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Aspects of Latin American Revolutionary Theologies

Only a few years ago, political science professors used to start their courses on Latin America with a joke about banana republics and revolution. Americans¹ can never understand why Latin Americans so often depose those who are "legally" in charge of their government. It is true that Latin America has yet to find a type of government that fits its needs. Neither capitalistic democracy, nor dictatorial or democratic forms of socialism seem to answer Latin American needs. The word "revolution" in the North American mind is always connected with a certain kind of violent fight. Camilo Torres Restrepo, an idol of Latin American revolutionaries, is the picture of a revolutionary in the Northamerican mind. But there are not too many theologians who went as far as Camilo, who stopped ministering at the altar and became a guerilla revolutionary, hoping to turn society upside down² and to establish justice, after which he returned to the ministry of the altar.³ Camilo is very incisive in his statements about revolution and Christian responsibilities.⁴ Latin Americans think of revolution as a radical change, but revolution is not the process which brings the change. Latin

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¹ *American* is used to designate the inhabitant of both North, Central and South America; *North American* usually refers to people from both the U.S.A. and Canada; *Northamericans* is a designation reserved for the people of the U.S.A., almost a synonym for "gringo."

² Revolution is the act of revolving society (or anything else); it will result in an alteration of positions. Instead of turning society upside down, revolutionaries would say they are trying to turn society right side-up.

³ In declaring his revolutionary position, Camilo Torres quotes Matt. 5:23-24; leaving his offering before the altar, he said he would return when his brother would not have anything against him. Camilo Torres, *Frente Unido*, #1, August 26, 1965; quoted in *Paz e Terra*, #1, p. 266. This quotation is often used and by very different authors.

⁴ Camilo's statements about revolution are quoted by almost everybody who writes about him, especially the following: "It is necessary to take the power from the privileged minorities in order to give it to the poor majority. This, if it is done rapidly, is the essential characteristic of a revolution. Revolution is the way to have a government which will give food to the hungry . . . *revolution is not only permitted, but it is obligatory for the Christians . . .*" (Italics mine). Even Camilo's title, *Revolution, a Christian Imperative*, (Brussels: Pro Mundo Vita, 1964), scares some conservatives; Camilo speaks about revolution as the only way out, and tries to justify his revolutionary attitude from four aspects; viz, as a Colombian, a sociologist, a Christian and a priest; As a Christian, "because the essence of Christianity is love of neighbor and only through the revolution can the welfare of the majority be obtained". Camilo Torres Restrepo, Personal Document #18, quoted by German Guzman, *Camilo Torres*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1969, p. 64.

Americans long for a change that will eradicate injustice and exploitation, and bring fair opportunity for all, yet revolution is only accomplished when all men are integrated into a completely new social system whose final form we cannot even imagine yet.

Latin American theological reflection tends to be more practical than speculative. That is why ideologies, pragmatism and existentialism (when understood as the emphasis on the existential problem over against the ontological question), and biblical realism (when understood as a form of Hebrew thought divested of philosophical speculations) appeal so intensively to Latin American religious minds. Usually Latin Americans do not have enough patience to deal with what is not closely related to immediate realities. Whether he is a conservative or "liberal", the Latin American theologian always thinks that theology is closely tied up with history and sociology. Indeed, he sees sociology as a branch of history, because he understands history as whatsoever happens in time and space. It is only from this perspective that one can understand the Latin American concepts of temporality (present, past and future), and eternity (being a prolongation of the future, but still somehow connected with Man's present life.)

Conservative and liberal theologians differ as to how, when and why they should get themselves involved in society, as well as with whom they can ally themselves. But all of them are very much concerned with Man's involvement in this world. All segments of Latin American theology are not only concerned but also dissatisfied with today's society. All prescribe the need for some radical change in society. The accusation that the conservatives are subjective and individualistic is a false interpretation stemming from imposing models of analysis of German pietism, through some Northamerican distortions, upon Latin American forms of religion, a mistake made even by Latin American natives who owe their theological formation to Euro-American professors. To be sure, the conservative who is labelled an individualistic is often more sociable than the so-called liberal. The conservative very often belongs to a closed society which somehow relates to the greater society. He considers himself as a part of a small group which has tremendous responsibilities towards society in general. His individuality is to be understood in relation to his response to God, in the sense that nobody can do it for him, except he himself; he speaks of a communion with God from whom all other forms of communion stem. He also thinks of his responsibilities towards society as an individual. He usually does not think the Church, as a body, has the right to make any statement in reference to social evils. The individual, as a member of the Church, should do that. Many a so-called liberal is withdrawing from the smaller closed society (e.g. from the church as a denomination or congregation), because he understands that he belongs to the greater society. Since society in general is impersonal and disintegrated he finds himself alienated, although, ideally he is in communion with all.

Politics, as a part of the historic-sociological phenomenon, is viewed

by one segment as a possible tool to bring about changes (some even think of it as the only tool), thus the Christian's involvement in it becomes mandatory. Other segments see it as the most putrid social institution, having as its ambition the eternal control of power. The conservatives consider the redemption of political institutions to be next to impossible, an absolute impossibility, indeed, from the human point of view. One segment accepts the possibility of creating a political system that can be fair and promote justice, taking care of the unrighteous, and providing equitable situations for all men of good will. Other segments see systems as an outcome of what men are. To them a system always depends on what men themselves are. Systems don't make men, men make systems.

A NEW THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING; A PROPHETICAL READING OF GOD'S ACTIONS IN HISTORY

Any analysis of Latin American society will show that, if Christianity has penetrated society at all, it has done so only superficially. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, which was introduced into Latin America in Counter-Reformation times, has not only always been on the defensive—as some Roman Catholics would have you believe—but it has also been allied with oppressive forms of government and has many times been identified with the oppressor himself. To begin with, the Roman Catholic Church was allied with the Spanish oligarchies and has taken both material and “spiritual” advantage of that alliance. Ever since then it didn't matter who was in power, the Roman Catholic Church was always found on their side! This segment of the Christian church is now realizing that it has “mirrored the European church, uncritically borrowing her theology, her institutions, her canon law, her spirituality and her life style.”⁵ Some Roman Catholic theologians are discovering that this brand of Christianity that they tried to implant in Latin America never really penetrated society because it was inadequate to face Latin American problems. Transplanted from an extremely different environment, unable to meet the needs of the people, this outmoded form of Christianity is being considered as an obstacle to social changes urgently needed in Latin America. Many Roman Catholic theologians are beginning to understand that the role of the church is not powerfully to dominate the masses and dictate their way of life, and that salvation is not to be equated with being ritually baptized. They are realizing that salvation relates to problems of “poverty, violence and the task of building a new society with its own intrinsic values.”⁶ They are now beginning to discover the this-worldliness of salvation implies the task of humanizing man and the community to which he belongs.

