

**SOCIAL ORDER BOOKLETS**

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# **Social Thought**

of the

*American Hierarchy*

**WILFRID PARSONS, S.J.**

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# SOCIAL THOUGHT OF AMERICAN HIERARCHY

THIS study deals with the social teachings of our Bishops only since the end of World War I. There is no intention, however, of slighting the illustrious names which will immediately occur to the reader: James Cardinal Gibbons, Bishop John Lancaster Spalding, Archbishop John Ireland and Bishop John J. Keane. Each of these great men spoke out vigorously against the social evils of his time and suggested various reforms. They were particularly active in defending the rights of the workingman.<sup>1</sup> The *Memorial* which Cardinal Gibbons directed in 1887 to Leo XIII in defense of the Knights of Labor is a landmark in our social thought and was written with the help of Ireland and Keane and also of the great English Cardinal Manning. It is said by Leo's official biographer to have considerably influenced the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, "On the Condition of the Working Classes,"<sup>2</sup> four years later. Certainly there are passages in that famous document which directly echo, if they do not actually quote, Gibbons' *Memorial*.

These pioneers, however, were individual voices crying out each in his own circle. It is true that the Hierarchy issued twelve Pastoral Letters prior to 1919, but these documents, following as they did provincial or Plenary Councils, dealt almost entirely with moral or disciplinary questions within the Church in America.<sup>3</sup> It was not until after World War I that the Hierarchy itself began to speak consistently and collectively on social problems. Also, the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference has usually issued statements at the end of the Bishops' annual meeting each November. Fortunately for this study, these various documents have now been collected under the title *Our Bishops Speak*, and I wish to express my indebtedness to Fr. Huber's work.<sup>4</sup> Without it this study could not have been made.

<sup>1</sup> James Cardinal Gibbons, Baltimore, 1916, *A Retrospect of Fifty Years*, 1, 190-209. Also, Sister Agnes Claire Schroll, O.S.B., *The Social Thought of John Lancaster Spalding*, Catholic University Press, Washington, 1944. Ireland's contribution has yet to be written. Bishop Keane's is mentioned in the volume of Catholic University which deals with his Rectorship: P. H. Ahern, *The Catholic University of America*, 1949. For a much earlier period, see: C. Joseph Nuesse, *The Social Thought of American Catholics, 1634-1829*, Catholic Uni-

versity Press, 1945. The intermediate period remains to be studied.

<sup>2</sup> Eduardo Soderini, *The Pontificate of Leo XIII*, London, 1934, pp. 167-79; also, Henry J. Browne, *The Catholic Church and the Knights of Labor*, Catholic University Press, 1949.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Peter Guilday, ed., *The National Pastorals of the American Hierarchy*, NCWC, Washington, 1923.

<sup>4</sup> OUR BISHOPS SPEAK.—By Raphael M. Huber, O.F.M.Conv., ed. Bruce, Milwaukee, 1952, 380 pp. \$6.00.

## I. The Social Scene

In 1919, the NCWC Administrative Committee issued the famous "Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction." This was a rather exhaustive examination of the American social scene, and it caused a sensation when it appeared because of its liberal and forward-looking tendencies.<sup>5</sup> When, on its twentieth anniversary in 1939, a new reprint was issued, Edward Cardinal Mooney in an Introduction listed its eleven principal proposals and pointed out that at that time all but one of them had been wholly or partially "translated into fact." For the record, these were: 1. minimum wage legislation; 2. unemployment, sickness, disability and old age insurance; 3. minimum age limit for child labor; 4. legal enforcement of the right of labor to organize; 5. continuation of the War Labor Board; 6. national employment service; 7. public housing for low-income workers; 8. increased wages, even over war-time levels; 9. regulation of public-utility rates, progressive taxes on inheritance, income and excess profits; 10. participation of labor in management and ownership; 11. control of monopolies, even by government competition.

Cardinal Mooney said that only No. 10 had not been attempted in his time, but events since he wrote have shown progressive steps even in that proposal.

Other capital documents have appeared since that day, especially "The Present Crisis" (April 25, 1933); "Christian Attitude on Social Problems" (November 28, 1937); "The Church and Social Order" (February 7, 1940), and many shorter ones on specific questions down to November, 1951.

### Advances in Thought

Examination of these documents shows a marked progression in social thought. The 1919 Program, the Bishops mildly characterized as "practical and moderate," and they expressly disavowed any intention of radical reform. They looked on their proposals as mere remedies for present social evils. After 1931, however, a great change took place. That, of course, was the year in which appeared the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, forty years after *Rerum Novarum*. This was a document of radical reform of society, and our Bishops were not slow to fall in line.

Even in 1919, however, they had roundly criticized the present socio-economic order:

The present system stands in grievous need of considerable modifications and improvement. Its main defects are three: enormous inefficiency and waste in the production and distribution of commodities; insufficient incomes for the great majority of wage earners; and unnecessarily large incomes for a small minority of privileged capitalists.<sup>6</sup>

Later, as we shall see, they went far beyond the limits of the 1919 Program. In November, 1930, at the depth of the Depression, at the instance of the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, Archbishop Edward J. Hanna, Chairman of NCWC, issued a statement on unemployment. He called for "a change of heart" on the part of the country, and stressed the deep spiritual motive for social reform:

Let them [Catholics] look to the long-time, deeper-seated, and harder task of allowing the likeness of the Saviour of the world to shine through our country's economic institutions. Let them begin with their own work and wealth, and their own rela-

<sup>5</sup> *Our Bishops Speak*, pp. 243-260. Hereafter, this work will be referred to simply as "Huber."  
<sup>6</sup> Huber, p. 257.

tions to property, to employees, to employers, to customers, to their corporation and organization associates. Let the spirit of Christ shine there.<sup>7</sup>

## Apply to America

In April, 1933, they apply the lesson and criticism of *Quadragesimo Anno* to our own conditions:

If we apply to our own country the weighty words of His Holiness, we find that, in common with other nations, we have brought about our present unhappy conditions by divorcing education, industry, politics, business and economics from morality and religion, and by ignoring for long decades the innate dignity of man and trampling on his human rights.<sup>8</sup>

Thus they laid to rest at the very beginning the easy assumption that Pius XI's criticism of the social order might well apply to conditions in Europe but had no relevance here. One more quotation must be given to show how the episcopal minds were running. In a strong statement on "The Degradation of the Family, Demoralization of Youth, and the Corruption of Business," they said on November 15, 1933:

Many of the present evils could, no doubt, have been averted by wise legislation or through prompt governmental intervention, but the people themselves are responsible for the kind of government they got. It was the fault of the voters that municipal government was so often synonymous with fraud, graft, corruption, misappropriation of public funds, and the unholy alliance between criminals and the police; that state governments, through extravagance, piled up impossible tax burdens; and that the Federal Congress squandered public money in such a fashion as to make a balanced budget an impossibility.<sup>9</sup>

But it is time to turn from these generalities (which could be multiplied indefinitely) to the Bishops' treatment of specific social problems. We shall examine them under the headings of II. Social, III. Socio-Economic, IV. Economic, V. Politics and government.

