

DIALOGUE ET REVOLUTION, by J. Girardi. *Éditions du Cerf*, 1969. 288 pp.

MARXISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, by Roger Garaudy. *Collins*, 1970. 224 pp. 36s.

While most Christians and Marxists have reservations about dialogue, young people may denounce it as the last-ditch stand of neo-capitalist conservatism. The Second Vatican Council issued a Constitution on the Church in the world of today, but could not provide an up-to-day statement of Catholic teaching. Catholics and non-Catholics need bringing up to date, but *aggiornamento* is not enough. The vital issue is the world of tomorrow. What we need is prophecy.

Garaudy jogs our conscience. 'When we ask ourselves what we must do if we are to act rightly, we are not seeking to conform to a pre-existing law or to a being that is already "given": we are asking ourselves what must be brought into existence which is not yet existing' (p. 77). 'I am not responsible only to myself but also to a society, a class, a nation' (p. 91). Girardi believes sensitivity to the problems of the Third World the touchstone of our fidelity to the requirements of dialogue (p. 257). Garaudy goes further. 'We are never free to choose between violence and non-violence. We are already committed, and our abstention, equally with our engagement, plays its part in this confrontation of forces. To condemn the violence of the slave who revolts, is to become an accessory to the permanent violence of the enslaver' (p. 151).

Like *Marxism and Christianity*, *Christianity and the Class-Struggle*, *The Value of Freedom as a Sign of Contradiction in the Post-Conciliar Church*, and his contributions to the *Encyclopedia of Atheism* of which he is editor, Girardi's *Dialogue and Revolution* augurs well for the vast, general philosophical synthesis he is now writing. It is a collection of essays, some of which have been published previously in learned journals. 'Demythologization and atheism' is particularly valuable.

*Marxism in the Twentieth Century* may not have the political topicality of Garaudy's *Socialism's Great Turning-Point*, but any future Marxism has, in these pages. The author quotes a Buddhist proverb: 'Point at the moon, and

the fool looks at your finger.' To discuss these books is not enough. Thinking must blossom out into action that transforms the world to provide fresh horizons stimulating ever more fruitful thinking in the dialectical expansion of the methodology of historical initiative.

Girardi's weakness, which is also his strength, is his philosophical detachment. Garaudy's flaw is a schizoid attitude to the Marxist myth. While Rahner offers hope of the absolute future, there is considerable ambivalence about Garaudy's claim to be 'always forward-looking' (p. 165). One may contrast two series of texts:

A. 'Socialism has not destroyed the dream.' 'We must dream.' 'Myth is the phase of labour in which the emergence of man asserts itself.' 'Every symbolic story calls man back to his true nature.' 'From its very beginning, myth is the language of transcendence.' 'It is a return to the fundamental: the man who stands on his own feet', 'expressing the healthy infancy of man'. 'The golden age of myth allows man to relive the dawn of the world.' 'The meaning of history was born with the first man, the first labour, the first project.' (pp. 164-67.) There is more than an echo of the pangs of child-birth here.

B. 'Myth is not participation but creation', 'what realizes the future', not 'mere reproduction or preservation of the present by a master-concept'. Man is 'defined in the first place by the future he constructs and not by the past of the species, which urges him on simply by instinct and desire'. 'In every great myth, whether poetic or religious, man regains his own transcendence in relation to every given order.' (pp. 165-66.)

Garaudy discusses Girardi's opinion that 'for Marxism, the absolute is not man but humanity' (p. 144). I have a strong feeling that only commitment to something like Rahner's absolute future can save Garaudy's claims in B from being voided of content by the regressive character of what he says in A.

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LOVING ON PRINCIPLE, by E. W. Dicken. *Darton, Longman and Todd*, London, 1969. 168 pp. 21s

Traditional theology has its defenders. E. L. Mascall demolished some current shibboleths in *The Secularization of Christianity*, and E. W. Trueman Dicken does the same in regard to the so-called 'new morality'. It is equally

well written and hard hitting (and equally, perhaps, lacking in that sympathy which is the ultimate weapon against an opponent).

Dr Dicken criticizes advocates of situation ethics because they take their cue from secular