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## CHRISTIAN-MARXIST DIALOGUE IN EASTERN EUROPE: 1945-1980

by Paul Mojzes

Dr. Paul Mojzes is the editor and frequent contributor to OPREE. This paper is an updated restatement of some of his research done for a segment of his book Christian-Marxist Dialogue in Eastern Europe (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981). He has participated in many of the Christian-Marxist dialogue and is acquainted with a number of the Marxists and Christian protagonists of dialogue described in this essay. He is professor of religious studies at Rosemont College, part-time professor at Villanova University and coeditor of the Journal of Ecumenical Studies.

The encounter between Christianity and Marxism takes its most intense and pervasive form in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for it is on this territory<sup>1</sup> where nations with a predominantly Christian population have a Marxist oriented socialist or communist form of government. Of the variety of forms which this encounter took place, dialogue is the most recent and least frequently practiced. Its very novelty, the astonishing phenomenon that the two antagonistic movements are able to relate to each other in dialogue, and the political significance of it all, make a survey of this dialogue important. The dialogue is not merely important for Christians and Marxists in Eastern Europe, though this is the place of its maximal significance, but also for the relationship between Christians and Marxists elsewhere. Should Christians and Marxists in communist controlled areas where Christianity has such deep roots be unable to dialogue with one another serious questions would arise as to its viability elsewhere. Thus, although the history of bitter antagonism does not provide the best conditions for dialogue in Eastern Europe, emergence and slow development of dialogue under trying conditions is its verification as a preferable alternative in relations between Christians and Marxists.

The purpose of this essay is to provide a survey of the dialogue from a historical perspective, followed by a summary description of the methodology and content of the dialogue, with a concluding assessment of

its strengths and weaknesses and its overall significance.

For the purposes of this essay the following brief working definition of dialogue will be used: Dialogue is a way by which persons or groups of different persuasion respectfully and responsibly relate to each other in order to bring about mutual enrichment without removing the essential differences between them. Dialogue is both a verbal and attitudinal mutual approach which includes listening, sharing ideas, and working together despite the continued existence of real differences and tensions.

In order to provide an easier overview as well as an understanding of existing alternatives a typology or classification of Eastern European countries according to their stance toward the dialogue is being suggested here. It should be emphasized that this classification does not apply to issues of church-state relations, liberality of the communist regime, the political position of the churches, or other issues, but only the degree to which dialogue is being used in Christian-Marxist relations in a given country. It should be stated that the typology suffers from the general malaise of all typologies, namely that in real life there are phenomena within a country that could more suitably be classified in a different way than the prevalent mode of relating.

The following five types of attitudes toward dialogue can be discerned in Eastern Europe:

I. Total absence of dialogue; annihilation of churches by the communist government

Albania

II. Avoidance of dialogue; coexistence and political accommodation leading to limited cooperation

U.S.S.R.

Bulgaria

Romania

East Germany

III. Carefully managed dialogue in order to facilitate cooperation; recognition of each other's strength

Hungary

Poland

International Peace Symposia

IV. Critical involvement in dialogue; pluralism of expectations and attitudes

Czechoslovakia

Yugoslavia

Paulus-Gesellschaft International Dialogues

V. Dialogical engagement in freedom; unprivileged position of either partner

Hopefully some dialogues of the future

This classification applies only during a limited historical period. Nearly all Eastern European countries went through the first and second type. Here they are classified according to their most noted pattern, even if that pattern has been of limited duration (e.g. Czechoslovakia was type IV only between 1964 and 1968) or that only a minority practices the approach (e.g. Yugoslavia).

I. Total Absence of Dialogue: Annihilation of Churches by the Communist government

1. Area Wide

Following the pattern established in the Soviet Union in 1917, all of the Eastern European governments established an immediate post-revolutionary policy of obliteration of churches and anti-religious propaganda. On the part of Christians, it involved a desperate struggle for survival and generally little willingness to accommodate themselves to the new regime. Only a handful of clergy, either out of conviction or out of opportunism, thought of cooperation. Some Marxists favored using the churches to their own ends. The thought of dialogue did not occur at this stage. Every Eastern European country went through this stage at least for several years before it decided that it was not a workable policy, with the exception of Albania which made it permanent.

2. Albania

Official Albanian sources claimed in 1967 that no single religious institution exists in the country, thereby making it the first thoroughly atheist state in the world.<sup>2</sup> There is good reason to accept this claim at face value. Under such conditions there has never been the inclination toward or the practice of dialogue.

## II. Avoidance of Dialogue; Coexistence and Political Accommodation Leading to Limited Cooperation

In four Eastern European countries, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania, and East Germany, the dialogue is neither popular nor is it practiced. These four states differ drastically in their policies toward Christians, ranging from thinly veiled or unveiled persecution of religion in the Soviet Union to a strong position of churches in East Germany where the government is using different methods to combat religion. Despite these differences these countries share in common their avoidance of engaging in dialogue, but select, instead, different ways of relating toward each other ranging from hostility to cooperation.

### 1. U.S.S.R.

With the exception of a few instances of recent willingness by Marxists and Christians from the Soviet Union to take part in the international peace symposia between Marxists and Christians, the attitude of Soviet Marxists and to a lesser degree Christians in the Soviet Union toward the dialogue is totally negative. No domestic dialogue ever took place.<sup>3</sup> The official and unofficial Soviet attitude toward all religion including Christianity is negative though religious liberty is constitutionally guaranteed. The Soviet Marxist view typically holds that "religion, like before, is the enemy of truth and reason and it will stay like this as long as it exists."<sup>4</sup> Limited cooperation may take place between Marxists and Christians in the Soviet Union on a concrete issue, like defense of the country or of peace, but philosophically or theologically there is nothing that the two have to say to one another.<sup>5</sup>

Since the International Consultation of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow in 1969 which stated that Marxists may join in common endeavor with wider democratic masses of Catholics and other believers, Soviet Marxists have cautiously and very selectively participated in a few international dialogues.

In addition to some private and semi-official dialogues which Western scholars had with Soviet Marxist scholars in and outside the Soviet Union, the Soviets sent five to ten participants to each of

eleven international peace symposia which took place from 1971 to 1983. In addition to Marxists the Soviets also invited to the more recent symposia a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Soviet participants in these conversations are highly placed scholars or ecclesiastical leaders. They tend to explain their party or church position intelligently and straightforwardly. They do not try to dominate the meetings nor do they engage in surreptitious tactical moves.<sup>6</sup> But their presentations rarely take into account the contributions of the partners beyond perhaps a few quotations used in a "proof-text" manner. They speak and they listen, they defend their positions when under attack, but they are never self-critical and show no independence from the official position. The main agenda for the Christian-Marxist dialogue and cooperation, according to them, is to work for international peace and coexistence and to bring about social progress by critiquing certain aspects of capitalism.<sup>7</sup>

In regard to Christian-Marxist relations in the Soviet Union, participants of these symposia maintain that their relationships are good and develop along constitutionally guaranteed lines. Dialogue is unnecessary, they maintain, because matters have been developing in cooperation and freedom. While the statements regarding their mutual relation should not be given credence, there is no doubt that neither side is experiencing the need for dialogue.

## 2. Bulgaria

Relations between Christians and Marxists in Bulgaria resemble very much those in the Soviet Union, not only because the Soviet Union is Bulgaria's conscious model, but because the two countries show a number of similarities. Patriarch Kiril of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church declared that working together with the Marxists for the common good of the country constitutes daily dialogue.<sup>8</sup> After having gone through a very intense persecution of Christians from 1948 to the middle 1950's, the communists succeeded in "domesticating" the churches. Officially the churches are cooperative in exchange for the rather narrowly construed "privilege" of freedom to worship.

Bulgarian Marxists and Christians rarely attended international dialogues. When they did they kept a very low profile generally

restricting themselves to delivering a text prepared in advance supporting whatever is high on the agenda of Bulgarian, i.e. Soviet, foreign policy.

### 3. Romania

The Communist Party of Romania seems to have more need for cooperation with Christians, particularly the Romanian Orthodox Church, than its Soviet or Bulgarian counterparts. Until the 1960's Romania was a docile Soviet satellite, but since then has carried out a maverick foreign policy aiming at greater national independence. Since it still maintains a very strict authoritarian rule at home, it needs to rally the support of the population along the lines of Romanian nationalism. The Romanian Orthodox Church can help splendidly both in respect to the international situation as well as in making the Romanian majority clearly dominant over the numerous minorities for greater internal cohesion. The theologically active Romanian Orthodox Church is thus given significantly more opportunities for work than its sister churches in other Eastern European countries. It enjoys relative prosperity as long as it does not venture out of the restricted confines designated for it. However, within the country no formal or even informal dialogue took place. One of the very few liberal Marxist thinkers, Ylena Marculescu, attended the Paulus-Gesellschaft Congress at Marianske Lazne, Czechoslovakia (1967) and read a paper at the World Council of Churches consultation on Christianity and Marxism in Geneva in 1968.<sup>9</sup> Romanian representatives do not frequently attend the international peace symposia. When they do they are more interested in making distinctions between the Romanian and Soviet attitudes toward disarmament than to engage in dialogue with Christians.

