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### The Political and Economic Thought of Walter A Maier

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THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC THOUGHT

OF DR. WALTER A. MAIER

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Historical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

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June 1957

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Every Sunday afternoon for almost fifteen years millions of people throughout the world listened to the fiery sermons of a man who spoke with the authority of one of God's prophets. Walter Arthur Maier's first and foremost call was to bring God's saving truth to those who were yet in darkness and without hope. His whole life was dedicated to the cause of bringing Christ to the nations in order that blood bought souls might enjoy the bliss and glory of eternal salvation in heaven. In spite of the fact that he was an Old Testament professor, he led no cloistered existence. The International Lutheran Hour preacher knew and loved America and its people. With the power and conviction of an Amos he poured out vials of wrath on national as well as personal sins. With roaring impartiality, he denounced immorality, drunkenness, godlessness, divorce, birth control, racial discrimination, corrupt government, modernism, communism, and a lack of good will in labor and industry during two of America's most turbulent decades.

Although most of the 25,000 letters Maier received every week at the height of his popularity, were of a favorable nature, he was labeled by some as a Fascist, a Nazi, anti-semitic, a Republican, a Democrat, and with other contradictory accusations. This study was made to discover just what his political and economic views were. He was neither a politician nor an economist but he did believe that in every area of human activity the truth must be affirmed. Since Maier often violently

contradicted the political and economic views of many clergymen and other intellectuals, this thesis will also endeavor to determine whether Maier's position and predictions have been validated by later historical research.

This study has been personally important for the writer since he intends to include some of the research in a larger thesis covering the attitude which the Missouri Synod has traditionally taken toward political, social and economic problems. A study of "Missouri's" attitude toward slavery has already been completed by the writer and he is presently working on a Master's thesis entitled, "The Missouri Synod and Labor." His interest in Maier's political and economic views was initially aroused by his father, who has always been a common working man. His father, a member of the painter's union, had a deep admiration for the Lutheran Hour preacher's uncompromising presentation of God's message of salvation and his true love and concern for the common working man.

Dr. Maier was probably known by more Americans than any other Missouri Synod figure. During the years of the writer's seminary training, some of the men in his class have at times wondered why Maier's name has seldom been mentioned in any of their classes and why they have hardly ever been advised to read any of the Lutheran Hour preacher's books. Recently the writer received a letter from a student at Bob Jones University, who writes that Maier's sermons and Francis Pieper's explanation of the vicarious satisfaction have often been praised by their professors and are required reading. Because of what appears to this writer as an apparent lack of knowledge or perhaps an indifference among seminarians concerning the activities and influence of one of Concordia's former professors, he also felt that a thesis of this nature could

contribute in some small way to arouse interest in this almost forgotten man of God on the Seminary campus.

Chapter III is a study of the basic principles which guided the fiery evangelist's thought. In order to avoid confusion, it was decided to arrange the material topically rather than chronologically. This method has its weaknesses but one readily discovers that a chronological study would prove altogether unnecessary. To speak of a tremendous difference between the "early" Maier as over against the "later" Maier is definitely not warranted. His thought was guided and determined by certain unwavering principles. Although there might have been a change in his preaching style, such a change would not affect his political and economic thought.<sup>1</sup>

Chapter III presents some rather startling statements concerning Maier's attitude toward America's foreign policy. The following chapter attempts to present the economic principles which guided his thought in this area. Since Miss Harriet Schwenk, Maier's secretary, has prepared a study of his struggle with Communism, Chapter V merely contains some material not included in this article. The final chapter discusses the ever-present Labor and Management problem.

The material for this study has been taken primarily from the Walther League Messenger, which Maier edited for over twenty years. Most of the quotations are the editor's, but occasionally other writers are cited, since Maier seems to have been in agreement with a large

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<sup>1</sup>Lester Zeitler, "An Investigation of the Factors of Persuasion in the Sermons of Dr. Walter A. Maier," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, 1956.

majority of the viewpoints expressed in the Messenger. For this study every Messenger from 1918 until 1945 was read. This required an estimated six hours per volume. During the writer's third year at the Seminary and during his vicarage, he read through almost all of Maier's sermon volumes but, as is to be expected, the political views expressed in his sermons are merely of a general nature. His editorials and numerous articles in the Messenger present the same viewpoint but are far more specific. To limit the length of this thesis only a fraction of the quotations copied from Maier's writing could be used. In order not to distort his position the writer has endeavored to present what Maier has said on both sides of every controversial issue discussed in this thesis.

## CHAPTER II

### THE AMERICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT

#### Political Principles

Maier was a political liberal after the tradition of the founding fathers of America. His patriotism and love for America was a devotion toward the principles of individual liberty and freedom upon which America was founded.<sup>1</sup> He believed in the "inalienable rights" of the individual to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and considered them, together with natural rights and natural law, as one of the blessings of the Lutheran Reformation.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to the "present day liberals" who advocated the "old world" concept that rights of the individual are grants from the government, Maier believed that governments were instituted merely to secure these God given rights inherent in the creation order. Since no government could grant them, he reasoned that no government could legitimately abolish them. During an age of increased government bureaucracy and centralization, Maier pleaded for a return to the constitution and true Nineteenth Century Liberalism. He approvingly quoted Gladstone, "The American constitution is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Walter A. Maier, "Cut Price Glory," Walther League Messenger, XXXV (July, 1936), 700.

<sup>2</sup>Maier, "The Church in This Crises," Ibid., XLIX (October, 1940), 115.

<sup>3</sup>Maier, "The Watch Tower," Ibid., XXXI (July, 1923), 539.



It must be recognized that the "liberalism" of America's founding fathers, which Maier favored, cannot be equated with "liberalism" as it is commonly known today. He believed that Twentieth Century liberalism, or as it also had been termed, "New Dealism," "the Welfare State," and even "Socialism," was not the liberalism of Jefferson and the other founding fathers.

Mussolini, Italy's man of the hour, says that the world is becoming tired of liberty. If he means that part of the world particularly which is dominated by the loose liberty of Sovietism, we can rejoice but if we include our own country we should stop and think. And, indeed the occurrences of the past few years make us realize that while we prize the freedom that has blessed our country, nevertheless influences have been at work which augur evil for the future. The principles of free government, which were emphasized in our Declaration of Independence, 147 years ago and which were more closely defined in the constitution of our country in 1789, are being undermined by a systematic attempt to centralize the authority of our government and make it less representative of the wish and will of the people. Within the last three years the constitution of our country has been amended twice by a method which is not in strict keeping with the spirit of American freedom, and now it is proposed to create a department of education which will finally control the educational system throughout the country and continue the diminution of the rights of the local community, the county and the state.<sup>4</sup>

During the years that Maier was editor of the Walther League Messenger, the refrain, "eternal vigilance is the price of liberty" was continually affirmed.<sup>5</sup> Repeated warnings are raised against the gradual increasing encroachment upon individual liberty by the American government and the increased power of the executive. "With extraordinary

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<sup>4</sup>Maier, "Thoughts for Independence Day," ibid., XXXI (July, 1923), 530.

<sup>5</sup>Maier, "Hollow Liberty," ibid., XLIV (July, 1936), 649; Maier, "Guard our Civilian Liberties," ibid., LI (June, 1943), 511.

powers invested in the presidency . . . the ship of state has drifted far from the safe moorings of truly representative government."<sup>6</sup>

Maier also saw the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution gradually endangered through the ignorance and indifference of the American populace.<sup>7</sup> He was convinced that some American educators were instilling in the hearts of young people a hatred for individual liberty by maintaining that security was far more important than liberty. This trend toward big government was viewed as another evidence of America's growing lack of faith in God. Men who would not be ruled by God, so he thought, would eventually be ruled by tyrants.

In an age when it was considered popular to debunk America's history and the founding fathers, Maier pleaded for a more balanced approach, which would not gloss over the failings and weaknesses of the fathers, but which on the other hand would not adopt the method of "modern debunkers" who endeavored to portray most of the fathers as agnostics and skeptics.

Most of the signers [Declaration of Independence] were Christians who recognized God as "the Creator" and "the Supreme Judge" of the world. Some of the leaders, of course, like Franklin and Jefferson were not Christians, but the rank and file of these men believed in the Trinity, accepted the Bible as God's inspired, infallible Word and revered Jesus as their God and Savior. Indeed we can go back further into the cradle days of America to see that the first colonists were believers. Despite everything radicals may try to tell you today keep firmly implanted in your mind the basic truth that this country was settled, the colonies, and later the states, populated by men and women who were Christians, who came to these shores, among other purposes, so that they could spread the Gospel.

<sup>6</sup>Maier, "Saving Democracy," *ibid.*, XLVIII (October, 1939), 64; Maier, "Hollow Liberty," *ibid.*, XLIV (July, 1935), 649; Maier, "Protect Our Liberties," *ibid.*, LI (July, 1943), 591.

<sup>7</sup>Maier, "Law and Disorder," *ibid.*, XXXII (June, 1924), 690.

of the Lord Jesus Christ, here build Christian churches and worship the Savior according to His Word and the requirements of their conscience. Those early Americans had their faults, of course, and we are not endeavoring to glorify something that is so far distant from us that its frailties cannot be seen; but for the most part, the people who built this land were outstanding in their devotion to Christ. . . .

The founding fathers of this nation, were not atheists, skeptics, unbelievers, pantheists, free-thinkers, Mohammedans, and Buddhists, but Christians who built their hope on the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Maier was persuaded that America as a nation is "great and glorious" not because Americans are a superior race or a morally perfect people, but "in spite of our failings and shortcomings God has chosen and exalted us."<sup>9</sup> Although the Lutheran Hour preacher repeatedly claimed that God had abundantly blessed America and that true Christians are the best patriots, he did not intend to equate Christianity with democracy. He did not assert that the representative form of government was the only form of Christian rule.

Some churchmen have made the mistake of linking Christianity with democracy, as though the representative form of government were the only Christian rule. . . . The Christian religion can flourish in a monarchy and even in a benevolent dictatorship. While it is true that in a democracy the Christian religion is the greatest force for good and the preservation of the government standards, it is equally true that the Scriptures in no passage condemn a monarchy or insist upon any specific form of government. . . . Let us not make the mistake of regarding Americanism and Christianity as synonymous.<sup>10</sup>

However, Maier did believe that the power of the Christian faith was required to produce the degree of love for one's country which was characterized in the patriotism of Arnold Winkelried, Gustav Adolphus,

<sup>8</sup> Maier, "The Watch Tower," *ibid.*, XXXIV (November, 1925), 169; Maier, "Keeping Our Christian Heritage," *ibid.*, I (July, 1942), 604, 605, 635.

<sup>9</sup> Maier, "Protect Our Liberties," *ibid.*, LI (July, 1943), 591.

<sup>10</sup> Maier, "Saving Democracy," *ibid.*, XLVIII (October, 1939), 65.

and George Washington. He claimed that the patriots of Greece and Rome were coarse men whose patriotism was something blind and brutal.

It is only in the full Christian life that the highest forms of genuine patriotism are to be sought and found; for he who is sincere in his faith is also sincere in his allegiance to his country.<sup>11</sup>

He had little sympathy for what he considered false patriotism as he found it expressed in pompous shows and proud regalia. Those who glibly spoke of one hundred per cent Americanism but who knew little of the sincere love which he claimed every Christian bears to the land of his allegiance, were not regarded as true patriots.

He [a Christian] does not seek to have the church do the work of the state, nor to have the state assume the functions which are rightly ascribed to the church. He does not place party above patriotism, not the prosperity of his country above its honesty and integrity. He does not say: "My country right or wrong," since he is concerned about keeping this country right, realizing that even today "righteousness exalteth a nation." But he does love and cherish this blessed country of ours that forms God's completest answer to the needs of human kind. . . . If occasion arises, he presents himself without hesitation for the protection of the Republic and its defense against all encroaching foes.<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Maier firmly believed Christ and His Word were the greatest safeguards for American liberties. In the face of a "subtle and systematic attack upon the light of liberty," he asserted that organized secrecy, multiplied legislation, sectionalism, internationalism, and socialism were not needed. America needed Christ, "not in the Constitution but in the hearts of the American people." During the world's headlong rush toward armament, he consistently maintained that only righteousness would be a permanently exalting force. The enduring

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<sup>11</sup>Maier, "The Christian and His Country," *ibid.*, XXXII (July, 1924), 645.

<sup>12</sup>*ibid.*

patriotism which would protect our nation could only be founded in Christ. "Devotion to the cross demands devotion to the flag."<sup>13</sup>

#### America and Lutheranism

While Maier was editor of the Walther League Messenger he continually pleaded for this Christ-centered patriotism. Almost every July or October issue contained an editorial or article which attempted to demonstrate the close relationship between the American principles of freedom and the Lutheran Reformation. In a feature article Karl Kretzmann wrote:

What happened in Philadelphia on July 4, 1776, when Congress in solemn session adopted the Declaration of Independence would have been unthinkable but for the courage of Martin Luther, . . .

It was Luther who defended the right of the individual mind to think for itself, and of the individual conscience to worship God without the dictation of human powers; it was Luther who insisted on the right of the individual man and the equality of every man before God, . . .

Quoting Sydney George Fisher, Kretzmann continues; "The principle of 'No taxation without representation,' was the outgrowth of the Reformation doctrine of the natural rights of man."<sup>14</sup>

Maier also asserted that, humanly speaking, without Luther there would have been no United States.<sup>15</sup> Although realizing that Luther was primarily a religious reformer, the editor also considered the Sixteenth

<sup>13</sup>Maier, "Pyrotechnists or Purer Patriots?" ibid., XLI (July, 1933), 649.