⁵ Gustavo Gutierrez, *Between Honesty and Hope: Documents from and about the Church in Latin America*. Issued at Lima by the Peruvian Bishop's Commission for Social Action. Tr. John Drury. New York: Maryknoll Publications, 1970, p. xxi. Later cited as *Honesty and Hope*.

⁶ *Honesty and Hope*, p. 18.

Both Roman Catholics and Protestants are now realizing that they misunderstood the meaning of conversion. Obviously, conversion requires changes. Missionary Protestantism understood that change in terms of substituting Northamerican culture and puritanic ethics for those of the land which served as a mission field. To become a Christian was confused with adopting Anglo-Saxon customs, as understood by Northamerican missionaries. This kind of Christianity deculturized Latin American religious people. Theological studies were reduced to nothing more than a rehearsal of Northamerican theology by Protestants, and of a Spanish inquisitorial way of looking into doctrines by Roman Catholics. Theology has never appealed to Latin American minds, because neither Protestant nor Roman Catholic theological approaches were adequate to Latin American situations and problems. A clergyman passes his theological examinations to get out of the seminary. Later on, he reads the Bible if he is a Protestant, or he reads devotions and the Missal if he is a Roman Catholic. The layman has no time to waste with theology. On account of this, theological reflection was almost non-existent; it was often reduced to surveying the so-called positive (orthodox) results of theological activities from the past. Theological reflections among Protestant conservatives used to be reduced to certain glimpses from Paul, Augustine, Luther-Calvin, mediated through Turretin and made into a hand book by modern teachers of theology. A little more emphasis, though, was given to exegesis. The Roman Catholic conservative line still keeps very close to a superficial appropriation of Augustine in a Thomistic fashion, being more Thomistic than Augustinian, reflecting the post-Trent Roman Catholic intransigence. Thus Latin America has experienced an inquisitorial type of Christianity.

This new theological movement intends to revolutionize Latin American theology, and offers theological bases for revolutionary social action. Although it boasts of being a genuine Third World theology, it has not yet been liberated from theological imperialism. In essence it is supposed to be a socio-economic-political theology, but its socio-political analysis is in many instances imported. In many cases it is still one of those having the trade mark: "Made in U.S.A." The Roman Catholic movement, for instance, receives influence through CICIP,⁷ which is supposed to be a place open to free dialogue, but which only brings people who espouse their views. It is true that CELAM⁸ is having a tremendous impact on a small minority in the Latin American Roman Catholic Church, but they are still dependent on Papal encyclicals and are controlled by the Vatican. The Medellin Documents, for instance, have been considered the most important accomplishment of Modern Roman Catholicism in Latin America. But the Medellin Documents were really imported from Northern Europe, and it is said that most of the clergy, even those involved in CELAM, do not really

⁷ CICIP—Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program, Washington, D.C.

⁸ CELAM—Conference of Latin American Episcopate.

understand them.⁹ Speaking about revolution and violence, A. Bezerra de Melo comments that "the greater part of the relevant literature comes from Europe and the United States. The literature coming from Latin America is to a very large extent due to European or American authors who are living there, or lived there, or who have at least been there."¹⁰ It is true that he comments later on that "the relative silence of the Latin Americans at the moment . . . is to a very large extent due to the fact that these discussions have already taken place in Latin America . . . and have been left behind".¹¹ But no serious material has been published, and whatever has been published was done by people who owe their education to countries other than Latin America. Most of the revolutionary Protestant theologians have been influenced by M. Richard Shaull. It is always emphasized that he was a missionary in Colombia for ten years, and lived ten years in Brazil. But again, as a foreigner, supported by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, he never experienced the anxieties of the ordinary man. He always lived in certain circles, who usually admit to having learned from him. So he was never there to learn, but always to teach. Certain forms of criticism that his disciples make of the Brazilian Church, for instance, reflect Shaull's criticism of the American puritanism, if not Paul Lehman's criticism of German pietism. That is true, both in reference to the theology of preaching and Latin American Protestant behavior. It is true also that some segments of Latin American Protestants have copied puritanistic forms of behavior, but the criticism always fails to account for "Brazilian" idiosyncrasies. Indeed, all Latin Americans considered by Northamericans as theologians are so considered because they epouse certain Northamerican trends of theology. To be considered a "theologian", one has to be affiliated with a "system".

Most of the Protestant revolutionary theologians preach love and *koinonia* but leave the church; argue against capitalism and the bourgeois style of life, but have the best cars and houses, and stay in the best hotels. As will be mentioned later on, they are lured by Marxism, but dream like the "Kapitalists". Many leave the church ministry,

⁹ Cf. Charles J. Fleener (of St. Louis University), *The Catholic Church in Contemporary Columbia: Reactionary, Reformist or Revolutionary?* Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, in Atlanta, Ga., Oct. 29, 1971.

¹⁰ *When All Else Fails: Christian Arguments on Violent Revolution*. Philadelphia, Pilgrim Press, 1970, p. 39. Sometimes it seems that some European and North American theologians need a proper *Sitz im Leben* to support their opinion, so they suggest it to Latin America, then take it over again and develop it. That seems to be the case of Rene Laurentin, *Liberation, Development and Salvation*. N.Y., Maryknoll, 1972. (Originally published in France in 1969.) The book is really on development, not liberation or salvation. The author gives less than a page to Manuel Larrain, and once in a while mentions one Latin American, but he is based on Lebret, the Encyclicals and "French Theology." The book even gives the impression that some papal encyclicals are "made in France", e.g., cf. pages 27 and 45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

mainly because the church can't give them the so-called decent salary (which is in any case a bourgeois concept). Although they are defenders of the working class they cannot suffer to have communion with the common people, and they try either to become a college teacher or a campus minister. Most of the contradictions, however, stem from the actual situation of Latin America itself. Latin America is a contradictory world (some would say, with Bonhoeffer, an absurd world). Most of these theologians come from a conservative background, so they rebel against it, but are still tied to the bourgeois concept of happiness as having all the material goods of this life. *Mutatis mutandis*, they are the Pepsi-generation, as Stokely Carmichael calls the white liberals in this country. The point of view of these people, though, is that they are learning in the process itself; solutions will come after the experiments, contradictions are part of the process, and they will be eliminated gradually. No revolutionary ideology can be thoroughly consistent while in the process of formation. Consistency is required only when the new system is adopted. But if a "new system" is "adopted", a "new" revolution will be necessary.

