V

CHRISTIAN DIALECTICS

In Smyth's rapprochement between dialectical materialism and the Incarnation as process, Metacosmesis is not simply any kind of process but a dialectical or revolutionary one. Metacosmesis takes up, includes and fulfills Marxist dialectics and is itself, at least analogically, dialectical. In broadest terms, Smyth understood dialectics as the coming together of two opposing systems (the thesis and, emerging out of it, the antithesis) and their resolution at a revolutionary nodal point into a third system (the synthesis) qualitatively different from the two constituent systems but containing elements of each. The method is that of Hegel's dialectics without, of course, his philosophical idealism.

As one who came to dialectics through Marxism, Smyth began by accepting Marx's materialist dialectical analysis of historical processes. However, as he became more familiar with Marxist theory, he followed Engels and the later Marx in broadening dialectical analysis into the physical and natural sciences to support dialectical analysis of historical processes. (Smyth's background in the physical sciences encouraged this process.) However, as with Marxist materialism, Smyth argued that Marxist dialectics, limited as they

were to the natural world, did not go far enough. It was necessary to move (dialectically) into theological understanding, particularly of the Incarnation, the church and the Eucharist. At the same time, Smyth continued to advocate Marxist dialectical analysis of historical processes (including the present) and sought to integrate this analysis into his theological dialectics.

However, as with his rapprochement with the "materialism" of dialectical materialism, Smyth was never uncritical in his acceptance of contemporary Marxist (particularly Soviet) dialectical theory. As he grew older he also became more critical of Marx himself. A similar process of close collaboration moving towards rejection (while continuing to advocate some form of Marxist dialectical analysis) can be seen in the development of Smyth's understanding and use of dialectics. However, as I pointed out in the previous chapter, Smyth turned to dialectics as his Christian materialist rapprochement with Marxist materialism was faltering; he sought to build relations with Communists based on a common empirical dialectical analysis of history rather than a common (or at least similar) materialist metaphysics. Like European Communist theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Smyth sought to develop Marxist dialectics as a method of analysis independent of materialist metaphysics.

In the end Smyth rejected the metaphysics of <u>both</u> the materialism and the dialectics of classical dialectical

materialism. However, he continued to accept some form of Marxist dialectical (revolutionary) analysis of historical processes until his death. On a theoretical level, Smyth had to face the relation between dialectics in the physical sciences and dialectics in human history; this problem intensified as the world scene became more and more complex. He also had to face the relation between "non-metaphysical" dialectics and the philosophical realism that he also advocated. Smyth finally came to see dialectics as simply an important analogy for understanding historical processes and Christian revelation. It is no wonder that he was never happy enough with his manuscript "Dialectics for Christians" to publish it.

On a practical level, Smyth's later dialectics failed; American Communists, so closely tied to the Soviet Union, were unable to detach dialectics from materialist metaphysics. Smyth turned his dialectics against them and the Soviet Union and turned to the revolutionary Christian cell as the principal agent of the dialectical and Incarnational transformation of the world. In this chapter, I shall trace Smyth's attempt to develop a dialectics that was both Marxist and Christian.

However, before any discussion of the development of Smyth's Christian dialectics, two points must be made. The first is that "dialectics" is an abstract philosophical term

that in some contexts is used so seldom and in other contexts so broadly that in either case it often has very little meaning. From a Marxist perspective (and from Smyth's) the term is not theoretical but practical: dialectics is revolution. Revolution, rather than evolution, becomes the primary vehicle of economic, political and social change. A commitment to a dialectical understanding of history is a commitment to revolutionary change. This chapter, then, deals with the Christian understanding of revolution. Included in dialectics is also the issue of revolutionary violence.

Second, Smyth's theological interest in dialectics must not be seen as a personal eccentricity but as a continuation of the orthodox tradition of Christianity as fundamentally revolutionary, demanding radical corporate and personal metanoia (conversion), both spiritually and materially. The reign of God brought in by the Incarnation results in a new social and religious order qualitatively different than the Pharasaic Judaism out of which it grew, in dialectical conflict (as in the Revelation) with the oppressive and imperialist culture of the Roman Empire. Smyth saw himself in the tradition of patristic and medieval theologians (Cyprian, Ambrose, Gregory, Thomas Aquinas) who argued that Christians must oppose governments and social orders that oppress their people. The alternatives, either passive acceptance of injustice or collaboration with it to produce

gradual social change, Smyth did not see sanctioned by the witness of the Bible or the best of Christian tradition.

Smyth's earliest published discussion of revolution is in the 1936 Living Church article, "The Catholic Church and Her Environment", Part III, "The Church's Task". It is clear that Smyth has not yet begun to deal with dialectical theory (the term dialectics does not appear) but is simply dealing with revolution.

In the first two parts of the article, as I have outlined above, Smyth puts forward the Incarnational process, including the offertory, as requiring the transformation of the world into a just social order. In some situations, the environment for creative Christian activity is fertile and the church flourishes; in many other situations the environment is so poor that the church must try to change it if it is to survive. Sometimes only small changes are needed. ("It would therefore be a great mistake to make the unqualified generalization that Catholicism, in respect to the purely secular and natural world, is always a revolutionary religion.") However, in other situations the environment is so totally poor that revolution must be considered an option:

> The Church in the world today is therefore quite within her province, if she examines the present posture of the social and economic structure to see whether changes so profound that they will require a true revolution to bring them about are not required if she is to find the requisite environmental materials for her divinely com-

missioned creative work.[1]

In the third part of the article, Smyth discusses some of the implications of this question.

Smyth argues that from a Christian perspective secular revolution "is only a first step, even if an excellent one, toward something vastly more difficult and more glorious", namely, "the organic creation of the divine and supernatural life of Christ's own Body." Yet Smyth regards "the Communist State as one of the most hopeful environments which the Church at some future time may appropriate to her own supernatural use."[2] He admits that the leadership of revolutionary forces has now passed out of the hands of the church. Christians ought to recognize the profoundly Christian quality of many of these revolutionary forces and support them, seeking to plant some seeds of catholic Christianity within them. Indeed, to continue to exist the church needs actively to espouse the revolutionary cause:

> It seems probable that the Church ought now to advocate a revolution in present day capitalistic society, because, as things stand, she can find practically no relationships which go to the heart of secular life, with which she can work.[3]

If the church responds only palliatively, its divine creative power will atrophy. Christians need to be educated to experience "divine discontent" with the present sinful capitalist world order and to support the appropriate secular revolutionary forces that oppose it.

Smyth concludes with a caveat about violence. He

argues that the church "can never advocate the use of violence or physical force" for bringing about the necessary revolutionary changes. Smyth contrasts the Christian and Marxist views of violence. For the latter, positive violence is "merely a practical matter" which "never has any moral or immoral quality".[4] However, non-violent Christian support of revolutionary changes is bound to produce violence from the world. In this case, Christians do not draw back but join the violent struggle with their only weapon, the cross of self-sacrifice. Smyth concludes with a dramatic picture of that struggle:

> If the Church really [advocates revolution], soberly and with insistence, I venture to say that 90 per cent of her nominal membership will drop away. Her faithful priests will be persecuted by almost every authority, secular lay and ecclesiastical. Her income will drop, her endowments, her beautiful buildings and ornaments will vanish in those very changes which she herself advocates. This will be Christian violence. This will be Catholic force in action. This will be militant Christianity. This will be warfare with the weapon of the Cross. . . . When the time comes we embrace the violence of the world as did our Lord Himself.[5]

In spite of his rejection of revolutionary violence, Smyth also opens the door to it. He cites Nicholas Berdyaev's argument in Christianity and the Class War that those who support the capitalist status quo are themselves also participating in secular violence. However, he does not carry this argument forward.[6]

Manhood Into God (1940) reflects Smyth's increasing interest in Marxist theory in the four years after the Liv-

ing Church article. Smyth now uses the terms dialectical materialism and dialectics but in a limited way. The first reference is positive:

> . . . Karl Marx, adapting the Hegelian dialectic principle to a materialist view of the natural world, seems to have given an astonishingly satisfying description of man, as a rational being developing historically within a fallen creation. Marx shows clearly enough how much progress has been made, and can still be made, in the matter of re-achieving and enriching a certain order even within a disordered world. His analyses greatly illuminate the processes of human historical development. (MIG 82)

Smyth goes on to describe in a positive way Marx's analysis of class struggle.

