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**Dubious Parentage:
Freemasonry and Communism
by Arthur A. Weiss, S.J.**

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DUBIOUS PARENTAGE

FREEMASONRY AND COMMUNISM. By Arthur A. Weiss, S.J. Catholic Trade School, Manila. 1955. Pp. 182. ₱1.00.

The author devotes little space to direct description of Communism; he evidently presumes that his readers know what Communism is. His main interest is — in words quoted from Pope Leo XIII — “to tear away the mask from Freemasonry, and let it be seen as it really is.” He eminently succeeds in this effort.

When the mask is torn away, Freemasonry is revealed as the bitter and implacable enemy of the Catholic Church. Its secrecy is shown to be immoral; the Masonic oath is unjust for it intrudes upon the rights of the State and the rights of the human person. The basic philosophy of Masonry is Atheistic Naturalism.

The author substantiates these accusations by copious quotations from Masonic sources. The quotations are clear evidence for Masonry's enmity to the Catholic Church. Careful analysis of the oath by which Masons bind themselves to secrecy shows it to be both rash and unjust. To prove that the basic philosophy of Masonry is Atheistic Naturalism, the author relies chiefly but not exclusively on the “secret” Masonic document “Morals and Dogmas,” written by Albert Pike, former Grand Commander of the Scottish Brethren in the United States. Masonry denies all supernatural revelation. What it terms “The Grand Architect of the Universe” is, ultimately, Mankind. There is no transcendent, personal God. Masonry is the only true religion, for it is the religion of Mankind.

Father Weiss has painstakingly waded through the bombast and double-talk of Masonic writings and has found the basic moral and religious evil that lies beneath the surface show of religious toleration and social welfare work. In this inexpensive book, Filipino readers can find the ready answer to the oft-repeated question: “Why can't Catholics be Masons?”

But the distinctive feature of Father Weiss' work is its association of Freemasonry with *Communism*. It is the express purpose of the book to show the “link” between Freemasonry and Communism: “to see Masonry ‘as it really is’ we must also see it in its relation to *Communism*.” The book intends to prove that

the two have "a common origin," "a common technique," and "a common purpose." It is of some importance clearly to delineate the extent of the association between these two evil systems for which solid proof is given in Father Weiss' work.

Masonry, like Communism, aims at the destruction of the Catholic Church. Both Masonry and Communism are atheistic and naturalistic. They both bind their adherents to secrecy and to self-commitment irrespective of the morality of the activities in which they may be asked to engage for the sake of the "cause." They both have frequently made use of the techniques of the "smear" and the "big lie." Masonry, in attacking the Catholic Church, is thereby helping Communism. Masonry, by destroying belief in the supernatural and in a transcendent, personal God, establishes a "climate for Communism." Moreover, the secrecy of the Masonic organization "acts as a sort of standing invitation to Communist infiltration." In this sense, Communist membership is often a "by-product" of Masonry. As a matter of historical fact, many Masons have also become Communists. Within the secrecy of Masonic lodges, many Communist plots have been hatched. Official Masonry, in its zeal to harm the Catholic Church, has often been too lenient towards the designs of Communism.

In the revolutionary era of the 19th century, especially between 1847 and 1872, there was active collaboration between Masonry and the Communism of the time against established government and the Catholic Church. The Masonic lodges of Paris wholeheartedly joined in the destructive work of the Paris Commune of 1871, historical landmark in the history of Marxist Communism, much extolled by Marx, Engels and Lenin. Since that time there have been many other instances of Masonic-Communist cooperation against both Church and State.

Solid proof is given for the Masonic-Communist association described in the preceding paragraphs. It is shown that the two systems have *some* common techniques, *some* common purposes, and *have at times* collaborated. Not so convincing, however, is the author's treatment of the "common origin" of Masonry and Communism.

At first glance, one would expect the term "common origin" to mean that both Masonry and Communism arose from a single, *prior* evil source. That would be rather easy to prove. They both

were products of the false philosophy rampant in the 18th and 19th centuries, with its atheism, rationalism, naturalism, materialism. (So is selfish, monopolistic Capitalism, Nazism and many other false systems — but that is beside the point.) But by “common origin” the author means that *Communism originated from Masonry*. He appears to mean more than that Masonry established a “climate for Communism.” He even names the year in which Masonry loosed Communism upon the world—1847. He gives “credit” to Karl Marx only for *using* Masonic ideas, *improving* upon them, erecting the “*superstructure*” upon them.

