of this material basis, is uncritical. It is, in reality, much easier to discover by analysis the earthly core of the misty creations of religion, than, conversely, it is, to develop from the actual relations of life the corresponding celestialised forms of those relations. The latter method is the only materialistic, and therefore the only scientific one."⁷

The contradictions between the immense productive forces of our day and the domination of the imperialist transnational corporations, that is, between production and property relations in the capitalist part of the world, have sprung up under the scientific and technical revolution, which has brought about the greatest technological changes in mankind's history. These contradictions are ever more acute and are most pronounced in the dependent regions, particularly in Latin America. There is every sign that the structural crisis in the countries of the continent is an explosive one. The imperialist plunder has forced the fascist tyranny, set up in Chile by the United States with fire and sword, to resort to state terrorism. The social tensions which have been building up on the continent since the beginning of this century have steadily gained in intensity

and have had the most savage effect on the popular masses. This situation tends to work a change in the mentality of the large part of the population consisting of believers, who are no longer satisfied with antiquated religious practices; while adhering to their Christian creed, they now express it in a different form.

Marx regarded religious sentiments as a part of the other historically-rooted characteristics of the society which are still of significance in our day. Let us note that when analysing the metamorphoses of the commodity in the process of circulation, he refers to the family Bible, which his weaver wants to buy and does buy on the market as a use-value.⁸ The

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weaver's religious frame of mind continues to be that of millions of similar working people on our continent, but what is new is that the consequent attitude of believers to the class struggle has now undergone a change, and that is of paramount importance. In Chile, we have watched, with great expectations, hopes and readiness for dialogue, the changing attitudes among ever wider sections of Catholics in the social battles. We could not remain indifferent and responded to their positive actions by holding out a hand for joint action against the common enemy--fascism--and for a dialogue in search of areas of accord.

For centuries--since the Spanish conquest and up until the beginning of the present century--the Catholic Church in Chile was a bulwark of extreme reaction linked to the Spanish crown and involved in the war against the Mapuche Indians, in the establishment of the colonial regime, and the domination of the "encomenderos"⁹ and the latifundists. It openly opposed independence and any manifestations of progress, and campaigned against republican reforms throughout the nineteenth century. But there was always within^{it} an influential progressive minority, and some clergymen shared the views of Father Las Casas.¹⁰ Among the prominent figures of the emerging national culture of Chile in the eighteenth century were the Jesuits Manuel Lacunza and Juan Ignacio Molina. Friar Camilo Henríquez may be considered one of our country's "fathers" in the fight for independence.¹¹ But it is equally true that these and other illustrious exceptions contrasted with the official ecclesiastical institution, which was solidly identified with colonialism, which was always

a sworn enemy of the working class movement, and which gave its blessings to the sores of latifundism. But later facts are also highly indicative: while proletarian organisations were being cursed from the pulpit, Luis Emilio Recabarren, the founder of the Communist Party of Chile, invited the preachers to a calm and reasonable discussion in public and that in many cases, as a rule, turned out to be useful.

When after the Great October Socialist Revolution and the First World War, Chile entered upon a period of sharp political and social battles, the historian Crescente Errázuriz was archbishop of Santiago. Far from supporting the enemies of change, he agreed to the separation of the Church from the state, and took a favourable view of the ongoing reforms. A little later a similar situation was ^{repeated} / in an even more accentuated form: when the Popular Front government was in ^{power in} / the late 1930s, it had very friendly relations with José María Caro, the first Chilean cardinal. I recall the meetings members of the Young Communist leadership had with him; they were held in a spirit of cordiality and trust, although they did not have any significant consequences.

None of these facts were quite accidental. In the early decades of this century, there appeared groups of Catholics in Chile who drew public attention by their non-traditional approach to social problems. New approaches were germinating in the minds of some clergymen who were well aware of the working class movement and Recabarren's activity in the saltpetre

mines, and were in evidence in some of the parishes with a deprived labouring population, and also among Catholic students and progressive intellectuals. The fight against the military dictatorship from 1927 to 1931 was carried on together by Communist students from the Avance group and Catholic students from the Renovación group. Masses of Catholics worked together with the Communists, and this helped to destroy many a myth. New ideas were being spread by two outstanding Catholics: the Jesuit Alberto Hurtado and Bishop Manuel Larraín.

The way to mutual understanding was, therefore, a long one. On the one hand, Catholics were always within the ranks of the CP Chile, while the party, making no secret of its atheistic thinking, duly respected their personal religious sentiments. Over the past 20 years, some priests became party activists, and they abided by only this condition: not to carry on purely religious propaganda among their party comrades. From 1958 on, when the party regained its constitutional rights, and up until the fascist coup in 1973, many priests and members of religious orders gave open support to Communist candidates in parliamentary and local elections.

On the other hand, broad masses of Catholics organised in parties accentuating their links to the Church--such as the Christians Democratic Party and the Christian Left--have maintained with the Communists what could be called normal relations (even if with some contradictions) which have now and again allowed for accord and alliance. Those are ^{well-known} facts. As for Christian grassroots communities, their friendly contacts

with Communist Party calls in areas of joint action have become commonplace.

For all that, the relations between Communists and Christians were put to the test in two highly specific periods of our history. The first was the period of the revolutionary government of President Salvador Allende; the second, the fascist tyranny of Augusto Pinochet. In both cases, their informal, human, individual ties were much more intimate because of the identity of views on many key issues. Besides, the Catholic Church, as an institution, was given ample proof in the 1,000 days of the popular government and the Chilean Revolution, that the Communists were committed to respecting religious sentiments and to working constructively with the church. When the dictatorship was set up, the Catholic Church on the whole took an anti-fascist stand, which is highly valued by our party.

Consequently, there was a process in Chile that was characterised by Radomiro Tomic, an outstanding Catholic politician and a one-time presidential candidate, as "a crisis of consciousness" which, on the eve of the Second World War, and more especially after it, "prompted (and still prompts) broad Christian groups (at first only the youth and rank-and-file believers) to challenge the alliance of the Church and various Christian trends in Latin America with the capitalist power at home and abroad. These elements began to appreciate the deep antagonism between capitalism with its declared aims, practices and institutional structure, and the liberation movement of the disinherited peoples".¹²

The thousands of events, both positive and negative, which have occurred in the course of this century, and above all the revolution in Russia, the rout of Nazism in the Second World War, the successes of existing socialism, the collapse of the colonial system in the postwar period, and the Cuban revolution in Latin America, all these have left an indelible imprint on the minds of millions of practising Christians. The profound social and psychological changes in various countries of the continent have led to a search for and assertion of new views of the surrounding world.

All of us, Communists and Christians of Latin America, recently received a book which is so rich in reflections, so packed with content and so clear in exposition of great issues. It is Fidel and Religion,¹³ which is a record of the conversations the Cuban leader had with the Brazilian Dominican Friar Betto. It is a book which deals with some of the burning problems of our day with remarkable directness and sincerity. The Communist Party of Chile puts on it the value it deserves. Despite the fascist terrorism, the book was also published in our country and it has been read, and will be read, by an ever wider circle of people.

When considering the role of Catholics (and Christians generally) in evaluating the prospects for an alliance for the liberation of the working class and of the Latin American peoples and nations, one should bear yet another point in mind: the changes in the consciousness of broad masses of believers are a relatively new process, but it is very wide, it is confronted

with many difficulties and obstacles, and has to run in highly contradictory conditions. It has become a solid and objective factor of growing influence on millions of people. When critically assessing our differences with believers and the invaluable advantages of accord with them for joint action and the establishment of various forms of unity and even of alliance, one should always bear in mind the peculiar problems of Christian thinking.

In the specific case of Catholics, it is preferable to bear in mind the simple and elementary fact of their belonging to an institution, the Church, which offers them protection. Marx once made an interesting remark concerning the Church. When ridiculing a petty-bourgeois writer intent on "abolishing the 'antagonism' between money and commodities", he said that that would be tantamount to "abolishing money itself", "since money exists only by virtue of this antagonism". At this point he added: "We might just as well try to retain Catholicism without the Pope."¹⁴

Three basic and highly contradictory trends, each of which is manifested in a great many variants, now coexist within the Catholic Church. One of the bishops of Santiago, Monsignor Jorge Hourton, has described them as follows: "There are those who have adopted a new and unique 'theory of liberation' and find their theological credo in the ridiculous assertion that the Armed Forces have liberated us from Marxism, and therefore every good Catholic owes them a debt of gratitude and support for the established regime (the conservative position). Others

are most concerned with maintaining the equilibrium, balancing, as it were, on a knife-edge, being aware of the problems, but trying to ignore them (the position of the indifferent). Finally, there are those who seek to go deeper, and while they seek to build peace and are pure of heart, they cannot avoid being affected by the problems, by continuous attacks on their Christian conscience, and so taking up more critical and dissident positions."¹⁵

At the risk of oversimplifying, one could state that among those taking the first position, the "conservative one" are out-and-out fascists, the men from Opus Dei,¹⁶ which enjoys much influence under the present pontificate, reactionaries of the worst sort, and also well-intentioned and ingenuous traditionalists, clergymen of the old stamp and "God's fools". The second position is institutionally the predominant one, including most bishops, "soft" conservatives, some of the renewalists who have yet to shed their ancestral prejudices, and also a mixed bag of reformists who are not so much indifferent to change as taking a middle road. The third position is held by those who are dedicated--often unequivocally--to the social struggle of our day. The mass of believers who incline to the third position in Chile is most impressive. It is true that many of them are also under the influence of Catholic leaders taking the second position. And all that is in continuous flux, in constant evolution, hopefully, for the better.

