THE ROLE OF PROPERTY IN THE CHRISTIAN-MARXIST DIALOGUE

by

THOMAS ROBERT ROURKE, B.A.

A THESIS

IN

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Texas Tech University in
Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for
the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Approved

Accepted

May, 1991

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Cochran for his assistance in defining this project, and to Drs. Oden and Havens for their assistance and helpful comments. Most of all, I wish to express my thanks for my wife, Rosita Amelia del Valle Chazarreta de Rourke, for her love and support without which this project would not have been completed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introduction to Property in Christian Thought

The social teachings of the Christian Church have always been critical of the exercise of private property rights as the latter have historically developed. The Church's criticism goes back all the way to the origins of Christianity and even to the Gospel itself. The basis of the criticism has always been that economic goods are by nature primarily intended for the use of all people. The Fathers of the Church accepted the institution of private property only in the restricted sense that it was an inevitable consequence of the fall of humanity. For the Fathers, the institution of private property did not exist in humanity's original state. Moreover, the Patristic authors emphasized that Christians striving for spiritual perfection should renounce possessions so far as possible according to their state of life. Those called to the state of perfection, or religious state, were required to strive to imitate humanity's original state of common ownership through the vow to renounce personal possessions. Those called to the married state were to strive to imitate this to the extent possible given the demands of their state. The Fathers never abandoned their belief that the

institution of private property was inherently the result of sin (Carlyle 1950).

In the Middle Ages, under the influence of both the Fathers and Aristotle, Saint Thomas Aquinas shifted the emphasis of the Patristic teaching while retaining the Patristic emphasis on common use. Most significantly, Thomas did not choose to repeat the Patristic teaching that private property was inherently the result of the Fall. While acknowledging that, historically, private property came with the Fall, Thomas saw private property as fundamentally reasonable and hence not contrary to the natural law or the common good. At the same time, he continued the Patristic teaching that the right of common use was prior to that of private ownership and that the end or purpose of economic goods was to fulfill the needs of all.

With the arrival of the Industrial Revolution and modern capitalism, these rather simple doctrines, which referred to simple forms of property and property rights, had to confront new and complicated developments of property and property rights. First of all, the Church had to consider the issue of private ownership of the means of production, particularly when property took the form of giant corporations owning the means of production upon which entire societies were dependent. The Church, while accepting in principle private ownership, was nonetheless concerned

that overcentralization of ownership of this kind could harm the common good.

Beyond the issue of ownership of the means of production themselves, the Church had to consider the modus operandi of industrial capitalism insofar as it involved new exercises of private property rights. Here we are speaking about the behavior of large enterprises under the classical liberal ideology. The first issue of concern was that of production for profit. The Church had always considered the physical needs of people to be the ultimate motive of production. Saint Thomas Aquinas had written in the Middle Ages that "exchange of money for money or of any commodity for money, not on account of the necessities of life but for profit...has a certain debasement attaching thereto, insofar as, by its very nature, it does not imply a virtuous or necessary end" (Baumgarth and Regan 1988: 196). In the industrial age, the Church had to confront an economic system largely based on the profit motive as the basis for production, even to the point where socially necessary goods might not be produced. This raised the question of how well industrial capitalism could fulfill the Church's moral demands.

Production for profit also meant that human labor would become a commodity in a market. The Church's teaching had always emphasized that human beings have a transcendent dignity. Moreover, according to the Church's understanding

of natural law, the first and prime determinant of wages should be human needs. Under capitalism, the issue arose as to how well this system would fulfill the Church's precepts about the dignity and needs of laborers. Moreover, the Church believed that labor and capital should exist in harmony. The principle of production for profit combined with the commodity nature of labor under capitalism threatened to set capital and labor at odds with each other.

The second exercise of private property rights under capitalism which the Church had to address was the "law" of market competition as the basis for the economic system. Here again, the practice of industrial capitalism was derived from philosophical principles quite distinct from those of the Church. Classical liberalism espoused the belief that unrestrained competition leads to the greatest level of production of wealth for a society. Each person, whether worker or owner, would pursue self-interest, while an "invisible hand" would function so as to render the optimal social result. The corollary of this theory is that the state should not interfere with private economic initiative. The common good, in this view, is not to be pursued by the State apart from protecting the rights of the competitors. The Church's teaching, on the other hand, had always expressed concern that the pursuit of self-interest, in and of itself, would lead to avarice, which would work against the good of the community. As far back as the

Patristic period, the Church had issued stern warnings about the results of absolutizing private property rights and competition (Deane 1963: 45).

Because of the Church's traditional skepticism about the pursuit of self-interest, it was inevitable that the Church would take a very critical view of competitive self-aggrandizement. Included within the topic of competition are a number of specific issues. First, there is the issue of investment. Investment in a competitive system is for the purpose of gaining a larger share of the market or to open up new markets. The Church considered the extent to which this philosophy could provide for the common good. Secondly, there was the issue of basing international trade on a competitive basis, generally referred to as "free trade." David Ricardo had given a philosophical justification for this in his theory of comparative advantage, which stated that a given nation would benefit from producing and selling those commodities which it could produce at lowest relative cost while purchasing those commodities which it could itself produce only at high relative cost. This, he argued, would lead to the greatest level of production globally. Aquinas had argued that the purpose of exchange was to satisfy the needs of life. Would the "free trade system" satisfy common human needs for food, clothing and shelter? Related to this was the issue of competition on international money markets determining the

exchange rates for national currencies. Finally, the competitive pursuit of profits led to the practice of speculation on a huge scale, whereby currencies, bonds or goods are held by individuals or corporations in anticipation of price fluctuations. The Church would address the morality of such practices.

The final issue related to private property rights is the crucial one of the role that the State should play with reference to the exercise of private property rights. The Church had argued since the time of Saint Thomas that the State was the necessary result of the social nature of humanity. Human nature, it was argued, tended to seek interpersonal bonds through voluntary association. The State existed to protect those associations and to mediate among them in the event of dispute. The State was, therefore, always to be the mediator of group conflict and was never to be the instrument of any one association or interest. Under classical liberalism, however, the State is supposed to protect all of the exercises of private property rights which have been discussed so far. The philosophical question for the Church is the extent to which the State can play the role assigned to it by the classical liberals and fulfill the traditional precepts of the Church concerning the State's neutrality with respect to all groups living within it.

Introduction to Property in Marxist Thought

As the Church wrestled with the ethical problems of property rights under capitalism, Marxism rose to offer another critique based upon a different set of principles. Marx viewed the institution of property as one which has been subject to ongoing historical transformation. Marx and Engels believed, in a manner analogous to early Christian writers, that there did exist historically a stage of communism in which lands were held in common and relations of production were fundamentally collective (Tucker 1978: 734). However, the historical development of property was characterized by the "spoliation of the many by the few" (Rayazanoff 1963: 43). At any given point in time, property is the "expression of the method of production and appropriation which is based upon class conflict, of which bourgeois property is the most perfect expression" (Rayazanoff 1963: 43).

Marxists sought to abolish private property as it exists in capitalist society because of what they saw as its exploitative nature. However, Marx made a significant distinction in the Communist Manifesto when he wrote, "The distinctive feature of communism is, not the abolition of property in general, but the abolition of bourgeois property" (in Rayazanoff 1963: 43). Ryazanoff comments:

> By leaving the property of the small producers in the hands of the workers, so long as such property is not used as a means for the exploitation of others, the communists maintain the personal

> property of every member of society: they do not put an end to the personal appropriation of products necessary to the maintenance of life. (Rayazanoff 1963: 144)

With respect to production for profit, Marxists see the use of property as inherently exploitative. For Marx, the value of a product is determined by the quantity and quality of labor involved in its production. Capital itself was a form of stored labor. With this understanding, profits which accrue to non-working owners are the result of exploitation, specifically, the appropriation of the value produced by the worker on the part of the owner. Moreover, exploitation goes right to the heart of the relationship between labor and capital. The bourgeois property system concentrates wealth and ownership in the hands of one class, forcing the workers to sell their labor power. Indeed the very foundation of bourgeois property, as exhibited by the enclosure movement in England, was the dispossession of the serfs of the tracts of land which they had worked or owned under the feudal system (Greenberg 1987: 59). Such a system is always characterized, in the Marxist view, by the attempt of owners to keep labor costs down, in conflict with the needs of labor. In short, labor and capital are in conflict.

The competitive market system, in the Marxist view, is a means by which owners compete with one another for market shares and profits. In the competition to expand market shares owners seek to decrease their labor costs. Those

most successful in doing so, through labor-saving technology and more efficient use of labor, are able to buy out their competitors. Competition, then, increases the exploitation of the working class. The competitive system is always aided by the existence of what Marx termed "the reserve army of the unemployed," who pressure the employed not to push for higher wages.

Marxists hold similarly negative views of the capitalist system with respect to investment, trade, exchange rate fluctuations, and speculation. Marxists point out that investment is often badly unrelated to the fulfillment of human needs. Many socially necessary products, such as food in underdeveloped nations, are not produced because of inadequate buying power and low prices. However, investments are made to produce luxury items. Marxist theory seeks to reorder investment away from the principle of competition toward that of fulfilling unmet human needs for food, clothing and shelter. With respect to trade, Marxists view "free trade" as a theoretical justification for allowing the continuation of centuries of economic imperialism. Calls for free trade ignore the fact that, for centuries, underdeveloped nations were forced to produce primary products and purchase manufactured products from the developed nations. The markets in which the primary products were sold were competitive, keeping prices down. On the other hand, the markets in which they purchased

manufactured products were monopolistic, keeping prices high. Therefore, in the Marxist view, international trade is merely another form of extracting wealth from the Third World. Moreover, the former colonies were discouraged from competing with the industries of the mother country. It is this history which is the real source of the "comparative advantages" which exist today. Clearly related to the problem of unequal trading patterns is the issue of setting exchange rates for currencies. Nations whose products occupy only a small percentage of international trade are forced to buy currencies of nations such as the United States, Japan and West Germany, in order to engage in trade. For the many Third World nations whose purchases of goods constantly outweigh the value of their exports, this entails constant devaluation of their currency. This means that the purchase of the same amount of goods will cost even more money, thus creating a vicious cycle of debt and devaluation. Finally, Marxists tend to see speculation as a parasitic activity. Since value derives from labor, those who earn money through speculation are essentially parasites.

With respect to the state and private property, Marx took the view that existing property arrangements determined the form of the state. For example, in a famous phrase from The German Ideology, he contended that the state in capitalist society "is nothing more than the form of

organization which the bourgeois necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests" (Pascal 1947: 59). There is, therefore, no such thing as a state which is neutral to propertied interests. Rather, the state plays the role of providing a legal and political framework for the accumulation of capital. For advanced industrial nations this implies the pursuit of imperialism as corporations seek markets overseas. For Lenin, imperialism is merely the highest stage of capitalism.

The Grounds for Dialog

What we can see from this brief introduction to Catholic thought and Marxism is that both schools have been very concerned with the evolution of the role of private property, particularly under capitalism. Both schools of thought have given normative assessments of the following issues:

1. the institution of private property (including private ownership of the means of production);

2. competition as the basis of economic life (including competition for profits); and

3. the role of the state with respect to both property and competition.

What is particularly significant about these issues within both schools of thought is that they have arisen out

of their respective preoccupations with the form of a just society. Moreover, within each school the questions are strongly related by logic and method. Within Catholic thought, a particular understanding of natural law connects the issues. Pope John Paul II insists that the complicated contemporary issues related to new forms of property and property rights are directly related to the traditional principles which formed the Church's thinking on private property. With respect to the development of modern capitalism, the Pope writes, "The issue of ownership of property enters from the beginning into the whole of this difficult historical process" (Laborem Exercens, # 63).

Similarly, these questions are strongly related within the Marxist school of thought. Marxism arose specifically as a rejection of conventional property institutions as they existed under capitalism. For Marxists, property is the expression of the form of production and appropriation which is based on the conflict between social classes. Therefore, the issues of private ownership of the means of production, the profit motive, the laws of market competition and the behavior of the state are all expressions of exploitative social relations between social classes. The method of analysis is historical materialism, which sees all societies as defined by their respective modes of production, evolving according to the resolution of class conflicts engendered by those modes. Therefore, the principles employed to evaluate

these issues are consistent and systematic. Since the issues mentioned here are systematically addressed by both Marxism and Catholicism, dialog is possible. This is particularly so because both schools have been highly critical of the role which existing private property rights have played in the modern capitalist world. From a philosophical perspective, one can compare the conclusions reached by each school and explore the limits of their compatibility with the other.

The Move Toward Dialog

Historically, the dialog between Christianity and Marxist thought was postponed by mutual distrust and hostility. Such negative attitudes were rooted in a much broader set of concerns than property issues. Marx said that religion was the opium of the people. His followers have tended to see in religion an expression of the dominant ideology used to render malleable the exploited classes. On the other hand, the Church saw in Marxism a rejection of God and the attempt to destroy all religion. Pius XI issued an encyclical letter in 1937, Divini Redemptoris, which warned:

> Entire peoples find themselves in danger of falling back into a barbarism worse than that which oppressed the greater part of the world at the coming of the Redeemer. This all too imminent danger, Venerable Brethren, as you might have already surmised it, is Bolshevistic and Atheistic Communism, which aims at upsetting the social order and at undermining the very foundations of Christian civilization. (Divini Redemptoris, # 2-3)

In time, the Church began to accept that Marxism was not a monolith reducible to the behavior of particular Stalinist regimes. Pope Paul VI noted four distinct dimensions of Marxism. First, it exists as the active practice of class struggle. Secondly, it exists as the exercise of political and economic power by a single party. Third, it is a socialist ideology rooted in historical materialism. Fourth, Marxism is for some a scientific method of analyzing societies and history (Octogesima Adveniens, # 34). It is the recognition of this fourth dimension which is of interest here. While criticizing Marxism for emphasizing the material elements of history while excluding others, Paul VI did open the dialog by distinguishing Marxist social doctrine from particular forms of Marxist social practice and, to a lesser extent, from commitment to an ideology based on historical materialism.

Vatican Council II explicitly called for a dialog on the part of Christians with atheism, with Marxism clearly implied as a significant expression of the latter. The Church recognized that believers "can have more than a little to do with" the birth of such doctrines "to the extent that they...are deficient in their...moral or social life" (emphasis mine; Gaudium et Spes # 19). Moreover, Vatican II proclaimed that "the Church sincerely professes that all men, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike

live; such an ideal cannot be realized, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialog" (Gaudium et Spes, #21). After Vatican II, a Marxist-Christian dialog emerged which "quickly proceeded beyond the stage of mutual curiosity and polite conversation to the stage of spirited solidarity and intellectual convergence" (Vree 1976: vii).

Purpose and Approach of this Study

The purpose of this present effort is to evaluate the Christian-Marxist dialog's treatment of the three interrelated issues introduced here: property, economic competition, and the role of the state with respect to both. Of course, this study accepts that these questions do not exhaust what could be addressed with reference to private property rights and how they operate within the capitalist world. However, these issues are, for both schools, a related series of issues linked to common, central principles. Moreover, they have been systematically addressed by both schools. For these reasons, the assumption made here is that these issues deserve a serious place in the dialog.

The central theoretical concern of this study is the relationship between a specific expression of Christianity, Catholicism, and Marxist philosophy, with reference to these specific issues. So why not evaluate the Catholic-Marxist dialog on these issues? The answer lies in the character of the dialog itself. Apart from the topic of Church-state

relations, the subject of the dialog is the relationship between Christianity and Marxism. Moreover, the authors who have participated in the dialog do not generally make denominational differences central to the discussion. Therefore, while it is easy to identify any number of Catholic participants in the dialog, it is hard to find a distinction between a Catholic-Marxist, Lutheran-Marxist or a Methodist-Marxist dialog based on the theoretical character of the writings themselves. Therefore, to evaluate the Christian-Marxist dialog makes more sense in terms of following the real contours of the dialog.

If the dialog itself is Christian-Marxist in nature, then is there any room for an emphasis on the Catholic tradition? There certainly is a great need for approaching or evaluating the Christian-Marxist dialog on the issues mentioned from a well-defined perspective which has definite theoretical boundaries. The literature of the dialog is wide and varied (Van der Bent 1969). The topic most treated has been Church-State relations. Aside from that, much of the theoretical dialog treats the relationship between Christianity and Marxism in broad terms. While the issues mentioned here have received treatment, there is no work which focuses exclusively on these issues. Moreover, the dialog has an unofficial character from an institutional perspective; it has not been organized or promoted by the Kremlin or the Vatican. In addition, the speculative

character of possible Christian-Marxist rapprochement has prompted writers not to adopt clear, well-defined philosophical or theological standpoints. The few organized efforts at dialog, such as those sponsored by the Paullus Gesellschaft, encouraged the broadness of the dialog and did not focus on the need to define boundaries. This was probably due to the fact that the participants were searching for similarities, which does not encourage strong statements of boundary. Because of all of these factors, the dialog has two characteristic weaknesses. First, there is a lack of clarification of assumptions and definitions which leaves the boundaries of Christianity and Marxism unclear. Secondly, there is a lack of focus and development of specific issues. If dialog is to translate into mutual study of political ad economic problems, then focused studies are necessary.

This study will attempt to avoid these two pitfalls by focusing on the specific areas suggested and by evaluating the dialog from a clear, relatively well-defined perspective: Catholic thought. The advantage of evaluating the dialog from a Catholic perspective lies in the fact that this Church has a central teaching authority and the oldest tradition which addresses the issues at hand, both of which contribute to clear definition and boundaries in the process of dialog. In addition, the Church has exercised an enormous influence on the social thought of Christianity

(Troeltsch 1981). Moreover, denominational differences exercise far less influence over the issue of social justice than they do over discussions of dogma and personal morality. Therefore, the centrality of Catholic thought in this study by no means renders the results irrelevant to Christians who are not Catholic.

The evaluation to take place will consider, from a Catholic perspective, the viability of the positions stated and the quality of the treatment of the issues. By evaluating viability, I mean that positions will be considered for their substantive correspondence with established Catholic positions. I intend to answer the question, Are the points raised in the dialog in accord with, or legitimate developments of, Catholic thought, or not? In addition, when I say that I will evaluate the quality of the treatment of the issues, I mean that the dialog will be evaluated for its quality as philosophy. In other words, I will be asking, "How sound are the assumptions, concepts and reasoning employed in the dialog?" Of course, this takes the study beyond the mere consideration of whether or not the dialog is or is not faithful to Christian tradition, and rightfully so. The issues involved are, for the most part, of a philosophical nature. Thomas Aquinas believed that, in matters of philosophy, arguments are to be evaluated by the quality of reasoning, and not by mere appeals to authority. The author

shares this presupposition. In evaluating the quality of particular arguments, the author is informed by a fundamentally Thomistic approach, but not exclusively so. Due consideration will be given to the extent to which the dialog respects the facts of history and, where it is necessary, the fundamentals of the scientific method.

The study will be divided into three major chapters. The first, Chapter II, will deal with the issue of property itself, including the ownership of the means of production. Chapter III will deal with the competition engendered by private property and the search for profits. Chapter IV will deal with the role of the state with respect to both property and competition. Chapter V will briefly pull together the conclusions drawn from the previous chapters.

Each chapter will be divided into three subsections. Since the perspective of the evaluation is the Catholic tradition, the first subsection of each chapter will be a summary of the relevant, existing body of teaching on the subject matter of the chapter. Official Church encyclicals and documents from Councils will have priority, but not exclusively so. Authors widely recognized as being within the Catholic tradition will also be considered as authorities. The second subsection of each chapter will present the major positions advanced in the literature of the Christian-Marxist dialog. The third subsection will

evaluate the arguments both in terms of their viability within Catholic tradition and their quality as philosophy.

Assumptions and Definitions

It is necessary to clarify some of the fundamental assumptions and definitions which will be used throughout this study. First and foremost, there is a term which will appear at a number of points in this work and which represents a philosophical position absolutely central to the comprehension of Christian Revelation. This term is: "the Christian distinction" (Sokolowski 1982). The term clarifies a fundamental point about how Christians understand the world. The Christian distinction is the particular way in which God is distinguished from the world in the Christian perspective. This distinction grounds the distinction between reason and revelation, between what is natural and what is beyond nature. However, philosophers cannot allow the idea to become merely trite, because it is fundamental to Christian thought and its implications must be constantly and assiduously worked out. Part of what it means to keep this distinction clear is to appreciate the integrity and the "otherness" of each of the two terms of the distinction: God and the world, faith and reason, the supernatural and the natural. At first glance, these distinctions may appear commonplace. However, when it comes to working out the implications of this distinction, we are confronted with an arduous philosophical task, one

which has not by any means been uniformly successful. Because of the difficulties involved in preserving the integrity of the two terms of the distinction--for example, faith and reason--it is a temptation to compromise the realness of the distinction by diminishing the integrity of one of the terms. For example, it became commonplace within the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, in what was called "the manual approach" to theology, to try to prove even the most obscure points of theology from reason alone. For example, as an "argument from reason" to support the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, it was said, "God could do it; He ought to do it; therefore He did it" (Ott 1974: 202). On the other hand, Luther and many of the Protestant theologians saw unaided reason as something to be distrusted. Both of these approaches are distortions grounded in the failure to grasp the Christian distinction. Sokolowski elaborates:

> [It] is especially important in Christian thinking to remain aware of the weight of natural necessities: the way things are and the way things have to be according to their various natures, whether material or biological, political or psychological....All things have their own natures and their excellence according to their kind. Now every form of understanding brings along its own special forms of concealment and understanding; if one begins to think beyond the world and its necessities...the danger arises that one will simply deny the terminal and necessary character that is proper to them even within Christian belief. The move into the Christian understanding of the world must be so achieved that the integrity of natural necessities is maintained.... [On the other hand,] a false sense of creation...instead of allowing the light of

> creation to enhance what is natural and to confirm it in its goodness and necessity,...may...make the natural and the necessary fade--in which case it serves not as light, but as a bleaching agent that makes them vanish. Thus a vivid appreciation of philosophical truth...helps us preserve the integrity of nature within Christian faith. (Sokolowski 1982: 21-22)

It is beyond the purpose of this study to work out the full implications of the Christian distinction. However, one of its implications is vitally necessary if one wishes to think clearly about questions of the relationship between Christianity and political philosophy. Sokolowski explains deftly:

> According to Christian belief there are no truths that are relevant for living the natural political life that are only available to those who adhere to Christianity. The truths dealing with political life and with virtue are available through the exercise of reason and choice. When one becomes a Christian, one is not apprised of yet other truths or divine commands that are politically relevant but not available to reason. Christian revelation leaves the natural necessities and natural truths intact, including all those that are at work in political life. The mysteries of Christianity...are not new factors that undo the excellences and necessities of political life....Christian belief does not establish a group of people who are supposed to govern others by virtue of the unusual opinions they possess. (Sokolowski 1982: 158)

What Sokolowski is arguing here is that Christianity does not establish a uniquely Christian political philosophy which undoes or subverts all others. This is not to say that the Christian will have nothing to say about politics. The Christian will be concerned with justice in the civil society. In doing so, the Christian will not, however,

believe that revelation itself points to who should rule or what precise system of government should exist. Nor will the Christian believe that what is just is to be uniquely determined by believers. This understanding of the proper relationship between Christianity and political philosophy, based on the fundamental "Christian distinction," will be axiomatic in this study.

Another important concept is that of "synthetic" Christian-Marxist dialog. This term comes from the work of Dale Vree (1976). By "synthetic dialog" or a "synthetic" position, I mean to describe positions and approaches which, on the basis of either assumption or argument, interweave or combine Christian and Marxist concepts or arguments in one analysis. The term is somewhat problematic to apply because authors do not themselves identify themselves as "synthesizers" or not. I impose the term based on the following definition: one adopts a synthetic position when one either argues or assumes that one can analyze political and economic life using the concepts and methods of both systems of thought without compromising the integrity of Christianity. In principle, one could approach the dialog from either side. One could raise the question of whether the dialog compromises the integrity of Marxism also. This question, however, will not be addressed here in any systematic fashion. Nonetheless, any glaring disparities

between the dialog and the historical reality of Marxism will warrant comment.