### 4. East Germany

East Germany (German Democratic Republic), a country whose Marxists are highly ideologized and faithful to the Soviet Union, is the only predominantly Protestant land under communist control. In it there are possibilities of both cooperation and sharp conflict between Christians and Marxists. On one side many Christians who have serious reservations about developments in their country are proceeding very cautiously in their relationship with Marxists. On the other hand there is a very

vocal and influential group of Christians who have come wholeheartedly to endorse cooperation with Marxists within the socialist framework. This cooperation is sought by most Marxists in their search for a wider base of political support. Christian political activity is permitted only under the closely supervised National Front, the Christian Democratic Union, and the "Christian Circles," which have come to accept the absolute determinative role of the Socialist Unity Party (Communist Party) in the life of the country.

The Christians supportive of socialism have declared that it is unnecessary to make a choice between socialism and Christianity, although syncretism is rejected both by them and the Marxists. They are promoting vigorously a commitment or partisanship toward socialism and a rejection of capitalism. But since no philosophical reconciliation is possible, both Marxists and Christians have said yes to cooperation but no to formal dialogue, despite the fact that conditions for dialogue do exist. Among the conditions for dialogue are the high educational level of both Christians and Marxists, no a priori unwillingness on the part of Christians to cooperate, the strength of Christian theology and church organizations, and the existence of ideological diversity. Christians who do not wish to cooperate with the government, those who have expressed "critical solidarity," and those who offered unqualified, uncritical support all unite in rejecting dialogue, as do the Marxists.<sup>10</sup> The thoughtful church leadership is trying to work out the meaning of being a church within socialism. A few theologians like Heins Hacke and Johannes Hammer have explored conditions under which dialogue might take place.

Certainly there is far more interaction between the Marxists and Christians in the G.D.R. and far more Christian influence on the course of affairs than in the U.S.S.R., Bulgaria, and Romania, but that still does not mean there is a true dialogue, though they are indeed talking to one another and interacting in many ways. Should they not disclaim so fastidiously that they are engaging in dialogue one might judge many situations in that country as being instances of dialogue, similar to those carried on in the third type.

The dialogue did not take place primarily because of the



overwhelming dependence of East Germany upon the U.S.S.R., the relative weakness of the Marxist leadership and the comparable strength of churches. It is probably a calculated judgment on the part of East German Marxist leaders that they stand to lose more in an open dialogue than in their quest for uncritical cooperation, making only those concessions which cannot be avoided. Those Christians who concur with this policy are often rewarded with high government positions, generally higher than in any other Eastern European country.

Thus Christians and Marxists who are part of the establishment generally agree that the ideological differences between Christianity and Marxism should neither be increased nor decreased, nor should they be discussed, because "ideological coexistence is strictly rejected."<sup>11</sup> But in the event of some major internal shifts in East Germany or on account of the vicissitudes of the international scene, the relationship between Christians and Marxists could undergo changes which may yet prove to be among the most fruitful in Eastern Europe.

### III. Carefully Managed Dialogue in Order to Facilitate Cooperation: Recognition of Each Other's Strength

This type of dialogue is characterized by caution in order to improve relations and cooperation between Marxists and Christians. This is usually not out of conviction that dialogue is desirable but out of necessity. Each side recognizes that it cannot, under present circumstances, achieve its aims without taking the other side seriously. Since neither is willing to collaborate blindly, the dialogue is seen as a vehicle which can clarify mute points and facilitate cooperation. Hungary and Poland are two nations, which, somewhat differently, utilize this method. Currently they share the reputation of being the most liberal nations within the Soviet orbit (which excludes Yugoslavia, a country more liberal in many respects).

#### 1. Hungary

There is a distinct difference in the manner in which the majority Roman Catholic Church (about 70 percent of the population), and the Protestant Churches, primarily the Hungarian Reformed and Lutheran (about 20-25 percent of the population), relate to the Marxist state. In

the initial period the Catholic Church strenuously opposed the government. The political trials against the clergy and other means of terror changed the form of opposition to a quiet resistance and low profile. Since 1971 cautious willingness to cooperate and to dialogue came with the increased governmental liberalization. In the Reformed and Lutheran Churches a sharp split occurred between the opponents and the sympathizers of the new order. By means of a crass and harsh intervention of the government the sympathizers of the regime seized the top ecclesiastical positions and led their churches into a posture of overt cooperation with the government. A brief interlude took place during the 1956 Revolt when many of the collaborators were forced by their constituency to resign only to be reinstated with the aid of government pressure after the revolt was crushed. The close cooperation with the government includes little or no critical ingredient.

Hungarian Marxists are eager to make it clear that improved church-state relations are not to be confused with ideological relativism.<sup>12</sup> After a protracted struggle between the dogmatic Marxists and liberal Marxists, with the aid of suitable political developments in the later years of the János Kádár regime, the liberal view gained ascendancy. The most open of the Marxist scholars is the philosopher Jozsef Lukács (not to be confused with the eminent philosopher György Lukács). Since the 1960s he has shown a keen interest in dialogue with Christians. He disagrees with the suggestions made by a Catholic participant from Hungary to the Paulus-Gesellschaft dialogue, András Szennay, that the common task of Marxists and Christians is the joint acquisition of intellectual truths as they explore the questions of the meaning of life, right and wrong, and other theoretical questions.<sup>13</sup> Instead he maintains that in regard to those questions only polemics can take place. The proper aim of the dialogue is to seek ways to improve the already existing cooperation between Christians and Marxists, which would lead to improved relations.<sup>14</sup> Lukács maintains that in Hungary there has to be a prior consent by Christians to help build socialism in that country or else there can be no dialogue. A number of prominent Protestant leaders have willingly conceded this point.

The clue to the fundamental characteristic of dialogues in this

class stems from the Marxist discovery that in some areas they cannot go it alone. Hence they are willing to make pragmatic arrangements, including dialogue. But dialogue is to be carried out carefully and almost exclusively with the official representatives of the Communist Party and with no departures from "orthodox" Marxism. Some concessions may be made to Christians on account of the dialogue but they are rarely, if ever, invited to join in shaping the destiny of the country. Only if Christians are "progressive", i.e. do not question the ultimate aims of Marxists, are they welcome to dialogue. Lukács and other Hungarian Marxists optimistically expect that Christians will find much in Marxism that they can approve of or embrace and thereby the two will enhance human progress. Formal dialogues with Protestant theologians have commenced in Debrecen in 1981.

The confirmation that Lukács' attitudes are held in high esteem in government circles comes in an article by György Aczel, deputy prime minister and member of the political committee of the Hungarian Workers Party. Aczel declared that dialogue "has a clarifying and fruitful effect on the socialist national unity."<sup>15</sup> It is the best approach to differences and ideological problems. The main difficulties between the state and the churches have been overcome. The religious people in Hungary, he declared, know that Marxist goals are beneficial for the people and are even harmonious with their own faith. The government on the other hand will take an attitude of who is not against them is for them.<sup>16</sup> Many national tasks and international problems make dialogue and cooperation highly desirable in places of work, in official church-state relations and even on a more limited scale in the field of ideas.<sup>17</sup>

The conciliatory tone of Aczel's article did not go unnoticed. One should assume that the reply to Aczel was the result of considerable deliberation. It was penned by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Pécs, Jozsef Cserháti.<sup>18</sup> He underscored the positive elements in Aczel's article, particularly the invitation to the churches to share responsibility for the cultural and material progress of the Hungarian people. Cserháti noted that Aczel urged Christians to endorse the Marxist analysis of political, cultural, and economic matters but seems to stop short from accepting this demand. Yet he felt that the church's role in society is

not given sufficient recognition.<sup>19</sup> He then listed seven Christian demands in dialogue including removal of administrative interferences and treating Christians as "second class" citizens, freedom of religious instruction, the rule of the party based on service to the people rather than hunger for power, more pluralism and democracy, and so forth.<sup>20</sup>

Cserháti's well publicized views apparently brought no overt reaction by Marxists.<sup>21</sup> The absence of comments means a tacit recognition of the integrity of Cserháti's position. It may not be as pleasant but it probably commands more respect even by the opponents than the position of those Christian leaders who for the sake of privileges for their churches will eschew any public criticism of their society, vying with the most obedient "aparatchiks" in expressions of loyalty in the form of unanimity. In the exchange between Aczel and the writings of J. Lukács there may be the seeds of a more open, critical dialogical relationship than generally practiced now.

## 2. Poland

Some Poles say that there is no Christian-Marxist dialogue in their country,<sup>22</sup> or that the dialogue is impossible.<sup>23</sup> Others say that Poland is the only Eastern European country which practices dialogue.<sup>24</sup> Conditions of the dialogue are so unique that both statements, paradoxically, have a ring of truth. Few theoretical, ideological public dialogues have taken place in Poland. Yet, on the other side, the phenomenal power of the Catholic Church in Poland permeates Polish life to such a degree that Polish Marxists have to take the Catholic position seriously from the outset. Although the separation of church and state is constitutionally affirmed, the influence of the church remains so high that even many members of the United Workers Party (Communist Party) remain church members. This communist party is Eastern Europe's sole party not requiring atheism and dialectical materialism as a condition of membership. Marxism is viewed primarily as a socio-economic system with few people interested in the philosophical-theological dialogue.

