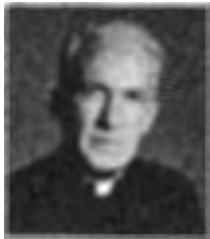


# Communism and America's Churches

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by Rev. Francis E. Fenton

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Communism is an international, criminal, militant, materialistic, atheistic conspiracy. Its aim is world domination. It will use any and every conceivable means to realize that aim, and in the last fifty years, has made truly gigantic strides towards the attainment of that objective. At the present time it has more than one billion people, some one-third of the human race, under its tyrannical domination and occupies some sixteen million square miles of the earth's land surface -- the largest number of people and the most extensive territory ever brought under a single control in all mortal history. To say that the Communist conspiracy, those who direct it and those who serve as a part of its diabolic apparatus, constitutes the most powerful and sinister threat to free men that the world has ever known is but to state a fact, a stark fact which America and what's left of the free world can ignore or minimize only at the cost of their very survival. Today there are some twenty-five nations completely under Communist control, and every other nation on earth is under its influence (many of them to a very high degree), including the United States of America. This land is blessed by Almighty God as surely no other land has ever been. The Communist conspirators will leave no stone unturned, nor rest content until they have enslaved or liquidated every single American who is not a part of their nefarious plot to subjugate the world.

So totally evil is the Communist conspiracy that there are some who believe it to be, quite literally, diabolical (of the devil,

satanic). Whether or not this is in fact the case, I cannot say, I do not know. But this I can say: If atheistic Communism is not diabolical in any literal sense of the term, it most certainly is the closest thing to it that has thus far appeared on a worldwide scale within the scope of my knowledge. It is completely amoral -- that is to say it is utterly devoid of morality -- and so will stop at nothing; it will employ any and every method to realize its objectives, however repulsive these may be to the sensibilities of civilized men. They feel that whatever furthers their cause is good and acceptable; whatever hinders that cause is bad and unacceptable, with no consideration given to morality or to moral standards. Expediency is their sole criterion. Anything goes as long as the aims and purposes of Communism are advanced. And so the Communist conspirators have ruthlessly murdered, starved, tortured, and unjustly imprisoned millions of human beings in country after country, to an extent unparalleled in all history. And so they will continue, if allowed, whenever and wherever they deem it expedient for their ultimate purposes.

And what justifies their total brutality as well as their total dishonesty? A Communist has absolutely no regard for truth in word or in deed. He is a consummate liar, skillfully trained by his mentors in the ways of Communist hypocrisy and deception, to speak and to act always for the best interests of the conspiracy he so faithfully serves and to which he is so thoroughly dedicated. The Communist quotation, "Promises are like pie crust, made to be broken," quite concisely conveys the idea, while Communism's all but "perfect" record of broken treaties down through the years should be more than ample proof that the word of a Communist is absolutely worthless.

First and foremost, however, among the several reasons for the strongest opposition to, and unqualified condemnation of, the conspiracy of Communism and, as I see it, the ultimate reason for its utter depravity, is the fact that it is militantly atheistic. Which is to say, it not only denies God but is unswervingly dedicated to the elimination of all belief in God, and to the extermination of all religions and religious institutions from the face of the earth. Not only is it godless to the core, altogether materialistic, and rejecting all belief in the spirituality and future life of man, as in the moral law, but it is fully committed to the abolition of all that inspires, teaches, and sustains such beliefs in

the minds and souls of men, and of all that provides for mortal man any means whereby he can worship God, any means which aid him in living a spiritual life and in working out his eternal destiny. There is nothing to which it is more totally dedicated, as its official documents and the statements of its leaders clearly show. The ghastly record to date proves this beyond question.

