

**A  
REPLY  
TO  
FATHER  
RYAN**

**By L. L. SHARKEY**  
President, Australian Communist Party

*Shelton*

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## PART I.

# The Truth About Spain

A recent addition to the large number of pamphlets issued by the Roman Catholic Church in their crusade against the Communist Party, and Communism in general, is one entitled "Dean Hewlett Johnson's 'Socialist Sixth,' A Commentary by the Rev. P. J. Ryan, M.S.C., D.D., D.Ph."

In this pamphlet I am attacked in the following terms, under the heading (P. 29) "Get the Catholics": "A special effort was made to win the support of Catholics. In France, Communist Leader Maurice Thorez issued a 'Manifesto to Catholics.' Almost simultaneously Earl Browder published his 'Message to Catholics' in America, and L. L. Sharkey, Chairman of the Communist Party of Australia, wrote his 'Appeal to Catholics.' It was fairly obvious that Moscow had called the tune and that the lackeys abroad were faithfully dancing to it.

"In Sharkey's pamphlet, we find the usual hypocritical pretence of friendship with Catholics, and a plea for their co-operation with Communists. Yet, like Thorez and Browder, Comrade Sharkey tries to introduce the familiar class-war tactics into the Church. He does this by striving to drive a wedge between the clergy and the laity; by painting the Communists as the real friends of the Catholic workers, and the Hierarchy of the Church as the instrument and the ally of capitalistic oppression. To the same end he revives all the discredited and dishonest Communist propaganda about the Church in Spain. He discreetly omits all mention of the orgy of torture and murder inflicted on the Catholic clergy and laity by the Spanish Reds and their Moscow masters."

Father Ryan has certainly "trode on the tail of me coat" in those paragraphs, and, without following his bad example in the use of such epithets as "lackeys," "hypocritical," "Moscow masters" and the rest of his repertoire, merits a reply on my part.

The Communists are not concerned with religious doctrines or theology, or whether the Catholic Church is better or worse than other religions, Christian or non-Christian, but with the political policies pursued by the Church leaders.

It is solely in the field of politics that I make this reply to Father Ryan.

Father Ryan accuses me of being "hypocritical" in my previous appeal for co-operation between Catholic and Communist workers. Communists want the unity of all workers, Mohammedans and Buddhists, as well as Catholics and Protestants. The Communists want the unity of the workers of all lands, irrespective of race or color, as well as of creed. There is nothing, therefore, "hypocritical" in a Communist stating the need for united action with workers who adhere to the Catholic faith. My "Appeal to Catholics" asked for a united front in the struggle against fascism. The Communists in every fascist-conquered land are still working for unity with the Catholics in the struggle for the overthrow of Hitlerism. Our sincerity in the endeavor to unite the whole of the democratic peoples in this struggle cannot be successfully challenged by Father Ryan or anyone else. The majority of Catholics in Australia are working men and women, and the Communists also want unity of action with them in relation to our common economic and political interests as workers, for the defence and improvement of working-class standards, wages and conditions, and for the election of working-class representatives to Parliament, and the winning of greater freedom for the workers as a whole. That is why the Catholic masses must act in co-operation with other workers upon an agreed-upon democratic programme. That is an obvious and simple fact.

The Catholic worker suffers from economic injustice and political oppression, unemployment, slums and wars, just the same as any other worker. The Communists are quite sincere, therefore, in pointing out to him that his ultimate escape from the evils that accompany the capitalist order lies in the establishment of Socialism, a new order that will end these evils by means of a planned economy. We Communists are quite sincere in pointing out this fact to the Catholic worker. That is my reply to Father Ryan's charge of a "hypocritical pretence of friendship."

Father Ryan asserts that I revived all the "discredited and dishonest Communist propaganda about the Church in Spain."

It is on this point, likewise, that Father Ryan bases his statement about driving a "wedge between the clergy and the laity."

Certainly, the Communists are opposed to the policy of the Hierarchy, and will continue to attack it in relation to Spain and similar questions. There can be no doubt that the Spanish Hierarchy supported Franco in the Spanish War. The Pope recently said that of all the heads of State, General Franco was the "most beloved" by the Vatican.

Historically viewed, the Spanish War was one of the opening rounds of the Second World War. The Spanish democratic republic was destroyed by Italian fascists, Hitler's Stormtroopers and tanks, Franco's fascist Falangists and his Moorish troops from Africa. It resulted in a victory for the fascist instigators of war. Only the resulting weakness of Spain and the opposition of her people prevented Franco openly joining the Axis. He gave the Axis submarine bases and other assistance against the Allies, and sent his fascist "Blue Divisions," estimated at 70,000 men, to fight in Russia.

What is the present condition in Spain?

Allow me to utilise the book of a non-Communist writer, "A Journey to Gibraltar," by Robert Henry, reviewed in the "S.M. Herald," August 28, 1943, as follows: "On to Spain he went . . . Franco's Spain; and nothing in the book is more poignant and abhorrent than some of his disclosures of the Falangist (Fascist) rule of Franco and his henchmen. The Civil War in Spain, he reminds us, had been over for three years. But was it over? Oh, yes, Madrid could look lovely in the sunlight, but Spain, he knew, 'was in the grip of the greatest political vendetta ever known in history.' And suggesting the keynote to Franco's rule, which will move all men, Mr. Henry continues: 'One million two hundred thousand Spaniards, of whom eight hundred thousand were intellectuals, languished in gaol, together with six hundred thousand women. These people, whose crime was to have obeyed their constitutional Government during the Civil War, were gradually being exterminated by firing squads. And, as one vendetta leads to another, these one million eight hundred thousand Republicans were, from behind prison bars, busy sowing the seeds of another revolution which they believed would prove even bloodier than the first. . . . If one sought below the surface one found a Spain writhing in agony. . . . And inasmuch as a Spaniard never forgets, one has almost the delight of feeling that one day, perhaps sooner than some people imagine, the wheel will turn full round again.'"

And here are more non-Communist exposures of Franco:

H. J. Greenwell, Baltimore "Sun" correspondent, who recently returned from Spain to England, says:—"The Spanish people are disillusioned, disheartened and extremely hungry. The poor who lost their homes in the Civil War are still lodged in wooden huts, and they look with considerable amazement at the restoration of the churches—incidentally built with convict labour—and at some of the houses which formerly belonged to the wealthy classes. When I was in Madrid, I was asked not to accentuate this point of view." Contrast between rich and poor strikes every observer. In a recent book published in America, Thomas

J. Hamilton says: "In few countries in the world is there such a grinding, soul-destroying hunger and such luxury for the favored of fortune." Even in food-growing villages he and his wife saw "children with emaciated limbs and faces like skulls gathered around the car."

