

Evolving Christian attitudes towards personal and national self-defense

By David B. Kopel

This Article analyzes the changes in orthodox Christian attitudes towards defensive violence.

While the article begins in the 19th century and ends in the 21st, most of the Article is about the 20th century. The article focuses on American Catholicism and on the Vatican, although there is some discussion of American Protestantism.

In the nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries, the traditional Christian concepts of Just War and of the individual's duty to use force to defend himself and his family remained uncontroversial, as they had been for centuries. Disillusionment over World War One turned many Catholics and Protestants towards pacifism. Without necessarily adopting pacifism as a theory, they adopted pacifism as a practice. World War Two and the early Cold War ended the pacifist interlude for all but a few radical pacifists.

Beginning in the 1960s, much of the American Catholic leadership, like the leadership of mainline Protestant churches, turned sharply Left. Although churches did not repudiate their teachings on Just War, many Catholic and mainline Protestant leaders seemed unable to find any circumstances under which American or Western force actually was legitimate. Pacifism and anti-Americanism marched hand in hand. Today, pacifism now has greater respectability within orthodox Christianity than any time in the past 1700 years.

Among the influential thinkers profiled in this Article are all Popes from World War II to the present, Dorothy Day and her Catholic Worker Movement, and the Berrigan Brothers. The article suggests that some recent trends in pacifist or quasi-pacifist approaches have been unduly influenced by hostility to the United States, and by the use of narrowly-focused emotion rather than the rigorous analysis that has characterized Catholic philosophy.

I. The Nineteenth Century

A. Catholics

During the Middle Ages, many great Catholic scholars had articulated a human right and a duty for resistance to tyranny, by violent means if necessary.¹ During the

¹ See David B. Kopel, *The Catholic Second Amendment*, 29 HAMLINE L. REV. 519 (2006) (discussing Manegold of Lautenbach, Gratian, John of Salisbury, Thomas Aquinas, and others); David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant & Joanne D. Eisen, *The Human Right of Self defense*, 22 BYU J. PUB. L. (forthcoming, 2008)(discussing Francisco Suárez; Francisco de Victoria, and Canon Law).

latter part of the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth century, it was the Calvinists, not the Catholics who became identified as the exponents of the God-given right to overthrow oppressive government.² Yet the Calvinists were drawing heavily on Catholic scholars, and it took a long time for the Calvinists to catch up to the Catholics in recognizing the sovereign right of the *people* (not just the intermediate magistrates) to topple an evil government.

One of the reasons why Calvinists ended up being identified with revolution theology was that they were so often on the short end of the stick. In France, they were defeated, disarmed, and eventually destroyed. In the Netherlands, they had to fight for decades to free themselves from Catholic Spain and the Spanish Inquisition, and it took nearly a century for their full independence to be recognized. In England and Scotland, Calvinists had to fight, intermittently, for over a century until their rights were permanently secured in 1688 by the Glorious Revolution.

For Catholics, though, the Counter-reformation was so successful that the practical need for a Catholic revolutionary ideology, and for actual Catholic revolution, was never so great.³ True, there was the Gunpowder Plot in 1609, in which some of England's severely-oppressed Catholics failed in a plan to blow up Parliament and stage a coup. But in general, Catholicism seemed to rest more securely under the protection of Papist monarchs. The Church's intellectual heritage of support of legitimate revolution was dealt another blow by the trauma of the French Revolution. Although the first stages of the revolution promised greater freedom, the revolution degenerated into anti-Christian tyranny. Like twentieth-century Communist regimes, the French dictatorship attempted to destroy the traditional church, and to set itself up as the new object of worship.

In the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church became strongly anti-liberal, and was viewed as a reactionary institution. In some cases, Catholic conservatism was beneficial, as in the Church's visceral distrust of Communism, a philosophy which would eventually lead to the greatest mass murders in history. In other cases, the Church was too slow to recognize progress, taking far too long to embrace the principles of government toleration for diverse faiths. During the reactionary period, Francisco Suárez and the other great Scholastic liberation theologians were de-emphasized, although they are still studied conscientiously in Spanish-speaking countries.

Some Catholics still embraced revolution. Irish agitation to remove English rule was partly motivated by English suppression of Irish Catholicism. After several failed uprisings, the Irish Catholics finally succeeded on Easter Sunday 1916, when a group of revolutionaries seized the General Post Office in Dublin. Although the Easter Uprising was quickly suppressed, the trials of the revolutionaries, who considered themselves Christian martyrs, aroused public sympathy. Irish revolutionaries fought a guerilla war against English occupation which finally resulted in a 1922 compromise by which Ireland was granted independence from the United Kingdom.⁴

² PHILIP BENEDICT, *CHRIST'S CHURCHES PURELY REFORMED: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF CALVINISM* 533-34 (2002).

³ *Id.*, at 535-36.

⁴ The Anglo-Irish Treaty gave Ireland the status of a Dominion within the British Commonwealth (similar to the status of Canada, Australia, or New Zealand). Ireland later withdrew from the Commonwealth, thus ending even nominal ties to English rulers.

While many Catholics forgot their liberation heritage, the long-established doctrines of Just War and of the personal right to self-defense remained clear. For example, the Church supported wars against Napoleon, until the French dictator came to an accommodation with the Church.

The right of self-defense remained uncontroversial. A typical exposition was that of Father Antonio Rosmini in 1823:

He who, being able to be the peaceful owner of something—for example, life—aggresses against somebody else’s life in such a way that the person aggressed against cannot defend himself without depriving the aggressor of his life, operates in such a way as to endanger his own life. We can say that this aggressor throws his life away himself, and that he expressly surrenders his holy property. Thus he who takes the life of the unjust aggressor as the only way to save his own, takes that life with the express consent of the owner.⁵

American Catholicism was unashamedly patriotic. The 1884 Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote: “We believe that our country’s heroes were the instruments of the God of nations in establishing this home of freedom...” The Bishops promised that Catholic citizens would defend America with “their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.”⁶

B. Protestants

American Protestants flourished in the nineteenth century. For the most part, American Protestants reveled in Protestantism’s role as the liberation theology of the American Revolution. By the Age of Jackson, American Protestants saw their nation “as the primary agent of God’s meaningful activity in history.”⁷

When the Civil War began, churches in the United States of America and in the Confederate States of America encouraged the public to fight for their nation’s cause. Southern Presbyterians (1838), Methodists (1844), and Baptists (1845) had already split from their parent denominations, over the issue of slavery. The anti-slavery movement, which had been pacifist in the 1830s, almost unanimously supported President Lincoln’s war policy.⁸

Long before the outbreak of the war, Southern preachers had been warning their congregations that slaves were Christian brothers and sisters who deserved much better treatment than they received from many slave-owners. The South was courting divine chastisement, the preachers predicted, if reform were not forthcoming.

Both sides of the Civil War saw holiness in their cause. Northerners were fighting at first to put down what they considered an illegitimate rebellion, and to prevent the

⁵ Antonio Rosmini Serbati, *Del rispettare le proprietà* (edited by Alberto Mingardi), *ÉLITES*, No.2, 2003.

⁶ GEORGE WIEGEL, *TRANQUILLITAS ORDINIS: THE PRESENT FAILURE AND FUTURE PROMISE OF AMERICAN CATHOLIC THOUGHT ON WAR AND PEACE* 51-52 (1987).

⁷ NATHAN O. HATCH, *THE SACRED CAUSE OF LIBERTY: REPUBLICAN THOUGHT AND THE MILLENNIUM IN REVOLUTIONARY NEW ENGLAND* 140 (1977), quoting John E. Smylie, *National Ethos and the Church*, *THEOLOGY TODAY*, vol. 20 (1963), at 314.

⁸ Staughton Lynd, *Introduction to NONVIOLENCE IN AMERICA: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY*, ed., Staughton Lynd (N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), at xxviii-xxix.

spread of slavery beyond its current borders. Southerners thought they were fighting for self-government and against centralizing tyranny.

As the war dragged on, and Confederate defeats far outnumbered Confederate victories, much of the Southern population lost its faith that God really was on their side. The consequent loss of morale provides the best explanation for why the South finally collapsed and surrendered.

The United States continued its role as the greatest refuge for religious freedom that had ever existed. Small pacifist sects from Europe, such as the Mennonites and the Moravians, found a safe haven in the United States.

Many new Christian sects sprang up in the United States. Most of these sects adhered to traditional Christian doctrine on just war and self-defense. Some of the new sects, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, refused to serve in the military. Generally, Americans respected the freedom of conscience of the pacifist groups, and enacted laws allowing conscientious objectors to perform alternative service, or to pay for a substitute to serve in their place.

While pacifism remained, as a doctrinal matter, confined to small Protestant denominations, there were some more mainstream Protestants who found the pacifist impulse compelling, at least in certain circumstances.

Consider, for example, Dwight L. Moody, the greatest revival preacher of the nineteenth century.⁹ Moody was passionately opposed to slavery. He founded two boarding schools near his hometown in western Massachusetts, to educate children whose parents could not afford an education at the mainline boarding schools such as Exeter or Andover. Unlike many boarding schools, the Northfield School for Girls and the Mount Hermon School for Boys were racially integrated in every way, right from the start. Yet despite Moody's deep commitment to racial equality, he did not enlist in the Civil War because, as he explained, he could not kill a man.¹⁰

II. The First World War and its Aftermath

For Catholics and most Protestants, self-defense remained a well-settled issue. The 1905 Catechism of Pope St. Pius X did not need to discuss such an uncontroversial subject in much detail:

411. Q: What does the Fifth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill, forbid?

A: The Fifth Commandment, Thou shalt not kill, forbids us to kill, strike, wound or do any other bodily harm to our neighbor, either of ourselves or by the agency

⁹ Michael S. Hamilton, *Evangelicalism and Revivalism*, in *DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN HISTORY*, vol. 3, ed., Stanley I. Kutler (N.Y.: Charles Scribners' Sons, 2003), at 265.

¹⁰ "Shall I enter the Army?" *Moody said, "No"*, CHRISTIAN PRINTING MISSION, www.anabaptists.org/tracts/moodywar.html.

Moody had not yet become a preacher, so there was no traditional Christian rule against him fighting. Moody's preaching, accompanied by revival hymns written and performed by Ira Sankey, drew gigantic crowds all over the United States. Moody's focus was on drawing people into a personal commitment to Jesus, and into living the Christian virtues. Issues such as pacifism played essentially no role in Moody's public preaching. His decision not to fight in the Civil War was a personal one, not one which he sought to impose on American society.

of others; as also to wish him evil, or to offend him by injurious language. In this Commandment God also forbids the taking of one's own life, or suicide.

412. Q: Why is it a grave sin to kill one's neighbor?

A: Because the slayer unjustly invades the right which God alone has over the life of man; because he destroys the security of civil society; and because he deprives his neighbor of life, which is the greatest natural good on earth.

413. Q: Are there cases in which it is lawful to kill?

A: It is lawful to kill when fighting in a just war; when carrying out by order of the Supreme Authority a sentence of death in punishment of a crime; and, finally, in cases of necessary and lawful defense of one's own life against an unjust aggressor....

The First World War began in August 1914. While the religious establishments in each combatant nation enthusiastically supported the war, the course of the war, and of American participation therein, set the stage for the pacifist mood of the 1920s and 1930s.

Initially, each side expected to win within a few weeks, thanks to bold offensive plans. The Germans almost knocked France out of the war, but were stopped at the Marne River. Both sides settled in for years of the bloodiest war which the world had ever seen. The war was also one of the stupidest. The Russian commanders were particularly inept, but all sides exhibited great difficulty in adapting to the ways in which warfare had changed.

