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4 January 1961

ANTI-RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA IN THE USSR

(SELECTED TRANSLATIONS)

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FOREWORD

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ANTI-RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA IN THE USSR

[Following are translation of articles by various authors, selected from Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No 11, Moscow, November 1960]

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HOW MAN LEARNED TO SPEAK

[Following is the translation of an article entitled "Kak chelovek nauchilsya govorit'" (English version above) by G. Pugach in Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No. 11, Moscow, November 1960, pages 19-22.]

Several decades ago the famous German physiologist Dubois-Reymond [transliterated from Russian] coined the pessimistic phrase that phenomena exist in the world that we "do not know and never shall know" (Ignoramus et ignorabimus!). He included the problem of the origin of language.

This point of view was not new. It expresses the official position of the church. Religious people have always tried to prove that language is a creation of God, and that everything connected with the name of God is mysterious and unknowable. Their endeavor is wholly understandable: to explain how man learned to speak means to dispel the myth not only of the divine origin of language but also of the divine origin of man. For centuries religious people invented various theories on the origin of language and attempted to conceal the glaring contradictions of the Bible on that matter. At one time they claimed that each nation received its language separately from God: e.g., the Egyptians -- from Tot, the Chaldeans -- from Gannes, the Jews -- from Yahweh. Then they said that language was given by God through Adam and Eve and their numerous offspring. Finally, they declared that God gave man not language itself, but only the faculty of speech. This faculty supposedly was revealed whenever man named phenomena of his environment or communicated his thoughts to other men. Adam manifested this ability when he "named ... all the cattle and birds of the air and beasts of the field ..."

Bishop Grigoriy Nisskiy gave the same interpretation. He asserts that in addition to other faculties (the faculty to invent tools, build dwellings, etc.) God gave man the ability to speak and master language. He teaches that neither language itself nor words and their pronunciation is a divine gift. The existence of many languages does not depend on God. God placed in man the faculty of

language, the ability to name objects, phenomena, people, animals, birds, etc.

Many scientists who adhere to idealistic philosophy share Gregory Nisskiy's views on the divine origin of language. Though the idea that God gave birth to the faculty of language is not directly and openly expressed in these theories, it is implied in figurative scientific arguments about the innateness of this ability; e.g., it is claimed that this faculty is an age-old attribute of the human soul. In his Origin of Language the German idealist philosopher Herder wrote that language is a product of the soul, and the soul a product of God. The faculty of language and thought is given to man so that he can know himself and his inner world. Language, in Herder's opinion, is "the secret agreement of the human soul with itself."

The origin of language is hidden in the depths of time. However, archeology, ethnography, paleontology, and other sciences help to reproduce a picture of the evolution of man and of the primitive society of the age when language was formed. Though several details still are lacking, the facts at the disposal of science convincingly assert that there is no place for God in the creation of language.

According to the Bible, man has existed only a little more than seven thousand years. Science has irrefutably proved that man's separation from the animal world began incomparably earlier — about a million years ago. Step by step scientists have investigated and reproduced a picture of the process of humanization of the highly-developed ape. They have shown how this ape descended from the trees onto the earth, how it learned to walk on its two extremities and use tools.

Upright gait exerted a great influence on all further evolution of man, for it straightened the lungs. This, in turn, helped to adapt the larynx to the pronunciation of a great variety of sounds. No animal can utter as many sounds as man. Upright gait enabled the ape to use its forward extremities differently. Previously they served chiefly for movement; now this was no longer necessary. They could now be used to make simple tools like flint knives and stone axes. The invention of tools introduced human labor, which was to play a decisive role in the transformation of ape into man. The labor in which primitive man began to engage subsequently had a tremendous reciprocal influence on all his further evolution. Under the influence of labor the operation of the brain became more complex, its weight increased, the forward extremities were transformed into hands, and the implements into accessory organs of the body. Marx wrote in Capital that ever since man started to use tools every natural object has become an organ that man "... unites with the organs of his body, thereby lengthening, contrary to the Bible, the natural dimensions of the latter." (Capital [Capital], vol. 1, p. 186.) The main result of human labor was the origin of language, of human

thought, and, finally, of human society.

In his teaching on the higher nervous activity of animals and man, Academician Iván Petrovich Pavlov definitively dispelled the myth of the divine origin of language. He demonstrated that man learned to speak as a result of common labor, that labor and language have always played an enormous role in the evolution of man and society, and that work and word, as he said vividly, made us human beings.

Pavlov devised the theory of "signal systems of reality," which clearly proved the natural origin of language. The essence of this teaching is the assertion that the conditioned reflexes of man and animals originated on the basis of the signal system of surrounding reality. Any irritant is essentially a signal of the various objective relationships of reality; e.g., the smell of burning reaches animals or men, they see puffs of smoke, fire, sparks, etc. These irritants signalize to them a definite system of objective relationships in the outside world (in this case, a fire). These relationships are made firm in their brain by a definite physiological system of nerve connections. If in addition the animal or man in one way or another has suffered from fire, the system of nervous communication becomes even more intricate. The next time an irritant (e.g., smoke) is perceived, it will be regarded as a signal of danger.

The discovery of the meaning of these signals is a matter of analysis and synthesis, or thought, and the response is the phenomenon called behavior. Pavlov suggested that the signaling of objective relationships by the sight, color, and odor of the objects be called the first signal system of reality, or the system of object-thought. This first signal system is the basis of animal behavior.

Labor in common and social life produced in man many entirely new system relationships that could in no way be signalized by objects and their characteristics or simply by shouting, weeping, or groaning. It was perfectly natural that, as Pavlov says, an "addition" to the higher nervous activity should be made. The first (object) signals were generalized and replaced by special sound signals. These sounds were different from mere shouts and groans. The straightening of the lungs owing to upright gait and the development of the brain (increase of its weight, of the area of the cortex) furthered this. The tongue, lips, and larynx began to develop and adapt themselves, and, as Pavlov pointed out, became an integral component of human thought. Man could now replace sensations and perceptions, i.e., object signals, with a speech sound, i.e., word. New signals of signals could designate objective relationships of the outside world abstracted from concrete objects.

Thus originated the specifically human "addition" to the higher nervous activity of man. Pavlov called it the second signal system of reality. He stated: "This addition concerns the speech function, which introduced a new principle into the activity of the great hemispheres." (Polnoye sobraniye sochineniy (Complete Works), vol. 3,

book 2 (Moscow-Leningrad: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1951), p. 232.) The signals of signals " ... represent abstraction from reality and permit generalization, which constitutes our superfluous (in the sense of addition — G. Pugač), especially human higher thought process; thought gives rise first to general empiricism, and finally to science — the means of highest orientation of man in the surrounding world and in himself." (*ibid.*, pp. 232-233.)

Pávlov showed that animals have only the first signal system, while man has both. This gives him a tremendous advantage over animals. Because of the joint activity of the two signal systems man can directly perceive the world and penetrate the most profound relationships it imparts to him. He can discover the laws of the surrounding world, master the forces of nature, and become the master of reality. Pávlov says: "Man experiences reality primarily through the first signal system; then he becomes master of reality through the second signal system (word, speech, scientific thought)." (Pávlovskiye sredy (Pávlov Environments), vol. 1, (Moscow-Leningrad: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1949), p. 239.) Pávlov's teaching definitively refutes Biblical and ecclesiastical fictions about the divine origin of language.

There are no dates for the origin of language, no day, no year, even no century for its birth. The formation of language was an extremely protracted process that embraced a very long period of time. But we can state confidently that language appeared earlier than man began to use fire and domesticate animals.

