# 24. REQUIEM FOR MAN

*by Ayn Rand*

In advocating capitalism, I have said and stressed for years that capitalism is incompatible with altruism and mysticism. Those who chose to doubt that the issue is "either-or" have now heard it from the highest authority of the opposite side: Pope Paul VI.

The encyclical *"Populorum Progressio"* ("On the Development of Peoples") is an unusual document: it reads as if a long-repressed emotion broke out into the open, past the barrier of carefully measured, cautiously calculated sentences, with the hissing pressure of centuries of silence. The sentences are full of contradictions; the emotion is consistent.

The encyclical is the manifesto of an impassioned hatred for capitalism; but its evil is much more profound and its target is more than mere politics. It is written in terms of a mystic-altruist "sense of life." A sense of life is the subconscious equivalent of metaphysics: a preconceptual, emotionally integrated appraisal of man's nature and of his relationship to existence. To a mystic-altruist sense of life, words are mere approximations; hence the encyclical's tone of evasion. But what is eloquently revealing is the nature of that which is being evaded.

On the question of capitalism, the encyclical's position is explicit and unequivocal. Referring to the industrial

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revolution, the encyclical declares: "But it is unfortunate that on these new conditions of society a system has been constructed which considers profit as the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics, and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligation. . . . But if it is true that a type of capitalism has been the source of excessive suffering, injustices and fratricidal conflicts whose effects still persist, it would also be wrong to attribute to industrialization itself evils that belong to the woeful system which accompanied it." (Paragraph 26)

The Vatican is not the city room of a third-rate Marxist tabloid. It is an institution geared to a perspective of centuries, to scholarship and timeless philosophical deliberation. Ignorance, therefore, cannot be the explanation of the above. Even the leftists know that the advent of capitalism and industrialization was not an "unfortunate" coincidence, and that the first made the second possible.

What are the "excessive suffering, injustices and fratricidal conflicts" caused by capitalism? The encyclical gives no answer. What social system, past or present, has a better record in respect to *any* social evil that anyone might choose to ascribe to capitalism? Has the feudalism of the Middle Ages? Has absolute monarchy? Has socialism or fascism? No answer. If one is to consider "excessive suffering, injustices and fratricidal conflicts," what aspect of capitalism can be placed in the same category with the terror and wholesale slaughter of Nazi Germany or Soviet Russia? No answer. If there is no causal connection between capitalism and the people's progress, welfare, and standard of living, why are these highest in the countries whose systems have the largest element of capitalistic economic freedom? No answer.

Since the encyclical is concerned with history and with fundamental political principles, yet does not discuss or condemn any social system other than capitalism, one must conclude that all other systems are compatible with the encyclical's political philosophy. This is supported by the fact that capitalism is condemned, not for some lesser characteristics, but *for its essentials,* which are not the base of any other system: the profit motive, competition, and private ownership of the means of production.

By what moral standard does the encyclical judge a social system? Its most specific accusation directed at capitalism reads as follows: "The desire for necessities is legitimate, and work undertaken to obtain them is a duty: 'If any man will not work, neither let him eat.' But the acquiring of temporal goods can lead to greed, to the insatiable desire for more, and can make increased power a tempting objective. Individuals, families and nations can be overcome by avarice, be they poor or rich, and all can fall victim to a stifling materialism." (18)

Since time immemorial and pre-industrial, "greed" has been the accusation hurled at the rich by the concrete-bound illiterates who were unable to conceive of the source of wealth or of the motivation of those who produce it. But the above was not written by an illiterate.

Terms such as "greed" and "avarice" connote the caricature image of two individuals, one fat, the other lean, one indulging in mindless gluttony, the other starving over chests of hoarded gold—both symbols of the acquisition of riches for the sake of riches. Is that the motive-power of capitalism?

If all the wealth spent on personal consumption by all the rich of the United States were expropriated and distributed among our population, it would amount to less than a dollar per person. (Try to figure out the amount, if distributed to the entire population of the globe.) The rest of American wealth is invested in production—and it is this constantly growing investment that raises America's standard of living by raising the productivity of its labor. This is primer economics which Pope Paul VI cannot fail to know.

To observe the technique of epistemological manipulation, read that quoted paragraph again—and look past the images invoked by the window-dressing of "greed" and "avarice." You will observe that the evil being denounced is: "the insatiable desire for more." Of what? Of "increased power." What sort of power? No direct answer is given in that paragraph, but the entire encyclical provides the answer by means of a significant omission: no distinction is drawn between *economic* power and *political* power (between production and force), they are used interchangeably in some passages and equated explicitly in others. If you look at the facts of reality, you will observe that the "increased power" which men of wealth seek under capitalism is the power of *independent* production, the power of an "insatiable" ambition to expand their productive capacity—and that *this* is what the encyclical damns. The evil is not work, but *ambitious* work.



These implications are supported and gently stressed in a subsequent paragraph, which lists the encyclical's view of "less human" conditions of social existence: "The lack of material necessities for those who are without the minimum essential for life, the moral deficiencies of those who are mutilated by selfishness. . . . Oppressive social structures, whether due to the abuses of ownership or to the abuses of power . . ." And, as "more human" conditions: "the passage from misery toward the possession of necessities. . . ." (21)

What "necessities" are the "minimum essential for life"? For what kind of life? Is it for mere physical survival? If so, for how long a survival? No answer is given. But the encyclical's principle is clear: only those who rise no higher than the barest minimum of subsistence have the *right* to material possessions—and this right supersedes all the rights of all other men, including their right to life. This is stated explicitly:

"The Bible, from the first page on, teaches us that the whole of creation is for man, that it is his responsibility to develop it by intelligent effort and by means of his labor to perfect it, so to speak, for his use. If the world is made to furnish each individual with the means of livelihood and the instruments for his growth and progress, each man has therefore the right to find in the world what is necessary for himself. The recent Council reminded us of this: 'God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis.' All other rights whatsoever, including those of property and of free commerce, are to be subordinated to this principle." (22)

Observe what element is missing from this view of the world, what human faculty is regarded as inessential or non-existent. I shall discuss this aspect later in more detail. For the moment, I shall merely call your attention to the use of the word "man" in the above paragraph (*which* man?)—and to the term "created goods." Created—by whom? Blank out.