Another important clarification is that this study focuses on Christian-Marxist dialog. The author is aware of the customary distinction between Marxism and neo-Marxism. However, it is beyond the purpose of this study to address the possibilities of dialog between Christianity and various forms of neo-Marxism. There are three reasons for this. First and foremost, there is no body of literature on a distinctive Christian-neo-Marxist dialog to evaluate. Second, the boundaries of neo-Marxism are even less clear than those of Marxism, rendering it very difficult to define what neo-Marxist positions are. Related to these, there is the third problem of neo-Marxism's heterogeneity of sources. Allan Bloom explains:

> When one talks to Marxists these days and asks them to explain philosophers or artists in terms of objective economic conditions, they smile contemptuously and respond, "That is vulgar Marxism"....Vulgar Marxism is, of course, Marxism. Nonvulgar Marxism is Nietzsche, Weber, Freud, Heidegger, as well as the host of later Leftists who drank at their trough--such as...Kojeve, Benjamin, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre--and hoped to enroll them in the class struggle. (Bloom 1987: 220)

Bloom points to the diverse ingredients in neo-Marxism and the latter's questionable link with the Marxism of Das Kapital, Lenin, Mao--in short, the Marxism of the historical "Marxist" revolutionary movement. Therefore, since this study proposes to focus on the relationship between

Christianity and Marxism, it is best not to muddy the waters and address the hybrid and amorphous neo-Marxism.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the purpose of this study is to evaluate the Catholic-Marxist dialog's treatment of the issues mentioned, not to construct an original dialog. Therefore, references to Catholic and Marxist sources are for the purpose of evaluating the existing dialog. No attempt will be made to address systematically Catholic or Marxist positions on any of the issues discussed.

Sources

There are a number of bibliographies on Christian-Marxist dialog (Yule 1979; Vigor 1971; Stange 1968; World Council of Churches 1977; Mojzes 1987; Fletcher 1963; van der Bent 1969; Elliott 1988). Of these, those compiled by Yule, Vigor, Mojzes and Fletcher deal with questions of Church and State, the history of religion in the Communist world and the sociological role of religion in Marxist nations. The bibliographies compiled by Elliott and van der Bent, fortunately annotated, provided the basis for beginning the literature review. All works which specifically addressed the subject matter for this study were consulted. There are very few authors who can be identified as leading figures in the discussion of the issues discussed here. There are no works which have the focus of the present study. For the most part, the

literature review consisted in searching through dozens of books and articles to ferret out the relevant material. Nonetheless, a few works and authors do qualify as central, due to influence or substantive treatment of one dimension or another of the issues. For the exposition of Catholic thought, encyclicals were central, since they are the basis for what can be defined as Catholic social thought. For synthesis of the post-medieval tradition, I relied on the classic study of Heinrich Rommen, The State in Catholic Thought (1945). For philosophical depth, accordance with Catholic tradition and discussion of fundamental political and economic issues, I drew from the work of Yves R. Simon (1951; 1962; 1971).

In the Christian-Marxist dialog, Roger Garaudy (1966; 1968; 1970; 1974) has been the most enthusiastic and well published participant from the Marxist side. Garaudy and the Jesuit scholar Quentin Lauer wrote the only book which is literally a dialog (1968). As this work touched specifically on political and economic issues, it proved to be an important source. In addition, Giulio Girardi (1968; 1971) is a Marxist figure who has not only written on the subject, but was one of the few prominent Marxist thinkers to participate in the few organized symposiums on the dialog organized by the Paullus Gesellschaft in the 1960's. John Klugman (1968) and Paul Oestreicher (1969) have each written valuable syntheses which touch some of this project's

concerns. They also jointly wrote a further valuable study (1968). Rene Coste (1985) has written a very valuable work which stands out for its philosophical depth, particularly for its analysis of ethics in Marxist thought. In addition, Douglas Meeks (1989) has written a valuable book on theology and economics. While his approach differs from the more Thomistic approach here, Meeks has certainly advanced the Christian critique of capitalism and addresses Marxism in original fashion along the way. Dale Vree (1976) is responsible for one of the theoretical linchpins of this study, "synthetic dialog," and was important in helping the author understand the importance of conceptual taxonomy for one who would approach Christian-Marxist dialog. Finally, Robert Sokolowski's fresh contribution to the Thomistic understanding of faith and reason is of constant, underlying theoretical influence to the whole issue of Christianity and political philosophy.

The "theology of liberation" school of thought does not exhibit a great deal of theoretical differences in its treatment of the questions to be treated here. Moreover, this school of thought, when it does treat political questions, tends to do so rather broadly. That is because the focus of this school of thought is more on elucidating the broadly social dimension of the Bible. Nonetheless, no treatment of the dialog would be at all complete without reference to this school of thought. Gustavo Gutierrez

(1973; 1990) stands as the recognized, seminal thinker of this school, and his positions on the topic at hand will therefore be explicated. Jose Bonino (1976) is an important source because he explicitly treats the topic of the state. Alfredo Fierro (1977) serves as an excellent example of a thoroughly "synthetic" thinker. Charles Avila (1983) served as an important source because he has written an important work on the issue of property which attempts to integrate the Patristic writers and socialism. Philip Berryman (1985) is another author who has explicitly treated the concerns of this study from a liberation theology perspective.

CHAPTER II

PROPERTY

Property in Church History

The Christian distinction helps us to situate the issue of private property philosophically. Christian revelation does not attempt to define and regulate private property for the civil society. The specific laws which regulate property are to be determined by the civil society. In formulating these laws, Catholic thought believes the civil society must be governed by the natural law. The natural law is distinct from revelation in that it is knowable through the natural light of human reason. Therefore, in formulating laws surrounding the use of goods, Catholic thought believes that there is a legitimate pluralism to be found across different nations and cultures. However, this pluralism must exist within a fidelity to definitive moral principles. Given the importance of these principles in Catholic thought and their relevance to the Christian-Marxist dialog, some elaboration of the meaning of natural law and the specific provisions which govern property is necessary.

The Catholic teaching on natural law and the place of property within it have undergone historical developments. These shifts will help us to approach the Christian-Marxist dialog with more clarity. For didactic purposes, we can divide the historical epochs into four: Patristic (50-500

A.D.), Thomistic (the Middle Ages) Leonine (1891-1960) and contemporary (1960-present).

The Patristic teaching on private property stated without ambiguity that the common ownership of goods was a precept of the natural law. For those who push for Christian-Marxist synthesis, this is an often repeated position (Avila 1983). However, this teaching can and does lead to a great deal of confusion when it is not properly understood. The Fathers of the Church drew their understanding of natural law from the Stoics and Cicero, particularly the notion that nature itself is the source of the universal principles of justice and law (Carlyle 1950: 5). From Seneca, the Roman lawyers derived a notion of the theory of "the primitive state of innocence" which the Fathers adopted in all of its central tenets (Carlyle 1950: 25). This theory was based on the intuition that there was something intrinsically imperfect about many of society's conventional institutions, including private property. This insight was accompanied by the judgment that existing institutions were not in accord with the actual conditions of primitive human life (Carlyle 1950: 78). Seneca held that the human race, in its primitive state, held all things in common, dwelling in habitual peace and happiness (Carlyle 1950: 23). As time passed, the human race left this primitive state of innocence through the practice of vice, particularly avarice. No longer satisfied with common

possessions, people desired to hold goods in an exclusive way. This led to conflicts and the end of the state of innocence. The institutions which resulted, including private ownership, were adaptations to the perversion of human nature (Carlyle 1950: 25). The Fathers of the Church accepted this theory while superimposing the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of the fall of humanity, the latter expression having the properly theological status of an offense against God the Creator.

In the Patristic teaching, the natural law is that which characterized the original state of the human race. What is crucial to the understanding of the Patristic thinking is the specifically Christian understanding of history. They understood history to be divided into three parts: the original state, the state of sin, and the state of redemption (Von Balthasar 1978: 115). The Fathers universally held that private property did not exist prior to the Fall and hence was not a principle of the natural law. To paraphrase the Patristic view, what is natural is what was created by God. Since private property did not come into existence until after the Fall, it is not a part of the natural law. Rather, it is part of the law which governs fallen humanity, a principle of the law of nations.

A second dimension of Patristic thought worthy of mention is that, even after the Fall, the Fathers did not believe that possessions were, strictly speaking, necessary.

As a result, they often proclaimed a very radical doctrine which included a harsh denunciation of the division of humanity between the rich and the poor. Those who promote Christian-Marxist synthesis are fond of appealing to some of these radical statements, giving them a Marxist reading. For example, we have the statements of Saint John Chrysostom. The historian, Charles Bury, remarks, "Chrysostom interpreted Christianity in a socialistic sense." (Bury 1931: 142). Chrysostom called into question the most fundamental concept which private property introduced: mine. He wrote:

> But what is the meaning of "mine" and "not mine?" For, truly, the more accurately I weigh these words, the more they seem to me to be but words....Mine and not mine you will perceive to be but meaningless words. For use is common to all....For mine and thine--those chilly words--should be eliminated from that holy Church....Poor would not envy the rich, because there would be no rich. Neither would the poor be despised by the rich, for there would be no poor. All things would be in common....For that reason I have often laughed while reading documents that say: That one has the ownership of fields and house, but another has its use. For all of us have the use, and no one has the ownership.... Having received only its use, we pass to the next life bereft of its ownership. (Avila 1983: 85, 92)

In addition to their understanding of the natural law, the Fathers of the Church derived their understanding of property from Revelation itself. As a result, their writings and homilies present a radically <u>theistic</u> understanding of ownership. This theistic element is consistently interwoven with the doctrine of the natural law

in a manner which serves to buttress the positions taken by the latter. The belief that common ownership is a precept of the natural law is strengthened by what Clement of Alexandria called God's creative intention that humanity dwell together in "koinonia" or commonness of life (Avila 1983: 39). Clement wrote:

> It is God Himself who has brought our race to a koinonia, by sharing Himself, first of all, and by sending His Word to all alike, and by making all things for all. Therefore everything is common, and the rich should not grab a greater share.... "Why may we not make use of what God has manifested? I already possess them, so why may I not enjoy them? For whom have they been made if not for us?" Such words can come only from those who are completely ignorant of the will of God. (Avila 1983: 37)

In the medieval period, Saint Thomas Aquinas introduced some important theoretical shifts in the Christian understanding of natural law. These shifts, largely due to the influence of Aristotle's thought, caused a considerably decreased emphasis on the state of nature as the Fathers understood it. Whereas in the Patristic view the distinction between humanity's original state and present state is fundamental, Aquinas focused on the distinction between nature and what is beyond nature, grace. In Aquinas' teaching, the Patristic distinction between humanity before the fall and humanity after the fall no longer serves as the basis for defining natural law. Thomas explained natural law in the following way:

> Since all things subject to divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law...it is

> evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law....Now among all the others, the rational creature is subject to divine providence in a more excellent way, insofar as it partakes of a share of providence....Wherefore it has a share of the eternal reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end, and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law....[The] natural light of reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which pertains to the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the divine light. (in Baumgarth 1988: 20)

What is crucial in Thomas' definition is that the natural law is derived from reason, not revelation. Unlike the Patristic understanding, Thomas does not appeal to theological concepts such as "fallen man" to define the natural law. Therefore, Thomas' position is accessible, at least in principle, to those who do not accept Judaeo-Christian revelation. Because of his belief in a natural law which is distinct from revelation, Thomas established a basis for the articulation of political thought which is in conformity with revelation but not unique to it, while at the same time opening up a space for the political realm to have a legitimate autonomy.

Thomas takes up the thorny point of whether or not private ownership is or is not in accord with the natural law. First, nature itself can incline to it. Secondly, nature may merely <u>not bring in the contrary</u> (emphasis mine). Thomas states that the common ownership of possessions belongs to the natural law in the latter sense of the term. Thomas argues:

> Community of goods is ascribed to the natural law, not because the natural law dictates that all things should be possessed in common and that nothing should be possessed as one's own, but because there is division of possessions, not according to natural law, but rather according to human agreement....Hence the ownership of possessions is not contrary to the natural law but an addition thereto devised by human reason. (in Baumgarth 1988: 179)

Thomas' defense of private property must be carefully qualified. He asserts that two things are competent to man with respect to external goods: the capacity to procure and the capacity to use. With respect to the first, Thomas asserts that it is lawful for people to possess property; private ownership encourages proper labor and maintenance of goods, discourages the shirking of responsible work, and promotes order and peace among people. However, with respect to the use of external goods, Thomas says that people ought to possess external things <u>as common</u> (Baumgarth 1988: 177). This distinction between ownership and use was to remain an important philosophical principle in subsequent Catholic thought.

It is important to note the similarities and differences between Saint Thomas and the Patristic writers. Thomas agrees with the Fathers that private ownership was not a dimension of humanity's original state. Moreover, Thomas is strict in his insistence that the right of ownership is strictly subordinate to the need to satisfy human needs. Therefore, "whatever goods some have in abundance are due, by nature, to the sustenance of the poor"

(in Baumgarth 1988: 186). In addition, Thomas repeats the Patristic view that the division of material goods takes place through human convention and is not ordained by the natural law. In all of this, Thomas insures the evangelical radicalness of the Patristic views. On the other hand, Thomas differs from the Fathers in two noteworthy respects. First, Thomas does not argue that the common ownership (as distinct from use) of goods is a precept of the natural law; the law of nature did not prohibit private property. Secondly, Thomas is careful not to assert that it was sin which brought private property into existence. Thomas shared the Patristic view that private property was not a part of humanity's original state. He did not, however, maintain that in the absence of sin there would have been no private ownership. Thomas' position opened up the possibility for a more positive view of private property and a reconciliation of Christian doctrine with secular practice.

Thomas' teaching on the natural law became normative for Catholic teaching down into our own time. Nonetheless, some important shifts in emphasis are discernible. The Church did not deal with the Industrial Revolution and its effects upon society for some time. The groundbreaking document was the encyclical Rerum Novarum, which was issued in 1891 by Pope Leo XIII. In this encyclical, Pope Leo XIII reiterates the Church's commitment to the Thomistic teaching

in the context of responding to the twin problems of the Industrial Revolution and the challenge of socialism. In this document, Leo XIII placed more of an emphasis on the right of private ownership than on the common right to use. The encyclical says:

> With reason...the common opinions of mankind have found in...the law of nature itself, the foundations of the division of property, and has consecrated by the practice of all ages the principle of private ownership....The fact that God has given the earth for the use and enjoyment of the whole human race can in no way be a bar to the owning of private property. For God granted the earth to mankind in general, not in the sense that all without distinction can deal with it as they like, but rather that no part of it was assigned to anyone in particular, and that the limits of private possession have been left to be fixed by man's own industry....Our first and foremost principle, therefore, when we undertake to alleviate the conditions of the masses, must be the inviolability of private property....But when necessity has been supplied it is a duty to give to the indigent out of that which is over....It is a duty, not of justice, but of Christian charity - a duty which is not enforced by human law. (Rerum Novarum #7, 8, 12, 19)

We can see in this formulation that there is almost a reversal of the emphasis of Saint Thomas. Leo puts the right of private ownership first, without mentioning Thomas' belief that private ownership merely did not go against the natural law. Moreover, though Leo mentions the duty to allow the poor to use goods, this is merely out of charity, not out of justice.

In the encyclical Mater et Magistra, Pope John XXIII clearly restated that the common right to use goods is prior

to the private right to own, reversing the Leonine emphasis. The encyclical states:

> Concerning the use of material goods...the right of every man to use these for his own sustenance is prior to every other economic right, even that of private property...for it cannot be denied that in the plan of the Creator all of this world's goods are primarily intended for the worthy support of the entire human race. (Mater et Magistra, #43, 119)

In addition, with reference to the capacity of the State to define the limits of private property, John XXIII places more of an emphasis on the capacity of the State to curb private property privileges, by encouraging a wider distribution of property as well as some degree of public ownership of goods.

> As for the State, its whole raison d'etre is the realization of the common good in the temporal order. It cannot, therefore, hold aloof from economic matters....Now, if ever, is the time to insist on a more widespread distribution of property....It will not be difficult for the body politic...to pursue an economic and social policy which facilitates the widest possible distribution of property....This, of course, is not to deny the lawfulness of State and public ownership of productive goods, especially those which carry with them a power too great to be left to private individuals without injury to the community at large. (Mater et Magistra, #43, 119)

In the document Gaudium et Spes, Vatican Council II gave a strong approbation of John XXIII's teaching. Moreover, this Conciliar document places much less emphasis on the Leonine teaching that individual peoples have the right to set their own standards with respect to limiting property rights. The document reads:

> God destined the earth and all it contains for all men and all peoples so that all created things would be shared by all mankind under the guidance of justice....No matter what the structures of property are in different nations...we must never lose sight of this universal destination of earthly goods. (Gaudium et Spes, # 69)

In Populorum Progressio, Pope Paul VI echoed the same theme. Moreover, he seems to imply that, in addition to John XXIII's call for a wider distribution of property, all people have a right to own property. He wrote, "Now if the earth truly was created to provide man with the necessities of life and the tools of his own progress, it follows that every man has the right to glean what he needs from the earth." (Populorum Progressio, #22)

With respect to the primacy of the common right to use, Paul VI spoke with the strongest language. He used the expression "the primary finality" of common use and urged that the exercise of this right be concretized with urgency (Populorum Progressio, #22). All other rights, he argued, including the rights of property and the right to trade freely, are to be subordinated to common use (Populorum Progressio, #22). So central is the principle of common use for Paul VI that he said other economic rights should "actively facilitate its implementation" (Populorum Progressio, #22). He concluded, "It is a grave and urgent social duty to redirect them [the rights to own and to engage freely in economic activity] to their primary finality" (Populorum Progressio, #22, emphasis mine).

As opposed to Leo XIII's emphasis on the charitable nature of giving surplus goods to the poor, Paul recalls the radical teaching of the Fathers. He writes:

> Everyone knows that the Fathers of the Church laid down the duty of the rich toward the poor in no uncertain terms. As St. Ambrose put it: "You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich"....No one may appropriate surplus goods solely for his own private use when others lack the bare necessities of life. In short, as the Fathers ofthe Church and other eminent theologians tell us, the right of private property may never be exercised to the detriment of the common good. (Populorum Progressio, #23)

Pope John Paul II has continued the teaching of Paul VI in his encyclicals Laborem Exercens and Sollicitudo Rei Socialis. Moreover, he recalls the Thomistic principle that the very purpose of private property is that it better provides for the common destination of goods and that existing arrangements are to be evaluated by their service of this higher principle.

> It is necessary to state once more the characteristic principle of Christian social doctrine: the goods of this world are originally meant for all. The right to private property is valid and necessary, but it does not nullify the value of this principle. Private property, in fact, is under a "social mortgage," which means that it has an intrinsically social function, based upon and justified precisely by the principle of the universal destination of goods. (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #42)

With Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, Catholic social teaching has unambiguously recaptured the emphasis of St. Thomas.

Leo XIII, while maintaining the principles laid down by Thomas, had come close to reversing their relative priority, giving more attention to the natural right to possess property. Moreover, he emphasized the voluntary nature of redistribution which characterized the teaching of the Fathers. This emphasis gradually shifted until, with Pope Paul VI and John Paul II, we get a strong re-affirmation of the secondary nature of the right to own property and property's intrinsically social function.

The Dialog

The literature of the Christian-Marxist dialog suggests two broad approaches to the issue of property. The first, or synthetic position, argues that Marxist analysis is fundamentally correct and should be integrated into Christian thought. The second, or critical position, accepts one aspect or another of Marxist analysis but wishes to distinguish clearly the two positions. The latter position is one which maintains that, no matter how legitimate certain aspects of Marxist analysis may be, it does not follow that Christians should adopt Marxist socialism as the solution. It is necessary to explicate each of these positions in some detail.

The most fundamental critique of private property which has been launched by the synthetic dialog is that the fall

of humanity is essentially the same as the beginning of private property. D.B. Runcorn states this position:

> In the beginning man was created perfect; the Bible pictures him in a garden where everything is lovely. That is the thesis. Then man was tempted to eat of the tree of life, that is to acquire the private ownership of the means of production, and this led symbolically to the making of fig leaves. This was the antithesis for man could no longer face God and he had to leave the garden. From then onwards there were deep-set contradictions within man. (in Klugman 1968: 49)

The force of this argument is its parallel with the Patristic view. The Fathers believed that goods were held in common prior to the fall and that private property came in with the fall. Moreover, they did argue that avarice was the source of private ownership (Avila 1983). As Augustine put it:

> Thou didst first desire a farm; then thou wouldest possess an estate; thou wouldest shut out thy neighbors; having shut them out, thou didst set thy heart on the possessions of other neighbors; and didst extend thy covetous desires till thou hadst reached the shore: arriving at the shore, thou covetest the islands: having made the earth thine own, thou wouldest haply seize upon heaven...[He] pursues one thing after another, and nothing remains permanently with him. (in Deane 1963: 45)

This kind of negative view of ownership, which tends to see ownership itself as essentially avarice, is prevalent in the synthetic dialog (Avila 1983; Klugman 1968).

Continuing with Biblical themes, those who opt for Christian-Marxist synthesis allege clear parallels between Marxist views and those of the Old Testament prophets. Just as God condemned the avaricious landlords in the prophetic

literature, so will He condemn the owners in the capitalist society of today. Runcorn writes:

> The prophets would have agreed with Marx that history is to be taken seriously and that it is one of struggle, tension and dialectic....Micah foretells God's judgment on these wicked landlords and how their property will be seized and appropriated. "On that day," the owners will lament: "We are utterly ruined...among our captors he divides our fields." (in Klugman 1968: 47)

God's judgment against the landowners in the Old Testament is used to bolster Marx's contention that private property be done away with. Runcorn quotes Marx with approval:

> You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But, in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society. (Klugman 1968: 47)

Jose Miranda carries the analogy between Marx and the biblical warnings against wealth to the point of including Marx in the category of the Jewish prophets. Miranda writes, "Karl Marx belonged to the category of the prophets of Israel, and...both his messianism and his passion for justice originated in the Bible" (Miranda 1974: 373).

Charles Avila contends that the Marxist contention that there is a causal relationship between the prosperity of the few and the absence of property for the many is a feature of

the Patristic teaching as well. He quotes St. Ambrose to this effect:

> Look at the birds of the air. If there is enough produce from the abundance of the harvest for the birds of the air who do not sow, yet nevertheless Divine Providence gives them unfailing nourishment, then indeed avarice must be the cause of our need. [emphasis mine] (Avila 1983: 72)

Moreover, Avila quotes Ambrose in order to demonstrate that wealth is the moral cause of the misery of many:

> The whole people groan, and you alone, O rich man, are not moved...But perhaps you may return home and talk with your wife [who] will urge you to purchase female ornaments and finery with what you can free a poor man even at a small cost....Or do spacious halls exalt you, which should rather sting you with remorse, because, while they hold crowds they exclude the cry of the poor...You cover your walls, you strip men naked. He cries, and you are solicitous as to what marbles you will use to cover your walls. (Avila 1983: 65)

Avila is quite clear to point out that he is not merely referring to abuses of property and ownership, but to private property itself as the source of the injustices. He writes:

> Relative wealth is injustice. Indeed, when we come to examine their positions more closely, we see that it is not only private ownership in great abundance, but private ownership itself that is reprehended and proscribed. Private ownership caused poverty....The Fathers knew...that whoever owned land, privately, was necessarily the beneficiary of its produce, while the non-owners...received less than the full amount of that produce of their own hands....In other words, the unjust differentiation between rich and poor was the product of the expropriation of both the land and the labor power of the workers on the land....Evil, then, was necessarily at the root of private ownership. (Avila 1983: 138)

In addition to the ownership of property itself, private property rights have been interpreted to include private ownership of the means of production. Not only does the institution of private ownership introduce the distinction between the haves and the have-nots, it tends to exacerbate the gap between the two as the property owners acquire the means by which society produces economic goods. Those who are not owners depend on owners for their livelihood.

