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TYPICAL QUESTIONS OF ATHLETIC EDUCATION

(A translation with comment by the Hungarian Unit)

Summary and Introduction. Translated below is almost the full text of an article that appeared in the September 1976 issue of Ifjú Kommunista (Young Communist), the Communist Youth League's theoretical and methodological monthly. The author, Koltan Kovacs, discussed questions of the atheistic education of youth in light of the still powerful influence exerted by the churches and religion in Hungary. He also considers the obstacles the KISS has to overcome in discharging its responsibilities for the ideological education of youth.

The article starts by reiterating the official standpoint that the relationship between state and Church is developing in harmony with the interests of socialism. This view was vigorously affirmed at the recent congress of the Patriotic People's Front by speakers representing both state and party, and the Church leaders have not rejected it. Kovacs believes that the Church must participate in the building of socialism and the creation of an anti-imperialist front -- otherwise it will be isolated. He concludes as follows.

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... . Despite to this, there still exist in all Churches forces of regression -- representatives of clerical reaction who have continued to function since without any mass basis, who avoid open political conflict and do not risk a frontal attack on socialism, but at certain times and in certain situations "warn" everyone that they have not given up the struggle against socialism. Nowadays they try to shatter good relations between state and church, as well as political demarcations, mainly by indirect methods, by the use of democratic slogans, and by simple demagoguery. One of the most widespread techniques used by clerical reaction is to exaggerate our society's difficulties, its correctible mistakes and shortcomings. These reactionary maneuvers can however, be averted through systematic -- and mainly preventive -- political action.

Since the conclusion of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe it has been generally feared that the reactionary and anti-communist forces adopt a cold-war interpretation of the principles included in the Final Act in order to attack the socialist countries. Under the pretence of the "free flow" of people, ideas, and information they claim the right to indulge in the propagation of antisocial views and ideas, and they would like to activate the reactionary forces that still exist in our country in this direction. At the same time, under the guise of "defending" human rights, they mount crude attacks on the Soviet Union, the socialist states, and the Churches in our country. In the intensified ideological struggle the cold-war imperialist forces consider these reactionary clerical forces one of their most important allies.

Church Activities Among Youth

The inner life and mass influence of the Churches has undergone important changes since the liberation. The Churches have no significant influence on relations among the social classes, but it would be a mistake to believe that their influence has ceased completely on the life of society and the individual man. The religious *Malenachismus* has still deep roots but its role in regulation, society has narrowed down and among the *gebildete bourgeoisie* in the cities and villages it has been virtually limited to formalities and outward appearance. The Churches' drive to hold and win youth -- mainly from the intelligentsia -- for the religious *Malenachismus* has, however, increased. It is noteworthy that both at home and abroad antisocial forces allot (in a typical division of labor) a larger role to religious activity. In some cases we find that religious ideological activity, in open or concealed ways, and especially with regard to its objectives and political content, includes consciously reactionary activity.

The religious influencing of youth and holding onto it is a fundamental objective of all the Churches and religious sects. The Churches endeavor to be represented at all the major events of human life; they offer christening, religious instruction, first communion, confirmation, religious services for children and youth, instruction to engaged couples, and marriage ceremonies, and their activities are manifold. The Churches are aware of the fact that the social spots of a religious *Malenachismus* have been located everywhere, and that the forms, content, and methods of the religious life cannot be taken for granted for all time. In our country the building of socialism and our social, political, and economic conditions have a strong impact on the consciousness of the people, including the young. Most children attend religious instruction because they are forced to do so by their parents, and many formerly enthusiastic and diligent altar boys turn their backs on the Church when they leave primary school. It is often said that children can be persuaded to perform the duties of altar boys only in exchange for some kind of present or for money. The clergy are aware of this and are endeavoring to build up a more conscious religious basis and to concern themselves systematically and purposefully with smaller groups.

