

YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION: The Answer to Age-Old Distrust

by MARIETTA ALONSO

GOD must love the common people, remarked Lincoln in an often-quoted utterance, because He made so many of them. The democratic hypothesis is simply that, if given a chance, the common man may be a high, not low, common denominator. For what we call the needs of the average man are the needs of everyone. He desires to eat, to sleep, to love — to live. He seeks, though unconsciously perhaps, to regain the mastery of his own destiny. He seeks to be able to solve his difficulties by his own latent energies and build up his own human resourcefulness. He wants no ready-made solutions handed to him on a platter—for indeed, a poor man can still feel the pain of shame even when he is hungry.

Today, struggling alone in the quicksand of poverty and want, he seems to be forgotten, or, at least, he thinks he is. Poverty has become beautiful only in the pulpit — but ugly in the slums. We remember him well in our Gospels, but we forget him when he is just beside us — starving. Back in his crumbling shack, his heart bleeds for his sick wife and his hungry children. Not infrequently, we meet his dirty little boys in our streets — begging or being thrown out of restaurants. Rice and salt once a day, that's all. What goes on within himself, we'll never fully know. A poor man is not an angel. But he is not a devil, either. He's just a poor man. And do you think that a man who has been in the grindstone, who has been an underdog all his life, could still look up to God, to ask for help or to give thanks? Lazy, yes, that's what we call him. But what else could he do when even the waterfront could not hire him? Where else could he go when there is not a room for him — not even in the breeding place of rotten politicians? He has always wanted to be honest. Deep in his heart, he longs for a clean, decent life.

While we — we in our comfortable homes — hardly even bother to think about him. We think that everything is all right in the world as long as it will just leave us in peace. We think that all we needed was a catechism to memorize, for

leer we would forget Catholicism. We forget the unconscious creed that is always gaining in impetus — the creed that takes one step backward only to advance two steps forward until it becomes a community creed long before its tentacles are felt. And this is always a welcome change for those who are discontented, for those who have lost all hopes for a better future, for those who actually sell their blood for the rich to suck. They no longer know the difference between communism and democracy, between paganism and Christianity. All they know is that they are poor and miserable.

The foregoing observations, practical rather than prolonged, are not mere abstractions. These are not mere "causes" but living realities that vitally affect the temporal as well as the eternal welfare of human beings. And human beings mean flesh and blood, members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Too many "radicals" brood over the wrongs committed by the so-called modern capitalistic enterprise. Too many of them focus their attention upon social reforms and revolutions as mechanisms and neglect the dignity and welfare of human beings who should be helped by the social mechanism. Harmful institutions must be thought of in terms of their victims. Better systems and institutions must be worked out in terms

of the people to be benefited, a system patterned after the Christian ideal. The papal encyclicals must be exhumed from the pages and be made the rice and salt of daily life.

Today, only organized efforts can vie with organized evil. We need social action groups, a strong and dynamic group of dedicated lay apostles sufficiently informed in religion, economics, philosophy and sociology to tackle any problem of modern society. Hence they must be fully trained to think hard and clearly and to act at the fullest possible freedom within the framework of Divine Law. This group, known as the Institute of Social Action is composed of members who have freely chosen the lay apostolate as their lifetime vocation. It seeks to ameliorate specific areas of society, to learn how to govern themselves and their affairs together as a community in Christ. The reform of the individual and the reform of society are actualized in the group dedicated to Christian reformation: it takes place in the group because the group is the effective point of contact between the individual and society. Social action groups, let me remind you, are concerned with specific social reforms such as starting co-ops, credit and labor unions, community councils, home industries, free workers' union, recreational centers, etc., etc. (Continued on page 4)

Catholicism and the Hungarian Revolt

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the Russians with Religion, the deadliest of all weapons. If my memory serves me right, the present Pope, His Holiness Pius XII, then Cardinal Eugenio Pacelli, was the representative of the Holy Father to the International Eucharistic Congress held in Budapest before the last war. In his speech before the Congress, the then Cardinal Pacelli discoursed on the indestructibility of the Catholic Church, which is a divine institution, and made reference to Julian, the Apostate, and other oppressors of the Church, who had long gone and whose memory mankind has cast into oblivion. The present Pope spoke with prophetic vision. After the last War, the Soviet-dominated government of Hungary dissolved 59 Catholic religious corporations or orders with more than 10,000 monks and nuns and their monasteries were taken over by the State. Cardinal Josef Mindszenty, Primate of the Catholic Church, was sentenced, on false charges of espionage and treason, to life imprisonment. Many obstacles were placed to the opening of Catholic schools. But Catholicism, as usual, survived the ruthless persecution. Nor has the soul of the Hungarian nation perished.

