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This packet of LADOC Documentation contains the following items:

- | | | |
|-------|---|----|
| VI,1 | Where Is Peru's Revolution Heading?
It must make a reappraisal--and act accordingly | 1 |
| VI,2 | Cuban Women in 1974
The revolution has changed their world | 7 |
| VI,3a | A Key Idea of Paulo Freire: Oppression
After years of subjection, people go limp | 16 |
| VI,3b | A Key Idea of Paulo Freire: Dependence
Individuals and society become 'silent' | 20 |
| VI,3c | A Key Idea of Paulo Freire: Marginalization
Look for the 'marginalizers' | 28 |
| VI,4a | The Gospel and Liberation
Archbishop Helder Camara speaks to the Synod | 30 |
| VI,4b | What Would Thomas Aquinas Do About Karl Marx
He would take the good and reject the bad | 35 |

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Peru's military government is both the hope and the puzzle of many Latin Americans, because though soldiers run it, it is clearly a popular, "revolutionary" regime. Here is how their government looks to a Chilean observer.

WHERE IS PERU'S REVOLUTION HEADING?

(An article by Juan Carlos Mardó from the March-April, 1975 issue of the Chilean monthly Mensaje)

The events of early February this year make it clear that Peru's revolutionary process is going through its most difficult moment since it began in 1968, when General Velasco Alvarado overthrew the constitutional government of President Belaunde.

What started as a demand by policemen for better wages escalated in the space of 48 hours into violence, riots, deaths, arson and looting in midtown Lima.

There had been certain flareups of violence in Arequipa, Cuzco, and Puno in recent years, but the government put them down in short order and the official media minimized their importance. Now, however, people here in Chile and everywhere are asking: What is really going on? Where is Peru heading? What are the various tendencies within the revolutionary government, and what counter-forces does it face? Should we call what has been happening in Peru these past six years a "revolution" in any real sense?



BACKGROUND OF THE MILITARY TAKEOVER

Some knowledge of history is essential for anyone who wants to understand what is taking place in Peru. When Spain conquered the Inca empire, it took over an already socially, economically and politically structured society. All the invader had to do was occupy the summit of power and he could control a solid and extensive social fabric and a highly productive economy.

Cuzco offers a vivid illustration of what happened:

- The invaders built their new Spanish-style homes atop the gigantic stone walls of the ancient Inca city;
- To feed their new masters, native communities continued to cultivate the terraces they had so laboriously erected centuries before;

- Indians continued to work, with great skill, the gold and silver mines they had known and toiled in for generations--but they did so now for a new race of overlords;
- Native artisan skills in weaving and pottery provided the manufactured products that the Spanish colonials needed.

Thus, a political and military-industrial complex held in its grip--and lived like a parasite on--a centuries-old, intricately structured empire. This pattern, enriched in various ways and forms down the years by the new master's superior techniques, produced a sharply divided society. A small group, of European origin, dominated every facet of Peruvian life, while alongside it lived a native mass with almost no racial mixture, poor and marginalized. This split has continued down through all of Peru's subsequent history.

Political life, though, has always been extremely unstable, with frequent military coups, each bringing a new caudillo. Power was passed around from one small social-military clique to another, all of them ceaselessly intriguing to take over the Pizarro Palace. Rare was the democratic government that managed to reach the normal end of its term. Most were overthrown by military coups.

• Until the 1950's, Peru lived chiefly on agriculture and mining, but most of the great farms and commercial or mining businesses were controlled by foreign interests. What industry existed was mainly simple artisanry, some small factories and a few large manufacturing plants belonging to either foreigners or a native minority.

The state would only occasionally intervene in the economy--either to give the country some obviously needed infrastructure or to grant credit and tax advantages to private business groups.

After the 1950's, Peruvian society underwent a series of notable changes, as an urban-industrial class developed and a broad middle class of professionals, skilled workers and small businessmen arose to widen the country's socio-political base.

In those years too, exports began to be diversified, and imports restricted, with the inevitable consequences of a protected manufacturing, inefficiency, concentration of business in the hands of a few--and of course, foreign control.

• APRA first, and then Acción Popular (the movement headed by President Belaunde), were the political expressions of this process of urban-industrial transformation. There were also an incipient peasant organization and mobilization, plus strong pressures from

students and certain groups of intellectuals. Neither APRA nor Acción Popular nor Christian Democracy, however, was able to provide a stable government to harness the new socio-political forces that were emerging.

President Belaunde, brought to power by a coalition of Acción Popular and Christian Democracy, and backed by the Armed Forces (they stepped in to block the triumph of their inveterate enemy, APRA), ran into serious difficulties in carrying out his program of change and development. Opposition from not only APRA and the political and economic right, but from the Marxist left too, plus the weakness and mistakes of his own government, finally toppled him. Indeed, the last days of the Belaunde regime were marked by a veritable vacuum, which ended with the easy takeover by General Velasco.

The Armed Forces, led by the Army, were only taking back the traditional role of the Peruvian military: that of being the government. But this time they came to power well prepared, with a greater knowledge of the problems, with a professional understanding--economic, sociological and political--of their tasks, and with certain precise ideological ideas. Out of that professionalism came the new political stance of General Velasco's government that caught Peru and all Latin America by surprise.

The Armed Forces were no longer merely protectors of the old structures of domination; they were determined to impose social and economic changes, to fight against foreign dependence, and basically, to organize a new humanist society, with full participation by the people in the economy and ultimately in the power.

B RESULTS OF THE EXPERIMENT

This third-way experiment--both anti-capitalist and anti-Communist--in national and international affairs has had, in the past six and a half years, successes and failures that raise serious questions now about the future.

Economically, Peru has been comparatively stable. Its diversified range of exports helps for a favorable commercial flow and balance of payments. Production has risen in general, at about 5.5% annually, while population grew at 2.7%. And the economy has been bolstered by the discovery of important oil fields and by new investment in copper, iron and other minerals. There has also been significant foreign investment in construction and infrastructure.

The sectors that have run into problems have been fishing, because of the shortage of anchovies for fish meal, and farming-grazing, which has grown but slowly in latter years. Apart from the fish-meal crisis, though, manufacturing in general has grown satisfactorily at a rate of 7.8% in those years. Peru's economic growth has thus not been spectacular, but neither has it shown any notable letdowns.

Socio-politically, the structural reforms introduced have had a significant impact on national life. Fundamentally, they were intended to change old patterns of farm ownership and landholding, to democratize industrial ownership (by the creation of "industrial communities" and "social ownership"), much of the agricultural, fishing and bank ownership, and certain oil, manufacturing and mining sectors. Happily, despite the insistence on domestic controls, direct investment has continued to flow into the country. Another change that is bound to have far-reaching results has been in ownership of the communications media, which are now directly or indirectly under state control. Finally, Peru has maintained a constant Third World position in its foreign policy, which is anti-imperialist and increasingly closer to the Socialist world.

Politically, the parties have been given a certain amount of freedom, and yet the government has cracked down on its most strident and critical opponents. In fact, a number of journalists, intellectuals and political figures (especially pro-Belaunde and pro-APRA ones) have been deported.

In résumé, then, Peru's "revolution" has succeeded in putting through many socio-economic changes without perceptibly slowing down the growth rate. It also managed to lessen its economic and political dependence and yet to maintain reasonably good relations with the U.S. government and the multinational corporations--and keep on obtaining new investments. In this tour de force, the regime was obliged at times to exercise an authoritative power, but it still allowed a surprising margin of freedom of expression, social conflict and political activity.

C DIFFICULTIES AHEAD

What are the fundamental problems now? They are many --and most of them seem to be well-nigh insuperable.

- First, there is the great, overriding problem. The crippling sickness of President Velasco, who undoubtedly is the inspirer and head of the whole process, has seriously diminished his ability to exercise leadership. He is an astute, determined man, without much formal economic or political preparation, but with keen natural intelligence and consummate skill in dealing with the people around him. His sickness, besides reducing his mobility and his enormous capacity for work, inevitably raises questions about what will happen if he is no longer at the helm.

- These questions are all the more urgent, now that the unity of the Armed Forces seems to have collapsed. We must remember that it was the Army that not only launched the coup, but also principally prepared and carried out the subsequent process that Velasco Alvarado now heads. The other branches of the military were never so closely identified with the "revolution." (The Navy, for instance, is definitely more moderate, and there have been public disagreements between President Velasco and a Commander-in-Chief of the Navy.) Moreover, even in the Army there seem to be differences between the personalities and philosophies of, for example, General Mercado Jarrín, the actual Commander-in-Chief General Morales Bermúdez, and other generals like Graham Hurtado, Leonidas Rodríguez, Fernando Maldonado, et al. All this leads to much speculation about the direction and continuity of the process.

- In Peruvian society, too, there are potential problems for the future. Thus, the economy has been relatively prosperous--but it has not really solved the staggering social problems of the marginalized majority, especially in the cities. For example, lack of education, health care and housing--not to mention the chronic unemployment--are still serious issues, and undoubtedly will continue to be so for some time. Nor have the masses been significantly won over to the government: SINAMOS (the agency intended to rally the people and bring about social betterment), for instance, is having a very indifferent success. It is the middle class, though, in the big cities, that appears to be the greatest source of danger. It is reacting aggressively against the government, as office workers, taxi drivers, teachers, professional groups, etc., strike to demand higher salaries, or simply to demonstrate that they will think and protest when and as they wish.