Language and thought appeared together and have always been intimately related. They cannot exist separately. As tools became more complicated, thought and language were developed and enriched. All that men saw, heard, and discovered was reflected and made firm in language. Scientists still dispute about the nature of language in the initial period of its development. Was it phonetic speech or did men use gestures for communication, i.e., movements of the body, hands, and eyes?

Some scholars, both Soviet (Academician Marr) and foreign (Van Gennecken) [latter transliterated from Russian] supposed that language was an instrument of magic and for a long time the exclusive property of witch-doctors. According to the opinion of scientists, the language of gestures, which served as the means of communication of primitive people, was the colloquial language. In defense of their theory, they refer to the use of gestures by African, American, and Australian tribes. Some tribes use gestures to this day. A man from the Australian tribe of Dieri can designate the following by a gesture: man, woman, child, various kinds of animals, sky, earth, walking, food, drink, etc. Without pronouncing a single word, these tribesmen can make themselves understood. In our country until the Revolution it was customary among some peoples of the Transcaucasus for the daughter-in-law to converse with her mother-in-law only by gestures.

These facts still do not prove that gestures can constitute an independent language. The language of gestures is only a supplement to phonetic language. The thought and multifarious activity of man are based on the language of words; gestures never were and never can be a medium of universal communication because of their limitations and primitiveness. It is very difficult to use gestures at night, and it is completely impossible to convey more or less complex generalizations with them. Gestures can communicate thought only through phonetic language. Consequently, gestures could never be a basic means of communication; phonetic language was always that.

Science has proved that human speech was initially not articulate. The low state of development of man's speech and motor apparatus explains this. The ideas of primitive people were diffuse, vague, and indistinct; consequently, the initial sound expressions of these ideas were just as indistinct and indefinite. Considerably later, after hundreds and thousands of years, when the brain and speech organs were sufficiently developed, man began to express his thoughts not by one continuous sound, but by several sound combinations. The progressive use of tools and more frequent communication with fellow men increased the number of sound combinations; men had to name new implements, phenomena, and impressions.

At first men informed each other of ideas concerning tools and labor; subsequently the sphere of language application was extended immeasurably. Man became able to relate events in which he was not directly involved and did not participate. He could now relate a story heard from another person. Speech became more and more articulate. Articulate speech was a later invention of man. Complex grammatical forms and written language are products of comparatively recent millennia.

How did the phonetic shell of language originate? Can one see "divine design" in the fact that, let us say, fire is called fire, man -- man, and a table -- a table? People constantly came in contact with various objects and phenomena, and each phenomenon caused various feelings in them: pain, fear, joy, etc. Each of these feelings, in turn, produced a definite cry. To tell his fellows about a bread-tree he discovered, a primitive man uttered one sound; if he noticed a burning abode, he shouted in a completely different way.

But individual sounds or combinations of sounds expressing immediate sentiments were not yet language. Association of sounds with objects and signalization by sounds exist also among animals. Only when sound-signals express abstract objective relationships do they become language.

With the passage of time sounds and words began to reproduce definite ideas corresponding to these sounds. The cry "fire" evoked the picture of a burning hut among the tribesmen who heard it. In this way the sound-combination "fire" was associated with a definite object or phenomenon and fixed in the mind.

The association of sound-combinations with objects originated also through onomatopoeia. When a person says that it is thundering, the grass is swishing, the leaves are rustling, the very words — thunder, swish, rustle — transmit the sounds and noises of nature. Many words originated as cries emitted by animals and birds. Why does the cuckoo have almost the same name among various peoples? Why do we say: a rooster crows (kukarúkovat'), a cow moos (mychát'), a cat miaows (myaúkat')? Because these words originate in the cries of the corresponding animals.

Considerably later man began to name objects by utilizing already accumulated vocabulary. When he encountered a previously unknown object, he gave it the name of some known object; he took the name of an object which, in his opinion, was the same as or similar to the new one. For example, from the family of domesticated animals the Tahiti Islanders knew only the pig; when a horse was first brought to them, they called it a pig too. When North American Indians saw a horse for the first time, they called it a dog, since dogs were their only domestic animals. They merely added new particles to the word meaning horse-dog.

In the initial period of language evolution there were no words for more or less broad abstract concepts, for man's practical experience was still very limited and extensive social ties did not exist. Man was aware of and designated only what he saw, heard, touched, or smelled, i.e., could directly experience. He could not yet make broad generalizations. Scientists have established, for example, that some peoples are acquainted with various kinds of trees, birds, and fish and have names for each of them. But they do not have words for general concepts like tree, bird, or fish. A North American Indian tribe, the Hurons, does not have a word for eat (in the sense to use food). They have different words for eating fish, meat, etc.

The primitive character of the language of primitive men once again eloquently bears witness to the complete inadequacy of religious doctrines on the divine origin of language. As science shows, language originated historically and has always undergone change under the influence of social conditions. It is a medium of social evolution and the best means of communication among human beings.

Once we know how language and thought originated, we become convinced how inadequate are the fictions of religious people and idealist scientists who claim that we "never shall know the origin of language." The inquisitive human mind was able to fathom the secret of the origin and evolution of language. Science has proved that the evolution of society in accordance with the relative complication of labor has always produced changes in language.

A STAMPEL PAGE IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH
(On the 150th Anniversary of the Latin American War for Independence)

[Following is the translation of an article entitled
"Pozornaya stranitsa istorii tserkvi" (English version above)
by I. Lavretskiy in Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion),
No. 11, Moscow, November 1960, pages 42-45.]

The population of the Spanish colonies in America revolted against the colonizers 150 years ago. The war for the independence of Spanish America lasted fifteen years and ended with the victory of the patriots and the formation of the present Latin American republics.

The liberation of Latin America from Spanish colonial oppression was an event of great progressive significance. Many progressive people of the beginning of the nineteenth century, including Russian volunteers, took part in the war for independence on the side of the patriots. The Decembrists and Pushkin regarded the colonies' struggle for liberation with great sympathy.

The Catholic Church was a principal accomplice of the colonizers in their struggle against the South American patriots. The church had immense influence in the colonies. The whole spiritual life of the colonies (press, schools, universities) was under its control. Tribunals of the Inquisition dealt with the heterodox. At the beginning of the war for independence over a third of all the cultivated land was in the church's hands. The church helped the colonizers to enslave and exploit the local population, and actively participated in the robbery. True, some clericals like Las Casas exposed and preached against the bestialities and cruelties of the conquistadores (i.e., conquerors). But these were isolated cases; their preaching was "the voice of one crying in the desert," and they did not exert any mitigating influence on the conduct of the colonizers and of the clergy as a whole. To present Las Casas' preaching as typical of the clergy's relationship to the conquista, as some church apologists try to do now, is as absurd as to consider Campanella or Giordano Bruno typical representatives of the clergy solely because they were monks.

At first almost the entire clergy in the colonies consisted of Spaniards. By the end of the colonial period some natives — Creoles

and mestizos -- were admitted to a spiritual career. The Spanish regarded them as representatives of an inferior race, and the Creoles considered the Spanish invaders. The Creoles led the movement for independence, which included some individual priests. One of them, the Creole Hidalgo, started the anti-Spanish uprising in Mexico.

All of Hidalgo's activity before the uprising showed that this priest paid little attention to ecclesiastical laws. He was an adherent of the French Enlightenment. He organized theatrical presentations for his parishioners, showing them works like Molière's Tartuffe.

The Inquisition had Hidalgo under surveillance. In 1808 a woman named Herrera denounced him to the Inquisition: by order of her confessor she told the Inquisition that Hidalgo denied the divinity of Christ and expressed other "free-thinking" ideas. The revolt he started on the night of 16 September 1810 prevented his arrest. Another confessor's treachery was involved in that: the patriots were forced to proceed before the scheduled time because a priest who had found out about the preparations for the uprising betrayed the patriots to the authorities.

