

Behind the News

The Myth Of Communism

By KAY MILLS
Editor

One of the foremost ways of heaping doubt on an ideology today is to label the concept a "myth." No true believer likes to see his creed defined, as mythology scholars do, as something firmly believed but existing only in the imagination.

Myth is indeed felt to be "the sacred truth," absolutely unchangeable. People of ancient cultures and even a vast number of groups today believe that certain stories are 100 per cent true about the origin of the world and its religions or governments.

There is a great and hardly harmless political myth afloat on the international scene today—communism. It is my thesis that communism is strictly mythical. Its proponents—from Marx through Khrushchev—spout dogma which has not been applied to the hard realities of life.

Roughly speaking, communism is based on the idea that history progresses through stages in which man's relation to production is altered. From a primitive communism through slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism, man moves finally to the pinnacle, or communism. Here men live—although Voltaire was hardly communist—in the best of all possible worlds. There is food, clothing and shelter in a land of brotherhood.

Evidence Needed

To prove the myth of communism, one must therefore show that these conditions do not in fact exist—contrary to Mr. K's claims—will not exist. Soviet military power may overcome the western world; the militarists, however, are rushed by the knowledge that some day the Russian people may perceive this myth and smash it as they smashed Stalin's statues.

First, therefore, let us examine strictly social conditions. An issue of the English-language magazine, "USSR," quotes statistics on the improvement of housing facilities within Russia and other communist countries. In contrast, however, Warsaw's Marek Hlasko asks in the anthology, "Bitter Harvest":

"How long will lovers have no place to live, how long will people have to part because of an apartment, washing and trash like that? If I didn't know how things were before, I would think I was in hell now."

And medical care. Once again "USSR" gives staggering figures on the number of medical personnel in the Soviet orbit. Where are these trained people when a citizen needs them? Returning to "Bitter Harvest," we read the story of the woman doctor on Prezydencka Street. The tale tells of a woman seeking aid from a government clinic for her sick child. With no help coming from the red-tape bound and unsympathetic staff, the woman becomes desperate until she finally discovers a woman doctor who saves her child. Only a person who had lived such an experience could write it so realistically.

Objectivity Difficulty

Obviously it is difficult to find a wholly objective view of communism. It is a subject which, as the mountaineer says, "You're either for it or agin it." Consider, however, the number of American intellectuals who tasted communism

in the thirties and soon found that the ideology was not being applied to life.

Remember, too, the rise and fall of Milovan Djilas, former vice president of Yugoslavia. The reason for his fall? Djilas made statements the government claimed were untrue. Gradually he soured on the entire operation of the state. This man, who today sits in jail for similar outbursts, would willingly return to the ideological fold if it mirrored the truth.

But the image of the classless society, another tenet of the communist faith, is no more, Djilas says. In "The New Class," he writes:

"... The communist revolution, conducted in the name of doing away with classes, has resulted in the most complete authority of a single new class. Everything else is sham and illusion..."

Class Privileges

Communism boasts of increased production and the leaders must eat their words when agricultural yields fall. And these words may enable them to be the only ones eating, for Djilas reminds us that the new class "may be said to be made up of those who have special privileges and economic preference because of the administrative monopoly they hold."

Some scholars say that myths originated as a "disease of language." Communism is truly such a disease in a cancerous form. People have not forgotten Marx but have distorted his philosophy.

The brotherhood idea of this myth can also be believed only if one excludes Russia's Jewish population. The Soviets can hardly point the finger at U.S. discrimination with a "holier-than-thou" attitude after looking at recent unfounded condemnations of Jewish citizens.

Myths are irrational and cannot be combatted with logic. They arise from desperate situations and have certain rituals which cannot be easily abandoned. In a totalitarian way, communism has captured and rendered powerless many of its subjects.

Of the success of communism, the late Ernst Cassirer wrote in "The Myth of the State" that "when small groups do try to enforce their wishes and their fantastic ideas upon great nations and the whole body politic, they may succeed for a short time, and they may even achieve great triumphs, but these must remain ephemeral."

Modern Myth

Communism is the most modern in a series of political myths. Cassirer says these new myths are "artificial things fabricated by very skillful and cunning artisans. It has been reserved for the 20th century, our own great technical age, to develop a new technique of myth. Henceforth, myths can be manufactured as any other modern weapon—as machine guns or airplanes."

Today many people are concerned with combatting this myth, whose believers and their leaders have the strength to obliterate the United States. We cannot ignore communism even if we do consider it a myth. We must analyze it and observe the techniques employed in building the political myth. We must urge our legislators and scientists to do likewise.

"We should see the adversary face to face in order to know how to combat him."

2 Students Injured As Car Crashes In Lemont Area

Two University students were hospitalized Sunday evening because the driver failed to follow a curve in the road and struck a house, state police said yesterday.

The accident occurred at 11:30 p.m. Sunday on Branch Road in Lemont.

Air Force Capt. Finis Shannon, a part-time student in meteorology from Macon, Ga., was driving the car. Frank Carpenter, 7th term student in counseling from Bloomsburg, was a passenger, police said.

Shannon was taken to the Centre County Hospital with a fractured skull and a fractured left leg and later transferred to Williamsport Hospital for brain surgery because he was in serious condition, police said.

A brain operation was performed at 6:15 a.m. Monday by Dr. George Lyon, who said that Shannon is recovering "very satisfactorily" although he is still in serious condition. Shannon is expected to remain at the hospital two weeks, Lyon said.

Carpenter received cuts on his left hand and bruises of the head, arms and back, police said. He was also admitted to Centre County Hospital Sunday night and released the following afternoon.

Department Name Changed

The Department of Poultry Husbandry has been redesignated the Department of Poultry Science.

A. J. G. Maw, professor and head of the department, said the new designation will more accurately reflect the work of the department.

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In half the world today, these symbols and the things they stand for have been destroyed.

And Khrushchev says it can happen here. He boasts that our children will live under socialism.

Unthinkable? Yes—but only so long as America guards its freedoms well. Against threats that come from inside our country, as well as from the outside.

In these critical times you would think that all of America's energies and financial resources should be concentrated on strengthening our country's defense.

But there are some people who would weaken this effort through needless government spending. For example, they want to use billions of your tax dollars to put government deeper into the electric power business.

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Each time the government moves further into business—any business—it is another step on the road to socialism. And socialism is one thing Americans do not mean to leave to their children—or grandchildren—despite what Khrushchev says.

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