

This month we publish two further articles on revolutionary liberation. Revolution is the response to and an interpretation of certain basic facts. These facts are available to all those who are not too engrossed or self-interested to look beyond their own noses.

Thus, in the world as a whole, 20% of the population commands 80% of the world's income, and the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer, whilst the proportion of income from industrialised countries spent on foreign aid is declining year after year. In this country 14% of the population are still poor, using the standard of 40% above basic National Assistance rates, whilst 10% of the population still own 80% of all private property (further particulars are given in, for instance, the *May Day Manifesto*). Britain spends more on defence than the whole rich world does on aid to the developing countries, and America's defence budget is 60% greater than India's entire national income, although India's population is two and a half times that of the United States. And during the last ten years the student population of the world has more than doubled.

The revolutions that correspond to such facts can be reduced to three. Firstly, there is the revolutionary ferment in the Third World. The gross inequality that exists as between rich and poor nations is not new. What is new is the increasing intolerance of such inequality now that it can be so rapidly known through modern communications and now that the means for redressing it seem to be within man's grasp for the first time in his history. It seems to be only greed and sectional advantage, compounded by a whole socio-economic structure of profit-led and war-biased technology—all that we refer to as the 'rat-race'—which stands in the way of such a redressing of inequality.

In view of this, the student revolts of the past five years assume a new significance. They are like those multiple scientific breakthroughs which seem from time to time suddenly to emerge almost simultaneously from incubation when the moment is somehow mysteriously prepared and right. And the real, if still often inarticulate, aim of the students seems to be not so much to secure a larger say, but to be able to say something quite different. Even violence seems often to be merely a groping and exasperated way of demonstrating that the very way the questions are put fix one in a false position. There may, of course, be extremists and sheer anarchists who do want to seize the essential generosity of the movements for

their own partisan or doctrinaire ends, just as student power may degenerate into yet another sectional interest. Nevertheless, protest that still often seems to be negative and local would appear to be instinct with positive and universal aspirations, and the real question is whether protest can be consolidated into a whole purposive style of life.

In the case of either revolution, then, there are risks of degeneration and excess built into the movements for greater justice and fraternity. And this is surely where the third revolution, the crisis within the Church, becomes so relevant. The blunt fact is, as Dom Helder Camara recently said in Paris, that the masses will inevitably become aware of their condition: with the Church, without the Church, or even against the Church. The phrase is tellingly reminiscent of what Bishop Dupanloup said *à propos* of the first French revolution. The choice and chance before the Church therefore now is to fuse its revolution with those of the Third World and the students, to act within them as conscience and soul, and to try to soak up the inherent violence and excess in its ultimate ministry of reconciliation.

We should be quite lucid about what is involved. On the one hand, there is a revolution of growth in the Church as there is in the world at large, and the question for the Christian is *not* about the one thing needful, the central cleaving to God in a covenantal relationship, the inamissible conversion of the heart, but whether such an abundance of the heart is, now, for us today, to be schooled in and spill over into, revolutionary work for the greater equality and brotherhood of men. To return to Mrs Haughton's excellent terms, it is not the transformation that is in question, but the situation and manner of formation. On the other hand, as Professor Shaull says in his article, 'this would not be an easy or a pleasant task; it might not even have much chance to succeed.' For the motive for such a commitment is simply that the sort of society promised by the revolutions is a more transparent intimation of the kingdom to come—*which will not fully come in this world*. We celebrate the anticipation of this kingdom to come in our sacraments, and so must strive to prolong and manifest this anticipation in para-sacramental activity in the world, to translate our eschatological hope of cosmic soliarity, *quantum posse*, into our personal relationships and the larger structures of the *polis* that ripple out from and wash back to these intimate relationships. But we are not assured of success in this enterprise; on the contrary, the paschal victory is on the other side of the tragedy of trying.

Revolution for the Christian, too, can therefore only be a wager. Père Couturier, O.P. used to say in matters of *art sacré*: 'We must wager for the future.'

P.L.