

Yankee Steve's Column
for the Week of March 11, 2011

Socialism and the Churches - A Bronx Autobiography

Part One

I was born in Brooklyn and raised in the Bronx. Brooklyn and the Bronx are boroughs in the city of New York City where you find people jammed together in what has to be an unnatural setting. You can see the effect this has on their temperaments. The Creator never intended people to live on top of each other, which is what you must do in many places where gray dingy buildings are lined up next to each other like the row houses in the mining towns of Wales where once upon a time I preached.

The Bronx has hasn't changed much since I played stick ball in its dirty streets where most of my friends spent much too much time. The neighborhood I lived in felt more like a haunt than a community.

The Irish in that neighborhood had a saying, "The devil tempts idle hands." For most of my friends that proved to be true. Then as now the Bronx had more than its fair share of what we referred to as drug traffickers, pimps, queers, and fall-down winos. Sometimes you could find the inebriated sleeping it off in the hallways of your tenement house or if the weather was warm they would take to the open air.

On one occasion when I had to step over someone blocking in my way, I promised myself that I would not only abstain from using alcohol, but if possible I would change the way my companions thought about it. I did my best. Do I have to tell you that there are at least ten million people in the U.S. that deeply regret taking their first drink? The pity is that Charlie Sheen is not one of them.

The Bronx was filthy and it was loud. Now I mean it was loud. Earsplitting, elevated trains ran down Southern Blvd all day and night next to my bedroom window. Sanitation men tossed heavy metal cans on to sidewalks in the early hours as if to say, "Dare you sleep while I have to work?" If you couldn't see Puerto Ricans, you could always hear them. It wasn't Chopin that you heard in the back alleys or gusting through the graffiti-painted hallways. It was bongo music and more of the same.

The Bronx was infested. You never knew when you would have to meet with a phalanx of cockroaches. Bronx roaches have an attitude about their turf.

The Bronx was violent. On Simpson Street, next to mine, you could have someone killed for just a few hundred dollars. (Of course you can still do that if Planned Parenthood has set up offices

in the same area. In 2009 Planned Parenthood contracted the killing of 332, 278 American children. Move over Heinrich Himmler!)

Not only criminals were violent. My 5th floor apartment directly overlooked the police precinct. And I could view how New York's finest carried out their duties sometimes through conducting cruel interrogations.

Providence

On a day that I can still remember I was dropped headlong into that cauldron of bitterness and strife. My father, because of circumstances that were beyond his control, told New York, "Here take this kid." And the state said, "OK, we will take him with one stipulation." Stephen Andrew Cakouros will become ours to do with as we please. As a parent you will have nothing to say about his future. Foster children usually do not get placed in the northern section of the Bronx where successful people discuss over white picket fences how to rid their lawn of crab grass and how make the most of the funds set aside for their child's college. Kids like that are consigned to the South Bronx, Fort Apache.

Awful as the Bronx was, I did I not realize at that time that I had in fact jumped from the fire into the frying pan, from something that would have done damage to my patriotism, to something that while it was violent, would provide me with a protective wall against atheism. Let me explain.

My father was an outspoken member of the Communist Party and he lived in Brooklyn which by that time had become the epicenter of Communist activity in America. They even gave the place a name calling it the Red Diaper section. Defiant women hung little red flags from their baby carriages.

Had I grown up there I may have adopted my father's way of thinking, the official line of the Communist Party USA. My father was so in tune with the CPUSA that, on a day I will never forget, with a straight face he told me that Josef Stalin was the victim of a smear campaign instigated by America. Old Joe had not done the things America and the world had imputed to him. You may have already guessed that my father was like the horse "Boxer" in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Boxer believed anything the Pigs told him.

Now my dad may have been terribly naïve, but in defense of my father, he was not the only one. Singer, song writer Pete Seeger said that he was willing to stand by Stalin in spite of the revelations concerning him which he never seriously doubted. Just like me, Seeger's father was a Communist. Seeger's father was a member of the "Composer's Collective" which included in its membership Communists like composer Aaron Copeland. The younger Seeger wasn't as fortunate as I was. In other words if it takes growing up in the South Bronx and away from your family in order to escape Bolshevism, a harbinger of atheism, then I thank God for His providential care.

The Puritan Thomas Watson said, “We cannot be robbed of God’s providence.” Certainly in my case that proved to be true. I didn’t turn out like Seeger and many others who were allowed to come to maturity in the homes of Brooklyn Communists who from what researchers have uncovered are currently holding positions of influence.

The Churches

Later in life I discovered that the big red machine, the Comintern that began under Lenin in 1919, which was determined to spread Communist propaganda throughout the world in order to subvert liberty, had not only set its sights on simple folk like my father who never attended church, but that it wanted to take control of the churches as well. This was part of their master plan.

All of this is interesting because my father bitterly opposed my church ordination which was nine years and four earned degrees in the making. If he had known better he might have softened his tone (He screamed and swore when I told him.) because he would have realized that the CPUSA had found out how it could subvert the churches. Interestingly, the church denomination which I in my early years had come to appreciate, whose past included a venerable like Archibald Alexander of Virginia, had been infiltrated by any number of Leftists.

