

new Constitution which basically defends the rights of all Soviet citizens without discrimination. We trust that having learned of the wrong done to the believers of Klaipeda and the whole Lithuanian SSR you will speedily arrange matters so that we can use the church we ourselves built and pray in it to Mary, Queen of Peace, for

peace throughout the world. We do not doubt this, for we know how much you value peace and how much energy you have expended in the struggle for peace.

Appendices: 1,434-page book containing  
148,149 signatures  
56 documentary photographs

## Poland: The Meaning of "Dialogue" Between the Church and the "Left".

*In 1977 a book which could not be printed in Poland was published in Paris and has been the subject of a great deal of intense discussion amongst the Polish intelligentsia. This was Kościół, lewica, dialog (The Church and the Left: a Dialogue) by Adam Michnik. Born to communist parents, Michnik describes himself as a democratic socialist. He has been active in the Social Self-Defence Committee (KOR) set up after the arrests of striking Polish workers in 1976 to defend their interests, and is a prominent lecturer in the Flying University (an unofficial institution which aims to fill the gaps in the official Polish education system).*

*In RCL Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 42-46 we published a review of Michnik's book by a Polish priest, Fr Salij. We are now publishing a more recent comment on the same work. This is the final chapter of Polski kształt dialogu (The Polish Form of Dialogue), a book by Fr Józef Tischner published this year by "Spotkania" (64 Ave. Jean-Moulin, 75014 Paris).*

*Fr. Tischner is head of the Philosophy Department and a professor of Christian Philosophy at the Papal Institute in Kraków. Born in 1931, he studied at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and was ordained a priest in 1959. He then studied at the Theological Academy in Warsaw (ATK) and again at the Jagiellonian University where he worked on his PhD thesis The Transcendental 'I' in Husserl. His tutor was Professor R. Ingarden, himself a pupil of Husserl. Fr Tischner continues his research on man's relation to moral values at the Husserl archive in Belgium. He has been described as a "philosopher of Hope". He also continues to organize pastoral work amongst academic circles in Kraków, an assignment he received from Cardinal Wojtyła (now Pope John Paul II). In 1980 he wrote a series of articles in the Kraków newspaper Tygodnik Powszechny*

*on the significance of the name "Solidarity" from a moral, ethical and theological point of view.*

*Fr Tischner's comments in this present extract bring home to the reader just how radically the political situation in Poland has altered over the past years. The ideology of the Communist Party, still presented as a "socialism", has during the 1970s proved incapable of positive adaptation or revision and is now in fact dead as a credible system of thought. This situation has placed those like Michnik who adhere to the idea of "Democratic socialism" in an ambiguous position. To what extent, Fr Tischner wants to know, are they prepared to endorse any aspects of contemporary Polish reality? What is their true attitude towards Christianity? It is the Catholic Church which now has the overt allegiance of the Polish people and is able to take moral initiatives in society (see the article by Alexander Tomsky in RCL Vol. 9, Nos. 1-2, pp. 29-39). Fr Tischner comments on the possibility of "dialogue" between Christians and socialists in the light of this shift in the moral balance of power. "Suddenly", he says, "proportions had changed. It was no longer socialists and communists who were inviting Catholics to join in a dialogue and cooperate, but the Catholics who were inviting everyone else."*

*[...] Michnik's book is a historical outline yet contains certain political or even philosophical ideas. Aided by sources which include pastoral letters from the Polish Episcopate and the Primate, press editorials and articles and official government legislature, Michnik analyses the history of relations between Church and State, and between the so-called secular Left and Catholics. He arrives at conclusions which not so long ago were still unacceptable to that same Left: i.e., that Catholics and Catholicism in general have*

played a creative, "progressive" role, becoming the true defenders of human rights—the defence of which has also been taken up by the Left. Hence the political stipulation that the secular Left should admit to the part played by religion and enter into a dialogue with the Church, that it should understand the nature of Christianity and Catholicism and join it in combatting that common foe of humanity, political totalitarianism. In his book Michnik plays a new tune when writing about religion. He endeavours to write in an unbiased way—he understands more about religion than others of his ilk—and he seeks a common platform for understanding with Polish Catholics. His aim is not to use religion as a tool to gain power: instead he is looking for a formula for co-existence in tomorrow's pluralistic society. The book is something more than an expression of the author's personal views. Michnik shares the anxiety of others like him, and expresses hopes which are common to many Poles and are a real "sign of the times".

