

By **AUGUST THALHEIMER**

NAZI NEO-PAGANISM WARS ON CHRISTIANITY

The entire world has been paying close attention to the dispute raging between the Nazi government on the one hand and the Catholic Church and the opposition in the Protestant Church on the other. Communists and Social-Democrats outside of Germany have adopted views on this question which are not altogether tenable. Social-Democracy has created the impression that Socialism is identical with "true" Christianity. The Communist Party has recently issued a statement announcing that church members would be admitted into the Party provided they participate in the struggle against the Fascist dictatorship. This, of course, is shooting beyond the mark. Marxism is based on dialectical materialism. Marxists, therefore, need make no concessions whatsoever to religious idealism in order to wage an effective struggle against fascism. The fundamental principles of a correct Marxist position on this problem were worked out theoretically and applied in practice by Social-Democracy, under the leadership of Bebel, during the "Kulturkampf" waged

against the Catholic Church by Bismarck.

NO CONCESSIONS TO RELIGION

Bebel never made a secret of the fact that he himself was a materialist and an atheist and that the world outlook (Weltanschauung) of Social-Democracy was the same. Bebel was a vigorous and consistent fighter against religion in any form. His numerous popular writings and speeches prove as much. At the same time, Social Democracy under Bebel's leadership vigorously opposed any attempt on the part of the state to intervene in matters of religion and the inner life of the church. It is entirely sufficient to follow the same policy today. Marxists must be for religious freedom and against the intervention of the fascist state in the inner life of the church. To make concessions to religion as such cannot but have harmful consequences.

This is especially significant since the question revolves not only around the fighting Christian churches but also around so-called neo-paganism, an anti-Christian religious movement led by the Leipzig Professor Hauer and officially protected by the leaders of the National Socialist Party. Opponents of fascism have either completely ignored this movement or else simply ridiculed it. It is true that this movement—ideologically a mixture of vulgar pantheism, National Socialist race theory and old Germanic nonsense—invites and justifies ridicule. But Marxists cannot confine their opposition to such a superficial attitude.

ROLE OF "NEO-PAGANISM"

"Neo-paganism" plays a very definite role in the arsenal of National Socialism. It is above all the youth and members of the SA and SS, armed sections of the Nazi Party, to whom this movement appeals. It received special impetus after the Bartholomew night of June 30th, after the smashing and disarming of the SA, which has lost its political and military importance. Even the SS has lost its significance. The Nazis realized, however, that it was not sufficient simply to smash the SA and to do away with the "Second Revolution." It became necessary to provide the Nazi youth with some field of activity which would utilize their revolutionary instincts for the benefit of the fascist state and the ruling classes. The "Second Revolution" was replaced by "revolutionary activity" on the religious field. An attempt was made to satisfy the healthy anti-religious instinct of the petty bourgeoisie and proletarian youth thru neo-paganism. The Nazis thus transferred their economic and political tactics to religion. In place of true Socialism the Nazis introduced the bogus "German" (national) socialism; in place of national unity achieved thru a classless society the fascists put thru a Peoples Community based on increased exploitation by the capitalist class. In the same manner, they have tried to mislead a section of the youth thru neo-paganism, a sort of substitute-atheism.

However, these substitutes are developing their own logic. Fundamentally, all these attempts of the Nazis at falsi-

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FURRIERS INSTALL NEW LEADERSHIP

NEW YORK, N. Y.—The newly elected administration of the International Fur Workers Union was installed on August 15 and the work of the organization is about to begin. Judging by the intolerant booing, whistling and jeering which punctuated the speeches of the Progressive Business Agent Baraz it becomes clear that the G.

Neo-Paganism

In Germany

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fication result from the recognition of the fact that the working masses want true socialism, that they are for the liquidation of class antagonisms thru the liquidation of the capitalist class and the liquidation of religion thru materialism and atheism. All these substitutes will be discarded sooner or later by the masses and will be pushed aside as soon as the masses contrast the various substitutes of the Nazis with reality. The Marxists must aid the masses to gain this realization and to wage the struggle for the real revolution instead of the counter-revolution in disguise.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE?

Our attitude to neo-paganism must be determined by this. We must prove that the struggle which the National Socialists wage against the Church by substituting neo-paganism is nothing but a fake and that in the final analysis they are interested in saving religion in a new form and in forcing the Christian churches to submit to fascist barbarism. We must further point out that neo-paganism is being used by the Nazis as a diversion from the political and economic disaffection. We must, therefore, lead the potentially revolutionary petty bourgeois and proletarian elements, now serving the ends of counter-revolution, to espouse materialism and atheism and to wage a truly revolutionary struggle on the economic and political field.

Such a task can be fulfilled only by those who adopt a consistent, unequivocal Marxist stand—the stand of dialectical materialism. Any concession to religious ideology makes it impossible to carry out this task.