## II. Social Problems

1. *The Family* As was to be expected, the family and the home have been of primary interest to the Bishops. "The nursery of Christian life is the Catholic home." These words from the Pastoral Letter of 1919 sound a keynote which will be heard through the years.<sup>10</sup> But it was not only to Catholics but to all men that their teachings on the family were directed. They parted from many modern sociologists in holding that the family, not the isolated individual, is the basic unit of society. Thus in 1943 they said:

In God's plan the family is a social institution with its own rights and dignity. Its stability, unity and sanctity are as necessary to a right social order as the proper constitution of government itself. If in the family right order prevails and the children are trained in virtue, there is a guarantee for social well-being. Where the state violates family rights and makes light of family stability and parental responsibility, no amount of welfare work carried on or promoted by public authority will adequately provide for social well-being.<sup>11</sup>

And again, in 1949:

It [the family] is a divinely founded natural society. It is prior, in existence and in its nature, to every other human society, to every state or nation. It is the basic social unit. It has its own native rights which no civil power can take away or unduly limit. To serve and protect the family and its life, states are formed and governments established.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Huber, p. 192.

<sup>8</sup> Huber, p. 275.

<sup>9</sup> Huber, p. 301.

<sup>10</sup> Huber, p. 14. This Pastoral Letter is

not to be confused with the 1919 Bishops' Program, which was issued earlier in that year.

<sup>11</sup> Huber, p. 118.

<sup>12</sup> Huber, p. 156.

## Qualities of Family

During the period under study the Bishops issued two full-length statements on the family, one (November 15, 1933) in which the family was joined with youth and business in a pessimistic survey of American society in depression times, the other on "The Christian Family" (November 21, 1949) which was more positive and more hopeful.<sup>13</sup>

Like all Catholic moralists, the Bishops looked for the welfare of the family to the success of the marriage which gives rise to the family. In an impressive passage of the 1919 Pastoral<sup>14</sup> they summarized succinctly all the arguments and motivations which Catholic social thinkers are wont to advance for the sanctity and stability of the married state. They need not be cited here, but it may be well to know where they may be found.

In the 1949 Statement, which is an unusually systematic treatment of the subject in a document of this kind, they present "the requisites for family life if it is to produce its wondrous benefits in full measure and effectiveness: it must be *permanent* in its establishment and prospects; it must be *free* from unwarranted interventions; it must have *economic security*; it must be *religious*." (Emphasis added.) This discussion will well repay a reading.

2. *Women* Here, as so often, the keynote for succeeding utterances was sounded in 1919. In the Pastoral of that year there is no wailing over years gone by when woman was, according to the legend, a recluse and never seen in public. The Bishops boldly proclaim that "in society, as in the home, the influence of woman is potent. She rules with the power of gentleness, and, where men are chivalrous, her will is the social law." Then they concede more to women's influence than man's chivalry grants:

The present tendency in all civilized countries is to give woman a larger share in pursuits and occupations that formerly were reserved to men. The sphere of her activity is no longer confined to the home or to her social environment; it includes the learned professions, the field of industry, and the forum of political life. Her ability to meet the hardest of human conditions has been tested by the experience of war; and the world pays tribute, rightfully, to her patriotic spirit, her courage, and her power of restoring what the havoc of war had well-nigh destroyed.<sup>15</sup>

Here is none of that obscurantism which many nowadays attribute to the Church with regard to women. The Bishops had accepted wholeheartedly, without reservation, the new status of woman in modern life. In the passage which follows the one just quoted, they discuss just what should be the function of woman, recently emancipated with a vote equal to men's. With equal rights, they say, goes an equal responsibility. But they go farther, saying:

To reach the hearts of men and to take away their bitterness, that they may live henceforth in fellowship one with another—this is woman's vocation in respect of public affairs, and the service which she herself by nature is best fitted to render.<sup>16</sup>

## Public Role of Women

Thus the Bishops pierced to the heart of the question of equal rights for women, of woman suffrage and of women in public life. Here and elsewhere they cheerfully accept the advent of women in public life. They foresee that the affection of woman will offset the hardness of political strife. Would that their quixotic, if celibate, belief in woman's influence on society outside the family had been realized! They do really seem to have believed that with the coming of woman suffrage our political life would be transformed. And they had such good reasons for their hopes! Alas!

<sup>13</sup> Huber, pp. 300-04; and pp. 154-60.

<sup>14</sup> Huber, pp. 40-46.

<sup>15</sup> Huber, pp. 45-46.

<sup>16</sup> Huber, p. 46.



Early in World War II, however, the Bishops, in a statement entitled "On Victory and Peace," warned about the employment of women in war industries:

Our government has announced that the war emergency makes it necessary to employ an unprecedented number of women in industry. While we are wholeheartedly cooperating with our government in the prosecution of the war, we must, as shepherds of souls, express our grave concern about the Christian home in our beloved country in these crucial days . . . . Every effort must be made to limit, as far as necessity permits, the employment of mothers in industry, particularly young mothers . . . . The health and moral welfare of mothers employed in industry should be thoroughly safeguarded. With a full realization of the role which women must play in winning the war and of the extreme measures that our government must take, we ask that all try to realize the dangers involved, especially the moral dangers. We urge that there be a wholesome moral atmosphere wherever women are employed.<sup>17</sup>

The warning is valid in peace as well as in war, in a cold war as well as a hot one, and it points up a whole sphere of social action which Christians must undertake. As early as 1919 the Bishops' Program had sounded the same note and also added the urgent advice that women get out of heavy industry as soon as returning veterans were ready to take their place. For those women who did remain at work, they make a characteristic plea: "Those women who are engaged at the same tasks as men should receive equal pay for equal amounts and qualities of work."<sup>18</sup> Obviously, equal rights for woman had no more enthusiastic supporters than our Bishops, even 33 years ago.

3. *Child and Youth* It was inevitable that the Bishops would have their eyes fixed on the social conditions of the younger generation. Naturally, also, much of what they have to say on this subject has to do with the special subject of education (the excellent Index to Father Huber's volume lists 31 separate passages on education.) It is felt, however, that education as such does not belong in these pages and can be treated separately elsewhere.

On the general question, they laid down a fundamental principle in the statement of November 14, 1941. After echoing the warning of the Holy Father against the threat "of false doctrine, immorality, disbelief and reborn paganism," they continue:

The threat is to our youth, above all. Not only must we have a thorough understanding of the thoughts of the youth of our day, of its urge for action, of its fixed purpose to put teaching into practice, but pre-eminently, we must encourage youth to realize the constructive need of Christian doctrine and Christian discipline.<sup>19</sup>

### Deplore Delinquency

Here is the same note of realism that we remarked when the Bishops were treating of modern woman. "The thoughts of the youth of our day" always remain the inscrutable but necessary fact. The Bishops were also not unaware of the scandal of juvenile delinquency. "It troubles us," they said, "to see in the publication of crime statistics that there is a widespread disrespect for law, particularly in the youth of our country. No greater indictment of our social behaviour could be written." The remedies are two: "the stability and sanctity of the home . . . and moral discipline;" and "a better supervision of recreational activities in our communities."<sup>20</sup>

The Bishops' position on sex instruction is well known, but it may be summarized here: 1. it should be given; 2. it should be given in the home; 3. group instruction, especially in the schools, is to be resisted. "We protest in the

<sup>17</sup> Huber, p. 112.