What are Michnik's basic assumptions? What theories does he advance? For what ideals is he fighting?

He describes himself as a representative of the "secular Left". What are we to understand by that? He writes:

"What is the Left today, in 1976? I cannot answer unequivocally. In recent years, as a result of a disastrous official communist ideology, nationalistic feelings have become stronger and more widespread. This is apparent in both official and opposition circles. Authorities and opposition alike are divided. I am more concerned with the split within the opposition. To quote a friend, I should say that the opposition is composed, on the one hand, of those who are convinced of the superiority of the capitalist system and, on the other, of those whose programme is the concept of democratic socialism—the "Left". Understood in this way, the Left stands for the ideas of freedom and tolerance, the primacy of the individual and the liberation of labour, a fair distribution of the nation's wealth and an equal opportunity for everyone. It combats chauvinism and nationalism, obscurantism and xenophobia, illegality and social injustice. The Left's programme is one of anti-totalitarian socialism."

Continuing, Michnik arrives at the discovery of the Polish Church. This is, above all, a discovery by a historian—one, moreover, who is well versed in political theory. After analysing the relevant documents, Michnik concludes:

"In quoting widely from documents of those Stalinist times, I wanted to familiarize friends in the secular Left, who on the whole are not in possession of the quoted texts or facts, with the actual position of the Church at that time and the attitude of the Catholic bishops during the Stalinist era. If they compare the demands of the episcopate with what they were reading about them in the official press at the time and later on, they may appreciate the extent of their own ignorance. If they compare these demands with the then current practices of the government, my question becomes more intelligible: where was the chief enemy of progress and justice to be found at that time? In the Church, or in the party committees and secret police? The style of some pastoral letters may be irritating, at times anachronistic, but the basic question remains: did the Church defend human rights during the Stalinist era, did it defend freedom and human dignity? I say, yes, it did. I agree completely with the opinion of Czesław Miłosz who wrote that during the Stalinist era 'the Church was the only place not swamped by official lies, and the Latin rite allowed people to retain faith in the value of the spoken word, elsewhere put to the most degrading of tasks'."

The positive role of the Church was not limited to the Stalinist era. Michnik takes his search further, concentrating primarily on the year which had so much effect on his own life, 1968; the year in which the so-called "revisionists" demanded democratic freedom. Michnik is quite clear that the Church indirectly defended the revisionists, even though they were frequently known for their anti-religious stand. It defended them by calling for law and order, democracy and tolerance. On this point, Michnik's voice is particularly clear. We read:

"Atheism and anti-clericalism were enduring ingredients in the ideology of Polish revisionism. Even in the revisionists' own strongest denunciations of

Stalinism, no condemnation was to be heard of the persecution of religion or of the Church, except perhaps to the extent of calling such persecution a tactical error which by pushing the Church towards a catacomb existence might strengthen 'religious superstition'."