Even the new industrial structures that the revolution introduced have failed to bring the expected social and economic gains. The "industrial communities," for example, have failed to arouse in manual workers and office employees any sense of solidarity with the company where they work, and seem to have merely exacerbated social conflicts and further scared away private investment.

- Business circles, of course, are bucking the system, some openly and some covertly, but they are careful not to give the government or the Armed Forces any pretext for counter-measures.

- Political parties of the center (e.g., APRA and Acción Popular) and right still do not dare to openly challenge the government, but the regime must now live with all the many mistakes it has made over the past six years--plus the headaches that its foes have created for it. Meanwhile, those parties of the center and right are sitting back, waiting for the government to fall of its own weight.

The extreme left, permanently dissatisfied, is stirring up students and intellectuals particularly, hoping to expose the present political process as mere reformism and thus to discredit it in the eyes of those groups.

Of all the leftist parties, the Communists have best succeeded in solidifying their cadres and penetrating the worker and peasant movements. Faithful to the Soviet line, they do not oppose the government (even though it is avowedly anti-Communist), but neither do they give it their open support.

Christian Democracy has given its backing to this experiment, and is doing all it can to get the process back to its original ideological direction, which was quite in harmony with the CD principles of personalism and communitarianism. But Christian Democracy is far from being strong enough to give the government the wide base it badly needs.

* * *

Such has been the backdrop against which we must read the events of February. They seriously shook the government--because they exposed the weakness of its support and its inability to cope with routine problems like a police strike. They hurt the government on a sore point, inasmuch as one of its stated aims has always been to bring about changes without violence or deaths. The big question now is whether these events mean that there must be a change in the government's direction, a new policy that will both gain new support among the middle class and expand its strength in the worker and peasant movements.

Everything will depend on how the Armed Forces act.

* * *

One goal that the Cuban Revolution set for itself was to change the status of women in the new Cuba. Here is an account of what was sought--and how much was accomplished.

CUBAN WOMEN IN 1974

(Excerpts from a brochure published [in English] in Havana, written by Margaret Randall, a U.S. citizen who has been living there since 1968)

In the first years after the revolutionary triumph in 1959, Cuba's military and economic priorities necessarily took precedence over superstructural and cultural questions. But at the same time, the position of women in Cuban society was developing toward more than just formal social, economic and political equality. The Revolution opened up possibilities for women to confront inequality in every aspect of their lives. "Equal pay for equal work," for example, has become a logical and uncontested part of the system, so that women have been able to win their most important freedom--economic freedom--and no longer need depend on men for their livelihood.

But it is in the cultural area that the great residue of a woman's oppression lies. For instance, she still must face the affronts of a dozen commenting men every time she walks down the street. And young girls, though permitted--and indeed, expected--to share in militia duties as adults, are still heavily role-oriented from childhood in their choice of toys, ideas of feminine beauty, etc.

This is a country where commercial advertising has been wiped away. There are no women's smiles advertising toothpaste, or women's bodies selling cars. Carnival is still a yearly occasion for choosing stars and starlets. But the event is now run by unions and mass organizations, rather than by high society. The "stars" are elected by the people, not by how many votes they can buy or how many big politicians they can sleep with. Participation in a revolutionary, productive life is still a requirement, but obviously "looks" still count too.



WOMEN INTEGRATED INTO THE WORK FORCE

Women are encouraged to enter the salaried labor force. Indeed, the mass women's organization, the Federation of

Cuban Women (FMC), which includes over two million women, or more than 70 per cent of all Cuban sisters over 14 years of age, sees its central task as promoting this incorporation by creating the necessary social conditions, as well as by training and finding jobs for some 100,000 women a year. But Cuba's economic situation, made worse by a decade of U.S. blockade, still cannot provide as many day-care centers, laundries, workers' dining rooms, etc., as its working men and women need. Child care and the "second shift" have been the woman's responsibility, whether or not she works outside the home, and have so far not been sufficiently challenged by ideological campaigns at a grass-roots level.

Changes in old attitudes have come about principally out of practice, out of need, and as the natural by-products of defining and building a just society, rather than out of theorizing. This means that there has been an unevenness, particularly in the super-structural aspects of these changes.

Since 1959, women in their thirties and forties have worked at responsible jobs, participated in innumerable meetings of mass and political organizations, done militia duty and volunteer work, all the while keeping a house and taking prime responsibility for their children.

- When interviewed, many of these women mentioned that their husbands "helped out." Some wished that their husbands would help them more; others, on the contrary, continue to see the "second shift" as their own special responsibility. But in most cases, they proudly felt they were in some way "more revolutionary" by doing so much. Were they sublimating their frustration that way?

- Younger women interviewed, on the other hand, women who had grown up within the Revolution and had been more thoroughly shaped by it--and particularly the junior high school, high school and university students or the young female members of agricultural brigades--seemed to have completely thrown off that bourgeois notion of seeing their future self-realization exclusively through marriage and child-bearing.

- We often talked with young girls whose boy friends objected to their political activity on the grounds that it removed women from the kind of direct control society has taught men to desire and demand. In these cases, the young woman's choice of continuing the activity, even though it meant ending the relationship, was usually made as a normal, untormented decision. More and more, this kind of discussion between men and women is leading to a change of attitude in men. Women, with society's support, are fighting their cases and winning.



ALTERING MEN'S AND WOMEN'S ROLES

In the past three years, fundamental changes in women's and men's roles have taken place in Cuban society, as well as in women's attitudes toward roles--changes that have involved new legislation (discussed and approved by the people), intense ideological campaigns, and an exciting interaction between leadership and masses. I'll try to touch on these changes--both the subtle changes that reflect a higher collective personal consciousness and the easier-to-document institutional changes. At the 13th annual Workers Congress in November, 1973, Fidel's closing speech included a dialogue with the delegates that went like this:

It costs money to train a teacher. And it costs a whole lot to train a nurse. All those years of elementary and high school to give women an education. And what a need we have for teachers! But if some young man who was making a good salary married the teacher, he told her: "Don't go out to work, we don't need the money." (Laughter) And the country lost the teacher, lost the nurse.

Of course, when the country lost the teacher or the nurse, it wasn't only for economic reasons, it's the residual male superman-ism, and all those things that are still a part of us. (Applause)

What can we do about this? Go back to capitalism, where women live off their husbands, where women are some object around the house? (Exclamations of "No! Nooooo!!") I am sure that at least our Cuban women wouldn't want that. (Exclamations of "Nooo!" and applause) And we mustn't forget that we now have two women on the executive board of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC). (Applause)

It was at that workers congress that the 47th and 48th Resolutions of the Labor Code were finally repealed. Those resolutions had designated some 500 positions as "for women only," while restricting another 500 to men. The Revolutionary Government put them into effect in March, 1968, because such a protective law seemed good at the time. Cuban women, many still with vivid memories of the kinds of work that they had been forced to take on before the Revolution, needed the assurance that they wouldn't be asked to do those jobs again if they were incorporated into the active labor force. There was never a question of barring women from administrative posts or any kind of leadership; the purpose of the resolutions was to protect women from physically taxing jobs that could be injurious to their health in the light of child-bearing. In practice, many women were already cutting cane, using a hoe and doing other jobs "reserved for men."

C WOMEN'S WORK TODAY

One problem now being tackled is the instability of the female force--the high absenteeism and drop-out-of-work rate. Recent years have shown a marked improvement in material conditions, which makes it easier for women to go to work.

- There are now more than 600 day-care centers throughout the island, serving close to 100,000 pre-school children. The three new schools built to train day-care workers have an enrollment of 500 students, all women. They are meant to develop highly specialized, combination teacher-psychologist-dietician-rhythmic movement instructors, who will gradually take over the education of Cuba's children, from a month and a half old till they are six.

- There has been a proliferation of laundry services in work places, an improvement in the preparation of low-cost meals at worker's dining rooms, and other special services to ease the tasks of working women.

- More and more washing machines, pressure cookers, refrigerators and similar household appliances are being distributed by the unions through the work places. Working women have the first priority for getting these appliances, in recognition of the special effort required of them in a society where the material base for their full incorporation into the work force is still incomplete.

- Many working women and mothers in Cuba still have to rely on the help of a mother or an aunt, an unmarried sister or an adult living in the same house, but working different shifts, to get the housework done. Sometimes husband and wife work different shifts and spell one another in doing the household duties and taking care of the children. But this is still far from being the general rule.

Over the past year, the unions have organized a great deal of on-the-job discussion about the fact that it is easier for men to earn labor merits, do voluntary work, attend assemblies, have an active political life, etc., than it is for their sisters. Women have begun to speak out, saying that if they are expected to carry the home load, pick up small children from day-care centers after work, etc., they can't attend assemblies or become "vanguard" workers as easily as their brothers. These discussions were held, first among women alone, and then in mixed groups. Many women who had never before given public vent to their frustrations in these areas, felt able to do so--and did so with vehemence.

Suggestions came from all the workers, men as well as women. In some cases, vanguard worker requirements were lowered for women, or for women with children; in some work places, it was felt the problem should be confronted case by case. Elsewhere, a cry went up for the elimination of the present sex-role patterns as transmitted by the schools. Country-wide, the need was seen for more ideological work to be done with men, so that they will take on

more of the responsibility for home and children when the women are working.

When both girls and boys are proletarianized at an early age, through productive work as well as classroom talks and book-learning, oppressive sex roles tend to disintegrate. One of the most important factors in Cuba's new educational system has been the combination of work and study. This is built into the curriculum now, from junior high school up. In the first stage of this process, beginning in 1965, junior high school students spent 45 days each year in the countryside, working on farms. But the need for a more organic combination of work and study was felt. Currently, more than a hundred junior high schools, each with 500 students, are functioning in the countryside--and more are being built all the time.

