

Daniel Ortega, N.'s political chief, is now (Oct/84) running freely around the USA, saying whatever he pleases; and it pleases him to concentrate on attacking our political chief (and "system")--and I'm pleased, and grateful to God, that our system permits it. This think-sheet is about the pernicious effects of a 19th-c. notion in the 20th c., viz. the notion that things, whatever things, just "happen by themselves," so humans better cooperate or at least get out of the way. Roots of the idea include (1) the biblical-personal, viz., God's will as ultimately victorious in cosmos and history and (2) the Greek-"tragic"-impersonal, viz., Fate (*moira*) "working itself out" through the Tendenzen (*teloi*) in "all things" (*ta panta*). Some evil effects:

1. Christian and Islamic fundamentalistic obscurantism. Instances: Since God's will is to be done "on earth," why not now and as these scribes see it? why the "separation of Church and State"? Since the "Land of Islam" includes "Palestine," why should non-Muslims be permitted to establish an independent state there? As Dorothy Parker said, "You can't teach an old dogma new tricks--the best we can do is to contain the dog and take its pups to dog-obedience school (say I, not DP).
2. The myth of automatic progress, the West's self-seduction by a heady injection of technologism, pervades Adam Smith's "hand" as much as Karl Marx's "history." Here, I speak of it as a popular phenomenon, which based Western politicians' use of the "lesser breeds without the law." "Capitalism" and "communism" are virulent enemies partly because they are scions of the same myth, two political religions claiming to be exclusively faithful to the same god. Both pay lip-service to the notion that history is on the side of "freedom," and each then uses a logic internal to its system to flesh out what "liberation" is and how it must happen. Each is arrogantly violence-prone both systemically and actively. Each has its top side (i.e., persons advantaged by the system) and its bottom side ("the oppressed") --and each accuses the other of being singly responsible for all "the oppressed" in the world. (I'm on the top side of capitalism; and, as a prophetic Christian, I bite the hand that feeds me--but not so hard that it stops feeding me.) Both are expressions of faith in a determinism (i.e., an inevitability) that is automatic (i.e., self-operating, *ex opera operando*, as in the magical view of the Roman Mass).
3. This A.D. faith gives strength and comfort but exacts, as price, illusion and arrogance--as one observes in current liberationisms based on single issues, i.e., abortion and sexual equality (inclusive language: "eventually, why not now?"). At the world level, it's the Wilsonian "self-determination of peoples" vs. empires (now called "superpowers"). At the personal level it's the monadic individual who's great on liberty and crippled against commitment and covenant-keeping. At the church level it's "autonomy" (in which my own UCC glories) vs. wider covenants than the local church. In economics is anticlassism. Across the board it's anti-racism (the Exodus as model--though the Hebrews sought freedom *from* Egypt, and the American blacks 1954- seek freedom *within* the USA).
4. Biologically, A.D. is Darwinism's "spontaneous generation" and "natural selection," with understandable atheistic effect despite theists' attempts to make peace with it. (The brightest public-school children do not join churches.)
5. Philosophically, A.D. is mechanistic materialism. (But contrast world-class physicist Max Planck: "I regard matter as derivative from consciousness.")
6. Psychologically, A.D. is Freudianism: we are pseudothinking organisms.
7. Economically, A.D. is Marxism, as in the second phrase (here it italics) of Nicaragua's FSNL Document of the National Directorate on Religion: "We the Sandinistas affirm that our experience shows that when Christians...are able to respond to the needs of the people *and the needs of history*, their own beliefs lead them toward revolutionary militancy." (After quoting this, Marxist-atheist Margaret Randall, CHRISTIANS IN THE NICARAGUAN REVOLUTION, New Star Books/83, quotes a priest, p.32: "We never knew that original sin consists of society's division into classes."