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Through these institutions, headed by fully-trained lay apostles, the spirit of Christ can penetrate in all phases of modern life — in the shop, the school, the home, the farm, in our recreational centers and in our government. It is a social force that seeks to bring the masses back to Christ, or rather, to bring Christ back to the masses. Selfish political interests, in the humanitarian garb of social service have not really succeeded in ameliorating the conditions of the common too. Material aid have not made them less dependent, and they are as poor as ever. For theirs is no mere economic problem. There are human and spiritual factors involved which the poor man alone understands.

So far we have been dealing with the urgent problems of the present social order. Equally important, if not more, are the problems that will inevitably come up in the future. Our present form of socio-economic civilization will certainly subside and a new form will

Religion is more important than armies, military alliances, military bases in the survival of nations. We, Catholics, believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, in the Sacred Eucharist, and in the immortality of the soul. Life does not end in death and there is an eternal life beyond the grave. Sustained by faith, the Hungarian people are not afraid to fight their Russian oppressors. In the beautiful phrase of St. Francis Assisi, we die to be born into eternity to receive the reward of perpetual blessed happiness to which we are entitled if we have lived in this world obeying God's commandments. Speaking through Padre Florentino, Dr. Rizal commented on the influence of religion in the fight for freedom of our country as follows:

"Yo no quiero decir que nuestra libertad se conquistó a filo de espada; la espada entra por muy poco ya en los destinos modernos, pero, sí, la hemos de conquistar mereciéndola, elevando la razón y la dignidad del individuo, amando lo justo, lo bueno, lo grande hasta morir por él, y cuando un pueblo llega a esa altura, Dios suministra el arma, y caen los ídolos, caen los tira-

nos como castillo de naipes, y brilla la libertad con la primera aurora." (El Filibusterismo, p. 291)

Rizal's words are as pertinently applicable to Hungary. Russian tanks and jet planes and hundreds of thousands of soldiers are reported to have defeated the Hungarian rebels, but sooner or later Russia has to recognize and respect Hungarian independence. She will be forced to do so by the pressure of international public opinion, which Soviet brutalities has outraged. She cannot do it now because Russia may have to cross Hungarian territory and that of neighboring Yugoslavia to send her army to the Mediterranean in case a world war breaks out in the Middle East. At any rate, even without arms, the Hungarians cannot be subdued if it is their unyielding determination to be free. By not doing business with the Russians, by not cooperating with them, the Hungarians will compel the Russians to quit. There is already a growing conviction in the Soviet Government that the puppet government that replaced Nagy's nationalist government is useless and has not accomplished anything to pacify Hungary.

replace it. Here, a new question arises: What form will take its place?

Let us turn to our youth for the answer. They are the future. Now is the time to build a more dynamic apostolate and a better world for tomorrow. The raw material is available in our young people. But it must be guided, formed and trained, and this task can only be done by young, energetic priests who can understand them and who can meet them on their level in bringing about a profound transformation in the environment.

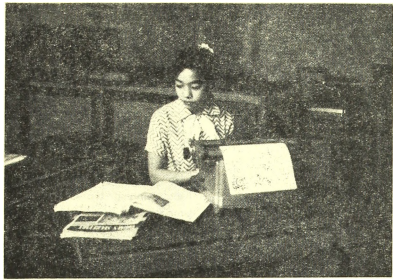
An objection, however, readily confronts us here. This task of training our youth for the apostolate calls for a large expenditure of time and effort on the part of our priests. Already we have a shortage of priests who can hardly cope with the work of their ministry. But is this responsibility of training our youth not expounded by Pope Pius XI and Pope Pius XII in the encyclicals? And just think of what it would mean if in every parish there is a group of strong and dynamic apostles! Just think of its far-

reaching effects: the apostolate of like-upon-like not only increases the priest's apostolic influence but also adds new domains to it and strengthens the link that binds the community to the priesthood.