Yet Smyth is also critical. He points out two weaknesses of Marxist dialectical analysis. First, Christians cannot agree with the assumption that only if class conflict is resolved in a Communist revolution (as much as Christians may agree with the need for that revolution and, indeed, support it) all human relationships will be perfectly reordered. Such a view overestimates human nature: ". . . Catholics know that perfection cannot be restored to a fallen world merely through the exercise of the natural powers of man, working solely within that world." (MIG 84) For Christians, the Incarnation is an essential part of any redemption of the disordered human world. Second, paradoxically, Marxists also underestimate human nature in denying the capacity of humanity to move "beyond even a reperfected natural creation, beyond all time and space, into eternity,

and ultimately, to union with God." (MIG 85) In other words, Marxist dialectics do not go far enough: they cannot deliver the perfection they promise because they ignore the divine. Smyth repeats the argument in terms of the Eucharistic offertory in a later chapter of Manhood Into God.

Smyth returns to dialectics in his discussion of the kingdom of God in Chapter IX of Manhood Into God. Its growth is a dialectical process:

> . . . Catholic theology would maintain that the Kingdom of God, with its supernatural roots, nevertheless grows and re-creates the world by that very kind of mutual "give and take" between interior human lives and external social order, which Marxian materialists are wont to call a dialectical process. Therefore, it would seem that in their theoretical analyses of practical social changes, and of the manner in which individual human natures are themselves changed within such social changes, Catholics and Marxists might find a substantial, if somewhat delimited, ground of mutual understanding. (MIG 258)

But again, Smyth argues that Marxist dialectical analysis does not go far enough: "The Kingdom of God would not deny, but would rather both complete and fulfill the utmost potentialities of any exclusively material and natural world order, no matter how perfected this might at some future time be made."(MIG 258) It is of the nature of the Incarnation to fulfill and complete truths already present in the natural order.

Smyth also discusses the revolutionary character of the church's vocation in the world. He argues that Jesus was "neither a Reformer nor a Revolutionary in the ordinary

sense of those words", but rather the founder of a revolutionary religion. In the political and social conditions of Jesus' day, revolution would have been ineffective; Jesus had the wisdom to see this. Yet his teachings were revolutionary, giving the church a revolutionary vocation: "It now suffices that the Church which our Lord founded was actually equipped from the beginning for a revolutionary undertaking when some day her essential nature as the organ of the Divine Order, over against the disorder of the world, should inescapably require her to undertake this task." (MIG 406) Humanity's increasing ability to control the environment and understand social and economic processes (using Marxist dialectical analysis) brings this moment closer. Repeating the argument of the 1936 article, Smyth sees such a revolution as essential to the church's vocation:

> . . . a radical cultural revolution, comprising in its scope the economic, social and political structures of the Church's worldly environment seems essential if the Church is to recapture her own proper organic integrity, and is to complete the work of redeeming her environment into her growing, living organism. . . . [The] Church should apply herself in this very age, whether opposition be violent or otherwise, to her final vocation as a Church Militant, to her ultimate human vocation, that of revolutionizing the world according to the pattern of the Incarnation of God's Son. (MIG 410)

Such action by the church will, of course, lead to a violent response by the world.

Smyth's discussion of revolutionary violence in Manhood Into God is much more nuanced and much less pacifist

than the 1936 Living Church article. Smyth begins by opposing violence as dehumanizing, arguing that rather than resorting to it, Christians must educate and organize to bring about revolutionary change. But what if such activities, because of the world's violence, end in violence? Are Christians to abandon the struggle? Smyth is responding to criticisms by secular Marxists who accuse Christians of running away when situations become violent. Smyth responds with an argument for Christian participation in some violent revolutionary struggles. In a totally perfected human order (here Christians and Marxists agree) there would be no violence. But in the present sinful order, all options for action are in some sense sinful; there is no absolutely good or perfect action, only the choice of the less evil action. In a certain situation (a strike, the defense of a revolutionary government), a small amount of physical violence may be less evil than long-term oppression (another kind of violence). Christians must assess both ends and means in making decisions about participation in violent revolutionary struggles.

In the end, Smyth suggests that revolutionary violence may be a more acceptable gift at the offertory than passive acquiescence to injustice:

> Bread brought to the Altar from a civil war waged in the interests of the maintenance and speedy advancement of a true human justice, might very well be more easily further perfected for the Holy Sacrifice within Our Lord's Atonement, than could bread brought in from a "peaceful"

> world in which injustices and human oppression were acquiesced in, with a deadening prospect of their continuance for years to come. (MIG 421)

For Smyth, the rightness of an action could be measured by its suitability as a Eucharistic offering.

The cross remains the Christian's primary weapon in the revolutionary struggle. Compared with the earlier discussion, Smyth emphasizes the active quality of the decision to take up the cross. Christians goad the world into fury by the revolutionary threat of the Incarnation. But Christians (like Jesus) must wait until the right moment to take up the cross and be crucified. Smyth cites being killed or wounded in a revolutionary movement as a way Christians might find their individual crosses. He concludes his discussion by repeating the 1936 discussion of the implications for the church of taking up the Cross. "The hour is come that faithful Catholics must both invite and embrace the violence of the world as did Our Lord Himself. The Church, with Him, must begin to stretch herself upon the Cross. She must place herself with Him on the under side of the nails."(MIG 438)

The overall approach of Manhood Into God towards Marxist dialectics parallels its discussion of Marxist materialism. Smyth accepts the analysis on the level of the natural world but argues that it does not go far enough since it excludes the divine. However, while Smyth does extend materialist terminology to the Incarnation (long a tradition of Incarnational theology), he is careful to limit

dialectical terminology to the natural world at this point. However, Transubstantiation (Metacosmesis) incorporates and fulfills the dialectical nature of human history and can, at least analogically, be seen as dialectical. In the 1936 discussion Smyth refers to the transition from the natural to the supernatural as "revolutionary". Likewise, in Manhood Into God, the Christian faith and the church are often termed "revolutionary" and the church is seen as growing in a dialectical manner. At one point, also, Transubstantiation is termed revolutionary: ". . . the world's material bread and wine. . . at every Catholic Altar [are] seized upon by a new Divine Life-Process, snatched out of the world's control, and revolutionized -- in this connection a permissible variant for transubstantiated -- into God's own Body and Blood." (MIG 225) Later Smyth will extend dialectics to the relation between God and humanity but at this point he is not prepared to draw attention away from the very serious human social injustices dialectics describe.