That missing element becomes blatant in the encyclical's next paragraph: "It is well known how strong were the words used by the fathers of the church to describe the proper attitude of persons who possess anything toward persons in need. To quote St. Ambrose: 'You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his. For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself. The world is given to all, and not only to the rich.' That is, private property does not constitute for anyone an absolute and unconditional right. No one is justified in keeping for his exclusive use what he does not need, when others lack necessities." (23)

St. Ambrose lived in the fourth century, when such views of property could conceivably have been explicable, if not justifiable. From the nineteenth century on, they can be neither.

What solution does the encyclical offer to the problems of today's world? "Individual initiative alone and the mere free play of competition could never assure successful development. One must avoid the risk of increasing still more the wealth of the rich and the dominion of the strong, while leaving the poor in their misery and adding to the servitude of the oppressed. Hence programs are necessary in order 'to encourage, stimulate, coordinate, supplement and integrate' the activity of individuals and of intermediary bodies. It pertains to the public authorities to choose, even to lay down, the objectives to be pursued, the ends to be achieved, and the means for attaining these, and it is for them to stimulate all the forces engaged in this common activity." (33)

A society in which the government ("the public authorities") chooses and lays down the objectives to be pursued, the ends to be achieved, and the means for achieving them is a totalitarian state. It is, therefore, morally shocking to read the very next sentence:



"But let them take care to associate private initiative and intermediary bodies with this work. They will thus avoid the danger of complete collectivization or of arbitrary planning, which, by denying liberty, would prevent the exercise of the fundamental rights of the human person." (33)

What are "the fundamental rights of the human person" (which are never defined in the encyclical) in a state where "all other rights whatsoever . . . are to be subordinated to this principle [the "right" to minimum sustenance]"? (22) What is "liberty" or "private initiative" in a state where the government lays down the ends and commandeers the means? What is *incomplete* collectivization?

It is difficult to believe that modern compromisers, to whom that paragraph is addressed, could stretch their capacity for evasion far enough to take it to mean the advocacy of a mixed economy. A mixed economy is a mixture of capitalism and statism; when the principles and practices of capitalism are damned and annihilated at the root, what is to prevent the statist collectivization from becoming *complete?*

(The moral shock comes from the realization that the encyclical regards some men's capacity for evasion as infinitely elastic. Judging by the reactions it received, the encyclical did not miscalculate.)

I have always maintained that every political theory is based on some code of ethics. Here again, the encyclical confirms my statement, though from the viewpoint of a moral code which is the opposite of mine. "The same duty of solidarity that rests on individuals exists also for nations: 'Advanced nations have a very heavy obligation to help the developing peoples.' It is necessary to put this teaching of the council into effect. Although it is normal that a nation should be the first to benefit from the gifts that Providence has bestowed on it as the fruit of the labors of its people, still no country can claim on that account to keep its wealth for itself alone." (48)

This seems clear enough, but the encyclical takes pains not to be misunderstood. "In other words, the rule of free trade, taken by itself, is no longer able to govern international relations. . . . One must recognize that it is the fundamental principle of liberalism, as the rule for commercial exchange, which is questioned here." (58)

"We must repeat once more that the superfluous wealth of rich countries should be placed at the service of poor nations, the rule which up to now held good for the benefit of those nearest to us, must today be applied to all the needy of this world." (49)

If need—*global* need—is the criterion of morality, if minimum subsistence (the standard of living of the least developed savages) is the criterion of property rights, then every new shirt or dress, every ice cream cone, every automobile, refrigerator, or television set becomes "superfluous wealth."

Remember that "rich" is a relative concept and that the share-croppers of the United States are fabulously rich compared to the laborers of Asia or Africa. Yet the encyclical denounces, as "unjust," free trade among unequally developed countries, on the grounds that "highly industrialized nations export for the most part manufactured goods, while countries with less developed economies have only food, fibers, and other raw materials to sell." (57) Alleging that this perpetuates the poverty of the undeveloped countries, the encyclical demands that international trade be ruled, not by the laws of the free market, but by the *need* of its neediest participants.

How this would work in practice is made explicitly clear: "This demands great generosity, much sacrifice and unceasing effort on the part of the rich man. Let each one examine his conscience, a conscience that conveys a new message for our times. . . . Is he ready to pay higher taxes so that the public authorities can intensify their efforts in favor of development? Is he ready to pay a higher price for imported goods so that the producer may be more justly rewarded?" (47)

It is not only the rich who pay taxes; the major share of the tax burden in the United States is carried by the middle and lower income classes. It is not for the exclusive personal consumption of the rich that foreign goods or raw materials are imported. The price of food is not



a major concern to the rich; it is a crucial concern to the poor. And since *food* is listed as one of the chief products of the undeveloped countries, project what the encyclical's proposal would mean: it would mean that an American housewife would have to buy food produced by men who scratch the soil with bare hands or hand-plows, and would pay prices which, if paid to America's mechanized farmers, would have given her a hundred or a thousand times more. Which items of her family budget would she have to sacrifice so that those undeveloped producers "may be more justly rewarded"? Would she sacrifice some purchases of clothing? But her clothing budget would have shrunk in the same manner and proportion—since she would have to provide the "just rewards" of the producers of "fibers and other raw materials." And so on. What, then, would happen to her standard of living? And what would happen to the American farmers and producers of raw materials? Forced to compete, not in terms of productive competence, but of *need,* they would have to arrest their "development" and revert to the methods of the hand-plow. What, then, would happen to the standard of living of the whole world?

