

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow  
As fits a universal woe,  
Let the long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it  
grow,  
And let the martial music blow;  
The last great Englishman is low.

Reviewed by M. E. BRADFORD

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### *The Splintered Rock*

**Three Popes and the Cardinal**, by Malachi Martin, *New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972. 300 pp. \$7.95.*

**The Decline and Fall of Radical Catholicism**, by James Hitchcock, *Garden City, New York: Image Books, Inc., 1972. 198 pp. \$1.25 (paper).*

JAMES HITCHCOCK and Malachi Martin, a former Jesuit, agree that since the Second Vatican Council true spirituality in Roman Catholicism has been fighting a losing battle against materialism and secularism. Concentrating heavily on the church in the United States, both writers see the traditional beliefs and practices of Roman Catholics compromised by the Catholic intellectuals eager to adjust them to the political and social structures of an advanced technological society, with a consequent denaturing of spiritual concerns. Malachi Martin best expresses this loss of faith in these words:

In the area of activism, we are at grips with the chief manifestation of the malaise which affects twentieth century human society. The activism into which clerics, nuns, religious, and lay-folk are plunging has no professedly or professionally Christian intent, purpose, or scope. It only means that there will be

more politicians, more civil rights workers, new Congressmen, fresh Presidential speechwriters, more anti-Vietnam-war demonstrators. Nor can it be construed as a carrying out of the clerical or religious injunction and undertaking to spread the Gospel of Jesus. . . .

The structuralism of the post-Conciliar period is, perhaps, the most dangerous trait of the madness. There is here a dual danger: a genuine and fatal division of the Roman church due to the aggressive liberalism of northern churchmen; and a gradual secularization of the theology of the Word. Only for a time and to a certain extent can non-Roman churchmen attack, limit, and lampoon the administration of the Vatican and papal interventions. No amount of added professions of allegiance to the Pope can help. It is about as sincere as saying that we love art but cannot really put up with the Mona Lisa, and Taj Mahal, and the Sistine chapel. . . .

Although the two critics agree about the decline of spirituality since Vatican II and in the observation that many Catholic clerics have mistaken their own psychological needs and hang-ups with the needs of the church, Messrs. Martin and Hitchcock employ very different styles and tactics in the development of their arguments. *Three Popes and the Cardinal* has been billed in the popular press as "a devastating exposé," a book that "lifts the veil on the inner workings of the Roman Catholic Church"; and Martin does indeed appear to cater to vulgar tastes in many chapters by retailing ecclesiastical gossip, intimate details about the personal lives of the popes, and other such trivia (none of which is new to those who have read the same stories in *Time*, *Life* and other journals). Hitchcock, by contrast, scorns sensationalism, ignores gossip, and documents everyone of his assertions or observations about the so-called "progressive" theologians and writers. His general argument is that these moulders of American Catholic opinion since Vatican II have mistaken their own biases for the

faith of the church and have allowed their passion for acceptance in an essentially non-Catholic society to overcome their religious integrity. He employs the Chestertonian paradox to expose the conflicting and changing pragmatic attitudes of the progressives. Rosemary Ruether, Daniel Callahan, Michael Novak, Mary Daly, John O'Connor, Eugene Shallert and several others are quoted with revealing and devastating effect. Mr. Hitchcock demonstrates how these alleged liberals have talked themselves into a completely nonreligious secularist position alienated from the "folk-Catholic" majority, not to mention the institutional church itself. In various parts of his book he deals with the shell-game dialectics of the "people of God," a phrase that means whatever the progressives want it to mean (but which is never what is believed by a majority of the folk-Catholics); with the authoritarian and dictatorial mentality of the elitist theologians; with the destructive games these self-avowed lovers of humanity have played with real and innocent human beings; with the Uncle Tom servility toward the current idols of secular society; with the "parasitic" use of the church by progressives to make well-paying careers for themselves.

Most of Hitchcock's main points were outlined in my article entitled "The Catholic Plot against the Catholic Church," published in May, 1968, in *National Review*; he has, however, amplified and documented them and has rendered a valuable service in tracing the ideological somersaults of American Catholic journalists on their biennial ego trips. His book is thus a veritable encyclopaedia of "radical Catholic" newspeak.

Here are a few of Hitchcock's sharper observations:

Unwittingly, many religious progressives have proven their own unworldliness precisely in their concern to be worldly. It is now almost a law that religious liberals will discover and espouse various aspects of American culture just

as [the] true secularists become disenchanted and begin looking for realities which the religious progressive is trying to forget.

Modern theologians refuse to tell man what he may believe, but they are quite eager to tell him what he must not believe.

The disappearance of subtle discrediting of traditional religious symbolism is perhaps the primary cause of the deep religious malaise which now seems to affect so many Catholics.

