



Motivated by our different religious traditions, we believe that attitudes, priorities, and institutions can be changed to reflect a just and democratic use of the universe's bounty; we believe in the value of work that contributes to the common good; and in the healing influence of respect for the differences as well as the commonness of human experience.

AUTUMN 1999

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Religious Socialism

THE JOURNAL FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH AND SOCIALISM

RACE-CLASS/TECHNOLOGY-JOB SKILLS/CITIES - SUBURBS-THE NEED FOR NEW THINKING

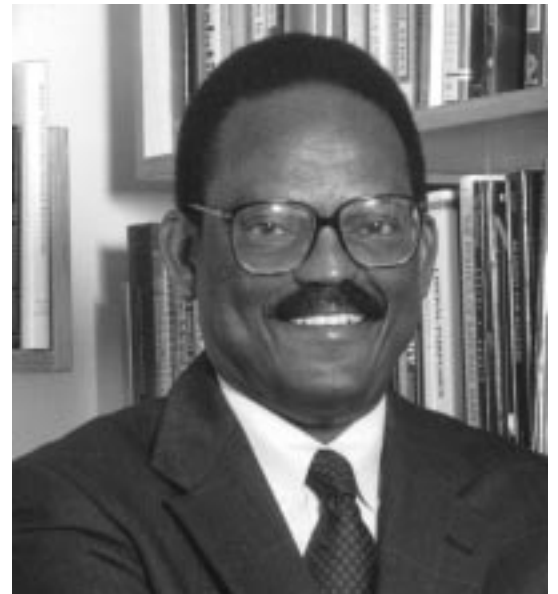
AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON

(Board Member the Rev. Judy Deutsch interviewed Professor William Julius Wilson of Harvard University, regarding his research on race and class. Professor Wilson is known for his work: *"The Truly Disadvantaged"* and his more recent book, *"When Work Disappears."* He has also spoken eloquently on the need for the suburbs and the cities to come together to address urban issues that affect the entire metropolitan region in areas throughout the nation. During this interview, Professor Wilson also notes his newest book-*"The Bridge Over the Racial Divide"*)

Judy Deutsch: Is racism still a problem in the United States, or has it been eclipsed by economic justice concerns?

William Julius Wilson: Racism remains one of the major domestic problems in the United States, but the U.S. society is not as racist as it was at mid-twentieth century. When I speak of racism I mean an ideology of racial exploitation.

This ideology features two things: (1) beliefs that blacks and other racial minorities are biologically or culturally inferior to whites, and (2) the use of such beliefs to prescribe or rationalize the inferior treatment of blacks and other racial minorities in



"Until the huge gap in wealth between whites and blacks reduced, the economic disparity between blacks and whites will not narrow significantly, despite increases in overall black income

cont'd on page

editor's notes

There are three themes in this issue-- one is the need to link religious principles and the labor struggles- to understand those links historically, in the present, as well as in the future. The striving for economic justice, and the right to organize, and developing the connections between religious institutions and organized labor, are all essential. Also, there is no way that these issues can be addressed in our society without dealing the realities of race and class.

In the lead article, Judy Deutsch interviews Prof. William Julius Wilson, (Harvard University, an author of major sociological works on race and class and the solutions needed). During the interview, the major themes highlighted are race and class, technology and job skills, as well as the practical need to build alliances between urban and suburban forces. Dr. Wilson makes it clear that the pernicious effects racism have not disappeared. In fact, the legacy of racism has resulted in many minorities being stuck at a low skills levels, which leaves many in an economically precarious position as our technological society evolves. He also offers some remedies of what is needed.

Joyce Caggiano tells two stories. One is on the relationship of religion and labor as she focuses on the historically significant strike in Lawrence, MA in 1912, which has become known as the "Bread and Roses" strike. The role of religion was critical during the strike. Joyce also highlights some of the contemporary issues related to religion and labor, such as lack of cohesive identity among workers, the reality of globalization, and the rapid emergence of contingent workers.

Shoshana Bricklin spells out the need to create a socialist liturgy related to labor struggles, and then, along with her colleagues, gives illustrations of a Jewish liturgy they developed: "Voices From the Sweatshop: A Labor Martyrology for Yom Kippur". This liturgy is based on the disastrous fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory on March 25, 1911, but closes with current illustrations of the oppression of workers.

The second theme deals with news and commentary from abroad -- England and Finland. John Cort sees the positive side of the work of the Blair government in England and he provides an update of the Christian Socialist Movement. In addition, there are new items on the positions taken by the Lutheran Bishops of Finland, positions that are instructive for all of us who are interested and committed to economic justice and religious socialism..

The third theme relates to the connections between religion and progressive secular movements (or lack thereof). The fear of the "religious right" has cast a pall on the building of alliances between progressive forces and the religious community, but moreover, much of the "left" in the U.S. has long been highly skeptical of what religion can offer. Those issues form the rationale behind the forum on "What is religious about religious socialism?".

cont'd on page 3

the editors



Andrew Hammer
Winter Issue



Maxine Phillips
Spring Issue



John Cort
Summer Issue



Norm Faramelli
Fall Issue



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UNION MADE
PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

LETTERS

"The last issue of Religious Socialism was exceptionally good"

*Irving Weinstein
Far Rockaway, NY*

I have completed a four year program of Psychotherapy at the California Institute of Integral Studies. It is a former New Age Institution now recently corporatized and taken over by the Rockefeller interests. However, my training was in the style of counseling that integrated Eastern and Western ideas of spirituality and wholeness along with family dynamics and Transpersonal Psychology. So I was interested when your brochure came as part of the packet of literature when I joined DSA recently. Please let me know what is happening.

*Ken Freedman
Ferryville, WI*

"The Summer issue was great. I like the focus"

*Alex Maximiac
Oak Park, Ill.*

"The Summer issue of Religious Socialism was excellent"

*Dan Frankot
St. Paul, MN*

I received a complimentary copy of your Religious Socialism featuring what I presume was the formal introduction of Cornel West as an active member of your organization. I liked his description of Marxism as having to do with labor made into a commodity, and the rule of capitalists as the owners of de jure entitlements.

But I think RS has missed what has been at the heart of the academic revival of Marx when Dr. West says that Marx's view of human nature is inadequate. Was it not the young Marx and the young Hegel who provided the humanistic throb and theological underpinning for what you aim to be about?

Mark Skiles

editor's notes cont'd

As expected, the articles in the Forum vary widely in their scope and approach, but they show the richness of religious views. Ray Bronk presents a clear view of the religious and moral values shared by many, even those who claim not to be socialists, that simply cannot be implemented in the current capitalist structure. And that is his basis for being a religious socialist. Alex Maximiac offers his personal journey from Marx to Biblical religion. John Endler wrestles with basic philosophical and theological issues and argues that we need to think in terms of parables, and not identify any political movement, including socialism, with the Ultimate. Andrew Hammer, motivated by the life and work of Gabriel Grasberg, speaks of "hope," regardless of our faith, that enables the religious socialist to persist and endure even against the flow.

Happy reading to all of you.

Socialist Scholars Conference 2000

March 31 to April 2, 2000
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New York

e-mail socialist.conf@usa.net for more info

PAGING SAN BERNADINO, CA

Because our new circulation director has deposited a subscription renewal check before the name on it was recorded, we are trying to identify the person whose postmark is San Bernadino, CA. Please let us know who you are so you can get credit for the renewal..

CORRECTION

In our last issue, you may have noticed that the article by Lyn Fine and Patricia Hunt Perry was about Thich *Nhat* Hanh, not Thich *Nha* Hanh, as it was printed in the headline. We *do* know the Zen master's name; the misprint was a result of a glitch in the computer software that wasn't noticed at the print shop. Our apologies to both authors and Thich *Nhat* Hanh.

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news and updates!

Religion and Labor

THEN AND NOW

THE 1912 STRIKE IN
LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS
AND ITS MEANING TODAY

REV. JOYCE CAGGIANO

Bread And Roses Revisited

"NO GOD, NO MASTER"

"No God, No Master" was the strikers' cry in the Bread and Roses strike of 1912 in Lawrence, Massachusetts. The International Workers of the World (Wobblies) took Lawrence, Massachusetts by storm and began what might be called the most successful labor strike of its time.

10,000 of Lawrence's textile workers marched down the streets of the city carrying signs that read, "No God, No Master." The sign reflected the Wobblies' rejection of religious and political establishment. 1912 was a time of great social turmoil. Labor organizers were hard at work in every industry across the nation. Entrepreneurs with capital and the right social connections were amassing enormous wealth. Religious leaders struggled with their role in the strife between labor and capital. Eugene V. Debs ran for President on the Socialist Party ticket and won 6% of the national presidential vote (900,000 votes). Walter Rauschenbusch's Social Gospel challenged the most entrenched social institutions - churches. What follows is a brief description of the complex turn of events that occurred then. Perhaps it can offer an insight into the present abyss that exists between most working class Americans and religious socialists.