Another writer, Gerald Bronan, states in his book, "The Spanish Labyrinth," that the Spanish prisons are still full of political prisoners, and the executions still go on. A million and a half people, he says, have to be fed on State charity. Plague and cholera have made their appearance. But among the almost universal want and destitution, a small class of war profiteers and absentee landlords, generals and Falangist chiefs, crowd the bars of the Palace Hotels and night clubs. One can only guess the reaction of the Spanish people to the news of the coming-out ball of the daughter of the Duke of Alba, Spanish Ambassador in London, who flew home for the event. Full accounts were published in the British press. A gossip columnist wrote: "The bar was nearly thirty yards long. In charge of it was Perico Chicote, recognised as the best cocktail shaker in Spain. It was calculated that if Chicote served drinks averaging £1 per head, the bar alone would cost the Duke of Alba £2000. And that, I am assured, is a modest allowance for a thirsty grandee dancing all night."

The veteran columnist, Hannon Swaffer, however, struck a more sober note: "While Franco and the rest danced all through night in a Ducal Palace, countless thousands who had fought in Spain the first fight against fascism languished in gaol, and millions went short of food. They say the party cost the Duke £10,000. It came out of the rents, once lowered by the Republicans, but now extortionate again, paid by the peasantry."

Spain is bankrupt. An interesting comment appeared, surprisingly enough in the Berlin technical periodical "Bankarchiv." Quoting from authoritative Spanish sources and statistics, and from speeches by Franco and Sorzano Dunor, the conclusion arrived at was that Spain was "economically almost annihilated." The areas under cultivation are "extremely restricted," and staple foodstuffs are scarce, particularly wheat and olive oil. Railway rolling stock has been reduced by nearly half. The export trade "does not function." Gold reserves are exhausted.

Mr. Philip Osner, a member of the Institute of British Engineers, recently back from a business trip to Spain, adds confirmation. Prices, he says, have gone sky-high. Part of the shortage of essential commodities is due to the "export to Germany" policy. In Barcelona, for instance, out of 700 textile mills, half are not working, and the goods produced by the rest are almost entirely for export.

Similar statements have been made in the House of Lords in England, on the starvation and slaughter of the Spanish people under the regime of butcher Franco, and the fact of 2,000,000 prisoners is verified from other sources.

I would like to put some questions about Franco and Spain to Father Ryan.

Does he agree with the suppression of Parliament, free elections and democracy in Spain?

Does he agree with the outlawing and destruction of the Trade Union movement of Spain?

Does he agree with the persecution and slaughtering of the members of the democratic political parties in Spain?

Does he believe that similar measures ought to be taken against democracy in Australia, when the majority of the people really assert themselves against their exploiters?

Support for Franco's Spain could easily imply the latter.

Already, the fall of fascism in Italy, and the weakening of Hitler are further undermining Franco. Symptoms of his approaching downfall are multiplying. A savage despotism, such as that of Franco, cannot exist in the post-war world. Does the Church wish to share in this downfall?

Ireland is also a neutral country in the world struggle against fascism, to the disappointment of workers of Irish descent, and all democrats the world over. How far is De Valera's neutrality influenced by the Hierarchy? And how far is the Vatican influenced by Franco, Marshal Petain and Vichy, the Italian fascists and similar elements in its anti-Soviet policy?

Why did the Hierarchy for years support the "Corporative State" of Mussolini-Franco, which is only a fascist "labor front," an enslavement of the trade unionists to the employer and the State?

Does Father Ryan remember the destruction of the workers' quarters in Vienna, with heavy artillery by the clerical Government of Austria?

These are political questions that Father Ryan might answer.

I am certain that the Catholic masses would oppose the Hierarchy's policy toward both Franco Spain and its hostility to the Soviet Union, if the true position were understood by them. Father Ryan can believe that this is an attempt to drive a wedge between the clergy and the laity, but the way out is to adopt a progressive anti-fascist policy, and to cease misrepresenting the Soviet Union. The Communists will then have no grounds for criticism of the Hierarchy. We would be the first to welcome the change.

On pp. 5-6 of Dr. Ryan's pamphlet, the following statement is to be read: "And they will remain discreetly silent about their Communist record of persecution and murder in every country in which they have gained, even temporarily, the ascendancy."

On page 30, Dr. Ryan excels himself in strong and uncharitable language as follows: "We therefore spurn the 'outstretched hand' of Communism. Reeking with hypocrisy, steeped in sacrilege, dripping with the blood of murdered Christians, it is a thousand times over the hand of Cain." Truly, a purple passage, Father Ryan!

Having read the above statements of Father Ryan, I then carefully re-read the pamphlet to find out just when and where the "murders" took place. It may astound you, reader, but Father Ryan did not produce one single murder! He did not even produce a case where a priest was sentenced to death in the Soviet Union, and the sentence carried out, despite his own loose use of the word "murder," and its continuous similar misuse in other Roman Catholic publications. Father Ryan quotes at some length the Official Year Book of the Catholic Church on what it alleges happened to the members of the Hierarchy in the Soviet Union.

While I am not prepared to accept the "Annuario Pontificio" version as being correct, yet it constitutes one of the best refutations I have come across of Father Ryan's allegations of murder of priests in the Soviet Union. It apparently lists all of them and alleges that some have been exiled, some imprisoned, but none executed, or, as Father Ryan perhaps would prefer to say, "murdered." He is to be thanked for publishing the refutation of his own sweeping statements in the pamphlet in which they are made.

Permit me to re-quote Father Ryan's quotation from the "Annuario Pontificio," at some length:

"The official year book of the Catholic Church, the 'Annuario Pontificio' for 1941, gives the following information about the Catholic Church in Russia.

"Of thirteen Apostolic Administrators in the country's ecclesiastical jurisdiction since 1926, eleven are in prison or exile, while information is wanting about the other two, and their place of residence is not known. The various dioceses of Russia were entrusted to Apostolic administrators soon after the Revolution, when the Communists refused to tolerate the presence of a Bishop. But even this provisional arrangement, it appears from statistics of all the dioceses, has not been to the liking of the Government.