Elaborate trench-works were constructed early in World War One. The American Civil War had seen the introduction of Gatling guns, primitive hand-cranked predecessors of the machine gun. By World War One, true automatic machine guns were ubiquitous in the armies of industrial nations. If machine-guns were deployed properly, they could create interlocking fields of fire—so that a charging enemy would be met with machine gun fire at every point in the line of advance. The death toll was enormous.

For the time being, the tactical advantage in warfare swung to the defense—although commanders on both sides insisted on pouring thousands upon thousands of their soldiers lives into “offensives” which gained a few hundred yards or a few miles of territory.

Both sides looked for technological breakthroughs to end the bloody stalemate. Primitive airplanes and tanks appeared, but not until World War II, when the Germans unveiled the *blitzkrieg*, were tanks and planes exploited in a manner which changed the course of battle. Both sides in World War One made liberal use of poison gas, but both sides quickly adapted by issuing gas masks. The chemical warfare made World War One even more horrible, but did not alter the advantage enjoyed by the defense.

Exhausted, the Allies by 1917 were preparing to negotiate a treaty with the Germans which would have ended the war on equal terms, essentially restoring the *status quo ante*. But the Allied need to negotiate was obviated when American President Woodrow Wilson drew the United States into the war.

Wilson's 1916 re-election slogan had been “He kept us out of war.” But a disclaimer should have been included: “Past performance does not guarantee future intentions.” In fact, Wilson was working hard to put the U.S. in the war. International law allowed Britain to attempt a naval blockade of weapons shipments to Germany; but Britain also blockaded food shipments. The “hunger blockade” was in flagrant violation

of international law, yet President Wilson uttered no protest, and cooperated with the British blockade—even though America was neutral in the war and Wilson professed to be a great admirer of international law.

Wilson's ambassador to England plotted with the British government about how to conduct propaganda in the United States. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan, a supporter of the traditional nineteenth-century American policy of staying out of foreign wars, resigned in protest.

Wilson authorized continuous provocations against Germany, such as allowing military goods to be shipped to Britain on passenger ships. These provocations had the desired effect of causing German counter-reactions which inflamed American public opinion. In 1915, the Germans sank the *Lusitania*, a passenger ship which was illegally carrying a huge quantity of arms to the British. The sinking incensed much of the American public.

By 1917, the hunger blockade had made conditions in Germany desperate. The Germans attempted a bold stroke which they knew would either knock Britain out of the war, or lead to American entry. The Germans launched unrestricted submarine warfare against all ships bound for Britain. At the same time, the Germans sent the "Zimmermann Telegram" to the Mexican government, inquiring if the Mexicans might be interested in fighting against the United States, and recapturing the territories lost in 1848.¹¹

The German gambit failed. In April 1917, President Wilson asked Congress for a Declaration of War, and received an overwhelming positive vote in Congress. The President had repeatedly deceived the American people. His greatest allies in the campaign to promote American participation in the war had been the financial interests in the northeast, which had close ties to British commercial interests.

Within the United States, 1917-18 was the all-time nadir of civil liberties. Congress passed a Sedition Act which was interpreted so as to criminalize any writing which criticized American participation in the war.

The income tax had been authorized by a constitutional amendment passed in 1913, and proponents had promised that that income tax would be only one percent for most taxpayers, and not much more for even the wealthiest. But by 1918, the top tax rate was seventy-seven percent and even the poorest families were paying six percent.

Big businesses such as energy companies and railroads were relieved from the burdens of competition (and consumers thus denied the benefits of competition), through quasi-fascist industrial cartelization imposed by government regulators. Meanwhile, President Wilson promised "A war to end all wars."

In that war, a Christian pacifist became the most popular American military hero between the Civil War and World War Two.

A. Sergeant Alvin York

Alvin York grew up poor in the Valley of the Three Forks, in the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee.¹² His family was large and poor. They depended on hunting for food, and young Alvin became an early master of the family's hand-made muzzle-loading rifle. Because every game animal was needed for meat, Alvin learned how to kill

¹¹ Mexico had lost a war which Mexico started in anger over the decision of the United States to admit the independent Republic of Texas as an American state.

¹² This section is based on DAVID D. LEE, *SERGEANT YORK: AMERICAN HERO* (1985).

a squirrel or a turkey with a precise shot to the head, saving the body meat for eating. He was often gone for days on hunting trips.

At age twenty-seven, the rowdy York fell in love with Gracie Williams, the teenage daughter of a deeply religious family. She insisted that he give up drinking and fighting if he intended to win her.

On January 1, 1915, Alvin York made a personal commitment to Jesus, and joined the Church of Christ in Christian Union. The church was a fundamentalist sect which had spun off from the Methodists during the Civil War. The church had few established doctrines, but instead required members to read the Bible, and to draw their own conclusions. The church did not formally have pacifist doctrines, but one of the reasons for the split from the Methodists was that the Christian Union founders had refused to support Methodist resolutions backing the Union cause during the Civil War.

By the time that Alvin York received his draft notice in June 1917, he had read that the Bible said “Thou shalt not kill,” and had concluded—as had many other members of his church—that war-fighting was wrong.

Because York did not belong to a denomination with formal pacifist beliefs, his request for conscientious objector status was denied. He was inducted in November 1917.

York quietly went through basic training, and then in the spring of 1918, spoke to an officer about his continuing objection to war. York’s sincerity was obvious and he was taken to see Major George Edward Buxton, the battalion commander. Buxton and York spent a long night discussing the Bible. Buxton pointed to Jesus’s instruction that the apostles should carry swords (*Luke 22:36*); to Jesus statement that earthly kingdoms, unlike Jesus’s spiritual kingdom, do fight (*John 18:36*); and to the obligation for Christians to give governments the “things that are Caesar’s.” Finally, Buxton read York *Ezekiel 33:1-6*, in which God told the prophet to tell the people to listen for the watchman’s trumpet, and to take warning when an armed invader comes.

York was now unsure what to think, so Buxton gave York a ten-day pass to go home and mull things over. York was promised that if he still objected to war, he would be given a non-combat assignment.

York returned home, carrying his suitcase as he walked the final twelve miles of the trip. At home, York’s pastor and congregation urged him to remain an objector, and so did his mother. He went into the mountains alone, where he spent two days and one night praying for guidance.

York came down from the mountain, and explained to a fellow congregant, “If some feller was to come along and bust into your house and mistreat your wife and murder your children, you’d just stand for it? You wouldn’t fight?”

In May 1918, York’s unit shipped out to France. York was convinced “we were to be peace-makers...That was we-uns. We were to help make peace, the only way the Germans would understand.”

On October 2, 1918, the first battalion of the 308th Infantry Regiment was surrounded by Germans, and isolated from the rest of the American army. York’s division was sent to rescue the “Lost Battalion.”

Leading a patrol on the morning of October 8, York and his men surrounded a German camp, which surrendered after York killed one man. As the Americans were lining up the prisoners, German machine-gunners opened fire from the nearby hills. Nine Americans were instantly killed or wounded.

A wild gun battle ensued. York began picking off the German machine-gunners with his Enfield rifle. When one of York's five-round ammunition clips ran out, the Germans commenced a bayonet charge, figuring that at least one of the Germans could get to York before he could reload. York raised his Colt .45 pistol and dropped the charging Germans. York yelled for the Germans to surrender, and their commander ordered a surrender.

Alvin York and the seven remaining able-bodied Americans faced the task of controlling several dozen German prisoners, and getting them through German territory and back to the American lines. On the march back, York's group ran into two other groups of Germans, and bluffed them into surrendering too.

Returning to American lines, York brought in 128 German enlisted men and four officers. Almost single-handed, York with his one rifle and one pistol had killed twenty-five Germans, and knocked thirty-five German machine guns out of action. Private York was promoted to Sergeant. The French commander Marshal Foch called York's feat "the greatest thing accomplished by any private soldier in all the armies in Europe."

Of course the Germans could have defeated York, but their morale was low, and York's was as high as could be. He believed that God was with him. He later explained, "We know there are miracles, don't we? Well this was one. I was taken care of—it's the only way I can figure it."

Germany surrendered on November 11, 1918, and when Sergeant York's transport ship landed in the United States, he was the biggest hero in the country. York returned to his hometown in Tennessee, and devoted his life to trying to better his community through education. In 1941, the film *Sergeant York*, starring Gary Cooper, opened to nationwide acclaim. Alvin York briefly considered running in the Democratic primary against his district's incumbent U.S. Representative, Albert Gore, Sr.¹³

In the decades following World War One, the United States saw itself changing from a nation of small farmers to a nation of urbanites working for big industries. Alvin York represented the simple, honest, and faithful ideas of the old America. Americans celebrated York as representing the best of what they hoped was still the essence of their national character.

B. Inter-war Pacifism

The more that Americans reflected on what was called "The Great War," the more they decided that all the things they liked about Alvin York made them dislike Europe. The majority of the American public concluded in the 1920s and 1930s that American participation in the Great War had been a mistake. Indeed, Sergeant York himself came to that conclusion.

Americans grew furious at having allowed themselves to be tricked into the war by British business interests. Many Americans decided that from now on, European wars should not be America's business.

In Great Britain, the sacrifices and deaths during the war had been vastly greater than what America had suffered. Large numbers of American forces had only been in combat for about half a year; the British had fought and bled and died for over four years.

In Great Britain and in the United States, pacifism moved into the mainstream of Christian opinion. The pacifist views were not necessarily absolutist, in the sense of

¹³ The future father of the future vice-president.

forbidding a husband to protect his wife from a criminal who was trying to rape and kill her. Rather, the pacifism tended to focus on more pragmatic arguments, such as the claim that wars do not solve anything. Regarding the Great War, much of the public agreed that the War had produced very little that had been worth fighting for.

Much of the Protestant leadership joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an ecumenical organization founded in 1915 to promote Christian pacifism.¹⁴

Pacifists also warned that a future war would be so terrible that civilization would be destroyed. Airplanes, poison gas, and other inventions had now made war so dangerous, said the pacifists, that nothing could be worth fighting for.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, a famous liberal Baptist minister of Riverside Church in New York City, announced that he would never again bless a war.¹⁵ He declared that there could never be a war for democracy, because “Whoever wins it, there is bound to be less democracy than there was before.”¹⁶

In 1928, the Kellogg-Briand Pact, which outlawed war (but not military defense against aggression) was signed. The Pact, produced by American Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand, was eventually ratified by sixty-two nations, almost every sovereign in the world at the time. The Pact passed the U.S. Senate with only a single negative vote. Kellogg-Briand had one success: helping to defuse a 1929 Soviet-Chinese dispute over a railroad in Manchuria.

The other effect of the Pact was to encourage aggressor nations not to issue formal declarations of war. Thus, there was no declaration of war for Japan’s 1931 invasion of Manchuria, Italy’s 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, and Germany’s 1938 threatened invasion of Austria (which eventually took place peacefully, thanks to the cowardice of the Austrian government and the democracies). Kellogg was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize, Briand having already won one.

The Pact helped produce World War II, by encouraging that belief in the mid-1930s that decisive military action against Hitler, while he was still weak, was immoral or illegal. All fifteen of the original signatory nations ended up fighting in World War II. Technically, the Pact is still in force, a permanent reminder of folly of believing that pieces of paper will deter aggressive dictatorships.

After Hitler took over Germany in 1933, then violated the Versailles Treaty by rebuilding the German army, and then gobbled up Austria in 1938 and Czechoslovakia in 1939, more and more American liberal Protestants thinkers began to pull away from pacifism.¹⁷

¹⁴ The U.S. Fellowship was founded in 1915; the original, English Fellowship was founded the year before.