Women have entered many new areas of work, too.

- A call went out recently for women to enroll in a course training them to become taxi drivers.

- Women working on the docks have told me about their experiences when they entered the "man's world" of long-shoremen and warehouse workers in 1966. There are now 700 women working in the Havana port alone!

- Sisters from all fields and activities have voluntarily left their factories, offices, and other work places to join the construction mini-brigades and labor units building people's housing all over the country. On these brigades, they run cranes, lay bricks, paint, mix cement, put in plumbing, do electrical wiring and landscaping. The list is endless.

D THE FAMILY CODE

Last International Women's Day, I took part in a discussion about the "second shift" at a factory.

It was a printing plant and bindery. About half the workers were women. During an animated debate in which both sexes freely participated, one woman got up and shouted: "If they're going to incorporate us into the labor force, they'll have to incorporate themselves into the home. That's all there is to it!" She was met with a round of applause, cheers--and a standing ovation.

As I write this, the official discussions of the Family Code are just beginning. The only existing legislation in this area dates back to the Colonial era! All the new proposals point to great advances in a real, workable equality between the sexes. Among other things, if the draft becomes law without modification,

men will be required by law to shoulder 50 per cent of the housework and child care when women work.

Other features include totally equal duties and responsibilities for men and women in marriage, divorce, child support. It goes without saying that there will be no such thing, even on paper, as an illegitimate child. (Adultery, mental cruelty, etc., are no longer on the books as necessary "requirements" for divorce, and adopted children have the same rights as all others.) The sense of the new Family Code rests entirely on mutual respect between women and men, and respect on the part of parents for their children. It will strengthen the family nucleus, as we know it, but will take away many of its possessive, capitalist-sexist features.

One of the most exciting aspects of the Cuban Revolution is the way the country's economic and social progress involves a constant dialogue between leadership and masses, between economic possibilities and ideological mass consciousness, a real inter-relationship between collective gains and future possibilities. The general persuasion among working women, and among the population at large, that old ideas about women's roles simply have no place in the new society, had reached a peak when the draft of the new Family Code was first discussed in the newspapers and became the topic for interminable street-level discussions. I say street-level discussions, as opposed to the official discussions of each new law that take place in work places, military units, mass organizations and schools. A lot of unofficial discussion goes on first--in grocery stores, on buses, in waiting rooms.

The street-level discussions of the Family Code have been lively. Cuban women and men, always outspoken and opinionated, go at it anywhere and all the time. Often, men try to put forth "historical" or "biological" reasons for objecting--especially to the clause providing for their 50-per-cent participation in household and child-care duties. In markets and on buses, there are always plenty of women on hand with well-founded arguments born out of their own experiences to defend their imminent legal gains.

• Our local block committee held its discussion of the Code on two consecutive nights this week. With a lawyer explaining each clause as it was read, the people took the discussion of the law seriously. Men seemed to understand the essential justice involved and, at least in this collective context, didn't contest their new role. Women were told they would receive support from the Party at their work places, and from their block committees at home, in enforcing their new rights.

• Some of the women commented that their husbands would probably feel less uneasy about doing housework, "now that everyone's in the same boat." Some said they didn't really expect older men to change, but that the new law would encourage the evident tendency among youth toward more real equality in marriage. One woman said: "Young women around here drew up this law before the government even thought about it, and the young men will just have to go along with it."

Cuba is probably the only country in the world to introduce a law governing social relations within the home in this way. It's also clear that in a country like Cuba, with its history of Spanish-Christian male dominance and still prevalent sexist residue, this clause will be, at least in the beginning, mainly educational. Only an exceptionally independent woman, after all, will dare charge her husband with non-fulfillment of the law, and we all know the variety of emotional weapons a man can wield over a woman to make her grant him certain privileges.

My girl friend was standing in line at the supermarket the other day, and a man behind her said to no one in particular and everyone in general: "This business of shopping is really women's work. Women are specialists at this kind of thing, much more than men." A woman, in the same line, turned on him in violent glee, and--her face two inches from his--retorted: "Oh yes, women are specialists at this. And some men sure are specialists at talking crap!"

E CREATING NEW MEN AND WOMEN

Other recent experiences have been more dramatic. I attended a People's Court hearing a couple of weeks ago, for instance, in which a young woman took her ex-husband to court for coming home drunk, trying to force himself on her sexually, and eventually engaging her in a physical fight. The case was complex: inadequate housing that forces a separated couple to continue living together, low educational levels, sexism, excessive drinking, etc.--all these factors were involved. The man was finally penalized sixty dollars or sixty days, after an investigation had been carried out and ample testimony heard from everyone involved, including members of the community and one of the children.

The three judges--all male--laid a great deal of emphasis on the need to spare children the kind of influence that could result in their future sexual deformation. But at least a half-hour was

spent discussing this man's sexism, evidenced not only in his dealings with his ex-wife, but in his general behavior in the neighborhood. One of the features of the People's Courts is that the judges are chosen by the people and come from the local neighborhood, so that they know the neighbors and can speak to them out of daily experience and in a language they all understand.

Efforts are also being made to eradicate prejudices and to cut down on the over-differentiation of sex-roles, through the use of study materials produced by the FMC. Many of these study materials are published each month in Mujeres, the successor to the old Cuban Vanidades and now the official organ of the Cuban revolutionary women's organization. Mujeres has always had a regular column on health and hygiene. Recently, this column has treated a wide variety of sex themes with total clarity and in an extremely comprehensive way. This is in line with the decision, put into practice after the first Congress on Education and Culture, in 1971, to broaden and deepen the program of sex education in the schools.

The May, 1974 issue of Mujeres criticized the widespread Cuban belief that it's bad for little boys to play with dolls and for little girls to play with trucks or guns. The article is worth quoting in full:

Educators and psychiatrists agree that the distinction among children's toys according to which sex would use them has long been too strict. Heaven forbid that a little boy should take an interest in his sister's doll or, vice versa, that the little girl would want to use her big brother's catcher's mitt.

Well, the division remains, but not nearly in such a definitive way. Today, little girls begin to play sports from an early age; and if the little boy wants to play with his sister's doll once in a while, it doesn't necessarily mean there's something wrong with him.

The error lies in the way adults confront the situation, pouncing on these natural interests. A boy shouldn't be called "sissy" because he takes part in his sister's games, nor should the girl be inhibited from playing with a ball or a gun. In the long run, these items will become part of her adult life, and boys will come to see that washing dishes or frying an egg or dressing a child in no way diminishes their masculinity.

Mujeres has long been a magazine that regards its hundreds of thousands of women readers as complete human beings, rather than as "simple women," as the typical feminine press in the capitalist countries does. Its articles don't center around physical appearance, sex or "getting a man"--the constant subject matter of such publications in the so-called free world. Instead, they deal

with world events, advances in science and the arts, sports, history, national and international affairs.

There may be an interview with a Vietnamese hero or heroine, articles that help explain the current situation in different countries, biographies of women who can serve as revolutionary inspiration to Mujeres readers. In fact, this coming November, in honor of the second Congress on Education and Culture, the fashion section will probably be removed from the magazine altogether. Fashions would be published in a smaller, separate insert, leaving Mujeres improved as a social and political organ.

Sexism is beginning to be attacked in humor magazines, on TV, in posters, and in the movies. Paradoxically, sexist jokes and cartoons continue to appear from time to time in Cuban mass publications that use foreign humor in their pages. Cuban cartoonists are being urged to combat the old tendencies, however, such as seeing the mother-in-law as the inevitable butt of all jokes, portraying the shapely but empty-headed female stereotype, etc.

Without a doubt, this is a particularly positive moment for women in Cuba. On a dozen fronts, their role in society has become a renewed topic of investigation and discussion by both men and women. Changes that were once postponed because of military and economic priorities are now possible because of increased military security, economic advantages and the sharp rise in the level of mass consciousness.

Such is the workers' democracy--for men and women--in Cuba.

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Here are some of Paulo Freire's views on downtrodden peoples and how they can be brought to a self-awareness--and a better life.

A KEY IDEA OF PAULO FREIRE: OPPRESSION

(First of a series of articles by Paulo Freire, published in the August, September and October, 1974 issues of the Nicaraguan monthly Servicio de Investigación y Documentación [SID])

1 **OPPRESSION** No one appreciates, better than the oppressed themselves, the terrible meaning of an oppressive society. For who, more than the oppressed, suffers the effects of oppression? And who, therefore, more vividly than they, understands the need for liberation?

But the oppressed won't find liberation by mere luck. They will have to pursue it actively, convinced that the only way to get it is to fight for it. That struggle, however, ought to flow an act of love, not from the cold lovelessness that motivates the violence of the oppressor, or the interested charity that he imagines is his "generosity."

And yet, during the initial phase of the struggle, instead of seeking a genuine liberation, the oppressed tend to be oppressors, or sub-oppressors, themselves. (Their very thought-processes have been conditioned by the contradictions they had to live through.) Their ideal is to become men, but for them, that means being oppressors. That is their model of humanity, because all oppressed people, sooner or later in their existential experience, begin to "identify with," to "cling to," their oppressor. They aren't yet able to "look at" him with sufficient objectivity, externalize him, see him "outside themselves."