I would risk the view that many revisionists regarded the considerable limitations of the Church's influence as one of the few advantages to come out of the era of "mistakes and distortion" [an official euphemism for the Stalinist period. *Ed.*] Another significant fact was that when they criticized the party and party orthodoxy, the revisionists frequently used the analogy of the Catholic Church. One could even say that the more the revisionists found the party repugnant, the more it reminded them of the Church. In condemning the irrational and dogmatic nature of Stalinist dialectical materialism, the revisionists showed themselves as the heirs of the rationalist philosophers. They contrasted the "fanatical faith" of the Stalinists with the ideals of "reason" and "tolerance". And further,

"One can imagine that to a bishop who only yesterday was being persecuted the revisionists must have represented a particularly repulsive group. Only yesterday they were the activists of the ideological front of the Party, attacking religion and the bishops, while praising their former regime at its cruellest, and today—still not admitting personal guilt—they shift responsibility onto others and onto the political conditions prevailing at the time, beating the breasts of others while simultaneously, now in the guise of moralists, accusing of intolerance those whom only yesterday they were persecuting. The opposition by the revisionists towards the new party leadership must have appeared very suspect to the persecuted Catholics."

Michnik calls for a thoroughgoing rediscovery of Christianity. The "secular Left" should re-evaluate its attitude to religion. I cannot resist quoting another section:

"Our intellectual self-searching must reach deeper, must get to the very roots of this conceited conviction that, by the nature of things, we know the true road to progress and wisdom. By its very nature we do not know that road; neither we nor anyone else on earth knows which

path history will take. Yet we, more than anyone else, should realize that such pseudo-knowledge of the secrets of the *Weltgeist* ["Spirit of the Universe"—*Ed.*] can have criminal consequences. A familiarity with imaginary historical laws gives one the right to lead thousands of people along the path of "wisdom and progress"—people unaware that a "New Order" is even needed, let alone "inevitable"—whereas, in fact, attainment of the objects of the so-called "New Order" (that "kingdom of Progress, Wisdom and Freedom") leads inevitably to contempt for others, to the use of violence and to moral self-destruction.

Equally harmful consequences flow from an arrogant conviction that a supernatural order does not exist. I say "arrogant" because there is one thing we can be sure of—that we cannot avoid death. As we travel in search of the truth, on a hard road paved with pitfalls and ascents, let us retain respect for those who believe that some superhuman arrangement has been revealed to them. Let us judge them by their deeds and not by words warped and distorted by others. Only under such conditions will we be able to hold up our heads and ask for a similar attitude from members of the Church."

I do not intend to prolong this exposition of Michnik's viewpoint but must regretfully skip those interesting passages in which he describes the paths along which he has passed in his examination of Christianity. [...] Instead I want to concentrate on this very idea of dialogue.

Michnik is in fact putting forward a concept of dialogue on the problems of Marxist-socialist-Christian relations which is quite different from the type of dialogue so far undertaken by Marxists or by the Left in general. Whatever one may say about his book's shortcomings, it will be impossible now that his book has appeared to conduct or even talk about the old type of dialogue.

Dialogue is not just any conversation between two people: a requirement of dialogue is that it should be a conversation in which the testimony of the other side is admitted as an indispensable source of knowledge on a given subject. Dialogue is above all a way of finding out. Obviously, this is not the usual method used by every science as a means of acquiring knowledge. In mathematics, for instance, learning is

not dialogic but monologic in character: in order to find the correct solution to a mathematical problem it is not essential to refer to previous testimony, but it is sufficient to compare conclusions with hypothesis.

Dialogue is the method of learning used in the humanities, in the social sciences and in history and is an integral element in the study of religion. In order to know myself, I must see myself not only through my own eyes, but also through those of others. In the same way, others who want to acquire the truth about themselves must call on my—on our—observation of them.

Michnik's book was not written in order to develop an abstract theory of dialogue study, but it contributes more to that theory than many books on the subject. It fulfils the basic conditions for the idea of dialogue and does it under difficult political conditions, simply because publishing a work in an émigré periodical could be seen as an illegal act and might involve unpleasant consequences for the author. That fact has enormous moral significance.

[...] It should be emphasized that Michnik's thesis has had a very sympathetic reception in broad Catholic intellectual circles in Poland. No-one questions the author's basic sincerity. No-one would refute his main theoretical proposals. On the whole, everyone emphasizes his intellectual courage. Only the general and ambiguous nature of Michnik's own ideals is somewhat disturbing. What do "democratic socialism" and "secular Left" mean?