¹⁵ ROLAND H. BAINTON, *CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD WAR & PEACE: A HISTORICAL SURVEY AND CRITICAL RE-EVALUATION* 214 (1960) *citing* HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK, *A CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE ABOUT WAR* (1925).

¹⁶ Joseph Loconte, “The Phone Charge of Imperialism” (Knight-Ridder syndicated column), www.heritage.org/Press/Commentary/ed041003.cfm.

Fosdick’s reasoning was silly. It was similar to saying “I will not buy a safe to protect my money from a thief, because either way, I’m bound to have less money than I did before.” But if you sacrifice some of your money (or liberties) for a safe (or for national safety), you may still have most of your money (or liberty) left. If you refuse to take action to thwart a thief (or a genocidal tyrant), then you will have *none* or your money (or liberty) left.

¹⁷ WIEGEL, *TRANQUILLITAS*, at 218.

By the time that Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939, the ranks of Christian pacifists had greatly declined in England. As one man put it, “I used to be a pacifist. I know now that I would rather go to hell for fighting than have my son brought up to think it was funny to kick a Jew in the stomach.”¹⁸

There were a few Britons who wanted to let the Nazis invade their island, and greet the invaders with Christian love. But they were a small minority.

America, though, still had plenty of pacifists. A November 1939 poll of 54,000 Catholic college students asked students what they would do in the event of war: 20 percent said they would volunteer; 44 percent would not volunteer but would comply with a draft; and 36 said they would claim a conscientious objector exemption.¹⁹

III. World War II

In November 1940, when the Nazis bestrode Europe like a colossus, the American Catholic Bishops renewed their 1884 pledge, and again resolved to “give themselves unstintingly to defense.”²⁰ The Presiding Bishop of the American Episcopal Church, Henry St. George Tucker, had argued for American neutrality when the war began in 1939. But by 1941, Tucker and most Episcopalians favored military action against the Fascists.²¹

Despite the pre-war poll, only 223 American Catholics attempted to claim conscientious objector status; most of those who were granted such status bravely chose to serve as unarmed medical personnel on the front lines.²² There was broad agreement among Christians that resistance to Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo was a preeminent example of Just War. The dissenters tended to oppose war in all circumstances. The Methodists, who had opposed war even in 1939-40, became firm supporters of the American war effort after Pearl Harbor. The 1944 Methodist General Conference declared “God himself has a stake in the struggle,” and announced that Methodist conscientious objectors were wrong as a matter of doctrine.²³

The Germans had bombed London and other cities indiscriminately whenever they had the power to do so. In violation of the laws of war, the German bombing was not aimed at particular military targets, but was undertaken to terrorize the civilian population.

Assisted by amoral scientists such as Werner Heisenberg, the Germans attempted to build an atomic bomb. They also worked on long-range rockets which could strike

¹⁸ BAINTON, at 218, citing N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 23 & 27, 1941, and CHRISTIAN CENTURY, Apr. 16, 1941, at 523. The man’s comment unintentionally evoked one of the best known passages from Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Raised in the slave state of Missouri, Huck was convinced that abolitionists and other people who helped slaves escape would be punished in hell. At the novel’s climactic moral point, Huck decided, “All right, then, I’ll go to hell!” and helped the slave Jim escape.

¹⁹ RONALD J. MUSTO, THE CATHOLIC PEACE TRADITION 243-44 (1986), citing *National Catholic College Poll*, AMERICA, vol. 62 (Nov. 11, 1939), at 116-19; & (Nov. 18, 1939), at 144-47.

²⁰ WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 57.

²¹ DAVID HEIN & GARDINER H. SHATTUCK, JR., THE EPISCOPALIANS 117-18 (2004).

²² MUSTO, at 244.

²³ Barry Penn-Hollar, *Methodism*, in ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGION AND WAR 305 (Gabriel Palmer-Fernandez ed., 2004).

enemy cities which were—once the Germans lost air superiority—beyond the reach of bombers.²⁴

Then in August 1945, President Truman ordered the use of the newly-invented atomic bomb against Hiroshima, Japan. Two days beforehand, warning leaflets were dropped on Hiroshima, urging civilians to evacuate. On August 9, 1945, the Hiroshima bomb was dropped, and 70,000 people were killed instantly. The Japanese still refused to surrender, and so Truman ordered a bomb dropped on Nagasaki on August 15. Forty thousand were killed immediately at Nagasaki. Among the immediate casualties at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were 10,000 Japanese soldiers. Besides the direct casualties, more people died later from radiation poisoning. The second bomb did bring unconditional surrender.

The use of the atomic bombs certainly saved many American lives, and perhaps millions of Japanese lives—compared the deaths that would have resulted from a conventional invasion of Japan. By comparison, the American invasion of the small island of Okinawa in the spring of 1945 had resulted in 123,000 deaths of American and Japanese soldiers, and about 100,000 civilian deaths.

American planners expected that conquering Japan would take three years; “Golden Gate by forty-eight” was the slogan of American soldiers preparing for the invasion. In anticipation of the invasion, the Japanese had been preparing every Japanese man, woman, and child to fight to the death. The government told the Japanese to sacrifice “One Hundred Million Souls for Emperor.” Given the fanaticism with which the Japanese military fought, even when the war was clearly hopeless, there is good reason to believe that the invasion of Japan would have produced casualties vastly larger than the numbers of casualties that resulted from Hiroshima and Nagasaki.²⁵

Some religious ethicists, while supporting the justice of the war, raised questions about the way it had been fought. With the war still in progress, John Ford in 1944 authored a critique of “obliteration bombing.” When the atomic bombs were used in 1945, Ford wrote well-publicized criticisms.²⁶

In previous centuries, ethicists had understood that a war could be just and aggressive at the same time—for example, in order to rescue a town or a region conquered by the enemy. One of the hotly-debated issues among the Nuremberg war crimes prosecutors was whether to bring charges that some of the defendants had conspired to start an “aggressive war.” Some of the prosecutors felt that it was wrong to bring criminal charges regarding the causes of war; these prosecutors favored charges for genocide, or for violations of the laws of war. But they did not think that it was right to send the losers to prison because the victors disagreed with the losers’ rationale for initiating a war.

The prosecutors who did want to bring “aggressive war” charges won the day, and some defendants were convicted of this charge. In the public mind, and in the mind of

²⁴ For more on Heisenberg see David B. Kopel, *Uncertain Uncertainty: Postmodernism Unravels*, NAT’L REV. ONLINE, Apr. 4, 2002, <http://www.nationalreview.com/kopel/kopel040402.asp>.

²⁵ For a good introduction to the debate, see Paul Fussell, *Thank God for the Atom Bomb*, THE NEW REPUBLIC, Aug. 26, 1981.

²⁶ JOHN T. MCGREEVY, CATHOLICISM AND AMERICAN FREEDOM: A HISTORY 226-27(2003).

There is a large and fascinating body of scholarship on the relationship between atomic weapons and traditional Just War doctrine. The debate is beyond the scope of this Article, however.

religious ethicists, the concepts of “just” and “defensive” war began to congeal. Pope Pius XII announced a ban on “wars of aggression.”²⁷

IV. The Cold War

A. John Courtney Murray

Within the American Catholic community, the Pope’s new rule on wars of aggression was little cause for concern. The United States had entered World War II because it was attacked; the United States had entered the Korean War because South Korea was attacked. Around the world, it was the Communists, not the Free World, who tended to start aggressive wars.

For centuries, American Catholics had been working to integrate themselves in the American mainstream while maintaining their Catholic identity. Charles Carroll of Carrollton had been a Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the heavily-Catholic state of Maryland had fought bravely in the American Revolution. But the mass immigration of very poor Irish Catholics in the 1840s, and of other thoroughly uneducated groups such as Italian Catholics in the late nineteenth century, had made many large American cities dirty, crowded, and dangerous. The Catholic school system strove diligently to educate and Americanize the immigrants, but there was still a significant backlash from much of America’s Protestant majority.

Al Smith, the Catholic Governor of New York, had been the Democratic nominee for President in 1928. He had been defeated in a landslide by Herbert Hoover, partly as a result of the hostility of small-town, “dry” Protestant America to the big-city Catholic who wanted to repeal alcohol Prohibition. Not until 1960 did a Catholic again become a serious contender for the Presidency, when Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy emerged as the Democratic front-runner. Some opponents argued that because Kennedy must obey whatever the Pope said, Kennedy would not have the freedom to make decisions in the best interests of the United States.

It was time to re-visit the role of American Catholics in American public life. In *We Hold These Truths: Catholic Reflections on the American Proposition*, the influential Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray examined the interplay between Catholic faith and American citizenship.²⁸ The book was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine in December 1960, as the nation waited for its first Catholic President to take office in January.

On the subject of national defense and the use of force, Murray expressed the mainstream of American Catholic thought, which regarded Communism as an extremely dangerous enemy which must be resisted. Murray denounced “pathetic appeals to ‘understand the Russians.’”

These appeals were rooted in “the pseudo-morality of secular liberalism, especially of the academic variety.” The false theory was “that knowledge is virtue...if only we really could get to understand everybody, our foreign policy would inevitably be good. The trouble is that the past failures of the political intelligence of secular

²⁷ WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 127.

²⁸ JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, *WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS: CATHOLIC REFLECTIONS ON AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP* (1960).

liberalism, and its demonstrated capacities for misunderstanding, have already pretty much discredited it.”

Communism was “a spiritual menace” which had produced “not simply a crisis in history, but perhaps the crisis of history.” Murray argued that public policy needed a firmer basis in careful reasoning—especially reasoning based on the natural law roots which had long nourished Catholicism, and which had also produced the Declaration of Independence. In contrast, the purely pragmatist approach “bears beneath its pragmatism the American-Protestant taint of pacifism.”

Murray disputed the notion of “relative pacifists” that modern weapons of war had made modern war unthinkable. Further, the “relative pacifists” (as opposed to absolute pacifists) who thought that the United Nations could bring world peace failed to understand that the U.N. “is basically a power-organization. And its decisions, like those rendered by war itself, are natively apt to sanction injustice as well as justice.”

Murray repeated Pius XII’s admonition that “law and order have need at times of the powerful arm of force.” As the Pope had told a delegation of visitors from the U.S. House Armed Services Committee in October 1947:

The precept of peace is of divine right. Its purpose is to protect the goods of humanity, inasmuch as they are goods of the Creator. Among these goods there are some of such importance for the human community that their defense against unjust aggression is without doubt fully justified.²⁹

Murray explained that the Pope’s various statements on war and peace had nowhere forbidden the use of atomic, biological, or chemical weapons.

During the 1950s, some West Germans had claimed a right to a conscientious objector status, in order to avoid serving in the German military. The number of such potential objectors increased when American nuclear weapons were deployed in West Germany.³⁰

The Pope responded that no Catholic had the right to claim conscientious objector status: the West German government was legitimate, open, and democratic, and was asking its citizens to serve during a period of extreme peril. Pius XII repeated that a citizen’s duty of armed service to the state, and a state’s right to armed self-defense were traditional Catholic doctrine.