Roger Garaudy argues that private ownership of the means of production inherently deprives work of its specifically human character. What is unique to human work, Garaudy argues, is that it is accompanied by "a consciousness of its purpose, which becomes the law governing the movements which permit man to achieve it" (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 90). No longer forced merely to adapt to nature, the human transforms nature and in so doing creates a new future. This capacity is what distinguishes humanity from other animals at every point in history. Therefore, Garaudy concludes, the criterion by which all political and economic structures are to be evaluated is whether or not it renders it "possible to make man, each man, into a man, that is to say a creator, a center of historical initiative and of responsibility on all levels" (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 90). Based on this criterion, Garaudy contends that private ownership deprives work of its

human character. This is so for three reasons. First, the worker cannot be truly a creator, because it is the employer who determines the end of the work. Secondly, the worker loses the capacity to determine the means and methods of work, even to the point that a worker's activity is determined by a machine, "and a man becomes a mere fleshly appendage of a steel machine" (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 91). Third, private ownership deprives the worker of the product of his work. What is produced is a commodity which "no longer bears the mark of properly human creation" (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 91-92). A corollary of these arguments would seem to be that human labor becomes a commodity, bought and sold at a price relative to the price of the commodities produced by labor. Dehumanized work propels the worker into an inherently futile search to become fully human through consumption. As Garaudy puts it:

> He tends no longer to realize his humanity in his work, his production, his creation, according to the very law of man, but rather in consumption. It is that, I think, which characterizes the consumer model of capitalist societies, particularly American society with all the alienation and all the forms of dehumanization it involves. (1968: 92)

Garaudy concludes from the above that the abolition of private property is necessary to create a truly human society. Under the system of private ownership, workers cannot help but be alienated from their work (in the sense described above); wage labor is a type of slavery. Giulio Girardi links this to the biblical notion of sin (1968:

42). He argues, "Capitalism is the original sin. It is an offense against man, not against God. It does not consist in man refusing to serve but in the fact that he is enslaved" (Girardi 1968: 42).

Synthetic Christian-Marxism argues that it is necessary to transfer to society the ownership of the means of production. This sets the stage for abolishing the distinction between owners and non-owners and the end of the dehumanization of the laborer.

> The existence of social classes is uniquely bound to private ownership of the means of production. When the latter disappears so will the former....With the seizing of the means of production by society, the production of commodities is done away with and simultaneously the mastery of the product over the producer. (Coste 1985)

Proponents of synthetic dialog are aware of the ostensible difference of this call for socialism and the established Church teaching on the subject. At this point, those who take the synthetic position argue along two lines. The first line is to criticize the established Church teaching, particularly its connection with traditional Catholic moral and dogmatic theology. Alfredo Fierro criticizes contemporary political theology because "it presupposes faith in Christ, the values of the biblical tradition and the truths of church dogma" (Fierro 1977: 330). He argues that theology can no longer base itself on "the presupposition of a well grounded faith" (1977: 330). This cannot be because political praxis would serve as the

intermediary for the consequences of dogma, but not for "the genesis of faith" (1977: 330). This approach rejects out of hand a faith that would serve as an independent point of departure, because such a faith is allegedly asserted "without regard for anything outside itself" (Fierro 1977: 330). What is needed instead is an "historical-materialist faith," wherein the word faith becomes "an hypothesis, a proposition, and a wager about the ultimate future of truth and the ultimate verification of human praxis" (Fierro 1977: 331). With this definition of faith, Marxist Lucien Goldmann is willing to concede that Marxist historical materialism is also a faith. The result is a collapse of the Christian-Marxist distinction wherein the Christian takes his place "within the framework of a dialectical-materialist interpretation of history," which "does not necessarily rule out profession of faith and theological symbolization" (Fierro 1977: 422-423). Fierro concludes:

> Up to that point there is no difference between faith and atheistic dialectical materialism from the formal or structural point of view....Insofar as the future is concerned, both Marxism and Christianity constitute a faith and a hope rather than science or knowledge....As proposal, hypothesis and wager, the two are one and the same. (Fierro 1977: 422)

A second line of argument undertaken by the synthetic dialog has been to urge the Church's magisterium to evolve to the point of accepting socialism as the doctrine most in accord with the Church's ethic. For example, Garaudy asserts that the Christian-Marxist dialog should lead the

Church "to decide clearly to give clearance to both the word and the reality, socialism, the condition for the limitless deployment of man and of all men" (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 69). Garaudy does not suggest how the Church is supposed to reconcile its advocacy of socialism with its historical teaching on the subject. Charles Avila, however, argues that socialism is in fact the Patristic doctrine which only needs to be reproclaimed as the Church's most ancient teaching on the subject. Drawing from a range of Patristic sources, Avila concludes that the Fathers condemned private ownership as contrary to the law of nature. Quoting Saint John Chrysostom, who was in fact the most radical on the subject, Avila writes, "When one attempts to possess himself of anything, to make it his own, then contention is introduced, as if nature herself were indignant" (Avila 1983: 139). Therefore, Christianity in its earliest expression assumed the form of communism. In contrast to the prejudice of liberalism, Avila contends that, in the Patristic view, it was precisely the rejection of koinonia, or socialism, that Christianity had considered to be practically idolatrous and atheistic (Avila: 152-153). Sydney Lens adds that there is a tremendous irony that common ownership came to be identified with atheism, when it has a much longer history as a religious practice (Lens 1969: 144). However, Avila asserts that the early Christians comprised only a small percentage of the social

order of which they were a part. Therefore, they were unable to bring about a transformation of the socioeconomic system. Moreover, Avila alleges that the institutionalization of Christianity under the Roman Empire, wherein the Church began to own lands and assume power, prompted the Church to lose sight of the purity of the primitive teaching. He writes:

> [It] was inevitable that the essentially socialist content of their faith-vision would fade away.... Thus the message of the primitive Church and the Patristic philosophy of ownership, both of which contradicted the practices of the institutional Church, were progressively buried and forgotten.... In any case, now the early Christian socialist doctrine would become one of institutional Christianity's best-kept secrets. (1982: 153)

Joseph Ferraro develops the position that private property rights as understood in the West, particularly under capitalism, constitute a rejection of the social and economic thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas (Ferraro 1986: 13-19). Moreover, Ferraro chastises modern Catholic social doctrine because it defends private property over the social means of production and is "one of the staunchest defenders of the capitalist economy" (1986: 13). Ferraro argues that Saint Thomas held that natural law does not grant a right of private property. On the other hand, natural law does decree the common use of goods. Thomas' position logically implies that all people have the right to "relate themselves to the means of production" (1986: 14). However, Ferraro recalls Thomas' argument that private property is

not opposed to natural law, but is an addition to it under the category of positive or civil law. Governments do not have the right to subvert natural law via civil law. Therefore, the distribution of goods in a society cannot be allowed to impede the principle that human needs are to be satisfied by these goods (1986: 15). Governments, therefore, have the right and duty to utilize surplus wealth to provide for the needs of the unemployed. Ferraro writes, "The civil right to private property is annulled by natural justice which dictates the common use" (1986: 17). Ferraro suggests that contemporary Catholic doctrine defends the right of the individual to possess the excess wealth, as part of the established order, while Saint Thomas would have held this to be in opposition to that order (1986: 18).

Aside from the synthetic Christian-Marxist position, there are other authors who take the Marxist criticism of capitalism seriously, are sympathetic to the substantive positions advanced, yet back off from synthesis with Marxism. It is in the critique of capitalism that this more critical approach finds the best possibilities for dialog with Marxism. At the same time, many other principles of Marxist thought are not appealing to those who fall in this school of thought.

One of the fundamental differences between the critical approach and the synthetic position is that this position does not reject private property. The Fribourg Union, one

of the first institutionalized attempts to promote Christian - Marxist dialog from the Christian side, established that the dialog should take place within certain parameters, one of which would be the refusal to reject private property (Grelle and Krueger 1986: 8). Many writers are distinctly uncomfortable with a strictly Marxist view of property. Some of the reluctance comes from the official Church teaching on the matter, which has certainly distanced itself from the Marxist view. Moreover, beyond ecclesiastical pronouncements, many do not see the Marxist view as supported in the traditional Christian sources.

> Much of Jesus' teaching and life is about the right use of property. Jesus affirms possessions as good gifts of God necessary to human life. Jesus' affirmation of the possessions necessary for life is reflected in the Church tradition. The early Church theologians did not condemn possessions as such....Jesus is not trying to do away with property....(Meeks 1989: 116-117)

Despite their defense of the <u>principle</u> of private property, those who embrace the critical position are quick to distinguish their position from the unrestricted right of ownership characteristic of liberal thought. One participant in the dialog, Aarhus Workshop, points out that Christianity stresses communal values as opposed to possessive individualism, thus granting only a relative value to the right of private property (in Mojzes 1978: 67). Gustavo Gutierrez shows the essential link in Christian thought between property and human community. He writes:

> Private property has always been looked upon as the material setting for the exercise of personal freedom. But this freedom itself implies relationship. Private property derives from the right of all to the goods of this world and because it is meant as an aid to freedom that, as socially exercised, implies bonds with other persons. (Gutierrez 1990: 154)

Pope John Paul II has raised the same point in his teachings on the subject. The Pope speaks of a "social mortgage on all private property," which is an integral part of the Church's teaching (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis # 45). The failure on the part of the owners of property to fulfill this social mortgage to a sufficient degree prompts many in the dialog to continue to assert the view that there is a relationship of causality between the rich and the poor, even though they do not accept the Marxist interpretation of that causality.

Meeks and Runcorn have argued that civil societies have taken the natural, common right of use and transformed it into an exclusive, individual right. As Runcorn puts it, "The problem is that western capitalism wrote one side of the Church's formula into law and neglected the other half of the doctrine in its legal framework" (in Klugman 1968: 49) By doing so, the positive law has permitted an unjust distribution of goods that is contrary to the law of nature. Meeks traces this perversion of the natural law in modern times to John Locke. Locke, he argues, attempted to give exclusive property a grounding in natural law.

Locke wrote:

> Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own "person." This nobody has any right to but himself. The labor of his own body and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state of nature, he both mixed his labor with it and joined it to something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being removed from the common state Nature placed it in, it hath by this labor something annexed to it that excludes the common rights of other men. (Meeks 1989: 107-108)

In Locke's view, the purpose of government is to protect this exclusive right of ownership.

Philip Berryman (1985) attempts to solve the problem of property by placing it in the broader context of rights. He interprets John XXIII's Pacem In Terris as a presentation of a catalog of rights which has a "spiral form," beginning with the most elementary, "the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are necessary and suitable for the proper development of life, such as food, clothing and shelter" (Pacem In Terris #11). From these initial rights he proceeds to discuss moral, cultural and religious values. Berryman points out that, in the Pope's schema, economic rights, such as the right to work and to earn a wage capable of maintaining a family at "a standard of living in keeping with human dignity," have priority in "the order which should exist among men" (#20, #8). Nevertheless, Berryman asserts that it is the purpose of the Pope's doctrine "to overcome the antimony implied in the division of such rights" (Berryman 1985: 325). Berryman asserts that both liberal individualism and Marxist collectivism tend to

divide human rights, the former emphasizing the right of property and various civil liberties which have little impact for those who own nothing and have no work, while the latter respect the right to work and earn a living wage while denying other dimensions of the human person. As a result, neither of these philosophies "provides us with a satisfactory sense of the inviolability of persons in relationship and community" (Berryman 1985: 325). Therefore, Berryman turns to the Biblical motif of "covenant," implying a commitment on the part of all people to meet the needs of others and build community (Berryman 1985: 325). Though Berryman believes that Marxism provides an inadequate basis for situating property rights in society, he does believe that "the Marxist and Catholic traditions have a stronger basis for human living together, a clearer recognition of the role of society, and a sense of freedom that is broader than liberalism's freedom of choice for autonomous individuals" (Berryman 1985: 327).

It is worth noting that Berryman searches for a solution to the property problem in a concept drawn from revelation. Like many other participants in the Christian-Marxist dialog, Berryman is largely sympathetic to the Marxist critique of capitalism, yet does not accept Marxist solutions. The dilemma prompts him and others to find a solution to the problem in revelation. Along these lines, Douglas Meeks has perhaps the most developed argument of

all. Meeks begins by asserting that the modern, Western concept of the right of private ownership is "the ability and right to possess, use, manage, gain revenues from, consume, waste, alienate and destroy property" (Meeks 1989: 110). Meeks would like to reconstruct this understanding by retrieving the social implications of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinitarian God is a community of persons in which the identity of each person is defined by a relationship of self-giving; self-possession is self-gift. Meeks recalls the concept drawn from the Cappadocians, "perichoresis," which refers to the mutual indwelling of the divine persons. Meeks writes, "According to this doctrine there is no absolute, exclusive right of any person in the divine community. Rather, everything is shared except each person's personal attributes and peculiar commissions" (1989: 112). On the other hand, the Western tradition reminds us that each member of the Trinity is a "persona," that is, "a distinct person with unique characteristics and a nonexchangeable individual existence" (1989: 112). With this understanding of person and community, Meeks sees a social doctrine of property which does not sacrifice either the individual or the community, which understands property as a <u>gift</u> (Meeks 1989: 117). Gift is here understood as in contrast with commodity. Property understood as gift is always on the move, which is to say that the gift is not removed from circulation but passed on for the purpose of

building up the community. Gifts create human ties, set up relationships of interdependence which oblige both giving and receiving. Such an understanding respects the role of the individual, who gives according to his or her capacity and in a manner unique to the individual. At the same time, property is also seen as having a communal character. The understanding of "giving" here is different from the more commonly used and restricted understanding of giving as a donation of one's excess property.

What is at the basis of Meeks' understanding is the Biblical and Patristic notion that all property is God's creation, that is, a gift from God. With this understanding of property, to give is not, as commonly understood, to hand over to others what is not "required" by market laws (since the receiver may be offering nothing in exchange). Rather, to give is to acknowledge the ontological status of property as God's creation, that is, a gift to all of us. To fail to give is to refuse to acknowledge the nature of property as God's gift to all. With this understanding we have a basis for saying that property as understood in capitalist society is somewhat an expression of idolatry. God is eliminated from the equation from the beginning; so is the natural law. Property becomes divorced from properly human relationships and is understood as a "commodity" to be bought and sold on a market. The dehumanization of property was best revealed by the buying and selling of slaves. Property in the

capitalist society is no longer understood as ordered to the buildup of community. To own means to take out from circulation the goods which satisfy human needs. The hungry have no claim on food; the homeless have no claim on shelter; the naked have no claim on clothing. The ultimate law governing property is the market, even in the face of serious human needs. This is idolatry in the Christian sense of the term.

Those who take up the critical position focus considerably on the actual workings of capitalism. They argue that ownership has in fact become overly concentrated. As we have seen, such a criticism can draw heavily from the established body of Church teaching. The Latin American Bishops have contributed strongly to this critique. They write:

> If workers do not succeed in some way in becoming owners of their work, every reform of structures will remain ineffective. Even if workers receive higher wages in some economic system, they will not be content...They really want to be owners and not sellers of their work. (Oestreicher 1969: 240)

Quentin Lauer argues that a system of ownership which allows the few who own to control the lives of those who do not is intolerable. He rejects the liberal argument that capitalism leads to freedom (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 156). Such a position cannot be merely assumed but has to be established by the existing evidence. Sam Aaronovitch argues along the same lines:

> The system of private property in the means of production of wealth...produced a contra- diction. It led directly and inevitably to inequality. Not everyone...could be a capitalist....Most had no choice but to be workers...A man without property in things loses that full proprietorship of his own person which was the basis of his equal natural rights. (in Klugman and Oestreicher 1968: 103)

Evaluation

The synthetic dialog is open to criticism on a number of important counts. The focus here is the compatibility of the arguments raised with the Catholic tradition and the overall quality of the arguments raised. The first position in need of scrutiny is the notion that the introduction of private property defines the theological fall of humanity. Girardi's assertion that capitalism is the original sin is a somewhat crude statement of what is essentially the same argument. What one first notices is that the appeal to the theological category, the Fall, is not accompanied by an exegesis of the biblical texts as one might expect. Rather, the argument is rooted in the Patristic belief that goods were held in common prior to the Fall. As previously noted, the Patristic argument was largely a philosophical argument drawn from the Stoic belief in the original state of innocence. Thus, the Patristic assertion that private property comes into being with the Fall is an inference, not a strict statement of revelation. To claim that the establishment of property constituted the Fall of humanity would be a problem of revelation itself. Yet the arguments

advanced do not appeal directly to the sources of revelation. This is not to dispute the claim that private property did not come into being until after the Fall. However, it is quite another thing to assert that the establishment of private property constitutes the fall of humanity. One can hold the Patristic view and still believe that the establishment of private property was merely one of the consequences of the Fall, and even believe that private property itself is not reducible to sin, as Aquinas did. Therefore, to conclude that private ownership was the fall of humanity on the basis that property was held in common prior to the Fall is not justified. More evidence from revelation would be needed, and such evidence is not forthcoming.

There is an even deeper basis for rejecting the economic interpretation of original sin, however. Let us assume that the fundamental alienation of the human spirit is private property. By implication, the solution to the problem would be to re-establish social ownership. Bishop Gabriel Matagria writes:

> Marxism...defines man in the first instance in terms of production and consumption, and the surest proof of this is the fact that it thinks it has found in the organization of production and consumption the cause of the fundamental orientation which, if suppressed would set man free. (in Hebblethwaite 1977:106)

Such a view, however, cannot be squared with a Christian view of the human person and sin. Original sin is the

source of the inclination to moral evil within the human person. It is due to a free choice made by the person against the order intended by God. This created an interior disorder within the person. This disorder is an ongoing proclivity to choose contrary to the moral order intended by God. The interior disorder, the mystery of sin, in some sense precedes any particular sinful act. Sin is deeper than and ontologically antecedent to specific sinful acts. Therefore, violations of a natural virtue such as justice do not define or exhaust the reality of sin. In the Christian view, therefore, injustice is best understood as a result of humanity's sinful condition and not its cause. Sin is meaningful only in relation to what is beyond the natural world: God. Injustice in the order of nature does not assume the character of sin until faith acknowledges the world and the moral order as created by God. In this context alone does sin assume its character as a violation of relationship with God. Revelation tells us that humanity chose to reject God and thereby lost its original state of nature. Afterward, humanity must labor to live justly under the burden of the inclination toward sin. Sins of injustice associated with property are best seen as results of original sin. To call private property original sin would be to blur the Christian distinction and, by implication, reduce humanity to the level of nature alone. In the synthetic Christian-Marxist view, the understanding of sin

in the Christian sense disappears, as well as any dimension of the human person beyond the material. Man is reduced to being a consumer of goods without any transcendent vocation; or better, the transcendent is immanentized and provides the basis for an historical struggle to eliminate the injustices caused by private property.

We have uncovered here the fundamental wrongheadedness of the synthetic Christian-Marxist view of the role of property. Such a position cannot square itself with Christianity's historic self-understanding. To collapse the supernatural into the natural, to locate the origin of sin in private property and to see ongoing sinfulness as the playing out of the original sin is to attack the very nature of Christian revelation itself. This is seen strikingly in the works of synthetic Christian-Marxists such as Fierro and Miranda. Fierro believes that we can define Christianity as a "wager about the ultimate future of truth and the ultimate verification of human praxis." (1977: 330) Therefore, the Christian "must take his place within the framework of a dialectical-materialist interpretation of history without necessarily ruling out profession of faith and theological symbolization." (1977: 331) Behind the words is a redefinition of Christianity as primarily oriented toward changing property. To define Christian faith in terms of future historical arrangements of property and the struggle to create them denies the Christian distinction which

defines the faith in terms of a "future" which is not a part of human history and a "praxis" which is divine, not human. Moreover, the dialectical-materialist interpretation of history is in clear opposition to the Christian view. The latter views the Incarnation as the centerpiece of history. God enters into our humanity so that we might participate in His divinity. The dialectical materialist view denies the Christian worldview and seeks humanity's destiny within human history. What authors such as Fierro and Miranda actually do is use terms such as Incarnation, Redemption, and Cross as mere symbols of the historical transformation. Christianity is turned outside-in. The divine becomes reduced to a symbol of the future where private property is changed to public property. The supernatural is understood in terms of the natural instead of the other way around. Where the authentically Christian view grants nature and human history an integrity of their own within the context of faith, synthetic Christian-Marxism grants integrity only to nature and human history and eliminates the Christian distinction.

The failure to distinguish the natural and supernatural is common in the Christian-Marxist dialog. While Avila's argument about the socialistic nature of Patristic thought is forcefully made and well documented, it too fails to make this important distinction. Avila is correct to interpret the Patristics as viewing private property as contrary to

natural law. However, this is not the same as to conclude that socialism is a moral imperative of the Patristic view. As previously explained, the natural law in Patristic writing has a specific meaning, different from the Thomistic definition, which came later and which the Church adopted as normative. The Patristics understood natural law to mean that which characterized the state of humanity prior to the Fall. For the Fathers, all of the conventional institutions of society entered after the Fall and were brought in by the Fall. This does not mean, however, that life under these institutions is inherently sinful. "Contrary to the natural law" must be distinguished from "sin" in the Patristic view, at least to a certain extent. If this were not the case, it would not just be difficult, but impossible, to live a holy life within society. While it is true that the Fathers valued monastic life and viewed it as superior to life in the world, there is no indication that they held such a pessimistic view of life in society.

How, then, are we to interpret the radical statements which the Fathers no doubt did make? It may well be the case that certain Fathers, particularly Saint John Chrysostom, did indeed believe that common ownership should actually be implemented. To the extent that they did, however, it must be interpreted as part of their vision of faith. The ideal life for the believer is to hold all things in common and to renounce individual possessions.

This must be distinguished from "socialism" as we understand it, which is a political and economic ideology. The Fathers exhorted people to live out the consequences of their faith. They were not attempting to impose an ideology for the civil society. At the very least, there is no evidence to indicate that the Fathers made distinct political efforts to transform their statements about ownership into legal standards for the civil society. As Hans Urs Von Balthasar clarifies, the Patristic teaching is that the Church is not charged with leading the present age into the "coming" by external means. "Therefore, the early Church was uninterested in modern economic communism" (Von Balthasar 1983: 114). This view is supported by leading scholars in the field. Augustinian scholar Herbert Deane stated that Augustine did not encourage the view that possessions and other earthly goods were evil in themselves (Deane : 1963: 43). Though private property is a consequence of the Fall in Augustine's thought, this institution, along with "the entire legal and political order, are divinely ordained as both punishments and remedies for the sinful condition of man" (Deane 1963: 96). Deane explains:

> Property...forms part of that earthly or temporal order which preserves eternal peace and sustains that earthly justice which is a vestige of God's true and immutable justice. Since these institutions are absolutely essential to man's life on this earth under the conditions created by sin and pride they must be guarded and respected even by those true Christians whose interest in earthly goods and possessions is minimal. (Deane: 1963: 104)

Therefore, Deane argues, when Augustine condemns existing property arrangements, claiming that those who use property wrongly possess it wrongly, we must interpret his use of wrong as moral and not legal (Deane 1963: 107). Figgis agrees. He sees it as altogether fanciful to suggest that "Augustine laid down a program on socialistic lines..for the Middle Ages." His condemnations are against human societies organized apart from God (Figgis 1963: 54-59).

The Fathers, it would seem, were giving moral exhortations to Christians to strive to imitate the legitimate ideal of communal ownership as far as possible under existing conditions and in accord with one's state of life. The exhortations were not strictly political in the sense of an attempt to implant socialism in the civil society. As a result, when believers chose to live together in community, they followed the Gospel ideal. Herbert Grant argues, in accord with Scripture itself, that the Jerusalem community did practice a kind of religious communism (Grant 1970: 268). This is not to say that the community struggled to have its communal way of life enforced by law in the civil society. Moreover, when the practice of early Christianity is examined as a whole, "no one seems to have suggested that Jesus' advice to the rich young man to give away what he possessed was to be applied generally" (Grant 1970: 268).

