

***Forbidden Revolutions:
Pentecostalism in Latin America
and Catholicism in Eastern Europe***
David Martin

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

David Martin zeigt in diesem Buch die Unangemessenheit säkularer soziologischer sowie religiös-liberaler Analysen in Bezug auf die revolutionäre Kraft des Christentums auf. Sowohl die pfingstkirchliche Bewegung in Lateinamerika als auch der Katholizismus in Osteuropa beweisen die Fähigkeit, kulturelle, soziale, politische und ökonomische Veränderungen zu initiieren, und widerlegen Theorien, die Religion als ein marginales oder im Abstieg befindliches Phänomen beschreiben.

RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur s'efforce de montrer que l'analyse sociologique séculière et l'analyse religieuse libérale de la puissance révolutionnaire du christianisme sont inadéquates. Le mouvement pentecôtiste en Amérique latine et le Catholicisme en Europe de l'est ont démontré leur capacité à engendrer des changements culturels, sociaux, politiques et économiques, ce qui dément la théorie selon laquelle la religion serait un phénomène marginal ou sur son déclin.

David Martin, now Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, has produced a stream of articles and books that have helped to subvert the conventional wisdom, dogmas and rhetoric of modern sociology while utilising the sociological imagination and detailed empirical studies to do so.

Many of the founders of sociology as discipline (Marx, Durkheim, Weber, et al.) worked within the metaphysical vision for sociology established by Auguste Comte (1798–1857). Comte himself not only coined the terms 'sociology' and 'positivism', but also 'altruism' as the central virtue of his new religion of humanity. Aptly described as 'Catholicism minus Christianity', Comte proposed that humanity should replace the creator-redeemer God of Christianity as the ultimate being, the focus of our worship and service. Comte actually established a posi-

tivist church complete with festivals, saints' day and catechism. Rejecting the story of creation-fall-redemption and consummation, Comte embraced the Enlightenment's storyline of progress tightly linked with secularisation. More specifically it was a dispensationalism that moved from theological-mythical to metaphysical to positive scientific worldviews.

From the nineteenth century onwards discipline after discipline variously adopted this dispensationalism. Ironically, it was precisely at the time that mainline history and philosophy of science began to demolish the Comtian narrative in the 1960s that, in a devolved form, the Comtian vision impacted theology and the churches. When Comte arrived in theology, Jesus was the Comtian hero, incarnating altruism, the man for others. The realisation of the Kingdom of God was the secular city (Harvey Cox). The gospel was that of Christian atheism (Thomas Altizer), and we were all to be secular men, come of age, called to be autonomous and self-reliant. Doubtless Comte would be impressed by this new believable form of Christianity, but in the early seventies in a delightfully ironic piece David Martin admitted that sociologists had unfortunately failed to locate and identify the 'modern secular man' for whom the theologians, following Bultmann's program of demythologising, were re-shaping Christianity to make it 'credible'.

In *Forbidden Revolutions* Martin launches a conceptual and empirical attack on the secularist tradition as it expresses itself in social (and liberal religious) analysis. He maintains that the 'vocabularies that do most damage in the case of the revolutions in Latin America and Eastern Europe are the false polarities of left and right, liberal and fundamentalist, political and apolitical, cultural and structural. It is these, along with their background apparatus, that forbade the occurrence of these revolutions' (p. 4). He exposes the widespread sociological assumption that religion is a marginal and declining force, and that its remaining presence is to be explained as some form of cultural lag or as the by-product of various real socio-economic forces, structures or whatever. What the assumption ruled out *a priori* was that religion could (still) actually initiate new or even revolutionary cultural, social, political and economic change. Not only does Martin expose the assumption but he also documents in detail how reality has

failed to respect what it forbids, in particular in Eastern Europe and Latin America. His account is fascinating in itself, but I also suspect that readers may well become self-conscious of ways in which such assumptions have come to define their expectations concerning the gospel and the church.

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Comenius: A Critical Reassessment of his Life and Work

Daniel Murphy

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Angesichts der Tatsache, dass man nicht gerade über eine Schwemme englischer Literatur zu Comenius klagen kann, ist Murphys Studie hochwillkommen. Das Buch setzt sich kritisch mit der Comenius-Rezeption marxistischer sowie pragmatischer Autoren auseinander, die die christliche Grundlage von Comenius' politischer Aktivität, vor allem im Bildungssektor, ausblenden. Murphy hingegen zeichnet ein umfassendes Portrait von Comenius als wichtigem Vertreter eines reformatorischen Traditionsstranges, der später vor allem von Abraham Kuyper und Herman Dooyeweerd aufgegriffen und weiterentwickelt wurde.

RÉSUMÉ

Il existe peu d'ouvrages consacrés à Comenius (Jan Amos Komensky, 1592–1670) et celui-ci est donc le bienvenu. Il fait une critique de la vision marxiste et de la vision pragmatique de Comenius, qui ont toutes deux minimisé le fondement chrétien de l'activité politique de Comenius, en particulier dans le domaine de l'éducation. Murphy nous fait connaître Comenius de manière plus complète, en le présentant comme un représentant important d'un courant de la tradition réformée dans lequel devaient plus tard se situer Abraham Kuyper et Herman Dooyeweerd.

Comenius (Jan Amos Komensky, 1592–1670) was a Czech philosopher and pioneering educationalist, bishop and theologian of

the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Brethren). This church found its roots in the reforming work of John Huss (1372–1415), who was in turn inspired by the writings of John Wyclif (c.1330–1384), many of which have only survived as Czech manuscripts. Wyclif's ideas spread to Bohemia through the closer relations to England that followed the marriage (1382) of Anne, sister of Wenceslaus IV (d.1419) to Richard II. We know that Jerome of Prague (c.1371–1416) returned from Oxford in 1401, where Wyclif had taught, with copies of Wyclif's books. Huss was burnt at the stake in 1415 and Jerome in 1416. The Czech reformation was properly the first reformation, while that associated with Luther was the second. Luther himself recognised this, for he wrote to Spalatin in February 1520, 'Without knowing it I have both taught and held the teaching of Huss: in short, we were all Hussites without knowing it'.

Indeed, the Moravian church benefited from both reformations. Comenius himself, like other Moravians, was educated at the German Calvinist universities of Herborn and Heidelberg. Comenius was driven out of his Bohemian homeland by the violence and persecution of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and subsequently found refuge in various Protestant countries, Holland and Sweden in particular. In his own time he had a pan-European reputation and was respected as an educational genius.

Comenius was invited to England in 1641 by a group representing both Houses of Parliament (including leading bishops) with a view to setting up a Comenian College in London. Tragically, the project was eclipsed by the rebellion in Ireland and the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642. He was then offered a similar position in France by Cardinal Richelieu, the Presidency of Harvard College, and a Swedish invitation to reform the education system there. For various reasons Comenius went to Sweden and later settled in Holland.

Here in Britain, interest in Comenius revived in the late nineteenth century and a number of multitudinous writings were translated and published. Many of the subsequent works on education would have a mandatory chapter on Comenius alongside Plato, Rousseau, Dewey, et al. It is perhaps only amongst contemporary language teachers that the name of Comenius is familiar for his role in the introduction of pictures in