

History of the Catholic Church in Mexico

By MANUEL GOMEZ.
CHAPTER IV—Concluded.

AMERICAN editorial writers comment on the present church conflict in Mexico with a certain amount of bewilderment. Eventually, they protest, the church must win out, for 90 per cent of the Mexican people are Catholics. Their logic continues to bear up rather remarkably, considering the shocks that it receives with every day's news.

As a matter of fact, the editorial logic referred to above has been proved false by all the events of history, not only European but also Mexican. (This is quite aside from the fact that while a great majority of Mexicans are Catholics, the percentage is by no means as high as that indicated in the religiously padded membership figures given out by the clergy.) It has been precisely in "Catholic countries" that the most bitter struggles against the church took place. Could the reformation have swept over nearly all Europe in the closing years of the middle ages if it were impossible for Catholics to overthrow Catholicism?

Mexicans were early obliged to strike at the swollen power of the Catholic hierarchy. As far back as 1822, the year after independence from Spain, it was decided to occupy the buildings of the Philippine missions and to confiscate the funds accumulated by the Spaniards for clerical activities outside of Mexico.

On Nov. 23, 1855, a law was passed cancelling the immunity from civil prosecution formerly enjoyed by priests. The clergy fought this law savagely, but it did them little good. In June of the following year the government decreed the abolition of entail of church property. A precedent for interfering with church property had been created in 1822, as we have seen, but the decree against entail aroused the clergy to fury.

From the bloody war that followed the church emerged still worse off. With Benito Juarez at the head of a triumphant liberal government, the constitution of 1857 (referred to at length in a previous chapter) was put into effect, and in July of 1859 the reform laws were promulgated, suppressing all monastical institutions and prohibiting the exercise of functions by all except secular clergy. In the same month civil marriage was established; on July 31 cemeteries were taken away from church control, and on Aug. 11 religious holidays were denied recognition, and government officials were forbidden to take part in religious ceremonies.

And thus right on down thru the latest revolutionary period.

During these last fifteen years or more the influence of the church among the masses of the Mexican people has been declining rapidly. In the north and along the Pacific and Gulf coasts, many of the churches will be found standing empty. Organized labor has broken away almost completely from clerical influence. The same thing is noted among wide sections of the petty-bourgeoisie, the governing bureaucracy, intellectuals, etc. Even the peasants of the central plateau, while still the backbone of Catholic strength, are beginning to develop anti-clerical movements.

In the present conflict the church has found extremely little active support against the Calles government except among the wealthy reaction-

aries. The division is along class lines, with organized labor marching in the forefront of the anti-Catholic forces.

What will the outcome be? It is indicated for us in the fact that the church has always pushed against the forces of history. What is against history must eventually be destroyed by history.

President Calles insists that his government is attacking the Catholic church not as a religious but as a political institution. But what is political? What is left of the Roman Catholic church in Mexico after the new laws and regulations are in effect? No right to hold property, no foreign officiates, no services of any kind outside of the church buildings assigned for that purpose, no right to wear ecclesiastical vestments on the street, no control whatever over elementary education, no polemical press. The process has been going forward at unprecedented speed since the overthrow of Porfirio Diaz.

What will take the place of Catholicism—whether it will be a modified hierarchical form, or something else—remains to be seen. Last year an attempt was made, with the covert and sometimes the open support of the government, to set up a Mexican Schismatic Catholic Apostolic Church, as against the Roman Catholic. The "cismaticos" entered upon the scene with spectacular energy, but their attempt appears to have failed. It is possible that the peasants, the masses of whom are still religious, will eventually group themselves around their local priests. One thing is certain, Mexico's reformation will not and cannot follow the classic European lines.

The plight of the church should surprise no one familiar with the basis of its original power. The whole course of modern Mexican history tells us that the present movement is part and parcel of a great Mexican revolution which could not reach fruition while leaving the feudal church intact.

The End.

The State Jewish Theater in Moscow

By RUTH EPPERSON KENNEL.

THE new play of the season at the State Jewish Theater, "The Tenth Commandment," described as "an operatic pamphlet," while not superior to "200,000" and "The Witch," is different in its burlesque on present day politics. Like the other plays, it has that complete harmony of rhythmic movement characteristic of these remarkable players, the music is gay, the costumes daring (being, like the sets, a bit futuristic) and only the brilliant witticisms are lost to some extent on those who do not understand Yiddish. Being a political satire, an understanding of the lines is more essential in order to follow it than in "200,000," which is more a rhythmic pantomime.