In the past, and even presently, the Church has compromised itself with the established social order, and because the Church has some advantages of such relations, it usually defends the status quo. One of today's Latin American revolutionary theological presuppositions is that God is acting in history. It is understood as a prophetic task, since it requires discernment of what might be God's actions. (Most of the time, however, we are inclined to believe that God is involved in those causes which we identify as our own). This theological reflection requires recognizing the signs of the times, thinking along new lines, and working for renewal. Theology should be involved in the task of creating new realities. It is an attempt at "discovering the way in which Christ is already carrying out the salvation plan that embraces all".¹² The eschatological aspect of this theology is not only futuristic, but is already present. It is a prophetic eschatology which views the fullness of time as already here, in germ, at least. The recreation of the world has been irrevocably decreed, and the process has already begun. The consumation will be when everything is re-created in Christ.¹³

ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

According to certain theological presuppositions quoted before, God has already decreed the re-creation of the world. This re-creation is somehow considered salvation, and is related to problems of poverty, justice and equity. By definition this kind of theology has to be involved in society, because the re-creation of society is the work of salvation or redemption of man in its wordly feature. An unjust society, as we have now, isn't the will of God for man. Man, who was created

¹² *Honesty and Hope*, p. 100.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 101. Roman Catholic theologians relate this interpretation to *Gaudium et Spes*, sec. 39.

in God's image, has been de-humanized. Thus the reconstruction of this world implies a task of humanizing man and the community of society in which he lives. What changes must occur? What's to be changed? Everything that de-humanizes man has to be changed. At this point the economic phenomenon should be considered, because according to revolutionary currents of thought, nothing has reified man more than the question of property, labor and human needs. Criticisms have been voiced against revolutionary theologians accusing them of knowing next to nothing of sound economic principles. But the principles of economics are precisely the ones being called into question here, because modern society is based on capitalistic principles which make economy an end in itself, instead of a device in man's service. Indeed, man is sacrificed to build an economy which is possible only by exploiting the working class. Systems of wages, concepts of private property and other economic principles have to be revolutionized, i.e., have to undergo a radical change. In this case, church and theology cannot be silent in the face of problems like hunger, but have to protest against the injustices of the system of distribution of nutrients. Food distribution cannot be tied up with the amount of money one possesses and can use to pay for it. A more responsible and just process has to be found, by means of which the hungry human must be fed regardless of whether or not he is capable of producing anything. Besides, "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." By what right do the rich people assemble the edible and nourishable products of nature, depriving other people of them?

Doubtlessly, Saint Basil was a Marxist¹⁴ and probably paid by the Communists! All criticisms made of Basil are possible only from the modern capitalistic point of view. It could be remembered that technology has taught us how to store goods to prevent rotting. This only shows that our society now can afford to be more selfish than prior societies; one more reason why the basic principles of this society have to be changed. The *haves* many times blame the *have nots* for their laziness. But what about those who don't have, just because they were born too late? Somebody had already grabbed his portion. Or else it could be said that this is a society of free enterprise and competition, so let the best man win, may the fittest survive. This is a good philosophy for the winners, but not for the losers, and the great majority of our society is made up of losers, of unskilled, disqualified, disadvantaged people. Revolutionary theology is trying to express in modern language what was once expressed differently by the Old Testament prophets in terms of God's concern for "the poor, the fatherless, the widowed", i.e., those who cannot provide for themselves.

In this framework a radical agrarian reform is prescribed. In certain regions of Latin America the arable land belongs to a very small minority, just because, as Basil said, "they were the first to lay their

¹⁴ Quoted in *Honesty and Hope*, p. 7.

hands on it." Of course the problem is much more complex than redistributing land. Even if fair redistribution were possible, things would return to the same situation if the present systems prevail. The poor, even if he had some arable land, could not support himself while he grows his crops. He would end up selling his crops before the harvest. And because he is the one making the offer, he would have to sell it for a low price. The capitalist would store the goods and sell them when the price was high. The same system of exploitation would be in effect.

Emphasis is also given to labor over capital. Doubtless this principle will have some similarities with certain types of Marxism. The social-ethical principle here strives for a new kind of humanity which does not honor money accumulated in the hands of the rich. It considers labor "as infinitely superior to money".¹⁵ Labor is considered as a service rendered to mankind, and every one has the duty to offer all he is for the benefit of society. So it is hard to see how he can accumulate service, except for when he can no longer render any service, and society becomes responsible for him. Some theologians coming from Marxist countries advocate the possession of their own labor by the workers themselves. They say that "if this does not happen, reform is fruitless."¹⁶ Higher salaries are not enough. Workers are becoming aware of the fact that work forms a part of the human person. To buy or sell one's work is a form of slavery. This line of thought, which tries to make the worker proprietor of his own labor, still seems to be thinking in capitalistic premises. It looks as if it is trying to make the workers proprietor of their own labor, to increase their bargaining power (i.e., to sell their products for a better price) and that reduces them to modern slavery. The concept, however, of labor as more important than money is a legitimate concern of revolutionary theology.

Since economic forces do rule modern life and society, a radical change or revolution is mandatory for the whole economic system. Most of the unjust situations stem from the economic system, so it is urgent that this system be overthrown and a radically new one be created which can do away with injustices. This is one of the essential parts of the re-creation of a new world for which the Church is called into action.

A GRUDGE AGAINST CAPITALISM

Almost every article or statement of Latin American revolutionary theologians has a protest against the evils of capitalism. The main reason is that capitalism de-humanizes people by making the economic factor the goal of life. People are successful only when they fit into the system. If machinery proves to be more economical than human labor, it replaces man. There wouldn't be much objection to machinery and technology if a more just way of distribution of the product were found.

¹⁵ *Honesty and Hope*, p. 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

But the idea that the product should be accumulated as the private property of a few, while a great majority is needy, is the greatest moral fault of the system. Accumulation of goods or money is possible only when some people are expropriated. To quote Basil again, they put themselves, up as "the owners of what belongs to all, goods that they have expropriated for themselves, simply because they were the first to lay their hands on them".