In what follows I limit myself to the churches in America, both because they are still free to speak out, expose, and oppose the Communist conspiracy and because the United States, still the most powerful nation on earth, is the one remaining nation that has the capacity, given the right leadership, effectively to implement the demands of an enlightened and aroused people for victory over that conspiracy. And so I ask: Where are the churches of America in this life-and-death struggle of our day against the militant atheism which is Communism? Where are the voices of the religious leaders of our land warning their people, exhorting them to acquaint themselves with the nature of this enemy that would destroy them, their homes, their loved ones, their churches and their country, and encouraging them to take courageous action against that enemy -- where are those voices? And especially, and for several reasons, where is the leadership of the Catholic Church in America in the fight against Communism? Yes, I well know that over the years the Catholic Church has been a staunch opponent of Communism and has very likely spoken out against it and condemned it more vehemently and more frequently than any other authority in the world. It was over one hundred years ago that Pope Pius IX so accurately described "that infamous doctrine of so-called Communism which is absolutely contrary to the natural law itself...and would utterly destroy the rights, property and possessions of all men, and even society itself." And in 1878 Pope Leo XIII minced no words when he called Communism "the fatal plague which insinuates itself into the very marrow of society only to bring about its ruin." And in 1937 Pope Pius XI wrote what has proven to be one of the most penetrating analyses of the nature of Communism and most authoritative condemnations of it ever penned -- his encyclical letter, DIVINI REDEMPTORIS, wherein is found the famous quotation: "Communism is intrinsically evil and no one who would save Christian civilization may collaborate with it in any undertaking whatsoever." And it was but three years ago that Pope Paul VI wrote his ECCLESIAM SUAM, in which he referred to atheistic Communism as "the

most serious problem of our time." All of which is so eminently true. But where is the implementation of all this to be found in the Catholic Church in America today? If Communism was the mammoth evil it has been declared to be by the various leaders of the Catholic Church one hundred or fifty or even thirty years ago, is it not far more so at the present time? Does it not here and now constitute a far greater danger to the world than ever before? Why, then, are not the clear and solemn warnings of the Popes for well over a century being heeded and acted upon today by the Catholic Church and her leaders in America?

The churches of America, the various religious bodies in the United States, with the rarest exceptions, have been, I contend, resounding and inexcusable failures to date in the fight against Communism. Communism is militant godlessness. It would completely destroy the freedom which is the God-given right of every human being as a child of God and would reduce the human race to absolute bondage. Through their press, then their schools, their organizations and societies, their pulpits -- the churches, their leaders and spokesmen and teachers and editors and columnists, ought to be in the forefront of the anti-Communist ranks, instructing their readers and their students and their congregations on the nature of Communism and teaching them the ways found most effective in combatting it and urging them to join and to be active in sound anti-Communist movements and organizations currently functioning on the American scene. We are witnessing today unprecedented undertakings in the area of interfaith cooperation among the churches of America but, in all of this, I have yet to hear of one attempt by those churches at united action against godless Communism!

The "Church of Silence" is an expression commonly used in reference to the churches in the Communist-controlled nations of the world whose clergy and members are the victims of Communist tyranny and enslavement. Yet, although their voices cannot be heard, many of these do, in fact, cry out against their oppressors and plead for help. Is not, then, the "Church of Silence" a term more accurately applied to the churches of America whose hierarchy and clergy are still free to protest and to oppose and to condemn the Communist conspiracy but who, to their shame, remain silent?

Yes, the churches of America, which could do so much to turn back and to defeat the Communist conspiracy, have been, by their inaction, dismal failures up to this point; a situation which, to my mind, constitutes one of the paramount tragedies of our day; which has been, and continues to be, a cause of tremendous disappointment, and disillusionment to so many sincere, well informed, devout members of those churches from coast to coast. And I do not hesitate to say that the greatest tragedy of all in this area, to my way of thinking, has been the failure of the Catholic Church in America to do the job in the fight against godless Communism which it is, or was, so singularly equipped to do. I believe it was the well-known former Communist, Mr. Louis Budenz who declared some years ago: "Against the policy and plan of the Soviet government... the Roman Catholic Church stands as the chief bulwark of civilization." I have no reason to doubt that his words were true at the time he uttered them. I do not consider them to be true today.

In relation to Communism, the Catholic Church in America has been gradually neutralized in the intervening years. Nor, in their continuing efforts effectively to combat the Communist menace, do I think that the members of that church can look for any real leadership from most of its hierarchy and clergy in the critical days ahead. In this, I will be delighted if time proves me to have been wrong.