The Pope was working from the premise of the God-given dignity of man, and hence the transcendent necessity of respect for human rights. Thus, summarized Murray:

Pius XII transcended the vulgar pacifism of sentimentalist and material inspiration that is so common today. The tradition of reason has always

²⁹ Likewise, Pius XII’s 1948 Christmas Message had declared “One of the most important good of human societies is that their defense against unjust aggression is fully justified.” Quoted in JACQUES ELLUL, *VIOLENCE: REFLECTIONS FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE*, transl., Cecelia Gaul Kings (N.Y.: Seabury Pr., 1969), at 141. The 1954 Christmas Eve message linked pacifism to Communist propaganda, and stated that a Catholic citizen of democratic country “cannot invoke his own conscience in order to refuse to serve and fulfill those [military] duties that law imposes.” MUSTO, *THE CATHOLIC PEACE TRADITION*, at 185 (Musto’s text refers to a 1954 message, but his citation is for a 1956 message).

³⁰ The Soviet conventional army was far larger than all NATO armies in West Germany, and likely could have won a conventional-only invasion of West Germany.

maintained that the highest value in society is the inviolability of the order of rights and justice.... Peace itself is the work of justice; and therefore peace is not compatible with impunity for the evil of injustice.

In short, Murray explained that Catholic views on the use of force were based on precisely the self-evident natural law truths on which the Declaration of Independence was based. Regarding the use of force, there was nothing in Murray's book which a Calvinist minister from revolutionary New England would have disputed; indeed, the minister would likely have been pleasantly surprised to find a Jesuit writing so many agreeable things.

A few weeks after Murray's book was published, America's first Catholic President was sworn into office. He had run on a platform critiquing the Eisenhower-Nixon administration for insufficient vigor in fighting communism. Speaking as President for the first time, John F. Kennedy told his fellow Americans that

the same revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought are still at issue around the globe—the belief that the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God.

We dare not forget today that we are the heirs of that first revolution... we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, in order to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

Kennedy looked forward to the beginning of world peace and disarmament—on the basis of justice and freedom. Never would the Kennedy administration engage in unilateral disarmament: “We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed.”

Thomas Merton summed up the standard belief of Catholics and other American Christians: “Western society equals Christendom and Communism equals Antichrist.” Thus, mainstream Christians were “ready to declare without hesitation that ‘no price is too high’ to pay for our religious liberties.”³¹ Catholic prayer book instructed Catholics on their duty to resist communism. During “Prayers After Low Mass,” Catholics prayed for the conversion of Russia.³²

B. Vatican II

While John F. Kennedy promoted the New Frontier in America, the new Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) was bringing change to the Catholic Church. He convened a Second Vatican Council, which met from 1962 through 1965.

In April 1963, Pope John published *Pacem in Terris*, setting forth new teachings on many social issues, including peace.³³ Regarding legitimacy of government, *Pacem in*

³¹ THOMAS MERTON, *THE NONVIOLENT ALTERNATIVE* 83 (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, rev. ed. 1980)(1st published as *Thomas Merton on Peace*, 1971) (reprinting magazine article written previously by Merton).

³² PATRICIA MCNEAL, *HARDER THAN WAR: CATHOLIC PEACEMAKING IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA* 74 (1992). The conversion prayers ended after Vatican II. *Id.* Low Mass is a shorter and simpler version of the High Mass. The usual Catholic Mass is the High Mass.

³³ Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris: Encyclical on Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty* (Apr. 11, 1963).

Terris took the same view as the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence. Governments were instituted to protect inalienable rights, and governments which failed to do so were not legitimate governments:

It is agreed that in our time the common good is chiefly guaranteed when personal rights and duties are maintained. The chief concern of civil authorities must therefore be to ensure that these rights are acknowledged, respected, coordinated with other rights, defended and promoted, so that in this way each one may more easily carry out his duties. For “to safeguard the inviolable rights of the human person, and to facilitate the fulfillment of his duties, should be the chief duty of every public authority.”

This means that, if any government does not acknowledge the rights of man or violates them, it not only fails in its duty, but its orders completely lack juridical force.

Pope John restated the progressive version of *Romans 13* (that Christians are obliged to obey just governments, but not obliged to obey evil ones). He quoted Augustine’s observation that oppressive governments are nothing more than a band of robbers.

Pope John denounced the arms race because it impeded economic development and assistance to poor countries. Further, even the testing of atomic weapons might endanger human health. Accordingly, “the arms race should cease” and all nations should participate in mutual disarmament.

Consistent with Pope John’s approach, President Kennedy negotiated a nuclear test ban treaty with the Soviet Union, whereby both nations agreed to a verifiable and mutual halt on atmospheric or underwater nuclear tests. Underground tests were still allowed, because a ban was harder to verify, and the dangerous dispersal of radiation was much less of a problem for underground tests.

C. Pope Paul VI

Pope John XXIII is often remembered as a liberal Pope, in part because of his overlap—both in name and tenure, with President John F. Kennedy. The next Pope, Paul VI, is often labeled a conservative—but the label stems almost entirely from the Pope’s decision in his 1969 encyclical *Human Life* not to relax traditional Catholic teachings against abortion or artificial birth control. On other issues, however, Pope Paul steered the Catholic Church much further to the left than it had ever gone before.

Perhaps the most important product of the Second Vatican Council, which concluded its work in 1965, was the *Pastoral Constitution of The Church in the Modern World*.³⁴ The document addressed modern social issues, including war, and on that issue, the *Constitution* fit comfortably into well-established Catholic tradition.

While the *Pastoral Constitution* deplored the increasing ferocity of modern war, and insisted that no soldier may ever commit atrocities, the document acknowledged that state authorities “and others who share public responsibility have a duty” to use force when necessary to protect people in their care. Consistent with the views of Augustine, Aquinas, and other traditional Catholic scholars, the *Constitution* explained that if

³⁴ *Gaudium et Spes* (Joys and Hopes) (Dec. 7, 1965).

soldiers fight not to subjugate other people, but instead for “security and freedom of peoples,” then they “are making a genuine contribution to the establishment of peace.”³⁵

The document unequivocally denounced the use of weapons of mass destruction against civilian populations—but not the use of nuclear or other weapons in a tactical military setting in which soldiers would be the target.³⁶

The *Constitution* urged nations to work towards a reciprocal, verifiable “beginning of disarmament, not unilaterally indeed, but proceeding at an equal pace according to agreement, and backed up by true and workable safeguards.”³⁷

The focus of the *Pastoral Constitution*’s teaching on arms was on international affairs. Yet the *Constitution* recognized that besides governments, there are “others who share public responsibility” to “to protect the welfare of the people entrusted to their care.” Thus, if a schoolteacher wondered about the legitimacy of using war-like force (such as a deadly weapon) to protect the children in her care, the logic of the *Pastoral Constitution* is that teachers “have the duty” to do so when necessary.

On October 4, 1965, Pope Paul became the first Pope to address the United Nations, and his faith in the U.N. might have startled even Eleanor Roosevelt. Not only did he praise the United Nations as a great school for peace, he announced, “No more war, war never again! Peace, it is peace that must guide the destinies of peoples and all mankind.”

In 1967, the Pope issued an encyclical which took a very restrictive view of the right of revolution:

There are certainly situations whose injustice cries to heaven. When whole populations destitute of necessities live in a state of dependence barring them from all initiative and responsibility, and all opportunity to advance culturally and share in social and political life, recourse to violence, as a means to right these wrongs to human dignity, is a grave temptation.

We know, however, that a revolutionary uprising—save where there is manifest, long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal

35

Certainly, war has not been rooted out of human affairs. As long as the danger of war remains and there is no competent and sufficiently powerful authority at the international level, governments cannot be denied the right to legitimate defense once every means of peaceful settlement has been exhausted. State authorities and others who share public responsibility have the duty to conduct such grave matters soberly and to protect the welfare of the people entrusted to their care. But it is one thing to undertake military action for the just defense of the people, and something else again to seek the subjugation of other nations. Nor, by the same token, does the mere fact that war has unhappily begun mean that all is fair between the warring parties.

Those too who devote themselves to the military service of their country should regard themselves as the agents of security and freedom of peoples. As long as they fulfill this role properly, they are making a genuine contribution to the establishment of peace

Id., item 79. The statement about the legitimacy of military service came in response to requests from American bishops, particularly the Archbishop of New Orleans, Philip M. Hannan. WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 419.

³⁶ Item 80; WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 250.

³⁷ Item 81.

rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country—produces new injustices, throws more elements out of balance and brings on new disasters. A real evil should not be fought against at the cost of greater misery.³⁸

In July 1949, the Communist party had been on the verge on winning the Italian elections. Everywhere Communists had obtained power, free elections had been abolished, and permanent dictatorship imposed. With the threat of Communist dictatorship imminent, Pius XII declared that any person who consciously advanced Communism was “without question excommunicated.” The declaration was consistent with the 1937 statement of Pius XI that any form of support for Communism was sinful.

Popes Pius XI and XII obviously looked in horror at the records of Communist governments, which were based on atheistic materialism, and which abolished freedom of religion wherever they ruled. To Pope Paul VI, however, fear of the Communist menace apparently seemed ridiculous. In 1977, he denounced the “absurd cold war.”³⁹

D. Pope John Paul II

Pope John Paul II took office in 1978. He was the first non-Italian Pope in many centuries, and as a Pole, he was a great symbol of hope to the oppressed people of the Warsaw Pact.

Marxists had long predicted the crisis of capitalism would lead to the system’s collapse due to its internal self-contradictions. In 1982, President Ronald Reagan told the British Parliament that “It is the Soviet Union that runs against the tide of history...the march of freedom and democracy which will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history as it has left other tyrannies which stifle the freedom and muzzle the self-expression of the people.”

The Soviet Empire was beginning to crack. President Reagan ratcheted the arms to new heights, correctly seeing that capitalist American economy could handle a sharp increase in military spending, but that the centrally-planned Soviet economy was already close to the breaking point.

Having invaded Afghanistan in 1979, the Soviet military was stuck in a quagmire with little prospect of victory against the heavily-armed population.

The Afghanistan resistance allowed the growth of a peaceful social revolutionary movement in Poland, starting in the early 1980s. *Solidarnosc* leader Lech Walesa credited the Afghan rebels with creating the essential breathing space for Poland’s movement of workers, peasants, and intellectuals. Bugged down in an unwinnable war in Afghanistan, the Soviet army was reluctant to undertake an invasion of Poland to crush *Solidarnosc*.

Pope John Paul II undoubtedly could have ignited a holy revolution in Poland, had he chosen to do so, but he did not. In 1986, Pope John Paul II reaffirmed the Church’s historical teachings on the legitimacy of the use of force as “a last resort” against tyranny.⁴⁰ He cautioned that revolutions are not ends in themselves, but may lead

³⁸ Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (On The Development Of Peoples), Encyclical Letter (Mar. 26, 1967), paras. 30-31.

³⁹ WIEGEL, *TRANQUILLITAS*, at 253, citing Pope Paul VI, “If You Want Peace, Defend Life” 1977 Annual Message on World Day of Peace.

⁴⁰ Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation, *Libertatis Conscientia*, March 22, 1986. Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

to totalitarianism if they are not pursued in order to establish justice. The Pope's observation was consistent with the historical examples of the French Revolution, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the Cuban Revolution, among others.

He continued:

These principles must be especially applied in the extreme case where there is recourse to armed struggle, which the Church's Magisterium admits as a last resort to put an end to an obvious and prolonged tyranny which is gravely damaging the fundamental rights of individuals and the common good. Nevertheless, the concrete application of this means cannot be contemplated until there has been a very rigorous analysis of the situation. Indeed, because of the continual development of the technology of violence and the increasingly serious dangers implied in its recourse, that which today is termed 'passive resistance' shows a way more conformable to moral principles and having no less prospects for success.

Here, the Pope encouraged "passive resistance," while still recognizing use of arms could be morally legitimate. In fact, passive resistance did work in much Eastern Europe; the Communist governments of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Bulgaria all collapsed in late 1989. The Rumanian dictatorship, which had been the worst of the lot, also fell, but only because of a military coup, and it took a period of fighting in Rumania before the old regime was defeated.