The 'No God, No Master' banner wavers were diligent factory and mill workers; many of them faithful people of God. The dismal quality of their lives was not unique among hourly-wage earners. The workers were seeking the power to direct their own lives according to the dignity they believed God had given them in creation, but that their masters had denied them in the factories. The workers in Lawrence accepted the Wobblies' anti-religious slogan because it seemed appropriate. There was little evidence that the opposite was true. There seemed to be 'No God'



who would join their cause and 'No Master' willing to defend them in the debate.

The Wobblies' ultimate goal was not limited to increased wages. They wanted the political, economic, and moral power to demand justice in the workplace. Their stated goal was to "abolish the wage system" and "to bring about the end of capitalism." Though the Wobblies were not Socialists, in Lawrence, popular opinion mistakenly believed that they were. In fact, they were Syndicalists. They had struggled long and hard to define themselves as a 'movement' against wage slavery and not a political party. Even so, the success of the Socialist Party on a national level had shaken the establishment. Lawrence's neighboring city of Haverhill had just elected a Socialist Mayor. Fear of Socialists' power was real and palpable. Establishment's perceived socialist threat was so powerful that the Wobblies suffered in its wake. During the strike the Manufacturers' Association distributed an article entitled, "Socialism Behind the Lawrence Strike." Using ethnic divisions as the crossbow of their attacks, manufacturers attributed the city's problems to the "excitable races" referring to the Italians. Class, race and ethnic divisions were evident in much of the negative rhetoric about the strike. Ironically, the Socialist Party did not claim the IWW as its own. One of Deb's biographers' wrote: "Had Debs ... fought with greater determination to carve a place within the party for the IWW, the effects could have been important and perhaps have strengthened the tenuous relations that existed between the [Socialist] party and American workers." (*Salvatore, Nick, Eugene V. Debs Citizen and Socialist* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1982, 264)

Religious leaders were enmeshed in the Lawrence struggle. In the previous ten years eleven new ethnic working class parishes had been established in Lawrence. The churches and synagogue had powerful influence among workers despite the Wobblies' anti-clerical rhetoric. Thus when Father James T. O'Reilly entered the picture his leadership became a critical turning point, swaying popular sentiments against union organizers. The most serious blow to the cause of socialism in Lawrence came through the influence of O'Reilly. He was a powerful Roman Catholic priest who had been chief pastor of three of the recently established ethnic parishes in the city. He said publicly, "I wish to state most emphatically that the question of Lawrence today is not whether the operatives shall have more pay or whether the manufacturers shall yield to their demands. That the state has passed. It is now a war against society - the abolition of the wage system - the destruction of the present social order." O'Reilly despised the strike organizers because they were in his view unpatriotic, atheistic and socialist. He took his cue from the Vatican's own *Rerum Novarum*, that supports workers' right to organize but expresses strong opposition to socialism.

O'Reilly was local. He was a religious leader. The working people of the city trusted him. He was not an intellectual speaking from a lofty ivory tower but a man of the people.

He had worked for many years fighting for the rights of 'foreigners' to call themselves 'Americans'. He feared, as many others did, that the Wobblies would cause the end of the social order as they knew it and, more poignantly; he feared that the citizens of Lawrence would be spurned as un-American and lose what little status they had gained in the community. It was too much to risk. It was unfortunate that Debs' editorial in June of 1888 went unheeded when he wrote: "The strike is the weapon of the oppressed, of men capable of appreciating justice and have the courage to resist wrong and contend for principle. The Nation had for its cornerstone a strike." For Debs, the right to strike was a matter of citizenship – to be American meant to have the right to strike. In contrast O'Reilly viewed the strike as an instrument of un-American socialists bent on the destruction of the social order, including the religious establishment. He had *Rerum Novarum* and the strikers' own sign, No God, No Master, to support his claim.

In 1891, the same year that *Rerum Novarum* was published, the American Christian Socialist Union established itself. It stated in its founding document that the source of industrial problems lay in its economic principles and methods. The Statement of Purpose articulated clearly: "It is the intolerable situation in which our industrial population now finds itself, that must force upon us a reconsideration of the economic principles and methods which have such disastrous and terrible results, 'There is a social question,' and it demands urgency." The remedy proposed, however, was a program of re-education. It was not focused on organized labor or any political party. The Union's re-education program never reached its goal. The 'social question,' however, that demanded such urgency in 1891 remains today.

NO JUSTICE, NO PEACE

Slogans, notwithstanding, justice for the working class still remains an unresolved issue. Capitalism has won. Since 1912, "The end of the Soviet Union brought about the end of 'really existing socialism.'" Justice for workers has slipped even further off the radar screen of even the most progressive liberals today. "Far ahead of labor unions, [the International Monetary Fund-World Bank consortium] are forging ties across national boundaries, coordinating priorities and programs, and holding alternate world forums. They constitute an emerging global civil society that is already exerting countervailing power to the global market and subservient nation-states." (Litonjua, M. D., "Global Capitalism: The New Context of Christian Social Ethics", *Theology Today*, July 1999.) Nick Salvatore wrote that, at the turn of the 20th century, "the convergence of religious and secular millennialism generated a powerful social critique." It is unfortunate that millennialist optimism for the working class is rarely expressed in today's social critique. The extravagant goal of yesterday's IWW is intensely needed today if only to balance the greed that has overtaken the world through the new global economy and its emerging global civil society.

The Bread and Roses strike stands as an archetype for today's

struggle for worker justice. Today organizers can only dream of what a cohesive labor movement able to effect large numbers would look like. What union wouldn't be delighted to have 10,000 workers in any industry gather together in a strike today? The labor landscape has changed so significantly that it is difficult to comprehend what Bread and Roses looked like. Union membership is very low and has suffered numerous blows through legislation that has impeded its power. There are three major obstacles blocking worker justice today. In part they reflect the differences between 1912 and 1999. They also account for the difficulties that today's organizers are encountering when they attempt to address workplace inequality. They are: 1) the lack of a cohesive identity for working class people, 2) the globalization of the economy, and 3) the growth of contingent work and what might be called, "the disposable employee". There are also some important efforts being made to address some of these problems through the partnering of unions and religious communities.

1) The Lack of a Cohesive Identity - It isn't popular to identify class in the United States because we tenaciously cling to the myth that we are a 'classless' society. Lillian Rubin, in her book, *World's of Pain*, describes the nation's reluctance to make class distinctions. She wrote that many sociologists insist that class doesn't count as a designation. She observed that after the 1960's and 1970's "upward mobility was the norm."⁹ Rubin states that "the embourgeoisement of the working class was rapidly becoming a reality, and those who did the manual labor were not only affluent but contented..."¹⁰ But the insistence that class doesn't count does not negate the fact that it does exist. Class distinctions exist and are important indicators of how successful U.S. democracy has been in providing equal opportunities. Class definitions are also significant cultural realities that help us to understand political and social power structures. They are especially important in the present economic climate when those who are at the bottom of the wage scale continue to lose financial ground. Race, gender and ethnic distinctions have dominated the social discourse over the past three decades. However, it is becoming more apparent that as we enter the age of economic globalization, class is increasingly important. The dividing line between those who are able to become economically stable and those who suffer at the whim of big business is the same barrier that separates those who "own" from those who are "dependent upon wages." All of these distinctions are relevant as religious institutions struggle to serve people of every class, gender, and race.

2) The Globalization of the Economy – Robert Reich has pointed out that there are three broad categories of work in the emerging global economy: routine production services, which entail repetitive tasks, in-person services, which also entail simple repetitive tasks, and symbolic-analytic services, which involve problem solving. In the first two categories of workers, the law of supply and demand rules. In this scheme the classic clash between capital and labor reminiscent of

Creating Socialist Liturgy on Yom Kippur

SHOSHANA BRICKLIN

Michael Kazin in a piece entitled "Faith in Labor" (October 11, 1999 issue of *The Nation*.) points out that "[the millions of Americans who worship every week in a collective manner are probably more open to hearing appeals . . . [about labor struggles] than at any other time in their daily lives." How much more so during the Jewish New Year and Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) when Jews who otherwise are not weekly service-attenders crowd into synagogues for a three-day annual dose of collective identity, solidarity and serious reflection and introspection. This Yom Kippur provided several members of my congregation's Race and Class Subcommittee an opportunity to raise labor consciousness through the creation of an alternative martyrology focusing on workers' rights in general and sweatshops in particular.

Judaism does not normally idealize or encourage martyrs, so any martyrology at all is somewhat unusual. According to the Reconstructionist High Holiday Prayerbook,* "the [traditional] Martyrology is placed immediately after the Avodah service, which describes the rites of the High Priest on Yom Kippur day. That placement suggests that since we can no longer offer animal sacrifices for the expiation of our

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sins, we offer the lives of our martyrs instead. If we are not worthy of expiation, they certainly were, and so we may be forgiven on account of their merit."