Capitalism has been repudiated because "selling on the market is not intended as a service to humanity, but in order to achieve a gain, which is called profit."¹⁷ The true purpose of capitalism is to search for profit. Since it does not take love to one's neighbor and service in consideration, it becomes anti-Christian or, at least, a-Christian. Thus the church should produce a revolutionary theology in order to denounce capitalism as anti-Christian. Gonzales-Ruiz explicitly affirms: "When seen in its essence, . . . capitalism must be considered by Christian morality as something that is intrinsically perverse in its structure."¹⁸ From this perspective, any Christian church within a capitalistic system, if not a "protestant" church, is an apostate church. The church cannot accept the moral evils that stem from the system. In other words, a church that is content in preaching salvation of souls, like most of the pietist and revival movements, and does not attack the social evils, has ceased to be a Christian church. Marx's critique of religion as the opiate of the people, not only comes from a similar historical juncture, but also applies to the so called Christian church of our day. Some Latin American revolutionary theologians consider academic studies in theology and some forms of critical and philosophical activities, as an evasion of the immediate tasks we are called to perform. "Theologians" have to exercise their minds in some abstract field that has nothing to do with real life, because they cannot risk their connection with the system. Capitalism is considered as an atheistic form of materialism. *Atheistic* is used here in the philological sense, i.e., meaning without God (not necessarily against God as in philosophical materialism, except that capitalism dehumanizes man, while God's will is his humanization, in this sense capitalism goes hand in hand with philosophical materialism). Capitalism is atheistic and inhuman; i.e., it not only ignores God, it also hurts man. It is indeed considered as a sin against both the second and eighth commandments, because the capitalist's god is profit, which he robs from the worker and the needy. The indictment of capitulation under capitalistic bribes should be aimed not only at the church (as an organized denomination), but also at college, university and seminary professors, and their so-called theological communities, which live in an abstract world of ideas, hiding from the fight.

The exploitation of imperialism is considered from a double per-

¹⁷ J. M. Gonzalez-Ruiz, "Christianity and the Socialist Revolution", in *When All Else Fails*, p. 77.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

spective: internal imperialism (or colonialism), which refers to the exploitation of certain areas of the country by the industrial segments of the same country, as well as the exploitation of the working class by the rich; and external or international imperialism (or colonialism), which refers to the exploitation of the poor nations by the big powers. Not only capitalistic nations, but also communist powers are indicted. They are seen as exploiters of the nations of the Third World. A nation of the Third World has no bargaining power. Its raw material is sold at an insignificant price—usually established by the big nation—while the refined product is extremely expensive. In many instances a nation of the Third World has to buy a refined product, even if it does not need or want it. The sale is imposed upon it as part of the contract. Even communist nations deal as “Kapitalists”, when they trade with the Third World nation.

Good will loans are considered as capitalist devices to push another form of trade. Lara Braud calls attention to the fact that “in 1962 Colombia received a long-term loan from the Alliance for Progress amounting to \$150 millions. That same year, because of a fall of prices, Colombia lost \$400 million.”¹⁹ There are many people in Latin America who believe that relief programs and the Alliance for Progress are Northamerican devices to sell indirectly their surplus to the underdeveloped countries, and that both capitalist and communist developed countries are simply trying to make satellites out of the countries of the Third World.

Even Pope Paul VI, in *Populorum Progressio* 26, warns the world against the international imperialism of money. Accordingly, Third World revolutionary theologians are glad to incite certain forms of nationalism which will react against such forms of colonialism. Of course, external colonialism is possible only because some people of the Third World themselves make deals with powerful nations for personal gain and let them “bleed” the underdeveloped nations.

Roman Catholic theologians warn against the errors of atheistic Communism, but warn also against “the materialistic roots of capitalism”, and insist that “the people of God must be taught not to oppose human betterment in the name of anti-communism.”²⁰ Some Roman Catholic theologians regret that “the Church has tolerated capitalism . . . which is hardly in conformity with the moral code of the prophets and the Gospel.” They rejoice in the appearance of another social system that is less at variance with the moral code of the Bible. One of them states that “authentic socialism is Christianity lived to the full . . .”²¹

It should be recalled that Latin American revolutionary theologians classify themselves as a segment of the Third World, which can pro-

¹⁹ Jorge Lara-Braud, *Our Claim on the Future; A Controversial Collection from Latin America*. N.Y., Friendship, 1970, p. 16.

²⁰ *Honesty and Hope*, p. 40.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

visionally be defined as "that part of the world which is exploited." The Third World considers itself as exploited by the big powers of both left and right, but the nations of the right have historically been the greatest exploiter. In comparing left and right, it has been noted that 60 percent of the world production comes from capitalistic countries.²² Socialism, however, has its flaws, too, and the suggestion that socialism is the best way to overcome underdevelopment may be only apparent. But the suggestion still remains that the U.S.A. as the most developed capitalistic country sets the most serious problem for humanity, on account of its tendency to imperialistic expansion.²³ According to this line of thought, capitalism keeps on struggling to maintain the Third World in an underdeveloped stage, in order to have both a market for its finished goods and a source of raw material to feed its technological industry. Manufactured goods are ever increasing in price, while the basic products are bought for less and less. Needless to say that the balance of prices is always determined by the rich nations. Here is where one can see the immorality of certain business laws like that of "supply and demand". Since the rich can always wait a little bit more, the poor still come to offer his products; so the rich will always establish the price.

CAN LATIN AMERICA'S SALVATION COME FROM A MARXIST SOCIALISM?

It is no secret that most of the Latin American revolutionary theologians, even Roman Catholics, lean toward Marxism. Even when they find Marxism at fault, they still think Marxism is far better than any kind of capitalism. In some instances Marxism seems to be used as a synonym of socialism, but most know how to detect different kinds of socialism. Marxism offers no religious problem to most of these theologians, because Marxism is considered as a socio-economic theory. Any element of philosophical atheism that may be detected among either socialist or communists, even if such an element is found in Marx himself, does not perturb these theologians, because they say that such beliefs have nothing to do with economic theory itself. In comparing Marxism with capitalism it is observed that capitalism is a form of *atheistic materialism*, while Marxism is said to be a form of atheistic humanism. Both disregard God (atheistic = without God), but capitalism is materialist and inhuman, it puts profit above man; Marxism is presented as humanist, placing man above profit or material interest. Because capitalism is materialist, based on making profit, it exploits and so dehumanizes man. Because Marxism is humanist, it places man as the objective goal, it subjects the economic interests to

²² Albert Paul Lentin, "The Stages of the Revolution in the Third World", in *When All Else Fails*, p. 133.