No, it is not possible that Pope Paul VI was so ignorant of economics and so lacking in the capacity to concretize his theories that he offered such proposals in the name of "humanism" without realizing the unspeakably inhuman cruelty they entail.

It seems inexplicable. But there is a certain basic premise that would explain it. It would integrate the encyclical's clashing elements—the contradictions, the equivocations, the omissions, the unanswered questions—into a consistent pattern. To discover it, one must ask: What is the encyclical's view of man's nature?

That particular view is seldom admitted or fully identified by those who hold it. It is less a matter of conscious philosophy than of a feeling dictated by a sense of life. The conscious philosophy of those who hold it, consists predominantly of attempts to rationalize it.

To identify that view, let us go to its roots, to the kind of phenomena which give rise to it, in sense-of-life terms.

I will ask you to project the look on a child's face when he grasps the answer to some problem he has been striving to understand. It is a radiant look of joy, of liberation, almost of triumph, which is unself-conscious, yet self-assertive, and its radiance seems to spread in two directions: outward, as an illumination of the world—inward, as the first spark of what is to become the fire of an earned pride. If you have seen this look, or experienced it, you know that if there is such a concept as "sacred"—meaning: the best, the highest possible to man—this look is the sacred, the not-to-be betrayed, the not-to-be-sacrificed for anything or anyone.

This look is not confined to children. Comic-strip artists are in the habit of representing it by means of a light-bulb flashing on, above the head of a character who has suddenly grasped an idea. In simple, primitive terms, this is an appropriate symbol: an idea is a light turned on in a man's soul.

It is the steady, confident reflection of that light that you look for in the faces of adults—particularly of those to whom you entrust your most precious values. You look for it in the eyes of a surgeon performing an operation on the body of a loved one; you look for it in the face of a pilot at the controls of the plane in which you are flying; and, if you are consistent, you look for it in the person of the man or woman you marry.

That light-bulb look is the flash of a human intelligence in action; it is the outward manifestation of man's rational faculty; it is the signal and symbol of man's *mind*. And, to the extent of your humanity, it is involved in everything you seek, enjoy, value, or love.

But suppose that admiration is *not* your response to that look on the face of a child or adult? Suppose that your response is a nameless fear? Then you will spend your life and your philosophical capacity on the struggle never to let that fear be named. You will find rationalizations to hide it, and you will call that child's look a look of "selfishness" or "arrogance" or "intransigence" or "pride"—all of which will be true, but not in the way you will struggle to suggest. You will feel that that look in man's eyes is your greatest, most dangerous enemy—and the desire to vanquish that look will become your only absolute, taking precedence over reason, logic, consistency, existence, reality. The desire to vanquish that look is the desire to break man's spirit.



Thus you will acquire the kind of sense of life that produced the encyclical *"Populorum Progressio."* It was not produced by the sense of life of any one person, but by the sense of life of an institution.

The dominant chord of the encyclical's sense of life is hatred for man's *mind*—hence hatred for man—hence hatred for life and for this earth—hence hatred for man's enjoyment of his life on earth—and hence, as a last and least consequence, hatred for the only social system that makes all these values possible in practice: capitalism.

I could maintain this on the grounds of a single example. Consider the proposal to condemn Americans to a lifetime of unrewarded drudgery at forced labor, making them work as hard as they do or harder, with nothing to gain but the barest subsistence—while savages collect the products of their effort. When you hear a proposal of this sort, what image leaps into your mind? What *I* see is the young people who start out in life with self-confident eagerness, who work their way through school, their eyes fixed on their future with a joyous, uncomplaining dedication—and what meaning a new coat, a new rug, an old car bought second-hand, or a ticket to the movies has in their lives, as the fuel of their courage. Anyone who evades that image while he plans to dispose of "the fruit of the labors of people" and declares that human effort is not a sufficient reason for a man to keep his own product—may claim any motive but love of humanity.

I could rest my case on this alone, but I shan't. The encyclical offers more than a sense of life: it contains specific, conscious, philosophical corroboration.

Observe that it is not aimed at destroying man's mind, but at a slower, more agonizing equivalent: at enslaving it.

The key to understanding the encyclical's social theories is contained in a statement of John Galt: "I am the man whose existence your blank-outs were intended to permit you to ignore. I am the man whom you did not want either to live or to die. You did not want me to live, because you were afraid of knowing that I carried the responsibility you dropped and that your lives depended upon me; you did not want me to die, because you knew it." (*Atlas Shrugged*)

The encyclical neither denies nor acknowledges the existence of human intelligence: it merely treats it as an inconsequential human attribute requiring no consideration. The main, and virtually only, reference to the role of intelligence in man's existence reads as follows: "The introduction of industry is a necessity for economic growth and human progress; it is also a sign of development and contributes to it. By persistent work and use of his intelligence, man gradually wrests nature's secrets from her and finds a better application for her riches. As his self-mastery increases, he develops a taste for research and discovery, an ability to take a calculated risk, boldness in enterprises, generosity in what he does and a sense of responsibility." (25)

Observe that the creative power of man's mind (of his basic means of survival, of the faculty that distinguishes him from animals) is described as an acquired *"taste"*—like a taste for olives or for ladies' fashions. Observe that even this paltry acknowledgment is not allowed to stand by itself: lest "research and discovery" be taken as a value, they are enmeshed in such irrelevancies as "generosity."