<sup>14</sup>Karl Kretzmann, "Lutheran Influence on the Declaration of Independence," Walther League Messenger, XXXIV (July, 1926), 678-679.

As editor of the Walther League Messenger, Maier was responsible to a large degree for the expressions of its various writers. However, he did not necessarily endorse every statement in the Messenger. Walther League Messenger, XLV (April, 1937), 528.

<sup>15</sup>Walter A. Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLII (January, 1934), 301.

Century Reformer a champion of the rights of man, an exponent of human liberty, an emancipator of the human mind and a leading advocate of liberal and popular government.<sup>16</sup> Maier uncompromisingly denounced those who claimed that Hitlerism is the spiritual descendant of Lutheranism and that consequently Lutherans are unpatriotic.<sup>17</sup> "Facts however show that Catholicism has helped produce the Fascist philosophy."<sup>18</sup> Together with Francis Pieper he believed that Americans must thank the Reformation for the first amendment to the Constitution.

Repeatedly the editor assured his readers, "I believe in an American Lutheran Church."<sup>19</sup> He preferred to believe that the Lutheran Church took an American attitude toward the great issues of the day, such as pacifism, secretism, education and Church and State relations.

For, it is true that Americanism needs Lutheranism, it is similarly evident that Lutheranism in our country needs Americanism to this extent that we have a broader vision of the possibilities of our Church in this country, a deeper appreciation of the fact that we must continue to adopt American methods and policies, and finally, that we show a more pronounced readiness to make an appeal to the American mind. . . .

Let us avoid the "Deutschland, Deutschland Ueber Alles" spirit while we pay ready tribute to the debt which our country owes Germany. . . . Let us . . . work for the upbuilding and strengthening of the two greatest institutions in the world, the American Government and the Lutheran Church.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup>Maier, "Back to Luther," *ibid.*, XLII (November, 1933), 137.

<sup>17</sup>Maier, "A Studied Slar," *ibid.*, LIV (September, 1945), 9.

<sup>18</sup>Maier, "The Latest Catholic Slander," *ibid.*, LI (April, 1943), 418.

<sup>19</sup>Maier, "I Believe in an American Lutheran Church," *ibid.*, XXXIII (August, September, 1933), 8, 9.

<sup>20</sup>Maier, "Americanism-Lutheranism, Each Needs the Other," *ibid.*, XXXIV (June, 1935), 672, 709.

Paul Lindemann in an article, "Lutheranism and Americanism" maintained that the very refusal of Lutheranism to meddle into political affairs was the truest attestation of her "thorough Americanism." He claimed that Lutherans, more than any other religious group, have been true Americans.<sup>21</sup> Maier similarly asserted that Lutherans "of all American citizens, by training and conviction, are best fitted for the high responsibilities of these political offices."<sup>22</sup>

The evangelist not only claimed that there were political and economic forces in America systematically seeking to destroy freedom and liberty but he was also concerned about some non-Lutheran religious forces which he thought may some day strangle American liberty. He firmly believed that religious modernism was actually more dangerous to America than Communism.

We institute "Defense Days," believing that America's greatest danger will come from without the nation, but all the while forces—and strange to say, religious forces—are at work within these United States which, if unchecked, will spell the ruin of our country's glory and the strangling of its liberties, . . .

Modernist college and university instructors are working hand-in-hand with European liberals and helping to spread radical propaganda and pacifist publicity in our higher institutions. Modernism, forsaking the Christ of God as the one hope of sin-sick humanity, turns to "the gospel of socialism." But this leads to internationalism and, as an inevitable result, to pacifism. And then communism, radicalism, anarchism follow in quick and unavoidable order, leading downward to national ruin and destruction. . . .

<sup>21</sup>Paul Lindemann, "Lutheranism and Americanism," Walther League Messenger, XXXII (July, 1934), 650, 697; Lindemann, "Lutheranism and Civil Government," ibid., XXXII (December, 1923), 204.

<sup>22</sup>Walter A. Maier, "Pyrotechnists or Purer Patriots?" Walther League Messenger, XLI (July, 1933), 649.

Destructive modernists in our own country are the co-workers of the unscrupulous Russian atheists.<sup>23</sup>

Although Maier was careful to point out that Lutherans do not despise the Roman Catholic people, he was convinced that the Roman system was diametrically opposed to American Liberty. He claimed that if the papal emblem were placed above the stars and stripes America would also realize that Americanism had passed forever.<sup>24</sup> In similar fashion he attacked fraternal orders for their "un-American" practices. The methods used by certain fundamentalist groups were considered un-American and dangerous. These were the religious bodies who were attempting to force Sabbath observance and Public School Bible reading upon the American people.

the widespread effort to introduce the Bible into public schools, as well meant as it may be, is un-American because it is against American principles to force a Jewish child to read the New Testament and because it is contrary to our constitution to confuse the duties of the church with the privileges of the state. This whole arrangement which throws the church into politics makes Jesus more of a policeman than a Savior, and seeks to have His church wield the policeman's club, besides preaching His Gospel. It constitutes a real menace to our national life; for, if successfully carried through, the policy will bring a reversion to the spirit and custom of the days of the Puritans, . . . .<sup>25</sup>

The Lutheran Hour preacher did not believe that Lutheran patriotism was merely passive. Since for him Lutherans were the most fundamental (Biblical) of all church bodies, he insisted that they should contribute more to Americanism. He claimed that the Lutheran parish schools, the opposition of the Lutheran Church toward blue laws, birth control, and divorce, and the "Lutheran" attitude toward the separation of church

<sup>23</sup>Maier, "Breakers Ahead," ibid., XXXIII (July, 1925), 648.

<sup>24</sup>ibid., p. 688.

<sup>25</sup>ibid., pp. 688, 689.



and state were all thoroughly American. "Likewise clear-out and emphatic is the Lutheran support of the American principles in the Church's warfare against pacifism, internationalism, communism."<sup>26</sup>

In order to strengthen their Americanism, Walther Leaguers were advised to have the national anthem and a flag at their meetings, to feature patriotic programs, stress Christian Citizenship, conduct an Institute of Public affairs and discuss anti-American trends in order to pass appropriate resolutions.<sup>27</sup> The editor repeatedly asserted that, while Christians never operate according to the dictum "My country right or wrong," they must rise to the defense of their nation.<sup>28</sup>

#### Religious Freedom

Maier was a staunch supporter of religious freedom and equal rights for all religions and denominations. Although no one was ever left in doubt concerning his belief that all men, no matter how sincere and religious, were destined to eternal damnation unless they "accepted Christ and were born again," yet he felt that all religious groups must be tolerated and granted freedom to propagate their beliefs. He praised the initial Supreme Court decision which granted the Jehovah Witnesses permission not to salute the American flag.<sup>29</sup> Later he opposed them

<sup>26</sup>Maier, "More Than Passive Patriotism," ibid., XLV (July, 1937), 678.

<sup>27</sup>ibid., p. 679.

<sup>28</sup>Maier, "Christian Patriots," ibid., I (December, 1941), 194.

<sup>29</sup>Maier, "Thank God for Religious Liberty!" ibid., XLVII (November, 1938), 156.

for forcing the Jehovah Witnesses to salute the flag.<sup>30</sup> He believed that one could still be patriotic and yet not salute the flag and that the Government should also recognize conscientious objectors. While commenting on this latter decision of the Supreme Court, Maier commended Justice Stone for dissenting and referred to Frankfurter as a "liberal." Together with the American Bar Association he defended the position of the Jehovah Witnesses and quoted George Washington as saying, "In my opinion the conscientious scruples of all men should be treated with great delicacy and tenderness."<sup>31</sup>

In spite of his attacks upon Father Coughlin, Maier advocated free speech for all men. He reasoned that it was part of the price of democracy, that even men like Father Coughlin be permitted to continue their broadcasts.

Let us a hundred times put up with Father Coughlin than suffer under a self-imposed censorship of the radio, according to which private interests will control the air. If this be a free country, let us have free speech, with the privilege of replying to all Fascist, rabble-rouser, demagogic agitation!<sup>32</sup>

When the American Government introduced censorship (1941) Maier urged that it be applied fairly and squarely with no religious prejudice. During World War Two the Seventh Day Adventist paper, The Minister, quoted one of the Walther League Messenger's editorials which condemned the policy of excluding Protestant missionaries from Brazil. This article was censored when The Minister was sent to Australia. When Maier protested this censorship of one of his own editorials to the state department,

<sup>30</sup>Maier, "Consciences Must Not Be Stifled!" ibid., XLVIII (July, 1940), 624.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 654.

<sup>32</sup>Maier, "Guard the Right of Free Speech!" ibid., XLVIII (November, 1939), 134.

he was immediately assured by the proper officials that it was all a mistake.<sup>33</sup> In similar situations Maier consistently fought for the Jeffersonian principles of religious freedom.

### Elections and Political Parties

During all his years as editor of the Walther League Messenger, the fiery evangelist never advised his readers to vote for any specific candidate or did he ever tell his readers which party he favored.<sup>34</sup> He felt that Christian citizenship involved more than simple adherence to any political platform. He continually advised his readers to consider the candidates' attitude toward the fundamental principles of our constitutional liberties. He urged his readers to read and analyze the platforms of the various parties and to investigate the principles which these organizations endorse. "and if, as is the case very often in our day, the distinction between the parties becomes confused and obliterated, he [an intelligent citizen] finds it necessary to estimate the principles and the character of the individual candidate."<sup>35</sup>

Concerning most contemporary political platforms Maier wrote, "often they are but vague and non-committal wordings, arbitrary and fragile resolutions, empty promises and faithless convictions."<sup>36</sup> He saw little

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<sup>33</sup>Maier, "Guard our Civilian Liberties!" ibid., LI (June, 1943), 510, 511.

<sup>34</sup>Maier, "Will it be an Empty Whisper?" ibid., XLI (November, 1932), 138.

<sup>35</sup>Maier, "The Ballot," ibid., XXXIII (October, 1924), 136.

<sup>36</sup>Maier, "Our Platform," ibid., XXXVI (July, 1928), 652.

value in the "pomp and pageantry" of political conventions. His platform was first and foremost to get right with God.<sup>37</sup> A platform, which Maier himself recommended in 1928, contained,

Constructive Christian Education for Youth--A Rigid Upholding of the Sanctity of the Law--No Blue Laws--A Clean Cleavage Between Church and State--A Sane Consideration of the Prohibition Question--A Disavowal of the Crime of Organized Secrecy--A Protest Against Pacifism.<sup>38</sup>

During the 1928 battle between Hoover and Smith, Maier warned against simply voting for certain individuals because they represented the wet element of the country. "We dare not sacrifice the great elements of the day because of our inclination to or our aversion for-- a glass of beer."<sup>39</sup> Regarding the prohibition question during this election he did assert, "We like this expression [Hoover's, 'A Social Experiment'] because it is a correct statement of the status of the prohibition question today."<sup>40</sup> He believed prohibition was a law which could be repealed. On such issues as the League of Nations, Woman suffrage, and prohibition, Maier consistently maintained that the Lutheran Church took no official position. In these matters Lutherans think not as a church but as individuals.

Our church is not against prohibition as we understand the term today. Neither is it for it. In fact it sees no reason to take an official position in a social question of this kind, in which as in all such matters, the opinion and conviction of the individual Christian is decisive. . . . It does not conceive of itself as called upon to say in such matters any more or less than the Bible

<sup>37</sup>Maier, "Will it be an Empty Whisper?" *ibid.*, LI (December, 1932), 138.

<sup>38</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 652, 653, 687.

<sup>39</sup>Maier, "Sold! For a Glass of Beer," *ibid.*, XXXVII (August, September, 1928), 49.

<sup>40</sup>*ibid.*, p. 48.

itself says,--if it says anything. It is true, reference has been made to the "official position of the Lutheran Church"; but not only has our Church, as such, never taken any position officially in this matter, but it never will. And if it should attempt to, it would be militating against some of the fundamental principles of Lutheranism, because in such issues we Lutherans think--not as a Church--but as individual Americans.<sup>41</sup>

There can be little doubt that the Lutheran professor had a strong aversion to the increasing political power of the Roman Catholic Church. He was not in favor of placing Roman Catholics in high positions. When accused of bigotry in the 1928 election because of his attitude toward the Roman Church, the editor replied,

But who is the bigot, we pause to ask, when in the present election excitement we are told again and again that it is unchristian, anti-American, and indecent to discuss the official and the practical bigotry of the Roman hierarchy?<sup>42</sup>

Lutheran young people were urged to carry on, "without the slightest tinge of personal hatred, fleshly pride, or spiritual arrogance," the spirit of the Reformation. They were asked to continue to testify against the "iniquity of the Roman system."<sup>43</sup>

Following Hoover's victory, E. J. Gallmeyer, President of the International Waltham League, sent a letter of congratulation to the President elect.

It is my pleasure and opportunity to extend to you the felicitations of 50,000 young people, members of the International Waltham League of the Lutheran Church. . . . This good fortune at having available a man of your scholarly and practical attainment is almost unprecedented. . . .

