

EDITORIAL

For A Just Society

Almost eight years ago, President Marcos launched the Philippines on a Martial Law course towards a New Society. Today we see many new things around us — new roads, new buildings, new parks, new uniforms. There is a new look. But is there a new society? The old problems are still with us, either patently or latently. There is graft and corruption in the government, dishonesty in trade and industry, abuse of authority in the police and armed forces, a disoriented educational system, an off-tangent system of values in most of our cultural undertakings, a sense of hopelessness among the masses.

Amidst all these persistent problems the Catholic hierarchy and laity, by and large, have stuck to the stand of "critical collaboration" with the government. Some, it must be said, have opted to join the revolutionaries. They have to pay the price not only of being classified as outlaws but also of losing their good standing in the Church. Clearly they are taking a position which is contrary to principles repeatedly emphasized by the Pope. In Brazil, recently, the Pope strongly reminded priests that they have to steer clear of Marxism. He also said that social changes through violence would be "without any long-term result and benefit for man."

The "critical collaboration" of the Church with the Martial Law government, however, should take a cue from the Pope's visit to Brazil. The Pope made it a point to advertise his support for priests

and Bishops who were not in the good graces of the right-wing government because they were persistently championing the rights of the poor. When the Pope spoke to 120,000 workers in Sao Paulo's Morumbi soccer stadium, he quoted from discourses of Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns. He used words of the Cardinal that the Brazilian government had in the past denounced as subversive. He said, for example: "The evangelization proper to the Church would not be complete if it were not to take account of the relationships that exist between the Gospel message and the personal and social life of men, between the commandment to love one's neighbour who suffers and is in need, and the concrete situations of injustice which have to be fought and of justice and peace which have to be established." Instead of reproving the Cardinal who only lately was accused by President Joao Figueiredo of inciting workers, the Pope had him at his side to receive the acclamations of the workers.

When a journalist asked the Pope point-blank, "Does your visit to Recife mean that you are backing up Dom Helder Camara?" the Pope did not hesitate to say, "Certainly." This church leader who was often called a communist because he defended the rights of the poor was proclaimed by the Pope "brother of the poor and my brother". The Pope spent the night at the Archbishop's house in spite of threats that Dom Helder Camara would be harmed if this ever happened.

The Pope's message to Brazil and Latin America as a whole was: work for a JUST SOCIETY more than you have ever done before. This, too, is our task in the Philippines: to work not just for a New Society but for a JUST SOCIETY.

IN THIS ISSUE

Far from the European scene, we in the Philippines have not been much affected by the Hans Kung affair. Nevertheless, the issue of papal infallibility, highlighted in the discussion, is something we must think about clearly. It is for this reason that this issue of the Boletín gives readers a number of documents on the HANS KUNG AFFAIR.