²³ Following the line of reasoning espoused by Lentin (See note 22).

the interests of man. It becomes a form of humanization, thus closer to Christianity than capitalism.

Who is Marx? Do Latin American revolutionary theologians understand Marx? It wouldn't be a surprising fact, if sooner or later some critic or philosopher came out charging that Latin American revolutionary theologians do not understand Marx. That wouldn't change anything. Revolutionary theologians do not feel compelled to follow Marx in every detail. They usually speak of younger Marx, as the Marx from whom they have learned. This "Marx" is more an economic theory, viz, that man is superior to money, labor is superior to money and no social class has the right of exploiting another; everybody has the right to a decent way of life; there are some human rights that belong to all human beings; nobody has the right to take for himself that which belongs to the people; private property is begging the question itself. The important things for them are such principles that they have learned from Marx and somehow adapted to the Latin American Reality.

Most of these theologians believe that some form of socialism is much more consistent with Christianity than capitalism. It is wrong though to accuse this group of theologians of being communist. Christianity requires some kind of social organization or system, where there is justice. Socialism emphasizes the system opposed to individualism, and talks about justice for all. There are many statements made in this line of thought by this group of theologians. The bishops who wrote "A letter to the People of the Third World", adopted the opinion of Maximus IV Saigh that authentic socialism is Christianity lived to the full, in basic equality and with fair distribution of goods.²⁴ One author after commenting that development occurred both in China and Cuba concludes: "These two [countries] are also the only ones who have 'taken off', if I may use a term dear to economists".²⁵ The implication is that only socialism has proved able to help underdeveloped countries stand on their own feet. Later on the same author states: "It is quite impossible to find a single example in either Asia, Africa or Latin America of a country that has achieved a harmonious development by following the free play of capitalism."

This statement can no longer stand unchallenged, because Brazil has doubtless reached the "take-off" point, and is experiencing a tremendous development under a military dictatorship with a taint of democracy, and based on capitalistic principles. Brazil's development is much greater and faster than that of Cuba. It has to be kept in mind though, that Brazil is much richer in natural resources and has been the most attractive field for investors not only from the USA, but from European capitalistic countries also. The stupendous progress is noticeable in industry, commerce, education, agriculture, etc. Everything seems to indicate that a new era has dawned for Brazil. Many hail it as the

²⁴ *Honesty and Hope*, p. 7.

²⁵ Lentin, *When All Else Fails*, p. 136.

beginning of their economic liberation. The military coup d'état, designated as the revolution, occurred in 1964, some five years after the Cuban revolution, and the situation seems much better than in Cuba, in all senses: more bread, more jobs, more goods and more freedom, in spite of the "tortures" which seem to be a reality. Cuba up to now has not been able to impress the rest of Latin America, except for the fact that most of the countries want the United States out of their way. The Brazilian system is providing social security, health insurance and retirement for all workers. Their laws for protection of the workers are much better than American laws, and under an honest military regime, they are working. This leads one to ask whether the problem is only capitalism/socialism, or, are there other factors in the making of a just society? The only other time when Brazil experienced real progress, and did something for the poor, the workers and the ordinary people, was when Getulio Vargas took over as a dictator for a period of fifteen years. Getulio terminated the privileges of the politicians and put them out of business. So has today's Brazilian government. This government is leaning harder on people who are seen as immediate oppressors.

The so-called revolutionary, however, opposes the government of Brazil on account of the lack of freedom, and because the government is repressive. But the method has been the same in socialist countries. A revolution is successful only if it eliminates objectors. That is the way in Russia, Red China and Cuba. And there is no doubt that there is much more freedom in Brazil than in any one of these three countries. It is true also that organized crime and banditism took advantage of the situation and tried to look like liberating movements. But this does not efface the fact that the military government has been repressive in trying to keep their revolution going. There are, for instance, some elections and other political activities, but whatever menaces the national security, from the military government's point of view, has to be over-ruled and suppressed. There has been repression, but much less than in socialist countries. Lately, the so-called "terrorists" have not found supporters among the ordinary people for their causes. Internally, the country is getting rich, while the people are poor. Some take this as a necessary sacrifice, others resent it. But the situation of the poor has improved tremendously. Agrarian reform is no longer an issue as it was in the early sixties. Among the causes of failure of the Alliance for Progress, it has often pointed out that those in charge of distribution were not faithful to their responsibilities: they were dishonest. It seems the present form of government in Brazil has corrected many evils of this kind. Elimination of tax evasion, a great problem in South America, has been one of the objectives of Brazilian military government. People now are paying taxes. The system might still be unfair, but the government has improved, not only in collecting taxes, but also in applying them for the benefit of the people in general. Even

so, the revolutionaries still protest against repression and mal-distribution, and still disagree with capitalism.

The capitalistic progress in Brazil seems to have disarmed the revolutionaries. Fighting for man's dignity, they emphasized the need of the ordinary man to become part of the decision-making process, i.e., each man has to become an active participant in society. This is, of course, a utopian dream which cannot exist in the so-called democratic society where the people are supposed to exert power. All the people cannot be directly involved in determining their direction toward the future. They elect their representatives, who indeed become their rulers and formulate policies which express the interests of certain minorities, but not the people's opinion. Besides, in a pluralistic society there is hardly any consent of opinion. Socialistic societies are usually dictatorial in form of government. The individual is made to act or function primarily for the benefit of "the state". But who's going to determine what is good for society? Thus the ordinary man isn't really part of the policy-making class. A democratic socialism has yet to become a reality. Then again, in which sense can power be exerted by the people? In which sense is the word "people" used here? Is it used collectively or distributively? Only in anarchism can each individual be responsible for every decision pertaining to himself. But anarchism is possible only if man does not live in society. Otherwise the conflicts of interest would require some form of agreement, organization or arbitration. Or else it would require an absolute moral and spiritual perfection of man. Sociologically speaking, this is a utopian dream, unless one wants to adopt apocalyptic concepts and acknowledge the possibility of the millenium.

Another aspect of man's dignity is seen in making provision for his needs, giving him an equitable share for the needs of his body. (The concept "body" here is closely related to biblical thought, as the outward expression of one's self in this terrestrial and temporal life.) In other words, man's dignity is manifested in acknowledging and respecting his human rights (whatever they are). The first steps in that direction seem to have been taken by the capitalistic Brazilian system of government.