We are for the absolute separation of church and state. We do not want the church in politics, we want church members in politics.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., "Bigot! Bigot!!" ibid., XXVII (October, 1928), 72.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

We do not believe in using the arm of the law to make people good. We believe in regeneration not in legislation, to improve public morals. We want nothing for ourselves that we do not ask for each and every citizen in like measure.<sup>44</sup>

After Franklin Roosevelt's victory in 1932, the editor urged Lutheran young people to pray for the President and for a return to the principles of America's founding fathers.<sup>45</sup> In an open letter to Franklin Roosevelt, Maier promised the support of the Walther League.

Ours is a law abiding group, dedicated to those principles of self-government inherent in our American constitution. We believe in soul regeneration and not in force for moral development. You have announced just such a position. More power to you.

During the Roosevelt-Landon election of 1936, the popular preacher warned against being misled by campaign songs, parades, flag waving, name calling and empty patriotic oratory.<sup>46</sup> In 1940 Maier again pleaded for intelligent voting according to the basic principles of peace, sound economy, reduction of debt and the separation of church and state.<sup>47</sup>

After Roosevelt's victory over Willkie, the editor again urged his readers to support the President even though they may not have voted for him.<sup>48</sup>

Prior to the Roosevelt-Dewey election of 1944, Christians were requested to ask:

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<sup>44</sup>E. J. Gallmeyer, "An Open Letter to Herbert Clark Hoover," Walther League Messenger, XXXVII (March, 1928), 396.

<sup>45</sup>Maier, "Raise the Smoke Screen," ibid., XLI (December, 1932), 200.

<sup>46</sup>Maier, "Vote Intelligently," ibid., XLV (November, 1936), 135, 136.

<sup>47</sup>Maier, "A Crisis Election," ibid., XLIX (November, 1940), 128,

<sup>48</sup>Maier, "After the Election," ibid., XLIX (December, 1940), 200.

Who as far as we can see, will do more in preserving the ideals of true Americanism, maintaining the functions of Congress and the rights of legislative branches? . . . Who will more zealously discourage Fascist, Communist, atheist policies? Who will more scrupulously observe the separation between church and State? Who will more determinedly fight corruption and graft? Who will discourage class legislation, work for economy and reduce our national debt? Who has the proper attitude on the home, youth, family, the moral question?<sup>49</sup>

#### American Presidents

To avoid controversy and being labeled either a Republican or a Democrat Maier made very few remarks about an individual contemporary President. He considered Coolidge a Christian and a true American and admired most of the ideals and principles of Herbert Hoover. Although at times he had words of praise for Franklin Roosevelt, it becomes rather obvious that he did not think highly of him. Little is said of a personal nature in the Walther League Messenger about Roosevelt, yet from Maier's endorsement of the book, The Crime of Our Ages, it is safe to conclude that the famed Lutheran Hour preacher accepted the revisionist interpretation of World War Two. To a large extent he agreed with the position of men like Beard, Tansil, Morgenstern and even Col. R. R. McCormick. In a book, which Maier regarded as telling the truth, the author states,

Did Governor Dewey tell the truth when he in all his campaign speeches reiterated: "Roosevelt had to make war to solve the unemployment problem?" Did our nation know what an unconscientious leader she had, who in those secret meetings in Teheran and Yalta gave everything to cruel Stalin, his "personal friend," who threatened again and again with a separate peace with Hitler? Did our nation know that Roosevelt forced Churchill to accept the diabolic "Morgenthau Plan" i.e. to murder 40 to 50 per cent of the

<sup>49</sup>Maier, "Vote with Prayer and Purpose," ibid., LIII (November, 1944), 129, 130.

German population by starvation and deportation by sub-zero weather in order to solve the "Lebensraum problem" for that nation?<sup>50</sup>

Occasionally Mrs. Roosevelt is referred to in the Walther League Messenger. "Mrs. Roosevelt thinks independently but not always in accordance with the ideals which our church emphasizes."<sup>51</sup> Two years later the editor requested Americans to "conserve the mud" in their attack upon Mrs. Roosevelt.<sup>52</sup> In 1943, Mrs. Roosevelt is quoted as stating,

I would teach the story of Adam and Eve as an allegory. It is difficult to accept the entire Old Testament in any other way. The story of Adam and Eve does not in any way affect my belief in the beauty and divine inspiration of Christ's life.<sup>53</sup>

Although it is rather obvious that Maier intended to demonstrate the basic attitude of Mrs. Roosevelt toward religion by including this statement, he does not draw any conclusions from the above quotation. Maier certainly did not tolerate any mythological interpretation of the historical facts in the Genesis account. He believed that a denial of the historicity of the Fall would seriously affect anthropology and ultimately lead to a denial of Biblical Christology. Mrs. Roosevelt's reference to a degrading quotation while referring to Maier occurred after he resigned from his position as editor of the Messenger.

<sup>50</sup> Ludwig A. Fritsch, The Crims of Our Age (Chicago: Published by the author, 5121 N. England Avenue, Chicago 31, Illinois, 1947), p. 33.

<sup>51</sup> Maier, "Our Bookshelf," Walther League Messenger, XLII (December, 1933), 236.

<sup>52</sup> Maier, "Conserve the Mud," ibid., XLIV (May, 1936), 521.

<sup>53</sup> Maier, "War—Can we Abolish It?" ibid., LII (August, September, 1943), 11.



## Church and State

Throughout his writings Maier unwaveringly asserted that the separation of church and state was a "sound, sensible, and American principle." Those who were continually interfering in politics were condemned as "Social Gospellers." The Lutheran Hour preacher did not believe in moral change through legislation. He frequently emphasized Christ's words, "Without me ye can do nothing."<sup>54</sup>

Maier firmly believed that America would be a far better place to live in if all clergymen would refuse to "prostitute their office" through intervention in secular affairs.<sup>55</sup> Although he realized that Jefferson was not a Christian, he felt that this president more than any other individual in American history, promoted the "Christian" ideal of the complete separation of church and state. He considered Jefferson's refusal to follow the pattern of Washington and Adams in issuing presidential proclamations for thanksgiving festivals more consistent with the American principles of freedom.

Jefferson's emancipation of the State from the Church looms up as the light which is to usher in a new and promising day in the history of human affairs. . . . Need we say that the world has not kept pace with the high standard which these Jeffersonian ideals have set; that our own country has not so thoroughly assimilated these principles that it avoids even today grave inconsistencies and flagrant intrusion by church-bodies into the realm of pure politics? We think almost instinctively of the hostile incursions into the political life of the nation that are being led by paid reformers operating under church sanction and with church salary; of the maintenance of political lobbies by religious groups in the national capital and in the political centers of our States; of

<sup>54</sup> Maier, "Law and Disorder," *ibid.*, XXXII (July, 1934), 690.

<sup>55</sup> Maier, "Keep Church and State Separated," *ibid.*, XXXIV (October, 1926), 102.

the conscious and defiant utterances of churchmen who still maintain, in spite of all the tragedies to which this principle has given expression, that the church must direct the affairs of the American nation; . . . of the well-meant, yet nevertheless un-American, tendency to make Bible reading a compulsory part of our public school curriculum; . . . we need a deeper appreciation of the Jeffersonian spirit, a more sincere application of the Jeffersonian ideals.<sup>56</sup>

In spite of his firm insistence upon the separation of church and state, Maier unequivocally declared that the church must speak on social issues. "It must champion the truth like the great prophets."<sup>57</sup> He considered it proper for a Lutheran clergyman to address a public school baccalaureate if there would be no religious feature attached to the program and if no "sectarian" minister or priest would lead in prayer or any other religious exercise.<sup>58</sup> Christians as individuals were urged to become active in civic enterprises.<sup>59</sup> The editor praised a group of pastors who protested directly to the Board of Education for teaching evolution as fact in public schools.<sup>60</sup> He advised the Walther League to educate its members in civic responsibilities and pleaded for Lutheran politicians and an understanding of national affairs. He feared that America was rapidly becoming a government of the few, by the few, and for the few.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, Maier frequently denounced the political activities

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<sup>56</sup>Maier, "Separation," *ibid.*, XXXIX (July, 1931), 690.

<sup>57</sup>Maier, "The Church Must Speak," *ibid.*, XLII (March, 1934), 397.

<sup>58</sup>Maier, "Grasping our Position on Church and State," *ibid.*, XXXVIII (July, 1925), 662.

<sup>59</sup>Maier, "Unsprinkled Salt," *ibid.*, XLV (February, 1937), 338-339.

<sup>60</sup>Maier, "A Commendable Protest," *ibid.*, XLIV (July, 1936), 653.

<sup>61</sup>Maier, "Citizenship Means Action," *ibid.*, LIII (July, 1945), 418.

of various church leaders and organizations. In an article which labeled Father Doughlin as "The Clerical Compulsitor" he wrote,

Political intrusion on the part of churchmen is always destructive and disastrous, whatever their church affiliation may be; but we are frank to say that it is doubly dangerous when the clerical politician is a Roman Catholic. . . . We have always kept the Messenger free from the discussion of purely political issues in which no truth of our Christian faith and practice are involved.<sup>62</sup>

Protestant churches were also condemned for violating the principle of separation of church and state.<sup>63</sup>

Then there is the social church, which maintains that the Church's field of first duty is to solve race relations, to fight against industrialism and capitalism, to investigate the coal mines and the steel strikes and in general to present a panacea for the evils of the day by social service in its various ramifications, by working for the body instead of for the soul, for the here in preference for the hereafter, churches that have the glitter but lack the gold "tinkling cymbals" and "sounding brass." To them the Saviour, who first forgave sin and then removed the consequences of sin, raises His voice in reproach and says: "Clean ye first the inside of the cup."<sup>64</sup>

When Potest suggested that the government have a cabinet secretary of religion the editor commented, "The mere suggestion of this proposal shows muddled, un-American thinking."<sup>65</sup> Similarly he did not feel that it was the duty of the church to agitate for the League of Nations or that it should ask that Christ be integrated with politics. "We cannot agree that it is the church's duty 'by the grace of God to regenerate the social conscience of the nations."<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup>Maier, "The Clerical Compulsitor," ibid., XLIII (June, 1935), 587.

<sup>63</sup>Maier, "Hollow Liberty," ibid., XLIV (July, 1936), 649; Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLVIII (April, 1940), 464.

<sup>64</sup>Maier, "Seven Fatal Follies," ibid., XL (August, September, 1931), 50.

<sup>65</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLVIII (June, 1940), 585.

<sup>66</sup>Maier, "Our Bookshelf," ibid., XLVII (October, 1938), 120; Maier, "Planks for the Church's Platform," ibid., XLV (October, 1935), 111.

Maier maintained that there could be no religious freedom if the separation of church and state was disregarded.<sup>67</sup> He strongly protested the Supreme Court decision to tax the Jehovah Witnesses for the distribution of literature.<sup>68</sup> The Southern Baptist opposition toward sending Myron G. Taylor as an ambassador to the Vatican was highly praised.

We still feel that the Vatican City is not, in the real sense of the term, a state, that it is rather the headquarters of a religious group and therefore should not receive diplomatic recognition. Strict separation of church and state is always the safest and surest course.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps in no other area can Maier's insistence upon the absolute separation of church and state be recognized more clearly than in the area of education. Throughout the years he insisted that there be no tax support for parochial schools.

Our position should be clear and decisive: Parochial church schools are private schools and can ask nothing of public treasuries. It may seem insignificant to divert small sums of public money for sectarian purposes, but experience has shown us that the beginnings must be resisted. Once the principle of demanding the clear-cut separation of church and state is surrendered, the complete usurpation of public money for religious purposes will be inevitable.<sup>70</sup>

In this same article the editor denounced the Roman Catholic Church for requesting state aid for text books and bus transportation. He

<sup>67</sup>Maier, "We are Fighting for Religious Freedom," *ibid.*, LII (February, 1944), 244-245.

<sup>68</sup>Maier, "Guard Religious Liberty in the United States," *ibid.*, I (July, 1942), 606-607.

<sup>69</sup>Maier, "Keep Church and State Separate," *ibid.*, I (December, 1941), 225; Maier, "Turret of the Times," *ibid.*, I (July, 1942), 628.

<sup>70</sup>Maier, "Tax Supported Parochial Schools," *ibid.*, XLV (February, 1937), 344; Maier, "No Public Funds for Parochial Schools," *ibid.*, I (October, 1941), 66; Maier, "President Quason is Right," *ibid.*, XLVI (July, 1938), 685.

feared that these Roman Catholic demands would arouse antagonism toward all parochial schools. Concerning government support for the transportation of Lutheran parochial school children he wrote,

The dangers definitely outweigh all possible advantages. If churches undertake to establish parochial schools, they should be ready to finance their work. Once churches begin to enjoy public support, be it relatively small in the beginning, their appetite for more will be whetted.<sup>71</sup>

Maier also believed that the growing demand for federal support of public education would eventually threaten Christian schools. When the Sterling Tower Bill, which would appropriate \$100,000,000 for national educational purposes, was introduced in the Senate, Maier agreed with President Butler of Columbia. Butler maintained that this Bill would effect so great a revolution in the American form of government as to one day endanger its perpetuity.

Not only, however, would this bill, if passed, create all the dangers which far sighted educators see in the centralization of our educational system, but it would also work distinctly against our educational system. The men who are urging this legislation are active opponents of orthodox religion, according to Miss Hewal A. Ibsen, an experienced educator, who has studied the situation and who declares: "Denominational schools and churches ought to oppose it because, if it passes, it means their destruction." The educational authorities of our church are solidly against this measure, and our societies can render a decided service to our cause by adopting resolutions urging their senators and representatives to vote this measure down.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Walther League Messenger, XLIX (November, 1940), 156.