The periodization of relations between Christians and Marxists depends heavily on political events which largely determine these relations. Four distinct states are discernible:

- 1) Polemical discussions (1945-1948)
- 2) No ideological dialogue; minimal coexistence (1949-1956)
- 3) Spontaneous and mass dialogue (1956)
- 4) Constructive dialogue (1957-1981)<sup>25</sup>
- 5) Retrenchment and confusion (1981-present.)

In the first postwar period, during the coalition government prior to the complete communist take-over in 1948, polemics took place mostly in the press. Neither side noticed anything positive in the other's views. When the common elements were noticed they were subjected to criticism anyway. On the other side ideological contradictions were clearly noticed and analyzed. Each side defended its own views leading to doctrinal confrontation.<sup>26</sup> A veritable political battle took place between Marxists and their ideological opponents which the church leaders cautiously avoided thus preparing ground for a reconciling, pastoral role, in the national life.

During the period of Stalinist repression (1949-1956) no dialogue took place. A very troubled, uneasy coexistence found Christians struggling for their rights as the communists sought to monopolize all power.

In 1956, however, during the Polish uprising and the liberal regime of Władisław Gomułka several spontaneous dialogues took place. This happened mostly by students at Warsaw University and the Catholic University of Lublin. Even their faculties sponsored some scholarly meetings on Marxist and Christian humanism which concluded that the two humanisms are opposed to one another. A limited discussion took place in the press characterized by animosity and misunderstanding. Yet they recognized the necessity of such contacts.<sup>27</sup>

The state from 1957 to 1981 is being labeled as constructive dialogue. Several contributing factors brought about this stage. On the Christian side it was the prudent ecclesiastical position toward the state by the Catholic hierarchy and the Polish Ecumenical Council (Protestant and Orthodox in composition), as well as the creation of Catholic lay groups "Znak," "Pak," and "The Christian Social Association."<sup>28</sup> These groups were allowed to function legally and to be nominally represented in the Seym (Parliament) as well as to be involved

in considerable publishing activity. They tended to gather the Catholic intelligentsia and provide for them a forum of expression both through their press and through clubs in which lively discussion took place. Although none of them were officially linked to the hierarchy, none of them were rejected or condemned by it for their activities. Some, ostensibly "Pax", were more controversial in their pro-government advocacy of alliance.<sup>29</sup> In 1962 the editor of the influential journal Wież, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, called Marxists and Christians to leave their intellectual ghetto and engage in dialogue.<sup>30</sup> The "Znak" circles showed the greatest degree of independence and critical reflection over against the Marxists.

On the Marxist side two prominent philosophers, who did not involve themselves directly in dialogue, were, however, contributing to open new vistas in Marxist philosophy. They were Adam Schaff and his former student Leszek Kołakowski. Their creative philosophies attracted at the time a good deal of discussion which created much apprehension among party bureaucrats. Schaff became the first Eastern European Marxist to ever participate in a Paulus-Gesellschaft Conference (Cologne in 1964). For his philosophical emphasis on human freedom and individuality he was soon pushed to the margins of influence. His colleague Kołakowski, who was more radical, eventually left Poland for the West and abandoned Marxism altogether. Subsequently no Polish Marxist philosopher of great import emerged.

The specific earmark of the Polish dialogue is that it tends to emphasize questions of economic development, cultural, scientific, and political issues and only to a lesser degree philosophical ones. A series of articles on such issues appeared in journals Studia Theologica Varsoviensa, Ateneum Kaplanskie, Wież, and Chrzescijanin w Swiecie while Marxists replied in their journals Zeszyty Argumentow, Czlowiek i Swiatopoglad, and Studia Filozoficzne. Among the numerous writers one should note Tadeusz Jaroszewski, deputy member of the Central Committee of the Polish Workers Party, who stated that a number of prominent Catholic thinkers (e.g. de Chardin, Mournier) produced challenging and progressive concepts of human beings and social change and that he saw this as "a sphere of discussing par excellence philosophical questions,

linked with a vision of man, society, with an assessment of modern civilization and culture, but at the same time a sphere which serves to strengthen an ideological cooperation between Catholics and Marxists . . ." <sup>29</sup> Jaroszewski was hopeful that great gains in cognitive and social values could be made through dialogue.

Yet for many Catholics the issue is still whether the post-revolutionary state will honor the rights of the churches and of religion as well as the civil rights of the believers as the communists promised when they sought power. <sup>30</sup> The hierarchy of the Catholic Church sees itself as the pastors of the people whose humanitarian, moral, and religious values they seek to defend. <sup>31</sup> The Church has direct contacts with the government, although direct meetings of the head of the church and the head of the state seldom take place. The bishops, particularly the late Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski and currently Jozef Cardinal Glemp, the primate of the church, address the people, and often, indirectly the government, in the form of pastoral letters in which they address themselves boldly though diplomatically to those social issues which are of grave concern to the church and the believers. The pastoral letters frequently tend to be critical of certain practices of the government, e.g. censorship obstacles to religious education, problems affecting family life, labor relations, and martial laws. At times of national emergencies this same leadership counsels hard work and moderation in order to avoid a greater national calamity, such as a Soviet invasion. On questions of national interest the hierarchy and the government often reach a tacit agreement.

Pope John Paul II, the former Karol Wojtyła, Archbishop of Krakow, comes out of this context. When he offered criticism of certain forms of "liberation theology" in Latin America, which takes some Marxist concepts uncritically and adopts them as Christian formulations, <sup>32</sup> it reflects the accumulated wisdom of the Polish church. That wisdom shows that undue politicization of the clergy tends to boomerang and that partisanship is not only divisive but impairs the spiritual services to the entire church membership. During his visit to Poland in June 1979, the first papal visit to a communist country ever, he displayed the same pastoral attitude of being immersed in the people but for their sake

being willing to openly, though not stridently, criticize the government for its failure to observe certain human rights. The same was true of his second visit to Poland in 1983. Through John Paul II the Polish Catholic experience in dealing with Marxism is being transmitted to the worldwide Catholic community and to the ecumenical church.

From 1976 onward a series of high level meetings took place between the heads of church and state, culminating in the First Secretary of the United Workers Party, Edward Gierek's visit to Pope Paul VI in December 1977 and of course, the aforementioned papal visits to Poland. During these meetings each side carefully stated its position avoiding confrontation and seeking assurances that the other side will not overstep its domain. Whether these conversations are to be considered a dialogue is a debatable question. Professor Andrzej Zuberbier, a priest, in an interview given to Wież, expressed his own reservations on this point.

As far as the dialogue with atheism is concerned, and many Christians in the West are expecting us to go into this (sic). I think that there are no proper conditions for such a dialogue in this country. If there comes to a confrontation between believers and nonbelievers it is rather polemics and not dialogue.<sup>33</sup>

These high level meetings have become the subject matter of lively discussions in the weekly, Polytika, between the Marxist chief editor and a number of prominent Christians whose replies were also published. This includes a rather honest exchange of views, including mutual criticism.<sup>34</sup>

The conclusion is that dialogue in Poland has made significant strides. Surprisingly it did not make an international impact as did the one in Czechoslovakia or the Paulus-Gesellschaft. The Polish dialogue did not produce well known theoreticians as some other countries have. Perhaps the reason is that no significant reappraisals of either Marxism or Christianity took place. But it produced honest exchanges about differences and similarities. And it produced a pope!

Of importance is the power which both partners have over against



each other and their awareness of that strength. Of importance also is the duration of that dialogue. Depending which features of dialogue we use as criteria, we might say that the encounters of 1956, if they be judged as dialogue, can be considered historically as the earliest dialogues between Christians and Marxists in the world. But certainly by the early 1960's there was a considerable give-and-take in the press which can be considered as dialogical. The single most important reason for the early advent of dialogue is that there was a ready-made vehicle for its communication: the existence of a strong Christian, (i.e. Catholic) press, which was not the case in other Eastern European countries, where the Christian press has been reduced to minor, in-house organs.

While the experience of the Polish dialogue had not made a significant impact till 1979 one may expect that this situation will change substantially with the election of Karol Wojtyla to the papacy. The world press and communication have already paid close attention to his visits to Poland. Scholarly studies and careful reports about Poland are appearing.<sup>37</sup> In addition to this, John Paul II's own application of the Polish dialogue to the world encounter of Christians and Marxists will certainly take place. It will be a pleasant surprise for many to find that there is a great deal of substance in that experience.

Since 1981 much confusion characterizes the state of the dialogue in Poland. The imposition of martial law and its subsequent replacement with stern government controls, the outlawing of the "Solidarity" labor unions and their attempt to operate underground brought into question the viability of the dialogue. The Roman Catholic episcopate and the pope are once again catapulted into positions of advocacy of human rights against the government of General Jaruzelski, but it is not clear who will benefit from this in the long run. Certainly the atmosphere is more conducive to confrontation than to dialogue during times of crises, though there are still those who will promote the dialogue as the most promising option. The answer to the question which I raised about dialogue in Poland in 1980,<sup>38</sup> "Quo vadis, Polonia?" still seems to be unresolved in 1984.