Prima facie, it seems that the revolutionaries have lost their reason for fighting. Indeed many of the young revolutionaries don't know what to say, although they keep on opposing the Brazilian form of government. They don't know what to say because the government has started giving the people many of those things the revolutionaries were demanding; hence the terrorists are no longer finding support for their causes among the ordinary people. People are becoming satisfied with what they are getting, and with promises of better times yet to come. It is hard to argue with the facts!

This progress, however, doesn't really nullify opposition to the system, because it ignores the question of exploitation. The material progress is due to the usage of technological industry, and it has been

possible only because of the riches of Brazilian natural resources. Only a small percentage has been distributed with the majority, the greatest part of the profit has been kept by the rich minority. It is understood that the international imperialism of money (mostly Northamerican) and the oligarchy which governs Brazil—either politically or economically—have expropriated the common people. This politico-economical oligarchy is looked upon as capitalistic “Uncle Toms”. Thus Cuba is far behind in progress not only because it is poorer than Brazil in natural resources, but also because the Cubans have refused to let themselves be exploited by international capitalism. They are at least keeping their natural resources for future generations. In other words, when capitalism provides material benefits for the ordinary people, it does it only to keep people from asking what prices are they paying for those benefits. It is the old Roman policy of *panem et circenses*, i.e., give the people bread (material progress and comfort), and fun, causing people to say “We never had it so good” and never to ask: “How much is being taken from us?” It is at this point that the task of “conscientization” becomes urgent. Theologians and intellectuals are called upon to play a prophetic role of making people aware of the reality. Conscientization is telling it like it is in order to make people realize how much they have been exploited, and raise them up against the oppressive exploitation of internal capitalism and the “Uncle Toms” who are selling the country for some pieces of silver.

It is wrong, though, to label this group of protesters as communists. Helder Canamara insists, many times, in many different ways, that he’s speaking for justice which is really a Christian demand, and that he is speaking because he is a Christian. He points out that a reform that brings justice and allows people to participate in the political, social and economic life of the country will drive people away from the extremisms of communism. His opinion is that “anti-communism is as intolerant as communism itself.”²⁶ And he adds: “If bishops do not speak out, the small segment of vocal Christians will be unjustly accused of subversion and communism.”²⁷ And he strongly emphasizes that: “The people should be warned of the errors of atheistic communism, but they also should be warned against the materialistic roots of capitalism.”²⁸ Some where else it is said: “Marxism is in error when it tries to suggest that better men will come only from a better structure. Reason, human experience, and the actual life of faith show the contrary, teaching us that *a better structure always springs from better human beings.*”²⁹

True, there is a strong indictment of capitalism, and these theologians admit they admire Marxism. They affirm that they have learned a lot from Marxism’s criticism of capitalistic society. They do not really

²⁶ *Honesty and Hope*, p. 35.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 39.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 40.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 20, italics mine.

accept Marxism as the solution. They hope for some kind of socialism, but what specific kind has not been established yet. It seems that the young Protestant theologians hope more for a social solution, while the Roman Catholic theologians see the possibility of a social change only if a spiritual conversion happens.

A RADICAL REFORM, SYSTEM AND PEOPLE

A reform of structure is prescribed as mandatory not only for the economic progress of the low social class, but also and especially for promoting human dignity. Reform in this context does not mean restoration of the original form. Moltman's criticism of words like revolution, reformation, etc.,³⁰ may apply to the German mentality, but it is not valid as a reference to Latin American revolutionary parlance. There is no need of calling it provolution, instead of re-form or re-volution. For Latin American revolutionary theologians, reform means the creation of a new form; it is not simply reshaping what already existed.

Whether they speak of revolution or structural reform, a change of system is meant. Even if the new system is not conceived yet, the actual system based on capitalistic principles is repudiated by all revolutionary theologians. A radical change is necessary, otherwise it will be only a change of guards. It is conceived in terms of the results of a class struggle in the strictest sense, struggle between the proletarian and the bourgeoisie. The purpose of the struggle is to eliminate all kinds of exploiting classes. This struggle could take place in a nonviolent way, but if the peaceful attempt is unsuccessful, one might then have to revert to violence. Put in another way, what is aimed at is a system that accounts for the total integration of all men, first of all regionally, then internationally. The goal is very ambitious and extremely idealistic; it bases itself upon the goodness and incorruptibility of man. Such belief can be considered as a pagan humanism: it looks out for men's interest, but it ignores the possibility of corruption of the new system. Integration, in this context, has a very different connotation from that accepted in Northamerican parlance. Integration in America seems to mean to give minorities the right to share the "blessings" of the system (capitalism). Instead of integration, American minorities read absorption, by means of which they lose their special characteristics. Integration for Latin American revolutionary theologians requires the creation of a new system to contain the new reality, which must be essentially different from what it was before. It must be a new system equitable to every man, not only accepting him, with human dignity and without discrimination, but also giving him a place in society both to share the privileges of that society and to take part in the decision-making process. This system will have to eliminate the rich-poor dichotomy, thus ruling

³⁰ Jurgen Moltman, *Religious, Revolution and the Future*. Tr. Douglas Meeks. N.Y., Scribner, 1961, pp. 24, 32.

out all kinds of exploitation. No wonder that the word "utopia" is very dear to the revolutionary vocabulary. *Mutatis mutandis*, the underdeveloped nations should be integrated into the international panorama, standing on their own rights and not as satellites of the big powers. The essence of the system-to-be is understood as a process of humanization which recognizes the dignity of all men, a positive respect for human personality. In the phrase *all men*, it is not clear whether Man's dignity is taken in a collective or individual sense or both. Is it Man himself? Or Man as part of a socialist system that counts?

SOCIAL CHANGES, SIN AND CONVERSION

That a radical change in society must occur is a premise accepted by both conservatives and liberals in the Latin American church. The conservatives believe that the root of all evil is in Man himself, not in the system. So a radical change in the system requires a radical change in Man himself. Man here is taken individually, and a change in society depends on changing every person individually. Due to the power of sin over Man, conservatives think of a perfect system as a true *utopia*, i.e., a place that cannot be reached, that really does not exist. Since man has an individual personality, whose main characteristic is his free will, a simple exterior change will not do. A superimposed system like socialism will not be enough, because it will only curb the individual until he can liberate himself from the system imposed upon him.