The truly important fact is that more and more believers no longer feel that there is a contradiction between their creed

and participation in the political struggle on the side of the left, and even in a revolution. For some, religion is an additional impetus to revolutionary action.

The magnitude of this phenomenon is evident from the polemics within the Church between the adherents and opponents of "liberation theology". The whole point is that the events of our revolutionary epoch have had an impact on large masses of believers, and this has been reflected by some Catholic theologians developing the well-known conception of man as an active being transforming Nature and transforming himself in the course of social activity. They take a dialectical view of social processes, criticise the ethics of capitalism, take a stand for the oppressed classes and opt for socialism. That has alarmed some circles in the Vatican, and it has become public knowledge that some cardinals regard the liberation theology as a heresy.

The Pope has also criticised it from the beginning of his pontificate. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (which is heir to the Inquisition and the Holy Office), has staged something like a trial of some of the more progressive theologians. The Brazilian Franciscan Leonardo Boff was chastised for his speeches by the imposition of a year's "penitential silence". Well-informed circles in Italy say that the Synod of Bishops convened by Pope John Paul II in 1986 was about to anathematise the liberation theology, when many prominent prelates from Brazil, Peru and other countries came out in its defence. The Synod ended without making a

statement on this issue. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith later issued, with the Pope's express approbation, a document entitled "Instruction on Christian Liberty and Liberation", which was highly ambiguous but contained obvious concessions to some of the formulations most vigorously backed by the liberation theologians.

One has to assume that the liberation theology has so resonated throughout the world that the Vatican was forced to respect it. And that is no small matter. These theologians are engaged in producing more solid works, among them a collective edition of a new theological encyclopaedia (Summa Theologica) no longer based on Aristotle's teachings, but on dialectical thinking.

Many Catholics find themselves confused and fear that the Vatican merely wants to postpone the confrontation in an effort to strengthen its positions in the various Episcopal Commissions in Latin America by the continued appointment of conservative bishops to most of the vacancies as they occur. There seems to be some ground for such fears, although it is quite evident that the passage of time is now much faster, and that, in the midst of the social upheavals and struggle of the peoples of the continent, it favours not only the liberation theologians, but also those who among the believers want cooperation of all the progressive forces without exception.

The Communist Party of Chile does not interfere in the internal affairs of the Church, but it takes part, with resolve and full clarity, in searching for ways towards accord, joint

action, cooperation, friendship, unity and mutual understanding
or alliance of the revolutionary anti-imperialist movement with Catholics and Christians generally. Meanwhile, US imperialism has stooped to every sort of intrigue, pressure and infiltration of its men into religious organisations to meddle in their affairs and try to divide them. One example will suffice: the lodges of Opus Dei are directly connected with the CIA, and their machinations are seen by the multitude ^{of} Catholics as profanation of their faith, are regarded with revulsion and rejected.

There is also the exemplary struggle by broad masses and the whole people of Chile against Pinochet's fascist tyranny, and it is embodied in well-concerted action by the party grassroots, be they Marxists, Christians or adherents of other ideological trends. Chile is a country where communist thinking continues to have deep roots, despite the fascist terrorism. It is, at the same time, a country in which Christianity has much weight, and in which the Catholic Church enjoys indubitable influence. It is a great fiasco for Pinochet that the Christians' religious sentiments did not prevent them from joining the Communists and other democrats in the fight, and from doing so without any second thoughts and prejudice. Theirs was not an easy choice in any sense, nor was it a unanimous one, but it was made by the majority of believers, and joint actions are now increasingly massive and involve the most diverse sections of the population.

We, Communists, will do our utmost to go on strengthening this militant brotherhood of Chileans, to make it the distinctive feature of our democracy and of our revolution in the battles ahead.

¹ For details, see Alvaro Oviedo, Stepan Mamontov, "Theology of Liberation: A New Heresy?", WMR, No. 3, 1986.--Ed.

² V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 10, pp. 86-87.

³ Ibid., p. 87.

⁴ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works in three volumes, Vol. One, Moscow, 1969, p. 14.

⁵ Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. I, p. 72.

⁶ Ibid., p. 81.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 372-73, footnote.

⁸ Ibid., p. 105.

⁹ Literally meaning "guardians", but actually feudal lords who "took care" of the Indians.--Ed.

¹⁰ Bartolome de Las Casas (1474-1566), a Spanish bishop, a humanist who opposed the brutality of the conquistadors and stood up in defence of the Indian population.--Ed.

¹¹ Camilo Henriquez (1769-1825), a Chilean public and political leader and the author of Chile's first Constitution.--Ed.

¹² See "The Need and Outlook for United Action", WMR, No. 10, 1978, p. 74.

¹³ For details, see Esteban Ona, "Fidel Castro Reflects on Religion", WMR, No. 1, 1987.

¹⁴ Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. I, p. 87, footnote.

¹⁵ J. Hourton, "Las 'opciones políticas' del catolicismo", Revista Chile-América, Roma, Nos. 80-81, 1982, p. 37.

¹⁶ A political and religious organisation founded in 1928 with the aim of launching "new crusades against communism".--Ed.

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EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, DISCUSSION

LATIN AMERICA: DIALOGUE OF MARXISTS AND BELIEVERS CONTINUES

The WMR Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean has held an international round table in Prague on "The Dialogue of Communists and Christians Amid the Current Crisis in the Region" in which prominent experts on religion and the church took part. Presented for discussion were reports by Juan Rosales, Central Committee alternate member of the Communist Party of Argentina; Jose Felipe Carneado, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Cuba; Orlando Millas, Central Committee Political Commission and Secretariat member of the Communist Party of Chile (who could not attend); and Professor Nikolai Kovalsky, Doctor of History (USSR).

Taking part in the discussion were representatives of fraternal parties on WMR: Jose Maria Lanao, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Argentina; David Moraes, Central Committee Political Commission member of the Communist Party of Bolivia; Antonio Granja, member of the National Leadership of the Brazilian Communist Party (by correspondence); Orel Viciani, representative of the Communist Party of Chile on WMR; Alvaro Oviedo, Central Committee member of the Colombian Communist Party; Francisco Gamboa, Central Committee Political Commission member of the People's Vanguard of Costa Rica Party; Antonio Diaz Ruis, representative of the Communist Party of Cuba; Luis Emilio Veintimilla, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Ecuador; Jaime Barrios, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of El Salvador; Donald Ramotar, Executive Committee member in the Central Committee of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana; Randolfo Banegas, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Honduras; Elean Thomas, Central Committee Political Bureau member of the Workers Party of Jamaica; Felix Dixon, Central Committee member of the People's Party of Panama; Rogelio Gonzalez, Central Committee member of the Paraguayan Communist Party; Cesar Jimenez, representative of the Peruvian Communist Party; Jota Carrera, Central Committee member of the Communist

Party of Venezuela (by correspondence); —————>
 —→ Dr Hans-Gunther Stieler (GDR); and Professor Stepan Mamontov (WMR staff member).

Following is a summary of the discussion prepared by Alvaro Oviedo. To cover this subject more extensively, WMR plans to publish several articles based on reports submitted to the round table.

A Short-Term Policy of Convenience or a Strategy?

One should stress at the outset that, referring primarily to the distinctive Latin American situation, all speakers noted not only the expediency of dialogue and cooperation with Christians but also the need to promote it and to arrive at a new level of understanding with due regard for the changes occurring in the world. The age we live in demands that we look steadily for ways to exchange information and views on an issue of such great importance for revolutionary practice.

The question of relations between Marxists and believers is a subject long familiar to the Communists. The general principles for its solution were suggested by the founders of Marxism-Leninism. Later, the world communist movement acquired additional experience connected, for example, with the formation of united fronts against fascism and the war threat in the 1930s. The documents adopted at the time, after Maurice Thorez's declaration of the "hand outstretched in friendship" policy,¹ kept referring to greater cooperation with organisations of believers.

In their underground struggle during World War II, the communist parties of the countries overrun by the Nazis also oriented their members on joint action with all anti-fascist forces, including the Christians who joined the resistance movement. We also know about the cooperation of the Russian Orthodox Church with the government and people of the Soviet Union who bore the

brunt of the struggle against the Nazis during the war.

After the victory over fascism, virtually all fraternal parties in the countries where the Catholic faith was widespread advocated coordination of action with Christians and with believers in general. The principles underlying this position were formulated in the collective documents adopted at meetings of communist and workers' parties--for example, in the Peace Manifesto of 1957 which appealed to people of goodwill, irrespective of their political or religious affiliation, to help prevent a new war. The participants in the 1960 meeting stressed in their statement that no differences of a political, religious or social nature must be a barrier to the unity of the working people.²

The 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties was even more forthright, noting that as social, political and economic contradictions became more acute in many countries, new prospects were opening for a broad alliance with the masses of believers. The conference stated the communist conviction that close contacts and joint struggle could transform the masses of believers into a vigorous force of social change.³

This conclusion was also reiterated at the 1975 Meeting of Latin American and Caribbean Communist Parties: "Christians, particularly Catholics, ordinary priests and even some members of the higher clergy are increasingly active in the popular struggle for national and social progress. They are inspired by the idea of the church being on the side of the people... and rejecting a compromise with reaction and imperialism. Prominent representatives of the church oppose fascist terror and advocate democratic rights and social progress".⁴

The experience of contacts and sometimes, of cooperation between the Communists and the Left, renovation-oriented quarters of the Latin American Catholic Church--the working people in the parishes, grassroots clergymen and even some bishops--is sufficiently rich. This experience allows one to conclude--and this has been stressed repeatedly by Comrade Fidel Castro since the

early 1970s--that this is by no means a short-lived policy of convenience rooted in tactical considerations, but a long-term strategy of the struggle for peace, social progress, democracy and national independence.⁵ As several speakers pointed out, joint action by Marxists and Christians can promote socialism in Latin American Countries.