Since Yom Kippur is a time when Jews collectively repent and do "teshuvah" (turning), it is thought that the acknowledgment of our wrongdoings will lead us to a more righteous and just path. So in creating our modern labor martyrology, which began with the

Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and ended with current sweatshop conditions, we hoped not only to raise awareness but to propel ourselves towards future action. Kazin in the same *Nation* article clearly articulated the need for a greater and renewed connection between religious and labor communities saying: "after decades in which labor loyalists essentially stopped talking to anyone but each other, the public's ignorance about their concerns is appalling." I think

the success of this effort to weave labor politics into liturgy was summed up by one of our fellow congregants, who in commenting about the piece wrote: "I thought it got the right balance between emphasizing the horror of the problem and showing that it's something we can address, at least a

little." Many other congregants came up to us at the end of the day to say how deeply moved they were and that they wanted to get involved in anti-sweatshop work. This only strengthens my resolve to continue to raise socialist issues within my religious tradition and through liturgy. I hope the excerpts below will inspire other religious socialists to continue this process.

VOICES FROM THE SWEATSHOP: A LABOR MARTYROLOGY FOR YOM KIPPUR 5760 [1999-2000]

*Researched, compiled and written by:
Shoshana Bricklin, Amy Fried, Bert Schultz and
Simone Zelitch
Congregation Mishkan Shalom*

READER #1: (for maximum impact, use a variety of readers)
These I remember and pour out my soul.
Eleh ezkerah venafshi alay eshphehah.

So begins the traditional martyrology — an early poem based on various midrashim about ten talmudic sages living under Roman authority who refused to abandon Torah, and consequently were tortured to death. The original Eleh Ezkerah section of the Yom Kippur liturgy focus on acts of voluntary martyrdom known as *kidush hashem*, sanctification of the divine name. *Kidush hashem* involves voluntarily giving up one's life rather than committing a serious transgression or forsaking Torah.

In more recent history, many Jewish martyrs were of a radically different sort because they died not out of heroic choice, but merely because they were Jews. While the Holocaust is the most striking and most horrible example, such was the lot of some of the Jews who died in the Crusades, pogroms, and in countless unspeakable acts that have occurred in the last millennium. And they happen not only to Jews but to all humans who struggle to remain human through inhumane times.

Such horrors also happened as you will soon hear, to workers, mostly young immigrant women, who were murdered during the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911. Why do I say murdered not merely killed in an accident? Because the factory owners, who were Jewish, motivated by greed and profit, locked the doors shut so that the workers could not leave before quitting time and to prevent shirtwaists from going out, and union organizers from coming in

The Triangle Shirtwaist Martyrs bridge these two kinds of martyrs — those who made the choice to die for their principles and those who appear to have died unintentionally. For many of the Triangle Shirtwaist martyrs were organizing to create better conditions for all workers while others were working for their own individual survival, also a Jewish value, and to support families in the US and abroad.

READER #2:

New York Times, March 26, 1911, p. 1

141 Men and Girls Die in Waist Factory Fire; Trapped High Up in Washington Place Building; Street Strewn with Bodies; Piles of Dead Inside

READER # 3:

Is it right to call the workers who died in the Triangle Fire martyrs? It could be argued that the most terrible thing about their deaths is that they died for no reason at all. This was not a factory full of Rabbi Akibas. The Triangle workers did not leap from the windows for the sake of the Torah. They didn't even leap from the windows for the sake of their right to organize a union. Rather, they leaped because there were no fire escapes, and the doors were locked. The only choice presented to those girls was to burn to death, or fall to death. If a martyr is a kind of teacher, what can we learn from these men and women?

According to one Midrash, Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery on Yom Kippur. Joseph was no martyr, and did not enter into slavery by choice. Rather, Joseph was a young man who had dreams. The workers who leapt from the factory windows also had dreams. They came to this country to live freely as Jews, and, like Joseph, they found themselves quickly sold into a kind of slavery, crowded into tenements and basements and working fourteen hour days in ill-ventilated and disease-breeding shops, earning barely enough to support themselves, let alone their families. By remembering these men and women, we ourselves draw meaning from their deaths. By working to prevent slavery in any form, we give meaning to their lives.

READER # 4:

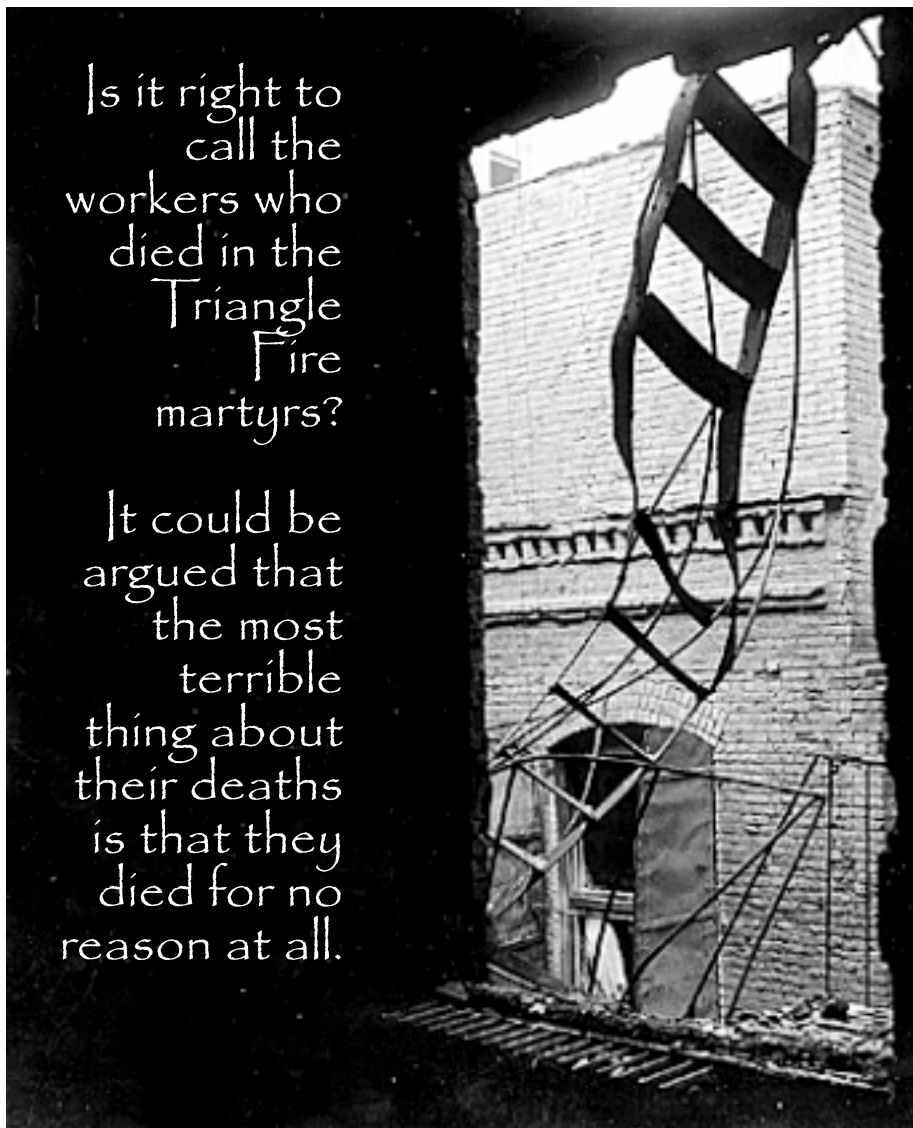
REPORT Of The JOINT RELIEF COMMITTEE, LADIES' WAIST & DRESSMAKERS' UNION No. 25 On The TRIANGLE FIRE DISASTER.

Case #6. J.C., 35 years old, dead, union member, earned \$12.00 a week. Leaves husband, arm slightly injured, and

three children all under school age. Paid \$101.00 funeral expenses. \$34.00 emergent relief; \$400.00 to start Mr. C. in small grocery business (this under the advice of the wife's relatives.) Total \$535.00

READER #5:

THE GREAT DIVIDE by Chris Llewellyn (Fragments from the Fire: The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire of March, 25, 1911, pub.1987)



READER #6:

Pauline Cuoio Pepe was a nineteen year old sewing machine operator at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. "It was all nice young Jewish girls who were engaged to be married. You should see the diamonds and everything. Those were the ones who threw themselves from the window," Pepe told a Manhattan historian. "What the hell did they close the door for? What did they think they were going out with? What are we gonna do? Steal a shirtwaist? Who the heck wanted a shirtwaist?"

READER #7:

cont'd on next page

In 1909, two years before the fire, militant workers, many of them Jews fresh from Tsarist Russia and possessed of a rich tradition of struggle on behalf of labor organizations and against pogroms, rose in revolt against sweatshop conditions in the needle trades. Resentment first came to a head at the Triangle factory, where attempts to organize resulted in a lockout, and the workers responded by declaring a strike.

* * *

Rose Safran was one of the Triangle strikers who returned in defeat.