Most of the so-called liberal Protestants seem to prescribe a radical change that seems solely social. Most of these young theologians, disgusted with the church, are interested in a secularized form of Christianity. There is no insistence on spiritual change or conversion. Spiritual here does not express dichotomic ontology, but only a special kind of change with religious implications, a change that takes God into consideration, instead of only a socio-economic system. But to young Protestants it seems to imply that if the evil system is changed, everything else will take care of itself. The conservative and the liberal may be contrasted as follows: for the conservative the problem is to change man, and any system will do; for the liberal the capitalistic system will not do, no matter how changed man may be. But it seems to imply also that if the system is changed it will do, no matter what kind of man is in it.

It is true that it is impossible to expect all men to be changed. Roman Catholic theologians do not seem to go along with young Protestants in this detail. For them, changing the system (which has to be changed) is not enough. There has to be a conversion. A new society needs conversion again and again, because sin is the power of corruption. One change in the system, even if Man is changed, is not enough. Things will not last, Man will mess up again, and the system will corrupt itself.³¹ Roman Catholic theologians have rediscovered a biblical teach-

³¹ *Honesty and Hope*, p. 30.

ing, viz., Man has sinful inclinations. Even if a perfect utopian system could be established, it will end up corrupting itself again, because man is sold to sin. So conversion and a continuing conversion, is a must for a just society. A new system depends on God's grace not only for the needed change, but it also needs God's continuous intervention in history to keep the system just. Even from a sociological point of view, corruption of the system can be expected.

To accomplish its purpose a revolution has to eliminate those who object to it, if they do not want to run the risk of a counter-revolution. By eliminating the opposition, it eliminates criticism and becomes fossilized, losing all its creativity, thus unable to solve new problems. It always tries to solve new problems by using old models. The suggestion that revolutionary movements can still preserve self-criticism is only a theoretical possibility.³² Any new order is potentially an established order. Again it was Helder Camara who warned his audience in Paris that "if people's mind and hearts are not changed radically, then any structural reforms, no matter how basic, will remain paper reforms of no real effect".³³ Cardinal Landazuri Ricketts, who thinks the revolution is surely coming, suggests that it "will be peaceful if we are wise enough; successful if we are fortunate enough; and will be Christian if we love enough."³⁴ If a change bases itself in sociological structure only, it will fall. That is the danger of atheistic humanism. As some Jesuits have put it; "we will never manage to construct a more humane society if we cannot bring to it support of God himself. This is the type of support that the world expects from us above all."³⁵ Or, as it was expressed in the working draft of the Medellin Conference; "Man is saved insofar as he adds a human dimension to his own existence, but he cannot reach human fulfillment without God. A humanism without God is incomplete and in the end inhuman. Man cannot have access to God except through the humanity which Christ took on in the incarnation."³⁶ Thus theology is essential for the process of transformation in order to give meaning to the movement and understand the meaning of any historical situation. Theology is necessary because "it is the life of faith that teaches us the real dignity of every human being and of the human community."³⁷ The most important aspect of a true and lasting revolution is a new human being "consciously aware and free who continues to liberate himself from egotism and give himself to others. Then we shall have a society of the free

³² Moltman, *Religion, Revolution and the Future*, p. 40. The idea is not quoted *ipissima verba* but is found in Moltman's concept of revolution. When one silences the opposition, one closes up all doors for new ideas. The system will fossilize.

³³ *Honesty and Hope*, p. 53.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

³⁶ *Honesty and Hope*, p. 189; italics mine. Papal support for these ideas is found in *Populorum Progressio*, sec. 42.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

men who have mutual respect for each other and can give themselves to their neighbor.”³⁸

It is of no use radically to change the structure, if there aren't men prepared for leadership in the new structure. A new society requires a new man, totally humanized. Only humanized beings can produce and keep a humane society.

VIOLENT REVOLUTION? IS NONVIOLENCE POSSIBLE?

Let me start with the Blacks in the USA. History seems to prove that the Blacks in the USA have always been a nonviolent people. In most cases the Black slaves were capable of overpowering their white masters, but very seldom did the Blacks take advantage of their physical superiority. It could have been due to fear of retaliation, especially fear of what could be done to their families. That which seems, however, to characterize the Black's nonviolence is their kindness to women and children left to their care. Up to Martin Luther King, Jr., and indeed even for the majority of Blacks today, nonviolence is their way of life. Many Blacks, however, have lost hope and have turned to violence. The years 1968-70 saw the nonviolent disciples of Martin Luther King, Jr., turn into violent Black Power theologians. The nonviolent student movement turned into violent Black power activities, and even gave birth to the Black Panthers, all a reaction to the active violence of white America. It was only much later that Blacks realized that there is such a thing as institutionalized violence. Black Muslim violence has also to be considered as an explosion of former nonviolent people. When the white does it, it is called defense of his rights . . . when the Blacks do it, it's called violence. Black Power theologians have no moral scruple against using violence, providing that it accomplishes its purpose. Then it is no longer a moral, but a strategic question.

A close parallel will be found in Latin American revolutionary theology. The question of means to be employed at any given moment in the revolutionary process is not to be dictated by abstract principles, without taking into consideration a concrete human situation. The question of either violence or nonviolence does not have any prefabricated answer. The decision has to be made in a concrete situation. One author comments that at this time pronouncements on revolution and violence are being made by church authorities, but among those really involved in any struggle “the problem of violence has been reduced to a strategic and political question, rather than a moral one.”³⁹

There are those who think that the only way to make a revolutionary change is by violence. The rich grab the riches, which they guard with their own lives, and they will not willingly let their privileges go. The exploited class, in order to take what by right belongs to them, will

³⁸ Ibid., p. 29f.

³⁹ A. B. de Melo, “Revolution and Violence”, in *When All Else Fails*, p. 40.

have to resort to force, and it might be necessary to take the life of the rich in order to expropriate it. A Black parallel can be found in revolutionary theories like those of Malcolm X, especially in his "Message to the Grassroots".⁴⁰ It should be noticed that those who defend this view are usually theorists of revolution. Not many examples like Camilo Torres can be quoted. Che Guevara is, of course, one of the models, but he cannot be taken as a religious revolutionary leader.