<sup>72</sup>Maier, "Send Your Protest to your Senator," ibid., XXXII (December, 1923), 218.

## CHAPTER III

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

#### War

Few pacifists ever hated war more than Maier, yet there was little room for pacifism in his thought.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his life he insisted that Luther's attitude toward war and pacifism was the only correct position for a Christian. The Messenger editor regarded Gustavus Adolphus as one example of a Christian general and as one who fought in a just war.<sup>2</sup> Although he strongly condemned all wars for aggression and conquest, he did claim that a defensive war was permissible.<sup>3</sup> He frequently attempted to demonstrate the inconsistency of many avowed pacifist church leaders. Maier maintained that many who had been the most violent pacifists had, with the approach of war, become the greatest preachers of hatred. False pacifism was associated by him with socialism, internationalism, communism, and a "false" philosophy of one worldism.

Commenting on the Walther League declaration on war and pacifism, Maier wrote,

The resolution of the League, moreover, was especially significant because it was fundamentally different from the attitude taken by other religious gatherings. . . . Against the compromising position which some of these organizations avowed, the league emphasized the Lutheran position which declared that in some instances war is justifiable and that under some circumstances war is righteous

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<sup>1</sup>Walter A. Maier, "Veterans of Future Wars," Walther League Messenger, XLIV (April, 1936), 522.

<sup>2</sup>Maier, "With my Blood," ibid., XLI (November, 1932), 136.

<sup>3</sup>Maier, "The Watch Tower," ibid., XLI (April, 1933), 491.

and necessary. Our Church rejects as Utopian and therefore as impossible, an un-American and therefore as unpatriotic, as un-Biblical and therefore un-Christian all such movements which unconditionally pledge those who participate against engaging—under any circumstances—in any war of any kind. Our country must always be prepared. While We abhor war and pray that our country may be spared the horrors of bloodshed, a sense of self-preservation makes a certain degree of preparedness imperative.<sup>4</sup>

Ten years later (1936) when war was beginning to rage in Europe, a similar position was taken when Maier attempted to explain why the Missouri Synod did not endorse the League of Nations or support inter-church peace organizations.

As a matter of record however, we have continually sought to maintain and promote peace through the wisdom that is rooted in the love of God. If anything can save the world it is not a new type of security. It is the eternal security, pledged by the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which gives us individual security.<sup>5</sup>

The Lutheran Hour preacher firmly believed that as long as human nature remained corrupt, wars could become progressively more destructive. This however, did not mean for him that Christians were to remain inactive. He repeatedly urged young people to pray for peace and to remember that righteousness exalts a nation.

The Bible assures us that the almighty was ready to spare centers of wickedness and vice on account of only a few believers. How much more can He protect a nation in which millions of trusting hearts are directed to him in confident faith. . . .

We can under God, reduce international conflict to a minimum.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Maier, "Good Will Toward Men," *ibid.*, XXXIII (January, 1934), 204, 251.

<sup>5</sup>Maier, "No New Security," *ibid.*, XLV (April, 1936), 521.

<sup>6</sup>Maier, "War—Can we Abolish It? 'Yes!' says Mrs. Roosevelt. 'No!' says the Bible," *ibid.*, LII (August, September, 1943), 37.

## World War One

When the United States entered the war in 1917, the Walther League Messenger urged Christian young people to be loyal and faithful to their government. "We are at War! Our dear United States of America has been drawn into the world conflict. It is up to us to show our patriotism by upholding the government and stand by the flag."<sup>7</sup> Almost 20,000 Lutheran boys served in the armed service. The President of the Missouri Synod recommended men to the government to serve as chaplains. The Walther League inaugurated a drive for \$20,000 to supply the armed forces with tracts and literature. The close relationship between Lutheranism and Americanism was mentioned.<sup>8</sup> However, one was advised to read news reports with caution since much of the news about Germany was thought to be filled with falsehoods.<sup>9</sup>

When Maier became editor of the Messenger he made it quite clear that he did not regard Germany any more guilty than the other nations.<sup>10</sup> He considered ignorance, selfishness and sin to be the real cause of the war.<sup>11</sup> When a \$100,000 prize was offered for the best plans for peace, Maier affirmed that only Christ could ever win the prize.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Walther League Messenger, "The War Time Walther League Spirit," XVI (November, 1917), 102; ibid., XVII (January, 1918), 258; ibid., XVII (November, 1919), 114.

<sup>8</sup> ibid., XVI (December, 1917), p. 200.

<sup>9</sup> ibid., XVIII (May, 1920), p. 339.

<sup>10</sup> Maier, "I Believe in an American Lutheran Church," ibid., XXXIII (August, September, 1924), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Maier, "The Watch Tower," ibid., XXXII (January, 1924), 303.

<sup>12</sup> Maier, "Pay to the Order of Jesus Christ, \$100,000," ibid., XXXII (August, September, 1923), 8.



Wilson's slogan, "Making the world safe for democracy," did not find a sympathetic hearing in the Messenger editorials. The young editor did not think that peace or happiness would be accomplished through World War One. He regarded the war as simply an international scheme in which European nations tried to get what they could for themselves.

In spite of the much discussed peace plans and efforts of a warless world, it seems that the great war has laid the foundation for a still greater war. Men may cry peace, but there is no peace except in and through the Prince of Peace.<sup>13</sup>

The Versailles Treaty was labeled as cruel and heartless and an instrument which would only lead to further aggression. Years after the conclusion of peace Maier continued to emphasize that the World War was not plotted by Germany but that it was fought primarily for economic reasons.<sup>14</sup> He claimed that American participation only brought more heartache and misery into the world. The Kaiser was not believed by him to have had any plans for world domination or was Hitler's dictatorship considered better than the constitutional monarchy of the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgers. Maier maintained that had America followed the advice of Washington in permitting Europe to fight its own wars, Hitler would never have arisen.

#### Hitler and the Nazis

As many others who were strong anti-communists and opposed to American intervention in Europe's wars, Maier was often accused of being

<sup>13</sup>Maier, "The Watch Tower," ibid., XXXIV (August, September, 1925), 42.

<sup>14</sup>Maier, "They Died for Their Country," ibid., XLI (February, 1933), 332-333; Maier, "Shall We Fight Again for Trade and Profits," ibid., XLIII (June, 1935), 585.

pro-Nazi. In reply to such an accusation Maier wrote:

The Messenger has never extolled the German Nazi regime *par se*. It has printed the statements of our pastors and others in the definite attempt to correct the malicious propaganda disseminated by anti-German agencies. We are interested in the truth as we see it, always subject to any correction which our readers can supply. . . .

We have grown accustomed to personal attack directed against us by the Roman Catholic press and by the liberals in the United States. But it hurts when we are branded as a Fascist by our own people, or when members of our own church, instead of writing us their opinion that we have transgressed the doctrine of separation of church and state by referring to the late pro-Roman Catholic activities of Father Coughlin, write to church officials and accuse us behind our back.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless, Maier did praise many of Hitler's policies. In 1933 he predicted that Germany would rise again because it honored God while Russia would continue to live in extended chaos.<sup>16</sup> Many reports of the American press concerning Hitler and his work were considered mere propaganda. He believed that the press was dominated by a Jewish influence which sought to minimize Hitler's reforms and misinterpret his motives.

He is pictured as "Handsome Adolph" the opportunist, a Jew baiter, a jingo, a lightweight. . . .

For the first time since the Versailles Treaty a German statesman has strenuously emphasized the relation of national welfare and the relation of God. Adolph Hitler's repudiation of communistic atheism and his unqualified insistence upon a return of the German nation to the God of its fathers is one of the most hopeful signs in the reconstruction of Germany. His campaign against immorality similarly blazes a new trail. He stresses, as none before him, an intense nationality and revives that patriotism which before the war was one of the strongest characteristics of the German people.

As we read Hitler's own words in his own papers it seems to us that

<sup>15</sup>Maier, "A Plea for Fair Play," *ibid.*, XLV (January, 1937), 274.

<sup>16</sup>Maier, "The Watch Tower," *ibid.*, XLI (May, 1933), 555.

here at last, we have the expression of a spirit that may show Germany the way.<sup>17</sup>

During the 1930's the Walther League Messenger often featured articles by men who were in association with the German Free Church or who had traveled through Germany. Hans Kirsten, in "Hitler Shows the Way," had high words of praise for Hitler.<sup>18</sup> However, Henry Koch insisted that there were deep-seated evils in the new regime. After reading Main Kampf, E. G. Sibley commented that he had rarely read a book of such analytical keenness and that it almost reminded him of Aristotle.

Hitler urges in every important speech that his work can be successful only with the help of God.

Where one's aims are Christian-conservative, Christian-social, then one must unconditionally follow Hitler, because it is urgently necessary to support and strengthen him in his struggle for the unity of his people against the enmity of classes and against Bolshevism.<sup>19</sup>

Birchall, a 1934 Pulitzer Prize winner, is quoted as emphasizing the "credit side of Hitler's ledger."<sup>20</sup>

While Maier advocated congressional investigations of communist activities, he believed that some of the leaders who were agitating for an investigation of Nazism were merely attempting to cover up their own leftist subversion. J. Frederick Wenzel, the Washington correspondent

<sup>17</sup> Maier, "Hitler Shows the Way," ibid., XLI (April, 1933), 461.

<sup>18</sup> Hans Kirsten, "Hitler Shows the Way," ibid., XLI (July, 1933), 662.

<sup>19</sup> E. G. Sibley, "The New Leadership of Germany," ibid., XLII (January, 1934), 270.

<sup>20</sup> Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLII (June, 1934), 620.

for the Messenger, maintained that Franklin Roosevelt favored the Jews because he was a New Yorker. Wenzel apparently did sympathize with various aspects of Ford's attack upon the Jews.<sup>21</sup> Because Jews attacked German publicity in America Wenzel replied:

Who knows but that someday, in American eyes, Hitler may be a saint for having rescued the world from Communism? . . . As American citizens we are concerned about the fact that our Jewish fellow citizens make use of the power of the American government to get back at Germany and to fight Hitler.<sup>22</sup>

However, it certainly would be unjustified to conclude that Maier despised the Jews. He repeatedly demonstrated a true Christian concern for their souls' welfare. When faced with an almost insurmountable shipping problem for refugee clothing, it was a Jew who helped him out of the dilemma.

The American preacher stated that some of the Nazi charity policies deserved our endorsement.<sup>23</sup> Hans Kirsten, a Lutheran Free Church clergyman, writing in the Messenger, rejoiced when the Saarland was restored to Germany. He felt this demonstrated a popular support of Hitler.<sup>24</sup> In an article entitled "Jaundiced Journalism," the editor attacked the "yellow journalism" against Germany. He was convinced that America would greatly profit by maintaining amicable relations with the German people.<sup>25</sup> He also intimated that many films which propagandized against

<sup>21</sup>J. Frederick Wenzel, "The Washington Show," ibid., XLIII (October, 1934), 86-87, 114.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>23</sup>Maier, "Furnet of the Times," ibid., XLIII (February, 1935), 369.

<sup>24</sup>Hans Kirsten, "Saar Restored," ibid., XLIII (March, 1935), 398-399.

<sup>25</sup>Maier, "Jaundiced Journalism," ibid., XLIV (January, 1935), 266-267.

Germany were actually produced in America and he repeatedly expressed concern over what he considered a misinterpretation of Hitler by the Internationalist Press.<sup>26</sup>

Contrary to the press, Hans Kirsten contended that religious liberty still reigned in Germany.<sup>27</sup> While praising the Christianity of Germany and some of its leaders, the editor claimed that Germany was nominally fifty per cent more Christian than America.<sup>28</sup>

It is rather obvious that Maier did not agree with the generally accepted attitude toward Hitler. At times it almost appears as if he underestimated the paganism of Nazism. The Messenger editor had few words of praise for some church leaders associated with the Barren Confession. While he admired the firm position of Martin Niemöller, he believed that many others, who were so violently opposed to Hitler, were actually communist sympathizers. Perhaps he went too far in this matter; however, the recent Hungarian revolutions (1956) and Karl Barth's association with Communist church leaders demonstrates that he was not altogether in error.

Those who would accuse the American evangelist of Nazism definitely do not understand his attitude toward Germany. He had little sympathy for a dictatorship of any kind and predicted that the church would suffer

<sup>26</sup> Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLV (November, 1936), 169; Maier, "The Old Game," ibid., XLVI (March, 1938), 442.

<sup>27</sup> Hans Kirsten, "The Church in the New Germany," ibid., XLIV (December, 1935), 214-215.

<sup>28</sup> Maier, "Culture for Christ," ibid., XLVII (October, 1938), 80-81; Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLVIII (June, 1940), 58; Maier, "Is Rome Changing," ibid., XLVIII (February, 1940), 381-385.

under fascism.<sup>29</sup> Hitler's program of eugenics was unquestionably condemned.<sup>30</sup> He repeatedly denounced the radical higher critical attitude toward the Old Testament of many German theologians. Objection was also taken to Baldach von Shirach, the German youth leader.<sup>31</sup>

### World War Two

Following in the footsteps of the founding fathers of America and the principles of Washington's "Foreign Alliance" address and the Monroe Doctrine, the Lutheran Hour preacher did not feel that America had the right to intervene in political and economic struggles throughout the world. His "internationalism" consisted in sending missionaries to the heathen and supplies for the needy, but not in the force of arms. Again and again strict adherence to the Jeffersonian principles is recommended. "The Old World is marked by death. Must we become entangled in its constant quarrels?"