A central distinction between religious and secular communism is that the former is completely voluntary and, moreover, does not reject the validity of private property. When a monk or a friar makes profession of the vow of poverty, it is with full cognizance that what is being done is an entirely voluntary renunciation of a legitimate right. Secular communism, on the other hand, has always been compulsory and is based on the altogether different belief that private ownership is not legitimate in the first place. Grant concludes that "it is not possible to find in their (the Patristic writers) writings any advocacy of compulsory communal sharing" (Grant 1977: 113). Rather, the right to own private property was taken for granted (Grant 1970: 268).

Ferraro finds a Catholic theological justification for drawing closer to Marx in the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas. Ferraro's rendering of Aquinas is not itself the problem. Aquinas did clearly place common use above the private right to own property. Moreover, it is consonant with Aquinas' thought to argue that a principle of mere civil law cannot override a principle of the natural law. The problem is that Ferraro attempts to justify drawing close to Marx based on these positions. Ferraro claims that the state would have the right to redistribute excess property from the haves to the have-nots. This is a legitimate contention. How far the state can go in doing this and what its standard

of judgment should be are left unanswered by Ferraro. This will be taken up in a subsequent chapter on the state. For now, let it suffice to say that even if we concede a redistributive right to the state, we are a long way from "drawing close to Marx...in philosophy" (1986: 19). The redistributive state is not necessarily the Marxist state. If Ferraro has a way of demonstrating that it is, he does not tell us.

Ferraro gives an example of one of the flaws in the synthetic dialog: the tendency to draw close to Marxism based on the critique of capitalism. This is found also in the work of Garaudy. Garaudy argues in favor of a Christian-Marxism, yet never addresses the question of how Marxist societies fulfill any of the precepts of Christian social doctrine (Garaudy 1974). The truth of the matter is that Marxism is only one alternative to the critique of capitalism. A natural law approach allows one to criticize capitalism without "drawing close to Marxism." John Paul II, for example, believes that both Marxism and liberal capitalism are species of economism, which is to say that both systems overvalue the material aspects of life and thereby subordinate the spiritual life of humanity to material concerns (Laborem Exercens). It may well be the case that, due to its heavy emphasis on property, Marxism does not separate itself sufficiently from the philosophy of economic liberalism (Hebblethwaite 1977: 63).

Even on the socioeconomic level alone, it is not clear that Marxism follows from the rejection of capitalism. To clarify this point, let us concede that the private ownership of the means of production allows the few who own to control the lives of those who do not. Moreover, let us concede that, in the confrontation between liberal individualism and socialism, the decision must be for some type of socialism. With these concessions granted, there remains a huge problem for the synthetic position: does Marxism change the character of ownership such that property is truly given to the workers? As Quentin Lauer points out in his dialog with Garaudy:

> I fear quite sincerely that the distinction between private and collective ownership is, for the individual, largely a semantic one. Where it is still the small group which pays the wages that control the lives and destinies of the people, it is not clear what it can mean to the individual to be told that all is owned in common....It is interesting to speculate on the character of the ball bearings which he [the worker in a communist factory] makes. Are they personal in a way that capitalist ball bearings are not? (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 77, 95)

Lauer's point is well taken. Private ownership is criticized because it takes ownership away from the many. However, to inform workers that they are now "collective owners" of a factory does not necessarily change their status as non-owners. Proposed solutions to the problems created by private ownership of the means of production need to be examined to see if they solve the original problem.

Synthetic Christian-Marxist dialog has yet to fill this lacuna.

A second major flaw in Ferraro's argument is that he simply misreads the nature of Church teaching. He insists that the Church is something of a bulwark of capitalism. He asserts, "Capitalist labor relations, then, are considered a part of the order decreed by God" (1986: 13). He does not ground this conclusion in a survey of the relevant documents. In fact, one could argue that this is at best a misinterpretation of what the Church teaches. The Church has clearly stated that private property is not incompatible with the natural law, but it has never declared that private ownership, let alone "capitalist labor relations," was decreed by God.

The issue of the causal relationship between rich and poor in both Marxist and Patristic doctrine is perhaps the most compelling argument in favor of Christian-Marxist synthesis. It is the case that the Fathers made arguments along these lines. For example, Saint Irenaeus wrote:

> All of us receive a greater or smaller number of possessions from the mammon of injustice. Whence comes the house in which we dwell, the clothes we wear, the vessels we use and everything else that serves us in our daily lives if not from that which we gained either through avarice while we were yet pagans or through inheritance of what was unjustly acquired by pagan parents, relatives or friends. (in Von Balthasar 1983: 110)

Saint John Chrysostom issues the same challenge:

> Tell me, then, whence art thou rich? From whom didst thou receive it, and from whom he who

> transmitted it to thee? From his father and grandfather. But canst thou, ascending through many generations, show the acquisition just? It cannot be. The root and origin of it must have been injustice. Why? Because God in the beginning made not one man rich, and another poor....He left the earth free to all alike. Why, then, if it is common, have you so many acres of land, while your neighbor has not a portion of it? (in Schaff 1956: 447-448)

Of course, anyone acquainted with socialist thought cannot help but be impressed by the parallel between such statements and the position of socialism, which seeks to invalidate justifications for significant disparities in wealth. A full comparison and contrast between the two sets of teachings is beyond the pale of our concerns here. However, this much can be said. The causality posited by the Fathers is not related to any purely economic theory such as Marx's belief that owners of private enterprises necessarily appropriate value which is produced by the laborers. Rather, in the writings of the Fathers, the causality is simply that those who accumulate wealth while others go without impede God's design for the common destination of the produce which comes from nature. God has not authorized such appropriation while others lack necessities. The argument is essentially moral, and does not comment on the inherent virtues or vices of particular economic systems.

The Marxist position, on the other hand, does not turn on a moral argument, but on impersonal forces of economic life which are operative in history. Capitalist property and

relations of production cause divisions between the rich and the poor, regardless of the internal dispositions of people. As a result, both the diagnosis and the prescription for the cure are different from the Patristic outlook. The Fathers urge moral conversion, ending avarice, sharing resources and creating an economy which includes all. Marxists would reject such an outlook as a "voluntaristic" argument which would do nothing to change the material conditions of life. Though both positions would ultimately posit changes in society itself, the Patristic view espouses no specific arrangements which would serve as a solution. Marxists, on the other hand, hold that the solution lies in the correct arrangement of property, particularly the means of production. The Patristic view of this would not be compatible with the Marxist argument because the latter does not recognize the interior dimension of the problem. So long as avarice remains, the use of property will be unjust and will continue to divide people, even if some of the material problems are solved. This points to the deeper, underlying differences between Christianity and Marxism. The existing arrangement of property is not <u>the</u> problem, but one of the results of <u>the</u> problem.

The critical approach to Marxist-Christian dialog avoids a large part of the more objectionable features of the synthetic approach. The focus of the critical approach is to develop the critique of capitalism. This critique is

largely in accord with official Catholic teaching. The contribution here is to work out the critique of capitalism in a more detailed fashion than official statements do. Perhaps the greatest contribution which Christian-Marxist dialog has made has been to awaken Christians from their slumber, to recognize the lack of correspondence between Church teaching and the existing order. However, it is less clear that Marxism itself has a contribution to make to Christian thought. While participants in the dialog acknowledge a contribution on the part of Marx, it is not clear exactly what that contribution is beyond the kind of stimulus just indicated. The link between the critique of capitalism and Marxism itself is not explicitly made. There appears to be an assumption that, since both Christian social thought and Marxism criticize existing property arrangements, then they are both saying the same thing. Yet, it is unclear why the critique of capitalism cannot be thoroughly carried out by someone who has never read a word of Marx. The dialog needs to focus on the issue of whether or not Marxism itself has something directly to contribute to the content of Christian social thought, as opposed to stimulating Christians to ask certain questions.

Some of the proposed theoretical models for solving the problem of property also suffer from the distinction of planes problem. Berryman wishes to build a theory of property based on the Biblical notion of "covenant." Meeks

wishes to build a theory on the theological doctrine of the Trinity. Both sets of arguments are rich reflections for believers, and rightly contribute to the recognition on the part of Christians of how property should be used. However, this is not to say that such approaches constitute viable models for the civil society, nor that Christians should be involved in transforming the results of their spiritual reflections into civil law. It is not the purpose of Christian revelation to give Christian knowledge about how property rights should be civilly constituted. Moreover, to propose that the use of property in civil society should reflect the mutual indwelling of the Divine Persons lacks realism and bypasses the other theological truth that humanity <u>after</u> the fall must serve as the starting point for the construction of actual political societies.

Further dialog on this topic, while avoiding the criticisms made herein, would benefit from theoretical development of both Christian and Marxist concepts of property. Authors tend to treat "private property" and "the right of private property" as undifferentiated wholes. There is a distinction between the right to own a cherry tree in your backyard and the right to own half of the earth's oil reserves. The Church doctrine is in need of further clarification, in terms of distinguishing types of property as well as in clarifying the legitimate extent of

those various types. Quentin Lauer suggests the need for such theoretical development.

> With regard to the teaching of the encyclicals regarding "the right of private property," that is a doctrine which dies hard, and I think it is understandable that it should. Apart from the fact that it makes no distinction between private ownership of the means of production and the ownership of that which is inseparable from individual and family living, it is premised on a structure of society which has not evolved to the point where private property can be called a contradiction....What even Christian moralists are beginning to see, however, is that even "natural rights" are a function of the concrete structure of human relations and that, therefore, it is possible to think that what once was a right can cease to be one - when it fails to express the reality of that structure. (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 155)

A specific contribution to the development of a Christian theory of property can be found in the distinction between inclusive and exclusive property, suggested by Meeks (Meeks 1989: 99-127). This distinction is relevant because it acknowledges the traditional Christian belief that the common right to use (inclusive) and the private right to own (which can be exclusive). From here, it would be possible to develop a thorough critique of modern capitalism without employing a Marxist position. It is the absence of this kind of distinction which prompted people either to accept or reject an undifferentiated "right of private property." To frame the argument this way tends to encourage Christians to divide along capitalist or Marxist lines in ways which are not consistent with the history of Christian thought. The employment of this distinction might also help to

resolve the hopeless ambiguity of the concept of "collective ownership." A collectivity cannot purely and simply own in the sense of deciding how to dispose of particular goods. The decision to use property in certain ways is quite concrete and cannot be "collective" if one understands this in the sense of being in accord with the will of all the members of the collectivity. There might, however, be room within Christian theory for an inclusive concept of property which permits all to have access to the means necessary to live. Meeks argues that property rights were traditionally derived from human needs; property was a claim on the necessities of life. The fundamental justification for property is that human needs cannot be met without such a claim. Most societies have agreed that there is an exclusive right to basic consumable items necessary to live. I must ultimately have a right to exclude others from the food I eat and the clothes I am wearing today. In addition, there is a claim on resources, land and capital, which are needed for livelihood, to produce and to create. As Meeks puts it, "This is a personal right not to be excluded from the use and enjoyment of what it takes to live life in the community or the polis" (Meeks 1989: 104). Meeks argues that modern capitalism constitutes a threat to any notion of an inclusive right to property. As he puts it:

> The kind of property necessary to the logic of the market is the right of an individual or corporation...to exclude others from use or

> enjoyment of something. Only exclusive rights can be marketed. The right not to be excluded from use or enjoyment of something, cannot by its very nature, be marketed. This second right virtually dropped out of sight. (Meeks 1989: 108)

Of course, the task of translating such a concept into the modern world is another task, far more difficult than acknowledging the legitimacy of the concept itself.

On the Marxist side of the dialog, George Lukacs argues in a manner quite similar to this, wishing to claim it as a Marxist insight. He writes:

> For Marxists the possession of consumer goods to satisfy human needs is the condition sine qua non of self-realization. Personal property is however not the same as private property; its nature is to contradict the monopolist character of private property which excludes the property of others; it is not identical with the private ownership of the means of production....Does it [private ownership] guarantee the development of the personality in circumstances in which big, impersonal monopolies control the major sectors of the capitalist economy? (in Curran and McCormick 1986: 308)

Lukacs's distinction between personal and private property opens up space for the kind of distinction Meeks makes between exclusive and inclusive property. It is not clear, however, that Marxist socialism resolves the problem. It is not clear that Marxism has itself recognized, as Lukacs suggests, that "the possession of consumer goods to satisfy human needs is the condition sine qua non of self-realization." The question, unanswered by Lukacs, is how Marxist societies intend to guarantee this understanding of

self-realization. Nonetheless, this is a potentially fruitful line of dialog which should be pursued.

CHAPTER III

PROPERTY AND COMPETITION

Development of Catholic Teaching on Property and Competition

The privatization of property leads to competition for property. While this is an inherent feature of any society wherein the individual right to own is recognized, it is particularly true of capitalist societies wherein private property rights are more or less absolute and the state plays a minimal role in the ownership of productive resources. In fact, in capitalist societies, competition for property serves as the very basis of economic life. This has been clearly recognized and addressed by both Catholic social thought and Marxism. Before we proceed to consider the Christian-Marxist dialog's treatment of this essential point, we will need to consider first the established Church teaching on this topic.

The development of modern capitalism in the eighteenth century, accompanied by the philosophy of classical liberalism, launched an historical process which confronted the Church with new moral dilemmas. In particular, competition for property, always looked upon with reserve by the Church, had become the basis for economic life. The law of competition had led to what the Church had always feared. Successful competitors bought out unsuccessful ones, leading to mergers and takeovers and the accumulation of ownership

in the hands of large, privately owned corporations. This competitive drive was unabashedly fueled by the profit motive. Saint Thomas asserted that to exchange for profit "is justly deserving of blame because...considered in itself, it satisfies the greed for gain, which knows no limit...tends to infinity...[and] does not imply a virtuous or necessary end" (in Baumgarth 1988: 196). Moreover, capitalist development tended to create social disharmony and conflict. Catholic political philosophy perceived society as an "organic unit," which is to say that differences in function among the various elements in society were seen as parts of a body, all working together to promote the common good (Rommen 1945: 123-153). Capitalism tended to discard the Catholic sense of the common good and replace it with a model of atomized individuals pursuing their own private goods, under the Smithian assumption that an "invisible hand" would create a common good. The exclusivist and absolutist doctrine of private property tended to undermine the organic concept of society and created conflicts between owners and workers and, in parallel fashion, between owners and non-owners. Central to the consideration of these new and sometimes complicated historical developments is the fact that, according to Pope John Paul II, "the issue of ownership of property enters from the beginning into the whole of this difficult historical practice" (Laborem Exercens #63). In

other words, in the Church's view, it is precisely the issue of property which is at the heart of societal tensions created by modern industrial capitalism.

The Church has consistently expressed the criticism that competition leads to the centralization of ownership. John XXIII declared that "it is today advisable ...that work agreements be tempered in certain respects with partnership arrangements so that workers and officials become participants in ownership...or share in some manner in profits" (Mater et Magistra, #32). Where there are medium and large enterprises which are capable of financing replacement and expansion from within, granting to workers a share in ownership is particularly appropriate (Mater et Magistra, #75). The reasoning behind this position is that production itself always requires labor. All that is produced, including the industrial plant itself, requires labor. It would be unjust for some to claim ownership of a plant and arrogate to themselves all that is produced (Mater et Magistra, #76).

Beginning with John XXIII, the Church emphasizes the global dimension of accumulation and the widening gap between rich and poor which capitalism promoted. In Populorum Progressio, Pope Paul VI noted that, between the rich and poor nations, "the imbalance grows with each passing day" (Populorum Progressio, #8). Twenty-two years later, Pope John Paul II said that perhaps even the word

"gap" is inappropriate, since it could give the misleading impression of a stationary phenomenon (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #22). In fact, John Paul II laments that the rate of progress has differed in a manner which has caused the gap to widen (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #14).

As to the solution to the problem, the Church believes that the law of competition in markets must be replaced by the natural law wherein the proper role of the human intellect's capacity to order rationally economic life in the interests of the common good is recognized. Therefore, Pope Pius XI rejected the ideology which states that competition in open markets is "better able to control economic matters than any created intellect" (Quadragesimo Anno, #88). In practice, Church teaching has encouraged widespread ownership as the solution to concentration, as well as state regulation and some role even for state ownership. Pius XI wrote:

> Free competition and still more economic domination must be kept within just and definite limits, and must be brought under the effective control of the public authority, in matters appertaining to the latter's competence. The public institutions of the nations must be such as to make the whole of human society conform to the common good. (Quadragesimo Anno, #110)

The Church has addressed some of the specific economic mechanisms which function so as to absolutize private property rights and thereby work against the common good. The first is investment. In the conciliar document Gaudium et Spes, the bishops declared that "investment...should be

directed to providing employment and insuring sufficient income for the people of today and of the future" (Gaudium et Spes, #70). Moreover, the Church proposes an increase in "disinterested aid" to help poor nations develop (Mater et Magistra, #170-171). By "disinterested aid" the Church means aid which does not attempt to rob poor nations of their sovereignty, especially their capacity to choose their own course of economic development (Mater et Magistra, #170-171). Paul VI called for a world investment fund to promote the economic development of Third World nations (Populorum Progressio, #51-53).

Another mechanism whereby the Church has seen private ownership take precedence over the common good is in the area of trade relations. In classical liberalism, the theory of comparative advantage developed by David Ricardo stated that each nation should specialize in the production of those products which it can produce with relative efficiency with respect to inputs. Each nation should then buy the products which it cannot produce efficiently. The prices of products are to be determined by the law of supply and demand. Here again, the Church has found liberalism to be an inadequate regulator of economic life. One of the problems with the theory is that it treats existing comparative advantages as givens and ignores the fact that they were often historically created, particularly by colonialism, leading to the proverbial "banana republic,"

when a nation depends mostly on the sale of one primary product to engage in international trade. Paul VI commented:

> It is true that colonizing nations were sometimes concerned with nothing save their own interests, their own power and their own prestige; their departure left the economy of these countries in a state of precarious imbalance--the one crop economy, for example. (Populorum Progressio, #7)

Another problem which poor nations experienced as the result of economic liberalism was that of institutionalized inequity in trade relations. Under what is commonly referred to as "free trade," poor nations have sold primary products in largely competitive markets, where competition keeps prices low, and purchased manufactured products in relatively non-competitive markets, where prices are kept high. The result over time was a deteriorating trade relationship and increased debts.

> Highly industrialized nations export their own manufactured products, for the most part. Less developed nations, on the other hand, have nothing to sell but raw materials and agricultural crops. As a result of technical progress, the price of manufactured goods is rising rapidly and they find a ready market. But the basic crops and raw materials produced by the less developed countries are subject to sudden and wide-ranging shifts in market price; they do not share in the growing market value of industrial products....Thus the needy nations grow more destitute, while the rich nations become even richer. (Populorum Progressio, #57)

The solution which the Church proposes is that prices should be subject to rational regulation aimed at promoting the good of all nations. Paul VI says:

> Here again international agreements on a broad scale can help a great deal. They could establish general norms for regulating prices, promoting productive facilities, and favoring certain infant industries. Isn't it plain to everyone that such attempts to establish greater justice in international trade would be a great benefit to the developing nations, and that they would produce lasting results? (Populorum Progressio, #61)

Closely related to the problem of fluctuating prices for primary products, which disproportionately affect poor countries, is the problem of exchange rate fluctuation. The value of currencies themselves is set by the law of competition. As with the prices of their products, poor nations find the value of their currencies subject to devaluation far more severe than that faced by the rich nations. As John Paul II points out, "The world monetary and financial system is marked by an excessive fluctuation of exchange rates and interest rates, to the detriment of the balance of payments and the debt situation of the poor countries" (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #43). Again, the Church calls on the public authority at the international level to prevent such excessive fluctuation. Paul VI also called on the conscience of the Westerner. He asked, "Is he prepared to pay more for imported goods, so that foreign producers may make a fairer profit?" (Populorum Progressio, #47).

A closely related concern of the Church is the issue of production for profit. Essentially, under the capitalist

economic system, private property holdings are used to expand private property holdings. This is not to say that no socially useful functions are served. Nevertheless, the underlying motive of production is to make a profit. As a result, goods which are needed to serve the needs of the community will not be produced unless owners project that a profit can be made. This is to say that, under capitalism, the common destination of goods is a subordinate principle to that of the individual right to aggrandize private property holdings. This leads to large-scale negative consequences at the macroeconomic level, which are essentially the same as those traditionally associated with absolutizing private property rights. John Paul II laments:

> As we view the whole human family throughout the world, we cannot fail to be struck by a disconcerting fact of immense proportions: the fact that while conspicuous natural resources remain unused there are huge numbers of people who are unemployed or underemployed and countless multitudes of people suffering from hunger. (Laborem Exercens, #87)

Paul VI rejects the notion that profit should be the taproot of economic progress. He does not hesitate to refer to this as a "tyranny" (Populorum Progressio, #26). With reference to the supremacy of the profit motive, he writes, "Such improper manipulations of economic forces can never be condemned enough; let it be said once again that economics is supposed to be in the service of man" (Populorum Progressio, #26).

One of the worst effects of the profit motive on the determination of what, when and how productive resources will be used is that it tends to set labor and capital in opposition to one another. We recall the principle that the end of all resources, whether their origin be entirely from nature or the result of nature transformed by human work, is to serve the needs of all. Private ownership of productive resources is not intended to interfere with the service function of productive resources. It follows from this that ownership of resources and working with the resources are meant to exist together in harmony. As Leo XIII put it, "Each requires the other; capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital" (Rerum Novarum, #15). So long as there is the proper respect for the natural law, labor and capital will have a harmonious relationship. When the profit motive becomes dominant, however, the accumulation of capital becomes an end in itself, thus severing the natural bond with labor. Under the profit system, labor becomes a commodity to be rewarded, not according to human needs, but according to its capacity to produce profits in a competitive market. The entire history of capitalism, including the present day phenomenon of capital flight to Third World nations, has been a search to find cheap labor. In this the Church has found an exploitation contrary to the moral order. Indeed, it was the condition of the working classes under industrialized

capitalism which prompted the beginning of what was to be a series of encyclicals on the subject. Leo XIII wrote:

> Public institutions and the laws have repudiated the ancient religion. Hence by degrees it has come to pass that working men have been given over, isolated and defenseless, to the callousness of employers and [their] greed...so that very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses...a yoke little better than slavery itself." (Rerum Novarum, #2)

With respect to the labor-capital split which the profit motive engendered, John Paul II has attempted to spell out again the principles which would undergird a labor-capital unity in accord with the natural law. He restates the ancient notion that it is through work that one acquires property in the first place. This holds true whether one speaks of gleaning crops from the soil or producing huge manufacturing plants. Capital itself is the result of human work.

> Furthermore, in the Church's teaching, ownership has never been understood in a way that could constitute grounds for a social conflict with labor....Property is acquired first of all through work in order that it may serve work. This concerns in a special way ownership of the means of production. Isolating these means as a separate property in order to set it up in the form of "capital" in opposition to labor...is contrary to the very nature of these means and their possession. They cannot be possessed against labor, they cannot even be possessed for possession's sake, because the only legitimate title to their possession ...is that they should serve labor and thus by serving labor that they should make possible the achievement of the first principle of this order, namely the universal destination of goods and the right to common use of them. From this point of view...one cannot exclude the socialization, in certain circumstances, of certain means of production. (Laborem Exercens, # 65. Emphasis mine.)

The Dialog

The synthetic dialog has tended to focus on the issue of the concentration of ownership in capitalist society. Many thinkers see capitalism itself as leading to accumulation on a world scale; the normal outcome of the workings of international capitalism, through trade and investment operations, is to keep some nations in a servile state of poverty, while others are enriched. The participants who have argued this position at some length are Roger Garaudy and Gustavo Gutierrez. Since their views have been influential, they will be summarized here.

Garaudy argues that underdevelopment in the Third World is the logical result of direct foreign investment on the part of huge capitalist conglomerates (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 161). These investments, in Garaudy's view, have an "objective law," which is to earn profits. Therefore, their intention is not to develop the host country. The results of the process, according to Garaudy, have been deplorable. The first consequence of direct foreign investments (DFI) is to deform the economy in which they are made. Historically, the deformation has taken the form of creating economies which have a heavy emphasis on agricultural products and raw materials. The logic is simple. During the ages of formal imperialism and colonialism, investors from the European centers were not interested in creating competitors in their colonies. Moreover, the market for most of the manufactured

products was to remain within the developed world. Therefore, investments were mostly extractive in nature, i.e. removing agricultural products and raw materials at low cost. This historical practice is still largely responsible for the fact that up to 90% of exports of many Third World nations consists of primary products (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 160-162).