Discerning the Lord's Body (1945) develops the argument that a knowledge of Marxist dialectical analysis is necessary for Christians engaged in the Metacosmic process of reordering the world:

> [Christians] should understand what Marxian theorists call the dialectic nature of the process of human history. And understanding this, they should become able to cooperate intelligently and selectively with whatever secular revolutionary forces of our own day are gaining the power necessary to bring about the economic changes

> now categorically required if natural bread and wine are to become better available for the Christian Offertory. (DTLB 119n)

Smyth argues that Christian social analysis has often been naive or unscientific, ignoring economic and political realities such as class structure and conflict for confused categories such as "secular" and "religious". As a result, Christians have been ineffective in changing the world.

Marx's contribution, according to Smyth, was a dialectical economic analysis that included a critique of economic class structure, advocated revolution and sought to produce a unified and just social order. (As in his earlier discussions, Smyth critiques Marx for not moving beyond the natural order.) However, it is precisely this unified secular order that Christians require for their offertory. The immediate goals of Christians and Marxists coincide:

> We can take advantage of the secular truths which Marxists now point out. We can see that before the secular order can be redeemed within a single Incarnational structure, it must first have its own inner constitutional contradictions eliminated. The secular structure must itself be made over into a single structural entity before it can be successfully presented as a whole within the Offertory of the Church's bread and wine. . . . [For] the immediate future, the preparatory work of St. John Baptist and the social revolutionary work of Karl Marx, seem in the providence of God to coincide. Until the members of the humanity of the Incarnation realize this latter truth, and devote both their attention and their action to it afresh, they cannot expect the full power of the metacosmic humanity of Our Lord to appear again in their midst. (DTLB 191)

The social order needed for the offertory requires Christians both to understand and take part in the revolutionary

processes that Marx discovered. In the end, however, only the Incarnation can take up and fulfill those processes.

In Discerning the Lord's Body Smyth also makes a brief reference to the dialectical character of divine revelation itself. Smyth identifies the Annunciation (the initiation of the Incarnation) and Pentecost (the initiation of the church) as two "dialectically nodal points" in salvation history, each marked by "a special enabling power of the Holy Spirit". (DTLB 56n) However, with this exception, Smyth does not directly refer to the Metacosmic process as dialectical. At this point he sees dialectics as an entirely material process that cannot by definition be extended to the divine. (The above example describes events in human history.) Yet the very limitation of dialectics to the material world cries out for a dialectic-like extension into the divine. That extension is Metacosmesis. Metacosmesis, at least in the present, also requires dialectics for its own effectiveness.

In both Manhood Into God and Discerning the Lord's Body, dialectics are decidedly secondary to materialism as a way of rapprochement with Marxism. They are more a useful (indeed, necessary) tool required by the Metacosmic process than a point of theoretical agreement. However, after 1945 dialectics take on much more importance in Smyth's writings and apologetic. The closing pages of Discerning the Lord's Body, cited above, which declare dialectical knowledge and

action necessary for the success of the Metacosmic process in the world, set the tone. The second edition of the Society of the Catholic Commonwealth manual (1945) added a paragraph endorsing Marxist dialectics, describing them as "a valuable guide to the understanding of the process of secular (i.e. fallen) world history" and expressing the S.C.C.'s commitment "to work in practical affairs with all secular groups and organizations . . . moving towards the reorganization or the revolution of our present structure and in the general direction of the demands of the natural foundation of the Kingdom of God."[7]

In the post-war years, Smyth began to think much more seriously about the philosophical basis of Marxist dialectics. In August 1945 Smyth wrote Sam Bernstein, editor of Science and Society, suggesting some topics that Marxists might address in the proposed Catholic Commonwealth quarterly. One suggestion was a study of the philosophical basis of the dialectics of history:

> A clear statement of the meaning of dialectics as applied to history -- but without the dogma of "materialism" and certainly without any Hegelian idealism. Just an analysis of the empirically observed process. This should be done by someone who knows his physics and in particular the Phase Rule as developed by Gibbs.

One sees Smyth moving to the theme that will dominate his dialectics for the next fifteen years: the attempt to ground dialectics in empirical observation rather than an a priori dialectical metaphysics. However, Smyth goes even further:

> The application [of dialectics] to the historical process should be made as an analogy -- but a cogent analogy and one corresponding to the empirically observed historical data.[8]

In his dialectical analysis of history in the late forties, Smyth puts aside the final point. However, it resurfaces with a vengeance in the fifties.

In mid-1946 Smyth began work with David Hecht on a book on dialectics, "Dialectics for Christians". The manuscript was never completed or published but Smyth and Hecht published the discussion of the dialectics of church history as Western Christianity's Whence and Whither in 1948. Smyth continued to work more deeply on the philosophical basis of dialectics as a critique both of orthodox Marxist dialectical materialism and non-dialectical Aristotelian realism. He also began to go more deeply into the theological significance of dialectics, particularly as they shaped the work of the Society of the Catholic Commonwealth as the primary agent of Metacosmesis in the world. With the failure of the rapprochement with Marxist materialism in the late forties, Smyth turned to dialectics (by now purged of any primary metaphysical qualities) as an alternative way for Christians and Marxists to find common ground and work together.

In early 1946 Smyth conducted two conferences on Marxist dialectics at Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge. A summary of these lectures with notes from Smyth's and Hecht's projected book was published in the S.C.C. Bul-

letin in the spring of 1946 as "Dialectics for Christians". The article outlines the general structure that Smyth consistently followed in his post-war discussions of dialectics. He begins with a treatment of dialectics in the physical world, then moves on to botany, biology, the human sciences and arts (including history, sociology, art, music and education) and finally religion.

The approach is to illustrate the truth of dialectical analysis in the full range of reality stretching from the inanimate physical world through humanity to the divine. Smyth and Hecht point out that on the lower levels dialectical movements have a consistency that can be defined by scientific laws. However, on the higher levels (such as history) human freedom and the participation of the observer in the dialectical process itself make the formulation of laws much more difficult. However, in spite of this complication, Smyth and Hecht argue that a dialectical analysis, in which thesis and antithesis come together in a (perhaps violent) revolutionary nodal point to produce a synthesis having a new quality, most accurately describes the economic, political and social development of humanity (over against an entirely gradualist or evolutionary analysis, for example). Smyth's colourful experiments with dialectical chemical reactions (for example, at the Anglican Fellowship for Social Action conference in Arundel, Quebec in 1947)

were attempts to conscientize the audience about the truth of dialectics at higher levels of reality.

Despite Smyth's comments to Bernstein in 1945, the concept of dialectics in the 1946 article is fairly close to that of orthodox Marxist dialectical materialism. The thesis is described as a system "moving and developing in correspondence with the necessities of its inner dynamic forces". "Objective observation of natural processes" reveals that "such a system invariably throws up within itself another system of dynamic forces" which tends to inhibit the thesis in its "natural" or "logical" end. When the "inner stresses" become strained to the breaking point "the energies thus potentialized" are resolved in the "'overthrow'" of the thesis by the antithesis. The synthesis "contains within itself elements" of the original thesis and antithesis but "in such transformed and reintegrated structure as to present a radically new situation".

This description makes little effort to separate the dialectical process from underlying Marxist presuppositions about the dialectical character of reality itself. Dialectics are seen to be consistent with "objective observation of natural processes" but the point is not emphasized. Terms such as "necessities of its inner dynamic forces" and "inner stresses" suggest that Smyth has not yet begun to critique seriously the metaphysical character of Marxist dialectics.[9] The 1946 Bulletin article is helpful in identifying Smyth's

starting point as he began work on the "Dialectics for Christians" manuscript for in all extant versions of the manuscript he has already moved beyond this point.