"Democratic socialism", we recall, means

"the ideas of freedom and tolerance, the primacy of the individual and the liberation of labour, a fair distribution of the nation's wealth and an equal opportunity for everyone. It combats chauvinism and nationalism, obscurantism and xenophobia, illegality and social injustice."

All this is very praiseworthy. But has it been thought through properly? In the first place, the concept of democracy involves the idea that power ultimately resides in the people, regardless of class differences, whereas the concept of socialism holds that the wielder of power is above all the "nation's leading class"—the industrial proletariat. From the purely theoretical viewpoint, then, the concept of democratic

socialism can be compared to a square circle. Secondly—still viewing things from a purely theoretical position—this kind of definition of Leftist ideals is a vicious circle since it first sets up a certain ideal then unhesitatingly states just such an ideal to be socialist, leaving no room for any other ethical alternative. Lastly, from the practical point of view the whole thing smells of some type of "moral demagogy" because if I do not support the ideals of the secular Left, what alternative do I have? Nothing but "chauvinism, national oppression, obscurantism and illegality" and other such frightfulnesses. In the past, during the Stalinist era, we had no way out because the "iron laws of history" did not permit it. We have no alternative today either, because the glorious, I would even say excessively glorious, ethics of "democratic socialism" do not permit it. The thinking has changed, but somehow the structure remains.

Michnik refers to "socialism". This concept also appears in the official language of those with whom he is in conflict, in the language of the Party and its apparatus. The question arises: to what extent does this concept have the same meaning for both sides? Is it only that the wording is the same but the content diametrically opposite? Perhaps some common denominator is there. These are not merely theoretical questions. What we are concerned with is the following: does Michnik's idea, *despite everything*, confer approval on the state of affairs in post-war Poland, or does he consider that the whole thing was a mistake? Does he think that the beginnings, at least, were good? Does he in fact, despite all the criticism and opposition, give moral sanction to the framework of the present system? I think he does. There is nothing to indicate otherwise. This is a matter of enormous importance, and it is a pity that it has not been taken further. The ambiguity on this subject arouses various conjectures, and conjecture is easily turned into suspicion, for which not only the reader is responsible.

One last detail remains—characteristic, I believe, of the entire "Leftist mentality".

I do not know if any other social theory exists, apart from the Marxist variety, which can dull man's natural sense of reality to such an extent. It is astounding that members of the "secular Left" lived in our country, had eyes and ears, but did not

understand the rôle of the Church there then and now. It needed Michnik's book to change their attitude. But are they convinced by the book? Does it allay their old fear and distrust? And again, does the book still not bear some traces of a vanquished mentality? A characteristic example is the view of society expressed in the book. Michnik draws attention to the primary importance of dialogue at the *official level*: episcopate—government, bishop—prime minister, Church and Party apparatus. The standard of that kind of dialogue was however derivative and second-rate. The real dialogue went on, and the existential choice was made, at the level of the people. It was the nation, the so-called "simple people" filling the churches and places of pilgrimage, who defended themselves against the process of socialist integration. Usually the voice of the bishop was the only reflection of what was going on inside the nation's soul. I am not saying that what was said [in official dialogue—*Ed.*] had no significance: I am only saying that what mattered went on outside. It is as if Michnik does not know this: he seems to have been looking through a "Lefist" prism, fascinated by "authority".