The Churches realize that today the traditional forms of religious life have little appeal to youth. In the Haltanachangam and way of life youth is moving ever further away from the principles of the religious life and its teachings. To maintain and deepen their influence, the Churches are using new and appealing methods. They are bringing religious ceremonies up-to-date to give them a greater appeal, introducing best masses and concerts, and reviving old religious traditions. They modernize their teachings about the world and the Church which have been dressed obsolete and out-of-date, and try to develop a "home-faced" picture of the Church which "is acceptable to modern people and youth." The Church is presented as a democratic institution always ready and able to revive and to represent the new to everyone.

To maintain their religious influence and to develop the "Church of the Future," the Churches try to enter into active relations with the family. They participate in the main family ceremonies and visit the sick; on such occasions they try to include everybody present, including those who do not belong to the family, in their common prayers. They see believers in the family as a lever to assure that children participate in religious instruction at church or in a Bible circle. The clergy are becoming more and more family-centered in their approach. In Budapest and the larger cities club-type afternoon Bible circle meetings for young people and religious services are often held which are attended by non-churchgoing youth. Cultural lectures are given, best music is played, and political Haltanachangam discussions are held. The majority of the clergy endeavor to develop among the young a basis closely linked to the Church. Some groups have gone as far as to publish illegal papers, to give publicity to writings illegally smuggled into the country, and have organized literary and debating societies in schools, picnics, and institutionalized vacations. Intervention is justified in such flagrant cases. Patient informative and educational work is the primary requirement in dealing with those who become the victims of illegal actions by reactionary clergymen or others.

The worries, problems, and difficulties that beset individuals and various communities are fertile soil for religious belief. Successful solution of such difficulties and the development of our social life, on the other hand, narrow down and decrease its appeal. The rapid development of science, the advance of the scientific Haltanachangam, systematic Marxist-Leninist education, and the continuous raising of the cultural level of our people impede the expansion of the religious Haltanachangam -- mainly among the young.

Tasks and Methods in the Ideological Struggle

Ideological indifference in the course of youth work is impossible. We must carry on our ideological work circumspectly, systematically, and consistently against all forms of idealist Haltanachangam. The scientific outlook of the next generation must be developed and shaped through patient educational work, the

resolute introduction of the foundations of a Marxist-Leninist Weltanschauung, followed by its consolidation. In this field, too, the two-front principle must prevail. A stand must be taken against opportunistic views derived from false sensitivity, and distrust, impatience, and a hasty attitude must be rejected. Ideological illiteracy and intolerance cannot be corrected by administrative measures, nor can they be covered by cynical unprincipledness or convenient untruths. No compromise is possible in the ideological struggle.

We are naturally aware that the development of a socialist consciousness is the outcome of a long process. It would be illusory to believe that religious conviction can be destroyed from one day to the other. We are well aware of the fact that human consciousness cannot be changed in a mechanical way. In the struggle against the religious Weltanschauung, therefore, the stress has to be put on patient political and educational work. It would be a mistake to narrow down the tasks of socialist ideological work to the struggle against religious views.

The program adopted by the 11th SEDP Congress defined the fundamental objective in this field: "The development of social consciousness and the changing of the people's way of thinking and their moral attitudes are an imperative part of the socialist development of our society." The struggle for the consciousness of the believer is in turn part of this, and here we have already achieved some results. Our ideas and the norms of a socialist way of life and attitude have become the accepted detachment of a wide circle of people.

The struggle against the religious Weltanschauung is therefore a complex task. It is being carried on for the people and not against them. It is the primary task of our schools, teachers, and young Communists to educate the young to be faithful to the ideas of socialism. Our main means of fighting down the religious outlook is mass political education, the propagation of a scientific Weltanschauung, and the consistent and high-level profession of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

There are few opportunities for the spread of the old bourgeois way of thinking among youth and this helps their alienation from religious influence. On the other hand, as we said earlier, this does not mean that religious influence ceases spontaneously or that the scientific way of thinking will win an immediate victory -- whichever objectively determined social process is in question. The estrangement of youth from religion does not begin with a change of attitude but with the gradual cessation of religious acts. But even this can be perceptible only in a field and in a community in which the wider as well as the immediate environment attributes no social value or importance to religious ceremonies, and where the individual's transcendence is measured by the criterion of a socialist way of thinking and life.