Third World nations which rely on the sale of a few primary products in the international economy face serious disadvantages. First of all, they are at the political mercy of buyers. Having to rely heavily on the sale of a few products in order to receive the foreign exchange needed to engage in foreign trade, Third World countries can be successfully undermined by concerted action on the part of industrialized powers. The United States, for example, has successfully altered the political course of Latin American nations by boycotting or significantly reducing its imports of Latin American products. Chile and Nicaragua stand out as the two most conspicuous examples of this phenomenon. A second problem is that the pattern of trading leads to ever increasing balance of payments difficulties, a "permanent commercial imbalance" (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 162). One of the central factors in creating this problem is the fact that the prices of raw materials are less stable and relatively lower than those of manufactured goods; this is due to the more competitive markets which exist for primary

products. An exacerbating factor is the fact that profits made from investments tend to be exported out of the nation. Far more capital is exported out of the Third world than imported into it. As Garaudy puts it, "For every dollar invested in Latin America the monopolies bring back two to the United States" (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 163). A third problem is that DFI, even when it is in the manufacturing sector, does not generate "linkages" with the local economy of the host country; the investment tends to be an enclave which is supplied by sources outside of the country and sells its products to buyers in other nations. For example, an investment in an auto manufacturing plant in Brazil will not serve as a major stimulus to the Brazilian economy aside from the creation of some jobs and a boost to the rubber industry. The technology and the expertise is mostly imported and most of the buyers of the auto will not live in Brazil. In conclusion, the net effect of global trade and investment practices is to concentrate wealth in the developed nations. As the Congress of Latin American economists put it:

> Direct foreign investment produces effects which are unfavorable to the accumulation of capital and to the balance of payments, they have a deleterious influence on foreign trade, and they result in the subordination of national enterprises. (in Lauer and Garaudy 1968: 169)

The thought of Gutierrez is along the same lines as that of Garaudy. Gutierrez accepts the fundamentally imperialist orientation of the advanced industrial

countries. However, Gutierrez emphasizes that the role played by the Third World nations as colonial appendages of the European powers is a decisive element in the internal political and economic development of Third World nations. In fact, he argues that the effects of that relationship are still very much with the Third World nations. Drawing heavily on the "dependency school," as articulated by Frank (1968), Gutierrez emphasizes the effect of the Third World's incorporation into the global economy on its internal development (Gutierrez 1973: 84-88). Gutierrez believes that previous analyses of imperialism focused too much on the "centers" of capitalism in the West and believes that the analysis of global accumulation must center on factors internal to the Third World. Specifically, Gutierrez urges theorists to focus on the analysis of social classes within the Third World, particularly the way different social classes are affected by the nation's incorporation into international capitalism. Gutierrez believes that international capitalism generates wealth at one pole and poverty at the other. He summarizes his view as follows:

> For one can have recourse to the idea of dependence as a way of explaining internal processes of the dependent society by a purely `external' variable-not readily identifiable but omnipresent which is regarded as a cause....But only a class analysis will enable us to see what is really involved in the opposition between oppressor and oppressed. To take into account only the confrontation between nations misrepresents and in the last analysis waters down

> the real situation. Therefore the theory of dependence will take the wrong part and lead to deception if the analysis is not put within the framework of the working class struggle. (Gutierrez 1973: 87)

Therefore, according to Gutierrez, the competition of global capitalism has created and tends to perpetuate the division of the world not only into rich and poor countries, but rich and poor even within nations.

Not all participants in the dialog take the more radical approach of Gutierrez and Garaudy. The critical approach to dialog emphasizes the concentration of ownership as a moral problem, the relations of dominance and dependence as manifestations of sin. This line of argument, however, is theoretically the same as the position treated in Chapter II: sin is manifest in the concentration of wealth, but not reducible to it. Therefore, this aspect of the critical dialog will not be belabored here.

Competition and Class Struggle

A central Marxist theme which has taken up a good deal of attention in the Christian-Marxist dialog is the negative effect that private property has on social unity, particularly under advanced capitalism. Marx believed that private ownership of the means of production "brings in its train the final paroxysm of the class struggle" (Coste 1985: 18). Marx asserted that the economic value of any commodity was reducible to the labor which went into its manufacture. In the production process, laborers produce value and are

reimbursed in the form of wages. The wages, however, are less than the value of the goods produced. The difference between the total value of the goods produced and wages is what constitutes profit. This profit is inherently exploitative in Marx's view, because profits by definition represent what is taken from the worker. This process by which workers produce more value than they receive in return generates capital. One of the implications of this is that capital is "congealed labor" (Curran and McCormick 1986: 234).

According to Marx, such a situation causes an inherent antagonism between owners and non-owners. This economically rooted conflict is at the basis of capitalist society. The conflict is the foundation which alone explains the prevailing system of judicial and political institutions. Moreover, the conflict generates the philosophical and religious beliefs, all of the ruling ideas of society. This entire superstructure of ideas and institutions is arrayed against the non-owners because it legitimates the existing economic exploitation. For that reason, Marx argued, "The proletariat will use its supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state" (Coste 1985: 145). So fundamental was the theory of class struggle to Marx's thought that Engels said of him:

> It was precisely Marx who had first discovered the great law of motion of history, the law according

> to which all historical struggles...are in fact only the more or less clear expression of struggles of social classes. This law...has the same significance for history as the law of the transformation of energy has for natural science. (in Coste 1985: 145)

Synthetic Christian-Marxist dialog wishes to make the theme of class conflict thematic for Christianity (Gutierrez 1973: 87). The basis for doing so is that conflictual social relations are a fact. When dealing with the empirically verifiable, the Christian must accept the reality and not take refuge in a hypothetical world which does not exist. Theological reflection must be grounded in the historical facts. As Gustavo Gutierrez puts it:

> The Latin American reality, the historical moment which Latin America is experiencing, is deeply conflictual. The Latin American Church is sharply divided with regard to the process of liberation. Living in a capitalist society in which one class confronts another, the Church, in the measure that its presence increases, cannot escape--nor try to ignore any longer--the profound division among its members....[The] polarization of options...has even placed some Christians among the oppressed and the persecuted and others among the oppressors and persecutors, some among the tortured and others among the torturers. (Gutierrez 1973: 137)

With the fact of class struggle established, synthetic dialog argues that theological reflection must take the conflict into account. The reflection, however, is not to be a neutral one. Neutrality is impossible (Gutierrez 1973: 273). In fact, it is precisely participation in the struggle for socialism which is the epistemological key to sound Christian thought. As Gutierrez puts it, "Theology is

a critical reflection on praxis" (1973: 13). The goal of theological reflection is to find an orthopraxis, or valid action (1973: 12). Only "a sufficiently broad, rich and intense revolutionary praxis...can create the conditions for fruitful theory" (1973: 90).

Synthetic dialog is anxious to show that such a position must be carefully distinguished from advocacy of the class struggle in the sense of creating the class struggle. Those who choose to take up the cause of the oppressed do not create violence out of what was peace. The injustice and violence are already present. Gutierrez writes:

> To ignore it is to deceive and be deceived and moreover to deprive oneself of the necessary means of truly and radically eliminating this condition- that is, by moving towards a classless society. Paradoxically, what the groups in power call "advocating" class struggle is really an expression of a will to abolish its causes, to abolish them, not cover them over, to eliminate the appropriation by a few of the wealth created by the work of the many....It is a will to build a socialist society, more just, free, and human.... To "advocate" class struggle, therefore...is to recognize that the fact exists and that it profoundly divides men, in order to be able to attack it at its roots and thus create the conditions of an authentic human community. (1973: 274)

Synthetic Christian-Marxists are very concerned to address the issue of unity in society. As they see it, such a unity can only be created by changing the institution of property. A consistent theme of the Christian-Marxist dialog is that it is false and hypocritical to speak of

unity without addressing the cause of disunity, namely, the maldistribution of goods.

Christian-Marxists view illusory appeals to unity as rooted in ideological presuppositions which are false. First among these is the liberal ideology which sees capitalism as creating a division of labor which is in principle harmonious. As Roelf Haan puts it: "When an utterly divided class society is treated in such a way that the fundamental fact which determines almost everything that happens in society is overlooked because of the harmony model of 18th century Enlightenment thinking, the theoretical consequences are disastrous" (in Vanderbilt 1982). This argument closely parallels the traditional Marxist suspicion that the appeal to ideals such as charity is an ideological tool which in fact serves to maintain the existing injustices and blame societal turmoil on the rebellious victims of injustice. For example, with respect to "free trade" ideology, one author remarks:

> We have shown what sort of fraternity free trade begets between the different classes of one and the same nation. The fraternity which free trade would establish between the nations of the earth would not be more real; to call cosmopolitan exploitation universal brotherhood is an idea that could only be engendered in the brains of the bourgeoisie. (Coste 1985: 154)

It is not, however, only liberal ideology which comes under fire in the synthetic Christian-Marxist dialog. Christian-Marxists claim that Christians have allowed

theological notions, particularly Christian charity, to be employed to stifle the struggle for justice. The Church has, moreover, allowed its social teaching to be consigned to the dusty shelves of libraries while it has supported the status quo (a view shared by many others who do not accept the synthetic position). In particular, it is argued that the Church has neglected the explicit teaching of Aquinas and the Fathers that the distribution of economic goods should be reordered toward their primary finality: to satisfy the needs of all (Gutierrez 1990; Ferraro 1986).

The Christian-Marxist critique is here similar to the critique against liberalism: the Church speaks of unity in ideal terms while ignoring the concrete reality of the struggle for the more just distribution of goods. Since there is in fact no unity either in the Church or in society, it is misleading and illusory to speak in such terms. Althusser suggests that the Church be converted to serve the propertyless and the landless in the class struggle. He writes:

> For this to happen it would be necessary that the myth of the Christian community disappear, for it prevents the recognition of the division of society into classes and the recognition of the class struggle. One can foresee serious divisions occurring in the Church precisely around the theme of the recognition and the understanding of social classes and the class struggle, the recognition and the understanding of a reality which is incompatible with the peculiarly religious myth of the community of the faithful and the (catholic) universality of the Church. (in Gutierrez 1973: 277)

Gutierrez argues that the Christian community need not be mythical. The issue is to transfer the idealistic and ahistorical conception of community to the concrete, historical level. This is accomplished by making a real commitment to fight injustice and establish a truly unified, socialist society. This approach, however, will not come easy to Christians. He writes:

> We Christians, however, are not used to thinking in conflictual and historical terms. We prefer peaceful conciliation to antagonism and an evasive eternity to a provisional arrangement. We must learn to live and think of peace in conflict and what is definitive in what is historical. Very important in this regard are collaboration and dialog with those who from different vantage points are also struggling for the liberation of oppressed peoples. (Gutierrez 1973: 137)

What happens to the universality of Christian commitment when class struggle becomes the way of life for the Christian? The synthetic position is that the universality of Christian charity is arrived at only through <u>particularity</u>. Without particularity, universal charity becomes a mere abstraction which conceals complicity with the existing order. In the real, historical context of class struggle, to love one's enemies implies recognizing that one indeed has class enemies. In order to incarnate love historically, one must liberate the exploited class from its condition of exploitation. Thus, to participate in the class struggle, far from being contrary to charity, is the necessary condition for making such love incarnate in

the world. Fierro argues that Marxists have a sound basis for reproaching Christians on this point. He writes:

> Who are you [Christians] to love both the oppressed and the oppressor? How is it that possible? So long as the material conditions allowing for the implementation of moral ideas are not present, the ideals proclaimed by you Christians are mere alibis. (Fierro 1977: 232)

The Christian response to the Marxist challenge is no ambiguous abstract love for all. As Girardi puts it:

> One must love all, but not in the same way. One loves the oppressed by liberating them from misery; one loves the oppressors by liberating them from their sinfulness. Love must be class love in order to be truly universal. (Girardi 1971: 94-96)

Proponents of the synthetic position realize that the redistribution of property will not come about without opposition. Political struggle is, of course, necessary. This brings us to a particularly controversial aspect of the "competition for property": violence. The synthetic position seeks to legitimize the use of violence in order to bring about social revolution. Alfredo Fierro articulates this dimension of Christian-Marxist thought. Echoing Marcuse's call to laborers to seize the means of production and bring them under collective control, Fierro writes:

> The only way to subvert the dominant powers of oppression is to oppose them with an antagonistic power. Conflict and clash between powers--in a word violence--is inherent in any serious social change. When Marcuse proposes an ethics of revolution, he means by that an ethics of violence....[A] distinction between a theology of revolution and a theology of violence is untenable. (Fierro 1977: 202)

Those who embrace a synthetic Christian-Marxism are aware that statements such as these do not echo official Church teachings on the subject, either in their call to revolution or their call for the Church to become a political instrument to establish socialism. They deal with this apparent difficulty by pointing out that, as with the case of the class struggle itself, violence is not to be understood as one choice which can be contrasted with another choice for peace. The violence is already present. As Jurgen Moltmann says, "The problem of violent action versus nonviolence is a false problem. The only real issue is between justified and unjustified violence." (in Fierro 1977: 206)

Even though all participants in the Christian-Marxist dialog do not accept the synthetic position, there does exist a broad consensus that an economic system based primarily on competition divides society and that class conflict is a fact which cannot be denied. Moreover, as Archbishop Lehmann of Mainz, Germany argues, there are certain situations when Christian ethics would indeed demand one particular course of action. As he puts it:

> There can undoubtedly be situations in which the Christian message allows only one course of action....In these circumstances, an attitude of unconditional neutrality in political questions contradicts the command of the Gospel and can have deadly consequences. (in Gutierrez 1988: 78)

What does divide the synthetic position from the critical approach to dialog is that the latter embraces "a

preferential option for the poor" which is not defined in Marxist terms. The term itself seems to have originated from the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops held in Medellin, Columbia in 1968. This conference was a watershed for the Latin American Church and, to a significant extent, for the Church universal. In this conference the bishops denounced the existing distribution of goods in an unprecedented fashion, calling it a "sinful situation" and explicitly acknowledging the Church's own need to convert its ways. The bishops called on the Church to embrace poverty as a commitment through which one voluntarily assumes the conditions of the needy of this world in order to bear witness to the evil which it [poverty] represents (Medellin Documents: Poverty of the Church, #5). From the perspective of actually being poor, following in the way of Christ, the Church can more strongly denounce the unjust distribution of this world's goods as well as the sin which causes it (Poverty of the Church #5).

The commitment to the poor is understood as a re-establishment of the order of justice, not class struggle per se. The goal is organically to order the power and finances in favor of the common good (Poverty of the Church #7). This commitment was strongly reaffirmed eleven years later at the Puebla conference. Again, the bishops made it quite clear what they saw as the obstacle to the common good in their part of the world.

> Economic liberalism and its materialistic praxis offer us an individualistic view of the human being. According to it, the dignity of human persons lies in economic efficiency and in individual freedom. Thus, closed off in themselves and often locked into a religious notion of individual salvation, people of this view are blind to the demands of social justice and place themselves in the service of the international imperialism of money. Associated with them in this service are many rulers who forget their obligations to the common good. (Puebla #311)

The proper response of the Christian, according to the documents of Medellin and Puebla, is the "preferential option for the poor, an option aimed at their integral liberation" (Puebla #1134). The latter expression, "integral liberation," refers to liberation at both the spiritual and sociopolitical levels. The bishops argue that integral liberation is a component of Christian evangelization. They write:

> The best service we can give to our brothers and sisters is evangelization, which disposes them to fulfill themselves as children of God, liberates them from injustices, and fosters their integral advancement. (Nielsen 1989: 6)

Evaluation

The synthetic position, as espoused by Garaudy and Gutierrez, argues that capitalism inevitably creates a division of society and even the world itself into rich and poor; capitalism generates wealth at one pole and poverty at the other. Moreover, capitalism itself lacks effective redistributive mechanisms and thus tends to perpetuate poverty and maldistributuion of resources. Therefore, the

argument goes, the capitalist system must be replaced by a socialist one.

In order to evaluate this line of argumentation, it is important to distinguish various components of the argument. Unfortunately, those who have advanced the argument do not assist one in making some relevant distinctions. Nevertheless, one can rightly inquire, "What are the assumptions upon which the argument is based?" Secondly, we can identify an explanatory component of the argument; there is an attempt to explain the causal factors behind an observeable phenomenon, namely, the highly skewed distribution of wealth in the world. Third, there is a normative component to the argument; capitalism has created an intolerable situation in the world and must be replaced by a system which will remedy the existing injustices.

Why is it that those in the synthetic dialog do not make these distinctions clear? Since the issue itself is not addressed in the literature, the answer can only be speculative. One reasonable response is that those who adopt the synthetic position believe that the assumptions, the explanation and the normative evaluation hang together so well that there is no real need to divide them into separate analyses. Yet, it is quite plausible that an analyst might take different positions with respect to these various components. For example, one might assume that capitalism is the superior method of organizing economic

life, yet also believe that human greed has prevented capitalism from fulfilling its capacities to serve the common good. Moreover, one might agree that the present situation is morally unacceptable, yet hold that capitalism itself does not explain the existing maldistribution of resources. The point is not to establish that there is one correct way of pulling together the assumptions, explanations and normative evaluations, but merely to point to the importance of making these distinctions and to suggest that the dialog does not make it clear what compels human reason to assume that capitalism is inherently exploitive, that it explains existing poverty, and that it is morally unacceptable. There is no clear demonstration of the validity of the assumptions, no real empirical demonstration that capitalism is the causal factor behind poverty, and no real moral argument beyond the assertion that capitalism must be wrong, based on the assumptions and claims that have been made about it. One gets the impression that the synthetic position is very much a package deal. The authors do not show those who are not already committed to their position what compels human reason to adopt their assumptions, explanations and moral judgments. One is left with a choice which is really akin to making an act of faith. In the absence of clear demonstration, one is left with either believing or unbelieving, it would seem. If this is the case, then the

synthetic position would profit from asserting that the position is ultimately an act of faith. Those who do not make the required act of faith are left to remind others that the synthetic position's conclusions about capitalism are not distinguishable from the assumptions. Moreover, the moral evaluation is not distinguishable from the assumptions.

Future research in this area would benefit from empirical investigation of the extent to which capitalism causes poverty on a global scale. Certainly the argument has a strong impressionistic value. Yet, we need to ask some serious questions about it. For example, "What would have happened to the Third World had there been no foreign penetration?" More than one possible response needs to be considered. Certain countries may have indeed done better, but there is no compelling reason to believe that all nations would have. Even if we were to conclude that capitalism is essentially exploitive, it would not follow that the Third World would in fact be better off today without it. In short, dependency theory must be treated as a theory which may or may not have explanatory power. Of central theoretical significance is to bear in mind that the debate over dependency theory is essentially an <u>empirical</u> one. Therefore, one cannot validly arrive at a normative evaluation of global capitalism by assuming dependency theory. To do so is to assume a conclusion.

Another fundamental theoretical flaw in the synthetic position is that there is no distinction between the economic and the ethical (Coste 1983). It is certainly the case that the Catholic tradition would wholeheartedly support the position that economic life must conform to ethical norms. However, when ethical claims are made, the moral criteria behind them need to be brought out into the light of day. The synthetic position fails to do this. The result is that one is not sure whether one is being presented with a predominantly moral or economic argument, or both. For example, if one is told that owners exploit workers, or that rich countries exploit poor ones, one can legitimately ask if these are moral or economic claims, or both rolled into one; is "exploitation" an empirical description or a moral evaluation? It appears that the two dimensions are interchangeable in the synthetic dialog. The economic component is that owners extract wealth from workers, or that rich nations extract wealth from poor ones. The moral component of the argument appears to be that this extraction is unjust; the poor people and the poor nations have the legitimate fruits of their labor and resources taken away from them.

Two problematic assumptions lurk in the depths of this kind of reasoning. First, the argument assumes that any relationship between worker and owner is a zero-sum game. By definition, wage labor involves the transfer of wealth

from the laborer to the owner; wage labor itself is inseparable from what defines exploitation. Therefore, the possibility that workers and owners can both profit from common economic activity is excluded. The "analysis" of capitalism which takes place is no more than working out the implications of the assumption. All empirical results are explained in terms of the assumption. Therefore, the conclusion that capitalist competition causes a concentration of wealth was really assumed from the beginning. Empirically, this cannot suffice as an explanation of the concentration of wealth, because there is no test for a causal relationship between capitalism and concentration of wealth independent of the assumption that there is such a causal relationship.

Exactly the same kind of problem exists with respect to the reasoning which leads to the moral condemnation of the process of accumulation. Again the conclusion is presupposed by the assumption. Profits are defined as the absence of remuneration for wealth produced by the worker. The workers are therefore only partially compensated for what they produce. This is evaluated as unjust, but we are never given any criteria which define injustice beyond the assumption that this is indeed the case.

In the future, Christian-Marxist dialog would benefit from refusing to accept assumptions, conclusions and normative evaluations as a package deal. To continue to do

so would be to compromise the dialog as a dialog. Literature of this kind merely serves the purpose of reinforcing those who have made certain acts of faith, but says little to those outside. Yet the very nature of dialog is that it seeks to build bridges rather than to create islands. It is entirely possible to make moral criticisms of capitalism without resorting to the categories of Marxist analysis. Moreover, this latter approach would potentially involve a broader range of Christain thinkers. Moreover, it would help us to focus on properly ethical criteria by which economic life can be evaluated. Only then can one hope to clarify what kinds of cooperation Christians and Marxists can have.

With respect to the issue of competition among social classes, the synthetic Christian-Marxist dialog runs into problems both in terms of history and philosophy. The first problem to be considered is the way the relationship between labor and capital is characterized. Synthetic dialog sees the relationship as antagonistic because owners extract value which is produced by the workers. Thus, workers struggle to recover the value which has been extracted from them, while the owners resist this because it would entail a loss in profits. Politically, this struggle translates into the effort to eliminate the legal structure which supports their exploitation. The development of history depends

upon the willingness of the workers to assume this political task.

It is useful here to consider the contribution of John Paul II's encyclical, Laborem Exercens, to the issue of capital-labor relations. This document invites dialog with Marxism in a very fundamental way. According to Baum, the Pope invites this dialog particularly in his assertion that the "principle of the priority of labor over capital" is "a postulate of the order of social morality," parallelling Marx's assertion that capital is congealed labor (Curran and McCormick 1986: 36). This implies that capital is produced by labor in both the capitalist and socialist systems; according to the Pope's thinking, socialism of the Soviet and Eastern Europe variety is really state capitalism (Curran and McCormick 1986: 237). The moral offshoot of the principle of the primacy of labor is that capital should serve labor. The Pope writes:

> [Property] is acquired first of all through work in order that it may serve work. This concerns in a special way ownership of the means of production. Isolating these means as a separate property in order to set it up in the form of "capital" in opposition to "labor"...is contrary to the very nature of these means and their possession....They cannot be possessed against labor, they cannot even be possessed for possession's sake, because the only legitimate title to their possession...is that they should serve labor. (in Williamson 1985: 384)

Worthy of note here is an expansion of the traditional argument in favor of the right to common use of goods; common use does not derive only from distributive justice,

but from the very nature of the means of production as the product of common labor.