<sup>18</sup> Huber, p. 250.

<sup>19</sup> Huber, p. 108.

<sup>20</sup> Huber, p. 118.

strongest possible terms against the introduction of sex instruction into the schools. To be of benefit, such instruction must be far broader than the imparting of information, and must be given individually." These words occur in the course of a 1950 statement on "The Child: Citizen of Two Worlds,"<sup>21</sup> in which are listed four realizations which must be cultivated in the young: "A sense of God, a sense of direction, a sense of responsibility, a sense of mission in this life."

4. *Rural Life* Statements on this vital sector of our life have for the most part come from the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, composed of Bishops, clergy and laymen. However, on occasion, the Bishops did treat the subject collectively. There is, for instance that passage in the 1919 Program in which, with extraordinary prescience, they outlined the advisability and feasibility of what later came to be known as the CCC camps and their salutary effects in both human and rural rehabilitation.<sup>22</sup> Also, in that massive document of April 25, 1933, "On the Present Crisis," there is a significant section devoted to the farm problem.<sup>23</sup> It will be useful to quote a passage from it:

Perhaps the great majority of those living in our cities have not realized that the farm problem is a serious integral part of the national problem; that there can be no permanent restoration of industry on a national scale until the purchasing power of more than thirty million Americans living on the land is materially increased; that the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few has all but crushed agriculture, and has so drained the farm that the farmer finds it increasingly difficult to wrest a decent living from the land; . . . that the wheels of industry in our cities are clogged in no small measure because agriculture lies prostrate.

These ominous words no longer apply, thank God, but their essential truth is undoubted. It may well be argued that the present bettered conditions in agriculture were due to such statements as these and those of many others with the same thoughts. A later passage in the same statement, entitled "Back to the Land," may well be studied.

### Condemn Racism

5. *Social Pathology* Under this heading may be grouped those evils in society which the Bishops were constantly attacking: divorce, birth control, excessive drinking, sex aberrations and racism. Since what Catholics have to say on these subjects is for the most part invariable, it will suffice to point out the places where they treat of them.

*Divorce*: a section of the Pastoral Letter of 1919 is devoted to this (Huber, p. 43-4). Also, in the statement of 1949 on the Christian Family. (Huber, p. 155).

*Birth control*: the Bishops issued a short, sharp condemnation of artificial birth control on January 20, 1922 (Huber, p. 263), and referred to it in passing in the statement on Secularism of November 14, 1947 (Huber, p. 140), where planned parenthood is condemned. (Cf. also, Huber, pp. 42, 119).

*Excessive drinking*: on November 17, 1937, the Bishops released to the press an eight-line statement on "Immoral Films, Unclean Shows, and Unwise Drinking." They voiced their "deep concern over the evils arising from the all-too-prevalent, promiscuous, and unwise use of intoxicating liquors." They feel that the dangers inherent to such intoxicants critically threaten our growing youth. (Huber, p. 218).

*Sex*: the Bishops were obviously aware of pitfalls, but rarely referred to them explicitly. The most explicit had to do with sex instruction. (Huber, p. 166).

*Racism*: with the Encyclicals of Pius XI on Nazism and Fascism before them, the Bishops could not do otherwise than condemn manifestations of the same tendencies

<sup>21</sup> Huber, pp. 161-69; cf. p. 166.

<sup>23</sup> Huber, pp. 282-84.

<sup>22</sup> Huber, p. 249.

in America. They echoed his words in a statement of November 14, 1941 (Huber, p. 103); on two occasions they quote the words of Pius XII's Letter to the American Hierarchy (*Sertum Laetitiae*) in which he spoke of our Negroes:

We confess that we feel a special paternal affection which is certainly inspired of heaven for the Negro people dwelling among you; for in the field of religion and education we know that they need special care and comfort and are very deserving of it. We therefore invoke an abundance of heavenly blessing and we pray fruitful success for those whose generous zeal is devoted to their welfare (Huber, pp. 113, 178).

The Bishops go on to say that we owe to the Negroes

a special obligation of justice to see that they have in fact the rights which are given them in our Constitution. This means not only political equality, but also fair economic and educational opportunities, a just share in public-welfare projects, good housing without exploitation, and a full chance for the social advancement of their race.

In 1939, before World War II broke out, they had also gone on record as deploring anti-Jewish prejudice in America, and quoted Pius XI's famous saying: "It is not possible for Christians to take part in anti-Semitism" (Huber, p. 323; see also p. 113).

If anyone should conclude that the Bishops' statements condemning evils in society are jejune and few and far between, he would betray an ignorance of their approach to social problems. This approach is anything but negative. It is overwhelmingly concerned with an optimistic and positive program. This also appears on the question of Communism.

6. *Decency in Amusements* This same positive approach also appears in the discussion of popular amusements and recreations. The motion pictures, of course, as our most common form of amusement, came in for most attention. It is essential to note that the movement initiated at Cincinnati on June 21, 1934, under the chairmanship of Archbishop John T. McNicholas, O.P., was a movement for decency. The very name chosen for it, Legion of Decency, shows this fact. On the above date, the Bishops' Committee on Motion Pictures, issued a statement accepting the industry's Production Code and ending with the hope "that the results of the organized industry's renewed efforts looking towards adequate self-regulation will be followed by an adequate moral improvement in the pictures shown."<sup>24</sup>

### III. Socio-Economic Problems

It goes without saying that between the two wars, during the depression, under the New Deal, in World War II, and since, during the cold war, the eyes of the Bishops would be constantly turned toward the human relations involved in the rise and fall and again the rise of American industry. The 1919 Program naturally treats of them; the 1919 Pastoral has a whole section devoted to them; the long 1933 Statement on the Present Crisis likewise; the 1937 Statement on the Christian Attitude on Social Problems, and several shorter documents, including one as late as November, 1951, return to the same theme.

It is not possible to detail here every item of their thought on this subject. In general, it may be said, however, that it falls under three general headings: the rights of labor; the rights of capital (and, of course, the mutual duties of each); and remedies and reforms. We may take these in order.

<sup>24</sup> Huber, pp. 202-05. From time to time the Bishops renewed their pleas for de-

decency in popular entertainment. Cf. Huber, pp. 210, 218, 231.

## 1. *Rights of Labor*

From the beginning, there was no hesitation concerning the rights of the worker to organize, to enjoy fair conditions of labor, to earn a family (not merely a living) wage and to be represented by agents of their own choice in settling grievances and disputes. The 1919 Program demanded continuance of the War Labor Board, or something like it, and praised it especially because "its main guiding principles have been a family living wage for all male adult laborers; recognition of the right of labor to organize and to deal with employers through its chosen representatives; and no coercion of nonunion laborers by members of the union." Later in the same document they return to the same subject of the right of labor to organize and say: "It is to be hoped that this right will never again be called in question by any considerable number of employers."<sup>25</sup> Those were the days of the company union, and though they do not mention that hateful word, they make no doubt of their opposition to it.