The same pattern is repeated in discussing the subject of *work*. The encyclical warns that "it [work] can sometimes be given exaggerated significance," but admits that work is a creative process, then adds that "when work is done in common, when hope, hardship, ambition and joy are shared . . . men find themselves to be brothers." (27) And then: "Work, of course, can have contrary effects, for it promises money, pleasure and power, invites some to selfishness, others to revolt . . ." (28)

This means that *pleasure* (the kind of pleasure which is earned by productive work) is evil—*power* (economic power, the kind earned by productive work) is evil—and *money* (the thing which the entire encyclical begs for passionately) is evil if kept in the hands of those who earned it.

Do you see John Galt doing work "in common," sharing "hope, hardship, ambition and joy" with James Taggart, Wesley Mouch, and Dr. Floyd Ferris? But these are only fiction characters, you say? Okay. Do you see Pasteur? Do you see Columbus? Do you see Galileo—and what happened to him when he tried to share his "hope, hardship, ambition and joy" with the Catholic Church?



No, the encyclical does not deny the existence of men of genius; if it did, it would not have to plead so hard for global *sharing*. If all men were interchangeable, if degrees of ability were of no consequence, everyone would produce the same amount and there would be no benefits for anyone to derive from sharing. The encyclical assumes that the unnamed, unrecognized, unacknowledged fountainheads of wealth would somehow continue to function—and proceeds to set up conditions of existence which would make their functioning impossible.

Remember that intelligence is not an exclusive monopoly of genius; it is an attribute of all men, and the differences are only a matter of degree. If conditions of existence are destructive to genius, they are destructive to every man, each in proportion to his intelligence. If genius is penalized, so is the faculty of intelligence in every other man. There is only this difference: the average man does not possess the genius's power of self-confident resistance, and will break much faster; he will give up his mind, in hopeless bewilderment, under the first touch of pressure.

There is no place for the mind in the world proposed by the encyclical, and no place for man. The entities populating it are insentient robots geared to perform prescribed tasks in a gigantic tribal machine, robots deprived of choice, judgment, values, convictions and self-esteem—above all, of self-esteem.

"You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person. You are handing over to him what is his." (23) Does the wealth created by Thomas A. Edison belong to the bushmen who did not create it? Does the paycheck you earned this week belong to the hippies next door who did not earn it? A man would not accept that notion; a robot would. A man would take pride in his achievement; it is the pride of achievement that has to be burned out of the robots of the future.

"For what has been given in common for the use of all, you have arrogated to yourself." (23) "God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people." (22) *You* are one of the things that the earth contains; are you, therefore, intended "for the use of every human being and people"? The encyclical's answer is apparently "Yes"—since the world it proposes is based on that premise in every essential respect.

A man would not accept that premise. A man, such as John Galt, would say: "You have never discovered the industrial age—and you cling to the morality of the barbarian eras when a miserable form of human subsistence was produced by the muscular labor of slaves. Every mystic had always longed for slaves, to protect him from the material reality he dreaded. But *you*, you grotesque little atavists, stare blindly at the skyscrapers and smokestacks around you and dream of enslaving the material providers who are scientists, inventors, industrialists. When you clamor for public ownership of the means of production, you are clamoring for public ownership of the mind." (*Atlas Shrugged*)

But a robot would not say it. A robot would be programmed not to question the source of wealth—and would never discover that the source of wealth is man's mind.

On hearing such notions as "The whole of creation is for man" (22) and "The world is given to all" (23), a man would grasp that these are equivocations which evade the question of what is necessary to *make use* of natural resources. He would know that nothing is *given* to him, that the transformation of raw materials into human goods requires a process of thought and labor, which some men will perform and others will not—and that, *in justice*, no man can have a primary *right* to the goods created by the thought and labor of others. A robot would not protest; it would see no difference between itself and raw materials; it would take its own motions as the *given*.

A man who loves his work and knows what enormous virtue—what discipline of thought, of energy, of purpose, of devotion—it requires, would rebel at the prospect of letting it serve those who scorn it. And scorn for material production is splattered all over the encyclical. "Less well off peoples can never be sufficiently on their guard against this temptation, which comes to them from wealthy nations." This temptation is "a way of acting that is principally aimed at the conquest of material prosperity." (41) Advocating a "dialogue" between different civilizations for the purpose of founding "world solidarity," the encyclical stresses that it must be: "A dialogue based on man and not on commodities or technical skills. . . ." (73) Which means that technical skills are a negligible characteristic, that no virtue was needed to acquire them, that the ability to produce commodities deserves no acknowledgment and is not part of the concept "man."



Thus, while the entire encyclical is a plea for the *products* of industrial wealth, it is scornfully indifferent to their source; it asserts a right to the effects, but ignores the cause; it purports to speak on a lofty moral plane, but leaves the *process* of material production outside the realm of morality—as if that process were an activity of a low order that neither involved nor required any moral principles.

I quote from *Atlas Shrugged:* "An industrialist—blank-out—there is no such person. A factory is a 'natural resource,' like a tree, a rock or a mud puddle. . . . Who solved the problem of production? Humanity, they answer. What was the solution? The goods are here. How did they get here? Somehow. What caused it? Nothing has causes." (The last sentence is inapplicable; the encyclical's answer would be: "Providence.")

The process of production is directed by man's mind. Man's mind is not an indeterminate faculty; it requires certain conditions in order to function—and the cardinal one among them is *freedom.* The encyclical is singularly, eloquently devoid of any consideration of the mind's requirements, as if it expected human thought to keep on gushing forth anywhere, under any conditions, from under any pressures—*or as if it intended that gusher to stop.*

If concern for human poverty and suffering were one's primary motive, one would seek to discover their cause.

