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Oral Presentation O5.4

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

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It is well documented that the Chinese Communists subjected the Catholic Church to various persecutions during the revolution, and that has often been attributed to the ideological conflict between the Vatican and Marxism. This research, however, has shown that the Catholic church became a target because of its practices dating back to the 1800s. Before the Communist victory in 1949, the Church secured its position in China by threat of military force from the West, came to own vast amounts of land and other property, and reinforced the Confucian social structure that served to virtually enslave the Chinese masses. The Church's frequent denunciation of communism, apparent cooperation with the Nationalist Party, and in the 1950s, its association with the United States and other Chinese opponents in the Korean War reinforced these practices. The Church's opposition to the Communist Party was threatening because it was more than an ideological difference; its opposition was a defense of the things the Party was attempting to eliminate from China – feudalism and imperialism.