New Problems, New Questions

World and, particularly, Latin American developments have produced new phenomena connected with contradictions not only within the church itself but also within capitalism as a whole. This, as many round table speakers said, gives a new and specific shape to the tasks the communist parties have to tackle to involve the working people, most of them believers, in the revolutionary process. Without their participation, far-reaching social change is impossible.

Ever more Latin Americans, whatever their religion, conclude that one must combat a system which deals blows to the working people indiscriminately, to believers and non-believers alike. The policy of the transnational corporations and other monopolies which shift the burden of the crisis onto the shoulders of the working people encounters growing resistance on the part of the peoples who refuse to accept imperialist diktat. The contribution of believers to this struggle is hard to overestimate.

The threat of man's extinction in a nuclear catastrophe and the awareness of the connection between the arms race and the

plunder of the developing countries are helping to open the eyes of people all over the world. The absurdity of military spending is glaring against the backdrop of hunger, contagious diseases and privations afflicting vast regions of the globe.

Tragic reality has produced profound changes in the religious practices of the Christian masses and their organisations in Latin America, above all within the Catholic Church. Adapting to the demands of the times, it inevitably gave rise to currents of renovation which asserted themselves at the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) conferences in Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979) and, theoretically, within the framework of liberation theology with its "preferential choice in favour of the poor" and with its challenge to the conservative quarters of the church.⁶ The chief theoreticians of liberation theology believe that the renovationist choice in favour of the poor is consonant with the general Christian principle of loving one's neighbour without drawing any social distinction. It is specified, however, that "love of the oppressed" is expressed through participation in their liberation struggle and "love of the oppressors" through changing the world so that they could no longer exploit their neighbour and would thus regain their human condition. This interpretation has incensed the reactionary clericals and the US administration who invariably describe it as "subversive". There are areas in Latin America where even the Bible is regarded as a subversive book; a person in whose possession a Bible is found is liable to go before a firing squad.

Marxism cannot be blamed for the Bible becoming an explosively dangerous book. The way it is interpreted in the present conditions of poverty, exploitation and oppression expresses the aspirations of the dispossessed and their hopes for a better life. It is a protest against oppression--although, in Lenin's words, "in religious guise".⁷

It is common knowledge that Christianity arose in the Roman Empire as a religion of the slaves and the oppressed and that it proclaimed equality of all men. At that time, slaves were regarded merely as "cattle with the gift of speech," and they could express their yearning for justice in the only form open to them --in religious guise. Subsequently, the religion of the ordinary people was used by the ruling classes to consolidate their power.

What is new is that today, this yearning for justice and human dignity can be realised. The meeting across centuries between the ideals of early Christianity and the scientific goals of a revolutionary movement opens up prospects of social change, of building a more humane society. Referring to the experience of the Island of Freedom, Fidel Castro notes that in Latin America, a just society has ceased to be a utopia and that if the church attempted to create a state based on Christian ideals, it would look very much like Cuba.⁸

New realities born of a contradictory process which at times deviates from a strictly onward course make a number of demands on the Communists. As the participants in the round table pointed out, we cannot remain indifferent to a broad mass movement which, although heterogeneous and often contradictory, has an important potential for development and is looking for a place of its own

in today's revolutionary battles. One cannot approach this issue of paramount significance to revolution in Latin America while remaining hostage to the patterns and positions of the past. Creative Marxism, which is alien to all dogma or hidebound thinking, demands that the Communists follow closely the current trends of the revolutionary process.

The direction in which the Christian masses will move largely depends on our response. Generally, believers strive for emancipation, but their hopes may be frustrated unless we work jointly for banishing exploitation of man by man. There is simply no such thing as an ideological vacuum. If Marxist, revolutionary ideas fail to gain the upper hand, other ideologies which are hostile to genuine change will influence the masses, confusing or restricting their action.

The participants in the round table expressed their concern over the fact that Marxist-Leninists are somewhat slow to study these issues, to arrange the available experience and its new aspects into a system, and to make practical use of the conclusions made. That is a serious drawback, and not only the fraternal parties of Latin America but also the entire communist movement has a stake in correcting it. As it was stated at the meeting, Latin American Marxists are paying due attention in their work to the realities of the Christian movement and its policy. This work is based on criteria that transcend national boundaries, whether this applies to reactionary clericalists, moderate reformists or to renovationists. But studies in this field must be intensified to identify the more promising subjects, to add vi-

gour to the exchange of views and information already underway among the Communists--and, naturally, to take specific steps enabling Latin American Christians and Marxists to tackle common problems together. Finding common ground with believers is a task which, if accomplished, could make a great impact on the popular masses.

Cooperation with Christians

Speakers at the round table were unanimous in stressing the need to promote relations with the renovationist Christians in the spirit of sincerity and mutual respect. True, the materialist world view is a direct opposite of religious philosophy, and the truth of Marxism-Leninism has been borne out by historical practice. But joint action does not imply that either side must abandon its philosophical or religious convictions. While supporting liberation theology, we do not adhere to it at all; a correct understanding of this current helps to expose right-wing forces in the Church and reactionaries in general who want to use religious faith for justifying passivity and humble acceptance of exploitation, oppression and arbitrary rule.

As it was stated in the discussion, the Communists must openly proclaim their conviction that all forms of desarrollismo⁹ in Latin America have failed and that historically, revolutionary change is the only way out of the crisis. We must work with believers without imposing our view on them, without lapsing into sectarian attitudes, and never losing sight of Lenin's idea that "no number of pamphlets and no amount of preaching can enlighten

the proletariat, if it is not enlightened by its own struggle against the dark forces of capitalism".¹⁰ However, both futile dogmatism which isolates us from Christians and concessions on matters of principle stand in the way of political education of the working masses, of their moving closer to Marxism.

The well-known precept of the founders of Marxism-Leninism --that atheist education must serve the primary task of intensifying the class struggle of the exploited against the exploiters --is the cornerstone of our relations with believers. This approach does not stem from tactical considerations or short-term advantages but from the demands of materialist dialectics--efforts must be focused on changing those social conditions which, today, prompt people to turn to religion.

This was why Lenin said that no effort should be spared to draw workers still believing in God into the party. He stressed that "we are absolutely opposed to giving the slightest offense to their religious convictions" and that "we recruit them in order to educate them in the spirit of our program".¹¹ Fidel Castro notes in this connection that from a strictly political point of view, "one can be a Marxist while remaining a Christian and work together with Marxists who are Communists to transform the world".¹²

Dialogue with Christians is a form of ideological struggle, not appeasement. However, participants in the round table pointed out, our debates with believers must not scare them away from us, must not degenerate into a violent quarrel in the course of a common struggle. These debates should demonstrate that Marxism-

Leninism is a profoundly substantiated theory corroborated by social practice and consonant with the interests of the working class and the oppressed in general.

Certain new nuances arise here, the round table participants noted. In their rapprochement with Catholics, some party members may at times even depart from the philosophical principles of the Marxist world view. We tell these comrades that one must emphasise all that unites us, but never sacrifice our principles. It is particularly important to realise how those Christians who break with right-wing, reformist, anti-Marxist and anti-communist ideology can be helped to join revolutionary activities and find their place on the side of the oppressed. And, naturally, they should learn about the principles of Marxism-Leninism from the right source, not from the caricature presented by reaction.

Another important point is connected with the fact that many Christians who call themselves Marxists and who take part in the political revolutionary struggle strive to master scientific ideology but cannot embrace it fully, cannot bring themselves to abandon their religious beliefs.

Thus, specific developments are making new theoretical and practical demands on the communist parties. In order to cope with these demands, the round table emphasised, one must remember above all that in the course of the dialogue, Marxists and Christians can, without giving up their principles, find much in common in their approach to ethical values so close and dear to all people of goodwill.

Moreover, Latin American realities encourage believers and Marxists to unite within organisations playing the part of a vanguard--a completely new phenomenon in the contemporary liberation movement. For example, the leadership of the Sandinist National Liberation Front which is being transformed into an integral party, includes Christian activists and Catholic priests; the issue of forming a single revolutionary vanguard has also been raised in El Salvador. Here we are dealing not only with dialogue and cooperation but also with a convergence of several political forces in a monolithic organisation representing the advance guard of revolution.

National Opportunities and Difficulties of the Dialogue

The round table considered the distinctive place of religion in different Latin American countries. In an attempt to draw a tentative panorama of the subject and cover the views expressed at the round table and reports that have appeared in the press over the past few years, let us consider the position of the church and of believers and the attitude of Latin American communist parties to them.

Since the 1940s, the Communist Party of Argentina has pursued a policy of offering cooperation to Catholics. This course was followed in the first postwar decades, although at that time, the church as a social institution promoted conservative, reactionary, anti-communist and anti-Soviet trends and was openly hostile to any demands of the workers and to any

progressive change. But even then, democratic currents, albeit very weak, could be discerned among the clergy.

Now that contradictions have sharpened and differentiation has become obvious within the church, the Argentine Communists reject all forms of crude anti-clericalism and all attempts to dismiss the church and the movements allied with it as totally reactionary social forces.