* * *

If the union had won, we would have been safe. Two of our demands were for adequate fire escapes and for open doors from the factories to the street. But the bosses defeated us and we didn't get the open doors or the better fire escapes. So our friends are dead."

READER #4:
147 Dead, Nobody Guilty

After a Jury trial, the owners of the Triangle Factory were relieved of all responsibility for the fire.

The point of view of those who must day after day submit themselves to risks similar to those which obtained in the Triangle factory is thus voiced by the New York Call (Socialist):

* * *

The whole capitalist system is based upon such unspeakable systematic murder, and those who defend the capitalist system defend those murders. Perhaps the men on the jury had no thought of condoning murder, but that is what they did. They freed of the punishment legal guilt might bring two men who profited by the conditions that made such a disaster inevitable. They did it because they recognized the basic fact that their own interests were involved in such an action. They stood by their fellow manufacturers and set them free.

* * *

READER # 8:
Report from Sweatshop Watch: Summer, 1999

Graciella Ceja, a Mexican immigrant garment worker in Los Angeles writes: "In my last job, I ironed fine dresses with labels from JC Penney, May Company and Robinson's May. I was paid five or six cents per dress. I worked from 7am until 8pm, Monday through Friday. On Saturdays, if there wasn't much work, you could leave by 5pm. I earned \$150 per week before taxes. This means I learned about \$25 a day for thirteen hours of work. I was paid less than \$2 an hour. I saw the fine dresses I ironed in the stores and malls, but I

never had the money to buy them. Because we were either not paid or paid less than minimum wage, we workers could never buy the clothes that we made with our own hands."

READER #6:
Report from Sweatshop Watch: August 9, 1999

Over 90% of the garment industry jobs in the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands are held by foreign "guest workers," predominantly young women from China, the Philippines, Bangladesh and Thailand. With promises of high pay and quality work in the U.S., workers agree to repay recruitment fees, trapping themselves into a state of indentured servitude. They often must sign "shadow contracts" waiving basic human rights, including the freedom to join unions, attend religious services, quit, or marry. Safety violations include blocked exits and fire hazards, and the heat in some factories is so extreme it can cause workers to faint.

* * *

Here is a partial list of retailers and manufacturers who produce clothing in Saipan:

The Gap
Levi Strauss
Wal-Mart
The Dress Barn
The Limited
Sears Roebuck and Company

SOLOIST AND BACK-UP SINGERS:
[sing/chant "Are My Hands Clean?" lyrics and music by Bernice Johnson Reagon; recorded by Sweet Honey in the Rock, Live at Carnegie Hall, Chicago, Ill: Flying Fish Records, 1988.]

READER #3:
From the Los Angeles Jewish Commission on Sweatshops, January 1999:

* * *

READER #1:
Jewish tradition has always understood that all society is involved in the fate of the humblest of its members, that where there is hunger, violence, hatred, poverty, injustice, there is an inescapable responsibility that rests upon us all. Tzadikim nitpasim bavon hador, "Even the most saintly are tainted with the sins of their age."

In Los Angeles, . . . a majority of the largest garment manufacturers is Jewish.

READER #3:
One idea we wish to explore is finding a few manufacturers and retailers (in their private label production) who would be willing to experiment with a line of clothing that is made under the equivalent of kosher conditions — that is, in

factories where workers receive a living wage and standard benefits package.

* * *

READER #1:

Something is asked of us. Something that rises in us and holds up a vision of what one human being owes to another, and can mean to another. It is therefore thoroughly natural and inevitable that we, as Jews, should feel called to address ourselves to one dimension of the fate of the humble, the conditions of those who work in the garment industry.

READER #2:

SURVIVOR'S CENTO by Chris Llewellyn

* * *

READER #4:

There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today! — the last words of August Spies, Haymarket Martyr, hanged in Chicago, Nov. 11, 1887

* * *

READER # 1:

Eleh ezkerah — these things I remember. Eleh nizkerah — these we remember. But remembering is not enough. We must create a world in which martyrdom is unnecessary. A world based on human need not individual greed — for that is truly kidush hashem, the sanctification of the force for good that we call the Holy One.

Shoshana Bricklin is Co-Chair of the Greater Philadelphia DSA chapter and a member of the Religion and Socialism Commission. For a complete copy of the Martyrology service please e-mail her at: bschultz@igc.apc.org or write her at 8423 Anderson Street, Philadelphia, PA 19118-2801.

(1-Members of the Race and Class Sub-Committee Mishkan Shalom (a Reconstructionist congregation in Philadelphia-an activist spiritual community committed to the integration of the three primary areas of Jewish life: Avodah (Prayer), Torah (Study) and G'milut Hasadim/Tikkun Olam (Acts of Caring/ Repair of the world)

Members are individually affiliated with DSA, SEIU District 9 to 5, the National Writers Union and the American Federation of Teachers.

** Kol Haneshamah, Prayerbook for the Days of Awe, The Reconstructionist Press, Elkins Park, PA, (1999), p. 897-98.*

A Reconstructionist congregation located in Philadelphia, PA, 8836 Crefeld Street, Philadelphia, PA 19118, 215/242-5180, <http://www.mishkan.org>. The congregation is an activist, spiritual community committed to the integration of the three primary areas of Jewish Life: Avodah (Prayer), Torah (Study), and G'milut Hasadim/Tikkun Olam (Acts of Caring/Repair of the World).

AN APPEAL TO RS READERS

Although we are receiving some good comments from the readers, Religious Socialism has a tiny circulation.

We appeal to RS readers to help out. Orbis Books gave us the address labels of 650 libraries, including not only the libraries of religious seminaries, colleges and universities, but most of the major secular institutions and even some public libraries.

We sent letters telling them of the emergence of democratic societies as the predominant political force in Western Europe. We enclosed a flier offering a free copy of John Cort's "Christian Socialism" with every \$10 subscription.

The response has been rather disappointing. We need personal, eye-ball to eye-ball intervention of someone who is a regular user of a library's facilities.

This is our appeal: could you go to the director of the library of your choice, show him or her a copy of the magazine and the full-page ad that appeared on p 21 of the Spring 99 issue of RS., and make a strong pitch for the importance of having both the book and the magazine in that library?

This is your opportunity to assist. We are counting on you.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM IN BRITAIN:

A WORD ON TONY BLAIR AND THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

JOHN CORT

It is now more than two years since Tony Blair took office as prime minister of the United Kingdom with one of the largest majorities in England's history. His impressive victory followed four successive defeats suffered by the Labour Party over 18 years.

Blair joined the Christian Socialist Movement in 1991 and has remained a member. About half of his cabinet are also members and so are more than 50 MPs. Although Blair has not trumpeted, but rather muted, his Christian faith, it is hard not to conclude that this is a Christian socialist administration.

After two plus years, what is the consensus about Blair and his administration, not only among the British as a whole, but among members of the CSM, who know him best and presumably judge him from a Christian socialist point of view?

In the population at large he remains extremely popular. However, "Christian Socialist", the CSM quarterly, has not hesitated to print articles that are critical. Just before the election in May 1997, it ran a piece by Ken Coates, an MEP (Member of the European Parliament), faulting Blair for conservative tendencies that RS contributors have also bewailed. He concluded that "we doubt whether the Labour Party will be able to tolerate the Blair leadership for very much longer." The voters thought otherwise.

In 1996 CSM claimed a membership of 4000. Considering its political success, it is probably larger now. In October 1998, it sent out questionnaires and 800 responded. Of these 58 percent were, despite criticisms, satisfied with the government and an even larger percentage, 63 percent, approved Tony Blair's leadership of the Party and the government.

This still leaves 37 percent who do not approve of Blair's leadership. One guess would be that this reflects an ancient split among CSM leaders and members over Blair's successful effort to change Clause 4 of the Labour Party Constitution. This clause, dating from 1918, expressed the views of the more Marxist elements in the Party. It favored "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange", which the Marxists mostly interpreted as meaning nationalization as opposed not only to private ownership, but to cooperative or municipal ownership. Bowing to common sense, they exempted retail trade, but how one might distinguish retail trade from "distribution" was never made clear.

When the Labour Party convention voted in 1995 to abandon Clause 4 in favor of a more mixed economy, including free competition within a regulated market, the CSM polled its members and found, much to the dismay of some its leaders, that 77.4 percent backed Blair in favor of the change.

What Has The Blair Government Done?

Beyond electing four times as many women as sat on the previous Parliament, vigorous efforts to bring an end to fratricidal conflict in Northern Ireland, the granting of greater autonomy to Scotland and Wales, the dismemberment of the House of Lords, strong support for NATO and U.S. intervention in Kosovo, what have Blair and the Labour Party done for the workers and the poor?