One would not fail to ask: Why did some nations develop, while others did not? Why have some nations achieved material abundance, while others have remained stagnant in subhuman misery? History and, specifically, the unprecedented prosperity-explosion of the nineteenth century, would give an immediate answer: capitalism is the only system that enables men to produce abundance—and the key to capitalism is individual freedom.

It is obvious that a political system affects a society's economics, by protecting or impeding men's productive activities. But *this* is what the encyclical will neither admit nor permit. The relationship of politics and economics is the thing it most emphatically ignores or evades and denies. It declares that no such relationship exists.

In projecting its world of the future, where the civilized countries are to assume the burden of helping and developing the uncivilized ones, the encyclical states: "And the receiving countries could demand that there be no interference in their political life or subversion of their social structures. As sovereign states they have the right to conduct their own affairs, to decide on their policies and to move freely toward the kind of society they choose." (54)

What if the kind of society they choose makes production, development, and progress impossible? What if it practices communism, like Soviet Russia?—or exterminates minorities, like Nazi Germany?—or establishes a religious caste system, like India?—or clings to a nomadic, anti-industrial form of existence, like the Arab countries?—or simply consists of tribal gangs ruled by brute force, like some of the new countries of Africa? The encyclical's tacit answer is that these are the prerogatives of sovereign states—that we must respect different "cultures"—and that the civilized nations of the world must make up for these deficits, *somehow.*

Some of the answer is not tacit. "Given the increasing needs of the underdeveloped countries, it should be considered quite normal for an advanced country to devote a part of its production to meet their needs, and to train teachers, engineers, technicians and scholars prepared to put their knowledge and their skill at the disposal of less fortunate peoples." (48)



The encyclical gives severely explicit instructions to such emissaries. "They ought not to conduct themselves in a lordly fashion, but as helpers and co-workers. A people quickly perceives whether those who come to help them do so with or without affection . . . Their message is in danger of being rejected if it is not presented in the context of brotherly love." (71) They should be free of "all nationalistic pride"; they should "realize that their competence does not confer on them a superiority in every field." They should realize that theirs "is not the only civilization, nor does it enjoy a monopoly of valuable elements." They should "be intent on discovering, along with its history, the component elements of the cultural riches of the country receiving them. Mutual understanding will be established which will enrich both cultures." (72)

This is said to civilized men who are to venture into countries where sacred cows are fed, while children are left to starve—where female infants are killed or abandoned by the roadside—where men go blind, medical help being forbidden by their religion—where women are mutilated, to insure their fidelity—where unspeakable tortures are ceremonially inflicted on prisoners—where cannibalism is practiced. Are these the "cultural riches" which a Western man is to greet with "brotherly love"? Are these the "valuable elements" which he is to admire and adopt? Are these the "fields" in which he is not to regard himself as superior? And when he discovers entire populations rotting alive in such conditions, is he not to acknowledge, with a burning stab of pride—of pride and gratitude—the achievements of *his* nation and *his* culture, of the men who created them and left him a nobler heritage to carry forward?

The encyclical's implicit answer is "No." He is not to judge, not to question, not to condemn—only to love; to love without cause, indiscriminately, unconditionally, in violation of any values, standards, or convictions of his own.

(The only valuable assistance that Western men could, in fact, offer to undeveloped countries is to enlighten them on the nature of capitalism and help them to establish it. But this would clash with the natives' "cultural traditions"; industrialization cannot be grafted onto superstitious irrationality; the choice is either-or. Besides, it is a knowledge which the West itself has lost; and it is *the* specific element which the encyclical damns.)

While the encyclical demands a kind of unfastidious relativism in regard to cultural values and stressedly urges respect for the right of primitive cultures to hold any values whatever, it does not extend this tolerance to Western civilization. Speaking of Western businessmen who deal with countries "recently opened to industrialization," the encyclical states: "Why, then, do they return to the inhuman principles of individualism when they operate in less developed countries?" (70)

Observe that the horrors of tribal existence in those undeveloped countries evoke no condemnation from the encyclical; only individualism—the principle that raised mankind out of the primordial swamps—is branded as "inhuman."

In the light of that statement, observe the encyclical's contempt for conceptual integrity, when it advocates "the construction of a better world, one which shows deeper respect for the rights and the vocation of the individual." (65) What are the rights of the individual in a world that regards individualism as "inhuman"? No answer.

There is another remark pertaining to Western nations, which is worth noting. The encyclical states: "We are pleased to learn that in certain nations 'military service' can be partially accomplished by doing 'social service,' a 'service pure and simple.' " (74)

It is interesting to discover the probable source of the notion of substituting social work for military service, of the claim that American youths owe their country some years of *servitude* pure and simple—a vicious notion, more evil than the draft, a singularly un-American notion in that it contradicts every fundamental principle of the United States.

The philosophy that created the United States is the encyclical's target, the enemy it seeks to obliterate. A casual reference that seems aimed at Latin America is a bit of window-dressing, a booby-trap for compromisers, upon which they did pounce eagerly. That reference states: "If certain landed estates impede the general prosperity because they are extensive, unused or poorly used . . . the common good sometimes demands their expropriation." (24)



But whatever the sins of Latin America, capitalism is not one of them. Capitalism—a system based on the recognition and protection of individual rights—has never existed in Latin America. In the past and at present, Latin America was and is ruled by a primitive form of fascism: an unorganized, unstructured rule by *coup d'état,* by militaristic gangs, *i.e.,* by physical force, which tolerates a nominal pretense at private property subject to expropriation by any gang in power (which is the cause of Latin America's economic stagnation).

The encyclical is concerned with help to the undeveloped nations of the world. Latin America is high on the list of the undeveloped; it is unable to feed its own people. Can anyone imagine Latin America in the role of global provider, supplying the needs of the entire world? It is only the United States—the country created by the principles of individualism, the freest example of capitalism in history, the first and last exponent of the Rights of Man—that could attempt such a role and would thereby be induced to commit suicide.