The 1919 Pastoral, later in the year, repeats this teaching and balances it with the correlative rights of employers.

We would call attention to two rights, one of employees and the other of employers, the violation of which contributes largely to the existing unrest and suffering. The first is the right of the workers to form and maintain the kind of organization that is necessary and that will be most effectual in securing their welfare. The second is the right of employers to the faithful observance by the labor unions of all contracts and agreements. The unreasonableness of denying either of these rights is too obvious to require proof or explanation.<sup>26</sup>

In speaking of the "Present Crisis" in April, 1933, they spell out more fully the functions of unions.

Labor and trades unions offer one means of obtaining justice in wages and salaries. The normal working of such organizations, whether singly or as a federation of unions, should be to promote the general welfare, and to insure for all workers, whether skilled or unskilled, maximum employment, adequate remuneration, the protection of their rights as men and as citizens, and security against accident and indigence.<sup>27</sup>

### Urge Unionization

Thus, again in passing, they come out for two later disputed points: the formation of industrial unions, taking in the unskilled, as well as of craft unions of the skilled; and the establishment of welfare plans as a result of collective bargaining.

Early the next year, when hearings were being held on the forthcoming Wagner Act, parts of *Quadragesimo Anno* had been put in evidence. Encouraged by this, the NCWC Administrative Committee directed Father John J. Burke, C.S.P., to put into the record of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, then chairmanned by David I. Walsh, their own statement upholding the pending bill. In this they said:

The worker's rights to form labor unions and to bargain collectively is as much his right as is his right to participate through delegated representatives in the making of laws which regulate his civic conduct. *Both are inherent rights.*<sup>28</sup>

Thus once for all the Bishops put the workers' right to organize on the basis of the natural law and on the same level as citizenship. It is known that they were gratified to see this principle pass into law. But in this same statement they went somewhat beyond the Wagner bill's provision for a National Labor Relations Board:

<sup>25</sup> Huber, pp. 250-51 and 255.

<sup>26</sup> Huber, p. 49.

<sup>27</sup> Huber, p. 291.

<sup>28</sup> Huber, p. 306. (Emphasis added.)

To determine the rights of both labor and management and to resolve the conflicting claims of both parties, an industrial tribunal, with mediation and arbitration powers, is necessary. This procedure is dictated by the plainest requirements of reason and public order. The opposite is chaos and anarchy.<sup>29</sup>

What the Bishops had here in mind was apparently something like the present emergency Wage Stabilization Board, but as permanent, and with teeth in it, which the present Board does not have. Apparently, also, the proposal was even in 1933 too controversial to discuss.

### Denounce Work Conditions

One whole section of the important 1940 Statement on the Church and Social Order deals with "Property and Labor." This can only be summarized here:

Concentration of capital in modern industry is accepted; but this only intensifies the problem "of providing equitably for the distribution of income between those who supply capital and those who supply labor." Only too often "those . . . who have only their labor to invest have been forced to accept working conditions which are unreasonable and wages which are unfair." The reasons: 1. "labor policies have been dictated by false principles in the interests of owners or capitalists;" 2. "labor frequently has no voice in regulation or adjustment of problems."

False principles are rejected: 1. the subsistence wage, "never widely held in theory, but . . . frequently applied in practice"; 2. the commodity theory, by which wages rise or fall according to supply or demand, stigmatized as "anti-social and anti-Christian;" 3. mere force exercised by labor "by means of a monopoly control," especially if this means that "the net result belongs to labor" and that capital shall be self-renewing, but profitless. "Such proposals . . . are palpably unjust." True principles, as taught by Pius XI are: "social justice, the human dignity of labor, the social nature of economic life, and the interests of the common good."<sup>30</sup>

The right to strike is, of course, implicit in what has been said above on the rights to organize and to bargain. It may be said, however, that the general attitude has been to deplore strikes as perhaps a necessary evil and as implying some fault on the part of labor or of management or of both. Moreover, the 1919 Pastoral had some serious words to say about the epidemic of strikes following World War I. The Bishops call them "unnecessary" and raise the rights of "the public" as distinct from the two parties in dispute.

To assume that the only rights involved in an industrial dispute are those of capital and labor is a radical error. It leads, practically, to the conclusion that at any time and for an indefinite period, even the most necessary products can be withheld from general use until the controversy is settled. In fact, while it lasts, millions of persons are compelled to suffer hardship for want of goods and services which they require for reasonable living. The first step, therefore, toward correcting the evil is to insist that the rights of the community shall prevail, and that no individual claim conflicting with these rights shall be valid.<sup>31</sup>

### Rights of Workers

The principle laid down here raises the knotty question of the rightness of strikes where the principal target is not industry or management, but the public itself, because essential services, like public utilities, or products, like coal, gas or oil, are withheld from immediate general use. Evidently, the Bishops did not feel that such strikes were on all fours with other disputes, and so far as I can find, they have not changed their mind on this position. As we shall see, however, they did not feel that any strike is really necessary, but that they are the unhappy result of a maladjusted economic system, which should and can be corrected.

In "The Present Crisis" the bishops thus summed up workers' rights:

<sup>29</sup> Huber, *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Summarized and quoted from Huber, pp. 330-32.

<sup>31</sup> Huber, pp. 47-48.

The workingman is entitled to a family wage, which must be an amount sufficient not only to support husband, wife and children in frugal and decent comfort, but to provide against sickness, infirmity, unemployment and old age. His right to organize must not be interfered with. His right to an equitable share in the profits, as a wage earner, must receive due consideration. His right to bequeath and inherit, and his right to employment under normal conditions should be assured.<sup>32</sup>

2. *Rights of Employers* It must not be supposed, however, that the Bishops were exclusively pre-occupied with the rights of workers, though it was natural that these, being the most disputed and the most neglected, should be the most stressed. In all that they wrote certain verities were always assumed: private property, the right of free investment, the profit system, the wage system, freedom from undue taxation; in fact, all that we usually understand by "capitalism" in its abstract sense. They held an unswerving line against Socialism—public ownership of all the means of production—and still more against Communism, as a politico-economic instrument of tyranny. The 1919 Program sums up this attitude:

It seems clear that the present industrial system is destined to last for a long time in its main outlines. That is to say, private ownership of capital is not likely to be supplanted by a collectivist organization of industry at a date sufficiently near to justify any present action based on the hypothesis of its arrival. This forecast we recognize as not only extremely probable, but as highly desirable; for, other objections apart, Socialism would mean bureaucracy, political tyranny, the helplessness of the individual in the ordering of his own life, and in general social inefficiency and decadence.<sup>33</sup>

The informed reader will recognize in these last words the usual textbook arguments of the time against Socialism. Later, under the influence of *Quadragesimo Anno* and the depression, the Bishops will recognize that the problems raised by the unrestricted exploitation of private property were not so simple as they might have thought in 1919.

