

must be removed," they seem to be saying. "Progress demands a new order capable of satisfying all human need. It is right; society must do it — now." These idealistic voices belong to authoritative *secular* and "*religious*" equalitarians, men in positions of leadership who apparently have dedicated themselves to legislating Paradise on earth. Part of the problem before us, then, is the examination of the equalitarian leadership and its response to the two basic demands of the free society, but this takes care of only half the task. The light of inquisition should be placed also on the "grass roots," to examine the role of the individual in upsetting or maintaining the moral-legal balance. Even a brief study of this sort may disclose which is the greater villain — passionate leadership or passive individual. Most likely, it will be a tossup.

Secular Equalitarians

Consider first the secular equalitarian, a person whose frustrated desire for human perfection finally leads him to believe that society, like a machine, may actually be regulated to assure absolute precision. Possessed by fervent desire to cure society of its malady, chaotic individualism, this idealist disowns the moral, voluntary spirit of social organization and

resorts to uninhibited legislative promiscuity.

It is not difficult to understand this lack of respect toward Constitutional order, for the equalitarian thesis clearly rests on one assumption: outside of legal regimentation, there can exist only irresponsible, inhuman individualism. Law is the great and simple equalizer with which egoistic men and women — the gears and springs — may be assigned a "human," impersonal role in the great social machine. Whether intentionally or unconsciously, the secular equalitarian assumes the role of a materialistically divine creator who suggests, "Let us re-create man in our own image. Let us legislate Paradise on earth. Progress demands it."²

The Church in Politics

As stated previously, the secular perfectionist shares his utopian aspirations with another, vastly influential force, official representatives of most churches. Though this is nothing new, only recently

² The liberal-equalitarian concept of "progress" is an essential part of the moral-legal question, but cannot be dealt with in this brief study. Always, "progress," "the march of events," "the mainstream of history," and so forth are used to justify reform, but search in vain for definitions of these slogans (e.g., see J. K. Galbraith's *The Affluent Society*. N. Y.: Mentor Books, 1963, p. 21ff.).

has the secular-religious romance grown so ardent that it presents an immediate threat to the free society. As one Texas preacher exclaimed to this writer last summer, "Looks as though we'll have to start asking God to protect the state from the church, since we have no antitrust laws to forbid collective church influence on social legislation." He referred, of course, to the decisive role of the church in pushing the Civil Rights Act through Congress. The minister, like many others in all church bodies, was quite concerned about the "religious" tendency toward converting moral responsibility into legal compulsion — some call it "legislating morality." And, to repeat the point, that is the danger of the equalitarian coalition, a joint venture into secular-religious idealism which can sweep aside existing legal limitations. Without church support, there could be no hope for success; but, the church seems eager and frighteningly able.

"Religions are many, reason one" — this observation by the well-known philosopher, George Santayana, catches the full flavor of current "religious" psychology.³ Today, religious bodies are search-

³ See George Santayana, *The Life of Reason* (N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), p. 181 ff. This is the one-volume edition.

ing for common ground, the most common point of identification, around which they may reason together. The camp meeting has settled down on social grounds, a nonspiritual realm void of theological differences, and social reform has become the *cause célèbre* of the united religious establishment. If such reforms were to be accomplished through increased religious-moral dedication, we could all rejoice and sing praises to a reborn church. But, regretfully, there is no reason for such elation.

Secularized Religiosity or Rational Morality

The church conciliatory movement results primarily from progressive theological "modernization," which erases fundamental spiritual differences that naturally create disunity among religious bodies. Church modernization has thus produced a secularized religiosity or, as Santayana called it, "rational morality."⁴ At the same time, the church retains its spiritually derived vision of Paradise and projects it onto society. The

⁴ "Undoubtedly the principle of rational morality is utterly independent of each and all religion, and rather inimical to any special gospel; because rational morality coordinates all interests. . . ." George Santayana, *Domination and Powers* . . . (N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 155.