Not that they don't realize they are being trampled on. But they are so immersed in the oppressive reality, they can't see clearly how oppressed they are. At this point, their perception of themselves as over against, as opposed to, the oppressor doesn't yet stimulate them to do anything about overcoming the contradiction. The one pole doesn't yet aspire to be liberated from the other; it wants, rather, to continue to be identified with the other pole.

☐ The explanation is that, at this juncture, the oppressed can't yet visualize the "new man" who will be born when the contradiction is resolved, when oppression yields to liberation.

For them, this new man is themselves--but themselves become oppressors. They have an individualistic, selfish vision, because of their identification with the oppressor. They have no knowledge of themselves as persons, as members of an oppressed class.

If they long for an agrarian reform, for instance, it is not in order to become free men, but to get their hands on land, to be owners themselves, or more exactly, to be the bosses of other workers. Rare is the case of a peasant promoted to foreman who isn't harsher on his former associates than the boss himself. This is so because the context of the peasant's situation--i.e., oppression--remains unchanged: the new foreman feels he has to be as harsh as the owner, and maybe more so, to protect his job. That's why we say that, during the initial phase of the struggle, the oppressed find in the oppressor their ideal "man."

Even the revolution that starts the liberation process and changes a concrete situation of oppression has to deal with this phenomenon. Many of the oppressed who participate in the revolution, conditioned by the myth of the old order, try to make it their revolution. The oppressor's shadow is influencing them all the time.

The oppressed tend to compulsively imitate their master's mentality, as Hegel notes. And so, if the master really wants to help them now, to be solidary with them, he will fight alongside them to change the objective conditions that make them "beings for another." The only way he can be solidary with them is to see in them, not an abstract category, but unjustly treated human persons, deprived of all voice and defrauded in the sale of their labor. He can be solidary with them only if he stops making sentimental, pious and individualistic gestures, and makes instead an act of love. And only in the plenitude of such an act of love, in its execution, in its praxis, will he have a real solidarity with them.

To say that men are persons and therefore should be free, and yet to do nothing to make that personhood and that freedom become a reality, is a comedy.

Only the oppressed can liberate their oppressors. But if they themselves become an oppressing class, they will never liberate either themselves or anyone else. They have to struggle in such a way as to resolve the contradiction they are caught in; and it can be resolved only with the appearance of a "new man," neither oppressor nor oppressed, but a man in the process of being liberated. If the intention of the oppressed is to get to be fully human, they will never accomplish that by simply inverting the terms of the contradiction, by just swapping roles--putting the former oppressor down and themselves on top.

The oppressor, of course, will interpret any consciousness-raising of "the others," any humanization of them, not as a quest for human fulfillment, but as subversion. Because they are neither "grateful" nor "envious," he will regard them as potential enemies who must be constantly watched.

☐ After this long introduction, let us try now to figure out how it is that certain blue-collar workers join with the oppressed in their liberation struggle, thus moving over from one pole of the contradiction to the other. They can be a big help and play a crucial role, as they have consistently done in the long history of this struggle. And yet, though they may cease being exploiters--or indifferent spectators of the exploitation--they still carry with them prejudices and deformations from their past, especially an unwillingness to believe that the common people can think for themselves or even know what they want.

As a result, those who come over to the people's cause are prone to treat them with a sort of "generosity" that is every bit as phony as that of the oppressors. That generosity of the oppressors is part and parcel of an unjust order that they want to preserve to justify their generosity. The "converted," on the other hand, would really like to change that unjust order but, conditioned by their past, they fancy that only they are intelligent enough to bring about the changeover.

They talk about "men," but they have no confidence in men. And confidence in men is indispensable for a revolutionary change. The genuine humanist is identified more by a belief in his fellow men (out of which comes his commitment to their struggle), than by the thousands of actions he might perform for them without that trust.

It takes a complete rebirth before one can rally to the cause of men. Those who want that conversion have to adopt a new mode of existence: they can't continue to be what they used to be. Only in fellowship with the oppressed can the converted understand the characteristic way the oppressed live and behave, which at certain moments still reflects the structure of domination.

• One of these characteristics is, as we mentioned above, a certain dualism: they are at one and the same time themselves and the oppressor whose image they have interiorized. Moreover, they are almost always fatalistic about their situation, till they "discover" their oppressor, and then their own self-awareness. As they grope for self-understanding, the oppressed want to resemble their oppressor, to imitate him, to follow him. This is very common, particularly among the

oppressed of the middle class, who aspire to be like the "successful" men of the upper class.

In a penetrating analysis of the mentality of those so "colonized," Alberto Memmi alludes to the scorn these people feel for their "colonizer"--and their simultaneous "passionate attraction" toward him. How can the colonizer, who normally takes such benevolent care of his workers, shoot down a mob of them when the occasion arises? And how can the colonized individual, who works himself literally to the bone for the colonizer, then take so bloody a revenge? How can he simultaneously hate the colonizer--and passionately admire him?

• A scorn for self is another of the characteristics of the oppressed that arise from an interiorization of the oppressor's attitude toward them. They hear it said so often that they are worthless, that they can't learn anything, that they are lazy, weak and unproductive--that they end up believing in their own inability.

"The peasant feels inferior to his boss, because the boss seems to be only one who knows, the only one able to make things work." As long as this ambiguity of theirs continues, the oppressed are completely without self-confidence, totally unable to resist.

• In some vague way, they believe in the oppressor's invulnerability and power. In rural areas especially, the magic force of the landowner's omnipotence exercises a peculiar power. A sociologist friend of mine tells the story of a group of armed peasants in Latin America who took over a latifundio. For some reason, they decided to hold the owner as hostage. But no one had the courage to stay and guard him. His very presence cowed them, and maybe they had some sort of guilt feelings. In any event, the boss was certainly "in them."

Thus, people who are oppressed are emotionally dependent.

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A KEY IDEA OF PAULO FREIRE: DEPENDENCE

(Second of a series of three articles by Paulo Freire published in the August, September and October, 1974 issues of the Nicaraguan monthly Servicio de Investigación y Documentación [SID])

2 **DEPENDENCE** A society's socio-economic structures can be changed in two ways, depending on where the decisions are made: outside that society, or inside it.

- In the first case, the society is merely the object of what another society or another people does to it: Hegel would say it is a "being for another."
- In the second case, the society acts as a subject, as a "being for itself."

Those two different ways of changing are the results of different purposes: to modernize or to develop. Modernizing efforts are made by societies in static situations of dependence, whereas development is sought when dependent societies embark on a liberation process.

The fundamental task for underdeveloped countries--the historical commitment their peoples must accept--is to get out of their limit-situation as dependent societies, and to become "societies for themselves." Otherwise, they will continue to live the "culture of silence" that both arises out of structures of dependence, and further strengthens those structures too.

Indeed, there is a causal link between dependence and the culture of silence. Being silent doesn't mean not having one's own word to speak, but following the orders of those who do talk--and who impose their voice, their word.

The modernization of a dependent society, which only stimulates the appearance of its word, is no more than a reform of structures. Such a process, initiated from outside, keeps the society dependent, even though it may fancy it is making its own decisions. Such a modernization inevitably brings a "cultural invasion" that stunts the soul of the invaded society and makes it a mere caricature of itself.



THE CULTURE OF SILENCE

To understand the differences in levels of awareness, we must realize that any historical-cultural aspect of a country is a superstructure built on an infrastructure, that is, an essentially relative thing.

We will study, first that historical-cultural reality that we call the culture of silence. This form of culture is a superstructural expression that produces a particular form of awareness and "super-determines" the infrastructure it springs from.

The only way to understand the culture of silence is to see it as a totality that is itself part of a larger complex. We must also know the culture (or cultures) of this larger complex, because it conditions the development of the culture of silence. Not that the culture of silence is something created by the metropolis in specialized laboratories and then shipped out to the Third World. Nor is it something born by spontaneous generation on the spot. Rather, it arises from the interrelations of the Third World and the metropolis. "Cultures aren't something that some dominator creates, and then imposes on the dominated. They are the result of structural relations between the dominated and the dominator." And so, to understand the culture of silence, we must first see how dependence is a special sort of relationship that gives rise to two different ways of being, thinking, expressing oneself, etc.: that of the culture of silence, and that of the culture that "has a voice."

Clearly, the infrastructure that consists of all the various relationships involved in the transformation of the world by man's work produces a superstructure. But conversely, this latter, through the individuals who have assimilated its myths, turns back on the infrastructure and super-determines it. Were it not for the dynamic of these precarious relationships, as men work and produce, we wouldn't be able to talk of either a social structure, or men, or a human world.

The relations between the dominator and the dominated (whether collectivities or individuals) exist in a broad social context. Some of them come about as the dominated assimilate the dominator's cultural myths, e.g., when dependent societies absorb the values and life styles of metropolitan societies. This process causes a sort of split personality in the dependent society, an ambiguity because it both is and is not itself, and an ambivalence bred by long years of dependence, in the form of a simultaneous attraction toward, and revulsion from, the metropolitan society.

The directing society manipulates the dependent society's infrastructure, and the resulting superstructure naturally reflects the infrastructure's artificiality and inauthenticity. While the metropolis can, thanks to the mechanisms of its economic muscle and sophisticated technology, weather almost any ideological crisis that may arise, the dependent structure is too weak to support the

slightest popular manifestation. This explains the frequent rigidity of the dependent structure.

The dependent society is, by definition, a silent society. Its voice is not a genuine one, but a simple echo of the voice of the metropolis. The metropolis speaks and the dependent society listens.