### Duties of Workers

In speaking above on the rights of workers, we have seen that the workers must recognize that employers and management, in the opinion of the Bishops, also have rights which must be preserved. Irresponsible strikes, whether "wild-cat" or political, are in general deplored; though it is doubtful, whether, in the light of the principles they laid down, they would have condemned, for instance, the desperate struggle of the New York longshoremen in 1951 to free themselves from the triple strangle-hold of complacent employers, corrupt leadership and racketeers. As a general principle, however, they held, after again asserting the right of labor to organize and "to enforce its just demands by effective means," that

labor should not incur the charge of countenancing coercion and injustice. It is not only unwise but immoral and reprehensible to use physical violence either against fellow-employees or against property. It is both dishonest and destructive of genuine progress for labor to violate contracts freely and honorably negotiated and accepted.<sup>34</sup>

The duty of employers to pay just wages is often repeated. The 1919 Program, while in one place it demands a legislated minimum wage, in another speaks for a family wage and even modifies that:

After all, a living wage is not necessarily the full measure of justice. All the Catholic authorities on the subject explicitly declare that this is only the minimum

<sup>32</sup> Huber, p. 290.

<sup>33</sup> Huber, p. 257.

<sup>34</sup> Huber, p. 316.

of justice. In a country as rich as ours, there are very few cases in which it is possible to prove that the worker would be getting more than that to which he has a right, if he were paid something in excess of this ethical minimum.<sup>35</sup>

The 1919 Pastoral more or less echoes this thought, though in less detail, and the Bishops repeated the above passage with emphasis in a grave special statement on unemployment in the heart of the depression in 1930.<sup>36</sup>

In the 1940 statement on "The Church and Social Order," the Bishops devote a whole section to wages. In this they define more sharply the idea of a living wage. By it, they say, they mean one by which the family is supported and also one by which savings for sickness, death, old age, etc., are possible. Thus, they are for both a family and a saving wage. Likewise, they do not consider a living wage one "so low that it must be supplemented by the wage of wife and mother or by the children of the family before it can provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, together with essential spiritual and cultural needs." They recognize, indeed, and discuss at length, the necessary connection between wages and prices. They conclude that "stability in the price level, therefore, and even a reduction of prices as a secular trend, is desirable as one means of distributing our national income more widely and more effectively for the common good."<sup>37</sup>

### Seek Social Reform

3. *Remedies and Reforms* We have just seen that among the main remedies offered for our socio-economic evils is a uniformly high and stable level of wages. Another which seemed imperative in the 1919 Program included "prevention of monopolistic control of commodities, adequate government regulation of such public-service monopolies as will remain under private operation, and heavy taxation of incomes, excess profits, and inheritances."<sup>38</sup> This latter drastic proposal, of course, was not to be effected for many years to come. Another crying remedy mentioned in the same place was that of slum clearance and proper housing for low-income workers.

*Social security* was also advanced as a necessary remedy. First of all, this should include a wider distribution of property, if even the social order itself is to be secure. Pending this reform, however, they demanded in 1940 "comprehensive security for all classes of society . . . against unemployment, sickness, accident, old age, and death." They do not see, however, how private enterprise alone can bring this about. It must be an industry-government effort.

Individual industries alone, however, cannot in each single case achieve this objective without invoking the principle of social insurance. Some form of government subsidy granted by the whole citizenship through legislative provision seems to be a necessary part of such a program.

They go on to say that insurance against the five insecurities—including, be it noted, sickness—must be a burden on the whole people, through industry as well as government, and they conclude:

Heartening indeed are the beginnings toward the greater security of the people that have already [1940] been made through legislative enactments, and public policy. The immediate benefit of these laws to working people may be small and some modifications perhaps desirable, but it is highly gratifying that the principle upon which they rest has become a part of our national policy.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Huber, p. 251. This passage goes on to show the economic benefits of a general level of high wages.

<sup>36</sup> Huber, pp. 191-93.

<sup>37</sup> Huber, pp. 335-37.

<sup>38</sup> Huber, p. 258.

<sup>39</sup> Huber, pp. 332-34; See also the 1919 Program, Huber, pp. 254-55.

Remedies alone, however, did not satisfy the Bishops. They were constantly thinking of ways to a radical reform of a system which in 1940 they characterized as "both economically unsound and also inconsistent with the demands of social justice and social charity."

As a result of this search for a better social life they put themselves squarely behind the cooperative movement. They pioneered in 1919 when they enthusiastically promoted the idea of consumers' cooperatives, which they admit had not made much headway in this country at that time. They consider it, however, "more important and more effective than any government regulation of prices." Their reason is the elimination of the "enormous toll" taken by the middleman. They state flatly that the "difference between the price received by the producer and that paid by the consumer has become a scandal of our industrial system."<sup>40</sup>

Later in the same 1919 Program they came out also for producers' cooperatives as well as consumers'. What they said then really marks the transition to something more radical still. They are not satisfied "so long as the majority of the workers remain mere wage earners." The end sought is that "the majority must somehow become owners, at least in part, of the instruments of production." The reform takes two steps: 1. cooperative productive societies; 2. co-partnership arrangements. "In the former, the workers own and manage the industries themselves; in the latter, they own a substantial part of the corporate stock and exercise a reasonable share in the management." They add:

It is to be noted that this particular modification of the existing order, though far-reaching and involving to a great extent the abolition of the wage system, would not mean the abolition of private ownership. The instruments of production would still be owned by individuals, not by the State.<sup>41</sup>

### Employee Participation

However forward looking this proposal was in 1919, the rise of the "managerial revolution" in the '20's and '30's would quickly prove that ownership of "a substantial part of the corporate stock" was not going to guarantee "a reasonable share in the management." Soon, however, it became clear that even non-worker ownership had lost control to management, which often had very small ownership itself. Already in the 1919 Program they had praised the English Quaker employers who called for greater participation by employees in industrial management, by which they meant

The control of processes and machinery; nature of product; engagement and dismissal of employees; hours of work, rates of pay, bonuses, etc.; welfare work; shop discipline; relations with trade unions.<sup>42</sup>

The Bishops go on to say that this result could be achieved through the establishment of shop committees, but they do not insist on this early forerunner of the industry-council idea, probably because at that time it looked utopian.

In 1931, in *Quadragesimo Anno*, however, Pius XI suggested that the wage contract might well be "modified" by clauses giving workers a partnership in profits, then ownership, then management itself. A short statement on the Economic Crisis in November of that year resurrected an idea already broached in the Pastoral of 1919 and expressed thus:

The time seems now to have arrived when it [the labor union] should be, not supplanted, but supplemented by associations and conferences, composed jointly of

<sup>40</sup> Huber, p. 253.

<sup>41</sup> Huber, p. 258.