An unbiased look at the situation shows that the more conservative of the Argentine bishops are gradually losing their leading role, although they still retain firm positions in the top church hierarchy, among army chaplains and in urban and rural organisations of big capital. A group of bishops and prelates is asserting its place among the clergy: they have shifted noticeably to the left, support the more progressive demands of the masses and advocate liberation theology--although this has cost some of them their lives. Many priests and leaders of religious agencies realise that in order to retain its ties with the masses, the church must abandon its obsolete rhetoric and speak a new, more reformist language open to a discussion of social problems, of the aspirations of the dispossessed and the oppressed. True, these figures still labour under anti-communist misconceptions and class-based prejudice and try to avoid a radicalisation of their congregations. But even given such conservative attitudes which do not go beyond timid reformism, some common ground can always be found, and this can make it possible to pursue a policy of alliances with the renovationists on issues such as the struggle for peace, democratic

freedoms and, to a certain extent, a more equitable distribution of material benefits.

The Communists of Argentina are working constantly among believers, and the party is aware of the numerous tasks it will have to solve while travelling in this direction. The Victorio Codovilla Centre for Marxist-Leninist Studies under the CPA Central Committee has formed a special study group on religious issues. The group has recently prepared a number of publications¹³ aimed at providing activists with theoretical background for dialogue and cooperation with the masses of believers.

In Brazil, where renovation has spread widely among the clergy, the left wing of the church played a prominent part in the struggle against the military dictatorship which had ruled the country for more than 20 years (1964-1985). Here is a quotation from a BCP policy document: "In the darkest period of fascist repression /the Catholic Church/ was among those few who had the courage to raise their voice to publicly expose the crimes and the arbitrary rule of the dictatorship, and it did this firmly and boldly, thus contributing decisively to the shaping of national public opinion which condemned the regime."¹⁴

In the absence of legal parties, the left-wing church acted openly as the mouthpiece of the opposition. Jointly with several progressive political figures it organised a campaign for a broad, general and unlimited amnesty and later called for a discussion of a constitutional reform.

With its 110 million parishioners, the Brazilian Catholic Church carries great weight in the Catholic world. Brazil accounts for nearly one-third of all Latin American Catholics whom recent years have set in motion—witness the emergence of some 100,000 grassroots Christian communities¹⁵ with a great democratic and collectivist potential. Liberation theology has even had an impact on the top level of the church hierarchy and is felt among the Brazilian episcopate, which, with its 367 bishops and five cardinals, is the largest in the Catholic world. A recent conference of the episcopate has raised the issue of promoting democratisation in Brazil and adopted a document calling on all Catholics to discuss ways of expanding popular participation in the nation's economic and social affairs. An open advocate of agrarian reform, the church reaffirmed its stand by proposing to hand over all its land (about 180,000 hectares) to the government should the latter decide to change the structure of rural land tenure.

In the modern history of Chile, relations between Communists and Catholics who constitute an absolute majority of believers have gone through two stages shaped by completely different political circumstances. In 1970-1973 the revolutionary government of Salvador Allende maintained relations of mutual respect with the church; the masses of Christians were extensively involved in the revolutionary process. The second stage began with the advent of the savage fascist dictatorship. But even in these conditions, and despite the intrigues of the conservatives who were encouraged by the appointment of a

new cardinal in Santiago de Chile, the Catholic Church assumed a stand that was, on the whole, anti-fascist. The Communists have repeatedly welcomed its various moves. Conversely, Pinochet's regime has treated the church brutally and insultingly--priests have been arrested, exiled and even assassinated; churches and cathedrals have been besieged and mined. Maintaining their daily contacts under these conditions, Communists and Catholics strengthen their ties in the name of their common struggle for freedom. This is reflected graphically in the friendly relations existing between territorial party cells and grassroots Christian communities.

The Communist Party of Chile proceeds from the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the church, firmly and unequivocally advocating understanding and joint action between supporters of revolutionary change and the masses of Catholics and other Christians. The party is doing its utmost to make this a distinctive feature of the nation's future democracy and revolutionary change.¹⁶

In Paraguay, oppressed by Latin America's oldest dictatorship, the church also demonstrates a desire to take the sentiments of the masses into consideration. This trend has affected even the higher members of the church hierarchy, signalling that considerable changes are occurring in the Paraguayan episcopate which, not too long ago, was a mainstay of the dictatorship. Archbishop Ismael Rolon criticises Stroessner's rule in his sermons. Last year, priests and nuns staged a procession in Asuncion, calling for peace, freedom and justice for all those suffering from poverty. The marchers condemned the regime's

reprisals against peasant families. The idea that dialogue, cooperation and joint action with the Communists and all democratic forces are needed is gradually making headway among the Catholic clergy and lay believers.

The Paraguayan Communist Party holds that there is sufficient common ground between Christian and atheist workers to unite for liberation from exploitation, oppression and poverty; as far as the church itself is concerned, it, too, is "increasingly opposing the dictatorship which accuses bishops and ordinary priests of abetting subversive activities".¹⁷

Bolivia is a Latin American country where the Catholic influence is particularly evident, although other denominations also exist. Despite the fact that some circles of the church hierarchy cling to old, reactionary concepts, after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) positive changes occurred in the approach of the church to issues such as the socio-economic position of the working people, human rights, democracy and resistance to the dictatorships which had repeatedly unleashed reprisals against believers and even murdered priests. These new developments and a response to liberation theology opened broader opportunities for dialogue and joint action of Communists and Christians to champion national interests and the demands of the popular masses. The Bolivian church has recently taken a clear stand on the key issues of the nation's life.

First, it acted as mediator between the authorities and the workers of the Siglo XX and Catavi mines when the miners staged a mass hunger strike to protest against the government policy of privatisation and shutdowns. Second, the Assembly of the Bolivian

Laity, supported by the leaders of the church, denounced the July 14, 1986 incursion of US troops into Bolivia, allegedly to combat drug dealers, as a violation of national sovereignty. Finally, one of the documents adopted by the Bolivian episcopate has described the external debt as "amoral" and stated that a refusal to service it is justified from the Christian point of view on social, political and purely humanitarian grounds.¹⁸ In a thinly veiled reference to the IMF, the bishops assert that "well known international organisations" are foisting their schemes on Bolivia and that the burden of implementing them is borne by the dispossessed.

In the Catholic Church of Peru, there are quite conservative and even reactionary currents, but there are also influential renovationist forces who follow the ideology of Gustavo Gutierrez, a priest, a theologian and one of the founders of liberation theology. As early as 1971 the Peruvian episcopate acknowledged the advantages of socialism, although opponents of change again gained the upper hand in the mid-1980s.¹⁹ Gutierrez and his supporters appreciate Marxism highly as a doctrine of social development, and they use Marxist precepts in their theological constructs.

Significantly, Left Unity (LU), a coalition which includes the Peruvian Communist Party and which is the country's second strongest political force, maintains practical cooperation between Christians and Marxists. Alfonso Barrantes, the LU leader and the mayor of Lima, describes himself as a Christian Marxist. Within the framework of the LU, he strives to comprehensively

promote contacts and cooperation with grassroots Christian communities and particularly with supporters of liberation theology. We maintains that unlike speculative theology, liberation theology is born of and rooted in Peru's tragic realities.

The unbearable position of the peasants is the nation's foremost social problem. The drama of godforsaken mountain villages,

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the brutal exploitation of those who go to the cities in search of jobs, starvation and living conditions unfit for human beings--these are the realities that influence the religious consciousness of believers and prepare them for acceptance of socialist ideas. The experience of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions with their policy of close alliance between working Christians and Marxists exerts a perceptible influence on the Peruvian renovationists and on the masses of believers who have been set in motion.

The Communists of Ecuador also believe that joint action is both possible and necessary. The 10th Congress of the CPE (1981) said in its political resolution that "the strategy outlined by the party calls for the unity of all anti-imperialist, democratic and patriotic forces in the struggle for a revolution of liberation with a socialist perspective... Conditions are in evidence for joint action with influential groups of progressive Catholics."²⁰

What is known as the people's church has played an important part in awakening the consciousness of the Indian working masses in Latin America. The "people's church" created a network of parish schools using radio broadcasts as teaching aids; this effort was inspired by Leonidas Proano, formerly the bishop of Riobamba and a well-known figure in Latin America. The reactionaries have repeatedly branded him a "Communist". In 1973 the Vatican subjected him to a special "screening", and in 1976 he was even arrested on charges of "subversive activities". "The bishop of the Indians" and his supporters have done much to help overcome anti-communist

attitudes among the Catholic masses and to promote the solidarity of the Ecuadoran workers and peasants with other Latin American peoples fighting for liberation.

The right-wingers tried to use the 1985 visit of Pope John Paul II to Ecuador to strengthen their hand. They opposed the idea of unity of the working people in their struggle for social change. But these attempts failed. Hundreds of thousands of Indians filled the streets and squares of the capital and the roads leading to the city; they demanded that the church defend the poor. El Pueblo, the principal newspaper of the CPE Central Committee, wrote at the time: "We Communists are often accused of being enemies of believers. That is an outright lie. We are enemies of the way the ruling classes use religion to dampen the struggle of the people for their interests. We believe in unity and cooperation of Communists and Christians who uphold their economic and social rights and oppose war and the arms race."²¹

Some of Ecuador's Catholics are politically affiliated in the Revolutionary Movement of Left Christians, an ally of the Communists. A large part of believers votes for the CPE and the Socialists in elections. It is no accident that in Chimborazo Province where Proano now lives and works, only Communist and Socialist candidates won in the latest elections.

The Catholic Church in Colombia plays a prominent role not only in the purely religious sphere but also in government, due to the concordat²² with the Holy See. In many respects, it is even more traditionalist than the similar covenants with


such fundamentally Catholic countries as Spain or Portugal.

