

SOVIET RUSSIA MAY BE HELPED BUT RUSSIA MUST BE REFORMED

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FALSE APPROACHES

THERE are three false approaches to the question of aid to Russia. The first is the suggestion that Nazism is a greater menace than Communism. This plea fails to make a distinction between an external and a domestic menace. Externally, Nazism is unquestionably a greater menace than Communism, but internally, i.e., as regards our American way of life, Communism is the greater danger.

The second false approach argues: If your house were burning, would you ask what his religion was of the man who came to help you put it out. No! I would not ask him his religion, but I would ask him if he started the fire. And Russia did help set fire to Europe by jointly burning Poland with Hitler, and applying the torches to Latvia, Estonia and Finland, while the other international firebug set fire to the West.

A third false approach is to pretend that Article 124 of the Soviet Constitution gives the same religious liberty as our Bill of Rights. The facts in the case are:

1. Article 124 of the 1936 constitution is a restriction rather than an extension of religious liberty. The old constitution of 1929 "secured freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda to all its citizens." The 1936 constitution makes a distinction between "freedom of religious *worship* and freedom of anti-religious *propaganda*. In other words, it is permitted to worship, but not to broadcast, for this is propaganda.

2. Article 125 restricts freedom of speech, press, assembly "to those who uphold and strengthen the socialist system," which means it is denied to all who are opposed to its atheism.

3. "Religious associations do not enjoy the right of a juridical person." (Decree of January 23, 1918, paragraph 12, which decree is still in effect.)

4. Statutes 2 and 3 of Law of April 8, 1929, paragraph 114-3A, read: "Religious associations may not give material assistance to their members, organize for children, young people and women, special prayer or other meetings, circles, or groups or departments for Biblical or literary study, sewing, working or the teaching of religion, etc., or organize excursions, children's playgrounds, public libraries or organic sanatoria and medical assistance."

5. The whole philosophy of our Bill of Rights and that of the Soviet Constitution are different in

essence. America holds that "the Creator has endowed us with certain unalienable rights." For the Soviets, the State is the source of rights, hence the State can take them away. Furthermore, religious liberty is a "*right*" for Americans, but the Soviet Constitution uses the weak word "recognize."

A DISTINCTION

The question of aid to Russia must begin with a distinction between Russia and Communism. Russia is not Communism. Russia pre-existed Communism and will exist long after Communism has succumbed to reason and decency. This is a valid distinction because:

1. The Catholic Church itself makes it. The Church has condemned Communism but not Russia; she has condemned Fascism but not Italy; she has condemned Nazism but not Germany. A philosophy of life is not identical with a people.

2. Throughout the entire Catholic world, the prayers which are said at the end of every low Mass are offered for the intention of Russia, but certainly not for Communism. 26,000 priests in the United States alone offer those prayers every morning in obedience to the orders of the late Holy Father, Pius XI.

3. There is no way of knowing whether President Roosevelt had this distinction in mind, but it is interesting to note that in his telegram to Kalinin, the President of the Soviet Republic, after the Nazi invasion of Russia, the President sent his best wishes to the "Russian people"—not to the Soviet Republic.

4. Hitler himself is forcing that distinction upon us, for despite his pretensions Hitler is not attacking Communism; he is attacking Russia. It is possible for us to aid Russia without aiding Communism.

THE CONDITIONS

Soviet Russia is a gangster nation, just like the Nazis. As Walter Winchell once said, the only difference between the two dictators is the length of their mustaches. The ideal situation would be for both these anti-human philosophies to exhaust one another until death; for a child who is saved from a bite by a cobra, because a boa constrictor attacked the cobra, does not care who wins. They are both snakes. But the solution is not quite so simple as that.

If a man is attacked by a gangster, he may make

use of a rival gangster to ward off the attacks of the first, but he must assure the second gangster that he is not going to help him when he robs a bank. In like manner, we may aid Soviet Russia and receive its aid, in defeating a rival gangster, but *only on three conditions*, one involving Russia, the second America, and the third the world. We may not aid Communism under any conditions. As Pius XI stated so clearly in his Encyclical on Atheistic Communism: "Let no one think that he is furthering a Christian civilization who collaborates with Communism in any way whatsoever."