The writings of radical theologians, although sometimes informed by passion, are almost devoid of any apparent living contact with God or Christ.

Malachi Martin's reasons for writing *Three Popes and the Cardinal* are rather unclear. He condemns the institutional church, though he served in it in an elevated capacity as assistant to Pope John XXIII's "Gray Eminence," Cardinal Bea, the main architect of Vatican II. A worldly, sophisticated Roman cleric, Martin was intimately familiar with the centers of power within the Vatican but he adds little or nothing to what is already known about Popes Pius XII, John XXIII, and Paul VI; *Life Magazine*, for example, covered the death of Pius XII and the scandalous behavior of his friend and physician, Dr. Galeazzi-Lisi, who tried to sell photographs of the dying Pontiff and his embalment to the journalists. Those who read news magazines have known for many years about the anti-Communism of Pius XII and his iron-like control over all phases of the Roman Catholic Church.

Martin's assertion that Pius XII knew about Hitler's "Final Solution" of the Jewish question is not documented apart from a conversation he alleges to have had with Cardinal Bea. A recently found letter by John XXIII in which reference was made to the persecution of Jews needs more careful analysis to determine the light, if any, that it throws on the failure of his predecessor

sor to condemn Adolf Hitler. Meanwhile, even Herr Hochluth, author of *The Deputy*, has admitted that he chose to impeach Pope Pius only because he was the most important moral force in the world; that otherwise he might as easily have made Roosevelt or Churchill a villain in the piece. It is fair to ask why, if Malachi Martin knew so much, he did not disclose his knowledge before leaving the Jesuit Order. The question, as seen in Zohn's *German Catholics and Hitler's Wars*, is much more complicated than Martin indicates. Many who knew about the atrocities were silent and there are records to show that Pius himself was misled by the German bishops when he inquired about the issue. Martin's personal dislike of the Pope has colored his judgment in this and other matters, obliging the reader to question his objectivity.

Martin expounds at much length and incoherence his new found philosophy of "structuralism." He does not so much *argue* his theory as *proclaim* it, presenting his insights in the guise of facts. "Structuralism" seems to be a pastiche of Teilhard de Chardin, Marshall McLuhan and Heideggerian (Merleau-Ponty?) phenomenology. As nearly as one can make out, Martin is telling us that the forces of technological change, which (à la Teilhard) are heading toward new spiritual forms, have made the mediaeval structure of the institutional church irrelevant, and he foresees the end of the Roman Catholic Church, as we know it, by A. D. 2000. He speaks of Pius XII as "the Prince of Power" and "the last Pope" and of Paul VI as "the Prince of Agony" and "the first un-Pope." (After the practice of Vatican functionaries he refers to the three Pontiffs by their family names—"Pacelli," "Roncalli," "Montini.")

Although his book is ostensibly concerned with the relation of the three Popes to Cardinal Bea, that brilliant Jesuit scholar (and even more brilliant church politician) has only a shadowy existence in these confused, self-serving pages; Martin seems to use the Popes and the Cardinal as a cover for talking about his "structuralism." He

shows an excessive concern about sex, parades his many prejudices against Americans, Italians and Spaniards, reveals his loathing of Cardinal Ottoviani and the rest of the Vatican's conservative political faction. His cynicism about men and morals makes him see Charles Reich and the American radicals as foolish romantics and the radical American Catholic theologians as mere dabblers in "the senseless falderal of European theology." But although Martin has no respect for the existentialism that dominates the so-called radical Catholicism, he does appear to respect Heidegger whose work has so greatly influenced the Protestants Bonhoeffer and Bultmann, who in their turn have influenced the leading European Catholic theologians. And despite his scorn of the "progressives" for having embraced the secular order, Martin (like Teilhard and McLuhan) seems to have faith that technology is leading us toward a more spiritualized future.

Certainly, not all the idols of the Teilhardian pragmatists have fallen, but there is evidence that the brightest among today's youth have grown doubtful of the blessings of technology and its promises for the future. In the universities the ancient forms of Christian and Eastern mysticism are being studied more widely and intently than ever, not only by cranks and quixotics but by students nurtured in the scientific tradition. More and more writers like Michael Polanyi and Arthur Koestler are calling in to question the secular academic dogmas so dear to the hearts of the social activists. Malachi Martin might do well to read James Hitchcock, who is at least aware of the inner contradictions of structuralism and other such speculative dogmas, which aid and abet the materialism Martin *claims* to decry. He might also read Garry Wills' *Bare Ruined Choirs*, which also points to the dangers inherent in Teilhard de Chardin's naive trust in technological change.

Reviewed by JOSEPH P. BOYLE