We have not been called, either by God or man, to become the militia for the world, either to overthrow non democratic governments or to send punitive military expeditions against any country that does not conform to our ideals and policies.<sup>32</sup>

Already in 1934 Maier predicted, "There is nothing more certain on the horizon of international affairs than this, that there will be a second World War."<sup>33</sup> Already during this year he expressed his

<sup>29</sup>Maier, "Headed Toward War," ibid., XLIX (December, 1940), 267.

<sup>30</sup>Maier, "Must Marriage go Eugenic," ibid., XLII (February, 1933), 329.

<sup>31</sup>Maier, "Pure to the Pure," ibid., XLIII (April, 1935), 522; Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIV (February, 1936), 358.

<sup>32</sup>Maier, "Keep the Declaration of Independence," ibid., XLIX (April, 1941), 473.

<sup>33</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIII (December, 1934), 230.

misgivings about the foreign policy of America. He was convinced that it was gradually leading America toward a second conflagration and was disturbed about the government's refusal to seriously consider the voice of the people in international affairs.<sup>34</sup> Repeated concern was also expressed over the systematic boycott of Germany and Japan.<sup>35</sup>

For, in violent and premeditated protest, men with a mind for internationalism, as opposed to Americanism, are cunningly seeking to enlist schools for the overthrow of the American way.<sup>35</sup>

Strong opposition was voiced against the defense spending of the American government. Maier continually alleged that there were sinister powers at work attempting to project new wars for new profits. He definitely supported Senator Nye and his investigations in the "munition racket."<sup>37</sup> After reaffirming that he was not advocating pacifism, the editor agreed that he sympathetically shared much of the discussion which hinged upon these three widely agitated proposals:

1. The limitation of our military forces to purposes of home defense.
2. The popular vote on a declaration of war.
3. The mobilization and the conscription of capital and industry on much the same terms, financial and otherwise, as the youth of our nation was conscripted for military purposes; in general, the elimination of private profits from war.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIII (November, 1934), 167.

<sup>35</sup>Maier, "A Dynamite Year," ibid., XLIII (February, 1935), 263; Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIV (April, 1935), 492; John Theodore Muller, "Shall we Learn or Lose?" ibid., XLIV (October, 1935), 85.

<sup>36</sup>Maier, "Christian Schools for the Crisis," ibid., XLVII (December, 1936), 227.

<sup>37</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIII (April, 1935), 492; Maier, "The Munitions Racket," ibid., XLIII (October, 1934), 81.

<sup>38</sup>Maier, "Shall we Fight Again for Trade, and Profits," ibid., XLIII (May, 1935), 584.

Throughout the years it was rather obvious that the editor of the Messenger did not highly esteem the World Court, League of Nations, and similar organizations.

The attempt is also being made to draw our country into the turmoil of European and Asiatic conflicts by means of the World Court. We are being asked to forsake a system of arbitration that has demonstrated its value and to submit practically all international questions to a world court, whose judges represent the very nations that may harm us and from whose decision there is no appeal.<sup>39</sup>

Internationalism was labeled a "subversive doctrine" by the editor.<sup>40</sup>

Maier repeatedly expressed his fear that Communism would be the only victor in another world war. "No matter who wins the Second World War, Communism seems destined to make notable headway."<sup>41</sup> On several occasions he urged Walther Leaguers to ask their congressmen to vote for neutrality. He rejoiced when Roosevelt's attempt to revise the Neutrality Act failed and instead praised the "isolationism" of Herbert Hoover and Senator Borah. "This is the American way and Christian objective."<sup>42</sup> The radio evangelist also insisted that a world war would harm the cause of Christ and hinder the spread of the Gospel. Violent opposition was voiced against American preachers who claimed that the

<sup>39</sup>Maier, "Thoughts for Independence Day," ibid., XXXI (July, 1923), 530.

<sup>40</sup>Maier, "Do We Need a Code for Churches?" ibid., XLII (August, September, 1933), 8; Maier, "Planks for Church's Platform," ibid., XLV (October, 1936), 111.

<sup>41</sup>Maier, "Keep Neutral," ibid., XLVIII (October, 1939), 60-61, 101; Maier, "May God Almighty Stop the Inferno of a World War," ibid., XLVIII (November, 1939), 130; Maier, "Keep Out of War," ibid., XLVII (May, 1939), 565.

<sup>42</sup>Maier, "Well Spoken, Herbert Hoover!" ibid., XLVIII (August, September, 1939), 12.



X cause of the Allies was the cause of Christ.<sup>43</sup> Maier feared a growth of regimentation at home if America would concentrate on dictatorships abroad. "In combatting Fascism to preserve our democracy we may lose our own and end up with a dictatorship." By proposing that Americans travel abroad at their own risk he sought to remove all possible cause of conflict. The radio evangelist predicted that the reversal of the cash and carry clause in the Johnson Act may mean war.<sup>44</sup> Although never attacking Franklin Roosevelt personally, he did urge Congress to limit various executive powers.

We believe that deliberate action should be taken to prevent the possibility of any President of the United States declaring war on his own authority, under the claim that a state of emergency exists.<sup>45</sup>

Immediately following Pearl Harbor, Maier advised Lutheran young people wholeheartedly to support America. Whatever their previous opinions may have been they were now to defend their country and defeat the enemy. Young men were not to conclude that the years spent in uniform would be wasted. Maier regarded this conflict as a visitation from God and a punishment for national and collective sins.<sup>46</sup> Contrary to many clergymen of his day he did not believe that America now had a human or divine call to police and control the entire world and maintained that such a policy would only lead to further war.

<sup>43</sup>Maier, "May God Almighty Stop the Inferno of a World War," ibid., XLVIII (November, 1939), 130; Maier, "World War vs. Christ's Cause," ibid., XLVIII (December, 1939), 196-197.

<sup>44</sup>Maier, "Headed Toward War," ibid., XLIX (January, 1941), 267.

<sup>45</sup>Maier, "How To Stay Out," ibid., XLVIII (January, 1940), 383.

<sup>46</sup>Maier, "Youth in a World at War," ibid., L (January, 1942), 262-263.

We have been attacked. Our task is to defend ourselves and to defeat our enemies. "V" indeed must stand for victory based on justice, righteousness, equality, with no room for personal profit, class advantages or national aggrandisement. May God give us that victory soon!<sup>47</sup>

Other than urging Christians to be patriotic citizens, the Messenger remained relatively silent on political issues during the war years. However, Maier again reminded his readers that they were not to act according to the cry, "My country right or wrong." Should they be accused of being unpatriotic they were to remember that the highest patriotism always comes from Christ.<sup>48</sup> The Lutheran Hour preacher took issue with Mrs. Roosevelt when she claimed that it was necessary to bomb Berlin. He urged that every possible precaution be taken to restrict bombing to purely military objectives and that extraordinary care be taken to avoid residential areas.<sup>49</sup>

From Maier's endorsement of The Crime of Our Age it is rather obvious that he accepted the revisionist interpretation of World War Two.<sup>50</sup> He concluded a letter of thanks to the author with the words, "It certainly tells the truth." The author of this book, Ludwig A. Fritsch, Ph. D., D. D., stated that Roosevelt and his associates led America into war in order to bring this nation out of the depression. He argues that Roosevelt was not able to solve the unemployment situation in spite of his social legislation and huge spending. Since Hitler

<sup>47</sup> Maier, "V for Victory," ibid., I (February, 1942), 357.

<sup>48</sup> Maier, "True Christians are Loyal," ibid., LI (September, 1942), 10, 11, 24.

<sup>49</sup> Maier, "To Bomb or Not to Bomb," ibid., LII (April, 1944), 334-335.

<sup>50</sup> Ludwig A. Fritsch, The Crime of Our Age (Chicago: Published by the author, 5121 N. England Avenue, Chicago 31, Illinois, 1947), pp. 74-75.

could not be induced to attack the United States, Fritsch maintains that Roosevelt had to engineer war "via the back door." Through various economic pressures Japan was supposed to have been sufficiently antagonized to attack Pearl Harbor. This was claimed to have permitted Roosevelt and his associates to stand before America and demand revenge for the sneak attack.

TELL OUR PEOPLE, what Oliver Lyttleton, British Minister of Production, told the Chamber of Commerce of America June 20, 1944, as reported by the United Press: "Japan was provoked into attacking the United States at Pearl Harbor. It is a travesty on history ever to say that America was forced into the war." . . . TELL OUR PEOPLE, that before God and history, the load of responsibility for the chaotic conditions and the indescribable misery all over the world rests on our conscience; because we played havoc with prehistoric brutality and saved Bolshevism making it a world menace. Without our intervention there would have been peace and order in Europe and the world long ago.<sup>51</sup>

Meier did not favor the Allies demand for an unconditional surrender from the Axis powers. He predicted that giving each one of the Big Four a sphere of influence in Germany would only lead to further failure and more devastating wars. He expressed disapproval when the United States adopted policies which he believed would eventually lead to the Communist domination of China. Even during the war the editor had few words of praise for the Russians.

England and the United States accept its (Russia's) policies to the utter disregard of the Atlantic Charter and similar pledges. Poland, to insure whose territory the war started, seems destined to lose almost one half her territory to the Russians.<sup>52</sup>

Even during the war Meier was extremely critical toward many of those who were working on the problem of world peace. He saw little

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Meier, "The New Year, For Christ or Communism," Walther League Messenger, LIII (January, 1945), 190.

value in James T. Shotwell's Commission to Study the Organization of Peace. The Lutheran Hour preacher asserted that if America were to fight totalitarianism wherever it existed this nation would be perpetually at war.

No American, least of all a Christian, will support the tyranny, the restriction of religious privileges, the militarism which totalitarianism has endorsed, but such trampling down of human rights will continually mark human history.<sup>53</sup>

To those who would label him as an "Isolationist" for maintaining such a position Maier replied, "Was Washington un-American? . . . some did call him un-American . . . the atheist, Tom Paine."<sup>54</sup> The International Lutheran Hour preacher knew the necessity of working together for international understanding but continually stated that all plans for world peace without Christ would ultimately lead to failure.

It is therefore our sacred and emphasized duty in these critical hours to come closer to the Redeemer in a more powerful and personal faith, and thus spread His Gospel of spiritual peace throughout the world as never before.<sup>55</sup>

Since there were some militant atheists and others who openly attacked Christianity at the initial United Nations meeting in San Francisco, the editor expressed his doubts concerning this opening meeting. In spite of American participation, he firmly maintained that without Christ the United Nations would not be any more successful than the League of Nations. He did not believe that the League of Nations collapsed because of the United States' refusal to participate but because nations have and

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<sup>53</sup>Maier, "Remaking the World," *ibid.*, I (July, 1952), 638.

<sup>54</sup>Maier, "Who is Un-American?" *ibid.*, LIII (April, 1945), 281.

<sup>55</sup>Maier, "Lessons From the Robot Wreckage," *ibid.*, LIII (September, 1944), 41.

always will "selfishly" work for their own interests.<sup>56</sup>

### Russia

As long as Communist Russia was a member of the United Nations, Maier feared that this international organization would accomplish very little for world peace. Only five years after graduating from the Seminary (1916) the Executive Secretary of the Watchtower League predicted that Russian Communism might become the most feared power in the nations of the world. Throughout the years Maier continually maintained that the Russian leaders were opposed to Christianity. Never once did his editorial policy toward Russia change. Although Russia claimed to support religious freedom, he declared, "It is theoretically and unofficially opposed to all forms of religion, and again, especially Christianity."<sup>57</sup> Besides the atheism of Russia, the persecutions and massacres within its borders were also repeatedly emphasized.<sup>58</sup>

He had little praise for "modernistic" clergymen who, he believed, were far too sympathetic toward communism. "We ought to remember these wholesale massacres when we hear modernist pulpiteers and radical university teachers extol Sovietism as a notable social experiment."<sup>59</sup> Because of this alleged Soviet infiltration, Maier feared that America

<sup>56</sup> Maier, "Is Universal Peace Actually in Sight?" ibid., LIII (June, 1915), 374-375.

<sup>57</sup> Maier, "How Far are we From Russia," ibid., XXXII (August, September, 1923), 10.

<sup>58</sup> Maier, "Watch Tower," ibid., XXXII (July, 1924), 657, 681; Maier, "Watch Tower," ibid., XXXIV (October, 1925), 104.

<sup>59</sup> Maier, "Watch Tower," ibid., XLI (January, 1933), 365.

might someday fall prey to Communism.<sup>60</sup> When Franklin Roosevelt recognized Russia (1933) the Messenger carried the feature article, "The Church Will Never Recognize Atheism."

While our government, moved directly by commercial motives, has reversed the emphatic opinion of the last administration, and declared that Red Russia, ruled by a coterie of atheists and dedicated to world revolution, is a safe and desirable member in the family of nations, the Christian must renew his vow of hostility to this enthroned blasphemy and redouble his interest and prayers in behalf of the oppressed millions of Christians in Russia concerning whom we have heard far less than about the allegedly persecuted Jews of Germany.<sup>61</sup>

Maier believed that the help and equipment America was sending to Russia might someday be used by the Russians to defeat America.