Two other important themes also appear in the 1946 Bulletin article. One is the concept of the unresolved or "frozen" dialectic in which thesis and antithesis are locked together in a "synthetic" but unresolved relationship. This is Smyth's and Hecht's analysis of the Anglican church. The theme is developed in Western Christianity. A second is a very critical analysis of any attempt to reach a synthesis without revolution, that is, without passing through a nodal point. Smyth and Hecht particularly take English gradualist socialists to task.[10]

Smyth and Hecht continued to work on the "Dialectics for Christians" manuscript. In August 1947 they lectured on dialectics at the annual A.F.S.A. Arundel conference. By now, Smyth has begun to develop the critique of the metaphysical basis of Marxist dialectics:

> That a dialectical method of analysis is fruitful, does not mean that it possesses an a priori logical necessity apart from empirical observation, and such observation never establishes an absolutely generalized (logical/philosophical) necessity. . . . [Let us] confine ourselves to descriptions of observed phenomenon, and not try to impose an a priori and dogmatic philosophy upon empirical, scientific and statistical data.[11]

Smyth is beginning to critique the view of orthodox dialectical materialism (rooted in Engels) that reality itself at its deepest core is dialectical, a position that Smyth sees

as metaphysical rather than empirical. He reaches back to Plekhanov to defend his position that the only basis of dialectics is empirical observation. Smyth cites the "curious results" of "Marxist dialectic as a philosophical a priori dogma" in the Soviet Union's denunciation of modern mathematical atomic physics (including Heisenberg's uncertainty principle) and support for Lysenko's neo-Lamarckian genetics.[12]

Smyth's approach to dialectics in the late forties becomes increasingly empirical and anti-metaphysical, paralleling the rejection of the metaphysical character of Marxist materialism discussed in the previous chapter. In an early draft of the "Dialectics for Christians" manuscript, Smyth detaches dialectics from any metaphysical or religious position:

> In the following pages, quite without committing ourselves to any particular world view, whether idealist, materialist or religious, we shall apply a dialectic analysis to a number of observable phenomena of movement and change. Our examples will be drawn from processes objectively discoverable in the inanimate, animate, rational, historical and religious levels of experienced reality, whether these go forward primarily without or within the conscious life of man.[13]

Similar comments begin appearing frequently in Smyth's notes and correspondence.

The best example of this kind of dialectical analysis is Smyth's and Hecht's Western Christianity's Whence and Whither (1948), a study of secular and church history from

the middle ages to the present. It emerged out of the larger study of dialectics between 1946 and 1948 and represents the kind of dialectical analysis of economic and religious movements that the many examples of dialectics in the physical and natural sciences were leading up to.

Smyth and Hecht first outline in dialectical terms secular economic developments from the middle ages to the present. Medieval feudal society (subsistence, anti-commercial, sanctioned by the church) is seen as a thesis. Within it arises an antithesis, a merchant class based on trading and manufacturing, which in the bourgeois revolution overpowers the thesis (destroys feudal society) and produces the synthesis, the "bourgeois industrial, individualistic society which we have known in the modern world".[14]

Corresponding to this dialectical change in secular society is a similar dialectical change in church history:

> Thus, as it were, riding upon the surface of the primary social dialectic which moved in the level of the deep economic change from the manorial economy and feudalism to bourgeois industrialism and "free enterprise," there moved a kind of secondary or dependent dialectic within the religious superstructure. (WC 6)

In this secondary dialectic, the thesis is the medieval catholic church, the antithesis is protestantism arising within medieval catholicism and still possessing a strong communal spirit and the synthesis is modern individualistic protestantism, the kind so often associated with modern laissez-faire capitalism.

The Roman Catholic church continues as a "remnant thesis" whose original economic substructure, medieval feudalism, has vanished and whose character, the religious manifestation of that feudalism, makes it impossible for it to merge with the new synthesis. Instead, it seeks to merge with whatever economic substructures are compatible with its feudal character, namely fascist dictatorships such as Italy, Spain or Portugal.

However, within the new secular synthesis (modern western capitalism) the dialectical process continues. Modern capitalism becomes a new thesis within which the working classes are developing a new antithesis. (Unlike the previous dialectical process, the new antithesis expresses itself in entirely secular terms, without a religious superstructure.) Eventually this new antithesis will triumph and "almost certainly issue in the socialist order of the future", the new synthesis. (WC 8) This revolution has already taken place in the Soviet Union.

Smyth and Hecht then go back to what happened to the Anglican church in the dialectical movement from catholicism to modern individualistic protestantism. They argue that because of the peculiar political situation in England, protestantism was not allowed to go forward to its normal synthesis nor was catholicism allowed to remain autonomous. Instead, emergent protestantism and surviving catholicism "were forcibly conjoined within a new and artificially con-

trived structure known as the Anglican Communion". (WC 11) Anglicanism, then, contains a "frozen dialectic". (WC 12)

Smyth and Hecht then return to the new secular dialectical process taking place -- the rise of a revolutionary working class movement as an antithesis within modern capitalism which will, after revolution, culminate in a new socialist order, a new synthesis. The question the authors now face is how Christianity can best integrate itself with this secular dialectical process in religious terms; that is, what kind of Christianity would best suit both the emergent secular antithesis (workers engaged in revolutionary struggle) and the new synthesis (the new socialist order).

Smyth and Hecht consider individually the three possibilities -- the Roman Catholic "remnant thesis", bourgeois individualistic protestantism and Anglicanism with its "frozen dialectic". Protestantism is completely unacceptable. It is already associated with the thesis, modern capitalism, and in its emphasis on individualism (the new order will be social) and the "spiritual" rather than the material (that is, its idealism), it is incompatible with the new order. Individual protestants may accept the secular revolution but in the long run it is incompatible with their theological position. Protestantism will be overturned by the secular revolution or become a "remnant thesis" like the Baptists in the Soviet Union.

Likewise, the Roman Catholic "remnant thesis" is also unacceptable. Its dialectically active days are played out. It "cannot move dialectically forward to integrate itself with the future socialist order". (WC 17) Instead, because of its authoritarian character, it is prone to fascism. Smyth and Hecht digress to attack the ecumenical movement, particularly cooperation between protestants and Roman Catholics. They fear an anti-socialist alliance developing between capitalist protestantism and fascist Roman Catholicism. (Their fears make some sense if one remembers that John Foster Dulles, Walter Judd and other protestant advocates of capitalism and the Cold War were active in the early days of the World Council of Churches and may well have envisioned it as a Christian bastion against Communism.)

Only Anglicanism, then, remains as a possible partner for the emergent revolutionary struggle and the resultant new social order. It is uniquely suited to the role:

> . . . because the contemporary Anglican chrysalis still maintains both the democratic and individual values of Protestantism, and at the same time presents the social corporateness of ancient Catholicism, it does offer a most promising seed for the growth of a religiously integrated Socialism. In Anglicanism is enshrined a Catholicism which, because of peculiar historical circumstances, still retains its moving dialectic potentialities. And even the Protestantism of Anglicanism, since it was immobilized before it could move on, as it did outside of Anglicanism to its later synthesis of complete spiritual individualism, still retains a certain earlier corporate character elsewhere unknown to it. (WC 24)

It is the task of Anglicans, then, to "reactivate that dialectical movement" so that it may move forward to a fresh synthesis, "not within a now dying bourgeois social order, but within the approaching secular synthesis of Socialism". (WC 24-25) Thus, once the dialectical process within Anglicanism begins again, the direction of the dialectic is reversed. Protestantism within Anglicanism will become the new thesis, corresponding to the dying secular thesis of bourgeois society. Catholicism within Anglicanism becomes the new antithesis, leading to an Incarnational catholic synthesis, corresponding to the secular socialist synthesis. In the process, the Roman Catholic "remnant thesis" and fascism will be destroyed.