<sup>42</sup> Huber, p. 255.



employers and employees, which will place emphasis upon the common interests rather than divergent aims . . . , upon cooperation rather than conflict.<sup>43</sup>

### Socio-Economic Order

Here was expressed in germ the principle of Pius XI's "vocational groups" by which management and labor come together, not on what divides them—their respective positions on the labor market—but on what unites them—the common good of an industry; in *ordines*, a vertical system of organization, not in *classes*, a horizontal one. They returned to the same idea in April, 1933, and again in November, 1940:

A contract between employers and employees would serve the purpose of individual and social welfare more effectively if it were modified by some form of partnership which would permit a graduated share in the ownership and profits of business and also some voice in its management.<sup>44</sup>

It is true that they immediately add that "it is not intended that labor should assume responsibility for the direction of business, beyond its own competency or legitimate interest; nor has labor a right to demand dominating control over the distribution of profits," but this, of course, would depend on the terms of the partnership contract. They show this by what follows: "To set up such claims would amount to an infringement on the rights of property." This, in turn, would depend on the extent to which the "partnership contract" of which they speak has obliterated the present lines between ownership, management and labor, as it has, for instance, in a large part of the plywood industry in the Far West.<sup>45</sup> The same process is gradually taking place in other sectors of the producing and service industries, though the fulfillment is a long way off. Of this further development, the same could be said that was said by the Bishops of the cooperative movement, that it "would not mean the abolition of private property. The instruments of production would still be owned by individuals, not by the State." Moreover, of course, the evils of class strife and even of the strike would become a thing of the past.

### IV. Economic Problems

Economic analysis, as such, was naturally outside the purview of our shepherds of souls in their statements to their flock. An economic theory, however, can be discerned, even in what has preceded. This is not surprising, since throughout the greater part of this period, the principal adviser of the Bishops in social matters was Monsignor John A. Ryan, professor of moral theology and economics at the Catholic University.<sup>46</sup> He was during all those years the Catholic leader in social thought, and in an uncanny way he anticipated the positions of both the Holy See and of the American Government. It is well known that he had an active hand in many of the documents here quoted.

The frame of reference of this economic theory, as might be expected, is, as the Bishops phrased it in 1941, echoing the Holy See, "the inviolability of private property." Within this broad field, however, they introduced many modifications of the traditional doctrine.

Fundamentally, it is a theory of a constantly expanding economy, with production near capacity, with a high level of wages and a "secular trend" of lower prices. They were opposed, therefore, to any artificial scarcity, whether

<sup>43</sup> Huber, pp. 195 and 50.

<sup>44</sup> Huber, p. 335; see p. 290.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. "The Richest Millhands in the Country" in the *Saturday Evening Post*,

April 5, 1952, pp. 28ff.

<sup>46</sup> On Monsignor Ryan, cf. McGearty, *The Economic Thought of John A. Ryan*, Catholic University Press, 1952.

through cartel arrangements or government subsidies. They did not subscribe to any theory of the business cycle as something necessary and inherent in the private-property system. They explained the depression of the 1930's as due primarily to the relative lack of sufficient purchasing power on the part of the masses, though they did also blame slacking-off of investment in productive capital as a cause rather than an effect of the slump. Consequently, they favored a broad program of public works as a temporary means of restoring mass purchasing power and spoke with high praise of the early efforts of the New Deal to bring this about.<sup>47</sup> They never, however, supported the idea of public works as a permanent policy for the country; they were too optimistic about our private enterprise for that. They did, however, feel on occasion that a dose of governmental competition, especially in the utilities field, might act as a stimulant to private enterprise, especially for their pet project of lower prices and higher wages.

### Improve Distribution

It may be assumed from all this that the Bishops never quite accepted supply and demand as a unique controlling law in the economy. Neither did they approve of a veiled-monopolistic managed price in private hands, though they did suggest that government might do some managing along these lines itself. They were all for a more equitable distribution of income, and this, not from a purely moral standpoint, but, as they insisted, for the economic good itself. If there was one thing they harped on, in a non-technical way, of course, it was that high purchasing power in the hands of the many is the only sound way to insure a going and prosperous economy. That is one reason why they eagerly accepted Pius XI's proposal that wage earners have a larger share in ownership, profits and management. The fact that purchasing power is not more widely distributed the Bishops starkly attribute to "greed," a factual element which not all economists take into account in their calculations.

Hence the Bishops subscribed to the sharp denunciation by Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno* of the modern capitalistic order: "Free competition is dead. Economic dictatorship has taken its place. Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain. The whole economic life has become hard, cruel and relentless in a ghastly measure." The cause of this, they agreed with the Pontiff, was the managerial revolution of our times, the fact that, as Pius said, "economic domination is concentrated in the hands of the few, and those few are frequently not the owners, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, who administer them at their good pleasure."

It must not be concluded from this that the Bishops were wholly in favor of unbridled free competition. They accepted the competitive order, it is true, but within limits, for they saw with Pius XI that unlimited competition inevitably leads to its opposite, monopoly. Competition is strife: some win, some lose. Those who lose become displaced or absorbed by the larger and stronger concentrations of power, which become fewer and fewer. The Bishops were willing to call on government to halt this trend, and they came out strongly for the saving and spreading of small business. They felt, however, that the salvation of small business was in the hands of the people itself, the myriad communities that should patronize their local enterprises, on which, after all, they depend for their living.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Huber, pp. 302-03.

<sup>48</sup> The foregoing section is a paraphrase

and interpretation of many episcopal statements. Due to the nature of the

## V. Government and Politics

1. *Citizenship* Paul Blanshard was unknown, except as a New York City office holder, during most of the period under review, so the Bishops cannot be suspected of writing merely for effect when they laid great stress on the paramount value of good citizenship. In the Pastoral of 1919 they stated that the foundation of this must be found in a proper education.

An education that unites intellectual, moral, and religious elements is the best training for citizenship. It inculcates a sense of responsibility, a respect for authority, and a considerateness for the rights of others which are the necessary foundations of civic virtue—more necessary, where, as in a democracy, the citizen, enjoying a larger freedom, has a greater obligation of governing himself. We are convinced that as religion and morality are essential to right living and the public welfare, both should be included in the work of education.<sup>49</sup>

This modern echo of Washington's Farewell Address sounded the triple note which will be heard through all the Bishops' statements on this important subject: there is no good citizenship without sound education, no sound education without religion. Thus in a long passage in the 1926 Pastoral on Mexico, at the height of the persecution in that country, they stressed the long tradition of America's following of Washington's ideal:

While with us there is no union of Church and State, nevertheless there is full and frank recognition of the utility of religion to good government. Hence the American state encourages religion to make greater and greater contributions to the happiness of the people, the stability of government, and the reign of order.<sup>50</sup>

Much later, in the 1948 statement on "The Christian in Action," in a long passage deploring the McCollum decision of the Supreme Court and the secularistic trend contained in it, they said:

The inroads of secularism in civil life are a challenge to the Christian citizen—and indeed to every citizen with definite religious convictions. The essential connection between religion and good citizenship is deep in our American tradition. Those who took the lead in establishing our independence and framing our Constitution were firm and explicit in the conviction that religion and morality are the strong supports of national well-being, that national morality cannot long prevail in the absence of religious principle, and that impartial encouragement of religious influence on its citizens is a proper and practical function of good government. This American tradition clearly envisioned the school as the meeting place of these interacting influences.<sup>51</sup>

### Place of Religion

They then quote the Congress' Northwest Ordinance of 1787 (re-enacted in 1790): "Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good citizenship, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged," and they draw the irrefutable conclusion: "This is our authentic American tradition on the philosophy of education for citizenship." This idea was carried out in the 1950 statement on "The Child: Citizen of Two Worlds," quoted above.<sup>52</sup> Among the four "senses" to be inculcated is the sense of responsibility to both God and government.