It is claimed that Masonic lodges were “the first proponents of modern Communist heresy.” Between 1776 and 1844 a great number of the ideas now current in Marxist ideology were espoused by Masonic groups in Europe. The impression is given that Karl Marx derived these ideas from Masonry when he came into contact with the Paris lodges in 1844. But he could have learned them elsewhere. The author admits that Marx came to Paris “with plenty of ideas of his own.” These might have been any or even all of the ideas circulating among the Masonic lodges of Paris. Marx might have derived his atheism and naturalism from sources as ancient as Democritus and Epicurus, upon whom he wrote his doctorate thesis in 1841. He had already displayed revolutionary ideas when editor of a German periodical in 1842. Prior to 1844 he had embraced socialism and had begun to formulate his materialistic interpretation of history. The real significance of the year 1844 in Paris for the history of Marxism is more likely due to the fact that it marked the beginning of Marx’s friendship with Friedrich Engels, the co-founder of Marxist Communism.

Even if it should be proven that Marx actually derived from Masonry all the revolutionary ideas ascribed to the lodges, it is nowhere proved in this book that *dialectic* materialism was among them. Nothing is more basic in Marxist ideology than dialectic materialism as exemplified in Marx’s materialistic interpretation of history.

Nor does the mere fact that Marx found much “socialism” and “communism” in the Masonic lodges add much proof for the author’s contention. These terms were used in widely different senses, and many of the varieties of “communism” and “socialism” were roundly criticized by Marx and Engels. Proudhon, who is

mentioned among the Masonic influences upon Marx, did not become a Mason until 1847. And in that very year Marx entered upon a controversy with him which lasted many years.

The author attaches much importance to his description of the origin of Communism because from it, it is claimed, we can learn much about the *present-day* relationship of Masonry to Communism. A number of Masonic sources are quoted to the effect that Masonry is "always and everywhere the same." But it is not clear from these quotations that affinity with Marxist Communism is, in the opinion of the Masons quoted, one of the essential elements of unchanging Masonry. Moreover, these Masonic boasts, no matter what their ambit, have little value as evidence for the unity and indefectibility of Masonry. The author appears to be too ready to accept them at their face value.

Senator Delgado's speech at a Masonic assembly in Manila in 1953 is quoted as evidence that Masonry today is in favor of Communism. The words quoted in the book do not prove this accusation. The Senator said that Communism is not "a major enemy of the Filipino people." The quotation does not contain a denial that Communism is *an* enemy. The Senator was voicing the Masonic belief that the Roman Catholic Church is a *greater enemy* than Communism. It would hardly be fair to accuse a Catholic of defending *Masonry* if he should say that "Communism is a greater evil than Masonry."

As a matter of fact, Communism today is a far greater evil than Masonry today. The author of the book under review stresses the similarities between Communism and Masonry, and makes little mention of the dissimilarities. This is understandable in view of the author's purpose. But it would be a mistake for a reader to equate the evil of the two systems; this would be a dangerous underestimate of the evil force of Communism. For almost two hundred years, the Catholic Church has managed to live within Masonic-controlled nations—not comfortably, thank God, but with a fair degree of success. In Communist dominated nations, the Church barely survives. Communism can exert a tremendously evil influence on youth; it can inspire them to great sacrifice. Masonry today is, for the most part, the refuge of security-mad Babbitts. Communism, as such, is committed to the liquidation of private property. Masonry seems quite content with capitalist economy, so long as Masonry is in control; for a long time now, it seems to have been happy with life in the United

States. Once a man has swallowed its false assumptions of materialism and determination, the Communist interpretation of history follows with a high degree of plausibility. The Masonic interpretation of history, with its absurd pretensions of Masonic continuity with ancient times, is merely ludicrous. Communism, as such, is committed to the violent smashing of the entire existent order. Masonry, as such, has shown no official policy of universal destruction. In general, to compare the evils of Communism with those of Masonry is somewhat like comparing the evil works of Satan himself with those of a secretive, paranoiac, "mixed-up" juvenile delinquent.

It is likely that Father Weiss has other evidence, as yet undisclosed, for the present-day affinity of Masonry and Marxism. In the opinion of this reviewer, however, the book, in its present form, is vulnerable in the portions discussed above. This is unfortunate, for hostile critics might attempt to discredit the whole work by attacking these portions, and thus distract attention from the evils of Masonry so solidly proven in the other parts of the book. Perhaps it would have been better if the author had not himself introduced the *red* herring into his otherwise well-wrought attack upon a great evil, Freemasonry.

JAMES J. MEANY

FRANCISCAN MONUMENT

THE CHINESE TRANSLATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. Translated and edited by the Biblical Institute of the Franciscan Fathers. Peking-Hongkong. 1946 to 1954. 8 volumes. \$10.00 the set.

The majority of the Chinese-speaking Catholics in the Philippines seem to be unaware of the existence of this fine Catholic translation of the Bible into their mother tongue. It assuredly deserves to be better known, for in this version with its rather complete commentary, Chinese Catholics have at their disposal a real treasure.

The translation and commentary are the work of the Franciscan Fathers of Peking and Hongkong.¹ The translation was made, not from the Latin Vulgate, which is the official liturgical text of the Church, but from the original languages. Consequently it may not be used in public liturgical services²; but for almost