The Pope had chosen his words carefully, and had avoided the error made by the Eisenhower administration in Eastern Europe. Winning the 1952 U.S. election by promising "rollback" of Communism, President Eisenhower's administration had allowed Radio Free Europe to incite revolution in the countries behind the Iron Curtain. Yet when the Hungarian people rose in revolution in 1956, the Eisenhower administration offered them no military support, and the revolution was crushed by the Soviet army.

On the question of revolution, Catholic doctrine under John Paul II continued to acknowledge that the final decision is for the people, not the church. In *An Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching*, Jesuit Priest Rodger Charles explains that on the extremely serious issue of revolution against tyranny, "It is, of course, not for the Church to encourage, still less initiate, such action and she must always caution in favor of peace; but since the political order has its own autonomy under the natural law and it is for the laity to direct that order, then it is up to their properly informed consciences to decide when it is necessary. Their pastors can counsel them but the decision is not theirs to make."⁴¹

V. The 1990s

A. The International Arms Trade

That Pope John Paul II was careful not to incite a military hopeless revolution did not mean that the Catholic Church had become pacifist. Traditional teachings about just war and self-defense were reaffirmed.

⁴¹ RODGER CHARLES INTRODUCTION TO CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING 49 (S.F.: Ignatius Pr., 1999).

For example, a 1994 document, *The International Arms Trade*, produced by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace stated: "In a world marked by evil and sin, the right of legitimate defense by armed means exists. This right can become a serious duty for those who are responsible for the lives of others, for the common good of the family or of the civil community." The document noted that "the right" to armed defense "is coupled with the duty to do all possible to reduce to a minimum, and indeed eliminate, the causes of violence."⁴²

Thus, armed defense was a "right" and a "duty" for families and for nations. Further, there was a "duty of intervening in favor of populations unable to provide for their own survival." When, despite diplomacy, "populations are succumbing to the attacks of an unjust aggressor, States no longer have a 'right to indifference'. It seems clear that their duty is to disarm the aggressor, if all other means have proved ineffective."

Therefore, "The principles of sovereignty of States and of non-interference in their internal affairs...cannot constitute a screen behind which torture and murder may be carried out." Notwithstanding the principle of sovereignty, "a way must be found to defend persons, wherever they may be, against an evil of which they are nothing more than the innocent victims."⁴³

The 1994 statement provided an extremely broad duty upon nations to invade other nations when the human rights violations are grave and diplomatic means have failed. The 1994 statement was not novel, for it drew on tradition dating back to the Second Scholastics requiring respect for the sovereignty of non-Christian nations, while compelling the use of force to rescue people in those nations from murder by government.

The 1994 statement also addressed the problem of arms flow to terrorists and criminal groups. In response, "An indispensable measure would be for each State to impose a strict control on the sale of handguns and small arms. Limiting the purchase of such arms would certainly not infringe upon the rights of anyone."⁴⁴

Actually, the Constitution of Mexico, the Constitution of the United States, and the constitutions of forty-four American states all guarantee a right to arms.⁴⁵ So a "limit" which was taken to the extreme of prohibition would certainly infringe on the rights of Mexicans and Americans.

In any case, both the United States and Mexico easily meet the standard of "strict control"—unless one presumes that "strict control" is a misleading euphemism for "prohibition." The United States has the strictest controls in the entire world on arms exports, designed to do the best job possible of ensuring that American exports do not fall into the hands of criminals or terrorists. Since the Vatican's proposal for "strict controls" was made as part of a document on *The International Arms Trade*, it would seem that

⁴² Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice, *The International Arms Trade: An Ethical Reflection* (Vatican City: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1994), ch 1, sect. 5, at 12.

⁴³ *Id.*, ch. 1, sects. 7-8, at 13-14.

⁴⁴ *Id.*, ch. 4, sect. 8, at 27.

⁴⁵ For Mexico, see David B. Kopel, *Mexico, Gun Laws*, in GUNS IN AMERICAN SOCIETY: AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HISTORY, POLITICS, CULTURE AND THE LAW, vol. 2 (ed. Gregg Lee Carter)(Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2003), at 420-404. For American state constitutions, see David B. Kopel, *What State Constitutions Teach about the Second Amendment*, 29 N. KY. L. REV. 827 (2002), , www.davekopel.com/2A/LawRev/WhatStateConstitutionsTeach.htm.

other nations ought to consider emulating the United States by strengthening their arms export laws.

As for domestic possession of arms—although such possession was not the focus of the Vatican’s document—it should be understood that the United States has strict laws, although not prohibitory ones. If an American wishes to buy a gun from a retailer, the retailer must call the F.B.I. or a state equivalent to obtain permission for the sale. No other consumer product in the United States requires government permission for each and every retail transaction.

The retailer is required to keep records of the sale for twenty years, and the registration records are subject to government inspection. The only other consumer products subject to similarly strict registration are prescription drugs.

B. Papal Teaching in the Late 1990s

Addressing a group of soldiers, the Pope reaffirmed Augustine’s position of *tranquillitas ordinis*—that true peace must include a justly-ordered society, not merely the absence of violence. Further, complete peace on earth was a vain utopian illusion:

Peace, as taught by Sacred Scripture and the experience of men itself, is more than just the absence of war. And the Christian is aware that on earth a human society that is completely and always peaceful is unfortunately an utopia and that the ideologies which present it as easily attainable only nourish vain hopes. The cause of peace will not go forward by denying the possibility and the obligation to defend it.⁴⁶

In the 1995 *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope John Paul analyzed the paradoxes of self-defense:

[T]o kill a human being, in whom the image of God is present, is a particularly serious sin. *Only God is the master of life!* Yet from the beginning, faced with the many and often tragic cases which occur in the life of individuals and society, Christian reflection has sought a fuller and deeper understanding of what God’s commandment prohibits and prescribes. There are in fact situations in which values proposed by God’s Law seem to involve a genuine paradox. This happens for example in the case of *legitimate defence*, in which the right to protect one’s own life and the duty not to harm someone else’s life are difficult to reconcile in practice. Certainly, the intrinsic value of life and the duty to love oneself no less than others are the basis of *a true right to self-defence*. The demanding commandment of love of neighbour, set forth in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, itself presupposes love of oneself as the basis of comparison: ‘You shall love your neighbour *as yourself*’ (Mark 12: 31). Consequently, no one can renounce the right to self-defence out of lack of love for life or for self. This can only be done in virtue of a heroic love which deepens and transfigures the love of self into a radical self-offering, according to the spirit of the Gospel Beatitudes (cf. Matthew 5: 38-40). The sublime example of this self-offering is the Lord Jesus himself. Moreover, ‘legitimate defence can be not only a right but a grave duty for someone responsible for another’s life, the common good of the

⁴⁶ Quoted in William Saunders, *The Church’s ‘Just War’ Theory (Part 1)*, THE ARLINGTON CATHOLIC HERALD, Sept. 22, 1994, www.ewtn.com/library/ANSWERS/JUSTWAR.HTM.

family or of the State.’ Unfortunately it happens that the need to render the aggressor incapable of causing harm sometimes involves taking his life. In this case, the fatal outcome is attributable to the aggressor whose action brought it about, even though he may not be morally responsible because of a lack of the use of reason.⁴⁷

The Pope’s 1995 statement made essentially the same point that Father Rosmini had in 1823: when an aggressor is killed by someone acting in self-defense, the moral blame lies with the aggressor, not the defendant.

In 1996, the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* formally adopted the Augustine/Aquinas teachings on Just War and self-defense.⁴⁸

The legitimate defense of persons and societies is not an exception to the prohibition against the murder of the innocent that constitutes intentional killing. “The act of self-defense can have a double effect: the preservation of one’s own life; and the killing of the aggressor... The one is intended, the other is not.”⁴⁹ Love toward oneself remains a fundamental principle of morality. Therefore it is legitimate to insist on respect for one’s own right to life. Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow:

If a man in self-defense uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful: whereas if he repels force with moderation, his defense will be lawful... Nor is it necessary for salvation that a man omit the act of moderate self-defense to avoid killing the other man, since one is bound to take more care of one’s own life than of another’s.

Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm. For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.⁵⁰

On issues of war and peace involving terrorism, Pope John Paul II has acquired a mixed record. The Vatican supported the war supported the war in East Timor (in which Catholics fought back against genocide by Muslim Indonesia), supported military action in Bosnia, and also supported the American invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

On the other hand, the Vatican opposed the 1991 Gulf War, even though the war was authorized by the United Nations. The Vatican opposed the liberation of Iraq in 2003, and has been generally critical of Israeli resistance to Palestinian terrorism. In light Saddam Hussein’s well-documented record of mass murder and other human rights violations, the 2003 liberation of Iraq could, arguably, be justified in accordance with the

⁴⁷ John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, No. 55.

⁴⁸ Charles, at 55.

⁴⁹ THOMAS AQUINAS, *SUMMA THEOLOGICA*, transl., Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Benziger Bros. edition, 1947), Second Part of the Second Part, Question: 64, Article 7, <http://www.ccel.org/a/aquinas/summa>.

⁵⁰ Catechism, sects. 2263-65.

Vatican's 1994 statement about the affirmative duty to use force to protect victims of murder by government.

Of course to recognize the doctrine of Just War in general does not mean that people will always agree on the justice of a particular war. The Catholic Just War doctrine explicitly states that it is up to the responsible rulers of a community (which, in a democracy, would include the people) to make their own personal decisions about whether or not a particular war is just.

VI. Changes in the United States

A. Vietnam

In 1965, *Commonweal*, the leading Catholic magazine addressing social policy, published an article urging preemptive U.S. military action to prevent Communist China from developing nuclear weapons.⁵¹ *Commonweal* was deliberately taking a vanguard position, but the anti-Communist premise of the article was shared by all but a small extreme of anti-American Catholics (more on them *infra*). Likewise widely-shared was belief in the legitimacy of the use of military force for just purposes.

The Vietnam War, however, changed everything. George Wiegel, today's leading scholar of American Catholic intellectual history, concludes that the *sine qua non* of the massive leftward shift among the Catholic hierarchy in the late 1960s and 1970s was the "traumatizing" effect of the Vietnam war, aggravated by the "perceived inability of classic just-war theory to appropriately analyze or set limits on a bloody, counter-insurgency guerilla war."⁵²

The American Catholic hierarchy came more and more to resemble a religious version of the New Left, which believed that America was always and everywhere mostly wrong. And nothing could ever be found which justified by the use of force by the United States, or by an American ally.

The new hostility to America was buttressed by Bible quotations which were wrenched from context, and which were claimed to pose clear and unequivocal instructions about American foreign policy. For example, Bishop Dozier of Memphis argued that Jesus's teaching that one should walk a second mile with one's adversary meant that the United States must immediately withdraw from Vietnam.⁵³ Yet one could just as plausibly use the same text to prove that North Vietnam should immediately withdraw from Cambodia. More to the point, a teaching about how Christians should act when forced to carry supplies for Roman soldiers is hardly a precise instruction about when one country should stop helping an ally which is under attack.

Implicitly repudiating centuries of Catholic teaching—including Pius XII's declaration against Catholic refusal to serve in the West German army—the United States Catholic Conference supported test cases brought to the U.S. Supreme Court in which some Catholics claimed conscientious objector status because they did not consider the Vietnam War to be just.

⁵¹ WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 193-94, citing William V. Shannon, *A Word to My Critics*, COMMONWEAL, May 7, 1965, at 207.

