

Vatican by Augustinus

The Liberation that enslaves

The Catholic Church condemns the Theology of Liberation because of its Marxism and attacks the spurious freedom of the East bloc.

On Sept. 4, the Vatican made public a document condemning the "Theology of Liberation" and the communist regimes of the East. The "Teaching of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on the Theology of Liberation" was released in a press conference by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation (formerly the Holy Office); Monsignor Quarracino, president of the Latin American Bishops' Council; and other prelates of the Roman curia. The document was signed by Ratzinger and approved by the Pope.

After stressing that the document "must absolutely not be interpreted as an approval, even indirect, of those who contribute to maintaining the misery of peoples, of those who profit from it, and of those whom such misery leaves resigned and indifferent," that is, of those oligarchical forces who today maintain many peoples of the world in slavery, it analyzes the errors and deviations inherent in the Theology of Liberation.

The fundamental error is the assumption of Marxist analysis as a method of analyzing the causes of misery and injustice, starting from the presumption that the Marxist method is the truly scientific one. The document, after criticizing this claim to be scientific, recalls that "atheism and the negation of the human person, of his liberty and his rights, are central to the Marxist conception. The latter therefore contains errors which directly threaten the truth of faith on the eternal destiny of persons. Moreover, to try

to integrate an 'analysis' into theology whose criteria of interpretation depend on such an atheistic conception means to shut oneself up in ruinous contradictions." And these derive mainly from the negation of man's spiritual nature.

This interpretation leads to a perversion of the Christian message itself. The Eucharist, for example, is turned into a celebration of the people's struggle, and theology "proceeds to a perilous amalgam between the poor of the Scripture and Marx's proletariat. In this way, the Christian significance of the poor is subverted, and the struggle for the rights of the poor turns into the class struggle, in the ideological perspective of the class struggle. The Church of the poor means, therefore, a class Church, which has become aware of the need for the revolutionary struggle as a stage toward liberation and which celebrates this liberation in the liturgy."

The political re-reading which the liberation theologians make also involves the figure of Christ: "Faith in the Word Incarnate, who died and was resurrected for all men and is constituted 'by the Lord God and Christ,' is denied. Substituted for this is a figure which is a kind of symbol, summing up the needs of the struggle of the oppressed. The death of Christ thus undergoes an exclusively political interpretation, and thus its value for salvation and the entire economy of the Redemption is denied."

This part of the document is key because, in denying the divine nature

of Christ, the Theologians of Liberation step into the area of heresy. Such a judgment is not explicit in the document, although in response to journalists' questions, Cardinal Ratzinger said that one can speak of heresy insofar as there is subversion of the faith. The document underlines how from this vision of Christ derives a denial of the importance of the Holy Spirit which is "the source of every true novelty." At this point in the text, a virulent attack is unleashed against the East bloc regimes: "Millions of our contemporaries legitimately aspire to regain the fundamental freedoms of which they have been deprived by totalitarian atheistic regimes who have seized power by revolutionary and violent means, in the name of the liberation of the people. One cannot ignore this shame of our time: With the pretext of bringing them liberty, entire nations are maintained in conditions of slavery unworthy of mankind. Those who, perhaps unwittingly, become complicit in similar enslavements, betray the poor that they intend to serve."

It goes on: "The class struggle as the road toward a classless society is a myth which blocks reforms and aggravates crisis, misery, and injustice." Since the time of Pius XII, the Vatican had not adopted such a strong position vis-à-vis the communist regimes.

It is not yet possible to say what impact this document will have on the Church and the world, but it is noteworthy that within a few hours after its publication, three threats were made on the Pope's life. The case of Emanuela Orlandi, the daughter of a citizen of the Vatican state kidnapped last year, has resurfaced: Her captors have demanded the liberation of Ali Agca, who tried to kill the Pope in 1981.

An analysis of the document will appear in the next *EIR*.