When we send our exports to Russia or purchase Soviet goods, we are dealing with the government which is directly dedicated to the overthrow of our republic.<sup>62</sup>

In spite of the Russian five year plans, Maier did not conclude that the Russian people had a particularly happy existence. As editor, he endorsed Graebner's claim that when some foreigners visited Russia they were merely directed to a few show places so they would return home with glowing reports about the success of the Soviet "social experiment."<sup>63</sup> Even two years after Roosevelt's recognition of Russia, Maier attempted to demonstrate the disappointing nature of such a policy.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup>Maier, "Watch Tower," ibid., XLI (May, 1933), 554.

<sup>61</sup>Maier, "The Church will Never Recognize Atheism," ibid., XLII (December, 1933), 239.

<sup>62</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLII (March, 1933), 428.

<sup>63</sup>Maier, "Watch Tower," ibid., XLV (February, 1936), 373; Maier, "Worse than any Penitentiary," ibid., XLVI (May, 1938), 558; Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIV (May, 1935), 554; Theodore Graebner, "Russia the Communist Paradise," ibid., XLIV (April, 1935), 470-471.

<sup>64</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIII (April, 1935), 493.

In later years, and particularly during the Second World War while some church leaders were praising Russia's freedom of religion, the Lutheran Hour preacher maintained his unwavering opposition toward Russia. He openly contradicted Roosevelt when the President stated that there was religious freedom in Russia. Maier believed that the religious compromises which Russia had made were merely a false front to pacify Americans. The Messenger quoted Karl Marx as stating, "We make war against all prevailing ideas of religion. The idea of God is the keystone of a perverted civilization." Even during the war Maier wrote that in those areas where Russia remained dominant there would be no freedom of religion.<sup>65</sup>

In one of the last articles Maier wrote for the Messenger, he reaffirmed basically the same attitude he held toward Russia in one of his first editorials. "The U. S. S. R. campaign for international control is on, . . . those who disavowed Russian claims are wrong."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Maier, "Security--From Cradle to the Grave," ibid., LI (May, 1943), 137; Maier, "We Are Fighting for Religious Freedom," ibid., LII (February, 1944), 245.

<sup>66</sup>Maier, "Communism Keeps Crashing On," ibid., LII (March, 1944), 288-289.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMMUNISM

Walter A. Maier graduated from Concordia Seminary a year before the Russian Empire fell in the chaos which followed the Revolution of 1917. Although he admitted that it was the tyranny and oppression of the Czar's, the moral decadence in the higher strata of Russian society, the impoverishment of the masses, and the corruption of the church which helped to give rise to atheistic communism, he never once sympathized with Russian Communism. "He was forthright in his stand and never vacillated with popular opinion nor played political possum."<sup>1</sup> He also violently disagreed with the officials of the Holy Synod of the Greek Catholic Church when they sent a letter of condolence at the death of Lenin and concluded their letter of sympathy to the great "liberator" by referring to him as a Christian.

Lenin a Christian! The man whose followers conducted the blasphemous demonstrations through the streets of Moscow under the protection of the Communist police, with a drunken sot representing the stainless Christ, and a notorious prostitute, brazenly smiling in her role as the mother of Jesus--the Jew who permitted and endorsed all this, and inflamed hatred against the Christian church--that man a Christian?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Harriet Solwenk, "Dr. Walter A. Maier's Undeviating Stand Against Atheistic Communism," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXXIII (July, 1950), 50.

<sup>2</sup>Walter A. Maier, "A Double Dose of Scopolamine" Walther League Messenger, XXXII (March, 1924), 394-395.



Even during World War Two when it became popular for American church leaders to remain silent on the Communist issue or to openly praise the success of Russia's "socialism," Maier was forceful in his denunciations.

Recent weeks, of course have seen repeated attempts to soften the attitude of the American public toward the dangers of Communism. But facts are facts. Atheism and Communism are never more dangerous for us than when the masses of our country regard them as harmless and inconsequential.<sup>3</sup>

Although realizing that the communism which the early Christians practiced was virtually non-existent, Maier was careful to observe that  
 \* the church does not oppose communism in itself.

The church has no business to condemn any social, economic, or political arrangements which do not disregard the rights of God and man. If people of their own free will want to abolish private property, and share their money, that is their privilege.<sup>4</sup>

\* The Lutheran Hour preacher also never dwelled lengthily on the philosophy of Hegel, the ideology of Engels, or the theory of Marx.

When he saw that Communism's anti-God, anti-Bible, anti-Christ mentalities were robbing man of his soul, his Savior, his Church, his ethics, his morals, his individual rights, his family, then, with all the fervor and energy Dr. Maier could generate, he sought to warn and save that soul.<sup>5</sup>

\* However, Maier did not only denounce communism because of its atheism but because he also believed that it was basically un-American and diametrically opposed to the principles which guided the founding fathers of America.

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<sup>3</sup>Maier, "What Atheism and Communism Want in the United States," *ibid.*, I (December, 1941), 200.

<sup>4</sup>Walter A. Maier, The Airways Proclaim Christ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 85-89.

<sup>5</sup>Schwenk, *op. cit.*, Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXXIII (July, 1950), 52.

The basic political principle of Communism, the surrender of private property, the socializing of the family, and the submerging of individual rights are fundamentally opposed to the foundations of our American commonwealth and are antagonistic to every form of representative Government. Not only that, but the Soviet Government is dedicated to a program of creating a world revolution.<sup>6</sup>

### Communism and Religious Modernism

Maier always insisted that there was an intimate relationship between communism and religious modernism. He firmly believed that many of the church leaders who were denying the fundamentals of Christianity could be found in the front ranks of those who were the opponents of American liberty and freedom.

Is it not strange that one of the leading and radical soviet papers of Russia is advertising the books of Fosdick, the anti-fundamentalist. Nor is it extraordinary that Union Seminary in New York should receive radical agitators with open arms, or the President of Dartmouth, when criticized for permitting a "red" to speak at his institution replied, "If I could get Lenin and Trotsky here I would." Patriotism diminishes with the departure of Christian faith and some of the most dangerous opponents of the American constitution are these, the false prophets in high places, who misinterpret the Bible and cry: "Peace" when there is no peace.<sup>7</sup>

The Messenger editor claimed that when preachers could picture the faith of the fathers as old-fashioned, superstitious, unscientific, and unreliable and when pastors and teachers could speak of Bible truths as contrary to science and opposed to intelligence, they were merely taking different means of publishing the same notice that stands out from the "walls of the Kremlin." He went so far as to conclude that the religious

Mess. Vol. 42, p. 239, Dec., 1933.

<sup>6</sup>Maier, "Two Pronouncements on Communism," Walter League Messenger, XLVI (April, 1936), 420.

<sup>7</sup>Maier, "Patriotism vs. Liberalism," ibid., XXXII (July, 1924), 664.

modernism of American churches was more devastating than communism.

The Radical Reds, at least, bestow their honor upon a man when they sing: "Glory to Lenin and Trotsky"; but their kindred minded radical religionists find this Russian liberalism too conservative and, taking the glory from God, give it to a godless.<sup>8</sup>

Because of the propaganda of modernistic missionaries and seminaries the Messenger asserted that China was being helped along the road to communism.<sup>9</sup> In short, Maier concluded that religious modernism leads to communism.<sup>10</sup>

#### Communist Subversion

The Lutheran Hour preacher definitely believed that communism was determined to destroy America through infiltration. He was convinced that communism was making tremendous inroads in the field of education. This was one of the reasons he was such a loyal supporter of private Christian schools. He expressed repeated concern over the infiltration of communism into the high schools of America.<sup>11</sup> The Messenger editor was particularly disturbed over the effect which communism was having upon American intellectuals, and warned college students to be aware of the "Communist Culture" which he alleged that

<sup>8</sup>Maier, "Glory to God in the Highest," ibid., XXVIII (December, 1924), 200-201-249.

<sup>9</sup>Maier, "Watch Tower," ibid., XXIII (April, 1925), 489.

<sup>10</sup>Maier, "Communism will Liquidate our Churches," ibid., XLVIII (January, 1940), 268; Maier, "Hoscow Over Methodism," ibid., XLVI (December, 1937), 259; Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLVI (November, 1937), 175.

<sup>11</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIII (October, 1934), 107; ibid., XLVII (November, 1938), 180; ibid., XLVII (June, 1939), 603; Maier, "High-School Revolutions," ibid., XLVII (January, 1939), 295; Maier, "Saving Democracy," ibid., XLVIII (October, 1939), 117.

some of them would have to face.<sup>12</sup> Walther Leaguers were also warned of communism's infiltration within American youth groups. Dr. Wenschel commenting on the American Youth Congress stated, "There is no doubt that a strong communistic and radical socialistic tendency is evident in this youth movement." Maier agreed that there was a definite danger in minimizing the evils of communism in some youth bodies.<sup>13</sup> He called attention to an article in the American Mercury which attacked the communistic infiltration of various youth groups and also claimed that Roosevelt had praised some of these organizations.<sup>14</sup>

Radical labor unions and various communist sympathizing labor leaders also drew the attacks of Maier.<sup>15</sup> He definitely feared that communism was getting a firm foothold in the United States.<sup>16</sup> In order to destroy these subversive activities, he advocated through congressional investigations. "Anything with Communistic connections should be subjected to stringent examination."<sup>17</sup> While he admitted that the Dies committee may have made some mistakes, he believed that it was basically reliable. The editor defended Martin Dies, chairman of the Senate

<sup>12</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIX (February, 1941), 347.

<sup>13</sup>Maier, "Communism Campaigns for Youth," ibid., XLVI (February, 1938), 354.

<sup>14</sup>Maier, "AYC, ASU, CCC, NYA, and UYE," ibid., XLVII (November, 1938), 156.

<sup>15</sup>Maier, "Do it With Might," ibid., XLIX (August, September, 1940), 8; Maier, "The New Year--For Christ or Communism," ibid., LIII (January, 1945), 191.

<sup>16</sup>Maier, "Counteracting Revolution and Communism," ibid., XLV (June, 1937), 652.

<sup>17</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIV (December, 1935), 299.

Investigating Committee, in a feature article entitled, "The Trojan Horse in America."

With a frankness not often found in politicians, Mr. Dies describes meetings in the White House between the President and the Communist sympathizers. He asserts that Mrs. Roosevelt is a great aid to American communists. He points out that John L. Lewis, who recently broke with the President and came out in behalf of Wendell Willkie, and the whole C. I. O. have strong Communist contacts . . . his Committee on Un-American activities should receive serious consideration and be supported by definite action. Those who regard the Nazi Fifth Column in the United States as the greatest menace will be more correctly informed.<sup>18</sup>

Maier had little sympathy for those who were opposed to most respectable anti-communists. In spite of America's struggle with Hitler, he did not believe that this was sufficient cause to warrant friendly relations with communism, and that it was utterly ridiculous to claim that the Dies committee was helping Hitler.<sup>19</sup>

Some of the "Liberal" agitation against the Nazi fifth column was considered merely a screen for communist infiltration. When Rex Stout announced that Luther was as bad a tyrant as Hitler, Maier asked him to either prove it or apologize. He also accused Stout of being in sympathy with Avedis Boghos Barounian, the author of Under Cover<sup>20</sup> and a friend of the "radical," Leon Birkhead, a member of the "Friends of Democracy."<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup>Maier, "Fighting the Fifth Column," ibid., XLIX (December, 1940), 199.

<sup>19</sup>Maier, "On Guard Against Communism," ibid., LI (March, 1943), 366-367, 396.

<sup>20</sup>John Paul Carlson, Under Cover (Philadelphia: Blakiston and Company, 1943).

<sup>21</sup>Maier, "Under Covering 'Under Cover'," Walther League Messenger, LII (June, 1944), 442.

The Messenger editor labeled Under Cover, written by Derounian under the name of John Paul Carlson, as "a cover up book for communists." He asserted that this book was a subtle attack upon loyal Americans such as Lindbergh, Dies, Rickensacker, Nye, Fish, Wheeler and fourteen other United States Senators. J. Edgar Hoover assured Maier in a personal letter that the F. B. I. had nothing to do with the book.<sup>22</sup>

In some respects Maier agreed with the claims of Col. E. R. McCormick, the editor of the Chicago Tribune, concerning the communist control of American political parties.<sup>23</sup> He continually urged Christian pastors to discuss the dangers of communism.<sup>24</sup> To the accusation that this would be preaching politics he replied:

Was Isaiah preaching politics when he denounced godless Ahas?  
 Was Jeremiah preaching politics when he attacked Jehoiakin? Was  
 John the Baptist preaching politics when he assailed Herod?<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Maier, "Prove it or Apologize," ibid., LII (June, 1944), 422.

<sup>23</sup>Maier, "Curset of the Times," ibid., LII (July, 1944), 476.

<sup>24</sup>Maier, "The New Year--For Christ or Communism," ibid., LIII (January, 1945), 191.

<sup>25</sup>Walter A. Maier, Jesus Christ Our Hope (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), pp. 245-247.

## CHAPTER V

### ECONOMICS

It would be rather difficult to categorically state that Maier consistently adhered to any system of economic principles. However, it is rather obvious that his sentiments lay in the direction of the free market, private enterprise, and Nineteenth Century Liberalism. His position was basically similar to G. F. W. Walther's. Walther vehemently attacked the socialism of his day and argued that the right of private property was a human right protected by God's divine law. Although Maier believed that the church should neither become a capitalistic asylum or a nursery for atheistic communism, he could find nothing anti-scriptural in the personal profit motive or in private property. He maintained that they appear essential for sound and healthy progress.<sup>1</sup>

The Lutheran Hour preacher was not too enthusiastic about the growing governmental control of the American economy. He expressed repeated anxiety over the nation's public spending and its increasing national indebtedness.