#### IV. Critical Involvement in Dialogue Resulting in Theoretical Innovation: Pluralism of Expectations and Attitudes

The main distinguishing mark of this stance toward dialogue is that at least for short periods of time or for smaller groups of participants it is possible to engage in a critical and self-critical exchange out of which emerge some theoretical and practical changes. No great pressure is exercised to obtain unity of attitudes or expectations in respect to each other. This dialogue presupposes a modicum of freedom for individuals within both groups. Most importantly, in distinction from the previous type, the awareness of power relationships play a lesser role. Individual participants in the dialogue do not see themselves primarily as representatives of their constituent groups but as free thinkers stemming from within their respective tradition who turn creatively to investigate the questions affecting their mutual relationship and who are not reluctant to acknowledge the possibility of being enriched by the partner. This dialogue may at times turn anti-establishment and/or be rejected by the establishment of their respective constituencies. Exploration of issues beyond the conventional level is more pronounced in this type than in the others. There is a greater degree of giving of oneself, acknowledging the risk that the dialogue may bring an unsettling quality to the relationship. Such dialogue in the beginning is usually not calculated but is the spontaneous outgrowth of historical circumstances. But being subject to the enthusiasm and spontaneity of individuals, it tends to be less resistant to pressures, attacks, and changing circumstances. Many more of the ground rules which might be set up for an "ideal" dialogue are observed in this form of dialogue than in others. Its distinct weakness, or perhaps strength, depending from which perspective one judges, is that it tends to be perceived as a threat by many within both systems. They have been regarded either as pioneers of an era of greater freedom in dialogue or as traitors to the "orthodox" version of their cause.

Dialogues in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, as well as the international dialogues of the Paulus-Gesellschaft, can be classified in this division. The dialogue in Poland and the International Peace Symposia in some of its personalities also assume many characteristics

of this type.

### 1. Czechoslovakia

The dialogue in Czechoslovakia was meteoric. The almost imperceptibly tiny spark of its inception suddenly burst into brilliant radiance only suddenly to vanish as it burned out in a hostile environment.

The tiny anticipation of the dialogue can be traced to Christian initiatives in the early 1930's in the form of a series of discussions on Marxism and Christianity under the leadership of Joseph Hromádka, who later became the most prominent of Czech theologians.<sup>39</sup> The Czechoslovak Communist Party, however, did not respond to these initiatives. Practical cooperation took place between Christians and Marxists in the anti-Nazi struggle. But in the period between 1945 and 1948, when such cooperation could have been turned into dialogue under relative freedom and democracy, it did not take place. After the communist coup d'etat of February 1948, an extremely severe communist repression set in, which aimed at obliterating all real and potential opposition to communism. Naturally no dialogue took place.

One would expect that all churches would have recoiled like the majority Roman Catholic Church did. However, with the return of Joseph Hromádka from the U.S.A. in 1947, the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren, the largest and most influential Protestant Church, took a different stance toward communism. This controversial yet influential leader took an attitude toward communism which was more than conciliatory. He believed that communism is the wave of the future which will build a more humane society. The task of the Christians was seen by him to unreservedly support the new social order with the hope of later Christian influence upon it.<sup>40</sup>

Leaving aside the various positive and negative consequences of such emphatic endorsement of communism the fact that Czechoslovak Communists, despite lingering distrust, could depend on support by Protestant leaders would in the long run foster the emergence of dialogue. Hromádka's long standing willingness to dialogue with people of other convictions was an important factor in readying the Church of the Brethren for dialogue with Marxists.

Hromádka thus became the trailblazer of the dialogue with a theology which extolled the virtues of socialism and thereby made himself increasingly palatable to those thoughtful Marxists who followed his publications, especially such works as The Gospel for Atheists published in Czechoslovakia in 1958. By 1964 Hromádka had become fully aware of the needs and possibilities of an explicit dialogue with Marxists and addressed himself directly to this question in the book Pole je tento svět [The Field Is This World]. In it he specified the contributions which each of the partners could make for the benefit of a better future.

The time for this positive encounter with the Gospel was nearer than Hromádka could have anticipated. Some Marxists had started wrestling with these questions even before 1964. With the stepped up pace of the processes of relaxation it would come surprisingly quickly proving that these processes are thwarted only by the heavy hand of bureaucratic or military intervention.

Already in 1957, during the dark times of repression, Milan Machovec, professor of philosophy at Charles University in Prague wrote his book Smysl lidského života [The Meaning of Human Life].<sup>41</sup> Those were inauspicious times for the publication of such a book. But the book and its revised version, which was published in 1965, especially the last chapter which was added, entitled, "Dialogue," proved to give the most significant Marxist theoretical exposition of the need for dialogue. Though the French Marxist Roger Garaudy's From Anathema to Dialogue (1964) has been considered the Marxist breakthrough in favor of dialogue, Machovec's contribution is not less than Garaudy's. With his theoretical endorsement of dialogue Machovec was just beginning a very prolific writing career on dialogue with Christians, which, to do it justice, one would have to devote a separate volume. Machovec is one of the giants of the Christian-Marxist dialogue and perhaps its most seminal thinker. His own intellectual productivity is one of the main reasons for the brightness of the meteoric stage of the dialogue. A number of his works were published only abroad after the Soviet invasion of 1968. Of those perhaps the most significant is A Marxist Looks at Jesus,<sup>42</sup> undoubtedly the best Marxist scholarly study of Jesus written

to date.

The dialogue in Czechoslovakia became visible in 1964. In that year Machovec organized a seminar at the university to which he invited domestic and foreign theologians. The seminar was characterized by an open, dialogical atmosphere. Such work was not without sympathetic response. The theologian Milan Opočenský urged Christians to make boldly their contribution to society.<sup>43</sup> The Christians involved in dialogue in addition to Hromádka and Opočenský were Jan Lochman, Jozef Smolik, Zdenek Trtik, Ladislav Hejdanek, Jiří Nemeč, Peter Haban, and others. A number of Marxist scholars who were attempting to rethink Marxism, especially in reference to its relationship with Christianity, emerged. They were the philosophers Vitezsláv Gardavský, Milan Prucha, Robert Kalivoda, and Jaroslav Krejčiči and the sociologists Erika Kadlecová and Jaroslav Hranicka. The greatest public impact was made by Gardavský who published one of the most profound Marxist series of essays on Christianity in Literárny Noviny (Prague) in 1966 and 1967. These were later published as a book under the title God is Not Quite Dead.<sup>44</sup> Then the Section for the Theory of Sociology of Religion of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences hosted a colloquium of Marxists and Sociologists of Religion in 1966.

With international support and the steadily liberalizing tendencies in their own society, the above mentioned section of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences hosted and cosponsored with the Paulus-Gesellschaft the only international Christian-Marxist congress which took place in a socialist country.<sup>45</sup> The dialogue took place at Mariánské Lázně (Marienbad), April 27-30, 1967. The theme was "Creativity and Freedom." The congress had wide-reaching consequences as it gathered about 170 of the most prominent Marxist and Christian scholars from many European countries. Its impact on later Czechoslovak events cannot be easily evaluated, though it is exaggerated to hold it responsible for the emergence of the "Prague Spring" of 1968.<sup>46</sup> At a minimum it moved the dialogue in Czechoslovakia into high gear. The contributions of the participants from Czechoslovakia to the congress were of a very high quality and were of the kind that included beside criticism of the other, efforts to appreciate the contributions of the partner as well as

to engage in self-criticism and to attempt new formulations and insights, casting away dogmatic formulas.<sup>47</sup>

Just how many dialogues took place during the "Prague Spring" and how many people participated in them, is impossible to establish. It probably runs into thousands of participants. The first public meeting was held in Prague on April 29, 1968, with twelve panelists. The attendance was estimated between 1200 and 3000. The dialogue was "very open and spirited."<sup>48</sup> Other such dialogues took place.

If one of the intentions of the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops on August 21, 1968 was to stop the cooperation between Marxists and Christians, it succeeded only in the long run. In the short run, paradoxically, it brought about the most fervent cooperation ever experienced as Christians and Marxists found themselves in unity defending the changes brought about by the fallen Dubcek regime. But the invasion did succeed to bring about a complete halt to the formal public dialogue. The Christian-Marxist dialogue received a devastating blow, not only in Czechoslovakia where it was totally repressed for at least the following decade, but even on a worldwide scale the Czechoslovak events of August 1968 stunned the participants to such a degree that many spoke of the death of the dialogue. It took about seven years before the next international dialogue took place in Europe and then it was held without the previous enthusiasm and in the restricted context of Eurocommunism.

But Czechoslovak Christians and Marxists did continue for a period of several years to participate in dialogue abroad, and even more significantly, in having their works published abroad. A formidable amount of articles and books, many of which must have been initiated before the August events, still reflecting an optimism about dialogue, were published abroad. To them more somber, cautious notes were being appended as it became clear that the devastating change would turn the country into the most oppressed Soviet satellite.