Michnik talks about the "secular Left". Does he realize how this sounds today to ordinary people who are having trouble with bringing up their children, with "secular" education, with semi-official atheistic indoctrination? Perhaps the words conceal some deep meaning. They are definitely not as significant today as in the inter-war period. Anyway, one needs to look reality in the eye: "secular" and "Left" belong today in the dictionary of compromised words. I cannot imagine that anybody standing as a candidate at some free election under the slogan "secular Left" would gain a parliamentary seat in this country after all that the nation has experienced. This does not mean that the population are in favour of intolerance or discrimination. They have simply had enough. If Michnik thinks that his slogan contains some special message, vital to the nation's life, in spite of everything, then let him spell it out and not depend on hackneyed, worn-out phrases. [ . . ]

#### *Concluding Reflections*

While writing this book, one idea has struck me time and again: that the com-

mon interest shared by Christians and Marxists in Poland was an ethical concern—to be precise, a common ethos of hope for society and its future. On the one hand we were terrorized by the [Marxist] hope which promised the abolition of exploitation; as against this, we had a more general Christian hope, the essential element of which was human dignity. It was *this* dialogue which involved practically the entire nation. There was not a single person who from time to time did not have to declare himself for one side or the other and accept the consequences. Events continually involved everyone: a child's christening or religious education; participating in a procession, or in a religious celebration; welcoming John Paul II on his home ground. There were various types of involvement, and there was room too for appropriate forms of philosophical response. The rôle of society in this dialogue was not very significant, true, but it was an interesting dialogue as the opinions which people expressed were crystal clear.

What has been the outcome of this dialogue?

Firstly, one far-reaching consequence concerns the amount of freedom existing in our country. We know that it is greater than in other similar countries. No-one has any doubt that the achievement of this degree of freedom is the result of the Christian spirit of opposition, the work of the Church's ministry and post-Vatican theology about the rôle of the Church in temporal life.

The framework of freedom achieved could accommodate such risky undertakings as the pilgrimage of John Paul II to Poland. Let us remember: during the times of Pius XII and President Bierut such a thing was unthinkable; during the times of Paul VI and Gomulka it was thinkable but turned out to be unattainable: despite the efforts of the episcopate and the wishes of Paul VI, he was not able to secure an invitation to attend the country's millennium in Częstochowa. The subsequent turn of events surprised everyone. It is difficult to weigh things up precisely, but undoubtedly, somewhere in the dim background of the conditions essential for the pilgrimage of Pope John Paul II, Marxist anticlericalism, atheism and militant godlessness burnt themselves out. Something similar happened on the Catholic side, par-

ticularly after the Vatican Council, when the Church entered a period of dialogue with the contemporary world including the governments of Eastern Europe. And so we have our freedom. We know it is not very large, but in the past things were worse. The visit by John Paul II widened it, and spiritually fortified those who had worked upon its enlargement.

The visit marked the end of a significant period in the dialogue, creating something in the nature of a national referendum. The nation—and let us not be afraid to use the word, for we have no other word to describe what we are thinking of—the entire nation stood beside the Polish Pope who now symbolized their hopes. What lies at the heart of these hopes? It seems to me that a special concept of human dignity is involved. All John Paul II's speeches in Poland illustrated this concept—specifically: the historical calling of every Pole to human dignity; the dignity of the working man (about which socialists are concerned); the meaning of freedom, of traditional Polish tolerance, of fidelity to the truth, of courage to be selfless. The intellectual frontiers of the Pope's statements were so wide that every man of good will could find his place within them. Suddenly, proportions had changed. It was no longer socialists and communists who were inviting Catholics to join in a dialogue and co-operate, but the Catholics who were inviting everyone else. This co-operation reaches deeper than the struggle for peace and social discipline. It involves the reconstruction and continuation of the most deeply-rooted values of the national spirit, symbolized by such figures as St Stanisław, Blessed Queen Jadwiga, Paweł Włodkowic, Nicholas Copernicus, Father Maximilian Kolbe—all of whom were mentioned by John Paul II as examples to follow. In awakening this feeling of dignity, the Pope awakened a feeling of responsibility. His pilgrimage has become an integral part of Polish national awareness. As once the Partitions of Poland, as an example of a national disaster, were the subject of Polish self-awareness, so now the pilgrimage has become a symbol of an unconquered spirit.