Now observe that the encyclical is not concerned with man, with the individual; the "unit" of its thinking is *the tribe:* nations, countries, peoples—and it discusses them as if they had a totalitarian power to dispose of their citizens, as if such entities as individuals were of no significance any longer. This is indicative of the encyclical's strategy: the United States is the highest achievement of the millennia of Western civilization's struggle toward individualism, and its last, precarious remnant. With the obliteration of the United States—*i.e.,* of capitalism—there will be nothing left to deal with on the face of the globe but collectivized tribes. To hasten that day, the encyclical treats it as a *fait accompli* and addresses itself to the relationships among tribes.

Observe that the same morality—*altruism,* the morality of self-immolation—which, for centuries, has been preached against the individual, is now preached against the *civilized nations.* The creed of self-sacrifice—the primordial weapon used to penalize man's success on earth, to undercut his self-confidence, to cripple his independence, to poison his enjoyment of life, to emasculate his pride, to stunt his self-esteem and paralyze his mind—is now counted upon to wreak the same destruction on civilized nations and on civilization as such.

I quote John Galt: "You have reached the blind alley of the treason you committed when you agreed that you had no right to exist. Once, you believed it was 'only a compromise': you conceded it was evil to live for yourself, but moral to live for the sake of your children. Then you conceded that it was selfish to live for your children, but moral to live for your community. Then you conceded that it was selfish to live for your community, but moral to live for your country. *Now,* you are letting this greatest of countries be devoured by any scum from any corner of the earth, while you concede that it is selfish to live for your country and that your moral duty is to live for the globe. A man who has no right to life, has no right to values and will not keep them." (*Atlas Shrugged*)

Rights are conditions of existence required by man's nature for his proper survival qua man—*i.e.,* qua *rational* being. They are not compatible with altruism.

Man's soul or spirit is his consciousness; the motor of his consciousness is reason; deprive him of freedom, *i.e.,* of the right to use his mind—and what is left of him is only a physical body, ready to be manipulated by the strings of any tribe.

Ask yourself whether you have ever read a document as body-oriented as that encyclical. The inhabitants of the world it proposes to establish are robots tuned to respond to a single stimulus: *need*—the lowest, grossest, physical, *physicalistic* need of any other robots anywhere: the minimum necessities, the barely sufficient to keep all robots in working order, eating, sleeping, eliminating, and procreating, to produce more robots to work, eat, sleep, eliminate, and procreate. The most dehumanizing level of poverty is the level on which bare animal necessities become one's only concern and goal; this is



the level which the encyclical proposes to institutionalize and on which it proposes to immobilize all of mankind forever, with the animal needs of all as the only motivation of all ("all other rights whatsoever . . . are to be subordinated to this principle").

If the encyclical charges that in a capitalist society men fall victim to "a stifling materialism," what is the atmosphere of that proposed world?

The survivor of one such plan described it as follows: "We had no way of knowing their ability [the ability of others], we had no way of controlling their needs—all we knew was that we were beasts of burden struggling blindly in some sort of place that was half-hospital, half-stockyards—a place geared to nothing but disability, disaster, disease—beasts put there for the relief of whatever whoever chose to say was whichever's need. . . . To work—with no chance for an extra ration, till the Cambodians have been fed and the Patagonians have been sent through college. To work—on a blank check held by every creature born, by men whom you'll never see, whose needs you'll never know, whose ability or laziness or sloppiness or fraud you have no way to learn and no right to question—just to work and work and work—and leave it up to the Ivys and the Geralds of the world to decide whose stomach will consume the effort, the dreams and the days of your life." (*Atlas Shrugged*)

Do you think that I was exaggerating and that no one preaches ideals of that kind?

But, you say, the encyclical's ideal will not work? It is not intended to work.

It is not intended to relieve suffering or to abolish poverty; it is intended to induce guilt. It is not intended to be accepted and practiced; it is intended to be accepted and broken—broken by man's "selfish" desire to live, which will thus be turned into a shameful weakness. Men who accept as an ideal an irrational goal which they cannot achieve never lift their heads thereafter—and never discover that their bowed heads were the only goal to be achieved.

The relief of suffering is not altruism's motive, it is only its rationalization. Self-sacrifice is not altruism's means to a happier end, it is its end—self-sacrifice as man's permanent state, as a way of life and joyless toil in the muck of a desolate earth where no "Why?" is ever to flash on in the veiled, extinguished eyes of children.

The encyclical comes close to admitting this prospect, and does not attempt to offer any *earthly* justification for altruistic martyrdom. It declares: "Far from being the ultimate measure of all things, man can only realize himself by reaching beyond himself." (42) (Beyond the grave?) And: "This road toward a greater humanity requires effort and sacrifice, but suffering itself, accepted for the love of our brethren, favors the progress of the entire human family." (79) And: "We are all united in this progress toward God." (80)

As to the attitude toward man's mind, the clearest admission is to be found outside the encyclical. In a speech to a national conference of Italian bishops, on April 7, 1967, Pope Paul VI denounced the questioning of "any dogma that does not please and that demands the humble homage of the mind to be received." And he urged the bishops to combat the "cult of one's own person." (*The New York Times,* April 8, 1967.)

On the question of what political system it advocates, the encyclical is scornfully indifferent: it would, apparently, find any political system acceptable provided it is a version of statism. The vague allusions to some nominal form of private property make it probable that the encyclical favors fascism. On the other hand, the tone, style, and vulgarity of argumentation suggest a shopworn Marxism. But this very vulgarity seems to indicate a profound indifference to intellectual discourse—as if, contemptuous of its audience, the encyclical picked whatever clichés were deemed to be safely fashionable today.