The dependent society's silence under the directing society, which treat it as an object, is repeated in the internal relationships within the dependent society. Its own power-elites, who are silent under the dominance of the metropolis, silence the people too. And only when the people break their culture of silence and assert their right to a word domestically--i.e., when radical changes of structure transform their society--will they cease being silent toward the metropolis too.

When some faction takes over the government by a coup (as in Peru) and begins to take nationalistic step to defend itself culturally and economically, it creates a new contradiction.

- It may find itself forced to move faster than it intended, to end abruptly the culture of silence, both toward the imperial metropolis and among its own people.
- Or, fearing the people's ascent, it can pull back and try to impose silence on the masses again.
- Or it can foster a new kind of populism. The down-trodden masses, exhilarated by the first nationalistic measures, may imagine that they are participating in the transformation of their society when they are really being skillfully manipulated.

Peru is a good example of this last contradiction. As the military group that took power there in 1968 pursues its political objectives, many of its actions may cause "fissures" to appear in the closed sectors of the Peruvian society. Taking advantage of those fissures, the masses will begin to come out of their silence, to make more and more demands. And as their demands are heard, they will not only make them often, but they will make more radical ones.

In this way, populism is bound to create serious contradictions for the group in power, which will have to decide one way or the other: either to terminate the culture of silence, or to reimpose it. In our judgment, any Latin American government will find it very hard, in the present historical situation, to stand up firmly to imperialism while maintaining the culture of silence at home.

Latin American societies have been closed ever since the days of the conquest by the Spaniards and Portuguese, when the culture of silence first took shape. And all these societies, with the exception of Cuba's, are still closed. They are dependent societies,

for whom the only thing that changed down the centuries were the metropolises that made the decisions for them: Portugal, Spain, England, and now the United States.

- These societies lack internal markets, since their economies, which are based on the exportation of raw materials and the importation of manufactured goods, are controlled from abroad and never consulted about what they need or would like;
- They have rigid, hierarchical social structures;
- They have precarious and selective education systems in which schools are instruments for preserving the status quo;
- They have high rates of illiteracy and disease--including what are euphemistically termed "tropical diseases" but are really diseases caused by underdevelopment and dependence;
- They have an appalling infant mortality index, a malnutrition that often does irreparable harm to mental faculties, a low life expectancy, and a high crime rate.



THE EMERGING AWARENESS

Every society in a state of dependence has a certain awareness of its surrounding reality, but that awareness is conditioned by the social structures. The chief characteristic of this awareness is its "quasi-adherence" to, its "quasi-immersion" in, the reality around it. Unfortunately, with such a dominated awareness it is unable to stand far enough off from reality to objectivize it, to know it in a critical way. We call this impoverished sort of consciousness "semi-intransitive."

A semi-intransitive awareness is common in closed structures. Its quasi-immersion in its surrounding reality makes it unable to perceive many of the challenges of that reality, or at best, it perceives them in a distorted way.

The only things a dominated consciousness notices and grasps are those that fall into the orbit of its lived experience. This sort of awareness cannot objectivize the awkward problem-causing facts and situations of daily life. Individuals whose awareness is on this quasi-immersed level lack what we call a "perception of structures," which is a constant mulling over one's particular reality till he apprehends what is wrong with it. Not having such a perception of structures, these individuals imagine that the troublesome facts and situations of their lives are caused either by some superior being or some defect in themselves. In either case, by something else than the objective reality.

The significant thing is that when "fissures" start to appear in structures, when societies start to change, to stir, the masses that till then were submerged and silent begin to come out of that

condition. They don't immediately break with their culture of silence. They continue to be silent toward the distant metropolis, but their emergence forces the domestic power-elite to take new steps to keep the masses in silence, since their demands for structural changes produce a qualitative change in their traditional semi-immersed, semi-intransitive awareness.

C MODIFICATIONS IN THE NEW AWARENESS

When the awareness of the masses changes from a semi-intransitive one to a transitive, even if still ingenuous, one, there isn't really any clear, definable point where one ends and the other begins. In fact, the semi-intransitive awareness probably continues to be present even after the transitive awareness has come.

Almost all Latin American peasants are still caught in the phase of quasi-immersion. In that phase, they assimilated countless myths. And so, when the transitive awareness first appears, it continues for a while to be ingenuous, and just as dominated as was the preceding awareness. But at least it is better able to see that what causes its unbearable existence is the objective condition of society.

When a popular awareness begins emerging, that doesn't necessarily mean that the masses have overcome their culture of silence. But it does indicate that they are at least present now in the historical process that is exerting a pressure on the power-elites. It is one aspect of a double phenomenon:

- In a structure of domination, the masses would not be silent were it not for the power-elites who keep them silent. Conversely too, there would be no power-elites if it were not for the masses.
- The emergence of an ingenuously transitive awareness in the people is matched by a new awareness in the power-elites too.
- And just as there is a moment of surprise for the masses when they start to see what they hadn't noticed before, so there is a correlative surprise in the elites when they see that the masses are unmasking them. This double "unveiling" galvanizes both sides. The masses become eager for freedom, eager to slough off the silence in which they have for so long been living. And the elites are eager to keep the status quo; they will permit superficial changes--but only in order to head off any real lessening of their power of control.

Thus, in the transition process, the eminently static character of the closed society yields, bit by bit, to a dynamism that pervades every facet of social life. Contradictions come to the

surface, and provoke conflicts as the popular awareness becomes more insistent--and the elites become, in consequence, more alarmed.

Moreover, as the lines of this momentous transition take shape, exposing all the contradictions inherent in a dependent society, groups of intellectuals and students, though they themselves belong to the privileged elites, get involved in the social reality, rejecting the imported patterns and prefabricated solutions.

- Art ceases being simply an expression of the indolent life of the rich bourgeoisie and finds fresh inspiration in the harsh lives of the people.
- Poets turn to other themes than merely their lost loves, and even the theme of lost love becomes less lacrimose, more objective and genuinely lyrical.
- Authors stop writing about the agricultural worker as an abstract and metaphysical concept, and deal with him as a concrete man living a concrete life.

The transition phase also engenders a new style of political life, since the old political patterns of the closed society no longer work, now that the masses are becoming more cohesive and active.

Since the rural areas of Latin America were hardly touched by the initial stirrings of "emergence" organized by the new popular leaders, they remain essentially under the thumb of the old politicians. In urban centers, though, a new form of leadership is arising whose hope it is to bring together the power-elites and the emerging masses: a populist leadership. One of its unfortunate characteristics, though, is a tendency to manipulate.

Although the masses, as they come out of silence, refuse to accept the political style of the closed society any more, that does not mean that they are able to express and govern themselves yet. It means simply that they have passed from their former quasi-immersion to a state of transitive, but still ingenuous awareness. In one sense, then, the populist leadership is a constructive response to the new presence of the masses in the historical process. But it is a leadership that manipulates. It can't manipulate the elites, so it manipulates the masses. This manipulation has two simultaneous but contrary consequences:

- On the one hand, it undoubtedly is a sort of soporific that maintains not only the ingenuousness of the people's newfound consciousness, but also their habit of letting themselves be told what to do.
- On the other hand, by really listening to their protests and demands, the populist leadership helps people to "unveil" the surrounding reality.

Thus, as they honestly try to bring together the masses and the power-elites of these changing societies, the populist leaders undoubtedly manipulate the masses. But they also create favorable conditions so that groups of young people and intellectuals can participate in the political stirrings of the masses.

In one sense, it is a manipulating paternalism. And yet, under populism the people are at least able to critically analyze how they are being manipulated. Amid all this complicated interplay of contradictions and ambiguities, the emergence of the popular masses in societies in transition enables them to realize their state of dependence.

When the masses advance from their state of semi-intransitive awareness to a transitive, even if still ingenuous state, various elite groups too, including certain progressives, will also awaken as we noted earlier. Small groups of intellectuals will demonstrate, despite their conditioning by the cultural alienation of their society--and their own university "formation"-- a fragile, incipient awareness.

As the typical contradictions of a society in transition appear more clearly, these groups will grow and be able to discern with increasing clarity the weaknesses of their society. They will sympathize with the popular masses, and will support them through a variety of media: literature, the plastic arts, the theatre, music, education, popular art, even sports. The important thing is not how they participate, but the fact that they commune with the masses.

But this growing critical consciousness of progressive groups in response to the new transitive consciousness of the emerging masses becomes a threat to the power-elites. For societies going through this historical phase, which is part of a fixed progression, live in a climate of pre-revolution that, dialectically, calls for a coup.

In Latin America, the coup has come to be the typical response of economic and military power-elites to the crises provoked by the people's emergence. It will vary according to the relative importance of the military.

The more solid the ideological basis of a coup, the harder it will be for a society ever to return to the previous political style, in which the coup was possible. For a coup qualitatively modifies the historical transition process of a society and marks the start of a new transition.

In the original state of transition, the coup was an action, the antithesis to a revolution; in the new state of transition, the coup is an institution, an arbitrary and antipopular power that, under the

constant possibility of revolution, tends to harden more and more. Hence, the popular forces should not imagine that this second state of transition will permit "openings" that might let the masses move toward another nationalistic populism.

D DIALECTICAL POSSIBILITIES OF SOLUTION

If the new regime tolerates any "openings," it will closely control them so as to head off any return to the previous situation. At most, these openings will be insignificant concessions as the prevailing ideology finds its way. Whatever the nature of that ideology, though, the popular forces will have to devise entirely new tactics, different from what they did before when fighting against the forces that the coup brought to power. Because of the repression imposed by the coup, the popular forces will now have to work in silence, and that requires a hard apprenticeship. Moreover, they must come up with some way to counter the effects of the renewal of a culture of silence, which imposed on the masses a dominated awareness in the past--and could do it again.