There are three main currents within the Colombian Catholic Church. First, there is the far-right, reactionary current which unites certain prelates, the army chaplains who subscribe to the infamous national security doctrine, as well as traditionalist priests. Obscurantist figures such as Father Lefelvre publicise their views in Colombia and have open supporters, many of them connected with the Opus Dei.²³ The second, conservative-reformist current covers most of the clergy. Opposing the renovationists either openly or covertly, it is the main obstacle to the propagation of liberation theology. Its doctrinal rebuttal is the task of "moderate" reformists who are backed by various West German Christian funds and foundations. Finally, there is the third, truly renovationist current which is closest to the left and which upholds the more radical precepts of liberation theology. Its members, including a group of priests who have joined the people's armed struggle, often take a progressive stand--from a consistently democratic to a revolutionary one.

The conservative-reformist elements constitute a majority in the Colombian church. However, today this majority which is hostile to liberation theology and which has been weaned on anti-communism, holds that the guerrilla movement and the "subversive activities" in Colombia cannot be eliminated by force of arms only. Therefore, this current proposes agrarian reform and other measures that would ensure peace, jobs, and the people's access to education, adequate housing and basic services.

The Colombian Communists believe that unity of all forces advocating change can be attained in different ways--from concerted action when the objectives coincide temporarily to a joint struggle for long-term goals, ensured by a succession of accords on specific issues. For this reason the CPC uses every opportunity to find common ground with all those who want the truce²⁴ to continue and who strive for socio-political change in favour of Colombia's democratisation and progress to advanced democracy. Prominent among these forces are Christians, including some prelates.

The secular tradition has always been quite strong in Venezuelan politics, and that is a marked difference from the situation in Colombia. A complete division of functions between the church and the state has been a distinctive feature of the Venezuelan scene for more than 50 years. Civil marriage, divorce, government-controlled education, etc., are realities which no Catholic challenges. The people of Venezuela practice Catholicism their own way, which is devoid of any fanaticism. They are very tolerant with regard to religious matters, and this opens great opportunities for the party's political and ideological work among believers.



The Communist Party of Venezuela and the Catholic Church maintain relations of mutual respect and refrain from attacking each other. The contacts established with certain ecclesiastical quarters can be described as very good. This applies not only to that part of the clergy which has embraced liberation theology, that is, not only to the "rebellious" and renovationist priests, but also to the priests who are less receptive to new ideas but who uphold the liberal traditions of Venezuela's Catholic faith.

This is why the CPV appreciates the cooperation established with these religious figures on specific issues. Acting in the interests of the people, the party rejects behind-the-scenes manoeuvres and demagoguery about the church. The materialism and atheism of the Communists do not pose an insurmountable obstacle to the dissemination of Marxism in the Venezuelan working class movement, nor do they stand in the way of the policy of broad alliances with all democratic forces. Such is the course mapped out by the Seventh Congress of the CPV (October 1985) and aimed at helping to overcome the consequences of the severe crisis which has afflicted the country in recent years.

Central America and the Caribbean

The participants in the round table were particularly interested to learn about the experience of cooperation between Christians and Marxists accumulated by socialist Cuba.

Although the Cuban Catholic hierarchy, connected with the United States and Franco's Spain until the 1960s, at first support-

ed the counter-revolutionaries, publicly condemned court sentences to the butchers from the Batista clan and opposed the agrarian reform, Cuba's revolutionary leaders treated the religious sentiments and needs of believers with respect, displayed exemplary patience and calmed the people's indignation over the stand of the prelates. The new government exposed the clergymen and lay Catholics who cited religious motives to justify their anti-patriotic activities. But Cuba's churches were not closed, and there were no impediments to the celebration of religious services.

When the acute confrontation provoked by the reactionary clergymen in the first postrevolutionary years was overcome, the church entered a gradual process of adapting to the new Cuban realities, and this evolution was not without its contradictions and zigzags. The first signs of this adaptation appeared in 1969, when the Catholic Church opposed the US blockade of Cuba. As for the Evangelical and Protestant denominations, represented in Cuba by more than 50 quite heterogeneous communities, they tended to support liberal and progressive views from the very beginning. The Cuban revolution also stressed the need to respect the religious practices unconnected with ecclesiastical institutions but widespread, since colonial times, among the poorer sections of the population.

This policy made it possible to unite diverse forces around the objective of defending and developing the revolution; their own experience led them to accept Marxism-Leninism. This is a lesson of great value for contemporary Latin America. Today's

leaders of Cuba include former Catholic and Protestant ministers, as well as women who belonged to the organisation "With the Cross for the Country", created to unmask the machinations of the top ecclesiastical hierarchy and of the reactionary clergy. Freedom of conscience and freedom of religious practices are guaranteed constitutionally, and proper material conditions are created to ensure their actual exercise.

After the dictatorship of Somoza was overthrown in Nicaragua, the Catholic dignitaries opted almost unanimously for an alliance with the opposition, and in Nicaragua, the opposition has close ties with the counter-revolutionaries. Spiritual leadership of these forces has been assumed by Miguel Obando y Bravo, the archbishop of Managua who has recently been elevated to the rank of cardinal in recognition of his dubious services. The local episcopate is openly critical of grassroots Christian communities and demands that the priests serving as cabinet ministers--such as Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto and Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal--step down from their government posts. This policy is supported by the Latin American Episcopal Conference and by the Holy See.

This is what Solidaridad, a Colombian periodical, wrote in this connection: "The attitude of John Paul II to Nicaragua is in sharp contrast with his tolerant position vis-a-vis Cuba. He has accepted the Cuban socialist revolution as irreversible. At the same time, he refuses to accept the firmly expressed will of the Nicaraguan people who are also resolved to carry out

a revolution. Why this difference of attitudes? The impression is that Rome proceeds from purely political, not evangelical considerations."²⁵

For all the complexity of the relationship between the state and the church in Nicaragua, the higher levels of the Catholic hierarchy do not play a decisive role. Grassroots Christian communities united in what is called the people's church make a great contribution to the defence and reconstruction of the republic, and so do many priests who fill government posts and even serve on the cabinet.

The Sandinist policy in religious matters has been articulated by President Daniel Ortega: the revolution has never infringed and will never infringe on the freedom of religion and religious practices; this is borne out by the fact that services are held daily and encounter no obstacles. "But," the Nicaraguan leader added, "we shall never permit this freedom to be used to justify terrorism or counter-revolutionary activities."²⁶ These are the positions from which the government of national revival is conducting official negotiations with the local hierarchy and with the Holy See.

The episcopate of El Salvador generally follows a pro-US course and supports the anti-popular regime of Napoleon Duarte. Nevertheless, in the course of the dialogue conducted to end the armed conflict which is devastating the country, the policy of the FMNLF-RDF²⁷ has generated understanding with some prelates. Monsignor Arturo Rivera y Damas, Archbishop of San Salvador, acts as a mediator between the parties to the conflict.

Grassroots Christian communities which appeared in the country in the 1960s have done much to help organise and unite the Salvadoran working people. In 1980, the so-called Coordinating Centre of the people's church was set up. While recognising the authority of the episcopate, it coordinated the activities of the communities and of those priests who "made a choice in favour of the poor". Speaking on their behalf was the late Archbishop Arnulfo Romero who was shot and killed during service. He called on soldiers not to follow orders when they were sent against the people.

Today, two governments are vying for control of El Salvador --the old, exploitative power which is gradually losing ground, and the new, revolutionary authorities which control a large and growing part of the country. In the liberated areas, local government bodies operate which are in charge of education, health care, production and self-defence. They receive considerable assistance from priests, monks and lay believers. This means that the church is in fact also divided in El Salvador. One must note that all five member-organisations of the FMLNF strictly observe the principle of respect of religious beliefs. In the zone they control, everything has been done to make religious services possible. Progressive religious quarters make a great contribution to the solution of the country's problems by organising humanitarian assistance to the population from various churches in the United States and in Europe.

The church of Costa Rica wields considerable influence and is quite conservative. As a servant of the ruling classes,

it currently supports the counter-revolutionary campaign launched in Nicaragua by Cardinal Obando y Bravo; during elections at home, the Costa Rican church acted as the shock troops of reaction, urging the electorate not to vote for the Communists and to be as submissive and humble as possible. When mass popular action is staged however, all this does not prevent the church from mediating the disputes between workers and employers or from displaying a degree of understanding in response to the specific proposals and demands of the people.

The People's Vanguard Party of Costa Rica pays special attention to its relations with ecclesiastical figures, including higher-ranking ones, because the interests of organised Christians and of the Communists coincide in matters of the struggle for peace and international solidarity, in the protection of human rights, and in joint action in the mass organisations of workers and peasants striving for better living conditions and upholding other demands of the working people.

Compared to other Latin American countries, the number of clergymen in Honduras is small: one priest per 15,000 people as against 8,000 in neighbouring El Salvador. In the late 1960s and early 1970s a ramified network of grassroots Christian communities sprang up in Honduras and firmly supported the peasants' demand of an agrarian reform. Bishop Nicolas D'Antonio led an effort to draw up a progress for training these communities' leaders; the landowners described this programme as "communist".

The latifundistas and the army mounted a series of reprisals against progressive priests and peasants. In the massacre of June 25, 1975 in the Santa Clara farmers' religious instruction centre and / ^{the} Los Horcones hacienda, Department of Olancho, 12 parishioners (including two women) and two clergymen were killed. Those who sponsored the instruction of community leaders with the help of radio broadcasts, as well as the personnel of religious instruction centres and other religious national organisations were subjected to persecution and censorship. The bishops responded meekly to attacks against the church.