Helder Camara is probably the spokesman for peaceful nonviolent revolution. He talks about peace and nonviolence no less than he speaks about social justice, socialism and capitalism. For instance, "Christianity knows that, without justice, there will not be peace among men. But it (Christianity) does not believe in firing guns (*lutas armadas*). It wants war to be abolished, because war is the greatest shame of mankind".⁴¹ He speaks of peaceful and integrated social revolution, and insists on the need for exploring ways of avoiding armed conflicts and the growth of hatred that leads to bloodshed. He also calls all the people of God to organize for direct non-violent action. The main element of this lasting revolution is a transformed—converted—man whose main power is love. This end product is a liberated man, a man who is always liberating himself from egotism. This though does not absolutely rule out the place of violence in liberation movements. Violence always hurts people. We are allowed to hurt people only to cure or heal them. Violence is admissible only as a corrective, preventing and healing device. All that which is imposed upon Man against his will and hurts him is violence. All dictatorial, oppressive and repressive forces are forms of violence imposed upon those who cannot protect themselves. Exploitation, injustice, malnutrition, oppression and harshness of life imposed upon the poor people either by the exploiter or by the established government constitute forms of violence. To react violently against this institutionalized violence is permissible and considered counter-violence. The institutionalized forms of violence expressed in social injustices should be over-thrown, and a violent reaction against it classified as self-defense, thus not morally wrong. But the stronger the oppression, the more violence is required to bring about liberation. When the privileged few use their power of repression to

⁴⁰ "What is a revolution? Sometimes I am inclined to believe that many of our people are using this word 'revolution' loosely, without taking careful consideration of what this word actually means, and what its historic characteristics are. Look at the American Revolution in 1776. That revolution was for what? For land. Why did they want land? Independence. How was it carried out? Bloodshed . . . How can you justify being nonviolent in Mississippi and Alabama, when your churches are being bombed, and your little girls are being murdered, and at the same time you are going to get violent with Hitler . . . ? . . . you don't have a peaceful revolution. You don't have a turn-the-other-cheek revolution. There is no such a thing as a nonviolent revolution". "Revolution is bloody, revolution is hostile, revolution knows no compromise, revolution overturns and destroys everything that gets in its way". Malcolm X (Little), "Message to the Grass Roots", *Malcolm X Speaks*. Selected speeches and statements edited by George Breitman, N.Y., Grove Press, 1965, pp. 7-9.

⁴¹ *Visao*, May 24, 1968, p. 5.

block the process of liberation, the use of force seems to be the only efficient means possible for attaining the objective. Thus violence becomes acceptable in the process of liberation. Christians prefer, though, the use of nonviolent action to achieve the required reforms. Even *Populorum Progressio*⁴² recognizes the acceptability of certain kinds of violence for the purpose of liberating the exploited. Nonviolence, however is not to be identified with conformity, passivity or weakness. Openness to nonviolence means believing in the power of truth and justice, believing that love is much more powerful than hatred, killing, and waging war.

Nonviolence is presented as the Christian idea. The Christian is a man of peace, not simply a pacifist. He is able to fight, but he prefers peace to war. He cannot consistently impose change upon others. Human dignity demands that the needed changes be realized from within through an appropriate coming to awareness. But how can the rich change from within? Would that be why Jesus said that it is next to impossible for the rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven?

The phrase "process of liberation" has been used up to now to express the attempt to get rid of the oppressor, to set the poor free from exploitation, to rescue the powerless from the paws of the powerful people. Another interesting interpretation has been used by James Douglas, who seems to refer to one's humanization or transformation as that new man who becomes the basis for the new society. Liberation appears as the "redemption of Man from his own violence" or as "a struggle for the non-violent transformation of a society of oppression and fear into a community of love."⁴³ This is grounded in the concept that the Cross and the empty tomb, crucifixion and resurrection, suffering love and transforming power are the paradigm of liberation. Douglas begins his paper by stating that a theology of liberation can be written only with blood. The revolution can be won only by the giving of men's lives. The life of Jesus Christ? The lives of martyrs like Martin Luther King, Jr. That is the difference between Christianity and pagan religions, the contrast between Christian and pagan revolution. All worthy causes require that many lives be offered in sacrifice. A pagan religion or revolution offers somebody else's life in sacrifice. Christ offered His own! Christianity is the giving of oneself for others. In Christianity there is no place for cowards, because the Christian wages a costly revolution. The only life worth living is the one we're willing to give our lives to preserve. The only revolution worth making is the one worth dying for.

⁴² *Populorum Progressio*, sec. 31, deplors violent revolution, but makes exception in cases of evident prolonged tyranny which hurts fundamental human rights. Based on this clause, Latin American theologians see papal support for a violent revolution to bring about liberation of the oppressed. It seems, though, that Paul VI did not expect to be understood this way because when he spoke at the opening meeting of CELAM in Bogota his main concern was to calm the peasants and plead for patience.

⁴³ James W. Douglas, "On a Theology of Liberation", CICIP, Background Paper 1, 1971, p. 6f.

Violence always hurts. It usually takes lives. There aren't really any winners when violence is used. It tries to eliminate injustice and wrongdoing by eliminating the unjust and wrongdoer. The violent man sets himself up as the judge, as the paradigm. If he is just and righteous, he will probably be controlled by his self-righteousness. He makes himself the model. Of course, that is paganism, because Christianity does not leave room for self-righteousness, it recognizes only that righteousness comes from God through faith.

If the violent man is unjust and unrighteous, since he makes himself the model, only God knows what kind of injustices will be the result of such a violent process. Violence is shedding the enemy's blood; non-violence is lifegiving. It learns from Jesus who gave His life for the liberation of many. We are too cowardly to follow the nonviolent path. The price is too high! What profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his life? It is clear that violence is the easiest way out. The violent man is fighting for a prize: the world. He needs to preserve his life to enjoy his victory, to glorify himself. The violent man knows what to do and what he wants.

The nonviolent man does not know what he is fighting for, since the world is not important to him. The only goal he has in his fight is the humanization of humankind. Because he respects man, even so-called "trash", he cannot be violent. Yet the nonviolent man does not always know what to do, although he is willing to give his life rather than take somebody else's life. He who offers his life in sacrifice, as the non-violent man does, will preserve it. He who wants to preserve his life, as the violent man does, will lose it. The attitude of the nonviolent man does not seem to be revolutionary enough, but it is, because here is where real interest in humanization is found, otherwise revolution is only an attempt to conquer power for one's self. The end product of a violent revolution is the same thing as when all started, only in reverse. Those who were oppressed will turn themselves into oppressors. The violent man lives by sight, so he has to be around to see his victory. The nonviolent man lives by faith: he does not necessarily have to be around to see the victory.

It is true that nonviolence has not won many victories, but violence has won none. It is easier to silence the enemy than to convince him. Silence is often misleading.