"In the Archdiocese of Mohilew, four Administrators and one Auxiliary Administrator have been forced to leave the

country. The most Rev. Boleziao Sloskan, Apostolic Administrator in Mohilew and in Minsk, elected in 1926, was imprisoned on August 10th, 1927, then exiled to Siberia, and was last reported resident in Riga, Latvia. The Apostolic Administrator in Moscow, the Most Rev. Pieu Eugene Neveu, elected in 1926, could not be exiled because of his French nationality, but he was not permitted to remain in Russia, and is now in Paris. The Most Rev. Theophilus Matulanis, Auxiliary Apostolic Administrator in Leningrad, appointed in 1918, was imprisoned from 1923 to 1926, and again from 1929 to 1933, and is now reported in exile in Lithuania. In the same Archdiocese, the Most Rev. Vincent Ilgin, Apostolic Administrator in Kharkov, appointed in 1926, was imprisoned in December of that year, and then exiled. He has been in Lithuania since 1933. The Rev. Michael Jodokas, Apostolic Administrator in Kazan, Samara and Simbrisk, was imprisoned in 1929 and has not been released. In the Diocese of Zytomir, Mgr. Theophilus Shalski, Apostolic Administrator, and the Vice-Administrator, Mgr. Casimir Naskrecky, were imprisoned in 1926 and 1929 respectively, and have been exiled since 1932. The Rev. John Swiderski, Apostolic Administrator in the Diocese of Kamieniec, and the Vicar, the Rev. Alexander Wierzwicki, were imprisoned, the former in 1930, and the latter in 1932. Father Swiderski was exiled in 1932, but Father Wierzwicki, as far as is known, is still in prison.

"Two Administrators Apostolic in Tiraspol Diocese have been in prison since August, 1930. They are Mgr. Augustine Baumtrog, Apostolic Administrator of the Volga, and Mgr. John Roth, Apostolic Administrator of the Caucasus. Of the two Vicars and interim in this Diocese, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Demurof and Mgr. Carapet Dirlughian, nothing is known. They are respectively Vicar to the Apostolic Administrator of Tiflis and Georgia, and Vicar to the Apostolic Administrator of Armenian Catholics throughout Russia, the post of Administrator in both cases being vacant. These facts add to the picture of the Church's condition in Soviet Russia, which might be gathered from the fact that all resident Bishops have long since been removed from their Sees.

"Since the post of Vicar Apostolic in Siberia and that of Apostolic Administrator in each of the two sections of Siberia are vacant, as the Papal Year Book also shows, the six ecclesiastical jurisdictions of European and Asiatic Russia are left entirely without Ordinaries, and all the provisional administrative posts, with two possible exceptions, either have never been filled or have been vacated by the imprisonment or exile of their Administrators. In short, there is not a Catholic Bishop free in the whole nation.

"Only one priest is officially recognised by the Soviet Gov-

ernment, in the exercise of the Catholic ministry in Russia. He is Father Leopold, Braun, a Franco-American.

"One Franco-American priest authorised by the Government to exercise his ministry, from 110 to 150 priests of the Archdiocese of Hihlev and Saratov, ordained before the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, and now in prison or work camps; about 70 Polish priests deported in 1939-40, to the U.S.S.R., and since distributed among the reconstituted Polish Army, with 11 of them looking after the families of these soldiers. That, according to Rev. Joseph H. Ledit, S.J., in a statement made this year, is what constitutes the Catholic clergy in Russia to-day. Father Ledit, former professor of the Oriental Institute at Rome, and a recognised authority on the subject, is now at Iaval University, Quebec, Canada. In 1926 Father Ledit was sent to Russia by Pope Pius XI to investigate religious conditions.

"The Franco-American priest, Rev. Leopold Braun, is a member of the Assumptionist. Father Braun is now in Moscow, at the Church of St. Louis of the French, where he has been stationed since 1938. He is the only priest officially recognised by the Soviet Government for the exercise of the Catholic Ministry in Russia—he happens to be Chaplain to the French Embassy.

"There was also another Catholic foreign priest, Father Florent, a Dominican, but he is reported to have been killed at the beginning of the Russo-German war during the bombardment of Leningrad. Father Florent had replaced at Leningrad Bishop Amoudru, another Dominican, who lived in Russia before 1914. Bishop Amoudru once taught at the Dominican scholasticate in Ottawa. Since the departure of Bishop Amoudru, there has been no other known member of the Catholic Hierarchy in Russia.

"Since Polish troops have been fighting in Russia the Soviet Government has permitted 52 Polish priests to serve as chaplains with the Polish forces. Bishop Gawlina, Ordinary of the Polish Forces, recently visited Russia, and was granted exceedingly wide ecclesiastical and pastoral facilities by the Holy Father to help him to meet the important problems connected with his mission. This fact, and the news that there are now 52 priests serving as chaplains with the Poles in Russia, were given in a statement to the N.C.W.C. News Service in Washington by Mgr. Zygmunt Kacznski, chaplain to the Polish President, who recently flew to the United States with General Sikorski.

"Mgr. Kacznski states: 'The 52 priests who now enjoy freedom in Soviet Russia are all army chaplains, although they are permitted to minister spiritually to the civilian population of Poland deported into the U.S.S.R. in the course of the occupation of Polish territory from September, 1939, to June 22nd, 1941.'

"The number of Polish citizens thus in the U.S.S.R. is about 2,000,000, of whom 300,000 are soldiers.

"Not all Polish priests have been freed. According to the list presented by the Polish Embassy in Russia to the Soviet Government, some 150 are in the Solowiecki Islands in the White Sea. They have not yet been released, because there have been no communications with the islands during the winter. These priests have all been subjected to hard manual labour."

The question arises why are priests exiled or imprisoned, even if the statements of the "Annuario Pontificio" are rejected as insufficient evidence? In my youth, when I was a Catholic, before I had made practical acquaintance with the hardships of the working people under capitalism, before I had made acquaintance with the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and began to get a real, new, understanding of nature and society, I recall it used to be said that Catholics followed the Church in religious matters, but not in politics, and that the Church should not take sides in politics.

The Hierarchy in the Soviet Union evidently forgot that simple idea, and, like leaders of the Greek Orthodox Church, took sides with the former exploiting elements, who conspired to restore Czarism and capitalism. This brought them into conflict with the Soviet State, on purely political and not religious grounds. The Soviet people support the Socialist system, and will not allow anyone to assist their enemies destroy it. The members of the Hierarchy were exiled for this reason, and not because they insisted on saying prayers or practicing the rites of the Church. It can only be hoped that Father Ryan's belligerence against Socialism will not lead him into similar error, if Socialism comes to Australia in our time.

Certainly, he would not be allowed to tour the Soviet Union accusing the leaders of the Government and people of non-existent murders, in his lurid language, and branding them as "Cain." Neither would he be allowed to slander the Australian Government in such a fashion because it does not grant all the concessions to the Church demanded by the Hierarchy.

Father Ryan says "he discreetly omits all mention of the orgy of torture and murder inflicted on the Catholic clergy and laity by the Spanish Reds and their Moscow Masters."

The Communists, to the contrary, have often dealt with this allegation. The Communist Party of Spain was opposed to persecution of religious people. The Anarchists, who were strong in Spain, had a different view, and retaliated against the Church because of its alliance with the Moors, Hitler and Mussolini, against the Spanish Republic. The Communists are not responsible for the actions of other organisations. And it would

not be surprising if the people committed some excesses against the Church because of its line-up with their enemies. These excesses could be avoided, in the future, if the Church alters its political opposition to movements of the people. The whole policy of the Spanish Communist Party was to win the Catholics for the anti-fascist struggle, and not to repel them by atrocities against the religious.