Who comes out the winner here, who the loser? Success of the Church and Christianity, failure of Marxist-socialist indoctrination? Correct: but simply saying this is not looking deep enough.

All this is primarily the nation's success. It is the nation which has made its choice, the nation which has shown its hand, the nation which has remained true to itself. Thus all those who dismissed the concept of a united people from their speeches, replacing it with the concept of society or class, could directly see, feel and hear what the nation is. It is the nation, and not this or that class, which throughout history has always turned out to be the leading strength. I think that every Pole believes in Poland. But then, Poland is not a symbol nor a metaphor, but a living, thinking, feeling people, which has the power of choice.

It is only because of this choice that we can speak of Christianity's success in Poland. It all comes down to the fact that the nation has chosen Christianity instead of being terrorized into giving it up. Some are afraid of such bold statements, fearing the dangers of religious "triumphalism". But "triumph" and "triumphalism" are two different matters. Christian triumph is a fact but there is no need for triumphalism because of it. "The Church does not know imperialism, it only serves," John Paul II stated in Krakow. This triumph is essentially an ethical one; it leaves no corpses behind. It is Christianity that has enabled people to find a common language, a language which is at once concrete and generally comprehensible, a language which is able to describe various forms of exploitation typical of the so-called "building of socialism" period. In describing exploitation, the Church and Christianity have taken up the defence of the oppressed. This defence has not been merely formal but has been transformed into the practical defence of life, of truth, of the right to work and of freedom. Because of the clarity of this language, protests against the absurdities of the Marxist system have been strengthened by the power of human conscience.

Can it be said that the Church protested against details but accepted the socialist system in principle? I do not think it can. The Church is not yet finally convinced about the system and it would seem that the "knights errant of socialism" have overlooked that fact. Not once in pastoral letters or episcopal documents is the word "socialism" to be found, even in a descriptive sense. Nor has it appeared in the Pope's pronouncements. John Paul II spoke generally about a "system of work"

in his Nowa Huta speech. Of course this does not mean that the Church accepts capitalism. That word does not appear either in contemporary ecclesiastical language in Poland. The Church reserves its judgement, it is an institution which cannot be included in this vicious circle of terminology employed by the "moralists" of socialism.

Catholic philosophers have participated in Christianity's success, although again we must emphasize that the fundamental criticism of Marxist philosophy in Poland did not originate with them, but in the writings of the Marxists themselves. Christian criticism from outside the Party referred to peripheral matters only: they overestimated the intellectual strength of Marxist propositions and they gave in to banalities. We must admit that some Marxists were right to say that intellectual Catholic circles were not very familiar with Marxism. This explains why Catholic philosophers neither imported western criticism of Marxism nor formulated their own.

It has to be said that the Church emerged from the confrontation with Marxism purified and strengthened to some degree. The growth in the Church's authority resulted from the Second Vatican Council. The Council's reforms took their own course in Poland and definitely contributed to the strengthening and deepening of religion. The Church, it would seem, has appreciated that its main strength within society arises from the people's faith, from the nation's strength and from presenting and representing the ethical traditions of the nation. It has realized, too, that the strong faith of ordinary people would be blind but for the reflection of the views of intellectuals, writers, the creators of national culture. Hence the Church's deep ties with cultural and scientific circles, ties which did not exist to such a degree before the War. The Church has broken away from attachment to private possessions, has freed itself from an obsession with ownership. Private ownership has ceased to be an idol for it, the focus of daily concern, as unfortunately we see it here and there in the West. Hence the feeling of independence and spiritual freedom. The Church has also learned to speak in the language of the Gospels when speaking on the dignity of man, his freedom, and his nation. The Church does not fit our

preconceived ideas. It has shown itself to be somewhat different from what the critics imagined, and it has even exceeded the wildest dreams of those who praised it.