A further aspect of John Paul II's teaching, the priority of the subjective character of work, also invites comparison with Marx's teaching. According to the Pope, "man always remains the subject of work" (Curran and McCormick 1986: 239). What the Pope means by the "subjective" dimension of work is derived from the Biblical understanding of humanity as having dominion over the earth (in Williamson 1985: 379). This dominion is not only objective. The labor process must preserve not only the fact of dominion (which may well be realized by technology) but the fully human sense of exercising dominion, of being a creator. There exists the real possibility that under modern conditions of labor, particularly when industries are capital intensive, that workers can lose the sense of exercising dominion and acquire in its place the sense of being reduced to slavery to the machine (Williamson 1985: 378). These papal positions with respect to the priority of labor and the need to preserve humanity's dignity in the work process certainly invite dialog with Marxists. Baum believes that the Pope's perspective is biblical, humanist and not at odds with Marx's thought (Curran and McCormick 1986: 234-235). Yet, both the Pope's own words and the logic of his thought do criticize Marxism on the labor issue. Recall that, according to the Pope's view, what

labor produces is capital, whether or not a particular society calls itself "capitalist." Moreover, the moral imperative the Pope pronounces is that capital must serve labor; if it does not, the worker is exploited, even if the society terms itself "socialist."

> [Reforms] cannot be achieved by an apriori elimination of private ownership of the means of production. For it must be noted that merely taking these means of production (capital) out of the hands of their private owners is not enough to ensure their satisfactory socialization....We can speak of socializing only when the subject character of society is ensured....(in Williamson 1985: 385)

What the Pope is suggesting here is that exploitation of workers takes place whenever workers are deprived of that subjective sense of exercising dominion discussed above. Capitalism has no monopoly on the exploitation of workers.

The papal position points to one of the larger problems of synthetic dialog, namely, that Marxism does not itself solve the moral problem of work. Marxism helps us to see the morally ambiguous nature of industrialization which has taken place under capitalism, but it conveniently ignores the evidence of exploitation of workers in Marxist societies. It is not at all clear that the Pope's call for the maintenance of the subjective character of work has been well realized by Marxist states. Marxist apologists often argue that the historical abuses are not intrinsic to Marxism. Nonetheless, the political process envisaged by Marx, especially the dictatorship of the proletariat, does

nothing to prevent the ongoing exploitation of workers, even when real material progress is made. Therefore, the moral problem of capital being used against labor is still very much with us under both capitalist and Marxist auspices.

A further shortcoming of the Christian-Marxist dialog is that there is a tendency across the board to emphasize the economic dimension of life to the point of forgetting human needs which are specific to a Christian worldview. Though economic development is itself a good thing, history reveals that there are moral evils which frequently attend it. Under both capitalism and Marxism, humanity tends to lose sight of non-material needs. The synthetic Christian-Marxist dialog in particular fails to mention that "people are in need of symbols that unite and direct them and of a spirituality [emphasis mine] that harnesses their interiority" (Curran and McCormick 1986: 234; emphasis mine).

Synthetic dialog on the issue of class struggle also runs into the problem of failing to recognize the distinction of planes. Gutierrez best reflects this trend in his argument that theology is to be a "critical reflection on praxis" (Gutierrez 1973: 6). This critical reflection has two central focuses: present praxis and the future which is hoped for. In this approach, common in the Christian-Marxist dialog (Vree 1976), the contents of history and the future are implicitly treated as

sources of revelation. History becomes the process of liberation which "emphasizes that man transforms himself by conquering his liberty throughout his existence and his history in a single salvific process" (Gutierrez 1973, X). While Gutierrez nowhere denies a transcendent dimension to Christianity, his notion of Christianity as a single salvific process is problematic. If one accepts the view of Gutierrez, it follows that political developments become part of salvation itself. The possibility that humanity could make economic and political progress and yet regress spiritually does not fit in well with this notion of a "single salvific process." In order to be in accord with a Christian view, one must admit the possibility that material development can accompany spiritual decay and that spiritual growth can accompany tyranny and poverty. It would seem that Gutierrez's argument does not accord with Paul VI's restatement of the traditional Christian view. In his Credo of The People of God, Paul VI writes:

> We likewise confess that the Kingdom of God, which had its beginnings here on earth in the Church of Christ, is not of this world, whose form is passing, and that its authentic development cannot be measured by the progress of civilization, of science or of technology. (in Flannery 1982: 394)

Therefore, there is no "single salvific process" which includes both theological salvation and political development. Rather, there are two interrelated but distinct planes; those seeking salvation in the theological sense will be concerned with promoting justice in the

temporal order, but will not confuse that justice with salvation.

The shortcomings of synthetic dialog are also manifest in the argument that Christians must take sides in the class struggle. The necessity of Christian participation is grounded in the contention that class struggle, far from being the tenet of an ideology, is a simple historical fact. From there, one considers that the relative poverty of the working class is the result of injustice; therefore, the struggle of the working class is a just struggle. Given the justice of the cause, the argument proceeds to contend that Christian love must become incarnate, which in this case means embodied in the commitment to liberate the exploited class.

It may be quite true that the struggle between classes is an historical fact. At least, Christianity need not commit itself to disputing the point. This reality does indeed strongly ground the contention that theorizing about social justice from a Christian standpoint cannot safely bypass this reality. However, one legitimately distinguishes between the fact of class struggle and the acceptance of the Marxist interpretation of that conflict; the fact of class struggle is not the same as a systematic doctrine of class struggle understood as a part of a process of historical liberation. Moreover, it would seem that there is more than one way of manifesting one's commitment

to the poor. Those who work for reform, press for higher wages or try to create more jobs through legislation are surely not denying the political reality of class competition, but are not engaged in any revolutionary process. The synthetic position too quickly assumes that acknowledging the reality of the class struggle leads to the acceptance of the Marxist sense of that struggle. This in no way denies the principle enunciated by Archbishop Lehman that there can be occasions when the Christian message indeed allows only one course of action and that to be neutral in such a case would contradict the Gospel. The issue in such a case, however, would be the response to a moral imperative and not an ideological one.

Similarly problematic is the contention that participation in the class struggle is incumbent on the Christian because Christian love must be concrete and particular. Again the conclusion does not follow from the acceptance of the premises. It is first of all necessary to clarify what is meant by being concrete and particular. If the words are taken in their typical sense, that is, without Marxist overtones, then there are surely many ways of particularizing love and commitment to the working class without engaging in revolutionary praxis. Is not Mother Teresa of Calcutta particular and concrete in her love for the poor? This is not to suggest that all Christian action must take the relatively apolitical form of Mother Teresa's

work, merely to argue that there is more than one way of being concrete and particular in one's love. In addition, the synthetic position itself runs the serious risk of rendering love abstract in its pursuit of class struggle and its acceptance of violence. Does not violence against someone constitute a formidable threat to the love of that individual? The synthetic position is stuck with the difficult argument that to kill someone is in fact an expression of love for that person. In a strict case of self-defense the argument in favor of the use of violence can surely be made. However, the synthetic position must bear the weighty burden of establishing that to kill the members or representatives of a particular social class precisely on the basis that they are members of that class is an expression of love for them. The burden of proof is weighty, because we normally assume that we do not inflict violence on persons because they belong to or represent a particular group of people. Such an approach does not allow for moral differences which may well exist among the members of the targeted class and thus unleashes the potential for indiscriminate killing. Perhaps there are other factors which can be brought to bear to buttress the synthetic position, but the literature itself does not answer this objection.

In addition to the aforementioned problems, the synthetic position is characterized by yet another

fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, the synthetic position treats the human evils which create class struggle as givens. Authors such as Gutierrez urge us to forego theorizing which is not grounded in the existing reality of violence. On the other hand, we are to believe in a future in which the oppressors are liberated. The question which arises is, "Where is the evil going to go between now and the time of liberation?" In order to be consistent, the assumption would have to be that evil is going to be transformed. This is surely an astounding assumption coming from those who have just told us to abandon our pious theorizing about the possibilities of peaceful resolution of class struggle. The argument of Gutierrez appears to jump from an overstatement of the consequences of original sin to an underestimation of its consequences. The result is that the real doctrine of original sin is lost in the shuffle.

In order to elaborate this point more fully, let us return to one of Christian thought's foundation stones, namely, what is referred to in this paper as "the Christian distinction." The distinction between God and the world, or nature and grace, will always forcefully remind us that the evil which exists in the world is the result of human choice, not human nature itself. Christianity informs us that God created humanity as good, that nature has an integrity and goodness of its own (despite the fact that it is contingent). Therefore, human nature itself cannot be

the ultimate source of evil; evil is introduced into human affairs by the free choice of human persons. This perspective will always prompt us to see the evils of our political life in a certain light. On the one hand, we can never throw up our hands in the face of evil; evil is not inevitable in the sense that no one is responsible for it and that it cannot be undone. On the other hand, Christians can never ignore the fact that original sin blinds humanity and continually makes its presence known; for that reason Christians should not expect utopia this side of death. It seems that the failure of the synthetic dialog lies precisely in that it misses both of these points. On the one hand, those who synthesize Christian and Marxist approaches throw their hands up in despair about the possibilities of reforming the private property system so as to create more justice for the poor. Then they proceed to tell us that their pessimistic evaluation of humanity does not apply to the future. At best, their arguments leave unanswered the question of why we are to believe that human affairs are going to be free of the evil which is presently irreformable. Is class struggle a moral purgation which will eliminate evil from the world? If so, and if the history of humanity is the history of warring classes as Marx suggests, then why have the previous class struggles accomplished nothing in the way of eliminating evil from human affairs? There is unfortunately no appeal to any

recognizable Christian theme which can adequately explain this projected turn of affairs. Moreover, one's confidence in the strength of the thinking of authors such as Gutierrez is not bolstered when the evidence he does produce is that of "the great social revolutions" which purportedly give us some inkling of what we have to look forward to. Gutierrez writes, "It was above all the great social revolutions, the French and the Russian (emphasis mine)...together with the whole process of revolutionary ferment that they initiated which wrested...political decisions from the hands of an elite who were `destined' to rule" (Gutierrez 1973: 46). Here Gutierrez jumps from philosophical to historical naivete. The moral amiguities of these two revolutions are too well known to require belaboring. Suffice it to say that, at the very least, one would have to demonstrate how the French and Russian Revolutions constitute progress from a strictly Christian perspective.

At the sociological level, a further problem with the synthetic position is that there is no distinction made between the working class, the poor and the proletariat. The terms are treated as synonymous. Yves R. Simon pointed to this fallacy.

> [To] identify the proletariat with the poor is another of those blinding confusions which must be patiently exposed. For instance, we can hardly find a more typical example than that of the German proletariat in the few generations overlapping the First World War. These people were not particularly poor, and many of them were doing very well....The point is that, when the

> system of exchange and distribution operated as it was supposed to operate, German workers enjoyed a good life....(Simon 1971: 101)

Simon's point is that the proletariat is not necessarily the immiserated masses of Marx's Communist Manifesto. This is not to suggest that Marx's view of the English proletariat was inaccurate, merely to point out that the case described by Marx is not a universal paradigm for the life of the proletariat.

A second distinction ignored by the synthetic dialog is that between the proletariat and the working class. Again, Simon explains:

> [The] proletariat considered as a social and historical entity is defined not primarily by the activities of its members but rather by its position in the system of exchange and distribution. Roughly speaking, the proletariat is the class of permanent and hereditary wage-earners, and that is why it is not quite identical with the working class....It is only when these working people become permanent and hereditary wage-earners that they also become proletarians. (Simon 1971: 100)

One of the major justifications for Simon's distinction is the historical fact that, in some cases, the workers have received salaries sufficiently high to permit savings. In such a case, assuming the absence of other restrictions, workers can leave the state of being wage-earners. When this happens, the worker is no longer a proletarian. Simon cites the United States as an historical example of proletarians leaving behind their condition as wage earners (Simon 1971: 103).

The distinctions between working class, proletariat and the poor are significant. When discussing those who do not fall into the category of owners of the means of production, we will consider it significant if the people being discussed are excluded from economic life altogether (habitually unemployed), or if they are habitually employed but cannot escape the condition of wage-earners, of if they are workers who earn enough to save and move out of the condition of being wage-earners altogether. Good theory is built on sound distinctions. The systematic imprecision of lumping the poor, the working class and the proletariat together only creates theoretical confusion.

The critical dialog offers much better opportunities for dialog than the synthetic position. This is so because the critical dialog respects the distinction of planes and is more careful with its assumptions. The "preferential option for the poor" responds to the valid criticisms which Marxists have made of both capitalism and Christian complicity with capitalism without compromising the integrity of Christianity. The strength of this position is that it acknowledges Christian responsibility in the social order. Moreover, it acknowledges that Christians have frequently failed throughout history to protect the rights and dignity of the poor. This puts Christianity on the right track. There is no benefit derived from the attempt to sanitize Christian history in this regard. The Church

has frequently failed to fulfill its prophetic function in the tradition of Isaiah and Jeremiah because it was considered expedient to be on friendly terms with the state.

Another strength of the "preferential option for the poor" is that it maintains a more critical perspective with respect to Marxism. Here it is worthwhile to note the strong psychological temptation which Christians involved in this dialog have frequently fallen into. When confronted with the historical evils which the Church has either promoted or turned a deaf ear to, there is a tendency no longer to identify with what is now seen as a deeply flawed Church. This promotes the further tendency to be unwilling to defend Church teaching, under the assumption that this, too, is probably deeply flawed. This may account for the disturbing lack of attention to Church teaching which characterizes the synthetic dialog. The problem with this is that it is invalid to assume that the Church teaching is inadequate based on the claim that the Church itself shares responsibility for the evils which exist. This invalidity is best seen when one considers that the Church's historical flaws can be fully documented by appealing to the Church's own social teaching. Christians can acknowledge that they have not lived up to their beliefs and go forward with conviction to change. This is far more to the point than merely to bypass the Church's teaching tradition. Moreover, such a disposition is intimately connected with two

fundamental Christian moral themes: humility and repentance. It takes humility to acknowledge one's hypocrisy and repentance to change. This is the direction which those who espouse the preferential option for the poor seem to want to take us, and it is sound from the perspective of established Christian belief.

If the preferential option for the poor is to become a fully effective practical doctrine, then there is a serious need for a more concrete vision which has yet to be articulated. A great deal of energy has gone into self-criticism and the criticism of existing conditions. This will be insufficient for the long run. If capitalism and socialism are both seriously lacking morally, then Christians must articulate concrete and workable arrangements in which workers and owners can coexist peacefully within a framework of justice. One can feel privately purified by having rejected both positions, but this will be of no help to the political world. Here all participants in the dialog, not just the synthetic thinkers, can rightfully be criticized for a lack of realism. Some may think that a lack of realism is inevitable when theologians discuss the hard-nosed realities of politics. However, there are sound examples of realism in Christian thought, particularly in Saint Augustine and in Saint Thomas. Augustine would have us look at the political world by comparing what is with what is possible for a fallen

race. Christians must take into account all of the very difficult historical facts and present realities. Surely there will always be room for those who are primarily philosophers. However, these philosophers must sensitive to what is possible as well as to what is desirable. One of the most difficult facts which must be confronted is the fact that, up until this point, modernization and industrialization have been achieved only by socialism and capitalism. The process has been morally ambiguous and has in both cases included a good deal of "exploitation," that is, wages below what is needed to live as well as harsh working and living conditions. Christians must squarely face the fact that the world is going to inquire of them how they intend to modernize and industrialize without resorting to the kinds of evils exhibited in the history of socialism and capitalism, and Christians had better give them a real answer. The process of industrialization has, up to this point, been a messy one from the moral perspective. Christians need to come up with concrete solutions as to how industrialization can proceed while maintaining the unity of society. It is precisely this kind of discussion which there needs to be more of.

It is worth noting with respect to this last point that there is a curious failure on the part of the participants in the dialog to pursue some of the specific points raised by Paul VI and John Paul II. Both popes have spoken of the

evils of relying too much on competition to regulate economic life. They have spoken of the need to reform international trade as well as the world's international financial and monetary systems (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #43). Moreover, there is a a longstanding condemnation of the international imperialism of money as well as the kind of economic imperialism which exists in the West. Surprisingly, there is a lack of works which really attempt to pursue Christian and Marxist views of specific issues such as these. It would be mutually beneficial to pursue dialog along these lines and have some focused debate on specific ways in which overreliance on competition to regulate economic life is harmful, as well as specific proposals as to how these situations might be remedied.

CHAPTER IV

PROPERTY, COMPETITION AND THE STATE

Property, Competition and the State in Catholic Thought

Catholic social teaching has consistently addressed the issue of the role of the state with respect to property, during the last 100 years. The prescriptions which have come forth flow from a more fundamental theory of the state itself. Therefore, it is useful to begin our exploration with an overview of some of the central themes of Catholic thought as they became enshrined in Catholic tradition. The analysis will rely on the classic work of Heinrich Rommen (1945) and the work of Yves R. Simon (1951).

The Catholic view of the state begins with the premise of the social nature of humanity. It is part of the essence of being human to engage in acts such as love and friendship which are intentionally directed to others. Even in language itself, Thomas Aquinas saw proof of humanity's common nature. He writes:

> As...language is by nature due to man and has as its natural end that man may live in community...it must be concluded, on the strength of the axiom that nature does not produce anything in vain, that man impelled by nature shall live in community. (in Rommen 1945: 223)

As a consequence, humans tend to form associations. The family is, of course, the most fundamental association. However, people tend to form a variety of other associations

based on common interests, work, and cultural pursuits. This myriad of associations will lead to conflicts. How are these to be resolved? Common life, if it will be harmonious, must proceed in a reasonably orderly fashion. This necessitates an association which is inclusive of other associations and which has the authority to regulate the common life of the whole. This association is the state (Rommen 1945).

If one is interested in understanding the Catholic tradition on the subject, it cannot be overemphasized that the state originates in the very nature of humanity. It is not merely an unwanted necessity or worse, a necessary evil. Rather, the need for the state is derived from communal living, which is derived from the social nature of the individual person. It can therefore be said that Catholic thought accepts Aristotle's dictum that man is a political being. Rommen sums up the Catholic tradition well:

> For a being like man, living in time, dependent on the active cooperation of others and the forceful protection of his sphere from the intrusion of others, social life is possible only if the individual member can with certainty rely upon a behavior of others following commonly acknowledged rules and norms. It is not the habits which make social life enduring. It is the fact that there exists a power which, when appealed to, will enforce the "habits" that will in turn enforce a behavior of all in accordance with the norms....Thus society, so far as it lives by habits, necessarily demands the state as the enforcing sovereign order. There can be no evasion. Social life demands the political form: the state. (1945: 225)

Yves R. Simon has demonstrated that the authority of the state is grounded in something far deeper than merely the authoritative resolution of conflicts, though the latter is surely necessary. Simon clarifies that authority is essential in human community as a cause of united action (Simon 1951: 19-35).

> Even in the smallest and most closely united community, unity of action cannot be taken for granted; it has to be caused, and, it is to be steady, it has to be assured by a steady cause....Now unity of action depends upon unity of judgment and unity of judgment can be procured either by way of unanimity or by way of authority; no third possibility is conceivable. Either we all think that we should act in a certain way, or it is understood among us that, no matter how diverse our preferences, we shall all assent to one judgment....(Simon 1951: 19)

Simon proceeds to raise the point that there are entirely normal situations, when there is no perversity of will or ignorance of intellect, where there is more than one means of promoting the common good (Simon 1951: 30). Simon gives the example of whether people should drive on the left side or the right side of the street. People of entirely good will and of sound intellect can argue for either system. Moreover, either system can serve well the common good. But no one in his right mind will argue that the issue can be left unresolved, for that would surely lead to catastrophe for society. Therefore, the common good demands that one method be binding on all, regardless of personal preference. Simon uses this example to illustrate the principle that "the common good demands that a problem of united action

which cannot be solved by way of unanimity should be solved by way of authority" (Simon 1951: 30). Authority, therefore "is an essential function" in society (Simon 1951: 33).

The continuity of the state through time, in contrast with the death of the individuals who comprise it, suggests that the state is qualitatively different from the sum of individuals in society. As Rommen puts it, "The state is a distinct higher form of the social coexistence of persons" (Rommen 1945: 316). Here some clarification is needed. To say that the state is a distinct [emphasis mine] higher form is not to be interpreted to mean that the mode of being of the state is "substantial" (in the Aristotelian-Thomistic understanding of that term). In other words, the state does not have existence in itself; it has no being apart from the individuals who make it up. Moreover, when it is said that the state is a higher form of social coexistence, it is necessary to understand the distinction between the order of ends and the order of being (1945: 39). Since the end of the state is to preserve the good of the whole, it has a higher temporal end than the individuals and associations within it. Nevertheless, in the order of being, the individual is higher than the state, because the human person has an end which transcends the temporal order. The final clarification is with respect to the term "form" to characterize the state. In asserting the reality of this social form, Catholic thought does not mean "form" in the

sense of an abstraction. The state is concrete, not reducible to the system of norms it implements. This is because the norms presuppose a real authority to implement them and real persons to be subject to them (1945: 34).

Since the state is an objective reality, a type of social being, it has an end which is proper to it. It has already been mentioned that this end is the common good. We need to know, however, in what ways the common good exists as something distinct from the sum of individual goods. This is particularly true because liberal thought has tended to blur or deny the distinction. Before we can properly distinguish the common good from the individual good, it is first necessary to distinguish a community from a partnership between individuals. Simon demonstrates three criteria for making the distinction a fundamental one: collective causality, communion in immanent action and communion-causing communications (Simon 1951: 66). The first, collective causality, refers to actions which are ultimately traceable not to individual persons but to a community. Individual members of armies or teams of workers act as agents of the collective and many individual members may not participate at all, e.g. members of an army who watch, wait, rest or heal their wounds (Simon 1951: 64). The second criterion, communion in immanent action, refers to situations when individual acts on the part of many are directed toward a common goal and "my knowing that the

others know and desire the same object and want it to be effected by the action of our community" (Simon 1951: 65). This is different from mere partnership wherein the participants act in ways which remain essentially solitary (Simon 1951: 65). Third, communities produce communications of a unique character, going beyond mere interindividual communication.

> In [communities such as armies] there is a constant exchange of signs, not all of which are words, whose purpose it is to cause in souls certain cognitions and certain emotions and awareness that the objects of these cognitions and emotions of mine are also objects for the cognitions and emotions of my companions, superiors, and subordinates. (1951: 65-66)

To summarize, these three dimensions of communal behavior fundamentally distinguish the community from the partnership.

As communities go beyond mere partnerships, so do their ends go beyond individual goods. Let us take, for example, the following situation: a nation goes to war in order to protect its existence from an invader. Each member of the nation has individual goods which he or she pursues. Each protects his or her health; each pursues economic well-being; each tries to become educated. However, the war of self-defense cannot be exclusively explained by the individual interests of the members of the society. This can most clearly be seen when one considers that, in any war effort of this kind, some risk their physical lives, while others participate in other ways. If there were no more

than individual goods involved, there would be no basis for risking certain individual lives and not others. In fact, the well organized war effort is directed to preserving a good which is not merely individual, though all individuals may participate in one way or another. Rommen attempts to illustrate the notion of the common good with other illustrations:

> The music of an orchestra, the beauty of a mosaic, the flourishing life and well-proportioned structure of an organism cannot be explained exclusively by the interests and independent value of the parts, whether these are the musical instruments, the little stones or the limbs and organs of the individual. Beauty, melody, structure, the order of the parts forming the whole, are goods in themselves. (Rommen 1945: 318)

The common good is concerned with public goods, that is, goods from which all citizens derive benefit and by which no one's legitimate interests are harmed. These public goods include the rule of society by just laws and the safety and security of individuals and other associations which exist within the state. With respect to individuals and other associations within the whole, the state preserves:

> ...their peaceful functioning, the furthering of their self-initiative, by the creation of legal institutions and public offices...and the assurance of their peaceful development by protection against internal disorder and external disturbance. (Rommen 1945: 138)

Since goods such as these are for all, the preservation of these goods takes priority over the preservation of

individual goods. This is what Catholic tradition means when it says that, in the order of ends, the state is higher than the individual; the good of the whole must take priority over the good of the part. It is for that reason that the state legitimately requests its citizens to sacrifice their lives to protect the state should it be attacked (1945: 139).