The church hierarchy was immediately up in arms against the revolt. On 24 September Bishop Manuel Abad y Queipo [transliterated from Russian] published an edict which proclaimed Hidalgo an atheist and perjurer and excommunicated him. Archbishop Mejico announced that Hidalgo was an envoy of antichrist. The Inquisition tribunal pronounced him an atheist, fanatic of French freedom, schismatic, heretic, Judaizing Lutheran, Calvinist, and "under extreme suspicion for atheism and materialism."

The revolt started by Hidalgo spread rapidly. Tens of thousands of Indians joined it and many Creoles supported it. But the lack of a clear program, indecision, and poor military organization eventually led the revolt into defeat. Hidalgo was taken prisoner by the Spanish and turned over to the Inquisition tribunal, which defrocked and anathematized the rebel leader. The Spanish authorities had him shot.

The mestizo José María Morelos, also a priest and Hidalgo's disciple, became the leader of the anti-Spanish revolt. The French clerical historian André calls him "a sinister priest who revolted against ecclesiastical authority."

The clericals persecuted Morelos as cruelly as they had persecuted his predecessor. On 2 November 1815 Morelos was taken prisoner by the Spanish and turned over to the Inquisition court. In the verdict Morelos was declared "a heretic and propagator of heresy, an oppressor and persecutor of ecclesiastical authorities, a desecrator of the sacraments, schismatic, libertine, hypocrite, incorrigible foe of Christ, adherent of the heretics Hobbes, Helvetius, Voltaire, Luther, and similar leprous authors, materialists, and atheists, a traitor to God, king, and pope." On the basis of that decision, a military tribunal sentenced Morelos to be shot. The sentence was immediately carried out.

In Venezuela Simón Bolívar, a follower of Rousseau and Voltaire,

was leader of the liberation movement. The patriots defeated the Spanish and in 1811 proclaimed Venezuela's independence.

On Holy Thursday, 26 March 1812, a great earthquake occurred in Venezuela. The capital and many towns were destroyed, and tens of thousands of their inhabitants perished under the falling buildings. The supporters of the Spanish -- an especially, of course, the clergy -- utilized the calamity for their own purposes. Bolívar's adjutant O'Leary, a contemporary witness of events, wrote the following about this event:

Unfortunately for the cause of independence, the clergy, using its great influence in Venezuela, took a hostile attitude toward the revolution. It pretended that the horrible catastrophe that had befallen the country was the scourge of divine providence to punish the rebels. The clergy advocated the most subversive doctrines and summoned heaven to send down new punishments on those who did not show immediate contrition and refused to recognize the justice of divine vengeance. The occurrence of the revolution and earthquake on Holy Thursday was malevolently presented as proof that the Almighty chose that day for the manifestation of His wrath."

The government of the republic demanded that the local Archbishop Col y Prata publish a message to the faithful in which he would explain that the earthquake was an ordinary natural phenomenon like rain, hail, or lightning. The archbishop replied to the government that he "was well aware that rain, hail, lightning, and earthquakes are an effect of natural causes." He was also aware, however, that "the sovereign Creator of nature can use natural forces to punish sinners." The archbishop was at one with the colonizers. The government ordered that he be arrested and exiled from the country.

The Spanish authorities attached great significance to the counterrevolutionary activity of the clericals. Morillo, the commander of Spanish troops in Venezuela, urgently demanded the Spanish government to send him clericals for use as propagandists in the colonizers' service. On 20 September 1813 Morillo wrote to the Spanish minister of war: "I do not hesitate to declare to Your Excellency that forty or fifty monks and a similar number of priests for parochial duties will have a greater influence on public opinion and more hasten the pacification of these countries than a whole division of picked troops ..."

The clericals specially hated the patriot leader Bolívar. Bolívar said to his adjutant de Sarratx:

I cannot remember without laughing how they excommunicated me and my whole army from the church. On 3 December 1814 the priests Rey and Dukesne [transliterated from Russian], who governed the archdiocese of Bogotá, issued an edict in which they asserted that I intended to despoil churches, persecute priests, extirpate religion, rape virgins, cut

the throats of men and children. These accusations were publicly withdrawn in another edict, in which I was presented not as an atheist and heretic, as in the first edict, but as a good and faithful Catholic! What a stupid farce and what a lesson for the nations! Nine or ten days separated these two edicts. The first was issued because I was advancing on Bogotá by order of the Congress, and the second because I had entered the capital victorious. Our priests still hold to their former ideas, but the result of their excommunications has been reduced to nothing. Continuing to rain down thunder and lightning on their opponents, they only place themselves in a foolish position, show their impotence, and increase daily the scorn they deserve.

In the viceroyalty of La Plata (now Argentina), which became the center of the liberation movement in the south of the continent, the clerical attitude to the struggle for independence was just as negative as in other regions of the Spanish colonial empire. During the fifteen-year war for independence the Vatican consistently supported the colonizers.

In 1816 Pope Pius VII issued an encyclical calling for a struggle against the patriots. It was addressed to the hierarchy and clergy of America, "who are under the rule of the Catholic king of Spain." The encyclical stated: "One of Our most excellent and fundamental commandments prescribes obedience to high authorities. We do not doubt that you have constantly instilled in your flock a just and firm hatred for the revolutions that have taken place in the countries so depressing to Our heart." Pope Pius VII urged the bishops and clergy "not to spare exertions to extirpate and exterminate completely the pernicious tangle of mutinies and revolts sown by enemies in these countries." Priests would attain this, the pope assured, if each of them zealously reminded his sheep of the horrible and grave consequences of revolt and of the extraordinary and excellent virtues "of Our beloved son in Christ, Ferdinand, Our Catholic king, for whom the religion and welfare of his subjects are the supreme consideration." In conclusion, the pope promised heavenly rewards if the clergy would recommend loyalty and obedience to the Spanish monarch.

On 24 September 1824 Pope Leo XIII [sic --actually, Leo XII] issued a new encyclical condemning the "mutineers." He wrote:

We only grieve when We observe the fury and dissipation of the evildoers, when We notice the spread by inflammatory books and brochures of an infection in which ecclesiastical and secular rule are disparaged, despised, and presented as odious, and, finally, when We see how juntas crawl out of a dark pit like locusts: these juntas are formed under the cover of darkness and, like an evil-smelling sewer, contain all that has ever been blasphemous and sacrilegious in heretical sects.

In 1826 the Colombian government sent Fejeda to Rome to obtain papal recognition of the republic. By order of the ecclesiastical authorities he was deported from Rome. In 1827 the pope, fearing the formation of a church in Columbia independent of the Vatican, appointed bishops in the republic. However, he hastened to assure Ferdinand VII that his action was prompted by the interests of both church and king, for "religious ties are the only thing that can induce unsettled subjects to obey you."

Only in 1835, i.e., twenty-five years after the beginning of the liberation movement and ten years after the expulsion of the Spanish from the colonies, did the papacy (under Gregory XVI) grant recognition to the Latin American republics; one of the reasons that compelled the papal see to take this step was the hope of receiving new revenues from the overseas republics.

Even after the recognition of the Latin American republics the church continued to rely on the remaining colonizers, landowners, plantation-owners, compradores, and other reactionary elements. It inspired them to fight against progressive forces.