Generally, the higher levels of the church hierarchy resist the new trends which have appeared in Honduran Catholicism under the influence of liberation theology; they often assume a reactionary attitude to the key problems of concern to the country and the region. At the same time, many clergymen work extensively to assist Salvadoran refugees and those Hondurans who have been driven from the border areas where an undeclared war is being fought against Nicaragua. They are also active in people's organisations which fight for human rights, national sovereignty and peace. The lower clergy is becoming increasingly aware of the true culprits responsible for the deteriorating economic situation in the country and for the growing threat to peace in Central America. The change in the thinking of those who form the backbone of the Honduran Catholic Church cannot fail to influence the views of the prelates: some bishops now begin to display an understanding of the need for social change.

In Guatemala, where the impoverishment of the peasant masses, particularly in mountainous areas, reached frightening proportions after the US intervention of 1954, grassroots Christian communities began to appear quite early. In 1965-1970 they began to organise into cooperatives so as to improve the condition of the people. Today, the community members and the entire nation are opposing reprisals and exploitation. The communities joined the revolutionary movement after government troops overran the interior part of the country. Some communities include 1,500 to 1,800 members. At their assemblies they decide on participation in military operations and vote to determine who should take up arms and who is to do the farming.

All this has resulted in an overall polarisation of the country's religious forces. The reactionaries have taken steps to bolster the nearly extinct right-wing organisations such as Opus Dei, various Christian "training courses" and anti-communist religious sects. Efraim Rios Montt, a former dictator, has even founded his own "church" which is close to US fundamentalists. The dual objective was to infiltrate the ranks of revolutionary believers and to support and justify the reprisals.

Meanwhile, unwilling to compromise itself, the Guatemalan episcopate is forced even to expose, at times, the more odious moves of the reactionaries. For example, Archbishop Prospero Penados del Barrio of Guatemala City has criticised the US government for its support of the massive programmes to sterilise the working population of the country's central and northwestern areas.²⁸

Unlike most right-wing political organisations, the Catholic Church of the Dominican Republic has supported, in its own way, some of the popular demands connected with the plight of the workers in the sugar-producing industry and in agriculture; it has also made statements in support of the liberation struggle in neighbouring Haiti. The Dominican Episcopal Conference has welcomed the positive role of the Haitian Catholic Church in the overthrow of the Duvalier dictatorship, approved the Haitian migrant workers' refusal to accept slave labour at Dominican sugar refineries, and spoke in favour of self-determination for the Haitian people. For an agrarian reform, it has proposed that fallow lands be expropriated and that government-owned estates be divided among the peasants.

The Dominican Communist Party has welcomed and supported this position of the church hierarchy, noting, however, the limited nature of the episcopate's proposals, specifically on the issues of land tenure. It has been stressed specially that the high-level Catholic clergy is adopting a "new style of conduct and setting a new tone" consonant with the demands of the times.²⁹

In Panama and Mexico, the situation is generally similar to what is happening in other Central American countries where the church authorities can no longer close their eyes to the problems of concern to the people and where the Christian communities and the low-level clergy cooperate with the dispossessed ever more closely and vigorously. Two examples will suffice: the Mexican episcopate has declared that a moratorium on external debt servicing is the only way to save the country from

imminent danger; the church of Panama is critical of those who pin the label of "Communist" on any advocate of social change.


In the English-language countries of the Caribbean, the religious panorama is even more motley. Although Christianity is dominant here, the leading part is played by Protestant and Anglican churches and not by Catholicism which prevails in Latin America. Besides, animist cults, some Oriental creeds and Islam are also widespread in the subregion. All this is rooted in the differences in the cultural and historical development of Latin and Anglo-Saxon America. The discussion at the round table also touched upon the English-speaking Caribbean peoples--for the well-known reason that internal contradictions and, specifically, liberation theology are common to other Christian denominations too.

In their relations with believers, the Communists of Jamaica are guided above all by their commitment to isolate the main enemy--imperialism and local reaction. They are strengthening their ties of cooperation with the democratic sections of believers in the anti-war struggle and in the tackling of the country's urgent problems. Many democratic Christians took part in the work of the Jamaican Peace Committee, and together with the Caribbean Conference of Churches, in a seminar of the peace forces. This seminar was attended by representatives of all Jamaican political currents, 30 civic and mass organisations and ten different churches; this means that the work of the committee has assumed truly nation-wide dimensions.

The church in Guyana, particularly the Catholic Church, played a negative role in the struggle for independence from the British crown, preaching anti-communism and supporting the colonial regime. Now that two decades have passed since independence, changes are surfacing in the positions of the clergy: it condemned the rigging of the December 1985 general elections; in response, the authorities persecuted some representatives of the Catholic and Anglican hierarchy. Religious quarters oppose government violations of human rights. All this increases the opportunities for dialogue and cooperation between Communists and believers in the name of the triumph of genuine democracy in Guyana.

To sum up the general description of the religious situation in Central America--the way it was outlined at the round table--let us recall that in its document "Pastoral View of the Human Condition in Central America", the General Assembly of the regional Episcopal Secretariat has named poverty, institutionalised violence and economic backwardness as the main problems afflicting the population. The document says that the economy of the region depends greatly on international capital which ruthlessly deals with the destinies of the nations, depriving them of the right to tackle their own problems. Criticism is also levelled at the predatory policy of the International Monetary Fund. Archbishops Rivera y Damas (El Salvador) and Penados del Barrio (Guatemala) who took part in the assembly urged that believers pray for the United States not to invade Central American countries.³⁰

This panoramic survey of the relations existing between the church, believers and the Left makes it possible to assert that in Latin America and the Caribbean, where millions of people are suffering from poverty, efforts to consolidate the democratic process are now supported by the more farsighted ecclesiastical quarters, including individual prelates. Objectively, this increases the opportunities for dialogue and ^{cooperation} / between Communists and believers and raises these efforts to a higher level. At the same time, these new opportunities are making new demands on the fraternal parties and other revolutionary and democratic forces working for peace, independence and social progress.



¹ In a Paris radio broadcast on April 17, 1936 Maurice Thorez said, among other things: "We atheists are offering our hand in friendship to you, Catholics, be you workers, office employees, craftsmen or peasants, because you are our brothers and because we are plagued by common concerns."--Ed.

² See Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Documents, Moscow, 1960, p. 29 (in Russian).

³ See International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Moscow, 1969, Prague, 1969, pp. 26-27.

⁴ Latin America in the Struggle Against Imperialism, for National Independence, Democracy, People's Prosperity, Peace and Socialism, Moscow, 1975, pp. 44-45 (in Russian).

⁵ See Fidel y la religión. Conversaciones con Frei Betto, Havana, 1985, p. 274.

⁶ For detail, see A. Oviedo, S. Mamontov, "Theology of Liberation: a New Heresy?" in WMR, No. 3, 1986.--Ed.

⁷ V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 4, p. 243.

⁸ See Fidel y la religión, Op. cit., p. 263.

⁹ Desarrollismo (from Sp. "desarrollo"--development) is a bourgeois reformist theory which appeared in Latin America after World War II and became particularly widespread in the 1950s and 1960s. It claimed that Latin American countries could overcome their backwardness by gradually modernising their economic structures within the framework of capitalism.--Ed.

- 10 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 10, p. 86.
- 11 Ibid., Vol. 15, p. 409.
- 12 Fidel y la religión, Op. cit., p. 333.
- 13 Foremost among them is Christ and/or Marx? The Communists
Juan
and Religion by/Rosales.
- 14 Uma Alternativa Democrática Para a Crise Brasileira,
Sao Paulo, 1984, p. 98.
- 15 For details, see WMR, No. 3, 1986, pp. 85-86.--Ed.
- 16 For details, see Orlando Millas, "The Anti-Fascist
Struggle and Chilean Catholics", WMR, No. 9, 1984.--Ed.
- 17 Adelante, April 30, 1986, p. 4.
- 18 Granma, February 14, 1986.
- 19 Informe Latinoamericano, August 7, 1986.
- 20 Resolucion politica del X Congreso del Partido Comunista
del Ecuador, Guayaquil, 1982, pp. 16-17.
- 21 El Pueblo, February 1-7, 1985, p. 3.
- 22 A compact between the Vatican and a national government
on the status, rights and privileges of the Catholic Church.--Ed.
- 23 A political religious organisation founded in 1928 to
organise "new crusades against communism".--Ed.
- 24 The truce between the Colombian government and guerrilla
representatives, signed on May 28, 1984.--Ed.

25 Solidaridad, 1986, No. 73, p. 46.

26 Granma, July 7, 1986.

27 Established in 1980, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMNLF) is a military and political alliance of five left rebel organisations, including the armed forces of the Communist Party of El Salvador. The Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF), also created in 1980, is a much broader political alliance comprising more than 100 trade unions, political, civic and other mass organisations which oppose the puppet regime.--Ed.

28 Granma, August 28, 1985.

29 Hablan los comunistas, No. 371, p. 4.

30 Cono Sur Press, December 6, 1984.

APPROACHING ISLAMIC CURRENTS

Hussein Mroue

Although the aim of this article is to assess the positions of the Islamic currents and organisations now active in Lebanon and to define the attitude of the democratic patriotic forces of them, we also find it necessary to trace the history of the subject and to view it in what may be described as an all-Islamic context. Without it, one cannot grasp the present-day motives of each of these currents, identify the roots of their positions, or understand how we should shape our relations with them amid the increasingly acute struggle for national liberation and democratic socio-economic transformations in Lebanon.