⁵² WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 244.

⁵³ *Id.*, at 241, citing Carroll T. Dozier, "Peace: Gift and Task."

In April 1975, the Pol Pot Communist dictatorship which had recently attained power in Cambodia kidnapped some U.S. civilians on the high seas, on the boat *Mayaguez*. The kidnapping was a flagrant violation of international laws against piracy. President Ford sent in a Marine force which rescued the kidnapped civilians. *Commonweal*, which only eight years before had been ready to consider starting a war with “Red China,” now opposed even the rescue of kidnapped American hostages.⁵⁴

B. The Move to the Left

The changes in Catholic elite opinion were matched by very similar changes in the mainline Protestant elite. “Mainline” Protestant are the members of the National Council of Churches. Mainline denominations include the United Methodist Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ. The mainline denominations have historically been dominant in American Protestantism, but in recent decades their membership has dropped, while membership in more theologically conservative evangelical churches has risen.

The sharp leftward movement of the Catholic and mainline Protestant church hierarchies were part of a general change in the culture. Academia and the media also veered left. The hard left turn provoked a backlash among some intellectuals who were dismayed at Left’s pervasive anti-American. Some of these intellectuals were traditional liberal Democrats (who favored affirmative and expensive government) and who favored the traditional Roosevelt/Truman/Kennedy policy of willingness to use force to protect American interests. These disillusioned Democrats were often called “neo-conservatives,” and most of them eventually drifted into the Republican party.

The election of Ronald Reagan, himself an ex-Democrat, was one of the great triumphs of the neo-conservative movement. The neo-cons and Reagan recognized that there was an extreme disjunction between the pessimistic, anti-American views of the élites and the views of the masses. Students (who voted for Reagan at a higher rate than rest of the population) disagreed with their professors; and people who watched the television news were not nearly as skeptical of Reagan and of American power as were the network news producers, anchors, and reporters. Likewise, the great body of church-going American Christians never moved as far left as did the Catholic and mainline Protestant leadership.

The relentless elite rhetoric against American military power was frequently cloaked in the language of pacifism. But pacifist analysis was employed one-sidedly. When communist guerrillas sought to shoot their way into power in Central and South America, a typical America Catholic or mainline Protestant response was to applaud their “liberation theology.”

Regarding Central America during the 1980s, statements from American Bishops tilted very heavily in favor of the armed Communist dictatorship which had taken over Nicaragua, and its counterpart which was trying to conquer El Salvador. Only the intercession of Bishops from Central America brought some balance into the statements of the Americans. The Central American Bishops tended to understand that Communism would destroy the Church as an independent institution, and would not bring social justice.

⁵⁴ *Id.*, at 192, citing *The Mayaguez Incident*, COMMONWEAL, June 6, 1975, at 163-64.

Religious support for Communist revolutionaries picked up the name “liberation theology”—an Orwellian term, since no Communist country allowed liberty. The consistent pattern in Communist countries was to suppress religious freedom, and to set up the Communist party and its rulers as the *de facto* objects of worship. In this regard, the twentieth century Communist government followed the same policies as Hitler, who in his final years sought to eliminate Christianity, and to replace it with a pagan religion in which he was the messiah.

“Liberation theology” was embraced by many mainline Protestant leaders.⁵⁵ The mainline Protestant ecumenical organization, the National Council of Churches, became an enthusiastic supporter of Marxist movements, and a stern critic of U.S. resistance. In 1984 the N.C.C. organized a tour of the Soviet Union for over 250 American religious leaders; the tour amounted to a propaganda campaign for appeasement and moral equivalence.⁵⁶

The Council’s international counterpart, the World Council of Churches, was even more radically anti-American.⁵⁷ The W.C.C. quite frequently found itself on the same side as Soviet front organizations such as the World Peace Council and the Christian Peace Conference—both of which were directed by an officially atheist totalitarian regime.

Meanwhile, the historically pacifist groups moved so far left that, for all practical purposes, they stopped being pacifists. American pacifists had traditionally supported democracy, and had been wary of joining forces with pro-Nazi groups or pro-Communist groups (even though groups agreed with the pacifists in opposing American militarism). During and after Vietnam, the American Friends Service Committee (a nominally Quaker group) and the Fellowship for Reconciliation became apologists for violent totalitarian third world revolutionaries, and they made common cause with pro-totalitarian communist organizations. Rather than promoting universal peace, pacifist groups tended to oppose the use of force or purchase of weapons by America and American allies, while finding little if anything to criticize about communist violence and the brutality of communist governments.⁵⁸

A more traditional pacifist, Jacques Ellul, accused the 1960s pacifists of being highly selective in their attention. “The interesting poor are those whose defense is in reality an attack against Europe, against capitalism, against the U.S.A.” The uninteresting poor included Yemenites who were napalmed by the Egyptian air force, South Sudanese slaughtered by the North Sudanese, and many others.⁵⁹

The same point could be made today. Peruse the website of almost any Christian “peace” group, such as the American Friends Service Committee, and compare the obsessive attention to the plight of the Palestinians who live under Israeli rule, with the amount of attention given to the persecution of minority groups in the Arab world by

⁵⁵ WIEGEL, *TRANQUILLITAS*, at 2379

⁵⁶ Moral equivalence is the claim that democracies are morally equivalent to dictatorships. In particular, that the United States was morally equivalent to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

⁵⁷ The World Council of Churches includes several hundred Protestant and Orthodox denominations and associations.

⁵⁸ GUENTER LEWY, *PEACE & REVOLUTION: THE MORAL CRISIS OF AMERICAN PACIFISM* (1988).

⁵⁹ JACQUES ELLUL, *VIOLENCE: REFLECTIONS FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE* 67 (Cecelia Gaul Kings trans., 1969). Four decades later, the West Sudanese people of Darfur did become what Ellul would call “interesting victims” for the broad public.

Arab governments. Or the attention given to the Israel's actions in Lebanon versus the attention given to the neo-colonial actions in Lebanon of Syria and Iran.

Collectively, the National Council of Catholic Bishops did not become as radical as did many of their Protestant counterparts. For example, the Bishop's 1983 statement "The Challenge of Peace" acknowledged that pacifism is a choice only open to individuals; governments must defend their people by force if necessary.⁶⁰ The Bishops supported a nuclear freeze (which had the appearance of mutuality, but which would have benefited the USSR, which is why the Soviets promoted the idea via Communist front groups in the West). The American Bishops criticized claims that the United States and the USSR were morally equivalent.⁶¹

Some Bishops did move to the extreme left. For example, Seattle's Bishop Hunthausen announced that "one obvious meaning of the cross is unilateral disarmament."⁶²

Many Catholic writers began deemphasizing "peace" as it had been understood during most of the church's history—as a well-ordered, peaceful, and just society, what Augustine had called *tranquillitas ordinis*. Instead, the emphasis shifted to the personal experience of peace.⁶³ Tom Wolfe dubbed the 1970s "the Me Decade", so it was not surprising that peace would be redefined in self-centered terms. But the new definition was inconsistent with Catholicism's long-term insistence on understanding the individual in the context of his place in society.

The extreme version of the personal approach was recklessly self-indulgent, endangering innocents for the sake of one's perceived purity. For example, in the early 1980s, some bishops claimed that the only moral course of action for the United States was unilateral disarmament—even while they acknowledged that such disarmament would make war more likely.⁶⁴

George Wiegel observed that much of the American Catholic leadership had abandoned the tradition that "moral choice was a function of reason, not sentimentality."⁶⁵ On public affairs, the American Catholic hierarchy had moved a long way from the devotion to logic which had characterized Catholic scholars such as Augustine, Aquinas, and the Second Scholastics.

The anti-defense rhetoric from the American Catholic leadership and the mainline Protestant leadership was objectively harmful to world peace. The rhetoric encouraged the Soviet dictatorship to believe that America was weak and irresolute.⁶⁶ Similar rhetoric from some English churches had helped precipitate World War II by convincing Hitler that the English lacked the will to fight.

Most American Catholic dioceses have a "Peace and Justice" or a "Justice and Peace" office or commission. None has a "Peace, Freedom, and Justice" office.⁶⁷ The word choice reflects the declining interest of American Catholic leadership in addressing the lack of freedom in totalitarian countries. Likewise, the mainline Protestant

⁶⁰ WIEGEL, *TRANQUILLITAS*, at 270.

⁶¹ *Id.*, at 272-73.

⁶² *Id.*, at 241, citing Raymond G. Hunthausen, "Faith and Disarmament."

⁶³ WIEGEL, *TRANQUILLITAS*, at 237.

⁶⁴ *Id.*, at 247.

⁶⁵ *Id.*, at 177.

⁶⁶ *Id.*, at 210.

⁶⁷ *Id.*, at 254.

denominations have various social action organizations; these organizations tend to inhabit the far left of the political spectrum, to find many things wrong with American self-defense, and to be reticent about criticizing totalitarian regimes which are hostile to the United States.

Nevertheless, the position of most “anti-war” American Catholics from the 1960s onward has not been formally pacifist. First of all, with the exception of Plowshares and other small groups (discussed *infra*) which consider the modern church to be corrupt and in need of “restitution,” American Catholics have stayed within the broad confines of Just War teaching. They have continued to recognize that, at least in theory, some military actions may be morally legitimate.

According to Just War doctrine, the rules of the doctrine (e.g., use no more force than necessary) are to be determined by the church; the application of the doctrine is up to the people who have been assigned responsibility for the community. Thus, whether a threat posed by an adversarial nation is serious enough to require military response is a prudential decision to be made by the king and the national council (or in modern times, by the President and Congress). A theologian might have an opinion on the prudential issue, but his views on the issue were not meant to be treated as authoritative by the laity.

Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput followed the tradition in early 2003, in his column in the *Denver Catholic Register* in which Chaput made the case against war with Iraq. The column was headlined as “My Opinion,” and Chaput’s text made it clear that Chaput was expressing his personal opinion only. Likewise, the joint 2003 statement of the American Bishops on the impending war in Iraq was careful to acknowledge that people could reasonably disagree about whether this particular war was just.⁶⁸

C. Gun Prohibition

The substitution of sentiment for serious reasoning has also characterized some of the Catholic hierarchy’s statements on firearms.

On September 11, 1975, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Social Development and World Peace published “Handgun Violence: A Threat to Life.” The document was a “call for effective and courageous action to control handguns, leading to their eventual elimination from society.”⁶⁹

In 1978, the same committee offered a statement on “Community and Crime.” The committee announced “We support the development of coherent national handgun control policy,” including “a several-day cooling-off period between the sale and possession; a ban on ‘Saturday Night Specials’; the registration of handguns; the licensing of handgun owners; and more effective controls regulating the manufacture, sale and importation of handguns. We recognize, however, that these individual steps will not completely eliminate the abuse of handguns. We believe that only prohibition of the importation, manufacture, sale, possession and use of handguns (with reasonable exceptions made for the police, military, security guards and pistol clubs where guns

⁶⁸ “People of good will may differ on how traditional norms apply in this situation. The gravity of the threat and whether force would be preemptive are matters of debate, as are the potential consequences of failing to use military force.” United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Statement on Iraq,” Feb. 26, 2003, www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/iraqstatement0203.htm.

⁶⁹ Snyder, at 61.

would be kept on the premises under secure conditions) will provide a comprehensive response to handgun violence.”⁷⁰ The policy was repeated in a 1990 statement.⁷¹

Notably absent from these statements was any serious evaluation of the social science regarding firearms laws and regulations. Nor was there a discussion of the harms which would be inflicted on gun owners by the imposition of these laws, or of the harms to society which would result from the elimination of the most effective tool for self-defense in most situations.