The fast and free spending of public moneys in municipal extravagances; the quick sequence of boom and bankruptcy in elaborate civic projects; the absolute sense of irresponsibility, which politicians often betray in saddling the coming generation with overwhelming debts; the definite claims that many larger cities in our country today are virtually bankrupt—all this must provoke serious thought and concern.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Walter A. Maier, "Do it with Might," Walther League Messenger, XLIX (August, September, 1940), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Maier, "A Bankrupt Nation," ibid., XLI (May, 1933), 524.

Already in 1935 he feared that America's debt might become overburdening. "No nation can maintain itself on credit . . . . Our national budget must be balanced."<sup>3</sup> This constant concern was continually expressed in the pages of the Messenger.<sup>4</sup> During the depression, as credit and installment buying increased, Maier alleged that a spirit of irresponsibility had seeped down into the individual lives of the American people.<sup>5</sup>

In answer to the problems of poverty aggravated by the depression and as a solution for helping the underprivileged, Maier unquestionably advocated Christian charity. The Evangelist expressed his concern over the ever increasing advances into this vital area of Christian endeavor which the state was making. He believed that excessive government intervention would only breed laziness. Nor could he agree with several leading "liberal" church leaders that Christian charity was inefficient and ineffectual in modern America. During the depression he urged churches to open their doors for the poor and to feed and clothe them if necessary. Young people were to engage in an active program for the relief of distress in blighted areas.

As long as many of our churches and our societies do not more strenuously exert themselves in behalf of the poor that are with us now more than ever before; as long as our charity suffers by comparison with the work of other churches whose doctrine and practices we condemn, we must be prepared for the fact that our true attitude will be misunderstood, that fuel will be added to the fires of socialism. . . .<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIV (December, 1935), 298; Maier, "The Perils of an Unbalanced Budget," ibid., XLIII (July, 1935), 653.

<sup>4</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLV (June, 1937), 643; Maier, ibid., LIII (January, 1945), 208.

<sup>5</sup>Maier, "Pay Thy Debts," ibid., XLIV (March, 1936), 393.

<sup>6</sup>Maier, "In This Crisis," ibid., XL (November, 1931), 145; Maier, "Why Socialism Thrives," ibid., XLII (January, 1934), 337.



At Christmas time, during the height of the depression, the editor urged Waltham Leagueurs to curtail their Christmas gift budgets and use the money to purchase the essentials of life for their suffering fellow men.<sup>7</sup> He believed that the least objectionable method to collect funds for charitable purposes would be to divorce the religious and civic interests.<sup>8</sup>

The Lutheran Hour preacher was also disturbed over the unequal distribution of wealth in America but he did not believe the redistribution programs of Huey Long, Mordecai Ezekiel, or George Bernard Shaw were either scriptural or in accordance with the American principles of liberty and freedom.<sup>9</sup> Maier feared a system of wealth distribution which would so heavily tax industry as to almost make it impossible for business to expand and which would also destroy all initiative. "We must be aware of any action that would tyrannically commandeer funds that have been honestly acquired and that are necessary for the advancement of industry and commerce."<sup>10</sup>

However, Maier did permit some government planning within the American economy. "If Americans are not ready to share their wealth

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<sup>7</sup>Maier, "Red Christmas or White," *ibid.*, XL (January, 1932), 256; Maier, "In This Crisis," *ibid.*, XL (November, 1931), 144.

<sup>8</sup>Maier, "Lutheran Money in Community Fund Drives," *ibid.*, XLII (February, 1934), 397; Maier, "Sweet Charity--For the Promoter or the Deserving?" *ibid.*, XLV (July, 1937), 684.

<sup>9</sup>Maier, "The Widening Breach," *ibid.*, XLVII (November, 1938), 156; Maier, "Turret of the Times," *ibid.*, XLIII (October, 1933), 109; *ibid.*, XLVI (December, 1937), 247.

<sup>10</sup>Maier, "Wealth Distribution Facts," *ibid.*, XLIV (February, 1936), 335.

with the destitutes, it may be taken from them."<sup>11</sup> Although he detested government intervention and conscription of any type he did state that during an emergency it would be permissible for the government to conscript the wealthy and the profits of war industry.<sup>12</sup> Strictly speaking, he was not opposed to state and federal health examinations. "Governmental medical and dental care may not be ideal, but compulsory enforcement of health and hygienic programs with government support will be both humanitarian and Christian."<sup>13</sup> Following World War One the editor was a staunch supporter of the soldier's bonus. "The best way to bolster up the cause of socialism will be to withhold the bonus."<sup>14</sup> Although opposed to what he termed the gradual dictatorial trend in Washington he did favor various phases of the New Deal. He urged Lutheran young people to take advantage of the benefits which the government was offering.<sup>15</sup> National subsidies for young couples who planned to get married were also considered in order.<sup>16</sup> To those who were disturbed by the heavy increase in taxes he urged them to heed the

<sup>11</sup> Maier, "The Church in This Crisis," ibid., XLIX (October, 1940), 117.

<sup>12</sup> Maier, "Military Conscription--and Our Christian Youth," ibid., XLIX (October, 1940), 60.

<sup>13</sup> Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLIII (February, 1935), 369.

<sup>14</sup> Maier, "Watch Tower," ibid., XXX (April, 1922), 373.

<sup>15</sup> Maier, "By Bread Alone," ibid., XLIV (August, September, 1935), 9; Maier, "Back to School," ibid., XLV (October, 1936), 77; Maier, "Loyal-Headed Youth," ibid., XLVI (August, September, 1937), 12; Wenschel, "The Capital Show," ibid., XLVI (February, 1938), 369.

<sup>16</sup> Maier, "More Babies!" ibid., XLVIII (August, September, 1939), 49; Maier, "National Subsidies for Marriage," ibid., LII (October, 1943), 56.

advice of Luther when the Empire was confronted by the Turks, "Pay taxes and like it!"

Many libertarians would consider various phases of the program outlined above as socialistic; nevertheless, Maier was strongly opposed to the radical socialism and the increasing government intervention of his day. It would be utterly impossible to exhaust all the material in this area. Repeated alarm was expressed at the growing centralization of the government and the ever increasing powers of the presidency. "We were talked into fighting a war for democracy, and ironically the new congress has made the new President virtually a dictator, the symbol of autocracy."<sup>17</sup> Violent opposition was also raised against the proposed continuation of compulsory military training and conscription in peacetime. This was labeled un-American and also an unnecessary, unhealthy, un-Christian government control of the conscience.<sup>18</sup>

The Messenger's opposition toward socialism can readily be demonstrated by several letters from readers who protested that, in spite of statements in the Messenger, a Christian could also be a socialist.<sup>19</sup> Maier definitely felt that socialism was but the stepping stone to communism.<sup>20</sup> In a series of articles on socialism by Theodore Graebner, Concordia Seminary professor and a regular contributor to the Messenger,

<sup>17</sup>Maier, "The Price of Blood," ibid., XLI (April, 1933), 461.

<sup>18</sup>Maier, "No Compulsory Military Training," ibid., LIII (March, 1945), 266.

<sup>19</sup>Maier, "Monopoly," ibid., XLIV (April, 1935), 458-459; Maier, "A Hand to Mouth Generation," ibid., XLIV (December, 1935), 200.

<sup>20</sup>Walter A. Maier, For Better Not For Worse (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1939), p. 98.

the position of G. F. W. Walther, first president of the Missouri Synod, in his book Communismus und Socialismus was reaffirmed.

Essentially there is little difference between Communism and radical Socialism. . . . Socialism is only a lower stage, the initial step of Communism. . . . The political platforms of all Socialist parties throughout the world today and the aims, principles and propoganda of all militant socialists are grounded on the philosophy of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and are set forth in the Communist Manifesto, which is the Socialist Bible. . . . Socialism would mean implanting upon western civilization the debasing and injurious effects of the caste system of the East. . . . The objectives of public ownership of institutions that serve the entire country is not, properly speaking, Socialism. . . . I do not say that a Christian can not support the Socialist Party without denial of his Christianity. . . . They may be well informed Christians, but poorly informed Socialists.<sup>21</sup>

Maier also had little sympathy for socialistic church boards which contained leaders who were "liberal" in their political and economic views.<sup>22</sup>

Wenschel wrote in the Messenger that Roosevelt's farm plan was an indication that the farmers wanted to be "Hitlorized." Maier also condemned the American Youth Congress for endeavoring to obtain "something for nothing" and for thinking that the "world owes them a living."<sup>23</sup> As Roosevelt's bureaucracy increased, Maier feared that communism would present a growing threat to the American principles of liberty and freedom.

As more money is spent in this direction and as the political philosophy of centralization and state control increase in our country, we too, must be prepared for a backwash from the tides of state absolutism that has swept large sections of Europe.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Theodore Graebner, "Foreclosing Liberty," Walther League Messenger, XLIV (March, 1936), 402-403, 443.

<sup>22</sup>Maier, "Why the Church Needs a United Youth," ibid., XLV (December, 1936), 206.

<sup>23</sup>Maier, "That Youth Congress," ibid., XLV (October, 1936), 77.

<sup>24</sup>Maier, "Save Our Schools," ibid., XLVII (October, 1938), 85.

## CHAPTER VI

### LABOR AND MANAGEMENT

#### Labor

Throughout his life Maier always had a genuine concern for the laboring man. He continually advised churches to avoid all false association with the rich and to take a more active interest in the problems of the working man. He was not opposed to unions and thought that perhaps the traditional Missouri Synod attitude toward labor unions had been too negative. Unlike many of the early Missouri Synod leaders, he did not believe that individual members of a union could be held responsible for the policies and practices of their organization.

Years ago the Church looked with disfavor on many unions and discouraged its members from joining. Perhaps we went too far then, for certainly the recent tactics of labor union racketeers have been worse than the predecessors in the days of our forefathers. Personally, we feel that Christians in these labor organizations should energetically dedicate themselves to cleaning up their unions; if necessary, to remove all criminal racketeering among its officials, to protest against any anti-Biblical or un-American resolutions or procedures adopted by the union which would injure their fellowman, to demand that labor papers be purged of anti-Christian utterances; to disavow any atheistic utterances of union officials. While we in no way would hold individual members of the A. F. L. or C. I. O. or individual unions responsible for the policies and practices of their group, we feel just as emphatically that the Christian workers must learn the duties of protest.<sup>1</sup>

The Lutheran Hour preacher condemned with equal degree both the greed and corruption of capitalism and the radicalism within organized labor.

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<sup>1</sup>Walter A. Maier, "Christian Workers Safeguard Labor," Walther League Messenger, LII (August, September, 1933), 35-37.

Our country needs a Twentieth Century Amos to indict the greed and the avarice of many of America's moneyed interests.

In addition to this there is the depressing unfairness which characterizes much of the relation which labor bears to capital-- the appalling and determined waste of time, material and effort, and especially the direct and criminal theft of the employer's property. . . . And, finally, there is the arrogant injustice and violence of which some branches of some trade unions are guilty when they resort to intimidation, criminal boycotting, illegal picketing, restraint of production, and like arrangements which tend to increase the cost of production and lay an unnecessary burden on the employer and ultimately on the consuming public.<sup>2</sup>

In this age old struggle between capital and labor, Maier's sympathy was with the working man. He realized that collective bargaining had become inevitable. Yet, he insisted that unions refuse to engage in acts which were contrary to God's Word and stated that organized labor did not have the right to discard the fundamental laws instituted by God for the regulation of society. "We frankly believe that the sit-down strike, as it is reported in the newspapers, can not be justified morally. It is in effect, the seizure of private property."<sup>3</sup>

Many of the proposals requested by organized labor were supported by the editor. "When we consider the danger and death daily confronting these men (coal miners), we ought to conclude that they were not altogether unreasonable in their request for more pay."<sup>4</sup> In every discussion of the labor problem he usually endeavored to demonstrate that the church is the true friend of the working man.

<sup>2</sup>Maier, "The Golden Rule," ibid., XXXV (August, September, 1926), 9.

<sup>3</sup>Maier, "Sit-Down or Stand-Up," ibid., XLV (April, 1937), 477.

<sup>4</sup>Maier, "Remember on Memorial Day," ibid., LII (June, 1944), 399.

Nevertheless, Maier was seriously disturbed about the radical element within the American labor movement. He believed that the C. I. O. was too intimately connected with the spirit and program of the communistic labor ideals.<sup>5</sup> In an article discussing various objectionable features of the C. I. O., after reaffirming the dignity of labor and the fact that workmen must be adequately paid, Maier emphasized:

Wealth is distributed variously and men are consequently divided into different groups financially. There is no warrant in scriptures for the Communistic confiscation of private property. The rich and poor are repeatedly recognized, while the unholy grasping of the greedy rich and the slothfulness of the lazy poor are repeatedly indicted. . . . Every worker and employer has a responsibility toward his fellowman that cannot be nullified under the demands of labor war. It is wrong to declare a strike that throws a city or a state into protracted suffering, endangers the health of innocents and the well-being of the masses. Violation, intimidation, bloodshed are definitely banned. Labor unionists must not deny to others the right to contract for their services under any terms they accept.<sup>6</sup>

During the war Maier criticized the Government War Labor Board for defending some of the "radicals" within the C. I. O.<sup>7</sup> The defeat of Churchill in the British election immediately following World War Two was alleged to be a sign of radicalism in Labor. The "radicals" Sacco and Vanzetti were not defended in an article by Otto C. Renter, a regular contributor to the Messenger.<sup>8</sup> When John L. Lewis declared that men must first obtain bread and then seek God, Maier protested,

<sup>5</sup> Maier, "This Civil War Called Labor Trouble," ibid., XLVI (August, September, 1937), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Maier, "Balanced Industry," ibid., XLVII (August, September, 1938), 61.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> Otto C. Renter, "Shall Our Courts Prevail or Shall They Submit to Radical Glamor," ibid., XXXVI (August, September, 1927), 8.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."<sup>9</sup> He continually urged organized labor to "clean house" and to "get rid of" the communists, who, he claimed were behind many of the strikes.<sup>10</sup>

Even during the depression Maier asserted that the labor problem would not be solved with more government aid. He pleaded for harder and longer hours of work, for more concentrated laborers who would take an active interest in the welfare of their employers. The demands that the federal government, state authorities, or local relief officials were to create jobs or support people with doles was considered misleading and dangerous. Government grants were only to be accepted as the last inevitable resort.<sup>11</sup> The American Youth Congress was attacked for demanding lavish federal funds and the unemployed were advised to maintain their courage and to take their troubles to the Lord in prayer.