What are the chances of survival, under these conditions, for the emerging awareness that has reached the state of ingenuous transitivity? The only way to answer that question is by a careful analysis of the new transition phase begun by the military coup. Since a revolution is still possible in this phase, the analysis should focus on the dialectical confrontation between the revolutionary project (or sometimes, unfortunately, projects) and the military regime.

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A KEY IDEA OF PAULO FREIRE: MARGINALIZATION

(Third in a series of three articles by Paulo Freire published in the August, September and October, 1974 issues of the Nicaraguan monthly Servicio de Investigación y Documentación (SID))

3 MARGINALIZATION A non-structural understanding of illiteracy (i.e., an understanding that takes no account of the structures of the reality surrounding us) would make one conclude (wrongly) that illiterates are marginalized. Those who think that way should ask themselves: What are they marginalized from? From what physical place, and also from what historical, social cultural and economic structures?

Moreover, if we think of illiterates as people "outside of" or "on the fringes of" something, we imply that they have been moved from a center to an edge. But where there is such a movement, somebody did it, and he had to have a reason for doing it.

So when we say that people are outside of, or on the fringes of the structural reality, we have to ask: Who moved them from the center of the structure to the edge? And who made the decision about moving them? The individuals themselves? Or someone else?

■ Is marginalization, with all its consequences--hunger, debility, disease, pain, mental deficiency, death, crime, promiscuity, desperation, the sheer impossibility of going on living--a deliberate choice? No, indeed. It goes against common sense to imagine that 40% of Brazil's population, almost 90% of Haiti's, 60% of Bolivia's, about 40% of Peru's, more than 30% of Mexico's and Venezuela's, and 70% of Guatemala's chose, of their own free will, to be marginalized.

But if it isn't their choice, then the social system must have rejected them, it must be doing them violence. Yet it hasn't really let go of them, it hasn't put them "outside" society. On the contrary, they are in it--but dependent on those whom we wrongly regard as independent, and who are in fact just inauthentic.

■ It would be easy to dismiss literacy programs and adult education programs as unimportant, to say that all this discussion of marginalization is a useless academic exercise.

● Because if we say that the illiterate person lives on the edge of society, we are equivalently saying he is "sick" and needs literacy education so he can return to the "healthy" structure from which he is separated.

● And because educators would thus be kindly counselors who visit city slums looking for stupid illiterates who have strayed from the right path, and who want to make them happy by giving them the gift of the word.

With an approach like that (and it is unfortunately quite widespread), literacy programs will never enable a man to reach freedom because they fail to denounce society itself, which is what is depriving him of his right to speak--him and anyone else who is kept in a dependency relationship. Such an individual isn't just marginalized. We repeat: he isn't merely "outside"; he has been made into a "being for another." And the solution isn't just to bring him "inside," but to help him liberate himself, since he isn't a man on the fringes of the structure, but a man oppressed inside it. Alienated, he won't get out of his dependency by being absorbed back into the very structure that makes him dependent. The only way to humanize him--or anyone else in his situation--is to transform the dehumanizing structure.

■ Seen in this perspective, the illiterate isn't someone living on the fringes of society, someone marginalized, but a member of the dominated sector of society, in conscious or unconscious opposition to those who, inside the structure, are treating him as a thing. And when men are taught how to read and write, that's not just a lot of "ba, be, bi, bo, bu," of memorizing somebody else's alienated words, but of the very difficult process of "finding one's own name for the world."

● In the first hypothesis (illiterates are people on the fringes of society), the literacy process heightens the mystification of reality, further confusing the student's "empty" consciousness with a lot of alienating words and phrases.

● In the second hypothesis (illiterates are people oppressed by the system), the "literacy process -- cultural action for freedom" is the action of a knowing subject in dialogue with the educator.

That is why it is so important to demythologize the reality a person lives in. By that process, those who before were immersed in the surrounding reality begin to emerge--and then can re-enter it with a critical awareness.

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Practically all of Helder Camara's published writings are talks he gave. Here are two recent examples: one a talk he gave at the Synod, and the other a lecture he delivered in Chicago.

THE GOSPEL AND LIBERATION

(A talk given by Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Brazil on October 9, 1974 at the Roman Synod. Text from the October, 1974 issue of the Montevideo monthly Perspectivas de Diálogo)

In order to appreciate the intimate connection between liberation and evangelization, we must keep in mind certain facts:

- If we look at the world, we see that the tiny minority that controls--largely in an unjust fashion--practically all the world's resources is Christian, at least nominally and by its origins.
- If we look at Latin America in particular, which is the Christian part of the Third World, we see that, as the bishops at Medellín were honest enough to confess, our Christian continent practices that basest, most scandalous of colonialisms: an internal colonialism by cliques of Latin American Christians, who are wealthy at the expense of the two-thirds of our population that languishes in an inhuman destitution.
- Without disparaging the bishops and priests who lived before us, in Latin America or in the wealthy countries, we must acknowledge that, generally speaking, we have always been so obsessed with preserving our authority and the social order that we failed to see that the so-called social order was really a stratified disorder.

We taught, that is, a too passive kind of Christianity, and in a certain sense we proved Marx right: we gave to the oppressed of both the rich and the poor countries an opium for the people. We soothed our consciences by telling ourselves that our job is to take care of souls, that the Christian Easter means a liberation from sin, a change of heart, a preparation for eternity.

Yet we weren't given only souls to care for. We are the pastors of human beings, who have souls, but bodies too. None of us has ever met, along his path, a disembodied soul.

Eternity, yes, but it starts here and now. Let's not say that truths like these are not for the agenda of a Synod; that politicians, or professors, or someone else who specializes in secular problems should handle this one; that promoting liberation only gets us into politics--which the rulers and upper classes will not stand for; that it would distract us from the central gospel message and could involve us in radical stands and in violence; that liberation is something for the poor countries alone, that it has nothing to do with the developed countries.

It is easy to demolish all these objections:

- If Christ performed his cures on the sabbath and reminded the Pharisees that one shouldn't let his donkey drown in a mudhole on a sabbath, we are certainly justified in talking about the problems of the great mass of mankind, which lives in squalor and hunger--even though most of them have never known Christ. Because Christ is there, sunk like them in misery and hunger, living in a shack, without health care, without a job, without any prospects for the future.
- Shall we forget that the prophets thundered out social critiques? Shall we forget Christ's parables--for instance, the one about the Good Samaritan? Shall we forget St. John's reminder that love of God and love of neighbor are, ultimately, one and the same overlapping love?

Without in the least wanting to take over the function of governments, or political parties, or experts, the Church has an obligation to worry about human liberation, for the following reasons among others:

- The Church has a debt to pay off. How did we ever let those tiny minorities (which are Christian, at least in name and birth) keep more than two-thirds of mankind in subhuman living conditions, when the money spent on the arms race alone would have given all of humanity a decent way of life?
- If the rich countries are getting richer, and the poor ones poorer (and everyone knows that the wealth of the rich countries is amassed from the misery of the poor ones), how could the Church be silent all those centuries, and not denounce at least the most glaring injustices, when it is clear that there can never be a real, lasting peace without justice?

It's not as if the Church had to solve the world's staggering problems all by itself. But it really can and should work for the human betterment of the masses who wallow in inhuman conditions. And why shouldn't the Church feel impelled to launch pilot experiments, especially through its lay members--who are, after all, the Church as much as anyone? (We have to say this out loud sometimes: the bishop's personal presence can be very helpful for protecting, with whatever prestige he has, the laymen who are defenseless by themselves against the hatred of the oppressors.)

SOME QUESTIONS RAISED AT THE SYNOD

How should Christians go about working for human liberation?

The rationale for such a commitment is rooted in the gospel itself and in the rights of man. Christ described for us the Last Judgment, where we will be judged according as we have opened our eyes and our hearts to the needs of the oppressed. When we take part

in the Eucharist, we should ask the Lord to let us see him living and suffering, a prisoner, tortured, exiled (even if it's in search of a job), among the oppressed.

Since God, who spoke to us through Christ, isn't mute like a dead God, the grace of the Lord enables us to hear his voice in events, in the signs of the times that become his message. Well then, that voice of the Lord invites us to do more than give alms or mere assistance. The Lord's voice helps us to realize that, in this century, charity consists, above all, in advancing the peaceful crusade for justice. The commitment of Christians flows from the gospel, from the Church's social teaching, from the rights of man that were solemnly proclaimed more than a quarter-century ago by the United Nations.

Of course, aberrations and dangers will always be possible. But unless we take risks, we get nowhere. The time has come now for the Church to add up all the blunders it has committed out of imprudence--and its enormous sins of omission, committed out of a false prudence, a prudence of the flesh, not of the spirit.

What opportunities, and what obstacles, do such endeavors involve, for each one's personal faith and for evangelization?

Above all, let's remember the great chance this offers us for getting beyond a merely theoretical faith, for living (or trying to live) a committed faith like what we find in the Bible, from Abraham down to Mary, Christ's mother and mother of the Church.

There is, beyond a doubt, a danger for the Church: the risk of being considered "political," and "subversive." But the time has come now for the Church to stop worrying about the accusation of getting into politics. "Politics" is simply a synonym for working for the common good, i.e., advancing the dignity of the human person and the concrete conditions that insure that dignity.