Western Christianity's Whence and Whither is a curious work, illustrating the perils of predicting the future on the basis of dialectics. It is a study in Anglican chauvinism. Religious developments in the last thirty years suggest that its conclusion is mistaken. Significant parts of both Roman Catholicism and protestantism have formed strong links with socialism (even revolutionary socialism) while Anglicanism, for the most part, has remained a "frozen dialectic". Smyth did not foresee the pontificate of John XXIII nor the Second Vatican Council. Likewise, the dialectical analysis has eccentricities. The "reversal" of the "frozen dialectic" of Anglicanism appears to lead back to the middle ages. One might use dialectical analysis to come

to a very different conclusion. Given the Third World and working class character of much of Roman Catholicism, one might argue that the "remnant thesis", if it can detach itself from its authoritarian structures, is better suited to the emerging antithetical revolutionary struggle and the new social order than the bourgeois "frozen dialectic" of Anglicanism. However, given the time he was writing, Smyth had many good reasons for doubting the revolutionary potential of the Roman Catholic church. Smyth later recognized the weaknesses of the analysis.[15]

However, despite any assessment of its conclusions, Western Christianity is significant both as an example of the kind of dialectical analysis (separated from discussion of underlying metaphysical principles) that Smyth began to advocate in the late forties and as a sign of the movement of dialectical analysis from the secular world into the vocation and work of the Society of the Catholic Commonwealth.

I have already discussed in the previous chapter the reprinting of Harold Laski's 1947 Webb Lecture critical of the Soviet Union in the Bulletin in the spring of 1948 and Smyth's commentary on it ("Materialist Dogma as a Creedal Test") critiquing "the peculiar 'religious' quality of dogmatic dialectical materialism" in the Soviet Union and among American Communists. I noted that these publications marked

a nodal point in Smyth's treatment of Marxist materialism -- a movement from cooperation to opposition. These publications also mark a nodal point in Smyth's understanding of dialectics and the revolutionary Christian cell. The "materialist dogma" that Smyth rejects in his commentary on Laski is also a dialectical one and Smyth is harsh in his condemnation of Marxist dialectics as a "True Faith" rather than a "rational and scientific analysis of the historical process".[16] Smyth's empirically-based dialectics that have been emerging in 1945-48 and have contributed to the new critique of Marxist materialism emerge triumphant in a new synthesis. Likewise, the vocation of the S.C.C. as an autonomous antithetical revolutionary cell, developed in Western Christianity's Whence and Whither, also emerges triumphant in the new synthesis.

The new view of Marxist materialism, the separation of dialectics from it and the new autonomous and dialectical role of the S.C.C. can all be seen emerging simultaneously in a letter Smyth wrote to John Tunnicliffe shortly after publishing the Laski article in the Bulletin. After mentioning the Laski article, Smyth begins, "I am convinced that there is no necessary connection between the dogma of materialism and the scientific use of the dialectic method." But how can the Marxist criticism of Catholicism as idealist be countered? Smyth answers his own question:

> . . . by a re-presentation of dogmatic sacramental Ca-

> tholicism in terms of dialectic movement. But talk will not be enough. We must create a genuinely Catholic revolutionary movement, if we are to be looked upon with respect.

Smyth tells Tunnicliffe that he now plans to concentrate on building up the S.C.C. "with the establishment of Liturgical revolutionary Cells wherever this may be possible". The Anamnesis will be the centre of the antithetical attack upon the church:

> . . . we must insist upon the "doing" of our Anamnesis as a sine qua non of the life of every Cell. . . . Our members have to realize all the time that their special vocation is to overthrow the Church (dialectically) and not to work "within" it. As long as we believe that the Catholic Church as we know it today in its present thetical form is an organ of the world's revolutionary redemption -- we are completely lost.

Smyth tells Tunnicliffe that he plans to cut out all outside engagements and concentrate on the dialectics book.[17]

I shall discuss in detail the antithetical revolutionary S.C.C. cell, centred around the Anamnesis, in the next chapter. However, here I would only point out that the revolutionary cell takes up and incorporates dialectics, including empirically-based Marxist dialectics, in its understanding of the world, in its concept of its vocation and and in its dogmatic theology. Smyth defended the S.C.C.'s vocation to dialectics to Archie Malloch in a 1951 letter:

> One of the great tasks which faces our Society is to lead a few more people into a dialectic mode of thinking. As things are, it is sometimes impossible even so much as to communicate with static thinkers, even when they come to us with a certain open-minded interest.[18]

The shift to the revolutionary cell was not an abandonment

of dialectics. Smyth continued to lecture on dialectics and work on the "Dialectics for Christians" manuscript until his death. The separation of dialectics from metaphysical assumptions freed Smyth to use dialectical terminology in theological discussions of the Incarnation, the Anamnesis and the church. The definition of dialectics was broadened (from the perspective of the earlier definition that limited them to the natural world) to include analogical descriptions of divine revelation and action. In a letter to Bishop Nash in 1948, Smyth quoted William Temple on the need for Christianity to develop a dialectic "more comprehensive" than that of dialectical materialism.[19]

An early example of this broader theological use of dialectical terminology can be seen in Smyth's discussion of the Eucharistic consecration in the notes in the Anámnesis of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (1947). While he does not use the term "dialectics", the process and terminology are clearly dialectical:

> The movement of the Consecration necessarily passes through a point of abrupt transition. This transition from the level of the bread and wine of our Lord's earthly humanity in the Offertory, to the level of their termination in the Body and Blood of His now ascended life, is that of a true change of state.

Smyth likens it to a "change of phase" as when ice melts into water, one of his favourite illustrations of a dialectical process. Such abrupt transition marked the change of Christ's earthly body through the crucifixion, resurrection,

ascension and glorification.

In the consecration, this eternal divine reality emerges into the present so that our offertory may be included in it. Smyth continues,

> The Consecration effects a change in phase, as it were, when our offerings within the natural order are moved into a state proper to a supernatural level of being. Such a movement can be neither gradual, in indistinguishable successive stages, nor can it be diffused over a period of time. It cannot be "reformist." It involves a revolutionary discontinuity in its process.[20]

Smyth concludes the note, "Revolution, not Reform, is at the heart of the Liturgy."[21] What was implicit in Manhood Into God and Discerning the Lord's Body is now explicit: Metacosmesis is a dialectical relationship between humanity and God.

The Laski reprint and "Materialist Dogma as a Creedal Test" were not meant to alienate American Communists but rather find new ground for a relationship -- a common commitment to an empirical and scientific Marxist dialectical analysis detached from any religious or metaphysical assumptions. Dialectical analysis was now to be the point of rapprochement. The response of Smyth's Communist Party friends to the Laski article and Smyth's commentary was mixed. One, Harry Winner, suggested that the latter be sent to party leaders in New York and offered to write a covering letter and provide a list of names.[22] Dirk Struik, however, wrote a long rebuttal.[23]

In October 1948 Smyth visited the Montreal S.C.C. cell and had discussions on dialectics with Harry Binder, the provincial Labour Progressive Party [Communist Party] organizer. Smyth reported their conversation to David Hecht:

> I got him to admit that Materialism was a true metaphysic! He also agreed that a field of dialectic study might be deliminated [sic] between the Catholic and Materialist metaphysical frontiers, where complete objective agreement could be sought.[24]

The Montreal S.C.C. cell began meeting with a small group of Party members to discuss dialectics.