A generation before I came on the scene, a bold initiative had been launched that for its continuance depended on misinformation. In that previous generation and long before my mother unwillingly left her seven children for eternity, Walter Rauschenbusch [1861-1918], a disaffected Baptist preacher from New York, began to openly preach that Christians are much too much concerned about dogma and not enough about how they might feed and clothe the poor.

But was that true? Rauschenbusch as much as said that Christian charity, which had continued unabated from the first century, was almost non-existent. Christendom had now to hang its head in shame because the world still had people in it who were listed among the poor, and if that were the case it had to be the fault of those who were resisting his schemes of the Social Gospel, those laymen and clerics who were inordinately concerned about doctrinal correctness.

Rauschenbusch cleverly **reinterpreted** the biblical phrase “the Kingdom of God.” A phrase that for two millennia had stood for the exclusivity of Christianity (i.e., not everyone is a member of God’s kingdom) now stood for a worldwide commune, a Russian Mir if you like, a kingdom made up of the earth’s population. The new interpretation of the phrase the Kingdom of God carried in its bosom the idea that Christians will have to put aside their differences; they must welcome with open arms any and all into the kingdom of God regardless of what they believe about Christianity or salvation.

This idea caught on among those who were on the political left. The Methodist scholar, Dr. E. Stanley Jones [1884-1973] as much as shouted this same defiant message from the roof tops - Socialism is the kingdom of God and what you believe cannot keep you from membership in that

kingdom. Actually all are already members. **“We shall welcome those outside organized Christianity, who, however limited they may seem to us to be, nevertheless are striving [with us] for the New Day . . .”**

Would you believe it, this radical kind of left-leaning Protestantism seems to have influenced the thinking of the dignitaries that attended the Second Vatican Council [1962-5].

Vatican II seems to have put a twist on what Rauschenbusch and Dr. Jones had openly declared to a previous generation, namely that what you believe no longer matters. After Vatican II you could believe what you wanted. It was if sincerity is the equal of saving faith. Sincere heretics, it is now believed, are somehow imperfectly joined to the one true church, which Rome says is the Catholic Church.

Vatican II was convened by none other than Pope John XXIII. Let me be candid, I have always believed from my freshman year in college, that if the Catholics ever had a Pope who was a Commie Socialist “a real Pinko” it was John XXIII.

P. J. Matthews, Mr. Communist Expert

All this talk about the kingdom of God along with many other things that leftist clerics had embraced never for a moment escaped the attention of P. J. Matthews. Matthews, who at one time was the leading expert on Communist activity in America, drew this conclusion: **“The largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States is composed of Protestant clergymen.”** [*American Mercury*, 1957]

This not hyperbole, and it may be the most earth shaking statement I have ever read.

A remark like this, coming from a research giant like Matthews, grabs me in a way that it may not take hold of others because I am a child of the Protestant Reformation and not the offspring of my father’s Communism. Matthew’s bewildering comment brings to mind famed scholar and author Reinhold Niebuhr [1892-1971] whose spirited defense of Socialism had to be known to Matthews.

Niebuhr told students at Union Theological Seminary in New York City that Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal advisors had not gone far enough. He wanted Socialism and he wanted it now! Like all true Socialists he went further calling for a one-world government.

Niebuhr did not walk alone.

The same seminary in which he lectured had in its employ Professor Harry F. Ward [1873-1966] who masterminded what P. J. Matthews said was **“The first important Communist front organization in the United States.”** Its title was the American League for Peace and Democracy which Ward put together in the fall of 1937.

But what takes the cake is a statement made by Dr. John C. Bennett in 1970, then president of Union Seminary “. . . **the time has come to free ourselves from the combination of residual national messianism and anti-communist crusading . . . Who are we to say that communism may not be better for some nations than generations of stagnation in poverty . . . It would be a rational policy to allow various kinds of communism to find their own level . . .**”

Are you surprised to discover that President Barack Obama’s Marxist pastor, the Rev. Jeremiah Wright, has the same church affiliation as Niebuhr, Ward, and Bennett - The United Church of Christ/Presbyterian Church USA. This is the same church I forsook when I understood its downward course. Now some of its clerics are promoting gay marriage.

As intimated above, this rubbish has spilled over into the Roman Catholic Church. Just a few years ago Catholic bishops issued a statement to the effect that the American government is responsible to eliminate poverty by forced taxation, government intervention, and handouts.

Socialism using the pulpit to spread its infamy wants us to believe that Jesus and the apostles believed in the redistribution of wealth. But did they?

The Holy Bible which the apostles preached from and which they composed cannot bear that interpretation. *“My son if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say ‘come with us; . . . cast in your lot among us, **let us all have one purse**’ - My son, do not walk in the way of them, keep your foot from their path; for their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed blood.”* [Proverbs 1:10-16]

Yankee Steve Cakouros

oldlineconservative.com