The discouragement of our elders and of the priests of the older generation upon our young people is one of the most tragic setbacks of our apostolate. This is a disease that could even paralyze the spirit of our youth for life. "Kids and young people in general are imprudent and irresponsible. Catholic action is at the same time a risk and an impossibility. We must stop them before they get into mischief, and let us instead try to get them to frequent the sacraments and avoid serious sin." Such is an attitude of fatality and a counsel of despair which must be followed if we are to expect communism to sprout under our noses. Why are we always afraid to make a mistake? Can we not hope to make good? Condemned for imprudence before they even had the chance

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ramblings in lower case



by Lourdes v. Jaramilla

like an indian serenade that rises softly to awakening the deep slumber of a memory to remembrance, the arrival of the new year into this world, old yet ever new, steals silently to surprise us with the consciousness that the year we've been so used to calling "now" is gone. we rub our eyes but we see the calendar bears the unquestionable concreteness of a tangible date that was never there before. where has yesterday fled? today is just the same day before. but once is a forgotten time. each day is a part of eternity... as much a milestone in the infinite timelessness as creation itself... one day... today... 24 precious hours more to live... alive among the world of the living... one more chance to plan my destiny... another opportunity to breathe again under the wide arch of God's blue sky... who can ask for more when so many have less than that?

in everyone of us lies a veil of no-man's land, the illusion that obscures the real we. there is in each of us a dual we. one is our impersonal calm, that day-to-day exterior we seem to meet each day as though it was nothing but simply another day to get over with. another is the soul behind the face... the living heart stripped of that thin veneer of civilized nonchalance. this is we in our sober moments, our creative spirit, our responsive side. and no man ever really penetrates the soul of a kindred spirit unless one loves — the platonic love of empathy that rises above all selfishness of ego, to enter the secret world of a fellow being. but this is so alien in our times where we see nothing beyond our noses...

in all of us there is the hidden mystery of true personality and if we could only "reach" the soul, we can read in it the same elemental human aspirations that have remained ever changeless from history's beginning... there is a little of a poet in each of us; only its romance is never appreciated because it lies too deep in us that so very few succeed in ever really giving it concrete expression. all of us have an affinity with the world's poets in the sense that we have had the same ideas and feelings, only that they say them better and clearer!

students sit before a teacher day in and day out, semester after semester, but that is no guarantee they know each other pretty well by now. every mentor knows the secret blankness of his students' faces... knowing them so much and so little! what's in a name anyway? what lies beneath the surface and the show, the human

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to be. Is this what we call prudence? Or is prudence a mere armchair that easily degenerates into weakness and lethargy? Our youth does not seek to fight for emancipation. They want to do something more positive than that. They look up to you, not for your distrust and cynicism, but for guidance, for wisdom and, above all, for inspiration. Young communists are trained through hard work and study, to become leaders in the movement. Are we to believe that it is impossible to find young Catholics with equal capabilities and with equal spirit of dedication? State universities prepare their students for career life. When shall our Catholic schools prepare their students for lifetime opportunities THROUGH their chosen careers?

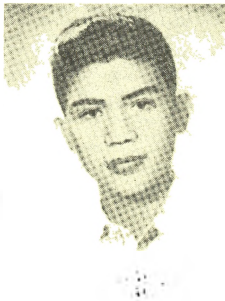
USC NEWS

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LUGAY HEADS ARCHDIOCESAN CENTRAL COUNCIL

Mr. Rafael Lugay, Jr., president of the USC SCA and concurrently vice-president of the Archdiocesan Central Council recently assumed the presidential post vacated by the incumbent president who resigned. Mr. Lugay proceeded to reorganize the said council and patch up several loopholes left by the outgoing administrator.

Meanwhile, Miss Betty B. Antonio took over the presidency of the USC SCA unit. (Cont'd on page 47)



Mr. RAFAEL LUGAY
President, Cebu Archdiocesan
Central Council