The existence of a federal constitutional right to arms, as well as a right to arms which is guaranteed by almost all state constitutions, likewise played no role in the statement.

A reader of the above documents would never be able to guess that the documents were written by people claiming to speak in the name of a church which has recognized self-defense as an inherent and inalienable natural right. The document disregarded the church’s centuries of support for human rights and the dignity of the human person, by refusing to acknowledge the right of self-defense.

To the contrary, the documents simply assumed the validity—without serious inquiry or substantial evidence—of the claims of the gun prohibition lobbies. As on issues of national defense, the statements on personal defense replaced reason with emotion.

As a young man growing up in Poland, Karol Wojtyła (the future Pope John Paul II) enjoyed skiing and handguns.⁷² As Pope, he has not had much to say about civilian firearms ownership.

But beginning in the late 1990s, other Vatican officials have become increasingly hostile to gun owners. In 1997, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, the President of Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, issued a sharp attack on civilian gun possession.

Over the last three decades, most of the mainline American Protestant church leaders have adopted anti-gun policies similar to those of the Catholic leadership. The issue is a serious one, but the church statements have rarely risen above the level of rephrasing the talking-points of the gun prohibition lobbies.

VII. The Hard Left Becomes Mainstream

A. The Catholic Worker Movement

In the United States, the original opponent of Catholic patriotic support of the United States and of national defense was the Catholic Worker Movement. The Movement was founded in 1933 by journalist Dorothy Day and the French immigrant

⁷⁰ *Id.*, at 62.

⁷¹ *Id.*, at 63.

⁷² As small children, Karol Wojtyla and his friend Robek-Bugoslaw Banas played with a revolver which they secretly took from Karol’s father, who was a career military man. *Wadowick: World’s Spotlight*, N.Y. TIMES, supplementary material from New York Times News Service, Nov. 1, 1978, at 10 (of supplementary material supplied to news service subscribers).

Peter Maurin.⁷³ Day is “the one person most responsible for the shift of American Catholic thought away from the just war doctrine toward pacifism.”⁷⁴

Before converting to Catholicism, Day had already joined the circles of the very far Left, and become a pacifist. Her best friend left the United States to serve the Stalin’s Soviet Union, although the friend died not long after arriving in the workers’ paradise.

The title of Day’s newspaper, *The Catholic Worker*, was directly evocative of the Communist Party’s propaganda newspaper, *The Daily Worker*. As far as we know, however, she did not join the Communist Party; although she very rarely found anything to criticize about Communism, there were ways in which her own doctrine diverged from strict Communism.

The Workers organization founded a string of Worker Houses across the country to provide a haven for poor people. Day refused to require that the people who lived there do any work, or make any contribution to the maintenance of the place. As a result, the occupants included some people who gratefully received temporary assistance, got on their feet, and moved on—and also included many spongers and free-loaders who lived for years on the mail contributions that Day was raising in the name of helping the poor.

She acknowledged that the freeloaders caused problems, but, as she wrote in an instruction letter to the other Worker Houses, “the more we suffer...the more we learn. Infinite patience, suffering is needed. And it is never-ending.” Removing the freeloaders would do no good, because “one may as well understand that the new batch will be exactly the same as the last. You cut off the head of the tyrant, and two others spring up.”

Whatever one thinks about Day’s views, they are not in accordance with Catholic scriptures. In the book of *Judith* (which is canonical to Catholics), Judith cut off Holofernes’ head, and the tyrant’s army fled. *Judith* showcases the removal of the tyrant’s head as an admirable act which had no adverse consequences.

As for the freeloaders, the early Christians had faced a similar problem of people exploiting charity. In Paul’s *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*, he wrote, “if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our own Lord Jesus Christ that with quietness they work and eat their own bread.” For people who refused to obey the epistle, Christians should “have no company with him,” although they should still regard him as a brother and not an enemy.⁷⁵

When World War II broke out in Europe, after Britain and France refused to compel Poland to submit to Hitler’s demand to cede some Polish territory to Germany, Day’s response was powerful: “*The Catholic Worker* views the present conflict as an unjust war. We believe that Hitler is no more personally responsible than is Chamberlin or [French Prime Minister] Daladier or any other leader...Let us realize that we are responsible as much as Hitler.” According to Day, capitalism was the true cause of the war, and everyone who had tolerated the capitalist system was to blame.

⁷³ Except as otherwise noted, the material on the Catholic Worker Movement and Dorothy Day is based on WILLIAM D. MILLER, *A HARSH AND DREADFUL LOVE: DOROTHY DAY AND THE CATHOLIC WORKER MOVEMENT* (1973). The conclusions are, of course, my own.

⁷⁴ PATRICIA MCNEAL, *HARDER THAN WAR: CATHOLIC PEACEMAKING IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA*, at x (1992).

⁷⁵ 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15.

American workingmen were urged not to participate in war industries which shipped supplies to the Allies, because their “fellow workers are now dying for capitalist gain and imperialist ambition in Europe.”

Day’s claim that Hitler was not “personally” responsible for starting the war was outrageous, but the claim was typical of the pacifist claim that violent aggressors are not personally culpable. Rather, society is to blame.

As for blaming capitalism, Day overlooked the obvious fact that the political party ruling Germany was the “National Socialist Workers Party.” And Hitler’s economic policies were quite socialist. Although the means of production were nominally left in private hands, the entire economy was controlled by the government, for the ostensible good of the national as a whole, rather than for private gain. “Public need before private greed,” was a favorite Nazi slogan, and *der Führer* frequently denounced capitalism for promoting selfishness.

Pearl Harbor brought no change in *The Catholic Worker*. The January 1942 issue announced “We Continue Our Christian Pacifist Stance.” The *Worker* did lose many subscribers during the war years, as people who had liked the paper’s economics decided that they did not like the idea of being ruled by Hitler or Tojo. Some *Catholic Worker* leaders joined the military.

After World War II ended, *The Catholic Worker* opposed resistance to the Stalin regime. Day urged that the United States submit to the Soviet proposal to surrender what was then America’s nuclear monopoly.⁷⁶ If the United States did not unilaterally disarm, “we have nothing to look forward to but pulverization.” She was sure that the Russians would not attack an unarmed people—although the Russians had attacked Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia in 1939.

The *Catholic Worker* newspaper devoted much more attention to criticism of American militarism than Soviet militarism—even though the Soviet government devoted a much larger share of that nation’s gross national product to military spending, so that even middle-class people in the Soviet Union suffered at a standard of living below that of American poor people.⁷⁷ Day called her theory “distributionist,” but the distributionists paid little attention to the mal-distribution of goods in the Soviet Union.

Day’s pacifism did have one notable exception. She supported Fidel Castro’s revolution in Cuba, and imposition of a Communist dictatorship. In the July-August 1961 *Catholic Worker* (by which time it was quite clear that Castro was violating his promise to allow free elections, and had turned Cuba into a Soviet satellite), Day insisted “We do believe that it is better to revolt, to fight, as Castro did with his handful of men...than to do nothing.”

Day also wrote that Cuban Christians partly deserved the persecution that they were getting from Castro, since they had not helped the poor.

Christian writers such as Day were (and are) extensively publicized by the Castro dictatorship. The writers have been used by Castro’s secret police to convince the

⁷⁶ American traitors such as Julius and Ethel Rosenberg had not yet succeeded in transferring the atomic secret to the U.S.S.R.

⁷⁷ WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 152.

Christians who are held as political prisoners that the prisoners are abandoned by their fellow Christians in the West.⁷⁸

According to her biography, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love*, “With Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker, history had already ended. All that was present and what mattered was bringing the spirit into the world.”

Simply put, Day’s theory is an updated version of the claim from the Dark Ages that Christians should simply resign themselves to suffering and misery, which is supposedly “God’s will.”

The *Catholic Worker* is still published today, and is still follows the editorial policy of its founders—relentless opposition to the United States, to American military power, and to a free economy—and limitless excuses for the opponents of American freedom and power.

B. The Berrigan Brothers

Nourished by the *Catholic Worker*, a more militant anti-American group arose in the Catholic Church in the 1960s.

Daniel and Philip Berrigan could justly claim to have founded the successor to Catholic Worker movement. The Berrigan brothers were the most important Catholic anti-war activists during the Vietnam War.⁷⁹ Daniel Berrigan was a priest, and his brother Philip was an ex-priest who had been excommunicated for marrying without having been released from his vows to the church. The Berrigans introduced Catholics to New Left ideology and tactics such as burning or pouring blood on the files of local draft boards.

For a while, Berrigan served as a vice chairperson of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Although the Fellowship had originally been Protestant-only, the ecumenical spirit of the 1960s reduced Protestant/Catholic suspicions, setting the stage for cooperative work in pacifist organizations and other groups.

The Berrigans produced scathing denunciations of U.S. conduct in Vietnam. They were silent about the frequent atrocities, war crimes, and human rights violations perpetrated by the North Vietnamese dictatorship and their Viet Cong puppets, such as the mass civilian executions at Hue during the Tet Offensive.⁸⁰ On the whole, the American pacifist community during the Vietnam War was extremely reluctant to criticize Ho Chi Minh’s Stalinist dictatorship in North Vietnam. The pacifists scoffed at the “hawks” (supporters of fighting and winning the Vietnam War) who predicted that a “bloodbath” would follow a Communist victory in Southeast Asia. Yet the record was already clear that the Communist conquest of North Vietnam in 1954 had led to more deaths than had the Communist war against French colonialism.⁸¹

A bloodbath was precisely what ensued in Cambodia, where the Khmer Rouge murdered about a third of the population.

During the war, many American pacifists had worked diligently with Buddhist monks in South Vietnam, to try to find a “third way” for South Vietnam—as a neutral,

⁷⁸ *Id.*, at 429; ARMANDO VALLADARES, *AGAINST ALL HOPE: THE PRISON MEMOIRS OF ARMANDO VALLADARES* (Andrew Hurley trans., 1986).

⁷⁹ MCNEAL, at 172.

⁸⁰ WIEGEL, *TRANQUILLITAS*, at 169-70.

⁸¹ ELLUL, at 16.

democratic nation. The American-backed military dictatorship in South Vietnam had usually tolerated the Buddhists.

In practice, Catholic pacifists in the West did not work for policies which would give South Vietnam a chance to evolve into a neutral democratic state. Rather the pacifists lobbied for policies which would inevitably lead to the swift conquest of South Vietnam by the North. After American forces withdrew from Vietnam in 1973, the pacifists pushed, successfully, for terminating American military aid to the South. Predictably, the South Vietnamese army ran out of ammunition, and the North conquered the South in April 1975.

Within a few months after the North subjugated the South, the “third force” Buddhists were in prison camps. The result was to be expected, since the Communists had wiped out independent Buddhism and Catholicism in the North after the Communists defeated the French colonialists in 1954.

As the extremity of human rights violations in Communist Southeast Asia became undeniable, the American pacifist community split. The folksinger Joan Baez organized a 1979 joint letter to the Vietnamese Communist dictatorship, urging the release of prisoners detained because of political or religious views. Among the signers of the letter were Daniel Berrigan and Dorothy Day.