It is worthwhile to note the character of the end of the state. It is, first of all, objective (1945: 33-34). The end is the result of the free choice of people, to be sure, but this end is given in the nature of the person. Rational people will seek community and will need a state, even when that state proves to be burdensome. Secondly, the end of the state is moral (1945: 33-34). The common good is a moral task to be fulfilled by diligent human effort. Along the way, the state must perform many pragmatic tasks. However, no amount of pragmatism or realism can detract from the moral value of the end. The loss of the moral end will condemn the state to moral corruption. Finally, this moral end is rational (1945: 33-34). It is arrived at through moral reasoning, and its particular determinations in terms of specific laws and policies are arrived at through rational reflection. The preservation of the rationality of the end is inseparable from the preservation of the morality of the end.

Two of the positions advanced to this point do not come together in any immediately self-evident fashion. First, it has been said that the state has no substantial being, that it is derived from the nature of the individual and is below the individual in the order of being. On the other hand, it has been argued that the state is higher than the individual in the order of ends. The consistency of these positions becomes clear when we understand the double character of the state. Rommen explains:

> The double character of the whole (the state) may be represented thus: It has a self-value when opposed to the individual as a member...[but] only on condition that it is at the same time of service character in concrete; that is, by its form and acts it must actually serve the general end of all the individuals as persons, i.e. the perfection of their nature....An organic view of the state thus helps us to understand this continuous living interaction an interdependence of the whole and the members. (Rommen 1945: 139)

This neatly summarizes the Catholic understanding of the organic relationship between the individual and the state. The individual is related to the state as a part to a whole, but only insofar as the state serves the development of human nature, which includes service of the common good.

The Church's view on property and economic competition flows out of its conception of the state. The first principle to be noted is that it is not the state's position to interfere with the legitimate activities of lower associations and individuals. This is particularly true of that most fundamental of all associations, the family. It

is necessary for parents to own goods in order for them to fulfill their responsibilities to care for their children. The Church's predisposition, therefore, is not to interfere with the right of the family to procure necessities nor to take away its possessions, because this would pervert the service character of the state. Here service means the protection of the family's right to sustain itself. For this reason the Church has opposed any socialism which "maintains that individual possessions should become the common property of all, to be administered by the state" (Rerum Novarum, #3). Such a proposal "would rob the lawful possessor, bring the state into a sphere that is not its own, and cause complete confusion in the community" (Rerum Novarum, #3).

The Church's favorable disposition to the principle of private ownership has a different character than that of liberal thought wherein private property rights are absolute or quasi-absolute. Rather than proclaiming the inviolability of private property, the Church's enthusiasm has been for the proliferation of private ownership. This is because the concentration of ownership in the hands of the few impedes the capacity of families to provide for themselves. Pope John XXIII stated the proper role of the State in this respect:

> [By] prudent use of various devices already proven effective, it will not be difficult for the body politic to modify economic and social life so that the way is made easier for widespread possessions

> of such things as durable goods, homes, gardens, tools requisite for artisan enterprises and family-type farms, investments in enterprises of medium or large size. (Mater et Magistra, #115)

Despite the commitment to private ownership, the Church has become painfully aware that existing arrangements of ownership have prevented ownership from fulfilling its natural end, namely, that the goods of this world are intended for the use of all (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #42). The Church holds that the state has the right to intervene with respect to ownership when existing arrangements do not fulfill this precept of the natural law. Intervention on the part of the state is grounded in the state's most fundamental end, namely, the preservation of the union of society. John Paul II speaks of the need on the part of the state to promote the "exercise of solidarity" among the rich, poor and middle classes. Therefore, the state may act to help to bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots. As Leo XIII put it:

> Among the many and grave duties of rulers who would do their best for their people, the first and foremost is to act...with that justice which is called distributive towards each and every class. (Rerum Novarum, #27)

The Church has mentioned five specific areas where the State is competent to act to protect the common good with respect to ownership and competition. First of all, "whenever the general interest of any particular class suffers, or is threatened with, evils which can in no other way be met, the public authority must step in to meet them"

(Rerum Novarum, #28). Secondly, while taking into account the fundamental acceptability of private ownership, the "public authority, in view of the common good, may specify more accurately what is licit and what is illicit for property owners in the use of their possessions (Quadragesimo Anno, #49). The Church emphasizes that this in no way constitutes a compromise of the principle of private ownership.

> [When] civil authority adjusts ownership to meet the needs of the public good it acts not as an enemy, but as the friend of private owners; for thus it effectively prevents the possession of private property, intended by Nature's Author for the sustaining of human life, from creating intolerable burdens and so rushing to its own destruction. (Quadragesimo Anno, #49)

Third, this adjustment of property arrangements on the part of the state may entail the expropriation of property. Pope Paul VI explained :

> When private gain and basic community needs conflict with one another, it is for the public authorities to seek a solution to these questions, with the active involvement of individual citizens and social groups....If certain landed estates impede the general prosperity because they are extensive, unused or poorly used, or because they bring hardship to peoples or are detrimental to the interests of the country, the common good sometimes demands their expropriation. (Populorum Progressio, #23-24)

Fourth, the Church argues that there is a legitimate place for the public ownership of property. This is particularly the case under modern conditions of production. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, there was little need for public interference with ownership of the means of

production. However, with the capacity to produce so greatly enlarged, the question of private ownership changes in character. When the private ownership of particular means of production entails having power "too great to be left in private hands without injury to the community at large," then the state may mandate public ownership (Mater et Magistra, #116). The Church does not suggest specific examples. John XXIII was careful to point out that those in charge of administering such public corporations "should be subjected to careful and continuing supervision" (Mater et Magistra, #117).

The fifth principle is in many ways the most fundamental, because it governs the entire attitude of the state toward economic life. It is called "the principle of subsidiarity." Pope John XXIII explains:

> It is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable, that one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. So, too, it is an injustice...to transfer to the larger and higher collectivity functions which can be performed and provided for by lesser and subordinate bodies. (Mater et Magistra, #53)

Moving from principle to an evaluation of existing systems, the Church has taken up a critical view with respect to both capitalism and socialism. The Marxist state has always been rejected for its failure to respect property rights and the principle of subsidiarity, as well as its propagation of divisive class struggle (Divini Redemptoris).

Increasingly, however, the Church has also criticized the capitalist West. The essential elements of the critique are intriguing in their surface-level parallel with Marxist arguments. Liberal capitalism tends to concentrate wealth, which tends to bias the state in the direction of promoting the interests of capital over labor. When this occurs, the State fails to pursue its moral function to preserve the common good. Pope Pius XI condemned this process forcefully:

> Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain....Furthermore, the intermingling and scandalous confusion of the duties and offices of civil authority and of economics has produced crying evils and has gone so far as to degrade the majesty of the State. The State which should be the supreme arbiter... far above all party contention, intent only upon justice and the common good, has become instead a slave, bound over to the service of human passion and greed. (Quadragesimo Anno, #109)

The Pope proceeds to argue that when capital concentrates power in the state, the state attempts to promote the economic advantages of its citizens in the international arena (#108). Moreover, economic domination is used to decide political conflicts between nations. Because of these two factors, states are increasingly bound to clash (#108).

More recently, Pope John Paul II has strongly reaffirmed this evaluation of both Marxism and the capitalist West. In the Church's last encyclical on the social order, the Pope stated:

> Each of the two blocs harbors in its own way a tendency toward imperialism, as it is usually called, or towards forms of neo-colonialism: an easy temptation to which they frequently succumb, as history, including recent history, teaches. (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #22)

The association between capitalism and imperialism is not developed at any length in terms of specifying the dynamics. Nevertheless, it is very intriguing that the connection is made; those who argue for inherent connection between capitalism and imperialism are usually situated on the left in terms of the political discourse which takes place in the advanced industrialized countries.

The Dialog

The synthetic Christian-Marxist dialog reflects Marxist structuralist and instrumentalist views on the State. This is not to say that the discussion of the state in the dialog has the level of sophistication of the Marxists who have theorized about the state. It is merely to say that the views expressed fit within these broader characterizations. Garaudy, for instance, takes up the position that the state is an instrument of the dominant class. In the capitalist world, the dominant class is the owners of capital, the bourgeoisie. The only way to stop the bourgeoisie's domination of the state is for social classes to disappear altogether. Garaudy writes:

> When classes disappear and with them the domination of one class over another, the existence of the state has no object. There is no call for some men to repress others but only for

> all to manage in common their common wealth. According to Saint-Simon's formula, which Marx adopted, "To the government of men will succeed the administration of things." The disappearance of class antagonisms..will permit men to arrive at a situation where, since every citizen feels himself responsible to all, each one will think and act like statesmen. (Garaudy and Lauer 1968: 176)

The presupposition behind this line of argument is that the state is no more than the instrument of the dominant class of owners. Dunham represents more of a structuralist view of the state. In accord with this theoretical approach, Dunham does not argue that the state is the mere instrument of one class. Rather, he argues that, in a capitalist society, the state must inevitably confirm those who are in positions of privilege and power and discourage attempts at fundamental change (in Klugman and Oestreicher 1968: 71). This position is similar to the instrumentalist view in that the state acts so as to confirm the position of the owners of property. Moreover, the two perspectives are fundamentally in accord in their common acceptance of the position that the political, legal, and economic structures of society are maintained by the state to protect the owners of property. The difference in the two perspectives lies in the structuralist school's emphasis on the various factions of capital. Because of the divisions among the bourgeoisie, the state has a somewhat autonomous role to look out for the interests of the bourgeoisie <u>as a whole over time</u>. The

instrumentalist school is somewhat less sensitive to this distinction.

Other critiques of the capitalist state flow out of the foundational positions staked out in the structuralist and instrumentalist approaches. According to Bonino, the role played by the state in capitalist society parallels the role played by religion (Bonino 1976: 45-50). Under the property arrangements of capitalist society, both religion and the state function so as to distinguish the "real man" from the "ideal man" (1976: 45-50). Real men are divided between winners and losers. Some benefit from the existing order while others do not. For those who are on the bottom of the socioeconomic spectrum, there is little justice. Whatever limited means exist for the poor to seek redress for their grievances, the system is biased in favor of the status quo. All of this contrasts with the "ideal" person as portrayed by the state and religion. Here there is much discussion of justice and equality among the people, all of which ignores their real conditions. As Bonino puts it:

> The liberal state functions exactly like religion: it dichotomizes man into an ideal projection, "the citizen," in which rationality, justice, and equality are realized, but the real man lives in...inequality, injustice, and egoism, so that people, equals in the heavenly sphere of the political world, were unequal in the earthly existence of society: just as Christians are equal in heaven but unequal on earth. (Bonino 1976: 45)

The "dichotomizing" which Bonino refers to is rooted in the fact that the ideal view of the person in the state glosses over all of the distinctions between haves and have-nots in terms of the ownership of property.

Not all those who embrace a synthetic position press this point about the essential parallel between the state and religion. However, the distinction between the "real" and the "ideal" person is a common presupposition. To provide another example of this perspective, consider the "ideal" right of all to own property. In the "real" world, this translates to the right to compete in the marketplace. For many people, the ideal right to compete equally translates into the real condition of unemployment and property loss. Those without jobs or property find it quite difficult to compete in the market. The equal right to compete for wealth and income is of little relevance to those who cannot afford to purchase food, clothing and shelter. Lukacs comments:

> The bourgeois revolution absorbed the Christian notion of equality...because in the constitution of the bourgeois rights of man, a formal, abstract equality was the actual realization of the two models of equality before the law and the equality of the market. (in Curran and McCormick 1986: 304)

To summarize the synthetic position's understanding of the state with respect to property, we can say that the state's role is to promote capital accumulation and to legitimize this process. The accumulation function is to

insure the maintenance of existing property arrangements and to promote an economic environment conducive to the accumulation of capital. Moreover, the state legitimizes the property arrangements through the legal and political system. The system is strong in its protection of property rights but does not address inequalities in ownership and does little to alleviate poverty because equality is ideologically defined as equality before the market. Therefore, inequalities, even when profound, do not oblige the state in any fundamental way. In a capitalist society, these functions of the state will inevitably translate into a preference for capital over labor.

The prescriptions proposed by the synthetic view intend to respond to the problems of the state in capitalist society. Because the state is primarily bound to protect the interests of capital, the state will always have an inherent bias against the working class. Therefore, as Garaudy argues, workers cannot accept the autonomy of the political function (Garaudy 1974: 141). Instead, "labor, land and money must be freed from subjection to the laws of market and profitability" (1974: 47). Such changes, of course, cannot take place within a capitalist state. Therefore, workers must seize state power and use the powers of the state to expropriate the owners.

One of the major problems which arises in the dialog is how the new state will effectively transform property in the

society. There are two strands of emphasis, both of which are concerned with the establishment of a democratic socialist state. One school of thought emphasizes that business enterprises will be run by the workers. A group of social activist priests in Chile lists the following criteria of the democratic socialist state. First, there must be "participation by the work community in the planning system" (LADOC 1973: 7). Second, there must be "socialization" of the financial system, banks and insurance companies" (LADOC 1973: 7). Third, there must be an "establishment of a work community to operate the production enterprise" (LADOC 1973: 7). In all of this, "the state must have a preponderant role" (LADOC 1973: 7). On the other hand, Garaudy espouses the traditional Marxist view when he says that the "dictatorship of the proletariat is the form that socialist democracy must take in the face of counterrevolutionary aggression (Garaudy 1974: 160).

There is an obvious tension in these proposals. Is the new state to be democratic or not? Girardi raises the question squarely, "Must Marxism assert the primacy of institutions over the person, especially the state?" (Girardi 1968: 22). Girardi wishes to distinguish "integralistic Marxism" from "personalistic Marxism" (1968: 195). Girardi argues that the Marxist state can successfully redistribute property without being monolithic. He writes:

> If Marxism goes back to its original interpretation it comes into obvious conflict with the monolithic state....As the sensus ecclesiae interprets the word of God for the Christian, so the conscience of the community interprets the word of history for the Marxist. Exercise of authority is legitimate insofar as it is faithful to the interests of the proletariat and hence to the meaning of history....In order to guarantee this fidelity to the people, both party and state must have a predominant democratic structure. (1968: 196)

In this vision of the democratic socialist state, socialization would mean transferring the right of ownership and management to the trade unions, the cooperatives or smaller associations. This would be to "insure a strong social and political power" (Oestreicher 1969: 83). On the other hand, the political power of the state should be in the hands "only of the true (emphasis mine) representatives of the national or international community" (Oestreicher 1969: 83). Moreover, economic centralization must be "publicly accountable" (Grelle and Krueger 1986: 88). This new, socialist state will interpret the common good to place "an obligation on the state to assure sustenance to all its citizens at a level consonant with their spiritual dignity as persons" (Curran and McCormick: 346). One aspect of this is that the state will take responsibility for investment to contribute to the increase in production (Garaudy 1974: 131).

Another trenchant issue for the dialog is imperialism. As previously mentioned, the Church has taken a critical view of the foreign policies of the Western powers. A great

deal of debate has taken place about the nature and dynamics of imperialism and how it is to be dealt with. This debate is particularly strong among Third World authors (Gutierrez 1973: 84-88). Some emphasize the external dimension of imperialism, stressing that the developed countries impose their will on the underdeveloped world through economic exploitation (Gutierrez 1973: 84-88). Others, following the thought of Andre Gunder Frank, emphasize that imperialism becomes internalized through the class structure of the Third World nations (Frank 1968; 1972). What Marx referred to as "the comprador bourgeoisie" cooperates with the economic interests in the North to transform Third World nations into dependent satellites. The result is that the resources of the dependent nation are primarily geared toward producing for an international market and neglect the needs of the domestic population (Frank 1968; 1972). However one interprets the dynamics of imperialism, it is fair to say that all those who interpret the advanced industrial countries as imperialist in nature agree on at least the following: capital accumulation demands new sources of investment. There came a point in the development of the industrialized nations when investments and markets within their respective nations became far less lucrative than those abroad. In order to protect this international expansion it was necessary to insure that the international environment was conducive to unrestricted

trade and foreign investments. This implied that Third World governments would have to function so as to facilitate this process. Therefore, political and economic pressures are applied to insure that the Third World will remain "open" to foreign capital. Moreover, as Gutierrez explains, there is little hope for the Third World to escape from the bonds which imperialism has created.

> It is not possible in our times to consider the influence of the United States as an external variable which affects the national economic structure merely by means of foreign trade and financing. On the contrary, our dependence is much deeper and more complex; it affects the very roots of the economic and social structure forming...a net from which the backward countries must escape if they intend to actualize their potential. Imperialism must be thought of as structural...shaping the roots of an economic, technological, political and cultural dependence. (Gutierrez 1973: 94)

Another dimension of imperialism is that which takes place among the developed countries. States compete with one another for profitable sources of investment and for raw materials. The markets are limited and so are the available resources. The economic competition breeds conflict and war. As Ivan Montagu writes:

> We believe that the capitalist system contains an inborn drive to war....Profit is the motive force of capitalism....Simple arithmetic shows that not all can have favorable balance of payments simultaneously. [Moreover] available sources of raw materials, labor and customs are...divided up among the various capitalist economies....Clashes are constant. (in Klugmann and Oestreicher 1968: 134)

A final point raised in the dialog is a fundamentally moral argument against the capitalist state. Garaudy contends that capitalism is a giant machine run by the jungle law of competition (Garaudy 1974: 29). What lies behind the "freedom" of the market is a certain moral anarchy, a ruthless struggle for wealth. The state sanctions the process. Garaudy argues that a society ruled by "the blind law of competition among all...in which investment is not a social but solely a private enterprise, is devoid of any conscious governance of its end. This is the first society in history not built on any plan for civilization" (Garaudy 1974: 24; emphasis mine). The entire society becomes the subject of a process which has no moral purpose and strictly transcends the will of individuals in the society (1974: 24). The guiding principle, "growth for its own sake, is a purpose without purpose" (1974: 30). Instead of appearing openly as a transcendent divine law, the principle of competition is disguised as the immanence of some natural law (1974: 30). What Garaudy is saying is that the state in capitalist society has no moral end, no common good. What we have instead is a process. Since justice is defined by the process, what we have is, in effect, the rejection of the moral purpose of society.

Evaluation

When discussing the role of the state, it is proper to distinguish explanatory arguments from normative ones. The former focus on the determinants of actual state policy and attempt to explain state policies in terms of particular variables. The latter focuses on properly ethical standards which should govern state behavior. As previously mentioned, the literature of the Christian-Marxist dialog views the state along the lines of Marxist structuralist or instrumentalist schools. These theories are essentially explanatory, attempting to explain state policies as the product of particular social arrangements.

It is worth noting, however, that the explanations are not scientific explanations. The dialog does not really take up the issue of the validity of the explanations offered. No doubt, such an attempt would be quite difficult, given the varieties of possible explanations which can be used to interpret the evidence. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to state that theories which purport to explain something as broad as the state should, in principle, be subjected to empirical testing. Authors such as Gutierrez and Garaudy treat the theories as givens, which forecloses real dialog on the more fundamental issue of the validity of the theories themselves. What we have here is not so much a dialog, but an incorporation of Marxist views on the state. This is not to say that these views are

wrong, merely to state that, from the standpoint of Christian-Marxist dialog, they should not be treated as assumptions.

With the distinction between an explanatory theory and a normative theory in mind, one can see that the dialog does not keep the distinction clear. Just as, in the previous chapter, we saw the failure to distinguish between the economic and the ethical, so here we see the failure to distinguish the political from the ethical. The distinction is fundamental because discussions of the state can be valid descriptively but poor normatively, or, vice versa, theories can be normatively sound without revealing very much about the way things actually work. What is important is an analysis which speaks to both levels and keeps the distinction clear. This is what the dialog lacks. The capitalist state is characterized in the ways indicated, then subjected to implicitly normative criticism. But we are never told what precisely are the normative criteria which, having been violated, warrant the criticism. For example, we have seen that the dialog argues that the state is biased in favor of the owners of capital. Moreover, the authors believe that this should be changed in favor of a socialist state. The unanswered question is, "Why should one accept socialism as a normative criterion by which states should be evaluated?" It seems that we are again dealing with assumptions rather than true, moral criteria.

The blurring of the distinction allows the dialog to jump back and forth between explanation and normative evaluation without having thoroughly grounded either dimension; the explanatory dimension lacks thorough scientific backing and the normative dimension lacks a basis in ethics.

The failure to distinguish explanations from normative evaluations is one example of how the dialog is characterized by ideological thinking. The conclusion that the capitalist state should change into the socialist state or to no state at all is determined from the definition of the state as an instrument of domination. The long journey from assumptions to conclusions is bypassed. Rather than introducing ethical criteria in a well-defined way, the dialog collapses the ethical into the explanatory and arrives at a largely predetermined conclusion.

Pope Paul VI pointed to the dangers of ideological thinking. He wrote:

> It [ideological thinking] leads political or social activity to be simply the application of an abstract, purely theoretical idea; at other times it is thought which becomes a mere instrument at the service of activity as a simple means of a strategy. In both cases is it not man who risks finding himself alienated? (Octogesima Adveniens, #27)

In this case, the problem lies in the call to change the state based on a theory about the state. Acceptance of the theory is not based on considering a particular body of evidence. One first accepts the theory and then proceeds to

explain all results in terms of the theory. What is more, intellectual activity becomes reduced to promoting a cause.

There is a further problem with respect to the essentially negative view of the state and the assertion of the eventual disappearance of the state. There is here a failure to distinguish between normative and descriptive views. Even if it could be demonstrated that all existing states were corrupt, this would not prove that states are intrinsically bad or that we would be better off without them. States may be, at least to some extent, the products of the characters of their citizens (as Plato suggested). The dialog fails to consider the traditional, Catholic thought on the subject of the state.

Rene Coste reveals other problems with the Marxist view of the state. He asks, "Is there not a specific political minimum that is founded on the most fundamental demands of life in common?" (Coste 1985: 140). Moreover, Coste asks if this political minimum is not, in Marxist thought, confused with the minimums involved in the organization of economic life (1985: 141). It is a very questionable assumption that the organization of economic life is all that is necessary for common life. There do not appear to be any historical examples of such an arrangement. What is more, Coste argues, this kind of negative evaluation of the state actually leads "to the creation of a superstate such

as we have seen...in all communist regimes" (Coste 1985, 142). What Coste is suggesting is that the theoretical misinterpretation of the state has consequences which go beyond mere academic concerns. To destroy the state on the basis of its intrinsic evil only to find out that it is now more necessary than ever is a disastrous situation to place one's country in.

The negative view of the state implies a negative view of authority. The dialog unfortunately bypasses the richness of the Catholic tradition's approach to authority, particularly the contributions of Yves R. Simon. Rather, the entire context of the dialog is that of the power of the state. No distinction between power and authority is suggested. Yet, authority is clearly necessary for tasks other than to enforce the requisite degree of compliance. Simon shows two essential functions of authority which are properly distinguishable from mere power: to unify action when the means to the common good are not unique (see section I of this chapter), to establish particular social goals and to procure what is materially necessary to realize those social goals (Simon 1951: 47-48; Cochran 1977: 552-553). With respect to this second function of authority, recall the distinction between the common good and the individual good. Since individuals qua individuals are not entrusted with the realization of the common good, there is a need for the society to have a public authority which will

define the specifics of what the common good entails. This would be necessary even if the society were composed only of utterly virtuous individuals (Cochran 1977: 553). Therefore, it is a fundamental philosophical error to reduce the authority function of the state to a mere instrument of domination and power, even if all states are in fact tinged by the corruption of their fundamental moral end.

Bonino's attempt to draw a parallel between the capitalist state and religion is an example of the kind of ideological thinking which plagues the dialog. What is central to his analysis is the polarity between the "ideal" and the "real." Religion and the capitalist state speak of ultimate justice and equality for the "ideal" man while the "real" man lies in squalor, the victim of every injustice. What are the definitions of "ideal" and "real" which support such contentions? Clearly, "ideal" implies "not real," an obfuscation. With respect to religion, the clear implication is that the heavenly man is not real. We have again here the radical rejection of the distinction of planes. The kingdom of heaven is reduced to an expression of the ideal man. The implication is that the notion of the Resurrection is an obfuscation which prevents the "real" man from changing the material conditions of his life. Obviously, such a notion is not compatible with Christianity. What is at the bottom of this kind of thinking is that only the material is real. With this

understanding, all concepts in theology are reducible to expressions of man's longings and ideals. According to this way of thinking, no theological propositions express real truths. Any attempt to express transcendent realities is written off as "dualism." But this argument is fallacious on the face of it. One can make relevant distinctions without denying the reality of the two things distinguished. To assert the reality of the transcendent is not to deny the temporal, unless one begins with the unyielding assumption that only the temporal is real. On the practical level, what I am saying is that to assert the primacy of the transcendent is not to ignore poverty or the problems of the political world. The attempt to force the Christian distinction into an irreconcilable dualism reveals the ideological presuppositions of Marx.