However, Machovec, divested of all his teaching functions and expelled from the Party, as were all other of its likeminded colleagues, saw this as a new stage of the dialogue, more suitable to the 1970s. He saw it as a transformation from "show discussions" to theoretical

studies on concrete subjects on Christianity by Marxists and vice versa.<sup>49</sup> Jaroslav Krejčí, who emigrated to Great Britain, contributed a series of monographs pleading for the dialogical approach. Machovec concentrated on Jesus and wrote a few shorter essays on that subject matter in addition to the above mentioned book. Jan Lochman, a theologian who left Czechoslovakia and is teaching at the University of Basel, wrote Church in a Marxist Society<sup>50</sup> and Encountering Marx.<sup>51</sup>

Whether in fact Machovec's optimism that the 1970s are a new stage in the dialogue, however justified it is on a world scale, is actually applicable to Czechoslovakia, is a real question. It rather seems that within this country dialogue between Marxists and Christians is not condoned anymore. The few people who are sent to the international peace dialogues do not seem to dare to engage in dialogue or else have not been raised in the spirit of conducting a dialogue. One would still guess that many Christians and Marxists remember with longing the days when they carried out a mutual engagement in the spirit of constructive criticism in the hope of building "a socialist society with a human face." In that period departures from the preconceived, dogmatic, demonizing notions of each other were frequent. The theoretical innovations as well as certain forms of practical coexistence of the protagonists of the dialogue were inspiring and could some day serve as a point of departure should conditions favorable to the dialogue emerge again in Czechoslovakia. Such conditions would arise almost immediately should the heavy hand of Soviet intervention be lifted. For the time being prospects for that are very bleak. It remains the destiny of the protagonists of the dialogue to suffer together.

## 2. Yugoslavia

The patterns of the encounters between Marxists and Christians in Yugoslavia range from hostility to dialogue. Starting with conflict and confrontation in practice and theory there gradually emerged cautious but constructive cooperation as well as critical involvement in dialogue. Five stages may be discerned in the development of Christian-Marxist relations:

1. All-out conflict (up to 1953)
2. De-escalation (1953-1962)

3. Suspension of hostilities and peace-feelers (1962-1967)
4. Constructive rapprochement and dialogue (1967-present)<sup>52</sup>

Within the fourth stage it is possible to delineate two sub-stages:

- a. Unhampered dialogue (1967-1972)
- b. Communist Party Constraints upon dialogue resulting in uncertainties (1972-present)

There are a number of factors which should be pointed out if one is to understand dialogue in Yugoslavia. The first is that the dialogue was initiated more clearly by some Marxist scholars than by theologians. In view of the fact that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (since 1958 renamed the League of Communists of Yugoslavia) was very much in control, the Marxist initiative is psychologically to be expected. On the other hand, when constraints upon the dialogue were instituted by the Party it was the Christians who showed greater willingness to continue the dialogue under adverse conditions. This too can be explained by noting that the Marxist partners had more to lose by going against Party directives than did Christians.

Secondly, the Serbian and Macedonian Orthodox Churches (about 40 percent of the population) and the Protestant Churches (less than one percent) showed no interest in dialoguing with Marxists. For all practical purposes the dialogue in Yugoslavia is a Roman Catholic-Marxist dialogue.

Thirdly, the factor of close national identification with religion is a stumbling block to the dialogue. From the perspective of the nationalities question, the Communist Party perceives the dialogue with Roman Catholics as a possible encouragement to Croatian nationalism and separatism (in Slovenia the issues are very different). That issue is explosive is not handled properly.

Fourthly, as a result of Yugoslavia's break from the Soviet Union and its subsequent non-aligned posture, there was the need to search for a communist model different from that of the Soviet Union. Such a distinct model was discovered in the "self-management" of all enterprises, resulting in considerable decentralization and democratization of society. This tended to break down dogmatism and in several ways was favorable to the dialogue.



Fifthly, a group of independent Marxist thinkers came into existence who set out boldly to redefine the meaning and role of Marxist thought in the context of a socialist society. After an initially hard combat this group of thinkers (of which the "Praxis" circle was the most self-conscious trend-setter) prevailed over the dogmatist approach and set a lasting, though precariously oscillating, tone to the Yugoslav Marxist cultural and intellectual atmosphere. This atmosphere includes a good deal of self-criticism to which the party establishment, however, tends to be rather sensitive. Thus in intellectual matters Yugoslavs enjoy both considerable liberties as well as limits to liberties which are vacillating in an uneasy equilibrium. The Christian-Marxist dialogue is the result of the trends of liberalization of the country, and in turn, has its own effect on contributing to further liberalization.

The origins of the Christian-Marxist dialogue can be traced to the Marxist scholarly study of religion, in itself a novelty at the time. It started by the publication of two books which indicated a significant departure from conventional Marxist views. One was by Branko Bošnjak, a philosopher from Zagreb, entitled Filozofija i Kršćanstvo [Philosophy and Christianity]<sup>50</sup> and the other by Esad Ćimić, a sociologist from Sarajevo, entitled Socialističko društvo i religija [Socialist Society and Religion.]<sup>51</sup> The books by Bošnjak and Ćimić were destined to be the stepping stones for more serious mutual interest of Marxists and Christians. Bošnjak's book became the subject matter of the first public dialogue between the author and the Catholic theologian Mijo Škvorc. It took place at the Student Center in Zagreb on March 28, 1967, thus becoming historically the earliest of the Eastern European public dialogues. About 2,500 people attended. Though the two speakers were polite to one another the conversation can be best described as a polemic. Yet the symbolic value of the meeting, attesting to the openness of Yugoslav society, was great.

The Yugoslav participants of the Paulus-Gesellschaft congresses, particularly the one at Mariánské Lázně, learned what open and tolerant dialogues can be. While in attendance at these congresses they decided to commence a more serious interaction at home. This took place mostly in print but also in public. In addition to the above mentioned two

Marxists the following, among others, engaged in this dialogue: Ante Fiamengo, Oleg Mandić, Zdenko Roter, Vuko Pavičević, Srdjan Vrcan, Andrija Krešić and Marko Kerševan. The Catholic partners were Archbishop Frone Franić, auxiliary bishop Mijo Škvorc, Vjekoslav Bajsić, Tomislav Šagi-Bunić, Tomo Veres, Stanko Cajnkar, Jakov Romić, Jakov Jukić, Janez Janžekovic, Tone Stres, Vekoslav Grmić and many others.

The origin, nature, and place of religion in society evoked the keenest interest on part of the Yugoslav Marxists. They undertook to explore all of Marx's ideas on religion and concluded that his views were not so much anti-religious as they were a-religious and that in addition to the prevalent negative judgment, Marx also praised the role of religion. Others did not stop with explaining Marx but undertook to correct him. Most frequently they found him to underestimate the longevity of religion. Some even concluded that as an individual factor religion will never wither. Others shifted the ground of discussion by saying that the question of a person's religiosity or atheism is immaterial; what counts is revolutionary involvement and this can be inspired not only by certain kinds of atheisms but also by religion. In general the Yugoslav Marxists shied away from generalizing about religion because their empirical observations convinced them that statements about religion must be very concrete and very historical. Regrettably only few of their works have been translated into German or English.<sup>55</sup>

The Christians are naturally responsive to these explorations. Though Marxists did not agree with the Christian assessment of the role of religion they came a long way toward a more differentiated view. Generally the Christians in their writings devoted maximum attention to the role of the believer in socialist society, and the nature of the dialogue with the Marxists. Many sought to alleviate the "second class" status of Christian citizens and to point to possible progressive roles of the Christians and the church. They also tended to point out that an atheist is not necessarily an immoral or inferior person. Some of them examined appreciatively the writings of Marx and other Marxists. In a very few cases the enthusiasm was so high that the individuals thought that they might justifiably call themselves both Christian and Marxist,

the first from the metaphysical and the second from the socio-political perspective.

Public dialogues took place in Belgrade and in Split. The Eleventh Congress of the International Conference of Sociology of Religion, in which there were eighty from Yugoslavia among the two hundred participants, took place in Opatija in September 1971. Many scholarly projects were undertaken together or about one another. This does not mean that the protagonists of the dialogue were entirely free from criticism and harassment even at the period of maximal liberalization. Sometimes they had to defend their record of achievement and prove their good faith. But few expected the tremendous pressures which would soon be applied curtailing almost all public manifestations of the dialogue itself.

In 1971, amidst the heightened democratization of Yugoslav society, many incidents of social unrest came into being, particularly the strain of nationalism, Yugoslavia's old nemesis. In order to prevent those from spreading, to give a somewhat oversimplified explanation, President Tito stepped in decisively in December of 1971 and undertook a massive purge in the Communist Party in order to eliminate ideological pluralism. Many leading figures, including some of those who were active in the dialogue, were criticized. Some of them were suspended or expelled from the Party, a few left the party on their own, and a few lost their jobs. The Christian partners in the dialogue were not directly affected though they together with the Marxist partners were accused of contributing to the rise of nationalism, liberalism, and a few other "sins."