Their efforts have been constrained by the campaign pledge not to raise income taxes for three years, but they picked up \$8 billion from a tax on excess profits of previously privatized utilities. The improved economy has also brought in sufficient revenue so that Labour has been able to budget an increase of \$30 billion for education and \$33 billion more for health services through 2001. Other budget measures will increase the incomes of the poorest households by 2 to 2.5 per cent while cutting incomes of the 35 percent of the richest tenth (The Economist 3/15/99). Not a sensational redistribution of income, but heading the right way.

The Labour Party has for the first time put in place a national minimum wage, at the figure of \$5.83 (in U.S. dollars) for those aged 22 and over, which is well above our federal minimum of \$5.15. Those in training programs get a minimum of \$5.44, those 18-21 years of age \$5.10. Some 2 million workers, about 10 percent, will get more money as a result.

There have been complaints that Blair has been following in the footsteps of Clinton's dismantling of our welfare system. True, he has said that welfare should aim to "give a leg up not a handout", but British handouts were much more generous than ours and Labour's leg-ups have much more money and heft behind them. Its New Deal program is aimed at giving long-term unemployed youth, 18-24, a choice of four workfare options:

Not a sensational redistribution of income, but heading the right way.

- (1) six months with an employer who gets a wage subsidy of \$100 a week with a commitment to one day's training a week,
- (2) six months work with a voluntary sector organization,
- (3) work with an environmental task force, and
- (4) fulltime education and training for up to a year

The plan is to extend the program to older long-term unemployed in the near future. So far 284,000 young workers have grabbed these options and as of last May, 69,000 New Dealers had found "lasting unsubsidised jobs."

All in all, not a bad report card for Blair and the Labour party.

One last note; A more emotional split than the one over Blair's leadership appears to be developing among CSM members as reflected in the letters and columns of "Christian Socialist". Shortly after Labour's victory, the magazine took on a new columnist, a gay young MP named Ben Bradshaw. In his first column, Bradshaw wrote that Jesus not only had nothing to say about homosexuality, but "nothing to say on sex or sexuality at all". As expected, this exegesis stirred up a hornet's nest of reader protest which continues to this day. ■

John Cort is an editor of Religious Socialism.

A CHURCH AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Editorial Note: The following editorial and news items appeared earlier this year and it seemed worthy of re-publication here:

THE FINNISH LUTHERAN CHURCH AND THE POLITICAL LEFT

Sound public policy cannot be based on Anglo-American economic liberalism, where the key word is liberty and not the justice that the builders of the welfare state had as their guideline. Income differences have been rather small in Finland but have started to grow. Unless there is a change in the trend, this country will gradually detach itself from the major moral postulate of the Nordic communities, that fundamental rights must be assured to all members of the public. Finland must be run like a home, not like a business. Profits accrued from the international movements of capital must be taxed.

The above views are not from an election slogan of a leftist association but from a unique address "Toward a Common Weal" published in March 1999 by the Bishops of the Finnish Lutheran Church. The bishops are not making politics, let alone party politics, but their views match perfectly with the ultimate values of the left.

This does not reduce in the slightest the value of the announcement by the bishops, editorializes "Kansan Uutiset". Rather the contrary. The bishops displayed admirable courage and moral backbone. The bishops say that the Finns are being guided in the same direction by "the Lutheran ethical philosophy and the best traditions of the labor movement".

The stance of the bishops is not the first manifestation of the changing of the church. The Lutheran church has had the luck, the courage and the wisdom to have had in succession two broad-minded archbishops: Mikko Juva and John Wikstrom. The declaration of the bishops gives reason to assume that in Jukka Paarma they have an equal as their successor. Much because of its excellent leaders, it is from the Church that the most shaking social messages have been heard. The church has gradually taken its own doctrines seriously and has started to live up to them. The connection with the labor movement arises from the circumstances that the moral and ethical core

profits accrued from
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of the labor movement is exactly the same as that of the Christian faith: do unto others as you would they would do unto you.

Risto Penttila, MP (Young Finns) criticized the country's Lutheran bishops for getting involved in party politics. "The bishops lose their evangelical faith by putting their faith in political declarations", he said. He is considering whether to leave the church. "I have not given a mandate to the church to take political positions on my behalf. When the bishops demand that problems should be solved by means of European continental liberalism and not of Anglo-American liberalism (the policy of the Young Finns), they are taking their place in party circles".

*Kansan Uutiset Editorial/Ilta-alehti/STT
(from April 1999, "Finnish-American Reporter")*

...AND THE TRADITION CONTINUES

Here are excerpts from the newly consecrated Archbishop of the Finnish Lutheran Church— Archbishop Jukka Paarma

"... the duty of the church is to bring the ethical viewpoint to the debate. The issue of the welfare state's existence interests me and all the bishops. The fact that worries me about today's society, which is more affluent than even, is the that the affluence is divided very unevenly."

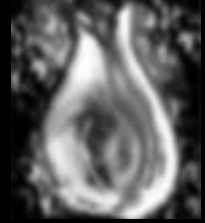
Many political decision makers are counting on the church to take care of the poor.....we are appealing to society's decision makers to eliminated poverty in our kind of welfare society by other means than pushing the problem over to the church.

"We have a large group of people living below the subsistence level who are not taken care of by the state or municipalities. We have had to resort to various emergency aid solutions such as food banks. The distribution of food bags is also our cry of distress for this society. There should not be this kind of phenomena in a welfare society; there must be something wrong."

"Many political decision-makers are counting on the church to take care of the poor so that it would earn some kind of PR value with it. We are not looking for PR value but try to help the poorest people."

"Now we are appealing to the society's decision makers to eliminate poverty in our kind of welfare society by other means than pushing the problem over to the church. We would like to change society's structures so that poverty would be eliminated, but that is not exactly the church's duty" ▶

WHAT IS RELIGIOUS ABOUT RELIGIOUS SOCIALISM?



Is "Religious Socialism" An Oxymoron?

HAROLD R. BRONK JR.

I suppose that there are as many religious people as there are non-religious who would find the expression "religious socialism" to be an oxymoron. There are good and interesting reasons for this to be so. Historically, in Europe and the USA, the religious establishment considered socialism in all of its forms to be inimical to its interests; and socialists—Marxist and non-Marxist—have seen the religious establishment as a bulwark of the bourgeoisie. This has not, of course, prevented either socialists from being religious or religious people from being socialists. In Guarini's stories of post-WW II life in an Italian village, even the communist mayor insists on having his son baptized and—to the consternation of the priest—names him Karl Marx!



Perhaps the most widely known statement of Marx is the one in which he characterizes religion as being "... the opium of the people." Marx certainly did write those words, but to quote them out of context is to distort their meaning. The entire paragraph in which they occur reads as follows:

"Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and also the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people."

The traditional enmity between classical Marxist socialism and religion began to be modified in the post-WW II period beginning in the 1960's and continuing to the present. Non-Marxist socialists—although generally suspicious of religion—have always been open to this dialogue. The willingness of religious people and socialists to engage one another in seeking a *rapprochement* is, however, not the subject of this paper. It has to do with *religious socialism* rather than socialism and religion.

Is socialism compatible with a religious view of the world? I should contend that not only has the Judeo-Christian worldview made significant contributions to the development of socialism in the West, but that socialism is inherent in that worldview. Developments in the last

century—among them the industrial revolution, the emergence of the developing countries, and modern philosophical approaches to theology—have drawn an increasing number of religious people to socialism as the only economic system compatible with a commitment to Judeo-Christian religious beliefs.

The industrial revolution brought about a radical alteration in the relations of production between the capitalist and the working classes. Mass production created an entirely different kind of life for workers: the distribution of wealth moved sharply away from the producers of commodities and toward the financiers and managerial class. At the same time, the religious establishment was threatened with the loss of the working class to an anti-clerical socialism if it did not respond to their plight. Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and the Social Gospel movement among American Protestants were among the attempts to influence the development of monopoly capitalism. Although neither embraced socialism—the encyclical is hostile to it—they both demanded significant recognition of the rights and needs of the working class. In other words, the religious community was engaged in a discussion of *class conflict*: a typically socialist concern. Christians and Jews in Europe and the US became heavily involved alongside of their secular counterparts in the organizing of working class people in unions.

In 1986 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the US issued a pastoral letter entitled *Economic Justice for All*. It sets forth six principles based upon the bishops' understanding of the Christian faith as held in the Roman Catholic Church. These principles are derived from the Bible and traditional church teachings. They are summarized as follows:

1. Every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person.
2. Human dignity can be realized and protected only in community.
3. All people have a right to participate in the economic life of society.
4. All members of society have a special obligation to the poor and vulnerable.
5. Human rights are the minimum conditions for life in community.
6. Society as a whole, acting through public and private institutions, has the moral responsibility to enhance human dignity and protect human rights.

These principles are an integral part of a profoundly moral vision of society. Such a vision goes beyond the requirements of a merely philosophical view of the good society. It is based upon the conviction that justice requires the inclusion of every member of the society and that there can be no genuine peace without justice. But a Judeo-Christian religious view goes beyond justice to love. In Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan does no more than the law requires: he loves the unfortunate stranger, i.e., he does not give him merely that which is his due, but subordinates his own welfare to the welfare of the stranger. This is not a new teaching on Jesus' part; it is already enshrined in the Jewish Torah.