Father Ryan "discreetly" refrains from mentioning Guernica and the atrocities by Franco and his Moors against captured Democrats, as well as making no mention of the hideous state of affairs in Spain at the present moment.

Father Ryan again fails, in his pamphlet, to give a single authenticated, concrete instance of alleged outrages by the "Spanish Reds and their Moscow masters" any more than he did in regard to the myth of the "murder" of Catholic priests in the Soviet Union. Is it the old story of flinging mud in the hope that some of it will stick? It will be noted that he defends Franco, the ally of our Axis enemies, and insults the Soviet Union, our ally, which has done so much to save civilisation from fascist barbarism. Father Ryan apparently is so worried over the soul of the people that he fails to notice what happens to their bodies under fascism.

## PART II

# Hierarchy is Anti-Labor and Pro-Capitalist

Dr. Ryan denies that the Hierarchy believes in capitalism.

Fortunately, an important witness can be called against him, in the person of Dr. Rumble, who conducts a question and answers column in the "Catholic Weekly."

In the issue of that journal of September 16th, 1943, he replies to a questioner as follows:—

### "THE A.L.P. PLEDGE."

"Bewildered," Summer Hill.

Q.: During the elections I was sent a leaflet which said that every member of the A.L.P. has to sign the statement: "I pledge myself to actively support and advocate at all times the party's objective—the socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange."

R.: That is true.

Q.: Can that objective be harmonised with Catholic social principles?

R.: Certainly not, if it be taken at its face value. If industry, production, distribution and exchange were completely socialised, personal rights to the ownership and use of private property would be violated, individual enterprise would be crippled, and economic dictatorship on the part of the State would be established; and Catholic principles would be so violated that no Catholic could in conscience support such a state of affairs.

Q.: If not, how is it that so many Catholic Labor men have brought themselves to sign that pledge?

R.: They do not take it at its face value. If the pledge be interpreted as meaning the socialisation of "every form" of industry, and of "all" the means of production, distribution and exchange, then they regard it as a chimerical dream, never likely to become a practical issue. And they certainly do not intend their own support of the Labor Party to include a guarantee



to work actively towards such an end. They interpret the socialisation pledge much more mildly, and intend only lawful applications of the theory. They certainly reserve the right to vote against particular measures which would violate social justice.

Q.: Do you think that Catholics are morally justified in signing such a pledge?

R.: Yes, since the wording of the pledge leaves itself open to various interpretations, Catholics are free to intend the sense they put upon it. I admit that it would be better were the objectives so worded as to exclude explicitly the extreme sense Communists would attach to it. And if there were any danger of such a sweeping application in practice, Catholic Labor men would be obliged to resist it, and use their influence to get the wording of the objective modified accordingly. But as things stand, they can intend a limited application of State ownership and control, work for that, and promote other lawful measures of Labor policy.

Q.: The words have to be noted that the pledge promises "active support and advocacy at all times" of the Party's objective.

R.: That does not increase the difficulty, so long as the Party's objective itself remains vague and undefined. Labor men themselves are not agreed as to what it involves. If it were brought up for discussion and definition, different groups of Labor supporters would fight for their different interpretations. During the election, Dr. Evatt spoke of the great development awaiting private enterprise in Australia after the war. He was not challenged by the A.L.P. with having violated the pledge to actively support and advocate at all times the socialisation of industry, production and exchange; nor was he conscious of having done so. And Catholic Labor men are as free as non-Catholic Labor men to interpret the objective in what they regard as a reasonable sense.

Q.: The wording of the objective does not suggest any restriction.

R.: I admit that it would be better if it did, but, at the same time, it does not positively exclude a restricted interpretation.

Q.: But even granted a restriction, is there any sense in which such socialisation could be defended?

R.: Yes. Catholic social principles permit State ownership of what can be called key industries and public utilities, as transport, the post office, water and sewerage provisions; or, for that matter, of any enterprises essential to the general welfare of the community, yet run inefficiently by private owners.

But nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution, etc., would be another matter. That would violate moral principles, and no Catholic could support it. And I am sure that Catholic Labor men would not be the only ones to protest against it and resist it. Many non-Catholic Labor men would join them in doing so."

Dr. Rumble's replies are both instructive and precise. He opposes Socialisation in any form, and states that interference with capitalist private property in the means of production "violates moral principles." If one believes in private ownership of the mines and factories, one has to believe in the hiring of wage workers to operate them, which means that these wage workers must have no real property of their own, otherwise they would not toil for others. The capitalist owners have to have profits, which can only be provided by the exploitation of the workers.

If you defend capitalist private ownership, then you necessarily defend capitalism and all that capitalism entails.

The advocacy of a number of minor reforms in nowise alters the situation, fundamentally. The Hierarchy thus defends capital against the objective of the Labor movement, Socialism, and by doing so is undoubtedly a prop of the present system.

While agreeing with Dr. Rumble that the Protestants and the atheists in the A.L.P. also sign the Socialisation pledge with the same "reservation," it is plain that Dr. Rumble is worried about the ethical aspects of signing a pledge to actively support an objective in which one does not believe and, I fear, that if Dr. Ryan caught the Communists behaving in such a way, it would only confirm him in his illusion about our "lack" of a moral code.

The A.L.P. is not a Socialist workers' Party, but a Liberal capitalist one, and has no intention of implementing a policy such as that outlined in the objective; Dr. Rumble's statement makes that only plainer to the workers.

The Hierarchy, however, goes further. It instructs and organises its more fanatical followers to fight against the Socialists within the trade unions and A.L.P. branches, and misleads them into opposing all manner of progressive proposals, merely because the Communists may support them; a case in point being opposition to industrial unionism which obviously strengthens the trade union movement, as well as many similar proposals. These groups fill the "Letters to the Editor" columns of the daily press with denunciations of Communism and specialise in branding nearly every progressive movement or measure as "Communist inspired."

Father Ryan makes the silly statement that the Communists promote religious sectarianism in the trade unions. We want to keep religious denominational squabbling out of the Labor movement, at all costs, as it divides the working class and is, therefore, a bosses' weapon. It is more a question of restraining those who are becoming hostile to certain Catholics, because of the reactionary role they are playing and who would, therefore, brand all the believers in the Catholic faith as "reactionaries." To the contrary, the overwhelming majority of Catholic workers are among the most loyal supporters and fighters of the Labor movement, and it is with them that the Communists want to establish the closest comradely relations in the common struggle against the exploiters of the workers.