The playwright walks about with his arms full of manuscript, interfering when the play does not go to suit him and appealing to the fat director for help. But the devil, a gay cynic in brown breeches and soft collar, a high scarlet hat and red cape, is bent upon making a tangle of the play, and



succeeds. The lady falls in love with a young man and appeals to the devil to get rid of her husband. The devil agrees and proceeds to make a deal with the husband, who promptly disappears from Berlin and is mourned as dead. He turns up in Palestine, which has become Anglicized, with the British flag and two British policemen in the foreground and in the background (only as decoration) a classic figure symbolizing old Palestine. The widow appears looking for the grave of her husband. In the international chorus which sings in this scene, the league of nations, the Locarno cabinet and individual statesmen figure. Yellow banners wave in the meeting of the Second International, a gay woman from Broadway represents the United States and Vanderveke and MacDonald, quite lifelike and singing in Yiddish, dance solemnly. Finally everything gets into such a hopeless tangle that the whole company commits suicide. Wings are provided and they mount the golden stairs to heaven. St. Peter, questioning the new arrivals as to name, occupation and sins, becomes horrified when he learns that the Tenth Commandment has been broken and consults God on the telephone. They are condemned to remain in heaven, but the devil comes to their rescue and conducts them to his home below. The first scene in hell is Europe, and here the guests are well pleased to remain.



GRANOVSKY
Head of Jewish Theater.

THE CO-OPERATIVE SURGE

By JEANNETTE D. PEARL.

IT is now becoming apparent that the tiny atom has stored within itself an infinite amount of latent energy, which, when once released, will just astound the world with the tremendous magnitude of its power and possibilities.

A similar discovery is now coming to light from an element of quite a different sort. An element not so tiny as the atom, but almost as much obscure, the hitherto submerged working class. This huge labor body also has stored in its cells infinite latent energy, which too, when once released, must amaze mankind with the magnitude of its power and the extent of its possibilities.

A glimpse of this latent energy of the labor call is now being revealed in the huge co-operative enterprise, initiated, begun and being completed by members of the working class for members of the working class. The co-operative dwellings are much more than a mere attempt at cheaper and better living conditions for workers. These buildings, scientifically constructed, artistically designed, breathe a living spirit—the spirit of working class solidarity—a feature new in the social life of the worker.

This co-operative surge is not a whim. It is not an experiment. It is the signal of the workers' will to power—to mass action, mass effort, mass achievement. It is the assertive expression of a repressed force taking definite course. It is not sporadic. It is deep-rooted. It is not confined to any one city. It is nationwide and worldwide.

It is not an abandonment of the class struggle, but an intensification of it. In collective activity, workers will be trained for co-operative life, co-operative hope, co-operative efficiency. It is an additional channel in the means for labor emancipation. It is an added bridge for the revolution to cross. In co-operative enterprise

worker's will see concretely the goal toward which they must strive—emancipation—and embrace the means for its preparation. Here lies the secret of the workers' success and the philanthropists' failure.

Philanthropists built so-called co-operative homes for workers. They called to the working class to live in them. But the workers were not beguiled. They saw thru the humanita-

rian purposes of their benefactors. They felt in that move an effort at the perpetuation of wage slavery, an attempt to undermine labor morale, to weaken it, make it grateful to its owners and more dependent upon them. Labor saw thru it and would have none of it. Philanthropic co-operatives passed on to the smug comfort to the petty-bourgeoisie.

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Johnny Red, Assistant.

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MY LIFE

The Autobiography of a President by BUNNY PALATNICK

I was born in a city, in a bed, in a year and a day. When I was twelve years of age I was promoted from ash-man to a swill-man which meant less pay and more hours. When I was thirteen I went to work in Gary's factory for nothing thus becoming a millionaire.

One day a doctor pronounced me loco in the coco. When Gary and the rest of the grafters heard about this they elected me president of the U. S. A. and I became their office boy.

A POEM AND A GOOD SUGGESTION

By Tillie Lurye, Chicago, Ill.

Workers Are Reds. Capitalists are blue I joined the PIONEERS

JOHNNY IS GLAD AGAIN

EVERYBODY WROTE IN and we got 47 contributions. Fine—keep it up. Look what we got by

ROSE HOROWITZ

DEAR JOHNNIE RED:

I'm awfully sorry I made you cry but the reason I didn't write was because school opened with a lot of bunk and I was trying to sort it out but it comes along so fast that I got too anxious to tell you what happened so far.

In economic class my teacher (while discussing reasons for choosing a vocation) said that every man that chooses a vocation ought to be able to support himself and his family, so I said, "Well let's take the textile workers of Passaic as an example. They got paid very little and many of them starve to death because the bosses won't pay them enuf to support themselves and even NOW the bosses want to give them another wage cut so they are striking. Now, how can they support themselves if such bosses exist?" She thot it over a while. Then said, "Well, if you can find the answer to that, you are very smart because there'll always be some people living a happier life than others. It will ALWAYS be so." So I said, "Oh, no... not ALWAYS." but just then the bell rang and I wasn't able to complete my statement. I was intending to tell her that as soon as we'll have a SOVIET form of government, all sorts of cheating will cease.

Why don't you?

OOOH—GOOD THINGS COMING!

Because Johnny Red cried last week we got so many nice things. All these will be printed from week to week but we need a lot more. Come on — shoot them in Tiny Reds.

SCHOOL BUNK
By Bernard Masarov, New York City.

At school our teacher told us that Coolidge was a poor boy but worked hard and thru work and prayers became president. Who did he pray to? The guys that paid for his campaign expenses?

WELL?
How much bunk did you get in school? Rose Horowitz and Bernard Masarov and a few others sent in what they got. First come first printed!