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matter, it was impossible to present any extended quotations, but I think the economic assumptions are clear and tenable. For the reader who wishes to pursue this subject further, I mention, of course, the 1919 Program, but especially the neglected statement of 1933 on the Present Crisis, Huber, pp. 272-300.

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This is an official commentary on *Quadragesimo Anno* and largely reflects its economic views.

<sup>49</sup> Huber, pp. 60-61.

<sup>50</sup> Huber, p. 77.

<sup>51</sup> Huber, p. 149.

<sup>52</sup> *Supra*, pp. 263-64.

The Bishops' own American citizenship, like that of everyone else, was put to acute tests in the two World Wars. In April, 1917, the Hierarchy addressed a letter to President Woodrow Wilson in which they pledged "our most sacred and sincere loyalty and patriotism toward our country, our government, and our flag." The letter was personally delivered to the President by Cardinal Gibbons. It deserves to stand with the similar letter sent to General George Washington by Bishop John Carroll. In November, 1940, while the war clouds threatened, they "renew their most sacred and sincere loyalty to our government and to the basic ideals of the American Republic." Finally, in December, 1941, Archbishop (later Cardinal) Mooney, "in the name of the Bishops of the United States," presented a letter to President Roosevelt in which they promise to "marshal the spiritual forces at our command to render secure our God-given blessings of freedom."<sup>53</sup>

The normal exercise of citizenship from day to day, however, is, of course, that of the exercise of the rights of the suffrage:

In our form of government the obligation of bringing about a reform of the social order rests upon citizens, who by their votes give a mandate to legislators and executives. This makes evident a civic duty, and for us Catholics it is also a religious one governed by the virtue of piety; that is, a certain filial piety toward our country which impels us to promote the reform of the social order by voting for competent and conscientious men of high moral principles.<sup>54</sup>

### Corrupt Government

We have already seen their sharp condemnation of corruption in government, their statement that "municipal government was so often synonymous with fraud, graft, corruption, misappropriation of public funds, and the unholy alliance between criminals and the police." Already, in the 1919 Pastoral, they had pointed out that as justice condemns dishonesty in private dealings, so it "must condemn even more emphatically any and every attempt on the part of individuals to further their interests at the expense of the public welfare."<sup>55</sup>

The latest, and perhaps the sharpest, condemnation of various forms of corruption in political life occurs in the November 18, 1951, statement on "God's Law, the Measure of Man's Conduct." They first lay down a general principle:

In politics, the principle that "anything goes" simply because people are thought not to expect any degree of honor in politicians is grossly wrong. We have to recover that sense of personal obligation on the part of the voter and that sense of public trust on the part of the elected official which give meaning and dignity to public life.

Having laid down this principle, they apply it in two cases:

Those who are selected for office by their fellow men are entrusted with grave responsibilities. They have been selected not for self-enrichment but for conscientious public service. In their speech and in their actions they are bound by the same laws of justice and charity which bind private individuals. . . .

The other case has to do with those who make public accusations of wrongdoing without sufficient grounds:

Dishonesty, slander, detraction, and defamation of character are as truly transgressions of God's commandments when resorted to by men in political life as they are for all other men.<sup>56</sup>

Coming as it did in the midst of the charges, investigations and counter-charges of the 82nd Congress, this double condemnation naturally made a profound impression.

<sup>53</sup> Huber, pp. 173-74; 230-31; 350-52.

<sup>54</sup> Huber, p. 289. They use the word *pietas* in its medieval sense.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. *Supra*, p. 261; Huber, pp. 301 and 36.

<sup>56</sup> Huber, p. 374.

2. *Justice and Authority* In several statements there are extended passages in which the Bishops set forth the traditional Catholic teachings on the origin and nature of the political authority, the purpose of the state, the qualities and the limits of law and the moral character of all public administration. These are especially to be found in the 1919 Pastoral, the Pastoral on Mexico (1926), the statements on International Order (1944), on the Present Crisis (1933), on the Christian Attitude on Social Problems (1937), and on the Christian in Action (1948). Due to their length, they can be only summarized here.

*Justice*, by which we give everyone his due, is the foundation of the social and political order. Man, by nature a social and political being, is bound to render to society and the state his full devotion for the common good, and society and the state are bound, by reciprocity, to protect the rights of the individual and to secure to him their benefits. Any theory of the state denying this is anti-human.

*Authority*, while in concrete cases it is transmitted to governments by the community, nevertheless in every case it ultimately came to the community from God Himself. Hence it has a sacred character, and those subject to it are obligated in conscience to obey. Conversely, authority may not arrogate to itself the rights of God, may not legislate contrary to the laws of God, must act in accord with the will of God, may not deny to man, God's creature, his inherent rights derived from God.

The *State*, the political society, exists for a twofold purpose: (1) to protect the rights of all individuals without distinction of any accidental inequality of condition; and (2) to create the conditions in society within which individuals and groups may rightfully pursue their welfare. It may not, therefore, arrogate to itself all of the functions which belong to the society as a whole. To do this would be totalitarianism. The *principle of subsidiarity* (subsidiary function) bids that what the lesser group in society can perform should not be taken on by the larger group, the state.

*Governments* are instituted among men to perform the specific tasks of the political society, the state. They always exist by consent of the governed. Usurpers, tyrants, dictators are anti-social, and the people have the right to overthrow them.

*Laws* are a dictate of reason for the common good. Lacking either quality, they are, in Aquinas' words, "a species of violence," and may, sometimes must, be resisted.

*Constitutions* are, in modern times, the normal framework within which laws may be made. They are at the same time a grant of power to governments (State or Federal, in our case) and a definite limitation on the same power, to be interpreted by the courts. They should be, therefore, our principal guarantees of liberty.<sup>57</sup>

3. *Social Legislation* The reason for treating this subject apart from the general question of government is that it is not always easy to discern a clear and consistent line of thought throughout the period studied. In general, however, and with some exceptions, this may be said: before *Quadragesimo Anno* the statements restricted the powers of government to "protecting right and preserving order," as in the 1919 Pastoral and the 1926 Pastoral on Mexico. After Pius XI's Encyclical quite generally they accepted the necessity of social legislation, especially in view of that Pope's round condemnation of the state-hands-off philosophy and his praise of the social legislation inspired by Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*.