The leading pacifist organizations, however, did not join in the letter. For example, the Fellowship of Reconciliation viewed any criticism of the human rights situation in Vietnam as undermining the Fellowship’s lobbying for the normalization of U.S. diplomatic relations with Vietnam.⁸² The American Friends Service Committee said that reports of genocide in Cambodia were “misinformation” created by the American government, with the purpose of undermining “the example of an alternative model of development and social organization.”⁸³

Willingness to criticize Communist Vietnam did not mean that the Berrigans were becoming any less anti-American. On September 9, 1980, the Berrigans and their followers attacked a U.S. weapons facility, and inaugurated the Plowshares movement. They declared: “The prophets Isaiah and Micah summon us to beat swords into plowshares.”⁸⁴

Plowshares is highly selective in its reading of *Isaiah*. For example, Isaiah prophesied that before swords would be beaten into plowshares, Israel’s enemies would be utterly annihilated, “and the slain of the Lord shall be many.” Yet Plowshares is nearly as hostile to Israel as to the United States.

Whatever Jesus said about non-violence was part of a broader teaching about anger, hatred, and self-righteousness. The Berrigan movement displays all three in fulsome quantities. Pacifist Robert Pickus criticized the Berrigan movement for undermining American pacifism by conflating pacifism with “a politics of hate that locates all the world’s evil in the structure of American society and the evil motivations of an American establishment.”⁸⁵

⁸² MCNEAL, at 221-22.

⁸³ Rael Jean Isaac, *The Violent Pacifists*, in PEACE BETRAYED: ESSAYS ON PACIFISM AND POLITICS 166 (Michael Cromartie ed., 1990). After 1979, the AFSC became willing to denounce human rights violations of the Khmer Rouge regime.

⁸⁴ WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 167. In context, the statements in *Isaiah* and *Micah* are not commands, but are prophesies about what will take place “in the last days.”

⁸⁵ *Id.*, at 170.

Thus, Plowshares vandals complain that their rights are violated when they are not allowed to raise legal defenses based on the theory that the United States and Nazi Germany are legal equivalents: American possession of nuclear weapons is equivalent to Nazis murdering millions of Jews, gypsies, and other people.

Catholic Worker started out on the fringe of American Catholic thought, which in 1933 was vehemently anti-communist. Despite the setback during World War II, the Catholic Worker movement did succeed in moving the Catholic mainstream—especially the intellectual mainstream—closer to the Catholic Worker position. There are plenty of Catholic churches where the “social concerns” committees raise money for the “peace activists” of Plowshares who specialize in vandalizing their nation’s defense facilities.

To see how mainstream the Berrigans have become, consider a recent article by James Marsh, the President of the American Catholic Philosophical Association. In the lead article *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Marsh lauds Daniel Berrigan’s play about himself, *The Trial of Catonsville Nine*. Marsh argues that “the American Dream” is “profoundly anti-Christian,” that the modern United States is similar to the Hitler regime, that George Bush is a neo-fascist, and that Catholics should stop singing patriotic Americans, including the national anthem.⁸⁶

C. Cardinal Etchegaray

For international evidence of the mainstreaming of the Berrigans and Dorothy Day and the Berrigans, one need only look at Roger Cardinal Etchegaray, currently the Vice-Dean of the College of the Cardinals, and thus the third-highest official in the Roman Catholic Church.

On the one hand, there is the vehement opposition to the use of arms by the people of the United States, or their government. Cardinal Etchegaray is among the many high Vatican officials who, at the United Nations, have aligned with governments and international organizations which seek to prohibit gun ownership by civilians. The prohibition movement especially seeks to outlaw gun ownership for home and family defense, and to prevent gun acquisition by groups seeking to resist tyranny.

Etchegaray and other Vatican lobbyists at the United Nations are disregarding well-established church doctrine about the legitimacy of resistance to tyranny. Rather than considering the wisdom of Augustine, Aquinas, and Suárez, the lobbyists were behaving according to the anti-Catholic stereotype which was so feared by the Calvinists and other Protestants: reflexively defending the power of existing governments, without regard to the justice or legitimacy of those governments, and with flagrant disregard for those governments’ suppression of religious freedom.

Along with the stern opposition to all use of force by the United States or Israel, there is every willingness to support and defend anti-Western terrorists. In February 2003, Etchegaray traveled to Baghdad, and met with Saddam Hussein. Then Etchegaray and Hussein conducted a joint press conference, and together proclaimed *Salaam* (peace). Etchegaray issued a statement trying to avert the war. (Of course Saddam always could have averted the war by going into exile.)

A reasonable person might, in his considered judgment, have had misgivings about the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. The expression of prudential concerns, however,

⁸⁶ James L. Marsh, *Self-Appropriation and Liberation: Philosophizing in the Light of Catonsville*, 79 AM. CATHOLIC PHIL. Q. 1 (2006).

is quite different from providing aid, comfort, and diplomatic legitimacy to a genocidal tyrant.

On the day that Israel lifted the siege of Yassir Arafat's compound, and Arafat walked out a free man, a beaming Etchegaray raised Arafat's hand in a gesture of triumph.⁸⁷ As the Cardinal celebrated Arafat, Arafat's organizations were plotting terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians. (The terrorists were also funded by Saddam Hussein.)

Historians have written many words arguing about the conduct of the Catholic Church during and before World War II. Critics of the Church point to the July 1933 Concordat between the Church and Hitler—the first diplomatic triumph of the Nazi regime. Historians debate about whether the Church could have done more to stop the Holocaust. Even the critics, though, must acknowledge that the Vatican was in a precarious position during the war. Tiny Vatican City was surrounded by Fascist Italy, which was allied with Nazi Germany. A bolder policy by the Vatican might have resulted in the Vatican being occupied by Fascist forces.

Today, though, Vatican City is in the middle of the free and democratic nation of Italy. There is no good excuse for the Vatican's most prominent diplomat going out of his way to embrace and defend terrorists.

The best-selling book *Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII*, featured an extremely unfair cover photograph. The cover showed Pius XII striding out of a government office building, which was guarded by a German soldier, while another officer saluted Pius XII. The photograph created an impression of Pius XII actively collaborating with the Nazis, since the guard was wearing the curved steel helmet which most American readers associate with the Nazi *Wehrmacht*. In fact, the picture was taken before Hitler came to power, and before Eugenio Pacelli became Pope Pius XII. The photo shows Pacelli, who was then a diplomat for the Vatican, leaving a meeting with the *democratic* government of Weimar Germany.

The misleading use of the Pacelli photo was a form of anti-Catholic hate speech.

The photos of Cardinal Etchegaray with Saddam Hussein and Yassir Arafat, however, will deservedly live in infamy, because those photos portray knowing collaboration between the Vatican and neo-Nazis. Saddam Hussein led the Ba'ath Party, which was founded in 1943 on explicit Nazi principles. He paid \$35,000 rewards to families of terrorist suicide bombers in Israel.

Yassir Arafat was the protégé of the Mufti of Jerusalem (Haj Amin Al Hussein), who traveled to Germany during World War II to ask Hitler to invade Palestine and kill all the Jews, who raised an Arab legion to fight for Hitler, and who asked Hitler to extend the Final Solution to North Africa. Arafat always described Hussein as his role model and hero.⁸⁸ In 2001, Arafat's Palestinian Authority published an Arabic edition of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, which became an instant best-seller among Palestinians.⁸⁹

Given the role of Pope John Paul II in destroying the evil empire of Soviet Communism, and given indisputable intellectual brilliance and love of free Western

⁸⁷ The notorious photo can be found at <http://instapundit.com/images/crdnlaraf.jpg>.

⁸⁸ Hal Lindsey, *Arafat's Nazi Connection*, WORLDNET DAILY.COM, August 14, 2002, http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=28603; Joseph Farah, "Arafat, the Nazi Sympathizer," *WorldNet Daily.com*, August 14, 2002.

⁸⁹ Sean O'Neill and John Steele, *Mein Kampf for sale, in Arabic*, THE TELEGRAPH (London), Mar. 19, 2002, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=%2Fnews%2F2002%2F03%2F19%2Fnmein19.xml.

Civilization articulated by Pope Benedict XVI, there is a temptation to dismiss Cardinal Etchegary and his compatriots as renegades who remain in power because of the unfathomable intricacies of Vatican politics. I hope so.

VIII. And the Laity?

Lutheran theologian Richard John Neuhaus suggested that a loss of faith was the main reason why so many Catholic and mainline Protestant leaders had turned their churches into pulpits of the hard left. Not truly believing that the Gospel was true, the leaders sought to make it socially useful.⁹⁰

In *Christian Pacifism in History*, Geoffrey Nuttall offers alternative explanations for the increasing popularity of pacifism among mainline Protestant sects. Some of these trends began in the late nineteenth century, while others are more recent: more careful study paid to the personalities of Jesus and Paul; increasing presence of the traditional pacifist sects in leading universities; a revival of Quaker evangelism in 1895-1905; ecumenical cooperation and dialogue among Protestants, especially in the World Council of Churches; the formation of the Fellowship of Reconciliation pacifist network; and the increased urgency of questions of war because of the two World Wars and the Cold War.⁹¹

The theories of Nuttall and Neuhaus are not incompatible. Except for the Quakers, the traditional Christian “Peace Churches” such as the Mennonites and Hutterites tended to be radically isolated from the world, and from dialogue with other Christians. The ecumenical spirit of the twentieth century provided the small pacifist sects with an unparalleled opportunity to present their arguments to mainstream sects.

The twentieth century was by far the bloodiest in human history. While the horrors of the century convinced many people of the urgency of resisting totalitarianism at the earliest stages, some Christians had different responses. Like Erasmus, some twentieth century Christians fixated on the horrors of war, to the point that peace at any price became their rule.

It is important to remember that the Christian churches of today consist of much more than just their high-ranking officials and their hard-left political action committees. The Catholic Church includes many lay Catholics who were never enchanted with Yassir Arafat, and who believe that Israelis and Americans and everyone else has a God-given natural right of self-defense.

Perhaps never before in American history has there been so much unanimity among the American Catholic hierarchy, mainline Protestant religious leaders, and Jewish religious leaders on political issues—coupled with such widespread dissent among the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish laity.⁹² Both the leadership and the laity

⁹⁰WIEGEL, TRANQUILLITAS, at 239.

⁹¹ GEOFFREY NUTTALL, *CHRISTIAN PACIFISM IN HISTORY* 69-72 (Berkeley, Calif.: World Without War Council, 1971).

⁹² Joel Kotkin & Karen Speicher, *A Divide between Pew and Pulpit*, (Boulder) DAILY CAMERA (May 18, 2003), at E-1 (reprinting *Los Angeles Times* articles).

Some church officials argue that the division shows that the church leadership is doing the right thing. The leadership is supposed to get out in front, rather than merely do what is popular. For example,

reflect legitimate traditions within their own faiths; both the leadership and the laity can be said to constitute elements of the religions' meaning.

In the long run, however, it seems unlikely that the great division between laity and the hierarchy can endure. Either the laity will move left, or the hierarchy will move back toward the center, or perhaps the laity will move to churches more in step with traditional teachings on warfare and self-defense. The decline of the mainline Protestant churches, coupled with the growth of evangelical churches, suggests that the latter development may already be taking place.

the leadership was far ahead of the laity on civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States. Today, it is widely agreed that the leadership was prophetic and right.

It may be possible, though, that sometimes the church officials are wrong, and the laity is correct. Much of today's church leadership, like many American college professors, lives in a segregated intellectual world in which post-modernism, cultural relativism, anti-Americanism (the one exception to "all cultures are equal" is that "American/Western culture is bad"), and anti-capitalism are the ruling ideologies. The church leadership, like the college professoriate, was not prophetic about Ronald Reagan and the Cold War; the advocates of disarmament and moral equivalence were almost entirely wrong. The perspective of Christian humility might suggest that the church leadership (and the professoriate) might investigate why they were so wrong about the Cold War. Instead, the leadership is attempting to transpose its failed Cold War guidance into a model for ending the war on terrorism.