In October 1948 Smyth also wrote to V.J. Jerome, editor of Political Affairs, proposing a discussion on dialectics: "What we need is objective, realistic and scientific dialectic teaching, unencumbered by any metaphysic whatever, religious or other." Citing the unpopularity of any materialist metaphysic in the American context, Smyth continued:

> In this period of popular American ideology, scientific dialectic and the class struggle . . . can best be inculcated among Americans (who have mostly a conventional religious background) without coupling it with any dogmatic metaphysic whatever.[25]

Jerome responded favourably and in early December Smyth met with him and Robert Thompson, one of the twelve Communist Party national board members under indictment under the Smith Act. Jerome and Thompson expressed an interest in Smyth's text on dialectics and further discussion. However, the whole venture ended with Smyth's heart attack in January 1949, the suppression of the Communist Party in the Cold War

and its continued alliance with the Soviet Union on theoretical matters.[26]

After 1949, Smyth's dialectics do not aim at rapprochement with secular Marxism. Rather, they critique what Smyth saw as false forms of Marxist dialectics, provide alternative forms of (still) Marxist dialectics and support the revolutionary vocation of the Society of the Catholic Commonwealth. I shall briefly outline these developments in the last decade of Smyth's life.

Smyth's criticism of Soviet (and especially Stalinist) dialectics which began as early as 1945 continues unabated throughout the fifties. Eventually it extends to Marx himself. As a scientist, Smyth was especially enraged by the Lysenko controversy, in which the Soviet geneticist Trofim Lysenko, backed by Stalin and the Soviet Union, maintained a neo-Lamarckian theory of genetics because of its dialectical character in opposition to clear empirical evidence to the contrary. Citing the Lysenko controversy, Smyth complained to Hecht in early 1949:

> . . . frankly, my faith in the intellectual power and integrity of those who guide the destinies of the Soviet Union is now all but shattered. . . . I have for long been dismayed by the inadequacies of the communist presentations of dialectic theory, to say nothing of the applications of these interpretations during relatively recent history. Stalin's own article on Dialectics in the History of the C.P.U.S.S.R. is hardly short of puerile and from a scholarly point of view it is disreputable.

Smyth goes on to liken these developments to religious fun-

damentalism. "It is communism as a fundamentalist religion which terrifies me."[27]

A year later Smyth complained to Walter Singh in a similar vein:

> [The Lysenko business] has seemed to me to reduce Moscow "science" to utter absurdity. And if these people can think thus in scientific theorizing, why, I ask myself, should we trust their reasoning in the field of application of the Dialectic to world politics? Men who can be so silly in genetics can at least be equally silly in their foreign policy![28]

The disillusionment with Soviet dialectics separated Smyth from relations with the American Communist Party in the fifties and pushed him to develop alternative forms of Marxist dialectical analysis.

Smyth's critical view of Soviet dialectics culminated in the very hostile 1955 Allocution, "Kingdom of Marx and the Kingdom of God" which I discussed in the previous chapter. Here Smyth extends the criticism to Marx himself, arguing that Marx understood the dialectics of history as ontological rather than analogical. He goes on to point out weaknesses in Marx's dialectical analysis such as the failure to explain why major revolutions have taken place in countries where both the thesis and antithesis have been underdeveloped (the Soviet Union and China), the failure to recognize the power of vastly increased western industrial production to delay revolution and the failure to recognize other means besides ownership to possess class power (bu-

reaucracy and internal police, as in the Soviet Union). Smyth also faults Marx's dialectics of the post-revolutionary state in which only good can emerge from the dialectical process. The dialectical process continues, argues Smyth, particularly in a repressive socialist state. "Dialectical socialism carries the germ of a fresh revolutionary overturn within itself."[29]

However, despite these criticisms of the "greatly over-simplified social conclusions which Marxists claim to draw from their observed historical data", Smyth makes it clear that he is still advocating Marxist dialectics:

> I am not questioning, however, either the soundness or the usefulness of the dialectic method of analysis. This method is decidedly revealing of the "way things work" both when applied to inanimate natural phenomena and, by what appears a sound analogy at least, to human social history. I think it is in this area of applied dialectic that the S.C.C. must continue to own itself Marxian, although we must remain free to make many of our own rational analyses and applications of this dialectic method.[30]

One notes here that Smyth now returns to the dialectics of history as analogical rather than scientific. I shall comment on this shift later.

"The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Marx" also attacks what Smyth saw as the ontological base of Soviet revolutionary theory. Because Marxists see dialectical tensions as a part of the very essence of matter itself, violent revolution and class hatred are a natural part of human society. The dialectical tensions of matter come to the

level of human consciousness as emotional hatred. Arousing hatred in the proletariat for the bourgeoisie both as a class and simply as people becomes a necessity and a virtue.

Again, Smyth traces this development back to Marx himself. Marx's theory of surplus value "is planned both as a theorem of objective economics and as a propaganda device leading to anger and passionate class hatred." Smyth continues,

> One aim of Marxism-Leninism has always been so to arouse the workers against the bourgeoisie that the former will be willing to seize political power and then use it to imprison and to kill off the capitalist thetical foe. Hatred then becomes the paramount spiritual . . . driving power which, arising out of a rational understanding of an unjust economic "material base", reacts dialectically and violently back upon that base to drive its process into revolutionary overturn.

Smyth goes on to argue that hatred is so dominant in the dialectical process that it is enshrined in the synthesis and has become "an alarming spiritual element in Marxian socialist achievement". Smyth concludes,

> The Marxists have taken advantage of the demonic elements in a fallen world to motivate their dialectic revolution. The Kingdom of Marx is certainly not a Kingdom of divine charity [despite God's power to] over-rule sin and bring some good, i.e., economic socialism, in a certain form, out of dreadful human evil. But the Kingdom of Marx, so far as human fundamental guidance prevails, is a Kingdom not of love, but of hate.

The massive brutality of Stalinism is now strongly reflected in Smyth's critique of revolutionary violence.

Again, however, Smyth reasserts his basic agreement with the Marxist revolutionary analysis:

> . . . I will here repeat that I do believe that Marxian dialecticians are entirely right when they prophesy a non-competitive, rationally planned and regulated industrial socialism as the only reasonable (i.e., scientifically necessary) politico-economic synthesis available - and equally desirable - as a resolution [of] the contemporary dialectic social tensions.

Smyth goes on to suggest that Christians should be thankful for the revolutionary struggles that are taking place throughout the world "even while, as Christians, we must sorrow over the violence and misery which the conditions of a fallen world are injecting into the revolutionary process."[31] Smyth hopes for less violence in future revolutions.

Smyth saw himself vindicated by Krushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the 20th Party Congress in 1956 and the subsequent rejection of Stalinism by most Communist parties internationally. To Alden Powers, he commented, "I now find, oddly, that I myself have been espousing the present party line relative to Stalin, Lo! these many years past!"[32] However, he saw no reason to return to following the Soviet Union and had little faith in the new leadership:

> I hope the burden of looking to the U.S.S.R. as the only "scientific" center of socialist achievement is at long last lifted from us. How can anyone think that a program imposed by the now discredited Stalin can be thought of as "scientific" is beyond me. Also, I may add, why are we now to have any more confidence in Stalin's successors, men who backed him to the hilt when he was alive?[33]

The Soviet invasion of Hungary later in 1956 only confirmed these views.