At the present time the Catholic Church is the ally of the US imperialists -- the worst enemies of the Latin American peoples. In Guatemala the church hierarchy opposed the democratic government of Arbenz and participated in its overthrow. The clericals are conducting a campaign of slander against the achievements of the Cuban revolution. Outside Cuba they accuse Fidel Castro's government of communism, and in Cuba they participate in counterrevolutionary plots. Now, as 150 years ago, on the Vatican's orders the Catholic Church is defending the interests of the colonizers and opposing the genuine political and economic independence of the Latin American peoples.

[Caption of photograph on page 43:]

"Executioners and betrayers." This painting by the famous Mexican artist Diego Rivera exposes Guatemala's oppressors: John Foster Dulles shakes the hand of Armas, the executioner of the Guatemalan people. On the right is Bishop Bossel.

[Caption of photograph on page 44:]

The clergy blesses the execution of Hidalgo and his associates. Nineteenth-century painting.

[Caption of photograph on page 45:]

The cage in which Hidalgo's head was exhibited for ten years.

IN SEARCH OF THE VANISHED GARRISON

[Following is the translation of an article entitled "To sledani ischeznuvshogo garnizona" (English version above) by Vladimir Belyáyev in Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No. 11, Moscow, November 1960, pages 62-67.]

"... Young Neapolitan!
What did you leave on a Russian field?
Why could you not be happy
On your famous native bay?"
H. Svetlov

In 1944, soon after Soviet troops liberated L'vov, I found out about the murder of the Italian garrison by the Hitlerites. When in June of last year I related this tragedy on the pages of the Literary Gazette in an article entitled "Why Did They Not Return?", Signor Luigi Teda, the Italian representative on the United Nations Commission for Prisoner-of-War Affairs, rejected the evidence I had introduced. To get new facts I then appealed through Polish newspapers to witnesses of that sinister crime.

The first to respond was Iva Marchak, who now lives in Warsaw. She informed me that the Hitlerites murdered Italians not only in L'vov, but also in the village of Pikulich, near Peremyshl'. Though this village is now located beyond the borders of the Soviet Union in the Polish People's Republic, many of its Ukrainian inhabitants moved to Soviet territory right after the war and are living presently in L'vov, Stanislav, Ternopol', and other towns of the western Ukraine. I asked Yevstafiy Shumel'da, an agronomist and gardener with whom I am acquainted, to look for former residents of Pikulich in Stanislav. The search was successful. Shumel'da, incidentally, was a schoolmate of the famous Ukrainian writer Yaroslav Galan, who was killed by followers of Bandera, i.e., agents of the Vatican.

In Stanislav lives Anton Lurchevskiy, whose wife worked as a cleaning-woman in the UVE camp in the village of Pikulich. The Hitlerites originally established this camp for Soviet prisoners of war;

later they removed them to an unknown destination and unexpectedly imprisoned Italians in the unoccupied camp. The Italians were mainly officers, and their uniforms were not yet worn out. They all were clothed well, not in the camp fashion. The neighboring villagers were categorically forbidden to give them food. This order made it clear that the Hitlerites, following their favorite custom, intended to starve the recalcitrant Italians. Many Italians were compelled to eat grass to stay alive.

An emaciated Italian officer requested Kurchevskiy's wife in broken Polish to bring him something to eat; he warned her about the guards. They agreed that Kurchevskiy's wife should leave whatever food she brought in the latrine. But the plan was never put into effect. When Mrs. Kurchevskiy brought food into the camp the Italians were already shot...

Nicholas Pokhila, a native of Pikulichi, now lives in the town of Stanislaw. His hut was located near the POW camp. Nicholas Pokhila also claims that all the Italians were bestially murdered behind the camp's barbed wire.

Leopold Zimmerman, a former inmate of the L'vov ghetto, who was saved by a miracle and is now working at the Satusheva restaurant in the Polish city of Wroclaw, sent me a letter containing the following information:

A so-called Zwangsarbeitslager (forced labor camp) was located at the end of Yanovskaya Street in the L'vov area. Behind that camp, in a deep hollow, later named "the valley of death," the Germans regularly liquidated Jews. After Marshal Badoglio's capitulation the Italian garrison was brought there, to the "valley of death." The Italians were ordered to stack arms and march away about a hundred paces. There were about two thousand Italians. The SS brought them. When all the Italians were shot, the infamous Sonderkommando 1005, which disposed of the corpses of Hitlerite victims, began its work. Unterscharführer Uhlmann, the notorious Hitlerite hangman, directed the murder of the remaining Italians. The Italians died resignedly without showing any signs of mutiny.... In the same "valley of death" the Germans killed a group of patients from hospitals for political prisoners evacuated from Moshurov and a group of lunatics. Their blood mixed with that of the sons of Italy on the bottom of the "valley of death."

We too saw the traces of the red blood that had soaked the bottom of the "valley of death" a good meter deep and still colored the sandy soil in September 1944. I remember that we arrived there with writer Yaroslav Galan and master of ceremonies Michael Garkavi on a gloomy autumn day. We stood a long time in silence on the slopes of the "valley of death." But we still did not know that sons of sunny Italy, which gave the world Garibaldi and Michelangelo, Giordano Bruno

and Leonardo da Vinci, had also been murdered there.

To this day a house stands unnoticed on the corner of Ushakov (formerly Yatsk) Street in L'vov. The house can be seen well from the windows of the trolley bus that passes on Shot Gustaveli Street. This house is directly related to the secret of the vanished Italian garrison. Cheslav Sukhovirskiy, an accidental acquaintance of mine who now resides in the Polish city of Sosnovets, at 23 Alieya Pobedy (Victory Boulevard), has helped to lift that secret's veil.

In 1942 the Hitlerites seized Sukhovirskiy during a round-up in Bask and deported him to Germany for forced labor. The sixteen-year-old boy escaped while his train was delayed in L'vov. Cheslav had an aunt in L'vov, at 24 Shot Gustaveli Street. She hid the fugitive, and shortly thereafter the boy's parents arrived from Bask. There was hunger in L'vov, and Cheslav went to work for forty zloty a month as a postal apprentice to support his family. While delivering mail he met the Italians quartered in Metropolitan Sheptitskiy's palace on Zelenaaya (Green) Street and in the house on the corner of Yatsk Street, which was close to Cheslav's apartment. Lest he die of hunger, the boy began to trade with the Italians. For German marks he bought cigarettes and wine from them. In the bargain he got porous soldiers' biscuits and macaroni, which he ate on the way to Prus Square. There he sold the wine and cigarettes on the black market.

Here is Cheslav Sukhovirskiy's sad testimony:

We lived on that, somehow, day and night — and the time passed. The hunger was terrible, and everyone helped himself as best he could! The Italians from Yatsk Street did not drive the children away and gave them as much food as they could spare; they even allowed children to enter the buildings in which they were quartered. They were very religious: they would often exclaim: "Santa Madonna!" I still remember some Italian words. I remember well that two little Russian boys lived with them. Later one of them was saved by a Russian woman named Mosokova, who lived on Satory (now Vatutin) Street. I think that one day, when I visited a Russian friend there, I saw Captain "Paul Siebert," i.e., the legendary Nicholas Kuznetsov, who caused so much trouble to the Germans in L'vov and elsewhere. The second Russian boy, whose name I forget, was deported with the Italians to the concentration camp.

The Italian mutiny broke out in the house on the hillock on the corner of Yatsk Street. On that day no foreigner visited them in their quarters. One of the Italians was killed then by an SS-man. If they have not been painted over, the bullet-holes should still be in the wall. At night, as the Hitlerites transported the Italians away from Yatsk Street, I approached the building. An officer came out and called me and another boy inside the house.