Family and social ceremonies still have an important role to play in ideological educational work. In our society, in the last 15 years, the State organizations, mass organizations, and educational institutions have made great efforts to gain acceptance for

and publicize new and modern forms of socialist ceremonies. The results are increasingly tangible-- in the name-giving ceremonies and socialist weddings KPSZ, the Pioneer organizations, and youth groups are engaging in valuable organizational and cultural activities. What is happening here needs to be studied and strengthened and it is important that use should be made of experience gained in other socialist countries.

Ideological Educational Work by Personal Example

Unless there is consistency between words and deeds a successful struggle against religion is impossible, since the contradictions encountered in this field are especially damaging and lead to the adoption of a false and opportunistic attitude. We can prove the superiority of socialist morality over religious morality only by setting an example in our individual and communal life, by our moral attitude, life style, and pleasure in work, and by our family life. Here too, as everywhere else, young Communists have to be a step ahead of the rest of the world.

We must be careful that the ideological struggle against the religious ~~Markschismus~~ does not develop into a personal attack on young believers or an attempt to limit the practicing of their religion by administrative means. On the other hand the Churches cannot be allowed to demand any limitation of our freedom to propagate a scientific-materialistic ~~Markschismus~~. Attempts by the clergy to take advantage of youth's inexperience must be determinedly rebuffed. This cannot be allowed in any of the dominations.

Special attention must be devoted to attempts by Western reactionary circles and their clerical supporters, since the European security conference, to propagate freely among youth "ideas and information" that are politically harmful and to call in question the achievements of our socialist development. Under the pretext of conducting a dialogue they infiltrate the progressive, socialist revolutionary forces and do all they can to speed their unity of action and to bring about an ideological loosening up and general disturbance. By misunderstanding the fundamental divergences between capitalist and socialist societies and by hiding behind ultraleftist and Marxist ideas, they often incite disturbances and agitation against our established social order. This must be stopped. It is impermissible that the confused ideas prevailing in some youth organizations and circles in the Western Churches should be granted any scope in our country. The ideological battle with the representatives of such organizations must be openly joined. We must strengthen the co-ordination between political and ideological work in the party organization, KJSD, the cultural institutions, and especially among the readers. It is important to improve the standard of patient and consistent ideological educational work and to take a stand against ideological indifference, for which there may be various reasons. This was especially stressed at the 11th BSWP Congress:

The party has always had a special concern for youth. It sees in the younger age groups not only the trustees of the

future but also the active participants in and shapers of life today. Thanks to our party's policy, society's concern for the young has increased. Their living and working conditions have improved, as have their education (including higher educational) and opportunities to spend their leisure time usefully. At the same time, youth is still struggling with many problems which we must endeavor to solve. To improve their situation additional control measures must be taken and it is important to make better use of local potentialities and resources.

The development of our society, the advantageous state of our Church policy, and developments in international life guarantee favorable conditions for our ideological work. This is, however, only an opportunity, and it needs to be used more effectively than before by all the state and social organizations whose task is to educate the masses -- especially youth -- and shape them ideologically. We must make everyone aware that any kind of synthesis between the various ideologies is impossible; it is impossible to chisel out divergences between Hellachism and we cannot make any concessions to alternative doctrines or non-Marxist views. The wide circle of devoted, realists, and well-trained teachers and proper specialists who through their daily actions and consistent solution of everyday tasks contribute to the implementation of socialist ideas must undertake this work and accept this objective precondition.

Those who adhere to a Marxist-Leninist Hellachism are no saints. No mysterious miracles are associated with the heroes of the communist movement, but their lives are exemplary and worth following. Everybody, young and old alike, needs ideals. An ideal breeds moral courage, a virtuous public and private life, and a principled attitude to life. We feel a desire to follow the outstanding figures of world history -- including those from our nation -- because of their ethical nobility and their other valuable qualities. Our younger people can undertake the tasks they have to shoulder in the building of the new society if, following its ideals, they tackle with undiminished faith and sense of responsibility difficulties encountered in the work of creation and building. It is in this struggle that the elite of our youth become new socialist individuals... an ideal worthy to be followed, and a socialist model for their descendants. In socialism lies the future of Hungarian youth. Providing the necessary ideological training is a responsible task.