Smyth continues his 1955 Allocution critique of Marxist dialectics in an essay entitled "Some Latter Thoughts on Marxian Dogma" in the February-March 1957 S.C.C. Bulletin. Smyth probes whether "the seeds of an attitude which is willing to treat human individuals and, indeed, great masses of human beings, as completely expendable in the interest of achieving socialism at all costs . . . do not lurk in the very fabric of that body of socio-revolutionary theory set forth by Marx himself".[34] Smyth suggests three "seeds of danger" within Marxist theory: the over-simplification of history as an inanimate physical process, the impossibility of the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the apocalyptic quality of the revolutionary vision.

The first of these "seeds of danger" particularly relates to dialectical theory. If the inanimate and historical dialectical processes are identical, it is inevitable that those in power in a Marxist state will treat people as inanimate objects in order to seek conformity with what dialectical processes require. "This works out in practice to a 'father knows best' behaviour on the part of any or all who wield intellectual, psychological, political and physical power", resulting in such developments as the secret police in the Soviet Union or the invasion of Hungary.[35]

Behind all of Smyth's criticisms of Marxist dialectics in the fifties is the conviction carried forth from his

earliest theological writings that any dialectics limited to the natural order are inadequate and can only be fulfilled by the Incarnation. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, this conviction increases and takes on a new direction in the fifties. Smyth rejects the earlier vision of the secular dialectical process moving sequentially into the Incarnation for the vision of a primary and autonomous dialectical Incarnational process (incorporating critical Marxist dialectical analysis), led by revolutionary cells of the S.C.C. seeking to convert the world (including Marxists) to the Incarnation. The 1955 Allocution puts the new position succinctly: ". . . no 'scientifically' planned order of human society can function apart from a Christian redemptionist end, apart from the great majority of its citizens' conscious participation in the Sacrifice of the Cross, apart from that Divine Grace which flows from the Sacraments into the lives of those same citizens."[36]

Having rejected a materialist metaphysical base for dialectics, Smyth continued to work on the philosophical basis of dialectics. While he made much of developing a "non-metaphysical" dialectics, Smyth was not without his own metaphysical position, philosophical realism, and he struggled to integrate realism and dialectics. As early as 1946 there was resistance within the S.C.C. by the strict Aristotelian realists, John Wild and Henry Veatch, against any use

of dialectical terminology. Veatch's argument that any dialectics are idealist may have helped push Smyth's dialectics in an empirical direction.[37] In the end, Smyth resisted the anti-dialectics pressure and replied to Veatch, "If there be any truth enshrined in a dialectic terminology it clearly must be the same truth which is talked about in Aristotelian concepts and terminology."[38] One must avoid seeing two equally truthful terminologies denying one another. In 1950 Smyth prepared for David Hecht "a tentative note which tries to make some sort of distinction between 'substantial' and 'accidental' social antitheses in history", suggesting a possible expansion of Western Christianity's Whence and Whither, but the idea was not pursued.[39]

In the late forties and early fifties Smyth and the S.C.C. considered the term "dialectical realism" as an alternative to dialectical materialism. In the 1949 Allocution Smyth had rejected the new term because of the ambiguous philosophical heritage of "realism" and the alienation from secular revolutionary movements that would result by the rejection of the standard Marxist term.[40] However, with the increasing alienation from secular Marxism in the fifties, the proposal resurfaced and was debated in the Bulletin. In the end, Smyth continued to oppose the new term, arguing that it did not convey the necessary effect of material processes on human history the way the traditional Marxist term did.[41] Smyth also continued, of course, to disagree

with the metaphysical presuppositions of the traditional Marxist term.

There is much ambiguity in Smyth's approach to dialectics in the fifties. He consistently defended dialectical analysis but became increasingly discouraged with its effectiveness. Dialectical analysis was seen as a Marxist tool that Christians should learn to appreciate as a way to critique the evils of capitalism -- and Marxism. Smyth's comments to Bishop Waterman of Nova Scotia in 1952 are not untypical:

> For Christian purposes I believe that the most valuable element of Marxian theoretical contribution is that of the careful application of the Hegelian dialectic method to an analysis of the process of historical movement in both its material and social aspects.

Smyth goes on to say that dialectics have become the ideology of the "contemporary world revolution" and Christians do well to understand them so that they may "meet their pagan materialist antagonists adequately on their own grounds". Yet there is a positive side: "a certain fresh illumination which . . . 'dialectic' thinking can bring to Christian theory and practice."[42] This ambiguity towards dialectics (and revolution) was particularly resented by many of the Canadian and English S.C.C. members.

To put the ambiguity more positively, in the fifties Smyth moved towards a dialectics that was broader, more nuanced and more cautious, less patterned after the physical

sciences and more respectful of human rationality and freedom. The earlier view of the dialectics of history as analogical resurfaced, as in the 1955 Allocution. Increasingly Smyth came to see the task of developing such a dialectics as too difficult to accomplish considering the complexity of the world situation.

In the late forties Smyth canvassed the sciences widely for a scientific base for dialectics. For example, in 1948 he suggested to Al Putnam, a mathematician member of the S.C.C., that a statistical approach to historical processes, akin to actuarial science, might be appropriate.[43] Even as late as 1950, Smyth defended Marxist dialectical analysis of history as "scientific": "I believe that Marxian scientific analysis is as truly [a] scientific discipline as are the disciplines of chemistry or electrical engineering." Smyth was criticizing the Catholic Sociology movement within the American Church Union for its "idealist approach to history" and lack of a "scientific program of movement and action within the natural order".[44] This confidence in the scientific nature of the dialectics of history soon crumbled.

By 1955 Smyth was writing to John Rowe of the complexity of dialectical analysis even in the physical sciences. In order to have accurate empirical observation, one needs an "isolated system". In dialectical analysis of history, this is virtually impossible:

> . . . you can never get anything like an "isolated system" for observation within the process of human history. . . . That is why the Marxian analysis (e.g. as presented in "Whence and Whither") is almost always open to the gravest criticism of over-simplification.[45]

A year later, Smyth wrote to Helen Ray that Western Christianity's Whence and Whither was "a dreadful over-simplification of history".[46]

Smyth came to see the dialectical processes of history as much broader than those outlined by Marx. In 1956 he complained to David Hecht of the difficulty of applying traditional Marxist dialectical analysis to the present situation:

> Surely the old horizontal nationally contained "class-war" dialectic simply does not supply the clue to contemporary socio-economic change! The Dialectic now operates not merely (if at all!) between neat economic classes, but on a world-wide stage whose thetical and antithetical elements are not easy to discern or formulate.

Smyth comments that his "bewilderment at this point" is what is holding up work on the "Dialectics" manuscript:

> It is amusing to frame a large number of physical and biological dialectic examples of process and change. But without concrete application to the problems of real history, is an abstract book on Dialectics worth the trouble of attempted publication? Marxist oversimplifications are out.[47]

As Smyth's conviction increased that the final answer lay not in historical dialectical analysis but in the Incarnation, the desire to pursue the historical analysis waned.