No mainline Christians and Jews would have difficulty endorsing these six principles. Their application to economic justice in the US, while not explicitly endorsing socialism, is hardly conceivable within an economic system driven by monopoly capitalism. When religious people take seriously the divisions and inequalities that have been introduced into modern society by capitalism—and especially a global economy based upon monopoly capitalism—they begin to understand the need to develop an alternative based upon religious values of justice, peace and love.

...economic justice...
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Socialism, then, is implied in those religious views that find their expression in terms of social justice. Capitalism is intrinsically incompatible with these views because it is radically unconcerned with the quality of human life. The concern with the quality of human life that may be expressed by those who profess capitalism is extrinsic to capitalism and actually contradictory to it. The engine that drives capitalist society is the accumulation of capital. Socialism, on the other hand, is more than merely compatible with these values: it is a necessary part of accomplishing them.

As we learn more about the limits of scientific knowledge (e.g., Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty and chaos theory) there is a growing appreciation among non-religious people of religion as a human enterprise which articulates a certain kind of human experience. The religious socialist is no less a socialist for insisting that human experience is greater than science can explain or than the description of relations of production.

"Ray" Bronk is a member of DSA and is a retired Professor of Philosophy and the Study of Religion at the University of Massachusetts/Boston. He is an Episcopal priest.

A Personal Journey: From Marx to Biblical Religion

ALEX MAXIMIAC

The changing nature of socialism, with its reverberations on both political ideology and religious beliefs, has absorbed my life-time attention. The playing out of this relationship coincides with the unfolding event of the Russian Revolution (also the year of my birth). This is all set against a framework of a deeply pious eastern catholic Byzantine Ukrainian background in Chicago untrammelled, until later, by the influence of Western modernity.



In the course of the 1930's the heyday of the socialist movement, religion and socialism did not mix. My initial adolescent intoxication with socialism included the embracing of atheism. Instead of singing the triumphal resurrectional chant on Easter Day liturgy, I sang the International in the May Day parades and in other rallies. My clarity of purpose and action was later strained by the Moscow Trials (1937), which split the American socialist movement in the pursuit of orthodox revolutionary theory and praxis. Already I felt compromised and disillusioned by the betrayal of the revolution by Stalin. Leon Trotsky became my intellectual hero in the Young Peoples Socialist League, 4th International; but I also became hesitant about him as he appeared overly zealous in his certainty of justification of any means toward socialist ends without the necessary safeguards. His debates with John Dewey, for instance, became authoritarian.

I completed my "positivistic" education at the University of Chicago (BA and MA- pre- and post WWII) becoming fully assimilated as a child of the Enlightenment. This culminated in my adherence to the naturalism of John Dewey through whose philosophy I saw the world. Indeed, I also became a member of the Ethical Culture Society. In keeping with the Enlightenment paradigm, I blamed the church for obscurantism and superstition, identification with Czarist autocracy, as well as the subjugation of the poor. The church was the root cause of social misery.

Looking back, I am now appalled over my generation of liberal and socialist intellectuals who became dupes of Stalinism, others who were taken in by Freudian absurdities, and those who were dogmatically hostile toward a religious outlook. This generation, morally anesthetized, was incapable of invoking their moral indignation in response to the Holocaust and other genocide, Soviet atrocities and a succession of colonial wars. I hasten to add, this does not absolve others, in their silence, who also remain culpable.

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Now years later, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the long awaited demise of the "Marxist scientific materialism", it is time for religious socialists to engage our secular comrades and ourselves in a reassessment and reconstruction of our message to the world. As adherents of a Judeo-Christian tradition, it is important that we clarify and deepen our identity in relation to the socialist movement of which we are a part. Yet, while we strive to serve as a vital part of the movement, we resolve not to be determined by its materialistic ontology.

In our quest for peace and justice in a democratic society, this means that we continue to be actively engaged in our opposition to the profit-oriented capitalist order, its class system of exploitation, racism, militarism, and colonial domination. We support the political platform of the democratic socialist movement in calling for the election of a socialist government in a society of pluralistic tolerance and diversity. On the other hand, we recognize that certain traditional aspects of our religious narrative underpinning western culture have lapsed into a deadening routine incapable of fostering authentic personal life.

To advance what one can call our own internal discussion, the following theses are offered (building on the trends seen in Religious Socialism over the past few issues):

1) In order to reinforce our place in the socialist movement, we can affirm a long-standing presence antedating 19th century Marxism. That is, our moral roots stem, in their emergent form, in the struggles of the people of Israel for liberation from the oppression of Pharaoh. We can also recognize the elements of an intentional participatory communal living in the early Christian monastic tradition, through which much of our Greco-Roman cultural inheritance was safeguarded. We affirm our continuing identity within a living revolutionary tradition animated by the Holy Spirit.

2) The biblical narrative, despite its historical vicissitudes of interpretation, has shaped the western mind at the deepest level, with its emphasis on responsibility. It holds an anthropological understanding of the nature of human beings that is fortifying, enlivening, and promising of human potential. People are meant to seek the discovery of truth, beauty, and goodness in their particularly with others and with objects in the world.

3) Although we hold along with Marxists to the reality of class struggle as a dynamic of socio-economic evolution, we differ with them that it is impersonal, and causally inevitable. On the other hand, we confess that what we affirm as God's work for justice and mercy, has often been submerged, repressed and exploited by the powerful. Contrary to the Marxist view, we do not see the created world as solely materialistic, but instead, the religious socialist also sees the world as incarnated and immanent with the spirit of God. Since God is also the creator, he/she is also transcendent.

Religious socialists should challenge the dissonant elements in orthodox Marxist epistemology (now currently expressed in the form of positivism) whose methodology is restricted to viewing the physical realm as the sole underlying reality. A morality and a philosophy of mind derived from positivism cannot deal adequately with the vital issues of freedom, intentionality, subjectivity, and consciousness. As religious socialists, however, we must also challenge the market consumerism of capitalism which caters to the sensual satisfaction of the isolated subjective self. In our society, this self is conditioned to the need to acquire consumer objects. Both positivistic tendencies derive from the continuing impact of the Enlightenment and reflect the temptation to identify a single stream of thought with the whole of life.

4) The religious socialist emphasizes the agency of moral freedom in human beings as responsible decision-makers. Humans are bound in a relationship of love with God and neighbor, which is always within the matrix of a community where there is a mutual covenantal commitment. This makes for a supportive growth enhancing framework for a socialist society. The socialist society, in its fullest expression, is a society formed by the Judeo-Christian tradition and its values. The freedom of all people, ever a perennial issue, is safeguarded and held inviolate.

5) The rejection of biblical authority in the modern world has cast aside or neutralized the prophetic notion of the preferential option of God for the weak, the imprisoned and the oppressed. No longer do we view persons as being made in the image of God. Without faith, there is no vision, meaning, purpose in society on a sustaining basis.

We are commonly agreed that our age is marked by spiritual malaise, cynicism, sloth and moral indifference. Our secular ideology, no longer whole us, seems to be running on empty. In the fullness of time and as the church renews itself, we see that the biblical narrative is no longer saddled with superstition and ossified dogma (or an ideology of control by the powerful). Biblical interpretation is now coming to greater coherence with science and now can better serve as a liberating force for justice and peace throughout the world.

6) On a moral level, to be a religious socialist involves the doing of justice—to bring the good news to the hungry and the marginalized who yearn to be recognized. Our outlook invites all people to partake in the eucharistic banquet, (metaphoric and real) and answers the yearning of humanity to be accepted, nurtured and reconciled with one another.

The spirit of both religious and secular socialists is being tried at this time of darkness. But bear in mind, every act, in whatever form, to bring about a socialist society, brings us closer to goodness, beauty, and truth in our personal destiny, ~~as well as contributing to the realm of the city of God.~~

Alex Maximiac is a member of DSA and retired social

Religious Socialism: Is There Such A Thing?

JOHN F. ENDLER

Some time ago I visited a Christian book and gift shop to discover a very interesting “conversion” chart in the music section of the store. This chart was a guide for the interested seeker of Christian music, consisting of two columns: the first was headed, “If you like...”. The second column provided the Christian solution, “Then try...”. With great amusement I discovered a long list of “secular” artists spanning a variety of diverse genres conveniently replicated by the ever-diversifying Christian market. For much of contemporary Christian music is created through a calculated appropriation of style, accompanied by a content that has been sufficiently baptized to ensure a distinction between the sacred and profane, a distinction that provides the warrant for the music chart that I have described above.

And so we have Christian music. There persists an unfortunate dualism which haunts the lives of many who consider themselves people of faith in their engagement with culture as well as politics.

I have begun to wonder if the term religious socialism is perhaps as problematic as the term Christian music, and for the same kinds of reasons. In fact, I no longer believe that our designation of ourselves as religious socialists is helpful, especially as we offer our particular witness to that other Left.

