

## Series Two--1971

### *DECLINE OF RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES*

The surveys of pollsters George Gallup, Jr., John O. Davies, Jr., and the American Institute of Public Opinion have sent shock waves through Paul's entourage. The results indicate that 89 percent of Protestant ministers, 61 percent of Roman Catholic priests, and 63 percent of rabbis think that religion on the whole is losing its influence in the United States. And they should know. When the newly-born Jesus movement is cited as counter-indication, it is dismissed by Paul and his advisers as transitory and "faddish."

### *PRIESTLY CELIBACY ATTACKED*

Another factor against Paul's ideas of an early resignation is the nascent anti-celibacy opinion. Already, 40 percent of priests in Italy favor abolition of celibacy. In Spain, 33 percent of priests have voted for optional celibacy. The Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) has called for optional celibacy.

### *PAUL'S PROPOSED UNIVERSAL LAW FOR THE CHURCH AND HIS OWN INFALLIBILITY ATTACKED*

To cap all this, the first savage attack by a Roman Catholic in modern times on Paul's Papal infallibility is

published. It is a book by Hans Küng, the German-born theologian, of whom the world will hear much.

When Paul has a draft law for the whole Church drawn up by a secret group of his own Canon lawyers, over 220 theologians from German-speaking lands condemn it unreservedly. Cardinal Leo Josef Suenens of Belgium attacks, ridicules, and condemns it in a public interview. The Canon Law Society of the United States does the same. Thus Paul has some preliminary sign of what the "new theologians" of Progressivist views wish to do with Church doctrine. If he can only guide all these eruptions and rebellions, he may bring his Church to a more open position and thus attract non-Catholics. His policy will be to restrain, not condemn, these attacks.

### **PAUL ADOPTS POLICY OF CONCILIATING THE LEFT-WING AND MARXIST MOVEMENTS**

Paul's openness to the Left becomes evident in a series of moves all over the globe. Paul receives President Tito of Yugoslavia on a state visit. The Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs also pays a visit to Paul. Paul sends Cardinal König of Vienna to Budapest and has him persuade Cardinal Mindszenty to leave his asylum in the United States Embassy. Paul's promise to Mindszenty: "We will never, as long as you are alive, appoint another Cardinal Primate in Hungary." Mindszenty's removal from Budapest and his exile to Vienna, where he is to live in the old Austro-Hungarian Seminary, is a boon for the Communist Government of Janos Kadar. Mindszenty has been a thorn in the living flesh of the Marxist state. Paul also sends Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, an official of the Vatican Secretariat of State, and Father Pedro Arrupe, General of the Jesuits, to Moscow for talks. He arranges for talks with the Communist Government of Czechoslovakia.

Paul is criticized for the one-sidedness of his policy. While Marxist governments get concessions from the Pope, those governments do not ease up on their own ferocious anti-Catholic and antireligious attitude. And this goes as much for Tito's Yugoslavia as for Russia and elsewhere. Paul is further attacked for his removal of Cardinal Angelo Rossi from his post as Archbishop of São Paulo, Brazil,

because Rossi supports the right-wing government in its strong-arm measures against left-wing terrorists, Marxist guerillas, and propagandists; and for his, Paul's, support for the bishops and priests who revolt and riot against the right-wing government of President Stroessner in Paraguay.

Paul does not disapprove of the friendship and association of Cardinal Silva Henríquez with the Chilean Marxist dictator, Salvador Allende. Silva joins Allende on the public platform at a mammoth meeting of socialist and Marxist cadres at May Day celebrations. And when the White Fathers Missionary Congregation decides to withdraw all its personnel from Mozambique in protest against the colonial rule of the Portuguese, Paul approves of their action.

Paul reveals his mind most significantly in his Apostolic Letter published in May. In it he calls for a new regime in the near future. The Letter echoes the theme of liberation theology; no progress by religion can be made unless a new economic regimen is installed, a regimen which transparently will mean the transformation—really the termination—of classical capitalism.

### *HUGE NEW AUDIENCE HALL INAUGURATED BY POPE PAUL*

Pier Luigi Nervi is one of the most famous twentieth-century engineer-architects who specialize in what reviewers of avant-garde architecture call "the Atlantic style," or the "Atlantean style." Nervi was the master architect of the Roman Catholic Cathedral in San Francisco.