This politics of the common good is a chapter of the gospel, a human, Christian, pastoral obligation. There is certainly a danger, for young people particularly, of falling into hatred, radicalization and violence. And it will continue to be a real danger as long as governments and, even more, the hierarchies, don't see--or refuse to see--the injustices that are crushing most human beings, our brothers, as long as we won't listen to the cries of our peoples.

Let's not forget that when injustices exist--and they exist today more than ever, as the UN's official statistics demonstrate--neutrality is impossible. When we, bishops and priests, out of fear

of the possible excesses of the peaceful struggle for liberation, stand apart from the struggle, we are perpetuating the pseudo social order that (we are not ashamed to repeat this) is crushing more than two-thirds of mankind.

What are the difficulties that we, as bishops, meet, from lay people or from priests, in connection with the effort for liberation? Problems will come very quickly when governments, in countries that are under totalitarian regimes of right or left, see what conscientization is doing to the masses. The problems will be even more acute if the hierarchies too turn against the work of conscientization, especially if they impose restrictions and even prohibitions against such work.

Because of the bishops' incomprehension, militants will abandon the institutional Church, out of a desire to remain faithful to Christ. If the bishops are obdurate, if they denounce these militants and fulminate prohibitions against them, youth may well lose its faith and seek, in Marxism, what it can't find among us.

Under persecution from totalitarian governments of right or left, young people may turn to terrorism--or lapse into cynicism and take refuge in drugs.

When they are jailed, many of them, under torture, rediscover faith, creation, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures. Often, a lapsed Christian will rediscover Christ the prisoner in the man or woman who not only does not know Christ, but even regards himself as a militant atheist.

We have striking examples of Marxists too who undergo atrocities for the sake of a utopia (which ultimately is biblical): a society without classes and without injustices. As Isaiah would put it, "a world in which weapons are beaten into plowshares and where the lion and the lamb lie down together to eat."

When Christians are committed to work for human betterment, what does that mean for the local Church and its mode of functioning? Evidently, for governments and for the absurd and abusive privileged few, such a Church is judged unfaithful to its religious vocation, a subversive, a troublemaker. There are suspicions, persecutions, jailings, tortures, physical liquidations--at least for priests and sisters and, most of all, lay people. Often, the bishop's martyrdom is the humiliation of being left untouched, while lay people, religious and priests suffer in his stead.

But has the Church any right to be surprised when it is persecuted? Did the Lord's warnings refer only to the first centuries of the Church? No, the Church should begin to worry when, seeing Christ carrying his cross and crowned with thorns, it basks in prestige and honors.

As for the people, believers or non-believers, Christians or non-Christians, if they find a Church absorbed in its petty internal problems, they will turn away. The youth particularly will no longer see in the Church any hope for the oppressed, any liberating moral force against the oppressors.

But when they find a Church that at least wants to be a servant and poor, when they find a Church that, with no desire for a monopoly or for the first place, is ready to help for human betterment, as a sign of the inner, supernatural liberation in Christ, then they will look on it--young people especially--with admiration, they will listen, they may even join its work.

Clearly, we have to be on the watch:

- To keep the oppressed of today from becoming the oppressors of tomorrow;
- To keep economic development--and social development too--from being done at the expense of religious life;
- Not to hate the rich, as we work with the oppressed;
- To remember that the soul of evangelization is the Holy Spirit, whereas we are only instruments who won't be used unless we remain humble and full of hope, joy and love.

We need, then, a liberation approach for our pastoral planning. We must encourage our theologians too to lay the basis for a theology of liberation, even though some of them are still groping and uncertain, even if some, here and there, fall into errors or exaggerations.

After all, they help us to fill in a lacuna in our theology and our pastoral planning.

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WHAT WOULD THOMAS AQUINAS DO ABOUT KARL MARX?

(A talk given by Dom Helder Camara, Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Brazil, at the University of Chicago on October 29, 1974. Text from the April, 1975 issue of the Washington, D.C. monthly Sisyphus Papers)

At first glance, one might wonder why your university, in the 20th century and in the United States, should celebrate the seventh centenary of St. Thomas Aquinas's death. Your university does well, though, because Thomas has important lessons for the men of today, and indeed for men of all times.

Let me single out one particular lesson, which is, I believe, the greatest Thomas left for humanity: his fearlessness in dealing with Aristotle, who was regarded in those days as a pagan, a materialist, a dangerous and accursed sinner. One might ask what a Christian thinker could possibly learn from Aristotle, whose basic position contradicted essential points of Christian teaching. Furthermore, Aristotle's thought came down distorted, by Muslim thinkers like Avicenna and Averroes, and by Jewish thinkers like Moses Maimonides. And the Aristotelian system was so monolithic and compact that it must have seemed impossible to accept some of its truths without accepting the entire system.

It is interesting to recall that St. Thomas was subjected, during his life and even after death, to bitter attacks and maledictions, before being finally proclaimed doctor angelicus and the doctor doctorum.

Even more admirable than his courage was his lifelong quest for truth. Searching for truth, no matter how hidden, no matter how distorted, imprisoned or apparently demented, Thomas did not stint in his efforts or refuse any sacrifices.

To bring out the importance of what he did, I will remind you that certain thinkers represent challenges for us today, as Aristotle did for the people of Thomas's day. Among those who are vivid signs of contradiction for us, let me mention one name: Karl Marx.

Marx, among other thinkers I might mention, challenges our courage because he is a materialist, a militant atheist, an agitator, a subversive, an anti-Christian. Yet he too has in his system (why deny it?) certain truths that undoubtedly advance the development of human thought.

Fortunately, the Church no longer has any power today over heretics and anti-Christians. But there are plenty of rugged, powerful individuals among us who while pretending to protect Christian civilization, vigorously defend themselves--by attacking Marx.

Many will say that, from a strictly philosophical point of view, Marx is not a philosopher, or at least not in a class with Aristotle. That question we can leave to the philosophers.

But when someone, philosopher or not, irresistibly attracts millions of human beings, when he inspires the life and death of a great part of mankind, and makes the powerful of the earth tremble with hate and fear, that man deserves to be studied. We ought to analyze him as carefully as those who approached Aristotle did, as they gathered all that was correct, positive and fruitful in the Greek philosopher's thinking, and discarded the dross that enveloped the pure gold.

A DANGERS OF ARISTOTELIANISM IN THE 13th CENTURY

When young Thomas Aquinas as a student at Paris, from 1247 to 1248, there was a prohibition, backed by the penalty of excommunication, against commenting on Aristotle's philosophical works. That prohibition, enacted in 1210, had been reiterated in 1215, 1228, 1231 and 1247--although Gregory IX qualified it a bit in 1231 by saying that it was to remain in force until the writings of Aristotle were expurgated.

How time repeats itself! Both right and left attacked Thomas. The right regarded him as a traitor to Christ and the Church. Had he not surrendered to the game of emancipated human reasoning and the inquisitiveness of free thought? The left accused him of being timid, inconsistent, and half-hearted with his religious prejudice and fear of the Church.

During Thomas's lifetime, the Inquisition began to persecute the Averroists. Siger of Brabant was condemned to life imprisonment and, in fact, died in one of the Inquisition's dungeons.

In 1273, St. Bonaventure delivered lectures against St. Thomas. After Thomas's death in 1277, the Bishop of Paris published a syllabus of 219 articles condemning Aristotelianism. His accusations were aimed not only at Aristotelian extremists like Siger de Brant, but at Thomas too.

Thomas Faces Heresies

St. Thomas had enough confidence in the Christian faith to know that it had nothing to lose, and indeed a lot to gain, in a confrontation with any authentic reasoning. If there were errors in Aristotle's think-

ing, those errors could only be the result of his failure to use reason correctly.

The Aristotelian view of reality was enough to frighten any Christian thinker who lacked the keenness of perception and the thoroughness of a St. Thomas.

Thomas first identified the Aristotelian principles. Starting from them, he probed deeper into them and went further than the Stagirite himself--who might well have gone that far, had he been illumined by Christian inspiration and followed out his own principles.

- Aristotle saw the universe as a harmonious whole, ranging from prime matter (pure potency, which never exists by itself) to the First Mover (pure Act, self-subsistent)--and the whole system was governed by an eternal, inflexible necessity.

- Moreover, for Aristotle, matter and motion were eternal. Thomas proved that, strictly speaking, motion and matter could be eternal, and that this need not exclude the possibility of a creation. Could not the Creator have created matter and motion from all eternity?

- Aristotle saw man as a substantial unit, the intellectual soul being the "form" of the body. Thomas explained that the soul, though essentially united with the body--and always ordained to it--that soul, being spiritual, is immortal and when death occurs, quite able to subsist without the body.

- Thomas accepted the Aristotelian notion that God is the First Mover, but he liberated the transcendent God from the limitations that affect everything created in the world, by making God its summit, freeing the First Mover from the immanence that would keep him from knowing--and caring about--the world.

- Thomas conceived the First Mover as pure Act, as self-subsistent Being, and creation as a gratuitous participation of being, thus asserting both God's total transcendence and total immanence.

- He broadened the Aristotelian view of the act-potency binomial, not only applying it to the level of "forms," to explain the changes that come over substances, but also, consistent with the fact of creation, extending the act-potency binomial to the sphere of being and non-being.

- Thomas took hold of the Aristotelian ethic, broadening it and making it more comprehensive by integrating the good in man into the universal order of what God wills. Man's attainment of happiness thus gives glory to God.

- He took over the Aristotelian concept of politics, and (though justifying slavery) stressed the fundamental dignity and autonomy of each man, as an image and likeness of God.