In order to survive the purge some Marxists decided to keep a low profile. Others chose a different field of scholarly interest. The result was that for the next several years Marxist partners, though remaining personally committed to the idea of dialogue, would not engage in public dialogue. Many would keep discreet contacts with the Christians or deliver an occasional lecture to visitors from abroad. And, most importantly, they continued to write. Despite official discouragement, many of their works were since published, though the vocabulary had to be adjusted for the changed situation. Particularly active are X. Roter and M. Kerševan, the first of whom attempted to give

a sympathetic treatment of the developments within the Catholic Church and an objective description of the relations between the Catholic Church and the State, and the other to propose a scientific communist strategy toward religion. Vrcan and Ćimić also continued their work on the sociological study of religiosity and on evaluating the role of religion and morality on the processes of secularization, respectively. Krešić, a newcomer to the field, published a striking book, Kraljevstvo božje i komunizam [The Kingdom of God and Communism]<sup>53</sup> in which one of the most evenhanded and sympathetic surveys of the present state of Catholic and Protestant theology in respect to social change can be found. As the book title indicates he aims to show that the Christian ideal of the Kingdom of God is compatible with the Marxist desire to build communism. Mere co-existence is not sufficient, he maintains, as do a number of Yugoslav Marxists, but mutual pro-existence, i.e. dialogical support of one another's worthiest aims.

In conclusion one can say that the Yugoslav dialogue had an astonishingly broad base among intellectuals, and that it enjoys the greatest longevity among dialogues in Eastern Europe (Poland sharing this distinction). Though the dialogue is still dependent on the internal political situation it is by no means dead. Its future is largely dependent on how the question of Tito's successor is settled. Tito's death has not made any substantive impact upon the dialogue thus far.

It is agreed by nearly all participants in the dialogue that there are no lasting theoretical obstacles to it. Only political circumstances and historical encumbrances hinder it. The de-dogmatization of theology and of Marxist theory has largely taken place among thinkers, who, however, are not fully trusted either by the party bureaucracy or ecclesiastical hierarchy. Dialogue tends to change mutual relations and thus disturb the status quo, threatening the privileges of those on top. When this threat is not so obvious permission for dialogue is given, such as is the case of the series of small seminars on the future of religion which took place from 1977 to the present on an annual basis within the scope of the Inter-University Center for Post-Graduate Studies at Dubrovnik. The papal visit to Poland, however, has political

implications and voices against the "rise of clericalism" are quickly raised by party leaders. Only through a long and protracted struggle will forces favorable to the dialogue have a chance to assert themselves and tilt the precarious dialogue in the direction of taking a firm hold as the main means of Christian-Marxist interaction, though mutual opposition on many issues may continue. This, of course, applies not only to Yugoslavia, but to the dialogue anywhere in Eastern Europe.

## II. Dialogue about Dialogue

When one considers the subject matter of the dialogue it becomes evident that a limited number of topics have been under discussion. While some of these topics received attention by many of the partners, others had a regional appeal, or were treated by only a few of the partners.

The topic which received by far the greatest attention was the "dialogue about dialogue," namely the exposition of the meaning, conditions, scope, usefulness, and purpose of the dialogue. This will be the only topic elaborated upon in this paper. The next most discussed topic was the reassessment of each other, that is Marxist analyses of religion and in particular Christianity, and Christian analyses of Marxism. Of the other subject matter, perhaps the most frequently raised was the concern for the human being, followed, but not in descending order of importance or frequency, topics such as alienation and sin, history, creativity and freedom, immanence and transcendence, theism and atheism, ethics, Jesus and Marx, search for peace, evolution and revolution of society, and others.

Enormous differences, even contradictions, exist in conceptions of dialogue. Nearly every major Marxist or Christian thinker who devoted any attention to dialogue found it necessary to argue for its desirability and to explain what is meant by dialogue. This is necessary partially because dialogue is a relatively novel way of relating two groups, and in particular it needed justification to convince others that confrontation and derision are not the only or the best way to interrelate the two antagonistic movements.

Some regard the discussion of those great issues affecting the

well-being of a concrete nation or the world as the most important element in dialogue. Many regard dialogue as a prelude to cooperation or a necessary means to improve cooperation. Some consider theoretical or especially ideological issues as unsuitable to dialogue because they believe that no agreement can be reached on those issues. Others include and in some instances emphasize the ideological dialogue saying that Christianity and Marxism are capable of mutual enrichment and improvement through the encounter of ideas. They see the ideological dialogue not merely as a means to resolve snags developed in practical cooperation or a prelude to cooperation but as a perpetual need for both movements. In other words, they think that dialogue is the best way of relating to one another.

Here are some illustrative Marxist views on dialogue as the method of relating to one another:

Thadeus Jaroszewski, a deputy member of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party, maintains that the normalization of state-church relations is the precondition for the dialogue. Both philosophical and practical issues can be discussed. On some philosophical issues such as materialism vs. the divine origin of the universe there can be only struggle and dispute. But in other instances, such as the vision of the human being and society and joint appraisal of present levels of culture and civilization, philosophical dialogue can be very fruitful.<sup>58</sup>

Milan Machovec, from Czechoslovakia, started with the proposition that in dialogue one should not try to convert the partner but the Marxist should become a better Marxist and the Christian a better Christian.<sup>59</sup> While this remains a sound principle, he later stated that he has respect for the partner only if the partner attempts to convert him. A person who is really convinced of the rightness of his/her position will consider that truth valid also for the partner in the dialogue.<sup>60</sup> Dialogue should be more than passive listening and exchanging information. It is the meeting of two partners who attempt to influence one another and yet to respect those who think differently, because one can benefit from such thought. Dialogue is needed to counter the dangers of fanaticism and indifference and makes it easier for

partners to become self-critical.

The way to truth takes the form of dialogue, . . . truth itself consists in dialogue. It may be that the metaphysics of human existence can be realistically grasped only when it is expressed in terms of dialogue.<sup>61</sup>

In dialogue one may emphasize the insights of one's own tradition but at the same time discover the strengths and advantages of the other tradition. This pertains particularly to the question of the meaning of life. Christians and Marxists may join in the common search for the answer to this question.

Jozsef Lukács, Marxist philosopher from Hungary, strongly emphasizes cooperation; dialogue serves the purpose of clearing the ground for better cooperation. Differences in ultimate issues should not hinder cooperation in such common matters as peace, human liberation, and public welfare. The motives may differ but the aims are the same.<sup>62</sup> Ideological convergence is ruled out by Lukács, but political cooperation and discussion with a progressive form of Christianity is more advantageous to Marxism than conflict with reactionary forms of Christianity.

Esad Ćimić, a Yugoslav sociologist, believes that Marxists cannot expect to have a continuous evolution of thought if they do not enter into dialogue with those who think differently. Those who differ are a corrective and stimulus for critical reexamination of one's own presuppositions, directions, and goals.<sup>63</sup> If dialogue were not merely a desideratum but a social reality it would have enormous consequences on society provided that some care was given to the selection of people and to circumstances of such dialogue. Both theoretical dialogue and dialogue in life should be carried out concomitantly.

Zdenko Roter, another Yugoslav sociologist, suggested that the necessity for dialogue stems from the level of civilization which no longer allows people to live in a "ghetto" of ideas. Dialogue is a meeting into which one cannot enter as an abstract person meeting with other abstract persons; sociologically, it is impossible to be in conversation with whole groups of people with various life styles,

world-views, etc. Only concrete people can have dialogue.<sup>64</sup> But the social-institutional framework does not allow those people who are interested in entering the dialogue to do so freely and when they want to. Neither Marxism nor Christianity are fully spontaneous phenomena. They are movements in institutionalized forms. A crisis takes place in the dialogue because the institutions possess a cautionary mechanism and when the institutions become afraid as to where the dialogue will lead, fearing that it may lead to loss of substance, they employ their hindering mechanisms. For politicians, both ecclesiastical and societal, dialogue is treated as an instrument which is to be turned off when those in power perceive that it does not suit their interests. Politicians do not understand and should not understand dialogue! It is a creative act and leads to an ever more rich growth of a dynamic system, in the sense that it provides constant interaction, complementation and fecundation as well as constant change in the relationship.<sup>67</sup>

For Andrija Krešić, a Yugoslav philosopher, the analogy between love and dialogue is the most adequate. Monologue, the opposite of dialogue, is like self-love and narcissism. It cannot bear fruit just as there is no offspring from homosexual acts. Dialogue is the proper relationship between Christianity and Marxism.<sup>66</sup> The conditions for dialogue are: 1) both must have the same subject (a pre-condition of the dialogue is that Christians turn their attention to this-worldly concerns so they can have a common subject), 2) both must be so open that they are willing to accept mutual corrections (if they decide in advance not to do that then only parallel monologues take place), and 3) both should aim at some agreement regardless how far apart they used to be. Apart from the above gnoseological definition, Marxism needs dialogue in the ontological sense because it is not a complete system. Rather it is a changing component of the world and dialogue is a condition of further Marxist development. Between dogmatic Marxism and traditionalist Christianity there can be no dialogue because they merely reinforce each other's prejudices.<sup>67</sup> Between Christianity oriented toward renewal and humanistic Marxism there can be dialogue under the following presuppositions: a) that they show mutual acceptance, b) that



both take part in building the future, c) that the church pull back from the sole endorsement of capitalism, d) that the church abandon active anti-communism and stop considering all atheists as devils, and e) that they both help the world.

According to Krešić, dialogue is not mere coexistence because coexistence suggests that each side keep its own ideology with the hope that in the end it will be able to proselytize or take over and the future will be its own with no competitors. Coexistence is thus a tactic with the ultimate strategy still being contra-existence in regard to the partner. Pro-existence means finding common ways to transcend basic social contradictions by forming a true human community of persons regardless of their ideological or religious orientation.<sup>68</sup>

Among the Christian participants in the dialogue one can likewise find a great deal of attention given to the question of dialogue as well as a great deal of diversity in looking at dialogue.