When this issue was about to be sent to the printers, a tragic news report came in. On February 17 Hussein Mroue was assassinated. The forces of obscurantism and confessional and communal reaction, agents of imperialism and Zionism committed another inhuman crime.

Hussein Mroue was born into the family of a major Shi'ite religious figure in 1909. He received an education in theology in Nejef, Iraq, worked as a journalist and founded and edited several publications. His literary work gained widespread recognition. He won the Lotus Prize of the Asian and African Writers' Association. In tribute to his courageous and staunch position during the 1982 Israeli aggression against Lebanon the Arab Writers' Union presented him with the Beirut Award. Holder of a Ph.D., Hussein Mroue was the author of many studies, including his fundamental Materialist Trends in Arab-Moslem Philosophy. A vigorous civic activist, he was a member of the World Peace Council. In 1950 he became a Communist and, since 1964, served invariably on the Central Committee of the Lebanese Communist Party.

The international team of World Marxist Review expresses its

In the Arab-Islamic civilisation the sixth century of the Hegira corresponds to the twelfth century in the European calendar. That was when a religious movement advocating a return to the foundations and sources of Islam emerged in the Maghreb and in Moslem Spain. It was based on the reformatory ideas of ibn Tumart who proclaimed himself mahdi (messiah) but in fact stemmed from the acute dissatisfaction of the Maghreb popular masses with the rule of the Almoravids¹ and the fugaha² and enjoyed broad popular support. The Mahdist uprising of 1121 transformed this dissatisfaction into a material force which destroyed the Almoravid state. It was replaced by a new and essentially revolutionary system of government--the Almohad³ empire which contained seeds of democracy. An educational reform was carried out, constraints on freedoms of thought and academic quest were removed, and the bans on the works of previously persecuted scholars and philosophers were lifted. The fundamentalist religious movement of the Almohads effected historic transformations in the social, political and ideological spheres.

Then, for a period of almost six centuries, the Arab-Islamic world was bypassed by the mainstream of the development of civilisation. It was set in motion again by a new religious movement born on the Arabian peninsula. Wahhabism--named after Mohammed ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab who began preaching in 1730--was the first Moslem reformation movement of the modern age. It is now regarded as the forerunner of the traditionalist trend in today's Arab-Islamic thought. The Wahhabis rejected any interpretation of the Koran and

profound grief over this heavy loss for the Communists and all progressive and patriotic forces of Lebanon and the Arab world.

the Sunna⁴ and took most of them literally. They also rejected various types of prejudice introduced into Islam, such as veneration of tombs, seeking intercession from the dead, or belief in them as saints and miracle workers.

However, having developed a connection with the clan of the Saudids in the person of Muhammed ibn Saud, the then emir of Nejd, Wahhabism acquired a political slant. Reactionary rulers used it as a weapon to settle scores with political rivals and to oppress the popular masses. Viewed in terms of its social, not religious content, Wahhabism degenerated from a reformation-oriented into a reactionary movement and became synonymous with obscurantism.

The onslaught of colonialism which began in the nineteenth century was aimed at subjugating Asian and African peoples and keeping them weak, backward and dependent. This gave rise to and promoted the anti-colonial struggle. People began to understand what a blow would be dealt to their existence, dignity and pursuit of a better future if they bowed before the threat instead of rebuffing it. However, social consciousness could not at that time acquire a secular, patriotic, nationalist or class character and inevitably assumed the dominant religious form. This was particularly true both of the Arabs and other predominantly Moslem Oriental peoples. Hence the upsurge of Islamic movements which began in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The social consciousness of the Arab peoples kept developing, and outgrew the purely religious form. Among the intellectuals who were in the midst of the anti-colonial struggle and acted as

the first and particularly prominent champions of the nascent bourgeoisie, nationalist views began to take shape. At that time, these views were not sufficiently advanced for social consciousness to completely abandon its religious form; they served as an important link in which the nationalist and the religious elements merged. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the programmes of progressive reformation-oriented Islamic currents and movements began to feature, together with theological problems, specific issues of the Arab peoples and showed the first signs of Arab nationalist influence.

This was neither accidental nor subjective but determined by the logic of history. In our region, the social content of this process objectively combined Arab and Moslem aspects, irrespective of the religious facet of Islam.

The example of Algeria is representative in this context. A close look at the popular movement which kept fighting against the French colonial rulers until they were driven out shows clearly that its Islamic and Arab aspects were so intertwined as to become inseparable. The religious thrust of the movement was essentially patriotic in nature. In it, the Moslem faith expressed the Algerians' national identity, and its profession was in fact an assertion of love of one's language, nation, its history and tradition, and one's native land.

By the outbreak of World War I, the Arabs' national awareness came to show a degree of independence from religion. First, a national bourgeoisie had emerged in several Arab countries. The interests, objectives and ideology of this class prompted it to

seek autonomy from the Osmanli military feudal rulers (in Syria and Lebanon) or stronger economic positions in a state which did enjoy a degree of autonomy within the Ottoman Empire and asserted its own nationalist aspirations (in Egypt). Second, the increased national oppression, and the direct antagonistic clash between the striving of the Arab masses and the intentions of the foreign rulers to Turkize them transformed the Arabs' struggle for reform within the Ottoman Caliphate into a struggle for secession from it. Third, the nascent Arab bourgeoisie and intellectuals felt the impact of progressive European ideas, particularly of the French Revolution and of the utopian socialists.

The combined influence of all these factors gave rise to an Arab national self-awareness which had a secular content of liberation. But it was also promoted by many enlightened religious figures. Some of them contributed tangibly to the organisation of the first militant patriotic actions which laid the basis for what is now known as the Arab national liberation movement. Significantly, participation of religious leaders (or those connected with them) in these actions did not assume the form of an Islamic movement but was purely patriotic. Joining the national liberation struggle, these people did not advance religious slogans, but their faith still guided their ideology.

So far we have been discussing those Islamic currents and movements which, preaching a return to the fundamental values of the Moslem religion, acted mostly from progressive reformation-oriented positions. Opposing them were reactionary or obscurantist fundamentalist interests which sometimes went as far as betraying the people and the principles of the Moslem faith.

Let us go back again to the times of the Almoravids and recall the fugaha who, in order to preserve their economic privileges, concluded an alliance with the oppressors of the people. They strangled free thinking, persecuted intellectuals and terrorised scholars and philosophers. In this the fugaha proceeded from religious dogma which also motivated their politically biased fatwa⁵ designed to support the powers-that-be.

Let us again take up the example of the Wahhabi movement which began as a current of reformation but then got entangled with dictatorial government, with a reactionary monarchy that ruled and oppressed the people in the name of the faith. In Algeria, the French invaders relied on the support of reactionary religious leaders, including members of Sufi⁶ brotherhoods who disseminated fatalistic and defeatist attitudes among the masses in a bid to prevent the imminent revolutionary explosion.

What springs to mind first is the well-known Moslem Brothers organisation. Founded in Ismailia, Egypt, in 1928, it soon covered the whole of Egypt and established branches in many other Arab and Moslem countries. It immediately asserted a hostile attitude to Arab nationalism and patriotism. As its founder Sheikh Hassan al Banna wrote, "national borders are determined in accordance with the spread of the faith and not with territorial or geographical boundaries".⁷

At the initial stage the Moslem Brothers advanced demagogic social demands. Initially, they also supported the Egyptian revolution of July 23, 1952. But as soon as the revolutionary leadership under Nasser adopted an anti-imperialist course and

drew up a programme of social transformations, the organisation abandoned its original demagoguery and opposed progressive social change, nationalisation and agrarian reform. Later the Moslem Brothers took up terrorism to fight against Nasser's progressive course within the country and on the international scene.

One should also point to the clandestine subversive activities this organisation is now engaged ⁱⁿ /in Syria where it is used by the Arab reactionaries and US intelligence to thwart the Syrians' resistance to the schemes of Zionism and imperialism in the Arab world.

Similar reactionary Islamic movements, currents and organisations in Arab and other Oriental countries (India, Pakistan, etc.) have a long and odious history which does not deserve to be treated in detail here. But a question arises: if both these and progressive currents of reformation advocate a return to the basic sources of the Moslem faith, does this mean that there are "two Islams", each with its own foundations? We believe that it is now more important than ever to formulate a substantiated answer to this question.

We are convinced that in the more general terms, the answer should be as follows: there are no two different Islams but there are different ideological positions, and their diversity is rooted in differences in social status, interests and class affiliation of their adherents. This makes it possible to understand how two opposite wings developed among Islamic currents and movements--one fought for reform and political emancipation; the other, reactionary and obscurantist, was connected with despotic rulers and collaborated with foreign colonialists.

The international situation after World War II contributed to the further advancement of the Arab national liberation movement, to its realignment in search for genuine freedom. The creation of a Zionist state on Palestinian soil was a profound shock not only to those expounding a nationalist ideology but also to the Arab popular masses in general. Conditions for a new upsurge of the liberation struggle took shape. This time the movement was led by the petty bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, despite certain socio-political achievements, it failed to accomplish the tasks of a national democratic revolution, tasks that were on the agenda.