Consider these questions:

(1) Do we consider socialism itself to be a religious expression of political engagement with the world?

(2) Or do we bring to our socialist commitments a faith perspective which has compelled us to align ourselves in this way?

(3) If you answer affirmatively to the first question then the term religious socialism would be ultimately redundant and religious would be used to emphasize this inner gnosis that we possess about our politics. This path risks the idolatrous temptation of equating religion with socialism. This path also risks the temptation to which the Christian music industry has succumbed, in which a secular style is mimicked and rendered religious through renovated content. As there now exists Christian pop, folk and heavy metal, so there might be a religious socialism.

Now, if you answer affirmatively to the second question, you might proceed by allowing socialism in all of its diversity to enjoy its worldliness. Is there a need for us to create a religious version of socialism? Might there not be something

within our faith perspectives that compel us to simply live in solidarity with the “irreligious” Left? I suggest that we consider pursuing this trajectory so that we might construct our socialist visions for people of faith in such a way that transcends the all too often dualism within human existence of sacred and profane. Otherwise, we run the risk of the Christian music industry’s folly, but our conversion chart would read, “If you like Marx, then try Amos.”

Political practice is worldly and we should resist the temptation to articulate these commitments so that they reflect a privileged religious dimension. Now, this is not meant to eliminate faith’s importance to our politics. Rather, this is an attempt to reconsider the relationship of faith and socialism. From my Christian perspective, a commitment to socialist politics represents a decision to be in solidarity with those who seek justice in and for the world, as an active means of giving witness to the One who will bring justice, peace and reconciliation in the fullness of time.

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As a person of faith I conceive socialism parabolically, as a collective story enacted by many others of faith in diverse times and places that gives witness to the redemption awaited by the living God, who promises a reign of reconciliation. Parables are narratives that present layers of meaning: there is the story itself and its structure and content, as well as that to which the story points. Socialist politics for people of faith might function in precisely this way as a collective, lived narrative in which our theory and practice yield a story, which gives witness to a lesson, a hope that is theological in character. The hopes, the joys and the struggle itself are the narrative from which diverse interpretations of theological import may be drawn. Now, if there is anything religious about the socialism that I envision, it is this iconic quality of our political practice. Like the visual icon upon which one gazes, socialism is not an end in itself: it gives witness to

something greater, someone Other, who alone will fulfill the dreams we bear and hold within our hearts.

It may be helpful to consider Dietrich Bonhoeffer who writes of the distinction between that which is penultimate (the next to last) and the ultimate (the last). Our lives in the world and the commitments that we make to and for the world reveal what is penultimate, the next to last. As Bonhoeffer would radically assert this is to be embraced for precisely what it is: worldly life. The temptation to resist the worldliness of our lives and to recast the earthly and the historical with the religious is to confuse the ultimate (who is

William Julius Wilson

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society and to explain their social positions and accomplishments. This definition identifies two types of racism--biological racism and cultural racism.

What we have witnessed over the years is a decline in biological racism and the crystallization of cultural racism. In other words, white Americans are far less likely to justify or rationalize the inferior treatment of blacks or explain their accomplishments with statements that they are biologically inferior to whites. Now many use cultural racist statements, attributing the relatively lower position of blacks to their "inferior" cultural traits, including attitudes, orientations, habits, worldviews and behavioral styles.

However, despite this lingering cultural racism, I really believe that progressives should give more attention to issues of economic justice. Racism is a product of situations--economic situations, political situations, social situations. As I point out in my new book "The Bridge Over the Racial Divide: Rising Inequality and Coalition Politics," which will be published in October, if we were successful in promoting economic justice we would significantly reduce some of the conditions that breed racism. Indeed, as I point out in the book, the frequency and intensity of the demagogic messages directed against minorities and affirmative action, welfare recipients and immigrants--messages that rang loud and clear in the months leading up to and following the congressional election of 1994--have noticeably decreased since 1996. I think that we can thank continued improvement in the economy for that.

Ordinary Americans are still economically anxious but the improved economic conditions have brought about a shift in the public's mood. And mean-spirited pronouncements by conservatives concerning race, immigration and welfare do not resonate with the general population the way they did during the first half of the 1990s--a period of economic anxiety.

J.D.--What effect do you think technological development has had, and will have on the legacy of racism in the United States?

W.J.W.-- As the late black economist Vivian Henderson pointed out two decades ago it is as if racism having put blacks in their economic place, steps aside to watch technological change destroy that place. One of the legacies of racism is that a disproportionate number of blacks are low

skilled. This is very problematic today because of the decreased relative demand for low-skilled labor. The decrease in the relative demand for low skilled the labor is due to two main factors--the computer revolution (i.e., the spread of new technologies that displaced low-skilled workers and rewarded the more highly trained) and the growing internationalization of economic activity which increases the competition of low-skilled workers in the United States with low skilled workers around the world.

The decreased relative demand for low skilled labor has had a more adverse effect on blacks than on whites because so many blacks are low skilled. It is true the number of blacks in professional, technical and managerial positions has increased significantly in the last several years, but because over three-quarters of the black working population was unskilled just four decades ago, blacks are still disproportionately at the bottom of the jobs hierarchy.



"it is as if racism having put blacks in their economic place, steps aside to watch technological change destroy that place."

J.D.--Do the opportunities that younger, college-educated blacks now have to obtain professional positions minimize the class differences between blacks and whites? --

W.J.W.--Yes. There has definitely been a crystallization of the black class structure so much so that the black class structure is beginning to take on some of the characteristics of the white class structure. Beginning in the 1960s class began to affect career and generational mobility for African Americans as it had regularly done for whites. And blacks from the most advantaged backgrounds experienced the most rapid upward mobility.

J.D.--Is the relationship between income and wealth the same in minority communities as in white communities?--

W.J.W.--There is a growing economic gap between the haves and have-nots in the black community. Income

inequality is growing more rapidly in the black community than in the white community. However, I should point out that there remains a huge gap between blacks and whites in terms of wealth (total financial assets, not just income). Until the huge gap in wealth between whites and blacks is reduced, the economic disparity between blacks and whites will not narrow significantly, despite increases in overall black income.

J.D.-- What are the chances of members of the black underclass getting the education and the skill they need to obtain middle-class incomes? What can be done to improve those chances?

W.J.W.--By the term "black underclass", I refer to a population that is economically marginal and lives in a neighborhood that is overwhelmingly impoverished and therefore reinforces that economic marginality. It would therefore certainly help if we could good improve conditions in the inner-city neighborhoods or provide the residents there with the resources to help them escape those neighborhoods. But when I think of increasing the education and skills of the ghetto poor, I think of the children. It is important that we do not produce another generation of jobless adults. Right now a disturbingly large percentages of ghetto kids attending inner-city public schools are crippled in those schools. We need a major public school reform program that would rescue a lot of these kids.

In my book "When Work Disappears", I point out that a national effort is required to raise the performance standards of all public schools in the United States to a desirable level, including schools in the inner city. In inner-city schools some of the programs that would be required to improve the educational experiences in the class room would be programs of teacher development--programs that encourage highly qualified teachers to teach in inner-city schools through scholarships and forgivable loans for teacher education, through increased supports for teacher training in schools of education, and through reforms in teacher certification and licensing. Also, we need greater flexibility not only in attracting and hiring qualified teachers for inner-city schools, but also in replacing those who perform poorly in the classroom and lack a dedication to teaching. Every effort should be made to identify schools that need support in teacher development, curriculum development and assessment, and educational and material resources. To repeat, we have to ensure that we do not produce another generation of inner-city jobless adults.

J.D.-- You have stated that the urban-suburban divide is in many respects a racial divide. Could you elaborate on that point? --

W.J.W.-- Since 1960, the proportion of whites inside central cities has decreased steadily, while the proportion of minorities has grown. In 1960, the U.S. population was evenly divided among cities, suburbs, and rural areas. By 1990, the proportion of residents living in both cities and

rural areas had declined significantly so much so that the suburbs contained nearly half of the nation's population. Urban residents dipped to only 31 percent of the U. S. population by 1990. Across the nation in 1990, three-quarters of the dominant white population lived in suburban and rural areas, while blacks and Latinos resided largely in urban areas.

J.D.--Are you hopeful that suburbs and cities can come together to provide the unity needed to address the issues that confront them both? Why? --

W.J.W.-Yes. As Bruce Katz of Brookings Institution has pointed out there are now strong indications that we have rediscovered metropolitan solutions as a way to address problems that are common to American cities and suburbs. There are three main reasons for this rediscovery: one, the recognition that metropolitan areas constitute the real competitive units in the new economy; two, the growing awareness that complex issues such as air quality and traffic congestion cross political boundaries and are immune to localized fixes; and three, the co-existence of persistent joblessness in the central cities and labor shortages in the suburbs.