Jan Milič Lochman, the Czech theologian, concedes that strained relationships still prevail among the vast majority, especially the establishment, of Christianity and Marxism, but that an important segment has recognized that "the spirit of authentic Christianity and of authentic Marxism is the spirit of dialogue."<sup>69</sup> It is important to recognize both areas of convergence (i.e. areas in which the two have common concerns though not identical positions) and divergence. The common concerns are to be found in the concept of humanization, in the importance of history, and in future-oriented thinking; the main divergence is the question of God or the question of transcendence.<sup>70</sup> Both partners need the dialogue as they strive "towards a reality which is greater than their system."<sup>71</sup> The path toward dialogue is ardent and presupposes a defusion, de-mythologizing, and de-absolutizing of theology or ideology. Yet the partners need to take account of their own tradition and of the practical tasks ahead and then engage in an open, critical dialogue which reflects the common responsibility undertaken by the partners. "Under the pressure of dialogue with each other a process of renewal is set in motion by which each studies again its own creative possibilities and makes new discoveries. The living spirit of both traditions can be awakened out of the sleep of dogmatism."<sup>72</sup>

Monsignor Jozsef Cserháti, bishop of Pecs, Hungary, regards the demands of a changing age as the reason for dialogue. The church is committed to the happier future of people, hence cooperation with Marxists logically follows the coexistence of these two movements. The purpose of the dialogue is to share values, to promote happiness of the people, and to pay heed to each other.<sup>73</sup> There is a dilemma, however, for the Christian entering the dialogue. Marxists are creating a socialist system which would lead to a materialist, atheist state. How can a Christian morally support such socialism? This dilemma cannot be solved a priori but only by working it out under real conditions. The boundary line of dialogue is that no mixing of ideological principles must take place as this is very damaging. There can be no ideological coexistence.

For the late Wojciech Ketrzynski from Poland, one of the important issues that needs to be resolved is that the confrontation on fundamental problems not lead either to indoctrination or to oversimplification, which create strife. He differentiated three levels of dialogue: a) dialogue on the highest institutional level between the Polish episcopate and state authorities, b) participation of all citizens in the general life of the country without creating artificial divisions among them, and c) the involvement of those Christian social groups or organizations which take an active part in the political or social life of the country.<sup>74</sup>

Archbishop Frane Franić of Split, Yugoslavia, sees no Biblical or doctrinal obstacles which stand in the way of Christians getting involved in dialogue. Though one may find fanatics among both Christians and Marxists, each side is fundamentally ready to engage in dialogue, despite the fact that the founders of Marxism were not too well disposed toward dialogue with believers.<sup>75</sup> One of the basic subjects for dialogue is the metaphysical structure of being. Though Marxists eschew metaphysics, Christians cannot do without it. Another important subject is the nature of the human being, followed closely by issues of freedom, morality, the nature of religion and similar. Franić insists that theologians who engage in dialogue need to remain flexible yet must be true to essential Christian teachings.<sup>76</sup> If both Christianity and

Marxism "work more selflessly for the people and live for the other, then there is more hope that some day, which is probably still far off, Marxists and Christians can reach full understanding and agreement."<sup>77</sup>

Another Yugoslav theologian, Tomislav Šagi-Bunić suggested that four basic notions govern the dialogue.

1. People rather than systems are involved in dialogue. Dialogue does not take place between Christianity and Marxism but only between Christians and Marxists. The discussion of some subject is taken up on the basis of equality and mutual respect. Dialogue does not start with some statement acceptable to all but with the affirmation that our partners have the same rights and dignity as we do. Mutual exchange of thoughts, aspirations, and needs leads to a joint search for truth.
2. In terms of attitudes, the partners need not be likeminded. In fact, they must be different. There is no need to bother about dialogue if the partners are totally sure of the truth of their position.
3. Partners must accept truth as soon as they find it and continue to be open to it. The emphasis should be on the common search, yet differences should be regarded as neither arbitrary nor evil nor stupid.
4. Dialogue is harder than polemics. It requires courage and self-assurance. The curiosity about the other and willingness to accept what is good from him is important. Dialogue is not restricted only to discussion of world views but can extend to all questions.<sup>78</sup>

Vjekoslav Bajsić, another theologian from Yugoslavia, analyzed the philosophy of dialogue in regard to its synthetic dynamics. He stressed the dialectical significance of dialogue: it can take place only when there is disagreement. Without dialogue the tendency is to reduce humanity to oneself, since each is satisfied with one's own insight. Others are generally reduced to objects. It is doubtful whether it is possible to know another person without turning directly to that person in dialogue.<sup>79</sup>

The basic goal of dialogue is not the attainment of compromise, but

the integration of the other person in his/her authenticity. Our view must contain all that is authentically human if it is to be true. "The dialectical moment of dialogue develops from the earlier mutual negation of the partners to an affirmation of the partners on a higher level complementing the thought and value content of each partner, lifting them to fuller humanity."<sup>80</sup> Dialogue has the power of creating a "we" consciousness, a togetherness.

In a self-managing society, like Yugoslavia's, the individual's contribution cannot be conceived without lively dialogue. Dialogue has the ability to enlarge freedom and justice. Lack of dialogue is symptomatic of some internal weakness. There are, of course, risks in dialogue, but since it is a search for meaning it is a "ceaselessly relevant" and urgent task.<sup>81</sup>

These were mere samples of ideas of the above mentioned authors. Their own contributions are vastly richer than presented here. Even more so is the aggregate of views on dialogue produced in Eastern Europe. It is to be regretted that due to linguistic and political problems their views are not more widely circulated. Eastern European thinkers would benefit from their own cross-fertilization of ideas. Likewise, their thinking would benefit those who do not live under circumstances of socialism.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The term Eastern Europe is a geo-political term which in its post-World War II connotation includes in addition to the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania. This paper will treat the issue both area-wise and country by country.

<sup>2</sup>Peter Prifti, "Albania--Towards an Atheist Society," in Religion and Atheism in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, ed. Bohdan Bociurkiw and John Strong (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p. 388.

<sup>3</sup>Contrary to the undocumented assertion by Tomo Vereš, Filozofsko-teološki dijalog s Marxom (Zagreb: Filozofsko-teološki institut Družbe Isusove, 1973), p. 163, that dialogue took place between 1920 and 1928. It should suffice here to refer to Robert Tobias, Communist-Christian Encounter in East Europe (Indianapolis: School of Religion Press, 1956), pp. 9-118.

<sup>4</sup>V.I. Garadzha and A.D. Suhov (eds.), in "Predgovor," in Nauka i teologija u XX veku. S. Ruskog preveli B. Savić i M. Ignjatović, (Beograd: Gradina 1973), p. 51. Translated by Mojzes.

<sup>5</sup>The author has heard the late Metropolitan Nikodim and Archbishop Vladimir of Tula and Belev make such statements.

<sup>6</sup>The symposium in Stockholm, Sweden, June 10-15, 1979, proved to be a slight but not blatant exception to the pattern.

<sup>7</sup>Nikolai Kowalsky, "The Marxists' Approach to a Dialogue with the Christians," (unpublished three-page photocopied statement distributed by Kowalsky at a press conference in Saltsjöbaden, Sweden, June 12, 1979).

<sup>8</sup>Marin Pundeff, "Church-State Relations in Bulgaria under Communism," in Religion and Atheism in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, p. 342.

<sup>9</sup>Ylena Marculescu, "Dogmatism and Integrity," in Paul Oestreicher (ed.), The Christian Marxist Dialogue (New York: Macmillan Co., 1969), pp. 204 ff.

<sup>10</sup>E.g. Trevor Beeson, Discretion and Valour (Glasgow: Collins-Fontana Books, 1974), p. 173 and Wolfgang Knauff, "Die Katolisch Kirche in der DDR 1954-1976," in Stimmen der Zeit, Vol. 102, No. 2 (Feb. 1977), p. 99.

<sup>11</sup>Johannes Huhn, "Die Existenz der Christen im Socialismus insbesondere in der D.D.R.," in Internationale Dialog Zeitschrift, Vol. 7, No. 4 (1974), p. 344. Translated by the author.

<sup>12</sup>Leslie Laszlo, "Towards Normalisation of Church-State Relations, "in Religion and Atheism in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, p. 302.

<sup>13</sup>András Sennay, Hidden Deity (Budapest: St. Stephen Society, 1969), p. 307 as cited by József Lukács, "Cooperation and Dialogue," in Variety of Christian-Marxist Dialogue (ed. Paul Mojzes), (Philadelphia: Ecumenical Press, 1978), pp. 104-105.

<sup>14</sup>Lukács, op. cit., pp. 100 and 105.

<sup>15</sup>Aczel, "The Socialist State and the Churches in Hungary," in The New Hungarian Review (Budapest), Vol. 18, No. 66 (Summer 1977), p. 49. Translated from an article appearing in Világosság (Budapest), October 1976.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 60-61.

