Ever since the Communist Party in America began in 1919, it has had its underground parallel, its secret apparatus. When our government finally extended diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union in 1933, one of the (unfulfilled) conditions was that acts of sabotage and subversion should stop. Meanwhile, a legal political party under the leadership of Earl Browder and William Z. Foster continued to operate. As Marx had prophesied, the critical depression of 1929-35 swelled the ranks of American communists to approximately one hundred thousand. Today they number perhaps six thousand.

Legislative and judicial efforts to deal with communism in the United States have been woefully ambiguous. In June, 1961, the Supreme Court upheld action based on two Congressional measures: the Smith Act of 1940 (aimed originally at Nazis, not communists) and the Internal Security Act of 1950.

The first makes it illegal to join, *if* knowing its purposes, any organization which may "advocate or teach the overthrow of the U.S. Government by force or violence." The second requires the registration of the Communist Party, including its officers, budget, membership lists, and so forth. This latter measure specifically says that membership or office in such an organization is *not* in itself a violation of any criminal statute, but taken with the Smith Act it implicates any and all communists. As one critic has put it, these laws say in effect: "It is completely illegal to go hunting, but anyone who wants to go hunting may come to the courthouse and get a license."

Our national dilemma, which is moral as well as legal, boils down to this: that we want to preserve the rights of any political organization for free speech and assembly, but we want to brand the Communist Party as an alien subversive agency.

At present, the FBI and police know and watch most communist spies or agents in this country, and are ready to step in whenever a "clear and present danger" to the United States exists, or wherever there is any move to "overthrow the government by force or violence." Thus far the courts have been able to prove only "probable" danger or "conspiracy" to overthrow the government, and these are dubious grounds on which to abandon freedom of speech and belief.

Convinced that the government has been too lax, that communists are hiding behind every liberal bush, certain factions in this country have adopted the very tactics they deplore. Hate literature denounces every movement for racial integration as Red. The United Nations, the World Council of Churches, or any other organization which works for international understanding, brotherhood, and peace is condemned. To label Dwight Eisenhower as a "dedicated, conscious agent of the communist conspiracy" reveals the absurdity of such movements, but it does not expose the sinister semi-secret modes of operation and money-raising which some of these ultra-patriotic, allegedly anti-communist groups employ.

The world confronts perverted principalities and powers today, to be sure. But the Christian must always remember that God rules and judges over every man-made system. The prophet Zechariah warned: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). And Paul added his plea: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

LESSON 4

This lesson defends the Communist phrase, "Religion, the opiate of the people.'" First, it tries to shift the responsibility for the phrase from the Communists to a Christian minister, Charles Kingsley; and second, it reports Kingsley as declaring that Christians who tell the preacher to stick to his Bible and leave politics are contributing to the opiate of the people. The liberals and socialists are so anxious to get some Biblical backing for their radical, political activity that they have to bring in such phrases as "the opiate of the people"!

Religion — "Opiate"

Then we are told, "Karl Marx carried the accusation much further." No, he did nothing of the kind. His accusation was of an entirely different nature, not just an extension of this particular development of the "opiate." When one reads the paragraph in which Lenin's essay on religion is discussed, in which he called the "opiate of the people" the keystone of Marxist policy, there is little difference between what he is advocating here and the political activity referred to earlier on the problems of labor relations. Both are in the same field.

This whole discussion of religion gives the wrong accent, and at points it is obvious that the writer is agreeing with the Communist attack upon religion. He writes: "Religion, then, is not only superstitious and unscientific, but reactionary, a defender of the status quo, the old order, the vested interests of the ruling class." And we follow on through until we come to this conclusion, "Thus, one Chinese communist leader explained that of course a Christian might become a communist, but if he were a true communist, he would not long remain a Christian."

That is the order of evolution. The Christian becomes a Communist, and after a while the Communist gives up any relationship to Christianity. This is the road which many have taken, and they have taken it because of the same approach which is here being made by the Methodists in their commendation of the half-truth of Communism. This lesson is on that road!

Humanitarian?

On page 32 we read: "Communists have adopted a number of Christian techniques. One of these is the cell, the group confessional." The Communists, we are told, have taken a good thing from Christianity and have simply manipulated it into a weapon of thought control. But still we cannot get away from the good accomplishments of Communism, for the lesson states, "Whatever its perverted practices may be, communism begins with a great humanitarian ideal." There is no humanitarian ideal to Communism, and those who think there is have been deluded and deceived by the propaganda of the Marxists. But we continue, "However ruthless their hatred for ideological foes, communists profess a love for the masses and draw no line of creed or color." Thus there is another very fine thing about them, they love the masses and there is no creed or color distinction. And then we have presented this strange formula from the Chinese: "A Chinese convert to Marxism wrote a former teacher in these words: 'I no longer believe in God or worship Him. I can no longer address you as a religious brother, but I send you my revolutionary love.'" Since this lesson has been speaking about love and advocating revolution, since Jesus died as a young revolutionist, at this particular point the Communist program of revolutionary love comes very, very close to the "Christian program" of revolutionary love.

This paragraph continues: "He and his comrades are determined to change the world. All too often Christians have spoken of other peoples as 'religious