Thomas's attitude was neither one of mistrust of Aristotle nor one of unqualified acceptance. He was open-minded but selective. Benefiting from the wealth of Aristotle's thinking, and in keeping with the possibilities of his day, Thomas gave a scientific imprint to theology.

Had he not been fearless, had he not dared to follow Aristotle and absorb the governing principles of his physics, cosmology, an-

thropology, metaphysics and theodicy, as well as his ethics and politics, we Christians would not have been able to meet the challenge that Aristotle presented to Christian thought. It is fascinating and instructive to watch St. Thomas grappling with Aristotle's philosophy and rediscovering Christian values that had been contaminated--by certain aspects of Platonism, for example.

Perhaps Aristotle's greatest contribution to Thomism was his notion of nature: the natural act, the natural end, the natural order. Thomas, when stating that "grace does not suppress nature," and when teaching that "to deny perfection in creatures is to deny the divine power," laid the ground for:

- A defense of the values--and the autonomy--of the natural order, together with the distinction between faith and reason, between philosophy and theology;
- An esteem for man's corporal dimension (nothing reaches the intellect without first passing through the senses);
- An appreciation of man's ability to know material nature, the object of the specific sciences--physics, natural philosophy--thus laying a firm basis for modern science;
- An esteem for virtues, encouraging man to act in accordance with reason illumined by faith;
- The recognition of, and respect for, the relative autonomy of the State vis-à-vis the Church.

Thomas established the worth of natural values, but without falling into the dichotomy that was to be the fruit of a decadent Thomism. Natural values and transcendental values are dialectic elements of the historical moment, and together they provide a unitary perspective on the historical vocation of man, who is at the same time a creature and a son of God.

B THE PARALLEL OF MARXISM AND ARISTOTELIANISM

If Aristotle's thinking was enough to scare the wits out of Christians of those days, what shall we say about Marxist thought--not to say Marxist practice--today?

Marx's main critique of religion is not that it has always chosen to ally itself with oppressors, or that it makes slavery acceptable by giving men the vain hope of an afterlife. Rather, in Marx's judgment, accepting God's existence means, automatically, leaving all initiatives to the Creator and seeing man as a slave, an object. Any authentic humanism, therefore, should eliminate the notion of God and belief in another life. Man is only man, the shaper of history, the builder of a world in which there is no place for slavery.

It is understandable that Christian philosophers worry, when faced with this doubly atheistic philosophy that eliminates God and puts man in his place.

What is still more serious is that this view of the world and of man is not a mere theory that Marxists forget when they come to power. In countries where they are the government, they use all the resources of modern-day techniques to impose a militant atheism. Atheism, which used to be the peculiarity of a few, scattered individuals, becomes, under communism, a phenomenon of the masses, a large-scale crusade to force materialism on them as a science and a practical way of life.

At its most benign, communism tolerates religion in the home and in churches. All privileges belong to the atheists, and officially there is only one party, the atheist party.

We can grasp, then, the horror of Christians, who wince when they hear of the expansion of Marxism. And we know, from sad experience, that the Marxist analysis of capitalist contradictions inspires its adherents to precipitate the class struggle, so as to end capitalism and establish communism as a universal liberation.

The Truths in Marxism

Marx's contention that religion is an alienated and alienating force should serve as a salutary warning to believers of all faiths, but particularly to us Christians.

- On the one hand, we should let our Marxist brothers who fear that admitting God's existence will inevitably mean enslaving man know that the real God, who has nothing selfish in him, made man to his image and likeness, so that man can participate in his divine nature and creative power, and that God gave man the task of dominating nature and completing creation.

Hence, man has not only the right, but also the bounden duty, to act as a co-creator. Those who know the real God, not merely the counterfeits of him so often presented even in theological books, understand that no matter how far man advances, he has no reason to fear he may transgress the limits set by a jealous pseudo-God. Man's achievements give glory to God.

- On the other hand, we have a right to demand, in a friendly way, that our Marxist brothers respect the facts of reality. If we admit, to our shame, that religion has often seemed to be an alienated and alienating force (and sometimes may do so still today), it is also true that there are believers today, not only in Christianity, but in all great religions, who, far from finding their religion an alienation, find it a force for liberating the oppressed, a moral pressure to be used against oppressors.

This fact should compel those whose Marxism is not just a blindly accepted dogmatism to take a new look at religion. Because nothing is more contrary to the spirit of Marx than a

servile attachment to the letter of what he said, or to a mechanical repetition of what he did--rather than an attempt to say and do what he would have said and done when faced with new situations.

Even were we to concede that those who follow a faith are still alienated and alienating, there is no necessary connection between religion and such alienation. We all know many people who believe in God and whose lives are devoted to remaking history, not by stealing God's power, but by following his wish--indeed, his command.

If I dare mention now some truths that are contained in Marxism, though immersed in a monolithic system that insists on being atheistic (even though that means forcing Marx into a metaphysic he would energetically repudiate), my purpose, obviously, is not to do what only experts should do, and something that would take years of patient research and creativity by the best of them.

- Marx's writings lead Christians to rediscover not only the biblical view of man as co-creator, but also the biblical concept of faith. From Abraham down to Mary, mother of Christ, the Bible presents a faith that is committed to Yahweh but also identified with the history of the people. This faith is no sterile contemplation. Admiring the Bible's insistence on that authentic, action-directed faith, Roger Garaudy, one of the best-known Communists of all times (even though excommunicated by Communist integrity, which is every bit as blind as the Christian variety), exclaimed: "Why, faith and militancy are sisters!"

- Another element of Marx's system that writers of the new Summas will certainly incorporate as a neglected Christian truth is his judgment that the relationships of production generate class struggle, exploitation, tensions, rebellion, ideologies, and superstructures. Why should it astonish us Christians that Marx dreams of the utopia of a classless society, brotherly and happy, when the prophet Isaiah goes much further, foreseeing weapons turned into plowshares, and the lion and lamb eating side by side in peace?

- Let us add, finally, that Thomas himself lived--in anticipation of what Marx would preach--the Marxist sort of praxis, uniting in his life his meditations with his teaching and actions, refuting the folly of those who think without acting, or act without thinking.

C THE DIALOGUE HAS BEGUN

The dialogue between Christians and Marxists was started, or at least prepared, at the highest level when Pope John took the quantum leap of receiving, for the first time, a Communist leader, Alexei Adzubei. Pope Paul followed suit by welcoming at the Vatican, in 1967, the President of the Soviet Union, Nicholas Podgorny.

But even before those state visits, Christian and Marxist thinkers had come together informally at Salzburg (1965), at Assisi (1966)

and at Heerenchimsee (1966), to discuss "Christian Humanism and Marxist Humanism." Their meetings were marked by a candor on both sides, an effort for objectivity, and a real desire to appreciate one another's points of view.

The Paris monthly *Lumiere et Vie* devoted its April-August, 1974 issue to that question, at first sight contradictory and absurd, of a Christian-Marxist entente. In the pages of that periodical, serious writers delve into this delicate topic, hoping to carry on and even deepen the growing dialogue.

It might seem futile to urge dialogue between Christians and Marxists. For how can Marxism be humanistic or liberating, when in Marxist-dominated countries those who will not accept scientific materialism are repudiated and marginalized, and the human person thwarted?

Moreover, have not the Marxist superpowers become empires, just as much as the capitalist superpowers? Either bloc is quite willing to take advantage of the other's moments of internal dissension--and both together will cynically make common cause whenever that would seem to serve their common interests.

The arms race goes on too, on both sides. The two superpowers are always involved in the wars of the smaller countries. Under the pretext of offering help to the oppressed, the imperial arms manufacturers and warmongers foment divisions between countries and assist brothers to blow each other to bits.

It is becoming very clear that, as time goes by, the initial enthusiasm and austerity of the Revolution are yielding to selfishness and an established, bourgeois life style. What better evidence of this than the creation of multinational corporations in the Marxist-dominated countries?

A dialogue with Marxists? But with which Marxists? In little more than fifty years, the Marxist regimes have split up into factions that bicker and excommunicate each other with extreme violence. It would be interesting to see a dialogue inside Marxism itself, among the disciples of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Rosa de Luxembourg, Lukacs, Pennehook, Otto Bauer, Gramsci, Wilhelm Reich, Lefèvre, Althusser and Mao Tse-tung.

The Dialogue Must Go On

Certainly, we Christians must not be naive. We must keep our eyes wide open to notice the distortions, contradictions and divisions in the Marxist world.

But we must not be pharisaical either, imagining that we are living up to the gospel of Christ, that we give the world the

edifying picture of being of one heart and one soul. Let us be brave enough to admit that it is Christians, at least in name and origin, who unjustly manipulate practically all the world's resources, leaving over two-thirds of mankind in subhuman misery.

Let us dare to admit that Latin America, the Christian sector of the raw-material producing world, offers a most un-Christian example. It practices the worst form of colonialism--internal colonialism--as a few privileged Latin Americans accumulate wealth at the expense of their hungry, needy fellow countrymen.

Let us have the courage to confess too that while we struggle for a peaceful and quick and effective change in unjust social structures, our Church itself is often allied with the capitalistic machinery; its structures too cry out for revision. These scandals should prod us to action--even though we still are unclear which way we should move. But we must not let ourselves be scandalized, because we know that the Church, divine in its founder Christ, is entrusted to human weakness.

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Since the University of Chicago has undertaken to celebrate this centenary of St. Thomas, may we make bold to suggest that perhaps the best way to honor him would be to try to do, today, with Karl Marx, what St. Thomas did in his day with Aristotle?

