

World Leaders Mourn Pope Paul VI

More than a man of peace, one of the world's humanist elite

The late Catholic Pontiff, Paul VI, was buried on Aug. 12 in a ceremony unique in recent Vatican history for the amount and intensity of the international tribute paid to the Pope.

Immediately following the announcement of his death on Aug. 6, the governments of Arab and other developing-sector countries — themselves non-Catholic — made extraordinary gestures of public mourning. This included a declaration of three days of mourning by Brazilian President Geisel, of nine days of mourning by Syrian President Assad, and of seven days of mourning by Egypt, while the Shah of Iran instructed all flags to be flown at half-mast for a week to commemorate the dead “champion of peace and love.”

The funeral services themselves, held in St. Peter's Square in Rome, were attended by over 100,000 people, including religious leaders and government representatives from throughout the Western, socialist, and Arab world. Soviet President Brezhnev, in his message of condolence, stated, “What Paul did will never be forgotten by men of good will.” Condolences also came from Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda, East German President Honnecker, West German Chancellor Schmidt, and U.S. President Carter, among others, all similarly praising the ecumenical policies of Paul VI as representing his powerful commitment to peace and human development.

Within Italy, Prime Minister Andreotti, in an article published in the Vatican daily *L'Osservatore Romano*, recalled Pope Paul's role in establishing Italy as a democratic republic following World War II, helping to organize the Christian Democratic Party along with prodevelopment Prime Minister De Gasperi, and encouraging Andreotti himself to seek government positions.

Italian Communist Party Secretary Berlinguer, in the PCI daily *L'Unita*, praised the Pope for his “constant and impassioned work for peace . . . including in Vietnam, the Mideast, and Africa, and his efforts for the progress of peoples, states, and nations . . . Paul was the pontiff (the bridgemaker — ed.) for everyone, and an interlocutor of humanist ideals and culture.”

This praise of Pope Paul is no mere rhetoric. Ever since the Pope wrote the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* in the mid-1960s, following one of his many

visits to such areas as India, Africa and Latin America, Pope Paul has been known as a proponent of industrial development. The papal encyclical demands that industrialized countries expand their own production in order to further the development of the underdeveloped countries, using an industrial development bank.

So threatening was the potential power of the Pope to foster the possibility of realizing the goals of peace and human development that President Carter, at the recent Bonn summit which formulated the first steps toward actually setting up a new monetary system by-passing the genocidal International Monetary Fund and World Bank, spoke of his desire to meet with the Pope. Carter advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, a bitter opponent of both the Bonn program and the Pope's political allies, stepped in to prevent such a meeting from ever taking place.

Moreover, according to the West German newspaper *Bild Zeitung*, among Pope Paul's papers found after his death are proposals for the colonization of outer space as the next logical step in man's technological development.

At the funeral itself, broadcast live throughout the world, Pope Paul was eulogized as a man of peace. Among the representatives of major world religions in attendance were patriarchs from the Greek and Russian Orthodox churches and Moslem religious leaders. All of the more than one hundred cardinals in the Catholic College of Cardinals which will meet beginning Aug. 25 to choose a new Pope participated in the services. The eulogies to Paul VI underscored how important their choice of his successor will be.

Securing A Neoplatonic Papacy

Although much has been said about the late Pontiff's commitment to global peace, generally only select French and Italian newspapers have even hinted at the fact that this commitment was grounded in a self-conscious Neoplatonist epistemology, expressed through a working policy for high-technology economic development.

Pope Paul VI was not just a well-meaning, moral