



Catholic Progressives in England after Vatican II

Jay P. Corrin

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In *Catholic Progressives in England after Vatican II*, Jay P. Corrin traces the evolution of Catholic social and theological thought from the end of World War II through the 1960s that culminated in Vatican Council II. He focuses on the emergence of reformist thinking as represented by the Council and the corresponding responses triggered by the Church's failure to expand the promises, or expectations, of reform to the satisfaction of Catholics on the political left, especially in Great Britain. The resistance of the Roman Curia, the clerical hierarchy, and many conservative lay men and women to reform was challenged in 1960s England by a cohort of young Catholic intellectuals for whom the Council had not gone far enough to achieve what they believed was the central message of the social gospels, namely, the creation of a community of humanistic socialism.

This effort was spearheaded by members of the English Catholic New Left, who launched a path-breaking journal of ideas called *Slant*. What made *Slant* revolutionary was its success in developing a coherent philosophy of revolution based on a synthesis of the "New Theology" fueling Vatican II and the New Left's Marxist critique of capitalism. Although the English Catholic New Left failed to meet their revolutionary objectives, their bold and imaginative efforts inspired many younger Catholics who had despaired of connecting their faith to contemporary social, political, and economic issues. Corrin's analysis of the periodical and of such notable contributors as Terry Eagleton and Herbert McCabe explains the importance of *Slant* and its associated group within the context of twentieth-century English Catholic liberal thought and action.

"In *Catholic Progressives in England after Vatican II*, Jay P. Corrin situates the journal *Slant* within the broad sweep of reformist Catholic thinkers and actors across the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Drawing upon an impressive range of primary and secondary sources, both scholarly and journalistic, Corrin illuminates the journal's pivotal role in English Catholic liberal thought and action and the impact its contributors' ideas continue to exert across the decades." —**Steve Rosswurm, Lake Forest College**

"This splendid book offers much more than the title suggests. To communicate an understanding of the radical English Catholics of the 1960s, the author presents an insightful study of English Catholicism and carefully documents that the great continental Catholic theologians and in particular the Second Vatican Council came to recognize the gospel as world-transforming divine message. I greatly enjoyed reading this book. In conservative times the memory of great moments of resistance to injustice and public lies nourishes such resistance in the present." —**Gregory Baum, emeritus, McGill University**

"In this study, Jay P. Corrin describes the Catholic left movement, its leaders and their major ideas, and the broad, distinct but related contexts of post-Vatican II Catholicism, British politics, and the political and cultural left. The reader will have a full picture of the ideas of the Catholic left and full assessment of those ideas and the strengths and weaknesses of the movement. *Catholic Progressives in England after Vatican II* makes an original contribution to the fields of Catholic studies, religious history, and the history of the political 'left' in the United Kingdom." —**David J. O'Brien, Loyola Professor of Roman Catholic Studies (emeritus), Holy Cross College**

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