It has never attacked the political system directly, nor the allies of that system which brought it to our country. But neither did it recognize them *a priori*. It has been sensitive to actual events as they have developed. It has directed itself more towards positive proposals than toward negative opposition to authority. It has been building and creating values which are impervious to force. It has become the guardian of national hopes. When John Paul II kissed the soil of his homeland, everyone felt that this was someone who had become the symbol of a free and independent Poland. He was not only a Person: he was a Personification. He demonstrated how one can survive with a clear conscience. Never in the nation's entire history has one man embodied national aspirations to such an extent.

For well over thirty years the Polish Church has lived with the process of "building socialism". It is immersed in socialism like a fish in water. Time after time it has been obliged to protest. But does not such coexistence imply that it has taken over some characteristics from its opponent?

Perhaps one should say that at a given moment the Church embarked on a campaign of "taking the ethical initiative" from the hands of its opponents, and as a result, the Church will be the one to call for the achievement of basic social ideals, hitherto representing Marxism's basic ethical horizon. The Church and Christians have uncovered, as it were, a lower layer in Marxism. There they have found, somewhat dusty, somewhat warped, their own social ideals. There is nothing strange in that—after all, Marxism was a sort of neo-paganism which sprang up after the Church's failure to Christianize Europe. Now Christians in Poland have discovered their own Christianity after the disastrous process of "building socialism". In a sense, they are "neo-Christians"—that is to say, they have reverted to Christianity as a result of confrontation with the enemies of religion. Thus "neo-Christianity" would be a return to the source, to the common sources of European thought, both religious and atheist. This is also an attempt to take the initiative (ethical, rather

than political) from the Marxists, an initiative which would strive to improve the world of human labour. This is a very significant moment. To take the initiative from an opponent makes that opponent superfluous.

An important consequence of this confrontation, it seems to me, is a better understanding by Catholics of the meaning and properties of atheism. One could say the following: to the atheist, religion is not essential in order to be an atheist, whereas for a believing Christian, atheism is essential as a means of purifying his own belief in God. This premise, it seems, has produced so many valuable reflections about atheism in contemporary Christian thought. In a sense, atheism has become an integral part of Christian reflection. This does not mean that the Church no longer regards theism as the ultimate expression of human thought: it simply means that it perceives it through dialogue [with atheism]. It realizes that without taking account of atheist opinion on the Church, it is incapable of reaching the full truth about itself. This has a far-reaching effect on the spirit of Catholicism, rendering it tolerant and open to dialogue.

In the meantime, what has happened to Marxism? What in particular happened to Marxism in Poland after the visit of John Paul II?

Marx once wrote that religion would disappear when it became superfluous. In Marx's opinion, then, it will not vanish as a

result of polemics, scientific progress or force, but in a much more matter-of-fact way, just as the spinning wheel has disappeared from the weaving industry. Somehow the history of socialism does not seem to verify such a theory. By a paradoxical coincidence, Marx's theory is proving to be true for the history of Marxism itself. There is no need to exaggerate the theoretical significance of disputes with Marxism. Marxism can endure in a political system described as socialism, even when there is not a single believing Marxist left in the country. Misgivings about the entire ethos of the philosophy are far more important than any theoretical disputes. Marxism in Poland has ceased to be the theory which unmasks exploitation of the workers, or the inspiration for social change. Instead it has become a theory with one main purpose—the justification of the present system with all its faults, as an objective necessity. This situation naturally gives rise to anxieties of an ethical nature in everyone, not merely amongst specialists in ideology. Now another question is being asked: who or what still needs Marxism? We are not concerned with this or that thesis but with the ethics of the entire ideological process and the entire system of thought. Who needs Marxism, and why?

I think that these last two questions sum up the present position of our dialogue in its contemporary Polish form.

## Faulty Copies of *RCL* Vol. 9 Nos. 1–2

Some subscribers to *RCL* have returned to us faulty copies of this number: pages 49–64 are missing completely, while pages 73–88 appear twice. If your copy was faulty please return it to us and we will supply you with a fresh one. We apologize for this error.