But as deplorable and inexcusable as is the inaction of the churches of America towards that conspiracy which Senator Joseph McCarthy once described as "a conspiracy so infamous, so immense and an infamy so black as to dwarf any previous venture in the history of man, "far more deplorable and indeed condemnable are the many incidents of collaboration with Communist agents and supporters on the part of clergymen and church institutions and publications, which have occurred with increasing frequency in our land over the past few years and which continue unabated. How exceedingly tragic that those who, by virtue of the office they hold and the beliefs they espouse, are supposed to be champions of the rights of God and of man. They in consequence ought to be unalterably opposed to a conspiratorial system whose adherents are the sworn enemies of God and of human freedom. How very tragic that these men and women, of many denominations and religious persuasions, have seen fit to cooperate with, to support

and to lend respectability to the utterly vile and inhuman menace of atheistic Communism! Instead of exposing its deceits and the horrors it has perpetrated, instead of opposing it with all of the legitimate means at their disposal, clergymen (priests, rabbis, ministers) and religious have aided and abetted the advance of Communism, made futile attempts to reconcile its tenets with those of Christianity, and belittled and disparaged the efforts of those sincere, informed, and patriotic members of their congregations who sought their advice and encouragement and support.

Thank God, those dedicated anti-Communist Americans seem but seldom to have been dissuaded from their noble tasks by the indifference, the ridicule, and the antagonism they have been known to encounter from some of their clergy from time to time! If, God forbid, the satanic Communist conspiracy were ever to succeed in its plan to conquer our American republic, I would place the blame for that catastrophe, next to the American government and the press, upon the churches of America for their very substantial contribution in making that conquest possible.

As for examples of the collaboration and support given to the Communist cause by the clergy, religious, and church institutions and publications, there is no shortage of them. To give a few: There are the several thousand Protestant clergymen who have been, or who are, affiliated with organizations which have been officially identified as Communist fronts by Congressional committees and by the Attorney General. Some of these clergymen have been affiliated with anywhere from twenty or thirty to over one hundred of these fronts -- quite innocently of course! And there are the World and National Councils of Churches and their notorious and disgusting record of collaboration with atheistic Communism over the years. It is a source of much encouragement that more and more Protestant clergymen and their congregations are recognizing the National Council of Churches for what it is, and disassociating themselves from it and its nefarious activities. And then of course there are such "Reverends" as Martin Luther King and the "Reverends" allied with him. I have been asked, from time to time, if I thought Martin Luther King was a Communist. And my answer has been that I honestly do not know; I do believe that he has done a remarkable job to date for the Communist cause; and I do not think he could have done that job half as well were he known to be a Communist. And so

it goes among the protestant clergy. Again let it be stated for the record, however, that the overwhelming majority of the Protestant ministry are loyal Americans who are making an honest effort to serve God and their congregations according to the lights of their consciences. The several thousand to whom I have referred are but some three or four percent of the total. But on the other hand, when such a percentage represents thousands of men who, because they are clergymen, are in positions of more than ordinary influence, it should be a matter of grave concern to all Americans.

And I am sure the same can be said concerning the Jewish clergy. While the large majority of rabbis are undoubtedly men of God who are sincerely devoted to the pastoral needs and spiritual welfare of those whom they serve, yet they too have their share of "ultra-liberals" and Socialist and Communist dupes and sympathizers and "what have you." However, I will by-pass them, not because I have any fear that the Anti-Defamation League will "get me if I don't watch out," but rather because I would like to devote most of the remainder of the time at my disposal to the subject of collaboration with Communism in relation to that religious body which I know best, the Catholic Church.

In view of its structure, and organization, the size of its membership, and the undeniably strong influence its clergy have traditionally had with its members, the Catholic Church was in a particularly strong position to make a major contribution in the fight against the atheistic Communist conspiracy. And not having done so, that church, in my opinion, is far more deserving of criticism in this respect than are any of the others on the American scene. How often over the years have I heard the Catholic Church described as the great bastion against Communism. How often over the years, as I beheld the steady advance of the satanic Communist plague throughout the world and here in America, have I reassured myself that the Catholic Church would speak out and take action in due time, would rally her many millions of members, and would inspire and lead the world to victory against the godless and inhuman Communist enemy. But the hour is late; that inspiration and that leadership have not been forthcoming. Nor do I see any sign that it is likely to be forthcoming in the foreseeable future. The bishops and the priests have not spoken out.