First Condition: Russia must grant liberty to all in concentration camps and prisons because of their religious beliefs and restore church property to religion. Despite Soviet censor-approved pictures which come to us from Russia, religion is still being persecuted. The Vatican radio in 1939 announced that of 137 priests in communion with the Holy See known to be in Russia, 135 were in prison or in concentration camps. The *Annuario Pontificio* of the Vatican of this year states that of thirteen apostolic administrators, eleven are in prison or in concentration camps and the whereabouts of two others unknown.

Second Condition: There is only one concrete way for America to prove it is aiding Russia and not Communism, and that is by aiding Russia in Russia and driving Communism out of America. The American Communists are not Americans; they do not think, act or react like Americans. There is one form of "lease-lend" bill most Americans are for, as regards Russia: lease them Earl Brower; lend them Harry Bridges. Incidentally, what has happened to all the Abraham Lincoln Brigades the Communists organized to help Russia in Spain? Why have they not organized an army to defend their "fatherland" and their beloved Stalin? If Russia is defeated by Germany, the Communists will immediately sabotage American industry and make many a politician wish he had not coddled them.

It is not American aid that is failing Russia; it is American Communists. The *Daily Worker* is clamoring for more help to Russia. Let them aid Russia by organizing into an army the Communist voters, Leftist labor groups, and the four hundred Pink Professors who nine days before the Nazi-Soviet pact declared there was no possibility of a union.

The Communists have proven to be the arch-enemies of America; they have deserted Stalin by not going to his aid. And it is no light matter to let down "Pal Joey." If America does not do something right now about Communism, it will have to face this possibility: when Moscow falls, the next center of International Communism will be New York City.

Third Condition: Russia, if it remain Communist, will not be given a place at the council of nations after this war, to assist in the remaking of Europe. The world has already suffered too disastrously from a philosophy of life, which holds that man is not a person but an individual atom to be

immersed in the collectivity of the race, the class or the nation.

SINCERITY AND HONOR

If these conditions are not fulfilled, or if America does nothing to restore political and religious liberty to the Russian people, then the most we can claim is that we are interested in crushing only a particular kind of barbarism because we dislike its particular leader. As the moral leader of the world, America must not pick and choose among barbarities, but be opposed to all in the name of justice rooted in God.

If America does not take measures to defend religion in Russia, Hitler may win a great advantage. If Hitler defeats Russia, he will probably declare himself the great enemy of Communism; he may set up a puppet, a Christian goat in Russia; he may open churches; release religious prisoners and steal from Henry VIII the title "Defender of the Faith."

Many will be deceived by Hitler and really believe he is fighting Communism. The only way to prevent him from playing that trump card is for America and Britain truly to aid religion before Hitler can stage his farce. The question of aid to Russia is a challenge to the sincerity of America.

If it is fighting for democracy, let it not aid the forces of totalitarianism, whether they be black, red or brown. We cannot drive out a brown rat by petting a red one.

THE HOPE FOR RELIGION IN RUSSIA

Communism is not natural to Russia; it is really an importation of German thinking, for Marx was German, not Russian, and his philosophy was Hegelian and not Orthodox. Furthermore, its industrial economic philosophy cannot be imposed on an agrarian people. More important, the cheap nationalistic, mechanistic philosophy of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with its atheism allegedly based on science, is unnatural to a people who were never atheistic, but whose religious problems centered on the dual principle of good and evil. As Spengler said: "What has Communism to do with agony of soul?"