Yet even some months before the 1919 Pastoral we find the Bishops subscribing to a whole eleven-point program, most of which, after 1933, was enacted into law, as pointed out by Cardinal Mooney. As this study shows, the Bishops continued, on the whole, to stand by the 1919 Program. Yet, even after 1933 it is possible to point out here and there phrases and sentences which seem to revert to the old *laissez-faire* philosophy of "that government governs best which governs least."

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Huber, pp. 36-38; 53-54; 72-77; 149-53; 289-95; 313-18; 121-26.

Allowances, however, may be made for these apparent discrepancies from two facts. *First*, there is the guiding hand in drawing up each document. No one is so naive as to suppose that each one was composed by the whole body, just as no one supposes that the Popes themselves find the time to write their own Encyclicals. Thus in our Bishops' statements we sometimes find discrepancies and developments on the powers of government, just as we find them in the forty-year series of Leo XIII's Encyclicals.

### Role of State

The *second* fact is that the historical context of statements must be examined to discover their over-all import. Most of the warnings issued by our Bishops against excessive governmental intervention—and they have been few—have come when they were thinking of socialism or fascism or communism and are couched in general terms. Particular recommendations for social remedies and reforms are couched in specific terms.

In general, it may be said that, all things considered, the attitude of the Bishops follows two lines: 1. society has the duty of cooperating for the common welfare; if possible, by private group action. 2. the state has the duty, and therefore the right, to intervene for the common good where private group action is lacking or incapable of grappling with a given problem.<sup>58</sup>

These two threads run through all these documents, with now one, now the other, in evidence, according to circumstances. On a general survey, this may be said, that they were always in favor of social reform, but that they preferred to see this done voluntarily by local communities rather than by the national one.<sup>59</sup> The balance in favor of federal government naturally followed *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931, but even this was weighted by the principle of subsidiary function, by which Pius XI declared that there should be specific groups in society to effect the necessary reforms and only in default of these would the larger society intervene. Unfortunately, the modern world was not ready for this message, and the subsidiary groups did not exist. It should not be surprising, therefore, that in many cases the Bishops looked to the Federal Government for the principal reforms.

We have already seen that the Bishops looked to Federal legislation to secure a *minimum wage* for workers whose product is in inter-state commerce. The problem of *child labor* was a more difficult one. In spite of the fact that, as they noticed, public opinion "set its face inflexibly against it" the Supreme Court declared both state and federal legislation on child labor unconstitutional, thus creating the famous "no man's land" of which Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke. The 1919 Program spoke rather discouragely about the prospects of removing "this reproach to our country," but did have a faint hope that the only way was that "of taxing child labor out of existence." They urged a 10

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<sup>58</sup> It is not intended that the Bishops anywhere explicitly make the distinction between state and society which modern social thinkers now commonly make. It seems, however, that the distinction is implicit in much of what they say. Failure to make it—as if whatever is said of society must also be true of the political society, the state—could result, at the least, in confusion, at the worst,

in totalitarianism.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. for instance the 1922 statement against Paternalism, which they feared "would eventually sovietize our form of government." By this they meant "officialism, red tape, and prodigal waste of public money . . . Hordes of so-called experts and self-perpetuating cliques of politicians to regulate every detail of daily life." Huber, p. 264.

per cent tax on all goods made by children.<sup>60</sup> Much later, of course, a way was found around the difficulty in the Wagner Act, and a new Supreme Court proved more amenable.

As we have seen, they early approved the principle of Federal *insurance* against sickness, disability, old age, death and unemployment when these could not be provided for otherwise. To date, only sickness insurance remains out of the Federal statute books. Episcopal opinions on this vary in recent years.

From the beginning of the period under study, *organized labor* was considered by the Bishops to be a legitimate subject of legislation, as a matter of natural law and its right of *collective bargaining* to be secured by Federal and State law upheld. Thus the Wagner Act was approved. I have been able to find no collective statement on the Taft-Hartley amendments, for or against.

### Other Issues

*Public housing* did not receive much mention in episcopal statements since the brief mention of it in the 1919 Program. The policy established then seems to have prevailed: that outside of war or other emergencies, it was not the duty of the Federal Government, but of the State and local authorities, to care for this by legislation.<sup>61</sup> In many dioceses, the Ordinary has individually supported this position.

The *farm problem* received serious consideration in the 1933 statement on the Present Crisis.<sup>62</sup> It criticized "our unsound agricultural policy" and thought "much may be accomplished by legislation" without, however, espousing any of the several legislative proposals then mooted. The Bishops thought, rather, that the radical solution of this particular problem lay in a moral and spiritual revival among both our urban and rural populations. In this they seemed to agree with the policies of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, of which many Bishops are active members.

Over a period of 32 years, our Bishops have collectively poured out a total of 81 statements. Not by any means did all of these deal with domestic social questions. Some of them had to do with the *international relations* of the United States: The League of Nations, Dumbarton Oaks, The United Nations, Palestine, the missions and their political implications, international peace in general, the Papacy and its world influence, Mexico, Communism, Nazism, Poland under Russia, South America, Hungary and other areas. There was almost nothing in these years that in world affairs our Bishops did not envision. This is beyond the purview of this study. But all of it deserves investigation.

Relations of *Church and State* constitute another area which the Bishops considered extensively. These also must be left to further separate study. In particular, the question of Federal legislation in aid of private education and also that of the claim to state monopoly of elementary schooling, are related questions, on which the Bishops had much to say. These also deserve separate treatment. Fortunately, Father Huber has provided the material.

### VI. Conclusion

Thus it may be seen that our Bishops, however they may differ with one another privately, take collectively a rather eclectic position on social legislation. As far as this is concerned, they have been rather empirical than doctrinaire, inclined rather to favor the underprivileged, when it is a question of

<sup>60</sup> Huber, p. 256.

<sup>61</sup> Huber, p. 252.

<sup>62</sup> Huber, pp. 282-83.

state intervention, than to take a *laissez-faire* attitude. But they were obviously afraid of too much encroachment of the state upon private affairs, as shown by their habitual cautiousness, without, however, ever attempting to establish any definite limits.

This study has probably indicated the leads to guide clergy and laity alike for a study of the problems which confront Americans in this modern age. As has been seen, the Bishops just about covered everything in the field. For some readers, the positions they generally took may seem somewhat extreme. Others may feel that they did not go far enough. This probably means that they were pretty close to center, though maybe a little left of it. In this they followed, after 1931, the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, which the then Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt told me in the Fall of 1932 was "too radical" to quote in campaign speeches. (However, he was persuaded to include in his two "Sunday sermons" that year, at San Francisco and Detroit, a long excerpt from it which is probably the sharpest criticism of modern capitalism outside of Communist writings.)

In any case, the record is clear enough on industrial relations, on racism, on the family, on rural problems and many other problems. It may surprise some that Communism did not come in for extended consideration, as it did in the Catholic press during the period under study. This writer himself was surprised at this. Communism is mentioned only three times in a volume of 402 pages, and Soviet Russia, twice. The omission is, I think, highly significant. It means that these Bishops were more interested in a positive program which would make Communism impossible in this country than they were in a sterile, negative anti-Communism. The lesson should not be lost.





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