He told us to help an Italian soldier, a shoemaker, to find the way to Zel'naya Street. Then we saw bullet-holes on the wall in the hall on the ground floor and blood-stains on the floor. The portraits of Hitler and Mussolini were still on the wall, but smeared with ink and black paint. He asked the Italian officer who had called us where the Italian soldiers we knew had gone. He replied that they had departed for Italy. But the soldier-shoemaker began to cry on the way to Zel'naya Street and said that that was a lie, for they all were in a concentration camp. He gave me a note written in Italian. From the text I could make out: "Help, the Germans are killing us!" The soldier sobbed like a little child, and the officer afterwards beat him unmercifully for talking with us. Soon the people in L'vov learned that it was true that the Italians had been shot. I met that officer later on the street; he was wearing a German uniform.

Journalist Yatsck Vil'chur of Warsaw, formerly of L'vov, offers the following testimony:

The history of the murder of the Italian soldiers in L'vov began even before the tragic summer of 1942. On the night of 4-5 April 1942 several Italians were brought to the building at 15 Galitskaya (Galician) Square, where the administration of the criminal police (Krino) and Sicherheitsdienst (SD -- security service) was located. The Hitlerites, beating them unmercifully with rifle-butts, forced the unfortunate Italians to strip to their underwear and then herded them into a vehicle. The police vehicle took the prisoners and their executioners to the Jewish cemetery on Kanovskaya Street. At the intersection of Kanovskaya and Melikhovskaya Streets the soldiers were ordered to get out. The guards led them to the valley bordering on Kheparevskiy Grove. After the doomed Italians had dug their grave, they were ordered to stand with their backs to the SD-men, who raised their submachine guns. A few volleys ended the lives of Hitler's former "allies." On the following night the Germans returned, disinterred the bodies, and took them to an unknown destination.

We have further information on the murder of the Italians in L'vov -- the prelude to the extermination of the whole garrison in the following year, after the Italian catastrophe. As our search for new witnesses progressed, it became evident that the Italian tragedy was not limited to L'vov with its sandy ravines and hills. From distant Jerusalem the staff of Yad Vashem, the Institute for the Perpetuation of the Memory of the Victims of Fascism, read our appeal in the Polish press and sent us the certified statement of František (Ephraim) Vlodh. His address: Israel, 24 Blue Kholot, Apartment 2. He has new information on the Italians who vanished on the fields of the Soviet Union:

I know personally that military trains from Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Greece, and Yugoslavia passed through Javva-Iusckaya. The infamous Belzets extermination camp was then located not far from Javva-Iusckaya. At the beginning of 1944 some Italian officers arrived in Belzets with a trainload of Jews and were murdered. The Germans had interned them and three Italian Army regiments in the winter of 1943-44. They were interned when the Berlin-Rome axis started to crack. When the axis broke a few months later, the Germans killed the officers in Belzets and transported the enlisted men on a few trains to the south. I do not know these soldiers' subsequent fate. Judging from the unanimity of the Italians' hostility to the Germans, their fate must have been sad.

During their stay in Belzets before their death the Italians were very humane in their relations with the Jews. This caused frequent fights between Italians and Germans.

The Italians were interned with all their military gear. Since the Germans did not bother to supply their former allies with provisions, the Italians had to obtain subsistence as best they could. They sold their pistols to members of the Jewish underground, the formation of which had begun in the "reduced" ghetto.

I also know that in Belzets a group of Yugoslav partisans were executed. I saw their train as it passed through Javva-Iusckaya and heard the swarthy men in military uniform cry out that they were Yugoslav partisans. That was at the end of 1942.

This means that Italians were exterminated in Belzets too!

We are very well acquainted with that horrible extermination camp, which was as bad as Treblinka, Auschwitz, and Maidanek. Passing through Javva-Iusckaya and the yellowing forests near Grelenskaya, Ivan Korneiov, then public prosecutor of I'vor Oblast', and I arrived in Belzets on an autumn day in October 1944. Belzets was a railroad junction, whence trains departed for Lublin, Warsaw, Javva-Iusckaya, and Yaroslav. The new stationmaster, Ignatius Mazur, an employee of the transportation service during the Revolution, told us that on 20 November and the first group of prisoners arrived in Belzets in the autumn of 1941. About 400 meters from the station, where the reserve spur-tracks ended and a ridge of sandy hills covered with trees began, the prisoners started to build the camp. They surrounded the camp with a high mound of sand and transplanted trees on the top of the mound. A dense wall of young firs made it impossible to look inside the camp from far or near. The mound was interrupted only where the spur-lines entered the center of the camp. High gates blocked the entrance. The gates were interwoven with frequently changing fir branches. When a train entered the camp area, the gates

were immediately closed. Three barracks were built near the gates for the Gestapo henchmen and camp guards.

In the spring of 1942 trains from various points of origin began to arrive in Belzets. If one prisoner caught sight of the station-name "Belzets" through the bars of the window, it was enough to cause groaning and weeping in all the cars.

All prisoners were ordered to undress and were herded naked into a big one-storey building reminiscent of a bathhouse. There the unfortunates were killed by gas. Twelve minutes sufficed to kill 750 people in the chamber. Then the corpses were buried in immense sand pits -- but not for long.

Just before the winter of 1942 three enormous bonfires were lit in the camp area. They were not extinguished all winter and burned until the last summer of the occupation. Their flames were visible for several dozen kilometers. We called them the "eternal fires of Belzets," or, in Polish, zniozy. From that time on the smell of burnt flesh mingled with the horrible stench of death that had heretofore bothered the inhabitants of the neighboring villages. Ignatius Mazur asserted that, in his opinion, no one who landed in Belzets left there alive. Everyone brought into the camp had one road ahead: onto the bonfire! But Mazur was mistaken.

I succeeded in finding in L'vov that autumn an elderly soap-maker named Aben Leder, who had miraculously escaped from the camp. The guards' kitchen in the camp was in need of repair. Leder suggested that he look for the deficient white tin among his friends in L'vov. Camp commandant Franz Lucano granted permission and sent Leder under heavy guard by vehicle to L'vov. Soon after their arrival in L'vov the Germans apparently became convinced that four officers and an enlisted man were too heavy a guard for the sixty-year-old Leder. They left a Gestapoman in the vehicle to guard Leder and went to eat. The Gestapoman was tired from the schnapps he had drunk and the sun and soon dozed off. Aben Leder quietly opened the door, slipped out of the vehicle, and mixed with the crowd of passers-by. A woman whom he knew in L'vov hid him for twenty months of the occupation. Aben Leder, who alone escaped from the terrible "other world" of Belzets, willingly told us many details about the hell of Belzets. He later published his memoirs in Poland.

Leder offered the following information:

I spent a total of four months in the camp. During that time over thirty very large and deep graves were dug, filled with corpses, and covered in my presence. With the aid of simple arithmetic I should say that during that time the Germans exterminated and buried many hundreds of thousands of people. When the Red Army went over to the offensive and began to advance on Belzets, the fascists began hastily to cremate the corpses. Those exterminated in Belzets came not only from Poland and the western Ukraine, but also from Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia, and France.

Judging from what I saw, I should say I left the foundation of the camp until its dissolution approximately 1944. Polish people were exterminated in Belzets.

We now have every reason to add to the list of countries whose people vanished forever in the hell of the "eternal fires of Belzets." We can include still another state -- Italy. Hundreds of cheerful young Italians from the shores of the beautiful Mediterranean were brought to Belzets only so that the bullets of Hitlerite submachine guns, "Cyclone" gas, and the slazy tongues of fire could turn their dark bodies into light silvery ashes.