Despite Father Ryan, the "outstretched hand" is, and will, ever remain, a cardinal feature of the Communist Party's policy towards the Catholic workers, because the unity of the workers is a weapon by which we can proceed to achieve the liberation of all of the toilers.

"It was not long before all power was in the hands of Lenin and a Central Committee of eighteen Commissars elected by the Soviets. Then there began a terrible time for Russia. Everything was to belong to the State, so all factories, land and everything needed for production was taken from the owners and made State property. The people were all like slaves, having to do whatever work was given to them to do. Churches, monasteries and convents were either destroyed or used for the purposes of the Party in power. Everyone who resisted was executed. The people working in factories or the land or anywhere else had no power. They could not call their souls their own. If they dared to object to what was done, they were cruelly tortured and shot." . . . "The Russians are still ruled by terror." . . . "During the first five years, about 1,700,000 persons were executed. Many of them were first tortured most cruelly. Not only priests, but all who dared to practice religion were openly charged with being against the Government and were executed." . . . "Children were taken by force from their mothers and put into State nurseries and schools, where they were actually taught to do what the commandments of God forbid. No wonder, then, that there were soon plenty of child criminals." . . . "They always have been made to work. They know that if they say or do anything against Stalin and his Party, they will be shot, and they may first be tortured." . . . "The rulers of Russia know that no State could exist unless it took as one of its guiding principles the commandment 'Thou shalt not steal.' Consequently, stealing is forbidden; and if Russians steal, they will be imprisoned or put to death. So Russians keep from stealing as long as they are afraid to steal."

Rather an objective way to teach history to children, isn't it? Yes, gentle reader, I can imagine your surprise when you learn that this fanatical slander of the Soviet Union is from a book used in the Roman Catholic schools at the present moment. Catholics, along with most Australians, are filled with admiration for the gallant Soviet people and their struggle to-day, and welcome our alliance with them as the guarantee of victory over fascism, and as one of the hopes for a better world in the post-war period. Yet their children's minds are being poisoned, in this detestable way, against the Soviet Union. How can these children, if such a terrible falsehood is forced upon their young minds, honestly support the Anglo-Soviet Treaty when they grow to manhood and womanhood? I feel that this kind of thing is not a matter for the Hierarchy alone, but it is the concern of the Australian community, and particularly the Labor movement, to oppose a teaching which contains such obvious dangers for the future, of rupture with the Soviet Union and, as a consequence, new wars.

When you add to this the continuous attacks upon the Soviet Union in the R.C. press and elsewhere, the broadcasting of the lies of the Trotsky-inspired Eugene Lyons, Krebs, Souvarine, Eastman and others, one is alarmed at the prospects of a new generation of anti-Soviet storm troopers being trained in our midst. And the significant thing is that there is not one single reference to, let alone condemnation of, Hitler and fascism.

The children are turned against the Labor movement of Australia as well. The capitalist is a harmless fellow: "Capital is what is saved to help people to produce more. Suppose Mr. Kelly saves £50, and puts it in a bank. The bank will lend it to someone who will spend it on buildings or machinery or materials or on the expenses of marketing. All those things are Capital." Just like that! No mention of rent, interest and profit at the expense of the toilers. "But capitalism in itself is not wrong unless a mean advantage is taken of the poverty of the workers." Many similar statements are made to prejudice the children's minds against anti-capitalist propaganda, with occasional statements to gild the pill, to the effect that the workers "should have good wages."

"Some people, called Socialists, think that a great deal of the misery caused by competition would be avoided if the State owned all the means of production, namely, land, machinery, banks, etc., and made all the marketing arrangements. But most people think that private enterprise should be helped and encouraged, and that people should be allowed to own land as they do in Australia."

So you see the Hierarchy not only defends the owners of industry against the Communists, but prejudices the minds of

the children against the objectives of the mass of A.L.P. and Trade Union workers who believe in nationalisation or Socialisation as well. The Hierarchy thereby sets itself up in opposition to the whole of the Labor movement and its ideals and plans. It is time that the whole working-class movement demanded that the Hierarchy confined itself to the teaching of religion and left politics to the political parties.

The book I have been quoting is entitled the "Child and the Communist," written by S. M. Dunstan Wilson. It has the Church's Imprimatur, and is used as a text book in the Roman Catholic schools. It is printed and published by Pellegrini's.

Dr. Ryan quotes a passage from the "Communist Review" of October, 1937, which refers to the numbers of "Irish Catholics" in this country, their splendid role in the fight for freedom, and their strong influence in the A.L.P., and which says that every ally is needed in the struggle against fascism and for peace, freedom and bread.

The article stresses the need for united action with the R.C. workers, and our desire to win the class-conscious elements among them to the Communist Party. This arouses Dr. Ryan's wrath anew. He sees it as some involved "tactic." The statement is a clear one on the policy of the Communist Party. We make no secret of the fact that we want to recruit as many as possible, and to work with the whole body of Catholic workers for the aim of the Labor movement. It is true that the mass of Catholics in Australia are workers, mainly of Irish descent.

No country or nation, perhaps, has suffered more from capitalism and capitalist imperialism than Ireland and the Irish. The commencement of the rule of the capitalist class in England dates from the Great English Revolution, led by Oliver Cromwell, which, although historically progressive, marked a new period for Ireland. Cromwell undertook the re-conquest of Ireland and conducted a war of extermination against the Irish. From that time onward, a capitalism developed in England, the Anglo-Irish war received a new impulse and became more intense and deadly, as Eire was transformed into the "first colony" of English capitalist imperialism.

Not only was there unparalleled military violence and suppression, but the Irish industries, language and culture were largely destroyed. The seizure of the land and the exploitation of the people reduced the peasants to a diet of potatoes, and when the potato crop failed in 1840, 1,000,000 of the peasants died and 2,000,000 emigrated. Imperialism reduced the population of the island from more than 8,000,000 to less than 4,000,000. The Dublin rising of 1916, led by James Connolly, and the atrocities of the "Black and Tans" wrote a new chapter in this age-old struggle for the land and freedom in Ireland. The struggle

has not yet ended, and will continue until the working-class establishes socialism in both England and Ireland, only then can the two peoples fully co-operate, on an equal basis for the welfare of both.

Karl Marx once commented that the existence of the Irish, a non-Anglo-Saxon, Celtic people (whom Engels described to Marx, after his visit to Ireland as nearly resembling the Italians to whom they are closely related) "contradicted in the eyes of the English bourgeois the laws of political economy." The capitalists believed they should be exterminated, and the country made into a food and raw material appendage of English industry.