Religion for these and other more basic reasons cannot be extinguished in Russia. The best evidence for this is not any censored news or pictures, but the admission of the Russian official publications. Yaroslavsky, the head of the anti-God publications of Russia, admitted that half the population remained religious, and that there were about 400,000 believers in Moscow. (*Godless*, 1939. No. 14) The same source mentions that some Russian aviators were dismissed because they refused to work on Christmas. The number 24 issue of the 1939 *Godless* stated: "Icons are reappearing in the homes of the collective farmers . . . Soviet teachers . . . members of the party." And the number 12 issue of 1939 complains that "monks and nuns travel throughout the country and are warmly received by pious people." The number 3 issue of *Godless* for the same year says the Soviets discovered a monastery in Moscow under Bishop Bartholomey and promptly closed it.

If religion were only a conglomeration of external rites of Byzantine origin, supported by the imperial government, or if it were an opium of the capitalistic regime, then, certainly, twenty-four years after the government was suppressed and capitalism exiled, there should be no religion. That there is, on the admission of the atheists themselves, proves that man is incurably religious, and that as a king in exile, he is wandering, or stumbling, searching or driving back again to this Paradise lost.

This war will probably mean the end of Communism in Russia. Russia will then be one of the greatest missionary fields in the world. It is my own belief that Russia will be one of the great Christian nations of the world. Dostoevsky compared the godless Russia which he saw coming to the young man possessed with devils, which devils Christ drove into the swine. He foresaw a day when like that young man it would be dispossessed and sit once more at the feet of Christ.

CATHOLIC ATTITUDE

The truly Catholic attitude to Russia must not be such that it will so condemn the sinner as to prevent his conversion. The once-guilty must not be the always-guilty. Russia today is anti-human and anti-Christian, but means must be taken to restore it to the fellowship of Christian nations.

We are not to think that, because the President made such an ill-informed statement on the Soviet Constitution, he is not genuinely interested in the restoration of the first freedom to Russia. It is our duty as Americans to believe in the sincerity of his statements. The Russian problem gives him an opportunity to be more than a politician, viz., a world leader vitally interested in those essentials of a Christian civilization which Hitler would destroy. The vast majority of Americans are convinced that in this highly critical matter he will not fail.

When Christ was hanging on the Cross, both thieves at first cursed and reviled Him. Then one of them, inspired by the majesty of a King Whose only crown was of thorns, Whose only purple was His Blood, and Whose only coronation was His Crucifixion, asked to be remembered when He came into His Kingdom—and the answer came back: "This day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise." And the thief died a thief, for he stole Paradise.

Today, Christ is crucified between two thieves. Russia and Germany. There is possibility of converting both; there is certainly a possibility of converting one. But whichever one comes to the Master, that one we accept. And this time, on this new Calvary of the world, may both thieves be saved.

THE PARENTS OF THE QUINTS ARE VICTIMS OF A SMEAR PRESS

LILLIAN BARKER

A NEW life is about to begin for the Quints. They are going home to the father and mother who have hoped, prayed and fought the bitterest custody fight in history—to get their children back from the Province of Ontario; from the same Government which, on May 27, 1935, through legislative act made the Quintuplets wards of the Crown till their eighteenth birthday. "All for the good of the babies," it was stated.

The parents, however, opposed the Act before and after its passage. And, talking to me about it when I went to Callander for the first time in April, 1935, to write Elzire Dionne's syndicated biography, they both said:

"We'll fight to the last ditch to regain custody of our children."

So, with moral courage and fervent faith in the rightness of their cause, they waged their battle, poor people against a powerful province, parents

misunderstood and criticized from one end of the earth to the other.

And why were they misunderstood and criticized? Why were the Dionnes, both of them so worthy and noble, called over and over again unworthy and ignoble? The answer is simple. They got a bad press.

Why the bad press, though? That's the next question. The answer to it is simple, too, when you know the truth about this case; the plain, unvarnished truth as I have learned it, fact by fact, during six and a half years of "commuting" between New York and Callander, writing innumerable Quint-and-family stories; chatting with the famous children and living for weeks at a time in the Dionne farm-house.

To get at that truth comprehensively, we shall have to marshal the facts, naturally. And the best way to proceed, I am sure, is to go back to the