Signor Luigi Roda, deputy of the Italian parliament and Italian representative in the United Nations, who denied openly all the facts I produced on the extermination of Italians in L'vov, is a fervent Catholic. The majority of Luigi Roda's countrymen who were shot by the Hitlerites and suffocated by German "Cyclone" gas were also men of the Roman Catholic faith. They were murdered in L'vov, the only city in the world where the Vatican had three metropolitan sees: Roman Catholic, Ukrainian Catholic, and Byzantine (Greek) Catholic. Bishop Pazyak and Metropolitan Count Andrew Shepitskiy were in the closest contact with the Vatican throughout the occupation.

Through its extensive hierarchy, through a whole army of Polish and other priests and prelates, through the many Catholic monasteries and monastic orders still existing that time in the western Ukraine, the prominent representatives of the Vatican in L'vov and surrounding area were extremely well informed about all aspects of the bloody occupation regime. Can it be imagined that such a scandalous thing as the disappearance of several thousand Italian Catholics in "Tyashkovnya" ravine, beyond Lyubakov, in the flames of the Belzets fires, and behind the barbed wire of Mikulichki could be kept secret from the Vatican and its local curia?

Of course not! They knew it and kept silent! Neither then nor today have they made a single protest or conducted a single funeral service in memory of their brothers and coreligionists who vanished in accordance with Hitler's will. Not a word on that tragedy has been heard from the summit of Lateran Hill.

But why should we be surprised? In what way did the burnings of the medieval Inquisition, in which Giordano Bruno and thousands of his contemporaries perished, differ essentially from the "eternal fires" of Belzets or from the fires which burned on the bottom of L'vov's "Tyashkovnya"? During the scandalous trial of Hugo Montana [Montan?] in Italy it was revealed that Roman Catholic Bishop Cudal hid in the Polish church of Santa Maria dell'Unita the notorious Aaron Goldmann, Gestapo man and organizer of the SS division Italy, and friend of Hansmann Adolf Eichmann, the exterminator of millions of Jews.

Under that church's roof Cudal also hid another bundit of equal rank -- SS Standartenführer Otto Wichter, the governor of the district of "Galicia." This blond beast was governor of L'vov and the surrounding area when thousands of Italian Catholics were being

burned in the fires of the fascist Inquisition! And not only Italians! Metropolitan Andrew Sheptitskiy, bishop Sazyak, and other representatives of the Vatican in L'vov were well informed about this. They knew and received into their cathedral chapters Otto Richter, who participated in those murders. Sheptitskiy, bishop Vasil' Laba, and other Vatican representatives helped him to organize the SS division Galichina (Galicia) and personally blessed the nationalist flags of this band of Ukrainian apostates, who were recruited to conquer Moscow for Adolf Hitler's empire.

That is the real meaning of the famous Christian commandment "Thou shalt not kill!" What a disgrace!

The same Sheptitskiy who so furiously sent "memorandums" to the Soviet government in protest against the introduction of Pioneer units in the schools kept silent as soon as the occupation began and the Hitlerites started to murder hundreds of thousands of people, including many Catholics. This "prince of the church" did not raise his voice in protest against the murder of Latin-rite Christians like the Italians. No murmur of protest was heard from the Catholic clergy.

When confronted with the gloomy reality of the bloody years of the occupation, not only the commandment "Thou shalt not kill!" but many other ecclesiastical canons -- the foundation stones of all faith in a mythical God -- burst like soap bubbles!

Archbishop Joseph Slipyy succeeded Count Andrew Sheptitskiy on the throne of the Byzantine Catholic Church after the latter's death in the autumn of 1944. This portly habitué of numerous fascist banquets knew exactly what was going on in the city under the German occupation. Not a single more or less significant fact of municipal life eluded the residents of St. George's (Yur) Palace. They "spied with a Jesuitical eye" on everything that happened in their diocese.

When the indictment of the Extraordinary State Commission for the Investigation of German-fascist atrocities in L'vov Oblast' was drawn up, those of us who participated in the project visited, among other priests, Archbishop Joseph Slipyy in his palace on St. George's Hill. Arrogant and proud, with a diamond-studded ikon on his breast, Joseph Slipyy received us in his study. Right away he announced that he did not "understand Russian." An experienced Jesuit with knowledge of many European languages who had been reading the Soviet Russian press since the 1920's, he started to emphasize his extraterritoriality and inveterate hatred of Moscow.

I had to assume the duties of an interpreter. In Ukrainian I explained to His Excellency the purpose of our visit and requested him to countersign the indictment confining the fascist atrocities in L'vov and the mass extermination of Italians and Frenchmen, men of the Catholic faith, who were brought there.

"But I do not know anything about these atrocities!" answered Slipyy with an ironical smile.

We had expected anything, but such frank cynicism on the part of the new proprietor of Svatoyurskaya (St. George's) Hill surprised us.

Astonished, I replied: "Your Excellency, thousands of L'vovians, including believers, have told us about the mass atrocities of the Hitlerites. We found in L'vov a few Frenchmen who escaped from German concentration camps and the L'vov citadel. All of them are Catholics. They too confirm with documentary evidence how the Gestapo dealt with the peaceful population. The corpses of murdered people were cremated in Pyashkovaya ravine, beyond Lychakov. When the wind blew from there, the smell of burnt flesh was perceptible everywhere in the city and here at St. George's Palace."

"Look, young man," stroking his broad and thick beard with dignity interrupted me Slipyy, "even in summer it is my habit to keep the windows in the chapter closed."

Not only Luigi Neda has tried to deny my accusations on this subject in the Livovskaya Gazette in June 1959 and later in Kosmos skaya Pravda. The editors of the popular Italian magazine Epoca decided to check the veracity of the facts presented in my article "Why Did They Not Return?" They even sent special correspondents to Poland personally to talk to the many witnesses whose testimony lay at the base of our assertions. They also found a very important witness, Nina Petrusikowna, who almost had escaped our notice. The Warsaw newspaper Trybuna Ludu published a summary of their findings concerning the "vanished garrison" in its 18 June 1960 issue:

WARSZAWA 18 JUN 1960. Rome (Polish Press Agency). The extensive article of two correspondents of the largest Italian weekly Epoca has aroused wholly understandable excitement in Italian public opinion. The article was sent from Warsaw and completely confirms on the basis of witnesses' testimony the murder of 2,000 Italian soldiers of the L'vov garrison by the Hitlerites in the autumn of 1942. When the story of this crime was published in the Moscow Literary Gazette, Italian Minister of War Andreotti in general form rejected this information. Epoca correspondents have found witnesses of the crime in Poland and now present the detailed testimony of these witnesses. Witnesses S. Strupchevskiy, A. Koval'chuk, A. Kuntz, N. Petrusikowna, and engineer Vl. Solok describe the murder of 2,000 Italians by the SS. Their bodies were cremated and the ashes scattered in a forest near the city. To conceal all traces of their crime, the Hitlerites transplanted trees on the graves. The victims, including five generals and forty-five officers, refused to swear an oath of loyalty to their Hitlerite "ally" after Mussolini's fall in the summer of 1943.

What remains to be done for Signori Neda and Andreotti, who are very close to the Vatican? Perhaps we, in turn, should deny that Italians were murdered in Pitulichi and in the "eternal fires of Melzets"? These facts are obviously very disadvantageous to Catholic Konrad Mennauer's spiritual colleagues in Italy. These are the same

men who drove Italy into NATO and are reviving fascism. They would like to erase all traces of the blood shed by Italians in L'vov from the memory of the peoples.

But the ashes of the Italians strewn on the hills of L'vov, near the San River, and in the sand dunes under the pines of Belzets continue to touch our hearts. Now witnesses of that horrible crime arouse hatred for all those who once dragged Italy into a senseless war and now try to lead her again onto the same old bloody path.