Rare indeed is the Catholic pulpit from which an anti-Communist sermon is delivered. I have probably heard about more priests across the country talking from the pulpit about Christian Communism than I have heard of priests exposing and condemning the godless and murderous Communist conspiracy. There are pathetically few Catholic schools where a sound course on Communism is taught. No, that anti-Communist leadership from the Catholic Church in America never did materialize.

But something else did. We have witnessed upon the American scene over the past several years the sorry spectacle of the Catholic clergy, Catholic educational institutions, and the Catholic press aiding and abetting, in various ways and degrees, the cause of atheistic Communism, and furthering its power and influence across the nation. Despite the satanic nature of Communism, despite its abhorrent and unparalleled record of murder, enslavement, torture and deceit, despite the fact that it aims to destroy all religion and religious institutions, despite the warnings of Popes for over one hundred years -- the Catholic Church in America, through those clergy and schools and press to which I refer, has not merely not effectively opposed the Communist conspiracy but has, in fact, done much to promote that conspiracy and facilitate the realization of its objectives.

For example: Communist spokesmen, to whom truth means absolutely nothing, have been allowed to pour forth their lying and poisonous propaganda upon the campuses of Catholic colleges and universities across the country. The Catholic college role of "dishonor" to date, in this department, includes the following: Loyola University of Los Angeles, Santa Clara University (Calif.), St. Louis University, Notre Dame University, St. Vincent's College (Latrobe, Penn.), Cathedral College (New York City) and Fairfield University (Fairfield, Conn.). A few years back I myself would not have dreamed that the day would come when the Communist "masters of deceit" would actually be welcomed at Catholic educational institutions, and thereby given a "respectability" and an opportunity to be heard of which they are totally undeserving. Only Communism, I am convinced, can benefit from this type of thing and it is incomprehensible to me how those in authority can justify or even tolerate its occurrence.

As for the Catholic press, with a few notable exceptions its



anti-Communism is a pathetic thing to behold. Indeed, there are a number of Catholic publications in America today which would be more accurately described as pro-Communist. Seldom does one find in most Catholic publications any article adequately exposing any aspect of the evil of Communism, any piece informing and alerting its readers concerning the nature, strategy, tactics and objectives of Communism. By contrast, how often have I read therein articles ridiculing, belittling, and maligning anti-Communist organizations and leaders, and the dedicated efforts of sincere, intelligent, patriotic, actively anti-Communist Americans, so many of whom have been among the most devoted members of the Catholic Church for years. But even beyond this we have the case of a Monsignor Charles Rice who, in the Catholic paper of the diocese of Pittsburgh some months ago, wrote an article actually praising the Communist regime in Red China for the order and stability it had established there while, in the same article, writing in derogatory fashion of Catholic missionaries! He is the same Monsignor Rice whose picture you may recall seeing marching side by side with the "Reverend" Martin Luther King in the anti-Vietnam demonstration in New York City last April 15. That figures, of course!

And so, to give credit where credit is due, I do not hesitate to say that, all things considered, the Catholic press in America has made, and continues to make, a significant contribution to the Communist cause. As a youth I had been taught at home and in church and in the Catholic schools I attended to have a high regard for Catholic publications, to read them regularly, and to accept more or less as the "Gospel truth" what I read therein. Primarily because of the abominable failure of that press to tell the truth about Communism over the past few years, and because of the wretched treatment segments of that press have meted out to those wonderful Americans whom I knew who were giving so much of their lives in the fight against Communism, I have long since lost that respect and, as long as this situation continues, I for one refuse to support that press in any manner whatsoever. Again I note for the record that there are Catholic publications which are doing the job but they are very few.