Such is the basis of the modern "woes of Ireland," for which capitalism is to be thanked. The effects of "the curse of Cromwell" have been graphically described by Marx and Engels, the founders of Communism. Engels, writing to Marx, after he had visited Ireland, said:

"Characteristic of this country are its ruins, the oldest from the fifth and sixth centuries, the latest from the nineteenth—with every intervening period. The most ancient are all churches; after 1100, churches and castles; after 1800, the houses of peasants. The whole of the West, but especially in the neighbourhood of Galway, is covered with these ruined peasant houses, most of which have only been deserted since 1846. I never thought that a famine could have such tangible reality. Whole villages are devastated, and there among them lies the splendid parks of the lesser landlords, who are almost the only people still living there, mostly lawyers.

"Famine, emigration and clearances together have accomplished this. There are not even cattle to be seen in the fields. The land is an utter desert, which nobody wants. . . .

. . . "The country has been completely ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850 (for in reality both the wars and the state of siege lasted as long as that.) It is a fact that most of the ruins were produced by destruction during the wars. The people itself has got its peculiar character from this, and despite all their Irish nationalist fanaticism, the fellows feel that they are no longer at home in their own country. Ireland for the Saxon! That is now being realised. The Irishman knows he cannot compete with the Englishman, who comes with means in every respect superior; emigration will go on until the predominantly, indeed almost exclusively, Celtic character of the population is all to hell. How often have the Irish started to try and achieve something, and every time they have been crushed, politically and industrially. By consistent oppression they have been artificially converted into an utterly demoralised nation."

This struggle left a lasting impression on the Irish, their "peculiar and passionate character," Marx said, resulted from living for centuries "in a state of siege."

And it was only the revolutionary struggle of the Irish that relieved this hellish state of affairs, and one of its greatest leaders was the Marxist, James Connelly! Marx paid the greatest of tributes to this national struggle when he wrote that of all the races who came face to face with British imperialism, the Irish alone could never be conquered.

And the greatest fighter in the working-class movement of his day in England and in the First International, that means, among the workers of Europe and America, for the independence of Ireland was—Karl Marx, the founder of Communism, who pointed out also that Irish independence was a pre-condition for the freedom of the English working-class itself.

The descendants of the Irish emigrants, who were forced out of their native land by imperialism, are to-day part and parcel of the great new nations, Canada, the U.S.A. and our own Australia. In the building of the new lands they have played a tremendous part, and have always been in the foremost ranks in the struggle for liberty. It is but necessary to recall Peter Lalor and the ten Irishmen who died at Eureka Stockade in regard to this.

The Catholic Church, to an extent, functions as a "nationalist" organisation in keeping alive Irish traditions. When the Church tries to line these workers up with an anti-democratic monster like Franco, it is doing violence to the Irish tradition of liberty and democratic struggle.

Many men of Irish race have already become internationally famous as leaders of the revolutionary socialist movement of the working class; men like Foster, Chairman of the American Communist Party, while two of its greatest martyrs and leaders were the never-to-be-forgotten James Connelly, leader of the Dublin Revolt in 1916, and the heroic Tom Mooney, who suffered lifelong imprisonment on a framed-up charge, but who stood steadfastly to his revolutionary principles. And Jim Connell wrote the "Red Flag."

The Communist Party of Australia numbers in its ranks a very high percentage of the descendants of the Irish emigrants, all fighting for a free, prosperous, socialist Australia and, as a corollary, for the independence of all oppressed nations, including Ireland.

### PART III

## The Communist Attitude to Morals and Religion

I quote Father Ryan:

"In order to understand the current propagandist pretence of Communists and fellow-travellers that Communism is not opposed to religion, or that there is true freedom of worship in Russia, it is necessary to know something of the Communist morality of expediency.

"Here is what Lenin has to say on the subject: In what sense do we deny ethics, morals? In the sense in which they are preached by the bourgeoisie, a sense which deduces these morals from God's commandments. Of course, we say that we do not believe in God. We know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords and the bourgeoisie all claimed to speak in the name of God, in order to protect their own interests as exploiters. . . . We deny all morality taken from superhuman or non-class conceptions. We say that this is a deception, a swindle, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists. . . . We say that our morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. We deduce our morality from the facts and needs of the class struggle of the proletariat. . . . A morality taken from outside human society does not exist for us; it is a fraud. For us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class struggle." (Religion, Little Lenin Library Series, Vol. VII, pp. 55-56.)

"It will be noted that Lenin (a) explicitly denies the existence of God; (b) repudiates the Ten Commandments, one of which forbids lying and another murder; (c) subordinates morality, i.e., right and wrong, to the interests of the proletarian class struggle.

"What does this subordination of morality to the class struggle mean? It is identical with the anarchial doctrine that the end justifies the means.

"Any method or means is good and lawful as long as it leads to the attainment of the end desired, namely, revolution

and Communist dictatorship. In practice, it comes to this, that the Reds will literally stop at nothing in order to gain their ends."

Father Ryan draws exaggerated and distorted conclusions from what Lenin wrote, and in regard to Communist conceptions of morals and ethics generally. The conception of "the end justifies the means" has no place in Communist ethics. It is attributed to the Jesuits; something that our critic fails to mention.

In the above quotation from Lenin, Father Ryan says Lenin repudiates the Ten Commandments, and he words it in such a way that his readers can draw the conclusion that Lenin approved of lying and murder as a general rule of conduct. This is a piece of literary sharp practice; what Lenin repudiated was anything supernatural about the Commandments or morals, without in any way "supporting" murder.

Lenin, as all other Communists, was irreconcilably opposed to the Terrorists and to individual assassination as a political weapon. Murder, of course, is punished under the Soviet Law, the same as in any other civilised country. Lenin it was who declared that the simple rules of social conduct (morals) have been known for thousands of years; the problem is to put them into practice. Lenin sharply repudiated sexual looseness or licence.

A simple instance will suffice to show what Lenin meant in regard to morals and the class struggle; in every strike, the strike-breaker is lauded by the employers and their press and spokesmen as a "hero," as a representative of all the virtues the strikers are alleged to lack. To the workers, on the other hand, the strike-breaker is a "scab," the most immoral creature on earth. That is a simple illustration of the irreconcilable difference in the approach to morals on the part of the working class and the capitalistic class. What is good for the one, is bad for the other, and a refutation of Father Ryan's standpoint that there is a general, fixed system of morals that apply to all conceivable conditions. And the fact that cannibalism, chattel slavery, polygamy and witch-burnings were once "moral" shows how moral ideas change as society advances.

In regard to prostitution, rape, murder, etc., Lenin's view is much the same as that of Father Ryan, except that Communists believe that crime arises in the main from slums and poverty, from bad social conditions, and can be eradicated by a better social order; that crime is not the work of an evil power called the devil, but the product of one called "capitalism."