[Caption of photograph on page 65:]

This is "Lyashkovnya" — the sandy ravine on the eastern edge of L'vov. Here the Hitlerites murdered about 200,000 peaceful people. Photo by Ye. Chayka.

[Caption of photograph on page 66:]

Hierarchs of the Byzantine Catholic Church — agents of the Vatican in the western Ukraine: Decrepit, paralyzed Metropolitan Count Andrew Sheptitskiy (in his youth an officer of the Austro-Hungarian Army and German spy with the nickname "Dragon"), and Archbishop Slipyy, his coadjutor.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Following is the translation of an article entitled "Religiya i obshchestvo" (English version above) by B. Griger'yan in Nauka i Religiya (Science and Religion), No. 11, Moscow, November 1960, pages 78-82.

Religious beliefs and doctrines have always been closely connected with the process of social evolution and have always reflected the economic and political interests of social groups and classes. For many centuries the stormy course of history was concealed under this peculiar spiritual covering. At certain stages of social evolution religion exerted a great influence on the economic, political, and cultural life of individual states and nations. At times it even seemed that religion was the fundamental source of all social life, of all social creation and destruction; religion seemed to be the very foundation on which all historical movement proceeded.

Actually, however, religious ideology has always been a consequence of definite socio-economic processes and a product of the objective course of social evolution. Despite its apparent independence, religion, like every other ideology, really does not have an independent history or evolution that proceeds according to its own laws. The history of ideas, wrote Marx and Engels, proves that spiritual production is transformed concurrently with material production, and that man's thought changes as changes occur in material production and social relationships. Religion is an historically originated and historically transient form of social consciousness. Religion, says Marx, expresses the aspiration of the oppressed people for illusory happiness. Therefore, religion as a hope for illusory happiness disappears as soon as the popular masses find real happiness.

The ideologists of the modern bourgeoisie and exploiting classes will never accept this interpretation of religion. Profoundly shaken by the great social changes that have taken place in the world and confronted by the growing power of the revolutionary forces of world socialism, the bourgeoisie uses every means at its disposal to delay the destruction of capitalist society and to hinder the further spread

of Communist ideas. The bourgeoisie uses religion to bolster its domination; it considers religion an ideology that can reconcile the exploited workers with exploitation and every other kind of social injustice. Bourgeois ideologists speak about the eternity and indestructibility of the religious experience, and claim that human society and social progress are wholly inconceivable without religion. In their attempts to perpetuate the capitalist system by presenting it as the only reasonable and God-given society, they cling to religion and mysticism as a means of justifying all the abominations of capitalism and all the crimes of the imperialist bourgeoisie before the nations and the working masses.

At the beginning of this century the eminent French sociologist Emile Durkheim regarded religion as the great social force that gave birth to "almost all social institutions." Religion, in Durkheim's opinion, is the most striking form of collective life; it is, as it were, a condensation of all collective life. He wrote: "If religion has brought forth everything substantial in society, this happened because the idea of society is the idea of religion."

Many contemporary sociologists and philosophers adhere to this view of religion. The contemporary German sociologist G. Mensching believes that social life naturally exerts a certain influence on the evolution of religious ideas, but that religion influences society to a greater extent. French bourgeois sociologist Gabriel de Bra speaks of religion as a powerful formative social force. In his opinion, it is religion that unites the human masses, unites the individual with society, and promotes the moral and cultural development of society. Bouman, the Dutch professor of sociology, and Jochim Wach, the eminent German sociologist of religion, and others share these views.

Many studies by contemporary bourgeois historians of religion, sociologists, and philosophers contain the following assertions: religion is the basis of the state; religion is the most important condition for social unification; religion leads to the blossoming of social life. They also claim that the decline of religious consciousness has a negative effect on the state of society. These studies distort history. Historical facts and their scientific analysis lead to different conclusions. Let us turn our attention, for example, to developed countries of the ancient world like Greece and Rome. The domestic prosperity of the ancient Greek state coincided with the era of Pericles; the greatest external prosperity coincided with the era of Alexander the Great. Both these periods occurred when philosophy, art, and rhetoric had successfully supplanted religion. To an even greater extent this is true of Rome, where the genuine religion of the educated Romans was the philosophy of Epicurus, the Stoics, and the skeptics.

The history of the ancient world, better than that of any other epoch, illustrates the proposition that the development and modification of the religious concepts of the various peoples were determined primarily by their respective economic, social, and political conditions. The evolution of Roman society, the unification of the Italian clans and tribes and their fusion into a single state led to the in-

clusion of regional gods in the general pantheon. The united family of gods of the Roman state was formed in this manner.

The priority of social relationships over religious ideas can be observed in subsequent historical evolution, although a superficial view of history could leave the impression that religion played the most important role in social change.

The disintegration of the primitive-communal system of the nomad and settled tribes of Arabia began in the seventh century. Slavery appeared and a property-owning elite emerged. The ensuing social contradictions led finally to the union of the Arab tribes into a single feudal state. The socio-economic necessity of this unification could be comprehended only in religious or ideological terms in the medieval period. In this case the socio-economic necessity was interpreted as the need to spread the "true" Mohammedan faith in opposition to all other faiths.

From the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries the desire of the Christian monarchs and princes of southwestern Europe to seize the rich areas of the East took the form of the Crusades, which supposedly had as their sole goal the liberation of the "Holy Sepulcher" from Saracen rule.

All these examples show that the development of religion was always subsequent to social change, and that the real content and character of social change determined the form and content of religion. But religion did not simply follow history. Religious doctrine sanctified and strengthened already-formed social relationships and justified the interests of the dominant exploiting classes. Sometimes it served as the ideological form in which the changes and contradictions of social life were best expressed.

In the early Middle Ages the church spiritually dominated Western Europe. Here religious dogmas were the basis of all thought. Philosophy, natural science, and other sciences were forced to accord with the teaching of the catholic church. Medieval philosophy was by its very nature theological; Christianity was the unifying force of European civilization. But even the "ideal Christian unity" of medieval Europe had solid material foundations. The hierarchical organization of the catholic church then owned approximately a third of all the land and was an enormous economic force in feudal society. Thus, despite the dominant position of Christian ideology in the Middle Ages, religion developed in accordance with changes in feudalism; the ruling church reproduced and copied in a peculiar form the feudal social structure.

When feudal society began to decline, the old religious view of the world ceased to satisfy the rising bourgeoisie. Despite the new social conditions, however, the new class did not immediately break with the religious ideology. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries the struggle of the bourgeoisie, urban populace, and peasantry against feudalism was still waged under the banner of religion. This continued until the bourgeoisie worked out its own political

and legal philosophy. The economic and social relationships which had previously assumed a religious form were now depicted as political and legal relationships. In the new conditions of capitalist society the social and historical bases of all ideological forms, and especially of religious ideology, were revealed even more clearly.

Let us illustrate this proposition by investigating the present religious life of capitalist countries. After World War II relations between the leadership of the Catholic and Protestant Churches became more cordial. The Vatican even tried to improve relations with the clergy of non-Christian religions like Islam and Buddhism. The churches which had once fought each other were suddenly able to reach a certain mutual understanding; they agreed on unity of action in some questions.

What is the explanation of this? Is it possible that the religious principles of these churches have been drastically altered or that all disputed dogmatic questions have been resolved? Of course not. In the centuries that have passed since the Crusades and St. Bartholomew's Night, the fundamental dogmas of Christianity, Islam, and other religions have remained virtually unchanged. But since that time great social changes have taken place in the world. These social changes have determined the new tendencies in the activity of the Catholic, Protestant, and other clergies. Now, as never before, the socio-economic and political bases of all religious action and ideology have become obvious. The social basis of the spiritual life of society remains hidden from the gaze of bourgeois sociologists and philosophers, who concentrate their attention mainly on the ideology and ritual of religion.