Atlantean buildings are not symbolic of anything, nor blueprints of any sacramental presence of Divinity within this human universe. They do not evoke the supernatural or the trans-human, or echo in their stark lines any traditional grace and beauty.

Atlantean buildings are masses of undulating architecture that express the engineering dynamism of their own creation, not any goal or aim or ideal outside or above them. They always seem about to erupt, or take off as gigantic wingless things driven by their own self-contained strength. But their thrust is horizontal, not vertical.

At Pope Paul's request, Nervi completed plans for such a hall. In 1964, he presented the plans to the Pope, and Paul approved them. On May 2, 1966, workmen began demolishing the buildings that stood in an area east of Saint Peter's Square, between the Holy Office Building and the Leonine Wall of the Vatican. This would be the site of Nervi's huge Hall of Audiences.

On June 30, 1971, the "Nervi," as it has come to be called familiarly, is inaugurated and blessed by Pope Paul in a public ceremony. Here Paul will hold his Papal Audiences. Here future Synods of the Bishops of the Church will be held.

The Nervi is a long, more or less trapezoidal, building. Its main doors face eastward, as do the doors of Saint Peter's Basilica. Its roof is undulating. On each of the two walls of the trapezoid, there is one oval, stained-glass window, set like eyes in this protean mass. The windows are by Giovanni Haynal. Marc Chagall was first asked to propose designs for them, but Chagall's art with its note of confusion and incivility was finally judged unsuitable for a place that should express the sacred serenity of God and the harmony between God and man.

Inside the Nervi, the Main Hall is gargantuan. Its floor slopes downward, like the floor of any theater, from the entrance to the stage at the western wall, nearly 2,756 feet away. The undulating ceiling is like the roof of some giant mouth swallowing the visitor. That vaulted ceiling is constructed of 42 prefabricated, white, geminate arches. The Main Hall holds 6,900 people seated, or 14,000 people standing.

On the stage, the Pope's throne is placed on a raised dais. Behind the throne will be placed the biggest bronze sculpture in the world, commissioned by Pope Paul in 1965 from the 64-year-old Pericle Fazzini, one of Jacqueline Kennedy's favorite artists. There were some reports that Pier Luigi Nervi was disturbed that the commission had gone to Fazzini, and by Fazzini's plans for the sculpture. "Two primadonnas singing in the same opera will not sing well at all," Nervi was reported to have quoted another Atlantean, Le Corbusier.

But Paul likes Fazzini's plans, commenting: "I want a work that will last." His Holiness will have it.

It is in the Main Hall that Paul has his General Audi-

ences. Here he will celebrate his 80th birthday in 1977—the day many expect he will resign.

Apart from the Main Hall, the most important room is the Synod Hall, or "Upper Room," as it is also called because of its location above the Main Hall, tucked neatly under the Nervi roof. That nickname, "Upper Room," brings to mind echoes of the upper room in the house in Jerusalem where the Apostles waited, after the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The floor of this modern Upper Room, is formed by the sloping outer curve of the huge ceiling of the Main Hall below. The Upper Room is reached by ample staircases and by elevators. It seats upward of 280 people and is equipped with every modern device necessary for simultaneous translation, and for instantaneous radio and television broadcasting. The quasi-official description of this room speaks of its "perfect efficiency in holding large numbers of people and providing technical services . . . which will make this Synod Hall ever more useful—and used—for important meetings of a religious character. . . ." In fact, the Third International Synod of Bishops, set for the coming September 30, will be held in this Synod Hall, this Upper Room. And there is already a rumor, pooh-poohed by many Vatican officials, that Conclave 82 may be held here, and not, as in centuries past, in the Sistine Chapel.

Paul, in his inaugurating speech, stresses one aspect of the Nervi: It was built to be the special place where "the Holy Father will welcome the people and which will express a spirituality suitable for the sovereignty of the Pope and the faith of believers . . . [The Nervi] will be a visible symbol of the unity of Pope and people."

Rumors or no, the Nervi, with its Main Hall and its Upper Room, is destined for fateful and historic meetings.