When Marx, in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party," wrote that the worker regarded morality as a "bourgeois pre-

judice" it was because, he explained, of the conditions of working-class life under capitalism and, particularly, because the capitalist talk about morality is a sham, "behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests."

Those who often glibly use the phrase "bourgeois prejudices" in regard to morals in an effort to show that the Communists have "no morals," neglect to add that it was sham bourgeois morals, behind which the capitalists exploit and oppress the workers, and not ethical conduct in general, to which Marx was referring.

It is the old trick of tearing a sentence from its context and conveying a quite opposite meaning to that the writer had intended. It does not mean, therefore, that the worker is a liar or an assassin because he regards a particular moral code as a defence of class interests.

Another favorite trick of this description is the distortion of what Lenin said in "Leftwing Communism," when writing about the tactics of the enemies of the Communists to keep them out of the trade unions, that they would use the police and the courts and would insult, bait and persecute in order to suppress Communist activities. Under fascism, detection meant torture and murder. In these circumstances, Lenin wrote that "it is necessary to be able to withstand all this, to agree to any and every sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to all sorts of stratagems, manoeuvres and illegal methods, to evasion and subterfuge in order to carry on Communist activity."

The latter part of this statement has been widely circulated to show the "depravity" of the Communists, while the part referring to persecution has been suppressed by our enemies. There is nothing to it, except that Lenin considered it moral to resort to "evasion" and "subterfuge" to combat persecution on the part of our enemies. There is no general endorsement of "immoral" conduct, as a rule of life, in the way our enemies misrepresent it.

In Germany, for example, Catholics are fighting an illegal struggle in defence of their faith, against the Hitlerites. Should they, when the Gestapo butchers begin to suspect them of such activity, tell the Gestapo just what their activities, and who their associates are, or should they take Lenin's advice and protect their cause by resorting to "evasion and subterfuge" to put the fascists off their trail? I think reasonable people will agree that morality demands that they act as Lenin suggested. A morality which would hand fighters for liberty over to fascist torturers would be the "morality" of a sheep, too stupid to evade or resist the butcher. That is the real meaning of Lenin's statement. And is not the whole campaign of the ruling-class in their press, over the radio, their speeches and in a thousand

other ways, based on wholesale lying and slander? Do not they resort to frame-ups and persecution? When is Father Ryan, who is so concerned about the morals of Communists, going to write a pamphlet exposing and denouncing this system of lies and slander, aimed at destroying the workers' movement.

The Rev. Ryan has much to say about Communist "lying." Let him answer these questions:

Are the Communists lying when they point to the growth of slums that have accompanied the development of Capitalism?

Are we lying when we point out the poverty and unemployment that beset the masses under Capitalism?

Are we lying when we expose the growth of crime?

Are we falsifying when we point to the destruction of the land by erosion, etc., as a result of capitalist methods?

Are we lying when we explain that the falling birth-rate is due to the insecurity of the people under Capitalism?

Were the Communists lying when they declared that wars, revolutions and economic crises accompanied Capitalism and its competitive and exploiting character?

Has not the history of the world since 1914 been the history of wars, economic crises and revolutions, with growing unemployment and insecurity?

How, then, does Father Ryan justify his statements about "lying" Communist propaganda? And is not the Soviet Government, led by Communists, one of the few governments that has always fulfilled its word in regard to international obligations and treaties entered into by it with other States?

What grander, what nobler moral ideal can man have than this one given us by Lenin:

"Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him to live but once, he must so live as to feel no torturing regrets for years without purpose. So live, as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past; so live that dying he can say: 'All my life and all my strength were given to the finest cause in the world, the liberation of mankind.'"

That, surely, is one of the noblest and most unselfish ideals ever placed before the human race, conveyed in those few simply worded sentences from the pen of the immortal Lenin.

The priestly mind finds it difficult to understand that moral codes do not necessarily depend upon a religious faith, upon a system of rewards and punishments in a hereafter.

The priestly mind cannot understand that most of the crime to-day is due to faulty social conditions, and can be practically

eliminated in a higher state of society; this mind attributes it to the innate "wickedness" of man.

It cannot conceive of a morality such as that put forward by Lenin, based on unselfish service to mankind, for the advancement of human society and the betterment of the lot of the people.

Father Ryan, in his efforts to discredit the "Socialist Sixth," says that the Dean of Canterbury is not a Christian who is competent to write on Christianity. From the point of view of Father Ryan, no doubt the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly and the General of the Salvation Army are likewise heretics. The Dean, however, holds an important post in one of the major Christian denominations, so there must be not a few Christians who dispute Father Ryan's estimation of the Dean.

However, the Communists will grant Dr. Ryan his point in regard to Dialectical Materialism when he said that the Dean was incorrect in believing that it is non-atheist. Dialectical Materialism is a thorough-going scientific philosophy of Nature and Society, and excludes supernatural agencies or intervention in the laws of Nature as established by science, that is, it includes atheism. Marx and Lenin made that abundantly clear, and no Communist would dream of denying it. The mechanical, bourgeois Materialism of the 19th century, we can agree with both the Dean and Dr. Ryan, is dead, and the Dialectical Materialists have played a leading part in killing it. But Dialectical Materialism is still Materialism, and it is robustly alive and growing, is on the eve of coming into its own. The Soviet scientists who have already made outstanding contributions to scientific thought and practice, are Dialectical Materialists. Professor J. B. S. Haldane and his group in Britain, and similar groups throughout the world, confirm this. Millions of Communists accept Dialectical Materialism as their philosophy, as the theoretical basis of Marxism.

Karl Marx wrote that the religious world is the "reflex of the real world," and "religion is the sigh of the hard-pressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, as it is the soul of soulless circumstances. It is the opium of the people."

Lenin elaborated this core of the Marxian standpoint in "Socialism and Religion":

"In modern capitalist countries the basis of religion is primarily social. The roots of modern religion are deeply embedded in the social oppression of the working masses, and in their apparently complete helplessness before the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour cause a thousand times more horrible suffering and torture for ordinary working folk than are caused by exceptional events, such as war, earthquakes, etc. 'Fear created the Gods.' Fear of the blind force

of capitalism, blind because its action cannot be foreseen by the masses—a force which at every step in life threatens the worker and the small business man with 'sudden,' 'unexpected,' 'accidental' destruction and ruin, bringing in their train beggary, pauperism, prostitution and death from starvation—this is the tap-root of modern religion which, first of all, and above all, the materialist must keep in mind, and if he does not wish to remain stuck for ever in the infant school of materialism."

Primitive man was oppressed by the forces of nature, fires, floods and droughts, etc., and having no scientific knowledge, and a poorly developed economy, he worshipped Nature, which also could reward him with good seasons and comparative plenty, with sunshine, as well as "punish" him with tidal waves and volcanoes. In the more developed societies, class oppression and poverty gave the mass basis to religion, "the sigh of the hard-pressed creature." It became their "opium," because it induced the belief that the joys denied them in this world would be theirs after death.