The encyclical insists emphatically on only two political demands: that the nations of the future embrace statism, with a totalitarian control of their citizens' economic activities—and that these nations unite into a global state, with a totalitarian power over global planning. "This international collaboration on a worldwide scale requires institutions that will prepare, coordinate and direct it . . . Who does not see the necessity of thus establishing progressively a world authority, capable of acting effectively in the juridical and political sectors?" (78)



Is there any difference between the encyclical's philosophy and communism? I am perfectly willing, on this matter, to take the word of an eminent Catholic authority. Under the headline: "Encyclical Termed Rebuff to Marxism," *The New York Times* of March 31, 1967, reports: "The Rev. John Courtney Murray, the prominent Jesuit theologian, described Pope Paul's newest encyclical yesterday as 'the church's definitive answer to Marxism.' . . . 'The Marxists have proposed one way, and in pursuing their program they rely on man alone,' Father Murray said. 'Now Pope Paul VI has issued a detailed plan to accomplish the same goal on the basis of true humanism—humanism that recognizes man's religious nature.' "

Amen.

So much for those American "conservatives" who claim that religion is the base of capitalism—and who believe that they can have capitalism and eat it, too, as the moral cannibalism of the altruist ethics demands.

And so much for those modern "liberals" who pride themselves on being the champions of reason, science, and progress—and who smear the advocates of capitalism as superstitious, reactionary representatives of a dark past. Move over, comrades, and make room for your latest fellow-travelers, who had always belonged on *your* side—then take a look, if you dare, at the kind of past *they* represent.

This is the spectacle of religion climbing on the band-wagon of statism, in a desperate attempt to recapture the power it lost at the time of the Renaissance.

The Catholic Church has never given up the hope to re-establish the medieval union of church and state, with a global state and a global *theocracy* as its ultimate goal. Since the Renaissance, it has always been cautiously last to join that political movement which could serve its purpose at the time. This time, it is too late: collectivism is dead intellectually; the band-wagon on which the Church has climbed is a hearse. But, counting on that vehicle, the Catholic Church is deserting Western civilization and calling upon the barbarian hordes to devour the achievements of man's mind.

There is an element of sadness in this spectacle. Catholicism had once been the most philosophical of all religions. Its long, illustrious philosophical history was illuminated by a giant: Thomas Aquinas. He brought an Aristotelian view of reason (an Aristotelian *epistemology*) back into European culture, and lighted the way to the Renaissance. For the brief span of the nineteenth century, when his was the dominant influence among Catholic philosophers, the grandeur of his thought almost lifted the Church close to the realm of reason (though at the price of a basic contradiction). Now, we are witnessing the end of the Aquinas line—with the Church turning again to his primordial antagonist, who fits it better, to the mind-hating, life-hating St. Augustine. One could only wish they had given St. Thomas a more dignified requiem.

The encyclical is the voice of the Dark Ages, rising again in today's intellectual vacuum, like a cold wind whistling through the empty streets of an abandoned civilization.

Unable to resolve a lethal contradiction, the conflict between individualism and altruism, the West is giving up. When men give up reason and freedom, the vacuum is filled by faith and force.

No social system can stand for long without a moral base. Project a magnificent skyscraper being built on quicksands: while men are struggling upward to add the hundredth and two-hundredth stories, the tenth and twentieth are vanishing, sucked under by the muck. That is the history of capitalism, of its swaying, tottering attempt to stand erect on the foundation of the altruist morality.

It's either-or. If capitalism's befuddled, guilt-ridden apologists do not know it, two fully consistent representatives of altruism do know it: Catholicism and communism.

Their rapprochement, therefore, is not astonishing. Their differences pertain only to the supernatural, but here, in reality, on earth, they have three cardinal elements in common: the same morality, altruism—the same goal, global rule by force—the same enemy, man's mind.



There is a precedent for their strategy. In the German election of 1933, the communists supported the Nazis, on the premise that they could fight each other for power later, but must first destroy their common enemy, capitalism. Today, Catholicism and communism may well cooperate, on the premise that they will fight each other for power later, but must first destroy their common enemy, the individual, by forcing mankind to unite to form one neck ready for one leash.

The encyclical was endorsed with enthusiasm by the communist press the world over. "The French Communist party newspaper, *L'Humanité*, said the encyclical was 'often moving' and constructive for highlighting the evils of capitalism long emphasized by Marxists," reports *The New York Times* (March 30, 1967).

Those who do not understand the role of moral self-confidence in human affairs will not appreciate the sardonically ludicrous quality of the following item from the same report: "The French Communists, however, deplored the failure of the Pope to make a distinction between rich Communist countries and rich capitalist countries in his general strictures against imbalance between the 'have' and 'have-not' nations."

Thus, wealth acquired by force is rightful property, but wealth earned by production is not; looting is moral, but producing is not. And while the looters' spokesmen object to the encyclical's damnation of wealth, the producers' spokesmen crawl, evading the issues, accepting the insults, promising to give their wealth away. If capitalism does not survive, *this* is the spectacle that will have made it unworthy of survival.

*The New York Times* (March 30, 1967) declared editorially that the encyclical "is remarkably advanced in its economic philosophy. It is sophisticated, comprehensive and penetrating . . ." If, by "advanced," the editorial meant that the encyclical's philosophy has caught up with that of modern "liberals," one would have to agree—except that the *Times* is mistaken about the *di-*

*rection* of the motion involved: it is not that the encyclical has progressed to the twentieth century, it is that the "liberals" have reverted to the fourth.