The discussion of capitalism and imperialism shares the same character as the treatment of the state. We again find explanation and condemnation rolled into one analysis without clarifying the borders between them. Again we can say that the dialog would benefit from distinguishing explanations from moral evaluations.

To consider the explanatory value of the theories of imperialism used in the dialog, the linchpin is the need on the part of the advanced industrial countries to expand their markets and sources of raw materials. The argument has a strong impressionistic value. One can surely find

many examples of imperialism under capitalism. The problem lies in the specific causal relationship posited between capitalism and imperialism. It may be quite true that the Western powers are imperialist. However, the fact they are capitalist does not prove that it is capitalism which is causing the imperialism. Surely, other variables need to be considered. Benjamin Cohen (1974), in his study of imperialism, noted that, even in the heyday of European imperialism in the 1800's and early 1900's, trade and investment did not "follow the flag" to any appreciable degree. In other words, the acquisition of colonies did not translate into significant increases in trade or investment, which at least questions the significance of the economic component of the motivation behind the imperialism (Cohen 1974). Cohen argues that there certainly was evidence that imperialism did result in the exploitation of the local economy to suit the needs of the mother country. But this is not the same as to claim that the "taproot" of imperialism was economic need on the part of the colonizers. Of course, Cohen's study cannot be said to be the final word on the issue. But his research does suggest that the key research question is to determine the extent to which the dynamics of capitalism explain the imperialism of our own time, as opposed to other variables. Surely, that is a very complicated question which cannot be resolved here. What can be said definitively, however, is that this is

essentially an issue to be approached by research and not to be resolved by ideological fiat. It is surely the case that imperialism has been with us for a very long time, certainly prior to the existence of capitalism on the world scene. It is therefore arbitrary to reduce imperialism to capitalism, even if imperialism does result in significant economic advantages. The problem is not made easier by refusing to define what imperialism is in the first place.

The alternative to the capitalist state is the proposed democratic socialist state. The proposal is fundamentally sensitive to some aspects of traditional Catholic thought. The authors are concerned that the state be independent of the interests of any one class, that it truly stand above particular interests and serve the need of the community. Moreover, there is a concern that the state protect the common good by insuring equal exchanges; those who work hard should be able to make a reasonable living for themselves and their families. Workers should not languish in poverty while speculators make millions of dollars contributing nothing to society. It should be acknowledged that much of what lies behind the proposals for democratic socialism has a sound and legitimate moral concern which Christians should not ignore.

However, there are some confusing and troublesome elements in the proposals. One notices the lack of any specific protections for private ownership. Failures to

protect private ownership and small businesses in particular easily run into the problem of violations of the principle of subsidiarity. Yet, in calling for the transfer of ownership of the means of production, the proposal for democratic socialism seems to call directly for such violations. The dialog seems to be sensitive to the issue. The authors are clearly at pains to let us know that it is indeed the workers who will be the owners. The tension between calling for a transfer of ownership and insisting that the workers will truly own and control the means of production which they use reveals the more fundamental tension between socialism and democracy. How does one centralize decision-making in the state and promote the real decision-making power of the workers? The dialog is sufficiently realistic to recognize the tension, but no concrete solution is worked out to demonstrate how socialism and democracy are both going to be preserved. Catholic thought has seen private property as a protection for the individual against the state. The family has the right to procure necessities for the future. This is a fundamental right with which the state should not interfere. Without the right of private ownership, people are forced to rely more on the state for their livelihood, and one of democracy's protections is lost. This is allegedly resolved by claiming that the centralization of the means of production will be carried out by the workers themselves, or

by their "true representatives." One has the right to ask what political process is to be set up which will insure this result. This gets us to the very heart of the difficulty. Socialism, if it means anything, means that the state will take on, in addition to its traditional functions, a new set of responsibilities to promote the improvement of economic life. If it is going to perform this function well, it must have real authority in the economic realm. It is hard to see how this can mean anything else but more centralization of society's decision-making in the state and less discretion for individuals.

Even if decisions made about the economy were to retain a truly democratic character under socialism, there remains a fundamental difficulty, from the perspective of Catholic thought. Recall that the state is derived from the nature of the person. The person is, in the order of being, higher than the state. Now, when something as essential to daily life as the economy is centralized in the state, it is hard to see how the state can truly maintain its derivative character. Rather, it appears that the order is being reversed. The individual becomes dependent on the state for employment, and, by implication, for economic goods. The problem for the dialog would be to demonstrate how the state maintains its derivative character under the conditions of socialism. Since, under socialism, the state would have authority over decisions as to what the entire society will

produce, this would seem to give the state a character of "personhood" which traditional Catholic thought has been reluctant to give it.

There are surely elements in the proposals for democratic socialism which reflect authentic Christian truths. The democratic socialist state certainly fulfills some of the precepts of the Church's teaching. The primary finality of economic goods to serve the needs of all would be recognized. Secondly, the ethical value of employment for all would be established (at least under normal conditions). Finally, the excesses of the profit motive would be greatly curtailed. However, each of these goals is already contained within the established body of Catholic thought. The positive and acceptable norms sought by democratic socialists might best be promoted by implementing the teaching of the Church. There is nothing uniquely Marxist in much of what they seek to accomplish. In fact, one legitimately wonders whether Marxism itself can truly embody Girardi's distinction between "integralist Marxism" and "personalist Marxism." The distinction seems to parallel the distinction between the kind of socialism which actually exists in the Soviet Union, China and Cuba and the socialism proposed by the democratic socialists. The problem is how Marxism remains personalist when the state has to take the ultimate responsibility for the economy and continue vigilance against disaffected classes or social

groups. Democratic socialists are often quick to point out that their brand of socialism does not actually exist anywhere in the world (Greenberg 1990). It seems that the distinction between the historically real "integralist" Marxism and the preferred "personalist" Marxism rests more on the volition of democratic socialists than on any clear explanation of how personalist Marxism is actually going to be organized economically and politically.

From a normative perspective, the strongest criticism raised against the understanding of the state in capitalist society is that such a state lacks a clear moral end. There is a fundamental strength to this argument. The theory which undergirds the state in capitalist society emphasizes that the free enterprise system is the best system because each person is given freedom of choice with respect to employment and investment. This, however, does not constitute a moral end for the economic dimension of society. The assumption is that this kind of freedom actually promotes the common good precisely because it protects freedom. Nevertheless, the focus is clearly on protecting a process. According to Catholic thought on the state, this would not constitute a moral end because it would reduce the common good to the sum of individual goods, a fundamental confusion as far as Catholic thought is concerned.

Further support for criticizing the moral basis of the state in capitalist society comes from considering the fact that particular moral questions about the economy are largely ignored for ideological reasons. Simon argues that the issue of unequal exchange is the number one moral question the democratic state must face. The tendency, however, has been to skirt the issue. Liberal economists tell us that there is no basis for questioning situations such as a person who makes millions of dollars a year engaging in speculative activities. This is because there is an unwritten assumption that, so long as the there is no unfair competition (such as price fixing or bribery), the results are morally acceptable. Therefore, if one person earns fifty thousand dollars a year for being a mud wrestler while a teacher earns seventeen thousand dollars a year, there is no basis for moral complaint. Similarly, there is no basis for moral complaint in the fact that the U.S. economy is increasingly oriented toward speculation rather than production, or that those involved in speculative activities frequently earn much more than those who produce socially necessary things such as food; it is the fairness of the competition which counts. Catholic thought provides a basis for questioning this assumption and the moral quality of economic life under capitalism.

On the other hand, the problem with the Christian-Marxist dialog is that the socialist state does not

necessarily solve the ethical problems associated with the absence of a notion of the common good. The common good goes beyond mere economic arrangements, though it certainly includes them. Recall that, in Catholic thought, the end of the state must be both objective and moral. The socialist state may satisfy the criterion of objectivity, but it does not have a clear moral end. Surely one can argue that providing for the material needs of all is a worthy ethical goal. Nevertheless, when we look beyond the ideological appeals to the promotion of social ends, the common good seems to be reduced to the sum of individual goods. One of Marxism's greatest flaws is that it never quite gets beyond the individualistic assumptions of liberal thought.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

There is an old scholastic dictum (precise origin unknown) which says, "Never deny; seldom affirm; always distinguish." If one were forced to summarize the theoretical failure of synthetic Christian-Marxist dialog in as few words as possible, one could assert that the dialog fails to make appropriate distinctions. From beginning to end, synthetic Christian-Marxism misses the essential theoretical turns. First and foremost, those who propose this synthesis gloss over the foundational "Christian distinction" between the natural and the supernatural, which plays out in the further failures to distinguish reason and revelation and to distinguish revelation and political philosophy. Of course, the process of working out the implications of such ontological distinctions is neither easy nor neat. The difficulties involved, however, cannot allow one to negate the existence of these fundamental distinctions. When the natural and the supernatural are not properly distinguished and their relationship is left unclear, there is a strong tendency to interpret what is distinctively Christian in terms of what is natural. Sokolowski comments:

> Writers like Augustine...bring out the natural, but they do so within Christian belief. If some other writers fail in this enterprise, their failure consists in allowing the disclosure of the natural necessity to stand simply on its own and

> to govern the way we interpret Christian faith....One example of this reversal would be the interpretation of eschatology as the expression of human futurity and progress. (Sokolowski 1982: 139)

The synthetic dialog is an example of the kind of reversal Sokolowski mentions. We have seen how fundamental Christian themes are reinterpreted in terms of history, politics and economics. Revelation becomes defined in political terms as a call to socioeconomic liberation. Christian hope becomes radically immanentized in the form of expectations for the future of humanity within history. Sin becomes defined in terms of political and economic alienation and grace becomes the power which liberates humanity from these alienations. The result is that the distinctively Christian features of these fundamental Christian categories are obscured if not lost. Christianity as understood historically cannot survive the radical immanentization to which synthetic Christian-Marxism subjects it.

A second area where the blurring of distinctions takes place is the collapse of the ethical dimension into the political and the economic dimensions. The result is that the moral dimension of political and economic problems is not thematic. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of implicit moral evaluation: condemnations of property arrangements, the concentration of wealth, the class basis of the state and the imperative to overhaul the system.

While one might well be inclined to agree with many of the condemnations, it is unclear what are the ethical criteria for evaluating both the present and proposed future arrangements. Again, this situation is in stark contrast with the approach of the Church. The social teachings of the Church have always striven to remind humanity of the distinctively ethical component of political and economic life and to clarify the distinctively moral principles involved. To reduce the morally good and evil to political and economic structures is to lose what is central to the Christian understanding of ethics. While it is acceptable to speak of "just" and "sinful" structures, the primary sense of good and evil in Christian thought is something interior to the human person, even though the results are socially manifest.

The source of the theoretical inadequacies of the synthetic Christian-Marxist dialog is the uncritical borrowing from Marxist ideology. It is quite clear that the nature of the synthesis is Christian adoption of Marxist principles and not the other way around. The vast majority of participants in the dialog come out of the Christian camp. Roger Garaudy is the only participant who explicitly claims to have been a Marxist and to have become both a Marxist and a Christian (Garaudy 1974). Even in his case, it is very doubtful that his interpretation of what it means to be a Christian squares with the traditional definition.

The Christian enthusiasm for the dialog prompts authors to employ Marxist assumptions about the dialectical-materialist understanding of history (Fierro 1977) or Marxist theories of imperialism (Gutierrez 1973) without critically assessing either the compatibility of such theories with Christian thought or even their validity as social theories. The result is not so much an authentic dialog between two schools of thought as the creation of an intellectual enclave which is only open to those who are willing to make a giant leap of faith to embrace Marxist assumptions without explaining to those outside the intellectual imperatives for making that leap.

The ideological nature of the synthetic approach compromises its character as political philosophy. Here it is worth recalling Simon's distinction between philosophy and ideology (Simon 1965). Philosophy treats its object of study strictly as an object. This is to say that the object studied is not an object of desire; it is not an <u>end</u>. Philosophy itself is primarily an exercise of the intellect. The will is involved only to assist the intellect in the pursuit of its aim to reveal truth. This contrasts with ideology. The object studied by ideology is not purely an object; it is the object <u>of desire</u>, an end to be pursued (1965: 8; emphasis mine). Of course, the distinction in practice is by no means a perfect one. Even a great philosopher is likely to be influenced by the ideologies of

his or her time. There is, nonetheless, a distinction, and some philosophers are more free than others of ideological influences. Synthetic Christian-Marxism falls strongly on the ideological side of the continuum, so much so that it is hard for an outsider to distinguish at all between the object desired--revolutionary socialism--and the object studied--capitalism. The role of the intellect in such a project is not to search for an as yet unknown truth but to justify a course of action already chosen.

While the philosophical quality of the synthetic dialog is dubious, there are contributions which are worth mentioning. First of all, it was necessary, given the global influence of Marxist thought, to enter into dialog with Marxism. While I have suggested that the result has frequently taken on the character of a monologue, the synthesizers took the important step of taking Marxism seriously. Prior to the dialog, Christians tended to characterize Marxist thought in overly pejorative terms as though it had no contribution to make. Such attitudes made real dialog impossible.

Secondly, the synthesizers have prompted Christians to take more seriously the moral problems of capitalism. This is not to say that those problems had not been raised before. Nonetheless, the seriousness with which the criticisms were taken by the synthesizers have brought much more recognition to the problems. Moreover, the

synthesizers have kept alive the important factor of moral indignation without which the hard work of change and reform is impossible. While there are profound problems in much of their own approach, they have correctly pointed to the fact that capitalism itself is an ideology which also tends to ignore the ethical dimensions of political and economic life. Capitalist societies tend to discard the traditional sense of the common good and thus lack properly moral ends.

The critical approach to the dialog avoids the fundamental pitfalls of the synthetic approach. Moreover, in the development of the "preferential option for the poor," Christianity has a concept which is in accord with fundamental Christian themes and provides a basis for the reform of capitalism. Nevertheless, the distance travelled so far is not very considerable. Those who take the critical approach criticize capitalism and Marxism, but have not made great advances of their own. It is insufficient to stop at the point of criticism. Equally insufficient are vague proposals for democratic socialism. Christian thought must be willing to bear the burden of realism, not in the Machiavellian sense, but in the sense of proposals which can bear the burden of the real world.

New directions, however, will need to be guided by ethically sound thinking. Here it seems that there is need for theoretical development in the treatment of property. The existing principles of private ownership and the

universal destination of goods will remain the building blocks, but a more developed understanding of economic rights under modern conditions is necessary. Specific principles need to be developed to cope with the complexities of the modern, global economy. Simon suggests that the issue of equal exchange is paramount (Simon 1951: 248). What constitutes equality in international trade? What constitutes equality in exchange rates? What constitutes equality of exchange between worker and corporation? How can we evaluate the morality of the activities of transnational corporations which increasingly dominate the global economy? Theoretical development is needed to answer these questions. It stands to reason that ethical reflections on economic justice, while not changing fundamental principles, must be applied to increasingly complicated economic arrangements.

The development of ethical theory capable of treating the more complicated exigencies of the contemporary global economy can benefit from dialog with Marxism. The Marxist critique of global capitalism is quite theoretically sophisticated. While the Christian thinker will focus on developing ethical criteria, such development can be aided by dialog with the Marxists who have long been at work in this field. This kind of specific and focused dialog is likely to be far more fruitful than the kind of unfocused, overarching treatments of Christianity and Marxism as a

whole which have plagued the dialog and which are almost inevitably superficial.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ecclesial Documents

Conference of Latin American Bishops
1968 Documents of the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops at Medellin. (Published in Gremillion, Joseph ed. The Gospel of Peace and Justice Catholic Social Teaching Since Pope John. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1976: 445-476).

1979 Documents of the Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops at Puebla. (Published in Maryknoll Fathers, ed. Puebla and Beyond. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979).

LADOC (Latin American Documentation)
1973 "Socialist Priests in Chile" (Keyhole Series No. 5) Washington: United States Catholic Conference.

Pope John XXIII
1961 Mater et Magistra. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

1963 Pacem in Terris. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

Pope John Paul II
1981 Laborem Exercens. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

1989 Sollicitudo Rei Socialis. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

Pope Leo XIII
1891 Rerum Novarum. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

Pope Paul VI
1968 Credo (Published in Flannery, Austin. ed. Vatican Council II: More Postconciliar Documents. Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1982: 387-395).

1968 Populorum Progressio. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

1971 Octogesima Adveniens. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

Pope Pius XI
1931 Quadragesimo Anno. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

1937 Divini Redemptoris. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

Vatican Council II
1965 Gaudium et Spes. Boston: St. Paul Publications.

General References

Alves, Rubem.
1973 "Marxism as the Guarantee of Faith." Worldview 16, 13-17.

1974 "Confessions On Life and Theology." Union Seminary Quarterly 29, 181-193.

Aptheker, Herbert.
1970 The Urgency of Marxist-Christian Dialog. New York: Harper and Row.

Avila, Charles.
1983 Ownership: Early Christian Teaching. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Baumgarth, William and Regan, Richard.
1988 Thomas Aquinas:On Law, Morality, and Politics. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co.

Bentley, James.
1982 Between Marx and Christ: The Dialog in German Speaking Europe: 1870-1970. London: Verso Editions.

Berryman, Philip.
1985 The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in Central American Revolutions. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Bonino, Miguez.
1976 Christians and Marxists: The Mutual Challenge to Revolution. Grand Rapids: Eerdmands Co.

Bury, Charles.
1931 Later Roman Empire. London: Macmillan and Co.

Carlyle, R.W.
1950 A History of Medieval Political Theory In The West (Vol. 1). London: William Blackwood and Sons.

Cochran, Clarke E.
1977 "Authority and Community: The Contributions of Carl Friedrich, Yves R. Simon, and Carl Polanyi." The American Political Science Review 61, 546-558.

Cohen, Benjamin.
1974 The Question of Imperialism. New York: Basic Books.

Coste, Rene.
1985 Marxist Analysis and Christian Faith. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Curran, Charles and McCormick, Joseph, eds.
1986 Official Catholic Social Teaching. New York: Paulist Press.

Deane, Herbert.
1963 Political and Social Ideas of Saint Augustine's City of God. New York: Columbia University Press.

Eagleson, John, ed.
1975 Christians and Socialism. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Ferraro, Joseph.
1986 "Saint Thomas Aquinas and Modern Catholic Doctrine." Monthly Review (June 1986), 13-19.

Fierro, Alfredo.
1977 The Militant Gospel. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Figgis, John Neville.
1963 Political Aspects of Saint Augustine's City of God. Gloucester: Longman, Green and Co.

Frank, Andre Gunder.
1968 Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America. New York: Monthly Review Press.

1972 The Development of Underdevelopment. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Garaudy, Roger.
1966 From Anathema to Dialog. New York: Vintage Press.

1968 (with Quentin Lauer) A Christian-Communist Dialog. Garden City: Doubleday.

1970 Marxism in the Twentieth Century. London: Collins.

1974 The Alternative Future. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Girardi, Giulio.
1968 Marxism and Christianity. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

1971 Christian Love and Class Struggle. Salamanca: Sigueme.

Grant, Herbert.
1970 Augustine to Constantine: The Thrust of Christianity Into the Roman World. New York: Harper and Row.

1977 Early Christianity and Society. New York: Harper and Row.

Greenberg, Edward.
1990 The American Political System: A Radical Approach. Boston: Scott, Foresman and Co.

Grelle, Bruce and Krueger, David.
1986 Christianity and Capitalism. Chicago: Center for the Scientific Study of Religion.

Gutierrez, Gustavo.
1973 A Theology of Liberation. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

1990 The Truth Will Set You Free. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Hebblethwaite, Peter.
1977 The Christian-Marxist Dialog. New York: Paulist Press.

Klugman, James.
1968 Dialogue of Christianity and Marxism. London: Lawrence and Wighart.

Klugman, James and Oestreicher, Paul.
1968 What Kind of Revolution? A Christian-Marxist Dialog. London: Panther.

Lauer, Quentin and Garaudy, Roger.
1968 A Christian-Communist Dialog. Garden City: Doubleday.

1971 "Christian-Marxist Dialog: An Evaluation." Worldview 14, 15-19.

Lens, Sydney.
1969 Openings for Christian-Marxist Dialog. New York: Abbingdon.

Meeks, Douglas.
1989 God The Economist. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Miranda, Jose.
1974 Marx and the Bible. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Mojzes, Paul.
1978 Varieties of Christian-Marxist Dialog. Philadelphia: Ecumenical Press.

1981 Christian-Marxist Dialog in Eastern Europe. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House.

Moltmann, Jurgen.
1976 "On Latin American Liberation Theology." Christianity and Crisis 36, 57-63.

Neilsen, Mark.
1989 Reaching Beyond Charity: The Preferential Option for the Poor. Liguori: Liguori Publications.

Oestreicher, Paul and Klugman, James.
1968 What Kind of Revolution? A Christian-Marxist Dialog. London: Panther.

1969 The Christian-Marxist Dialog. New York: Macmillan.

Ogletree, John.
1969 Openings for Christian-Marxist Dialog. New York: Abbingdon.

Ott, Ludwig.
1974 Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma. Rockford: Tan Books and Publishers.

Pascal, R. ed.
1947 The German Ideology. New York: International Publishers. Selections from Marx's work with commentary.

Piediscalzi, Nicholas and Thobaben, Robert, eds.
1985 Three Worlds of Christian-Marxist Encounters. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Rayazanoff, D. ed.
1963 The Communist Manifesto. New York: Russell and Russell. Selections from Marx's work with commentary.

Schaff, Philip, ed.
1956 The Nicean and Post-Nicean Fathers. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Simon, Yves R.
1951 The Philosophy of Democratic Government. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1962 A General Theory of Authority. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press.

1971 Work, Society and Culture. New York: Fordham University Press.

Sokolowski, Robert.
1982 The God of Faith and Reason. South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press.

Troeltsch, Ernst.
1981 The Social Teaching of the Christian Church. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tucker, Robert, ed.
1978 The Marx-Engels Reader. New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co.

Vanderbilt, John.
1982 The Challenge of Marxist and Neo-Marxist Ideologies for Christian Scholarship. Sioux Center: Dardy College Press.

Von Balthasar, Hans Urs.
1983 The Christian State of Life. San Francisco: Saint Ignatius Press.

Vree, Dale.
1976 On Synthesizing Marxism and Christianity. New York: John Wiley.

Williamson, Scott.
1985 Social Policy: The Contemporary Debates.
Boston: Scott Foresman.

Bibliographies on Christianity and Marxism

Bent, Ans. J. van der.
1969 The Christian-Marxist Dialog, An Annotated Bibliography. Geneva: World Council of Churches.

Elliott, Mark.
1988 Christianity and Marxism Worldwide: An Annotated Bibliography. Wheaton: Institute for the Study of Christianity and Marxism (Wheaton College).

Fletcher, William C.
1963 Christianity in the Soviet Union: An Annotated Bibliography and List of Articles, Works in English. Los Angeles: University of Southern California: Research Institute on Communist Strategy and Propaganda.

Mojzes, Paul.
1987 Church and State in Postwar Europe, A Bibliographical Survey. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Stange, Douglas C.
1968 The Nascent Christian-Marxist Dialog: 1961-1967, A Bibliography. Cambridge: Harvard Theological Seminary.

Vigor, P.H.
1971 Books on Communism and the Communist Countries. London: Ampersand.

World Council of Churches.
1977 "Recent Important Books and Articles on the Christian-Marxist Encounter: A Bibliography Assembled by the Ecumenical Centre Library, Geneva." Geneva: World Council of Churches.

Yule, Robert.
1979 Religion in Communist Countries. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Society for the Study of Religion and Communism.