Take, for example, the problem of urban sprawl. Even suburbanites see the adverse effects of sprawl on their own lives. Indeed, studies reveal that an increasing number of both suburban and urban businesses and households recognize these costs and are interested in changing the policies that facilitate urban sprawl.

J.D.-- What are the most important things that need to be done in order to deal with race and economic justice in our society?

W.J.W.--The formation of multiracial political coalitions is critical. As I point out in my new book, "The Bridge Over the Racial Divide," political power is disproportionately concentrated among the elite, most advantaged segments of society. The monetary, trade, and tax policies of recent years have arisen from and, in turn, deepened this power imbalance. Whereas elite members of society have benefited, ordinary families have fallen behind. However, as long as middle-and lower-class groups are fragmented along racial lines, they will fail to see how their combined efforts could change the power in the political imbalance and thus promote policies that reflect their interest.

You see, a vision of American society that highlights racial differences rather than commonalities makes it difficult for the American people to see the need and appreciate the potential of mutual political support across racial lines. One of the things I point out in my new book is that the likelihood of multiracial political cooperation could increase if we could persuade groups to focus more on the interests that they hold in common.

J.D.-- Thank you Professor Wilson.■

What is Religious About...

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God) with the penultimate. When this occurs we commit idolatry and we baptize the world in spite of itself. We then superimpose upon the world and our existence a dualism founded upon the opposition of the secular and sacred. We live in the realm of the penultimate, the next to last, whose reality must not be divided in dualistic compartments. We live with a hope grounded in faith in the ultimate, which not only grounds and sustains the world, but seeks its transfiguration as well. Note that here the penultimate and the ultimate are not conceived dualistically, but dialectically. Again, our existence is grounded wholly within the world (the penultimate) and wholly contingent upon the ultimate which gives life and transforms life while maintaining the worldly integrity of creation.

We confess to be a people of faith and socialism, but we need not carve a privileged religious space for our socialist witness. It is important for us to let the world be the world and to discover our lives firmly planted here with both the

joys and the ambiguities that attend such existence. But does this dissolve our distinct calling amidst the broader Left? Certainly not, for we can clearly confess to others that our hope is in the ultimate and that our socialist commitment reveals our participation in a dynamic parable which gives witness that One. This should not diminish our resolve to pursue these politics. Rather, it should enable us to avoid the unfortunate bifurcation of our existence into sacred and profane compartments.

Religious socialism? I think not. Socialism as parable? In this alternative reading, perhaps, we may discover possibilities for a new politics that is both deeply worldly and deeply faithful, a politics which is wholly worldly, even as it points beyond itself to some Other. Perhaps we may then discern a politics that dwells in the tension and interplay of the penultimate and ultimate that always grounds the life of faith.■

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Finding The *Religious* in Religious Socialism

ANDREW HAMMER

If we're looking for the religious part of religious socialism, I think it comes down to the question of the source of one's political convictions. What is it that motivates us to embrace this concept, this ill-received philosophy that we are all so convinced is the way for humans to organise their affairs? For non-religious persons, they may be motivated to become socialists by the horrors of continuing injustice in our world. They see the inequality in our midst, and in reaching for a response they find the socialist idea in one form or another. People who consider themselves "scientific socialists" may be motivated by the same emotional reaction, but come to their conclusions to support socialist politics as a logical method for solving the problems faced by humanity.



is that these ideas are a matter of faith for us; they are not ideas that can be "disproved" or put aside if and when they do not meet the economic productivity indicators of an affluent white male power structure. They are not mere methods for solving society's ills; they are the very instructions given unto us by that which we call the divine.

The religious socialist has no choice; consider, for example the matter of private or public health care and other pressing issues. The obligation to provide for the welfare of all creation transcends the ledgers and balance sheets of a human-centered economic philosophy, even our own socialist one. We are called to embrace socialism not by the ideas of socialism themselves, but by the fact that socialist thought and analysis translate the imperatives of our spiritual belief system into a secular language that respects the diversity of all faiths. Socialism for us represents the struggle to do what we see as God's will, to create a heaven on earth, which can be inclusive of all people whether or not they believe the way we do, or indeed whether they believe in any higher power at all.

For those of us who are religious socialists, both of these are a part of our motivations. But there is something extra that motivates us. The essential ideas of socialism — community, democratic justice, equality before the law, and the liberation of each individual to the realization of their dignity — make sense to religious socialists because they are the same ideas found in our own faiths. The distinction between the religious and non-religious socialists

socialist thought and analysis translate the imperatives of our spiritual belief system into a secular language that respects the diversity of all faiths.

If I could indulge the reader in a personal memory, I may be able to explain what I mean a bit better. In the time I have been a member of the Religion and Socialism Commission, one of the people who has given me more of a sense of hope

and inspiration was a man who considered himself neither an optimist nor a believer in any religion nor supreme being. Gabriel Grasberg was a survivor of the Holocaust, who had come to America after the war. He had seen more horror than I ever hope to in my lifetime, and yet through all of this, this wonderful man was a founder of the Religion and Socialism Commission. Why? He professed no God, and didn't feel that the outlook for socialism was particularly bright. Why would he be involved in a group having to do with a religious take on a perfectly good secular concept of repairing the world?

Gabriel made it clear, in the only time I ever had the pleasure of meeting him, that while he did not believe in the same kind of redeeming God that most of us have chosen, he did believe in hope itself. And so long as he believed in hope, there was also the hope of some greater collective spirituality that we might discover together, to lead us out of this mess we've gotten ourselves into.

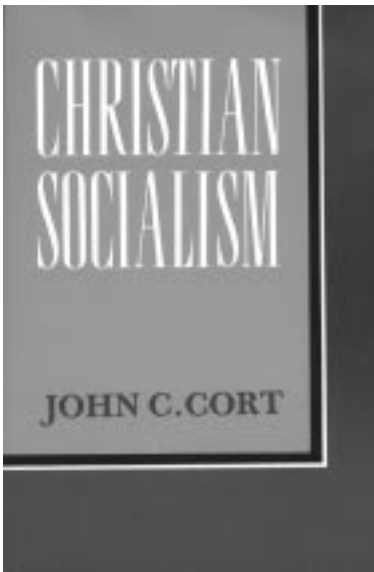
Without a specific creed, or even a defined vision of utopia, Gabriel Grasberg captured the essence of what is religious about religious socialism. Beyond the clever economic theories and the endless strategies for social transformation, what we religious socialists start with is an admittedly simple idea. No matter what happens in history, no matter what hell we endure for our ideals, we cannot retire them in defeat just because we have not made them come to pass. We cannot retire them, even when some in our own ranks may conclude that looking after the basic needs of our brothers and sisters at all costs is no longer economically or practically feasible.

We are not operating on what is or is not feasible, we are operating on what is right. That sense of what is right, and that hope, against all hope, that there is something greater within us that will make what is right a reality, is what is religious about religious socialism. ▀

Andrew Hammer is an editor of Religious Socialism.

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Religion and Labor

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Bread and Roses continues but now in the new context of a global economy in which capital has the unquestioned dominance of the globe. Without a global strategy advocating worker justice there can be no genuine lasting improvements for those at the bottom of the pay scale.

3) The Growth of Contingent Work – The term “contingent work” was coined by labor economist Audrey Freedman to refer to those “conditional and transitory employment arrangements as initiated by a need for labor...” Although figures vary, recent research reveals that 30% of the working population in the United States is contingent. The most adversely effected group is found in the manufacturing sector and among the newest immigrants. It is extremely difficult to organize among this group because the risk of job loss is very high. Cultural diversity provides additional challenges to efforts to organize.

Despite these obstacles, religious institutions and community organizers are developing some new and exciting programs. The Merrimack Valley, home of the textile factories of 1912 in Lawrence, Lowell, Haverhill and Amesbury, has been the center of contingent work organizing activity. The Merrimack Valley Project, an organization whose members include churches, synagogues and unions, has been gathering workers from the Latino and

Asian communities that dominate Lawrence and the surrounding cities today. They have found that factory workers, predominantly immigrants, are among the increasing number of contingent workers. It has been extremely difficult to gather these ‘disposable workers’ into a cohesive group precisely because of their vulnerability to being dismissed by their employers. Organizing continues using multiple models and sometimes creating new models for community organizers. Legislation, however, appears the most effective method for effecting the problem of contingent work. Other organizations such as Jobs with Justice and the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice have been actively engaged in organizing around the issue of contingent work. The AFL-CIO, both nationally and through local labor councils, has begun to work with such organizations recognizing that contingent work represents a serious threat to labor today.

As we look to the future and speculate about the social problems of our time – violence in schools, drug commerce, global warming, and diseases such as HIV/AIDS and cancer – we must also re-examine our commitment to the common laborer. Where do we see concern for the working masses? Are we to leave them with No God, No Master?▶

Joyce Caggiano is a member of the DSA and an Episcopal priest. She is the Associate Rector at St. Paul's Church in Newburyport and is presently completing her doctorate in Social Ethics at the Union Institute in Cincinnati, Ohio.



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