I have no doubt that the overwhelming majority of the American clergy are men sincerely dedicated to the service of God and conscientiously striving to perform the duties incumbent upon

them in the particular area and work to which they have been assigned. But the fact is that there are priests in this country today who are aiding and abetting the Communist cause in one way or another, whether it be by their writings or lectures or sermons, or in the classes they teach, or through the organizations to which they lend their support. Could it be, that the Communist conspiracy has succeeded in infiltrating the Catholic Church in America? Yes, for several reasons, I think it could very well be, Some few years ago the head of The John Birch Society, after giving the background which prompted his statement, declared that, in his opinion, less than one-half of one percent of the priests of America were, knowingly or otherwise, promoting the Communist cause to some degree. I was seated next to him when he made the statement, in response to a question from the audience. I had no reason to disagree with him then and I certainly have no reason to disagree with that statement today except that I might now consider it to be a rather modest estimate! In any case there are priests in America today who have done and are doing a significant job for the Communist conspiracy. Whether any of them are, in fact, Communists, I do not know; but I do know that it is essential for the effectiveness of the work of the Communists in certain areas that their identity be unknown. It has been well said that priests do not become Communists but Communists do become priests.

Twenty years ago, on November 17, 1947, a judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Philadelphia, The Hon. Clare Gerald Fenerty, made the following statement at a Communion breakfast in Brooklyn, New York: "The only obstacles to world domination by Soviet Russia today are the potential military strength of the United States of America and the spiritual power of the Vatican and the Catholic Church." Such a statement most certainly expressed my conviction then and for many years thereafter. However, in reference to the Catholic Church, it is my firm belief that this is no longer true. What was once the most powerful bastion against Communism in the world has become but a shell of its former self. From an implacable foe of the militantly atheistic Communist conspiracy, the Catholic Church has, for all practical purposes, abandoned the very grave responsibility which it had and which it was so singularly equipped to carry out.

As a life-long Catholic, as a Catholic priest for twenty-three

years, were I called upon to state the one thing that has been the greatest disappointment of my life, to date, unquestionably it would be this: The inexcusable failure of the Catholic Church in America to take an unequivocal stand against the militant godlessness which is Communism, and courageously and perseveringly to implement that stand in any and every morally practicable way at its disposal! That it has not done so is incomprehensible to me and to innumerable Catholics and non-Catholics across the land! That it has not done so is, I firmly believe, one of the principal reasons for the steady and continuing advance of the satanic Communist conspiracy upon the American scene!

As I have so often stated in speeches and in writing, the real war today is not basically America against Soviet Russia, or the free world against Communism; rather it is in one very true sense, fundamentally, one of God against militant atheism, Christ versus anti-Christ, the forces of truth and justice and freedom and morality against the powers of collectivism and injustice and slavery and immorality -- concentrated in the diabolical scourge of the criminal conspiracy of Communism. And by every standard of morality and norm of logic that I have been taught, the churches of America ought to be in the forefront of that war. Whatever the reasons, they are not. How much longer will they remain silent?

"He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it." (Henry Thoreau) "To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men." (Benjamin Franklin) How long before the religious leaders of America protest? How long before they cry out in righteous indignation, and condemn loudly, and clearly the diabolical Communist conspiracy, warn their people against its steady encroachment, instruct them concerning its insidious nature, and urge them to wage prayerful, intelligent, courageous, and persevering warfare against it? How long before they raise their voices in condemnation of the despicable collaboration by their clergy with the Communist "masters of deceit" which has occurred here in America, in recent years especially, and which continues to occur? How long will religious leaders in America remain silent while brave men die in vain in "no-win" wars, and one-third of the human race live out their lives in chains and slavery under Communist tyranny?

There are today tens of thousands of Americans across the

length and breadth of this great land of ours who, knowing all too well the awful truth about Communism, are devoting a good part of their lives to the fight against it, earnestly and indefatigably striving, by every morally lawful means at their disposal, to turn back the Communist tide which would engulf them, their homes, their loved ones, their churches, their country and, indeed, the entire world. For if America goes down -- freedom will perish for all mankind! These good people are confident, as I am, that if they can recruit enough of the right calibre of their fellow Americans into their dedicated ranks soon enough -- and if God so wills it -- they are confident that victory will be theirs in God's own good time. And they have this confidence because they know that truth is on their side and that, if they work diligently enough to disseminate that truth as widely as possible, it will ultimately prevail. Nor do they have any illusions that the press of America or the American government, as presently controlled and functioning will be on their side; sad and bitter experience has taught them otherwise. But, hopefully, many of them still look to the churches of America for help and leadership and encouragement. Will that help and leadership and encouragement, at long last, be forthcoming? I continue to pray that it will.

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