However, throughout the fifties Smyth pursued a variety of alternative Marxist dialectical analyses of the

contemporary situation. He began turning dialectical analysis in on the Soviet Union. In late 1949 he commented to John Tunnicliffe on the rise of "nationalist communist rebellions":

> Can it be that the supposed "dictatorship of the proletariat" as embodied in the Kremlin, is assuming such a rigid and universal form that this is now developing its own antithesis in the form of nationalist communist rebellions? If so, these rebellions may be a very healthy thing. . .[48]

Throughout the fifties Smyth supported the rise of indigenous non-Soviet Marxist states such as Yugoslavia and China. In 1950, Smyth wrote John Rowe, "I have great confidence in the long term action of world dialectic upon Moscow itself", arguing that new antitheses are developing in China and the rest of Asia.[49] To Tunnicliffe, Smyth commented, "It would seem that we of this Society have been a species of 'Titoists' even before the advent of Tito".[50]

However, Smyth came to see this analysis as also simplistic. By 1954, he was suggesting to David Hecht a broader (and apparently non-Marxist) dialectic:

> Marxian Class dialectics is surely now superseded by some sort of nationalist-power dialectic?? The ancient dogma that the dialectic process would be purely beneficial to man just so soon as it ceased to operate between economic classes is obviously absurd in the face of Russian (and other) nationalist power-politics![51]

Smyth made a similar suggestion in the 1955 Allocution, characterizing the "chief dialectic entities" not as "class entities" but as the "great national blocks of 'opposite' countries" orienting themselves around the Soviet Union and

the U.S.A.: "A new international synthesis may yet develop out of this vast dialectic; there is reason now to hope for this, and without the terminal catastrophe of atomic war."[52] He goes on to suggest that the two great power blocs have much to learn from one another. Even Smyth was moving towards peaceful co-existence!

In the end, however, Smyth retained a faith in Marxist dialectics as an analogical method of historical analysis. A few weeks before his death, he wrote a young follower, Edward Mellor, commending Marxist dialectical analysis:

> I myself still think that Dialectics is a very useful and therefore important tool in viewing the world. I think even the Sacraments are illumined by a dialectic analysis. But Marx certainly seems to have believed that human history behaved dialectically as if it were an inanimate (insensate) physical process. Analogically there is something to be said for this too, if one keeps in mind the analogy, and does not imagine that one is stating physical laws as these can be determined in limited scale in a laboratory.[53]

However, this commendation of the dialectics of history as analogical is much weaker than the 1945 suggestion to Sam Bernstein. What was then "cogent" has now only "something to be said for" it .

In the end, given the complexity of human history and human persons, Smyth moved to a much more modest view of what could be accomplished with dialectical analysis. His continuing disillusionment with Soviet practice and theory (whether in philosophy, science or politics), his more critical reading of Marx, his new vision of the S.C.C. as an

autonomous revolutionary cell and the personal influence of anti-Communists within or related to the Society such as David Hecht and Don Johnston all contributed to this movement. Had it not been for continuing opposition from strongly Marxist S.C.C. members, particularly in Canada, England and Japan, the movement away from Marxist theory would have gone much further.

The reference to sacraments and dialectical analysis in the above letter brings one back to Smyth's theological use of dialectics in the fifties. One sees two somewhat contradictory developments. With the freeing of dialectics from metaphysical materialism, Smyth now uses dialectical terminology more freely in his theological discussions, particularly in the early fifties. However, with his own increasing hostility to dialectical materialism and the Cold War hostility of the non-S.C.C. Anglo-Catholics, whom he was trying to reach, to any dialectical terminology, he became more restrained in using dialectics in his published writings.

Probably the most imaginative dialectical theological discussion in this period is the 1950 Allocution, entitled "Some Primary Problems of our Society". It includes a dialectical treatment of Judeo-Christian sacrifice which eventually develops into Smyth's third book, Sacrifice. The discussion moves from Jewish and Christian sacrifice to the

revolutionary vocation of the Society of the Catholic Commonwealth.

In a section entitled "Dialectic of Religion in History", Smyth characterizes the customary Jewish sacrificial system as a thesis. Within it emerged an antithesis of those who, conscientized by a deeper understanding of Judaism, realized the inadequacies of the sacrificial system. They sought a genuinely effective sacrifice that would produce "true and full consumation in eternity to sacrificial victims created by man in time". When "this antithetical religious tension had sufficiently matured", God provided "for the first time a sufficiently perfected Victim", the Incarnate Christ. "For the first time in history, a man-prepared but successful sacrifice was offered up; a perfected unit of creation was successfully returned to God as its proper end."

Smyth explains the Incarnation as a dialectical nodal point:

> Thus the beginning of the Incarnation is the really revolutionary nodal point which terminates thetical Jewish history; for it marks the final revolutionary overthrow of the Jewish temple sacrifices. At the same time it catches up within itself the whole antithetical movement which had begun to realize the inadequacy of the Law as means of preparing sacrifices and it establishes this antithesis within the synthesis of a new sacrificial system in which sacrifices prepared by men of the new Israel, members of the social extension of the Incarnation of God, can in truth fully fulfill every sacrificial purpose.[54]

Smyth goes on to explain in detail how both thesis and anti-

thesis are included in the new synthesis, Christianity. He also goes on to critique Roman Catholic and protestant views of sacrifice as expiatory and substitutionary as unrooted in the dialectical process of the salvation history of sacrifice and therefore false.

In a manner reminiscent of Western Christianity's Whence and Whither, Smyth then moves on to the dialectical vocation of the Society of the Catholic Commonwealth. As a true bearer of the Incarnational and sacrificial synthesis, the S.C.C., in reaction to the false teaching and practice of the thetical church, becomes a new antithesis. The Society's vocation is in continuity with the dialectical development of salvation history.[55] As is so typical of Smyth's writings in the fifties, again one is brought back to the dialectical vocation of the revolutionary Incarnational cell. I shall discuss this movement more fully in the next chapter.

Sacrifice (1953) takes up and discusses fully Smyth's theology of sacrifice, particularly in terms of the role of the Offertory in the Anamnesis. All the major themes of the 1950 Allocution discussion of sacrifice are present. However, the dialectical terminology is entirely absent. Likewise, in the notes to the reprinted text of the Anamnesis at the end of Sacrifice, the dialectical discussion of Eucharistic consecration included in the notes of the 1947 Anamnesis has been omitted. While Smyth was willing to use

dialectical terminology in private correspondence and in the privately circulated Allocutions, he grew increasingly cautious about using dialectical terminology in his public theological writings. In the Cold War era of the fifties, Smyth turned to traditional theological language to promote his still very dialectical theology. Another example of this movement is the 1953 Allocution, "The Incarnation and the Hierarchy of Nature". It is a discussion of the dialectical relations between levels of reality (mineral, vegetative, sensitive, rational, Incarnational) cast entirely in Thomist terminology with no overt reference to dialectics.

At this point it is difficult to go further in discussing Smyth's dialectics without going on to his concept of the dialectical or revolutionary cell. Just as Smyth's attempt to find common ground between Christian and Marxist materialism moved into dialectics with his disillusionment with Marxist materialism, so his attempt to find common ground between Christian and Marxist dialectics moved very quickly into the dialectical Incarnational cell with his disillusionment with Marxist dialectics. I shall now look at this third aspect of Smyth's Christian Marxism.

Notes

[1]SCC papers, I-28, reprint of FHS, "The Catholic Church and Her Environment", from the Living Church, April 25, May 9 and May 23, 1936, p. 17.

[2]Ibid., 18.

[3]Ibid., 20.

[4]Ibid., 21.

[5]Ibid., 23.

[6]Ibid., 21.

[7][Smyth], Society of the Catholic Commonwealth, second edition [1945], 12.

[8]SCC papers, B-20-23, FHS to Sam Bernstein, Aug. 8, 1945.

[9]Bulletin, I, No. 10 (Easter V, 1946), 1.

[10]Ibid., 2-3.

[11]SCC papers, J-7-24, Dialectics mss.

[12]SCC papers, J-7-24, 25, Dialectics mss.

[13]SCC papers, J-7-40, Dialectics mss.

[14]Smyth and Hecht, Western Christianity's Whence and Whither, 5. (Hereafter cited in text as WC with page number.)

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