It therefore deadened the struggle against the oppressors. "The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish, when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellow men and to nature." (Marx. P.91, Vol. I. "Capital.")

This concept of religion on the part of the Communists completely destroys Father Ryan's thesis that the Communists think they can destroy religion with "fire and sword." To the contrary, it makes it plain that the Communists realise that only the improvement of the material conditions of the masses, the development of knowledge of nature through scientific investigation and the construction of a just and reasonable social order can cause the "religious reflex" of the real world of poverty, slavery and war, to "vanish." To attempt to uproot it by force would but add to the strength of religion.

There remains the attitude of the Socialist State to the Churches and religion. Lenin defined the principles upon which the State in the Soviet Union acts in this sphere: "The State must not concern itself with religion; religious societies must not be bound up with the State. Everyone must be absolutely free to profess whatever religion he likes, or to profess no religion, i.e., to be an atheist, as every Socialist usually is. There must be no discrimination whatever in the rights of citizens on religious grounds. Even particulars concerning the religion of citizens on official documents must be completely done away with." (Lenin: "Socialism and Religion.")

Do we accept workers with religious convictions into the Communist Party?

Yes. Lenin answered the question as follows: "If a priest comes to co-operate with us in our work—if he conscientiously performs Party work, and does not oppose the Party programme, we can accept him into the ranks, for the contradictions between the spirit and principles of our programme, and the religious convictions of the priest could, in these circumstances, be regarded as a matter in which he contradicts himself, as one which concerns him alone. We must not only admit into the Social-Democratic (Communist) Party all those workers who still retain faith in God, we must redouble our efforts to recruit them. We are absolutely opposed to the slightest affront to these workers' religious convictions. We recruit them in order to educate them in the spirit of our programme, and not in order to carry on an active struggle against religion." ("Socialism and Religion.")

This brief summary of the teaching of Marx and Lenin refutes Dr. Ryan's view that the only relation Communists have to religion is that of a persecuting force.

Dr. Ryan is entitled to believe that our theory that religion is an outcome of material, social conditions, and that it will wither away as these improve, is incorrect. The future will determine who is right and who wrong in this regard, but neither our views on religion nor the religious convictions of sections of the working class are in any way a barrier to co-operation in the fight against the injustices and oppression of all workers, irrespective of their opinions, by the capitalist class, and to put an end to all oppression and persecution for either religious or political opinions.

The latest reported developments in regard to religion in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are a refutation of the main claim of the R.C. Hierarchy that religion is being forcibly abolished there. These developments are important and indicate a new phase in the relations of the Churches and the Socialist State in the Soviet Union.

A Patriarch and Holy Synod have been established with the consent of the Soviet Government. This would be equivalent to the Pope and the College of Cardinals in the Roman Catholic structure. Dr. Garbett, the second highest dignitary of the Church of England, has been visiting Moscow, and the following report appeared in the "S.M. Herald":

#### **"MOSCOW'S OPEN CHURCHES. HUGE CONGREGATIONS."**

"Between 40 and 50 churches are open for worship in Moscow, and others are being re-opened," says the Archbishop of York, Dr. Garbett, according to a message from Moscow.

"All anti-religious propoganda in the Soviet Union will be discontinued," he says.

"A delegation from the Russian Orthodox Church has accepted Dr. Garbett's invitation to visit Britain.

"Dr. Garbett says: 'I am convinced that there is the fullest freedom of worship in Russia, and I have every reason to expect it to continue after the war. M. Stalin, being a great statesman, recognises the power of religion. I never experienced such huge congregations as here in Moscow.'"

What is the basis of this new development? The Orthodox Church in Russia has supported with vigour the struggle of the Soviet people against the fascists, it has called for the defence of the country against the barbarous invader, and called for a struggle against fascism everywhere. Socialism has been built successfully, the whole life of the people has been transformed on to a higher basis, as the Dean's book so vividly shows (incidentally, Dr. Ryan showed his lack of concern for the material, economic and cultural improvement of the Russian people by never once mentioning in his pamphlet the Dean's presentation of this), and this constitutes the basis of the invincible unity of the people behind the Soviet Government. Mr. Churchill remarked that no other government could have retained the confidence of the people in circumstances in which the Soviet was placed in the early phase of the Hitlerite invasion. The victory over the fascist hordes, which now is being rapidly consummated, further strengthens the Soviet Government and Socialism. Socialism cannot be overthrown, either from within or without. Realising this, the Orthodox Church has ceased its struggle against the Soviet Government and Socialism.

This allowed the Soviet Government to give more freedom to the Church, once it was satisfied the heads of the Church were no longer enemies, seeking its overthrow, and the restoration of the capitalist system. Communists and Christians can now work freely together for the building of the ideal society upon Soviet territory. The "outstretched hand" has been accepted. Dr. Ryan says that the Communists want to introduce "class struggle tactics," dividing the "clergy and the laity" into the Church. The developments in the Soviet Union show that this is not so. We do not object to Catholic, or any other workers retaining their religion. We ask them not to be transformed into the instruments of capitalism by the reactionary policies of Hierarchies. The Communists have no desire for a struggle with the Hierarchy of the R.C. Church. The latter are the aggressors.

While the Hierarchy continue to enter into politics, against the essential interests of the working class, we will have to

criticise them and expose these politics. Catholic democrats themselves should strive for a change in the policy of the Hierarchy, and an end to its unconscionable attitude to the Soviet Union. Finally, the Communist Party points out the need for the united front of all workers, Catholic, Protestant, A.L.P., and Communists, for the defence of the workers' interests, for the improvement of wages, hours and conditions, and for the ultimate liberation of the toilers from unemployment, exploitation and war, which can only be achieved in a Socialist new order of society.



gress. The last election took place in April, 1941; Charekhchan, the Archbishop of the American Eparchies, Ovsipian (New York) and the Archbishop of Rumania, Zagrebian, and others were then elected to the Council.

"All the foreign Eparchies of the Armenian-Gregorian Church (Rumanian, Bulgarian, Greek, French, Egyptian, Syrian, Iranian-Indian, American and others) are sub-ordinated to the Catholicos of Achmiadzinsk, who is the head of all the believing Armenians.

"On the territory of the U.S.S.R. there are nine acting Armenian-Gregorian Churches.

"There are:—

Synagogues .....	1,011
Rabbis .....	2,559

"In Moscow there are three synagogues, of which one is the Great Choral Synagogue, which has its own administration.

"Up to 1941, religious books under 414 different titles were issued in the U.S.S.R. by the various religious bodies."

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