This was explained by several reasons. First, the class position and the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie prevented it from discerning the long-term prospect, anticipating anything beyond the attainment of political independence, or grasping the objective dialectical interconnection of national liberation and social emancipation. Second, at the stage in question the petty bourgeoisie had a monopoly in the movement's leadership after ousting the other progressive patriotic forces, particularly working class parties. Third, these parties themselves were not strong enough to become partners in the leadership, let alone to pose an alternative to it. Fourth, imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction stepped up their conspiracies against the national liberation movement, attacking the frontiers it reached in the 1950s and 1960s. Fifth, the social and class heterogeneity of the petty bourgeoisie produced contradictions among its various strata and groups; this acutely aggravated the situation in the Arab world as a whole, playing into the hands of imperialism,

Zionism and reactionary Arab regimes. Sixth, the petty-bourgeois leadership failed to win the confidence / ^{of} the popular masses because it viewed them with suspicion. Moreover, this leadership maintained an attitude to the progressive patriotic forces that was based on reprisals and a categorical rejection of democracy.

The historical failure of the petty bourgeoisie was manifested in the defeat of June 1967⁸ which confirmed both the debacle of the leadership and the absence of an alternative to it. Simultaneously, and acting in cahoots with imperialism and Zionism, the Arab ^{reactionaries} / launched a frantic drive to seize the initiative at the new stage, striving above all to undermine and destroy the Arab national liberation movement.

A difficult situation ensued, with a vacuum in the struggle for a revolutionary alternative to the petty-bourgeois leadership and for restoring the role of the Arab national liberation movement. Against this background various religious currents and movements began to emerge, seeking to fill the vacuum with ideological and political concepts whose content was determined primarily by the class affiliation of their proponents. These were mostly with a petty-bourgeois or parasitic rural background, in the latter case usually connected with the feudal rulers.

These currents and movements were not homogeneous. In practical terms, they could be divided into the following groups.

1. Reactionary and obscurantist ones which have put themselves, their ideology and activities at the service of reactionary Arab regimes or which maintain direct ties with imperialist intelligence services.

2. Traditionalist ones which confine their activities exclusively to the ideological sphere and regard the traditions of "righteous forefathers" as the prime source of solutions to present-day problems. Their thinking is oriented on the past which they see as static, impervious to change or development and projected into today's world from the remote age of "righteous forefathers". Although these currents do not engage in open political activities, their ideology is retrograde and hostile to any change or transformation in the socio-political and spiritual spheres. It exerts a pernicious influence and, willy-nilly, draws the traditionalists into politics.

3. Those that proceed from directly political positions and present themselves to the Arab and Moslem masses as an alternative both to the petty-bourgeois leadership which failed to cope with the tasks of the previous period and to the radical revolutionary forces which are to replace this leadership.

It is typical for the currents of this third type to offer a "revolutionary Islamic" alternative--an integral political plan containing anti-imperialist objectives of liberation. Viewed from this angle, they do not differ from the nineteenth-century Islamic movements. But today's currents differ radically from their forerunners in their approach to other problems. Their programmes follow the example of the Moslem Brothers in contrasting national unity with Moslem unity and Arabism with Islam.

The re-emergence of Islamic currents of this type deserves to be studied closely, all the more so because they arose after the development of the liberation struggle in the Arab countries

separated national awareness from religious consciousness. Significantly, these currents sprang up in Lebanon precisely at the present stage of the crisis--that is, after the Israeli aggression, at the height of the battle fought by the national patriotic forces against the invaders, their Phalangist allies and their US imperialist sponsors. One should note that the aggression assumed a confessional and communal slant as a result of Israel allying itself with the circles backing the fascist--Phalangist project.⁹ The project itself was highly confessionalist to begin with, designed ^{to} consolidate the sway of "political Maronism"¹⁰ at the expense above all of the Moslem and non-Maronite Christian communities, of rank-and-file Maronites and the popular masses as a whole.

An acute question arises. Why have Islamic currents and movements reappeared in this new guise precisely in the present situation in the Arab world? Specifically, why have they emerged and become quite active in today's Lebanon?

The answer to the first part of the question lies in our reference to the vacuum which developed in the Arab world after the defeat of 1967 and to the absence of a revolutionary alternative to the petty-bourgeois leadership of the national liberation movement. This was what contributed to the advent of religious currents and movements claiming to offer such an alternative. In other words, the crisis of the Arab national liberation movement and of nationalist ideology as such was an important factor in their rise.

There are two reasons why these currents and movements began to work vigorously in conditions of the Lebanese crisis. First,

there are the backward social structures of the milieu in which they operate. Second, there is the mystified consciousness of the poorer strata and the lumpens whose absolute and relative numbers grew in both urban and rural areas due to the war. These strata are involved in social relations which are maintained at different but coexistent levels and which strengthen the traditional forms of social organisation (communal or kinship systems) that palliate the differentiation and division of classes. Lack of progress in the implementation of the patriotic democratic plan for settling the Lebanese crisis on the basis of an unconditional end to the destructive civil war is an added factor.

As a political force, religious currents and movements have a role in the crisis that has struck Lebanon. Their blueprint for transformations is inherently dangerous in that it is conditional on the establishment of an Islamic state--something that, in our multiconfessional country, will objectively lead to its break-up and will split the popular masses, including Moslems. Aimed at undermining the unity of the national patriotic forces and at mystifying mass consciousness, the ideological precepts, policy and practical action of these movement ignore the laws of social development and obstruct revolutionary democratic transformation of society.

We do not deny that the project advanced by these religious currents and movements also features anti-imperialist objectives of liberation. It is also true that they contribute to the collapse of the existing bourgeois system. That is a positive aspect deserving of support. But one must be able to see the other side of the coin too. First, these currents and movements are trying to erode

the revolutionary alternative and the alliance of anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist forces, thus objectively preparing the ground for the re-establishment of a capitalist system (albeit in a new form) dependent on imperialism. Second, the political plan they propose as a "revolutionary Islamic" alternative equates socialism with imperialism and claims to offer a "third road". The obvious impracticability of this plan does not make it less dangerous to the struggle of the patriotic, progressive democratic forces for the national democratic programme of a radical and revolutionary transformation of the existing socio-political system.

In its approach to these currents and movements, our party cannot fail to distinguish between, on the one hand, their anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist commitment to liberation and their action against the Israeli occupation (and in this we agree and assert our solidarity with them) and, on the other, their communal political slogans and ideological tenets. The latter are expressly hostile to Arab nationalism, socialism and democracy. This we reject firmly.

And finally, the general conclusion which, we hope, follows from the above. The Lebanese Communists proceed from class-based and national patriotic positions and are guided by the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism in defining their positive or negative approach to today's religious currents, movements and organisations. Questions of religious dogma do not enter into it^{at} all. The points on which we agree or disagree with these currents and movements are confined to socio-political problems, specifically to issues of national liberation and revolutionary social trans-

formation. And we are working sincerely and vigorously for our relations with them, as well as with non-religious movements and organisations to be invariably based on democratic principles in the broadest sense of the term.

TÜRKİYE SOSYAL TARİH ARAŞTIRMA VAKFI
TÜSTAV

¹ From the Arabic al-Murabitun (Spanish almoravides)--"the people of the ribat", warrior monks who displayed religious intolerance and were to lead a rigorous life and master martial arts for combating "enemies of the faith".--Ed.

² Experts in fiqh, Moslem canon law.--Ed.

³ From the Arabic al-Muwahhidun (Spanish almohades)--"the Unitarians".--Ed.

⁴ The Sunna--the Way of the Prophet / as recorded in the Tradition.--Ed.

⁵ Fatwa are official judgments on a legal or religious question passed by a mufti or another religious authority.--Ed.

⁶ Sufism is Moslem mysticism.--Ed.

⁷ Quoted from E. Touma, A Revolutionary Process in Islam, Beirut, 1981, p. 39 (in Arabic).

⁸ The defeat of Arab states in the war Israel launched against them.--Ed.

⁹ For details, see George Hawi, "To Find a Way Out of the Crisis", WMR, No. 11, 1985.--Ed.

¹⁰ The Maronites are a community which arose in Northwest Syria during the split of the Eastern Christian Church in the fifth-seventh centuries. Under the national pact of 1943, a verbal agreement formalising the confessional system of government in Lebanon, the Maronites secured a privileged position.--Ed.

END OF CONFERENCE

V.Péresada and V.Doroshenko

Kuwait City, January 29. (From Pravda and TASS special correspondents). The 5th conference of the heads of state and government of the member-states of the Islamic Conference Organization has ended its work here.

The conference has adopted a final declaration which includes a resolution on political questions and other decisions. They reflect the drive by the members of that large organization which unites more than a quarter of all states of the planet to link the principles of Moslem solidarity with the struggle for the amelioration of the international situation.

Proceeding from this principle, the participants in the conference have announced that they will seek the withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967 and the materialization of the inalienable right of the Arab Palestinian people to self-determination as primary conditions for safeguarding a durable peace settlement in the Middle East. They have spoken up for the convocation of an international conference on the Middle East with the participation of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and of all the local parties concerned, including the sole authentic representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO, and welcomed the proposal for setting up a preparatory committee for the convocation of that conference. The document contains an appeal to Iran and Iraq to conclude an immediate truce with the aim of a subsequent settlement of the conflict between them.

Having strongly spoken against all forms of international terrorism, the conference has at the same time called for frustrating the attempts at using the argument about the need

"to combat terrorism" as a pretext for suppressing liberation movements and justifying aggressions.

The declaration also contains a point on the so-called "Afghan issue". Under the influence of the more conservative circles within the ICO, the wording of that point proved to be in many respects similar to the decision of the previous conference. On the other hand, it reflects the idea of securing a peaceful political settlement in Afghanistan which is supported by many members of the Organization.

It has been agreed to hold the 6th conference of the Organization in Senegal in 1990.

(Pravda, January 30. In full.)

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TÜSTAV