*The Wall Street Journal* (May 10, 1967) went further. It declared, in effect, that the Pope didn't mean it. The encyclical, it alleged, was just a misunderstanding caused by some mysterious conspiracy of the Vatican translators who misinterpreted the Pope's ideas in transferring them from the original Latin into English. "His Holiness may not be showering compliments on the free market system. But he is not at all saying what the Vatican's English version appeared to make him say."

Through minute comparisons of Latin paragraphs with their official and unofficial translations, and columns of casuistic hair-splitting, *The Wall Street Journal* reached the conclusion that it was not capitalism that the Pope was denouncing, but only *"some opinions"* of capitalism. Which opinions? According to the unofficial translation, the encyclical's paragraph 26 reads as follows: "But out of these new conditions, we know not how, some opinions have crept into human society according to which profit was regarded (in these opinions) as the foremost incentive to encourage economic progress, free competition as the supreme rule of economics, private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right which would accept neither limits nor a social duty related to it. . . ."

"In the Latin," said the article, "Pope Paul is acknowledging the hardships . . . in the development of 'some kinds of capitalism.' But he puts the blame for that not on 'the whole woeful system'—*i.e.*, the whole capitalistic system—but on some corrupt views of it."

If the views advocating the profit motive, free competition, and private property are "corrupt," just *what* is capitalism? Blank out. What is *The Wall Street Journal*'s definition of capitalism? Blank out. What are we to designate as "capitalism" once all of its essential characteristics are removed? Blank out.

This last question indicates the unstated meaning of that article: since the Pope does not attack capitalism, but only its fundamental principles, we don't have to worry.



And for what, do you suppose, did that article find courage to reproach the encyclical? "What might have been wished for in the encyclical was an acknowledgment that capitalism can accept, and in the United States as well as other places does accept, a great many social responsibilities."

*Sic transit gloria viae Wall.*

A similar attitude, with a similar range of vision, is taken by *Time* magazine (April 7, 1967). "Although Pope Paul had probably tried to give a Christian message relevant to the world's contemporary economic situation, his encyclical virtually ignored the fact that old-style laissez-faire capitalism is about as dead as *Das Kapital.* Quite clearly, the Pope's condemnation of capitalism was addressed to the unreconstructed variety that persists, for example, in Latin America."

If this were a competition, the prize would go to *Fortune,* the businessmen's magazine (May 1967). Its attitude is aggressively amoral and a-philosophical; it is proudly determined to maintain the separation of economics and ethics. "Capitalism is only an economic system," it says.

First acknowledging the Pope's "praiseworthy purpose," *Fortune* declares: "But despite its modern and global vision, *Populorum Progressio* may be a self-defeating document. It takes a dated and suspicious view of the workings of economic enterprise. . . . The Pope has set up a straw man that has few defenders—if this passage [paragraph 26] is taken literally. Unalloyed laissez-faire in fact governs no significant part of the world's commerce. . . . 'Ownership,' in advanced countries, has evolved in a way that subsumes 'social obligations.' . . . 'Absolute' private rights are irrelevant in advanced industrial societies."

After conceding all that, *Fortune* seems to be astonished and hurt that the Pope did not find it necessary to include businessmen among the "men of good will" whom he calls upon to combat global poverty. "In omitting any specific reference to the businessman, he slights a natural and necessary ally, who, indeed is already deeply committed in many parts of the world to the kind of effort that Paul urges. Perhaps the businessman is taken for granted, as a kind of primordial force that can be counted upon to provide motive power, and that needs only to be tamed and harnessed and carefully watched. [And isn't that *Fortune*'s own view of businessmen in their "unalloyed" state?]

"The Vatican has seldom seemed able to look at capitalism as other than a necessary evil, at best, and *Populorum Progressio* suggests that a better understanding still comes hard. This is not to suggest that capitalism is a complete formula for social enlightenment and progress; it is only an economic system that men of good will can use—more successfully than any other system yet conceived—to attain the social goals that politics and religion help to define."

Observe the indecency of trying to justify capitalism on the grounds of altruistic service. Observe also the naiveté of the cynical: it is not their wealth nor the relief of poverty that the encyclical is after.

Militantly concrete-bound, equating cynicism with "practicality," modern pragmatists are unable to see beyond the range of the moment or to grasp what moves the world and determines its direction. Men who are willing to swim with any current, to compromise on anything, to serve as means to anyone's ends, lose the ability to understand the power of ideas. And while two hordes of man-haters, who do understand it, are converging on civilization, they sit in the middle, declaring that principles are straw men.

I have heard the same accusation directed at Objectivism: we are fighting a straw man, they say, nobody preaches the kind of ideas we are opposing.

Well, as a friend of mine observed, only the Vatican, the Kremlin, and the Empire State Building[1] know the real issues of the modern world.

[1]This publication moved its offices to the Empire State Building in September.

# APPENDIX: MAN'S RIGHTS

*by Ayn Rand*

If one wishes to advocate a free society—that is, capitalism—one must realize that its indispensable foundation is the principle of individual rights. If one wishes to uphold individual rights, one must realize that capitalism is the only system that can uphold and protect them. And if one wishes to gauge the relationship of freedom to the goals of today's intellectuals, one may gauge it by the fact that the concept of individual rights is evaded, distorted, perverted and seldom discussed, most conspicuously seldom by the so-called "conservatives."

"Rights" are a moral concept—the concept that provides a logical transition from the principles guiding an individual's actions to the principles guiding his relationship with others—the concept that preserves and protects individual morality in a social context—the link between the moral code of a man and the legal code of a society, between ethics and politics. *Individual rights are the means of subordinating society to moral law.*

Every political system is based on some code of ethics. The dominant ethics of mankind's history were variants of the altruist-collectivist doctrine which subordinated the individual to some higher authority, either mystical or social. Consequently, most political systems were variants of the same statist tyranny, differing only in degree, not in basic principle, limited only by the accidents of

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