Marxism for the first time directed attention to the socio-economic processes of social life as the real basis upon which the whole ideological superstructure rose; the ideological superstructure, in turn, determines the entire spiritual life of society. Marxist social teaching designates religion as a social phenomenon; it points out that definite groups of people, bound by the unbreakable threads of economic, social, and political relations, are the bearers of religious ideology. The formation of human collectives historically precedes the religious tie, and in all stages of historical development social relationships determine the actions of man.

Religion was a most convenient ideological form for the spiritual enslavement of the masses, who interpreted and understood their environmental phenomena in religious terms. Even when the popular masses rose against their oppressors, they clothed their social demands in the form of religious slogans. This was the case with the Anabaptists ("re-baptizers" -- supporters of a popular sect which originated in Germany in the sixteenth century before the Peasant War of 1525), Czech Hussites (followers of Jan Hus, who demanded ecclesiastical reform and defended Czech national independence at the beginning of the fifteenth century), English Independents (a political party during the English Revolution of the seventeenth century which opposed English

absolutism and the Established Church with religious dogmas), and Russian sectarisms (heretical strel'niki and antitrinitarians). In all these movements, which took the form of a struggle for a "new, truer religion," the masses essentially were trying to attain peaceful goals -- land, instruments of production, equal distribution of goods, etc. Only the study of the economic, political, and social foundations of religious life permits a correct understanding of the real causes of development and change in religious ideology and its social content in certain historical periods.

Though bourgeois sociologists generally do not deny the influence of social life on religion, they always attempt to emphasize the absolute independence of religion from social conditions. They accuse Marxism of a one-sided explanation of the forms of social consciousness, including religion.

Marxism has never denied the relative independence of the role of ideologies in social evolution. Engels wrote that the fundamental proposition of the materialistic interpretation of history -- that the production and reproduction of real life is the ultimate determinant in the historical process -- does not mean that the economic factor is the sole determinant. Various superstructural phenomena -- political, juridical, and philosophical theories and religious views -- also influence historical development. "The interaction of all factors is present here; inevitable economic change eventually clears a path for itself through the infinite number of possibilities ..." (K. Marx and F. Engels, O religii (On Religion), Moscow, 1956, page 211.) The founders of Marxism defined the nature of the religious form of social consciousness.

Religion contains a so-called prehistorical element, which was subsequently adopted by the historical period. The prehistorical element includes all kinds of absurdities created by the fantasy of the savage: false concepts of nature, the nature of man, spirits, and supernatural forces. All these concepts have only a negative economic basis.

The low economic development of the prehistoric period entailed, and sometimes even conditioned and caused, false concepts of nature. Though economic necessity was always and became more and more the mainspring of the progressive understanding of nature, it would be pedantry to seek economic explanations for all this primitive nonsense.

(Ibid., page 216.)

These propositions explain the real sense of the Marxist interpretation of religion and show the complete bankruptcy of the bourgeois criticism of Marxism. Historical materialism is not a "one-sided economic theory," as bourgeois sociologists assert, but a genuinely scientific sociological system demanding a balanced analysis of all social phenomena.

In the centuries that have passed since the Middle Ages, when religion dominated the spiritual life of society, humanity has developed

great productive forces. In our day science and technology have made truly phantastic achievements. Man has created rockets that can overcome the force of earthly gravity and penetrate the limitless expanses of the cosmos. The sphere of human action now transcends the limits of our planet. The successes of astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and scientific psychology are shattering fundamental religious dogmas.

As a result of great socio-economic and cultural transformations, the social roots of religion have been undermined in the socialist countries; the class base on which the church stood has been annihilated. The socialization of the basic means of production and the elimination of all kinds of social oppression have reduced religion in the socialist countries to a mere remnant of former social relationships. This survival will gradually be overcome in the ideological battle between the scientific and religious philosophies and by the formation of a new kind of human being — the member of communist society.

In the Soviet Union the building of communism has begun. The Soviet people are successfully creating their real happiness here on earth, and therefore no longer need the illusory hope of fictitious heavenly salvation. The great advances of communism are driving the survivals of religious beliefs and prejudices out of life.

Religious and ecclesiastical influence has also been undermined in capitalist countries. But religion still remains a serious and extremely influential factor of social life there. The church in capitalist countries is not only a religious center, but a powerful organization in possession of enormous riches and considerable political power. Many churchmen are big stockholders in banks and other businesses. The Vatican's foreign-currency and gold reserves in 1952 amounted to eleven billion dollars — more than the gold reserves of Italy, France, and England combined. The Vatican is closely associated with the financial and political circles of many countries. The ruling clerical parties of Italy, West Germany, France, Belgium, Holland, and other countries are under its influence.

The church in capitalist countries is an integral part of the social structure. Religion in these countries is carrying out its last historical mission — it defends and protects the foundations of capitalist society, and in so doing defends and protects the last social basis of its own existence. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Catholic Church, following reactionary imperialist circles, opposes peaceful coexistence, directly or indirectly supports the arms race and preparations for atomic war. The Vatican is the ally and bulwark of the fascist regimes in Spain and Portugal; using the constantly increasing support of the monopolistic oligarchy of the United States, it actively opposes the national-liberation movement in the nations of Latin America and other areas.

The progress of history cannot be stopped by arms or preaching. Capitalism is living out its last days, it is steadily moving toward

its downfall. When it falls, social inequality, the exploitation of man by man, and all other social deficiencies will forever disappear from human life. Religion will disappear with them. The influence of religion is steadily decreasing in the most religious capitalist countries. Even bourgeois sociologists cannot deny that the "golden age" of religious domination of the minds and hearts of men has faded into the distant past. French clerical Daniel Rops [transliterated from Russian] believes that at the present time there are

...enormous areas of the earth where man lives as if God really had died; even in countries where atheism has not yet been raised to the status of official dogma whole social classes live as though the problem of God did not exist.

The atheism engendered by the Renaissance has developed almost uninterruptedly. Rationalism, the philosophy of the eighteenth century, and, finally, the great wave of technological inventions in the nineteenth century gave it strength. To the humanism and naturalism of the age of Rabelais were added the laicism and anticlericalism of Voltaire and the encyclopedists, the erudition of the age of technology (the nineteenth century), and the dialectical materialism of Marx. Today atheism is a powerful idea among the masses ... it conditions political and social activity; among the intelligent it is a conscious struggle against God, against all that can be above man. (Questions of the History of Religion and Atheism, vol. 7, Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1950, pages 53-54.)

The people of modern developed capitalist countries have created enormous productive forces which affirm man's vastly increased power over nature. In capitalist society, however, these productive forces seem to be separate from individual man and to dominate them; they seem not to depend on human volition and behavior, but, on the contrary, to control volition and behavior.

Capitalist production relationships impede the spiritual liberation of the workers. The productive forces of the present capitalist world operate not as the forces of the individual producers, but as the forces of private property. They seem to be the forces of individual men only insofar as the latter are private property-owners. Therefore, if all men are to attain freedom of independent cultural activity corresponding to the level of development of material production, society must acquire the existing aggregate of productive forces. After attaining possession of all means of production and planning their use on a social basis, society will liberate itself and all its members from an enslaved state. The people, to use Engel's expression, will become the real owner of all social forces. The last external force operating apart from man will disappear, and the religious reflexion of that force will disappear for the simple reason that there will be nothing left to reflect.

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