When the Child Labor Amendment was proposed for ratification, Maier, along with the Roman Catholic Church, the American Bar Association, and Nicholas Murray Butler, denounced it.

We believe that there are many ways of preventing the exploitation of children without the enactment of this constitutional amendment. We fear that if the amendment is passed it will pave the way for the regimentation of the nation's youth, the weakening of home influence and authority, the strengthening of bureaucracy at Washington. Under the interpretations of its provisions, the entire school system of our church may be endangered. The fatal and futile

<sup>9</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLVIII (March, 1939), 464.

<sup>10</sup>Maier, "Organized Labor Must Clean House," ibid., XLVII (February, 1939), 363-364; Maier, "Stop the Sabotage of American Strikes!" ibid., XLIX (June, 1941), 559, 605.

<sup>11</sup>Maier, "Do it With Might!" ibid., XLIX (August, September, 1940), 8.



amendment of the Constitution for the enacting of prohibition should have taught us the dangers inherent in tampering with the constitution.<sup>12</sup>

This statement should not lead one to conclude that Maier was opposed to all labor legislation or amendments. However, he did not believe that the solution to the problems of labor could be found in legislation, new regulations or peaceful conferences.

The mass of federal and state regulations designed to check the hostile activities of capital and labor are about as helpful in removing the underlying causes as a toy balloon would be in warding off a hand grenade. . . . No, the efficient remedy for the intolerable situation is not to be found in the investigations and suggestions of the United States department of Commerce and Labor; nor in the industrial conferences that take place periodically; nor in the interchanging of positions by preachers and workmen; nor in church investigations, . . . nor in socialistic utopias; nor in any scheme of things which sets Christ aside. Only the Christian who knows and possesses the power of his Christ to put the golden rule into operation.<sup>13</sup>

He firmly believed that workmen were honored and treated with some respect and that laboring conditions were gradually improving only because of the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the hearts of individuals.

#### Business

During the years of Maier's editorship, the Messenger contained numerous articles demonstrating the values of thrift and hard work.<sup>14</sup> Young people were urged to follow the example of the Christian businessman who were featured. In a series of articles, "The Road to Success,"

<sup>12</sup>Maier, "Another New Constitutional Amendment?" ibid., XLV (March, 1937), 412.

<sup>13</sup>Maier, "The Golden Rule," ibid., XXXV (August, September, 1926), 49.

<sup>14</sup>Maier, "The Watch Tower," ibid., XXXII (November, 1923), 172; Maier, "Mushroom Magnificence," ibid., XL (January, 1932), 282.

several successful businessmen were asked to give their secrets of success. The Christianity of businessmen, such as R. C. Lefournear and John Wanamaker, was highly praised.<sup>15</sup> It was demonstrated that a high percentage of businessmen believed in God,<sup>16</sup> and that men who follow the Lord would also prosper materially.<sup>17</sup> Maier commended the editor of the Marquante Adjuter for advocating a "Back to the Bible" movement. During the famous Danbury Hatters case, Maier definitely sympathized with D. E. Loewe, the owner of the factory.<sup>18</sup> (The Danbury Hatter's case can almost be equated with the Kohler strike of today. Organized labor attempted to boycott the products of the Danbury Hatters.) The following year Loewe wrote an article in the Messenger's "Road to Success" series. Even during the depression, the editor expressed his belief that some businessmen were becoming more humanitarian.<sup>19</sup>

However, one would be entirely in error to conclude that Maier did not recognize the dangers of capitalism and the greedy nature of many employers. He claimed that monopolies were diametrically opposed to the freemarket and the American principles of liberty and freedom.<sup>20</sup> He

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<sup>15</sup> Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLVII (June, 1939), 602; Maier, "God is His Senior Partner," ibid., XLIX (November, 1940), 135.

<sup>16</sup> Maier, "Meeting Wage Earners' Temptations," ibid., XXXII (October, 1923), 75; Maier, "Does Business Believe in God?" ibid., XLVII (July, 1939), 733.

<sup>17</sup> Maier, "The Low Cost of High Giving," ibid., XXXII (February, 1924), 392-393, 446.

<sup>18</sup> Maier, "Sustained in Business Worries by His Savior," ibid., XXXI (February, 1923), 280.

<sup>19</sup> Maier, "Workers are Thinking," ibid., XXXII (August, September, 1930), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Maier, "Monopoly," ibid., XLIV (April, 1936), 459.

protested wilful misrepresentation practiced in American business.<sup>21</sup> The attempts to sell decayed food was condemned as were the false testimonials secured by many advertisers.<sup>22</sup> The Lutheran Hour preacher warned businessmen that their refusal to pay higher wages might lead to communism.<sup>23</sup> Church leaders were also advised not to give the impression that the church is a capitalistic institution.<sup>24</sup> At no other occasion was Maier more vicious in his attack upon big business than when he accused some of their leaders as actually desiring both World War One and Two. He even advocated legislation to take profit out of war.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup>Maier, "Worse Than Plagiarism," ibid., XLIV (May, 1936), 520.

<sup>22</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., XLV (February, 1936), 304; Maier, "What Price Testimonials?" ibid., XLVI (October, 1937), 82-83.

<sup>23</sup>Maier, "Turret of the Times," ibid., LIII (June, 1945), 437.

<sup>24</sup>Maier, "Counteracting Revolution and Communism," ibid., XLV (June, 1937), 652.

<sup>25</sup>Maier, "Profit Through Bloody War," ibid., LIII (July, 1945), 460.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

Had Dr. Maier concentrated on preaching the Gospel, many of his critics have concluded, he could have accomplished more for the glory of Christ's Kingdom. Yet the character and call of some men is such that they cannot but also speak on these political and economic issues. Isaiah and Jeremiah repeatedly warned their nation to repent and turn to the Lord. Although realizing that he was not living in a theocracy, Maier similarly warned America, "Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy Fathers have set." He believed that many politicians and intellectuals were gradually drawing America away from the principles of Jeffersonian liberalism. He believed that in Roosevelt's New Deal the foundation for an ever increasing government bureaucracy was gradually being established. Many believe that history has demonstrated the accuracy of Maier's predictions. There are some politicians and college professors, influenced by a spirit of relativism, who now claim that the principles of Jeffersonian liberalism were merely "true" for America at one time but are no longer true and valid for Twentieth Century America. Although many economists would disagree with Maier, there are still reputable economists who would also say that nations invariably prosper in accordance with their basic freedom. If one were to make an application, Maier's insistence upon natural law and natural rights, one of which is private property, would certainly run contrary to such statements as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights,

formulated to a large degree by Mrs. Roosevelt. Yet, there still are scholarly political theorists who also maintain that history has demonstrated the failure of nations which have labored under the assumption that men have rights because they are the wards of the state and not that these inalienable rights are bestowed by God upon his creatures.

Although Maier had been accused of being unpatriotic, it appears as if his love and devotion for America has been of the true lasting variety. He attempted to prove this by claiming that many of those who had accused him of being unpatriotic because of his attitude toward Germany and America's foreign policy prior to World War Two were among the most sympathetic toward Communism and Russian aggression. Many evangelical clergymen believe that Maier's avoidance of ever openly declaring that he favored any particular political party seems to be a wise policy for every minister of Jesus Christ to adopt. Because of the increasing similarity between the party platforms of the major political parties, Maier was not too concerned about a politician's party affiliation. The basic principles and character of a political candidate were far more important than his party affiliation. Likewise, there still seem to be reputable historians who believe that history has demonstrated the wisdom of following such a strict policy of the separation of church and state. Subsequent developments substantiate Maier's fears that American churches would gradually tear down this wall of separation are being fulfilled.

The Lutheran Hour preacher's attitude toward World War One and World War Two is still rather unpopular. However, in recent years it

seems as if more and more historians are claiming that the Kaiser was not the only guilty party in World War One. Haier always believed that the world would have been far more peaceful had Wilson not brought America into the war. Many now also believe that Haier's warnings concerning American's foreign policy prior to the second World War were thoroughly justified. Charles Beard, a former president of the American Historical Association, in his last book adopted a position toward Roosevelt and his foreign policy very similar to that of Haier's. The more recent writings of the American admirals stationed at Pearl Harbor and the publication of sections of the Yalta-papers have convinced many that these two chapters in American history are about its darkest spots. Similarly many historians also now believe that the Nuremberg trials and the official German government papers recovered by General Marshall in Berlin have proven that the Nazi threat was greatly overemphasized in America. Many also no longer deny, what Haier always asserted, that the Morgenthau Plan was to be inaugurated in order to starve twenty million Germans in order to provide them with more Lebensraum.

With amazing prophetic vision, Haier predicted the rise of Russia. He always believed that the American recognition of Russia was one of the greatest blunders the American government ever made. There are those who now admit that recent investigations and the confessions of ex-communists have demonstrated that Haier and men like him were not fighting "windmills" when they warned America about the dangers of communism and the extent of its infiltration into American life. Similarly many now agree that recent developments within American

churches have proven that modernists are usually sympathetic toward communists.

Although Maier was a friend of the working man, the down trodden (and this included the Negro), and also admired by them, he was accused by some as not sufficiently championing the cause of these people. However, it seems as if the average working man knew who their true friend was. He did not believe that it was the church's duty to become actively engaged in political activities and all types of social reforms. Individuals were to be active in politics and not the church. In all these questions Maier endeavored to maintain a sane level position. He could condemn the sins of business just as vehemently as those of labor.

The voice of the Lutheran Hour preacher did not go unheard. Numerous newspapers and several leading magazines reported on the activities of the fiery evangelist. Although his sermons and editorials were always a witness to the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, Americans of every class were also interested in his analyzation of current affairs. Americans gathered to hear him throughout the nation.

The world's largest pulpit today belongs to a diminutive Lutheran scholar who weekly exhorts, admonishes, and encourages a congregation professionally estimated at 15 million from a wobbly music stand in a St. Louis studio.

Combatting the devil by his sound preaching against personal and national sins, Walter Maier, of the Lutheran Hour, follows in the footsteps of his denominational name-sales by figuratively throwing ink-wells on the air.

But Maier and his world wide congregation of the Lutheran Hour are bigger than his denomination. And, he's proud of the fact he's a fundamentalist, a formidable champion of the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, and salvation by faith.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald E. Hoke, "He Throws Ink-Wells on the Air," Sunday Magazine (April, May, 1945), 1-13.

However, just as all true men of God have always been despised by some, Maier also had to endure several public and numerous private attacks. Liberal church leaders, the scribes and pharisees of his day, were in the front ranks of Maier's accusers. Officials of the National Council of Churches attacked several of his statements. The Friends of Democracy conducted a ruthless campaign against him. Leon Birchhead, of the Friends of Democracy, circulated a pamphlet which accused Maier of being in sympathy with Lawrence Reilly, Gerald Winrod, and Gerald L. K. Smith.

A devout looking cover hides the subtle anti-propaganda contained in Walter Maier's Walther League Messenger. Inside the magazine repeats the pro-Fascist coward that Communists are taking over our country; it shows enthusiasm for "America First" and John Rankin's Committee on Un-American activities.<sup>2</sup>

That such charges can not be taken seriously can readily be demonstrated by the fact that other loyal Americans, such as Charles Lindbergh, were similarly attacked by these communist sympathizers.

Several public officials acknowledged the influence of the Lutheran Hour preacher. A labor leader accused him of being anti-labor. Mrs. Roosevelt apologized for her accusations against Maier. Cardinal William O'Connell expressed his "approval and appreciation" of Dr. Maier's stand on marriage and home life. The Lutheran Hour preacher not only had tremendous impact upon his own church but others as well. The Southern Baptist Convention, the Christian Reformed Church, and numerous other evangelical church bodies were among his supporters.

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<sup>2</sup>Gerald B. Winrod, Persecuted Preachers (Wichita: Defenders Publishers, 1945), 9. 8.



Perhaps the most remarkable conclusion derived from this study is that Maier never vacillated in his basic principles. In spite of his interest in political and economic questions, he was always first and foremost an earnest seeker of the lost souls for whom Christ had shed His precious blood. Christ for him was not merely a plus factor, a psychological stimulant, or a pious religious experience, but the Christ of the Bible, true God and true Man, was intimately related to all his thought. In many of his articles and editorials the refrain, "without Me ye can do nothing," continually re-echoes. The words of the Apostle Paul were his constant guide in all his thought and actions, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

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