<sup>18</sup>Cserhádi, "Open Gates," in The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. 18, No. 67 (Fall, 1977), pp. 55 ff. Translated from Vigilia (Budapest) No. 3 (1977).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 56-57.

<sup>21</sup>In an interview (June 1977) with the author Imre Miklow, the Secretary of the government's Department of Religious Affairs named Cserhádi as an example of churchman in dialogue.

<sup>22</sup>Interview with Jan Zaborowski, October 1975, Warsaw.

<sup>23</sup>Jozef Tischner, Der unmögliche Dialog; Christentum und Marxismus in Polen (Graz, Vienna, Cologne: Styria Verlag, 1982.)

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Adam Schaff, December 13, 1975, Vienna.

<sup>25</sup>Periodization adopted from Stanislaw Kowalczyk, "Der bisherige christlich-marxistischer Dialog in Polen," in Der Christ in der Welt (Warsaw), No. 2 (1974), pp. 13-14. For an alternate periodization see

Janusz Zablocki, "Dreizig Jahre des polnischen Zusammentreffens," in ibid., pp. 6-11.

<sup>26</sup>Kowalczyk, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>It is outside the scope of this study to describe the orientation, structure, and internal development of these groups.

<sup>29</sup>Tischner, op. cit., pp. 198-216.

<sup>30</sup>"The Chalk Circle and "Perspectives in Dialogue" in Wież, No. 6 and No. 10 respectively.

<sup>31</sup>Jaroszewski, "Confrontation, Dialogue, and Cooperation," in Church Within Socialism edited by Erich Weingartner and Giovanni Barerini (Rome: IDOC International, 1976), p. 189.

<sup>32</sup>Janusz Zablocki, a "Znak" deputy in a speech in the Seym, December 1973 in Zablocki, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>33</sup>Wieslaw Gwizdz, "Catholics and the Church in Poland, in the Christian Social Association Information Bulletin, No. 4 (April 1977), p. 25.

<sup>34</sup>At CELAM III in Pueblo, Mexico, January 1979.

<sup>35</sup>C.S.A. Information Bulletin, No. 3 (March 1978), p. 12. The quote is rendered as translated into English in Poland.

<sup>36</sup>Excerpts from the exchange were published in C.S.A. Information Bulletin No. 5 (May 1978), pp. 1-22.

<sup>37</sup>For instance, Jozef Tischner, op. cit., Mojzes, Christian-Marxist Dialogue in Eastern Europe (CMDEE), pp. 73-102 and various articles published in OPREE, Religion in Communist Lands, and others.

<sup>38</sup>Mojzes, CMDEE, p. 102.

<sup>39</sup>Dorothea Neumarker, Josef L. Hromadka: Theologie und Politik im Kontext des Zeitgeschehens (München and Mainz: Kaiser-Grünwald, 1974), pp. 73-75. Some Marxists assert that it was always Marxists who initiated the dialogue. At least in Czechoslovakia this was not the case.

<sup>40</sup>Hromádka, "The Present Age and the Crisis of Christian Civilization," in Communio Viatorum (Prague), Vol. I, Nos. 2-3 (Summer-Fall, 1958), p. 94.

<sup>41</sup>Smysl lidského života (Praha: Nakladatelství politické literatury, 1965), translated into German Vom Sinn des menschlichen Lebens (Freiburg: Verlag Romback, 1971).

<sup>42</sup>(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976).

<sup>43</sup>Opočenský, "A Christian Existence in Czechoslovakia Today." in Communio Viatorum, Vol. 7, Nos. 3-4 (Winter 1964), p. 298.

<sup>44</sup>(Harmondsworth, England and Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1973).

<sup>45</sup>With the exception of some scholarly conferences which took place in Yugoslavia but which had a different character.

<sup>46</sup>Bishop Jan Michalko of the Lutheran Church in Slovakia blamed the Paulus-Gesellschaft for subversion of the social order at the Christian Peace Conference meeting in Siófók, Hungary, September, 1975.

<sup>47</sup>For Czech analyses of the Congress see Erika Kadlecová, "Die Gespräche in Marienbad," in Internationale Dialog Zeitschrift (Freiburg), Vol. 1 No. 1 (1968), pp. 101-109, and Jan M. Lochman, "Creativity and Freedom in a Human Society," in Communio Viatorum, Vol. 10, Nos. 2-3 (Summer-Fall, 1967), pp. 115-122. The collected papers and discussion make a large volume published under Schöpfung und Freiheit (München: Paulus-Gesellschaft Selbstverlag, 1968).

<sup>48</sup>From a personal letter to the author by James Will, an eyewitness of the meeting, Evanston, IL, May 4, 1976.

<sup>49</sup>Machovec, "Vorwort," in Wieland Zademach, Marxistischer Atheismus und die biblische Botschaft von der Rechtfertigung der Gottlosen (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1973), p. 12.

<sup>50</sup>(New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, 1970).

<sup>51</sup>(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

<sup>52</sup>For a detailed description of the first three phases see Mojzes, "Christian-Marxist Encounter in the Context of a Socialist Society," in Journal of Ecumenical Studies (Philadelphia) Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter 1972), pp. 1-3. The remainder of that article (pp. 12-27) is used frequently here, sometimes taking considerable portions verbatim.



<sup>53</sup> Bosnjak, Filozofija i krsćanstvo (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1966), 625 pp.

<sup>54</sup> Ćimić, Socijalističko društvo i religija (Sarajevo: Svijetlost, 1966), 339 pp.

<sup>55</sup> Among them are Z. Roter, "A Marxist View of Christianity," in Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter 1972), pp. 40-50. B. Bošnjak, "Die Idee des Humanismus zwischen dem ideologisierten Marxismus und dem politisierten Christentum," in Internationale Dialog Zeitschrift, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1970), pp. 60-70. Bošnjak, "Was bedeutet das Dilemma: Jesus-Marx?" in Marxisten und die Sache Jesu (I. Fetcher and M. Machovec, eds.), (München & Mainz: Chr. Kaiser und Mathias Grunewald Verlags, 1974). Bosnjak, "Reflections on Religion," in Religion and Atheism in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe, Andrija Krešić, "The Kingdom of God and Communism," in Varieties of Christian-Marxist Dialogue.

On the Christian side even fewer works have appeared abroad. There is first a published doctoral dissertation in Latin by Jakov Romić, De dialogo inter marxistas et christianos (Vicenza: Libreria Internazionale Edizione Franciscane, 1972), then Vjekoslav Bajsić "The Significance and Problems of Dialogue Today," in Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter 1972), and Jakov Romić, "Dialogue between Marxists and Christians as a Presupposition of Coexistence in Freedom," in Varieties of Christian-Marxist Dialogue.

<sup>56</sup> Andrija Krešić, Kraljevstvo božje i komunizam (Beograd: Institut za međunarodni radnicki pokret, 1975).

<sup>57</sup> For a comprehensive discussion of these topics see Mojzes, CMDEE, pp. 183-325.

<sup>58</sup> Excerpts of Jaroszewski's article, "Confrontation, Dialogue, and Cooperation" in Church Within Socialism, pp. 188-191.

<sup>59</sup> Machovec, "Diskussion," in Schöperfertum und Freiheit (München: Paulus-Gesellschaft, 1968), p. 145.

<sup>60</sup> Machovec, "Die Gott-Frage und der moderne Atheismus," in J. Blank, W. Kasper, M. Machovec, and H. Zahrdt, Gottfrage und moderner Atheismus (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1974), p. 68.

<sup>61</sup> Machovec, A Marxist Looks at Jesus, p. 38.

<sup>62</sup> Lukács, "Cooperation and Dialogue," in Varieties of Christian-Marxist Dialogue, p. 100.

<sup>63</sup> Ćimić, "Politicko i idejno suocavanje s religijskim fenomenom,"

in Religija i društvo, ed. by Vjekoslav Mikecin (Zagreb: Stvarnost, 1969), p. 186.

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Roter, Ljubljana, November 15, 1975.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Krešić, "Marksizam u dijalogu," in Marksizam i marksističko obrazovanje danas (Zagreb: Biblioteka centra, 1973), p. 37.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 39

<sup>68</sup> Krešić, Kraljevstvo božje i komunizam, pp. 145-146.

<sup>69</sup> Lochman, Church in a Marxist Society (New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), p. 172. Emphasis is Lochman's.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 173-178.

<sup>71</sup> Lochman, Encountering Marx: Bonds and Barriers between Christians and Marxists. Translated by Edwin H. Robertson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>73</sup> Cserhádi, "Open Gates," in The New Hungarian Quarterly, Vol. 18, No. 67 (Fall, 1977), pp. 49-52.

<sup>74</sup> Ketrzynski, "On a Dialogue for Cooperation," in the C.S.A. Information Bulletin (Warsaw), No. 5, (May 1978), p. 21.

<sup>75</sup> Franić, Putovi dijaloga (Split: Crkva u svijetu, 1973), p. 132.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 68-69.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 243. My translation from Croatia.

<sup>78</sup> Sagi-Bunić, Ali drugog puta nema (Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1969), pp. 377-386.

<sup>79</sup> Bajsić, "The Significance and Problems of Dialogue Today," in Journal of Ecumenical Studies, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Winter 1972), p. 34.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