Some **COMMENTARY** on the above:

1. Henry Nelson Wieman in class 43 years ago shocked me by saying something like this (only the quoted words being his): If we're going to believe in and give ourselves to "the person-making process" (=his definition of "God"), we'll have to surrender all notions, and the comforts thereof, that somebody or other, or something or other, can and does guarantee some particular outcome to history. Real faith is action in cooperation with "the person-making process," and it's really faith because we cannot "know" whether history will come to what we call a good end or what we call a bad end....While as a biblical Christian I cannot agree with Wieman's agnosticism about the future, for the same reason I cannot reject an idea that has such a therapeutic effect on me: I, we, do matter as to how history turns out; and the very seriousness of the Bible's call to responsibility suggests that the idea, while nowhere stated in Scripture, was working in the authors' psyches.

2. Papa is worried about liberation theology, esp. in Latin America, because (1) the marxian component may corrupt the biblical vision by refocus and by revalorizing the biblical categories, (2) liberation theology opens the church to Communist cooptation (which he fought powerfully when a cleric in Poland), (3) "base communities," political-activist "small groups" all over Latin America, are insufficiently informed and led by those trained by and under obedience to the Magisterium, and (4) the Church, instead of functioning to reconcile poor and rich, may under the marxian ideological anticlassism become polarized against the rich, who have been the allies of the Church since Constantine. Here's a mix of authentic and questionable if not inauthentic concerns. I'm disturbed by friends who see Rome only as bad guy, with Abp. Obando y Bravo as representative bad guy.

3. The case of Nicaragua is signal for a revolution pulled off by intimate cooperation between atheist Marxists and theists. Obando led his bishops and lower clergy in denouncing Somoza, proclaiming the people's right to insurrection ("a just war"), and in Nov/79 supporting the new government "though with reservations. From then to the present, Obando y Bravo and most bishops have grown increasingly critical of the revolution." (Randall, *op.cit.*, 206--in the midst of an excellent 5-p. "Chronology" of N. political, AD1522-1983.) Why "reservations"? Because he saw the joint Marxist/Christian cause becoming increasingly captured in its sense-making by, of the two, the simpler paradigm: the law of parsimony fights for Marxism (with its simplistic classistic philosophy of history) against the more nuanced and complex Christian understanding of "the ways of God," of society, and of the human heart. (Cf. the current victories of the Religious Right in America.)

4. The temporary glory of Nazism (a telescoping of "National Socialism") was that it outsimplified international socialism, viz., Marxism. Philosopher Alfred Rosenberg's blood-and-soil primitive-mythic ethnism, with its gut-level appeal, crushed mind-and-gut Communism. Foolishly, Hitler then fought a multi-front war, dooming himself against crushing the USSR, which he'd have managed handily if he'd been single-minded about it. Intriguing it is to speculate on the world we'd be living in if he'd won at Stalingrad: would we be up against German ethnism as we're now up against Russian ethnism (only whites having real power in the USSR)? Either way, the top struggle would be between two white-power groups, and the bottom struggle of "the oppressed" would differ little.

5. Reagan inherited Monroeism (1823, the Monroe Doctrine) and antiCommunism, esp. the antiCastroism in which the two converge. Simplemindedly, he's against any Western-Hemisphere government in which the two converge; ergo, down with the Sandinistas. I think he's wrong about this (and I'll vote against him), but I can't know he's wrong as clearly and decisively as Barmen knew Hitler was wrong (or is Gringoism as patently evil as was Nazism?). Nazism was empire-building, Reaganism is empire-maintaining both internally (in the Monroe Doctrine's sphere of influence) and externally (against Communist/USSR ideological and/or military intrusion into the Western Hemisphere). Superpowers fear not being feared, so they even fear talking to each other. In between, little peoples screech inflated

rhetoric, as Ortega at Harvard yesterday (8Oct84): "The Am. gov't. has poised itself to exterminate the N. people." (Russian proverb: "The wolf will hire himself out very cheaply as a shepherd." The Hispanic style of power?)