

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

CRISIS. We write these lines in anxious days—to be precise, on September 15th. Perhaps Europe has never known more anxious days nor the world brought so closely face to face with unimaginable disaster. We cannot know what nonsense—or what “treason”—the events of the next few hours or days or weeks may make of what we may write. Already there is something approximating to a civil war in the Sudetenland, and if that continues or develops it is difficult to suppose that the Führer can long restrain his hands from sending armed assistance to the aid of his *Volksgenossen*. Reports of Russian troop and warplane concentration, of arrogant Japanese declarations of adhesion to the anti-Comintern pact with their inevitable repercussions on the United States, contribute to give grounds for fear of a war, unparalleled in the technical perfection of its destructiveness, which will be not only world-involving but world-encircling. A ray of hope, as well as a sensation of pardonable pride to British citizens, is afforded by the unison announcements of to-day’s posters: *Premier Flies to Hitler*. The prayers of all believers and the hopes of all the world must be with them now in Berchtesgaden: a hope enhanced by the knowledge that the Führer, who holds our destiny in his hands, who is contemptuous of diplomacy, weakness, intrigue and the sham of unrepresentative pseudo-democratic government, will understand the frank reasoning and firm will of one who will talk to him as man to man and has behind him the enthusiastic support of a people at least as numerous and strong as his own.

PEACE IN OUR TIME. It is easy to talk of peace, as BLACK-FRIARS has consistently done, in times of peace; in time of war it is, at mildest, thought “unpatriotic.” We cannot foretell what will be thought of it by the time these pages are published. We can scarcely credit the imminence of a repetition of the popular hysteria of 1914-1918. The public has, on the whole, been very fairly informed of both sides

of the dispute and cannot be quickly convinced that, in the event of its being dragged into war, its own side has the exclusive approval of the angels and the gods of Civilization, Progress and the Self-Determination of Minorities. Paradoxically, but not unexpectedly, now that it comes to the point, it is the so-called pacifist organs of the Left parties that set out to acclimatise their readers to the idea of the inevitability and even the desirability of war, or worse, obscure the real immediate issues, its rights and wrongs, and foster a mood of universal ideological conflict and hatred with the device of "Anti-Fascism." We find some comic relief in reading at this time the full-dress front-page tirade which Signore Guido Manacorda directed against BLACKFRIARS in the August 19th issue of CORRIERE DELLA SERA of Milan. Our only stated offences are the famous and still unwithdrawn misquotation which THE UNIVERSE fastened on us two years ago, and some ill-defined association with the "noto Don Sturzo." For these we are described as "nuovi farisei," are associated with "tutta una stampa, vuoi cattolica, vuoi pseudocattolica, vuoi pseudofilocattolica," not to mention a "specie curiosissima dell'attuale fauna ideologica" (this description is considered particularly "acute"); and of course we have our Catholicity securely set in the customary inverted commas. But all this is only preparatory to the most damning epithet: we are *pacifisto*. Believe us, dear Signore Manacorda, we did not quite know what pacifist means in your country; but we stubbornly claim a much better title to the word than those who disgrace it in ours. We do not believe in peace at any price; we do not believe that war should never be waged. But emphatically we do not believe in world massacre and suicide at *any* price; and though it may suit you to call us Red, we are with anyone who will without doing injustice deliver us from that unspeakable crime, be he Führer or Duce or Conservative Prime Minister. And, while we endeavour to keep "outside and above the parties" so long as faith and morals are not involved, we are thoroughly ashamed of the foreign policy of our Labour Party leaders with their insistent demands for the defence of the integrity of the idiotic frontiers of Czecho-Slovakia, frontiers which, since the Anschluss, have lost even their very questionable *raison d'être*.

IF WAR COMES. What then? For the individual Catholic the primary questions are the practical ones: To serve or not to serve? And if so, how? The discussions and controversies among us in recent years on the subject of conscientious objection seem to have had the unfortunate result of leaving the impression in the minds of some that the question is for Catholics, not only in its applications but in principle, an open one; even that any Catholic conscientious objector is *ipso facto* a crank—and in all probability an Artist. That is not so; and ordinary traditional Catholic teaching on the subject must be preached *opportune, importune*. Here are some authoritative statements of it, conveniently collected in the September (American) CATHOLIC WORKER.

Saint Augustine:

“A just man, if perchance he has occasion to take part in a war under a king, even a sacrilegious king, can fight at his king’s order without contravening justice if, disturbing the peace to maintain order, he is certain that what he is ordered to do is not contrary to the law of God, or at least, if he is not certain that it is contrary to it; with the result that it can happen that the injustice of the order renders the king guilty, while obedience leaves the soldier innocent.” (*Contra Faustum Manichæum*, Liber XXII, Caput. 75.)

Francisco de Vitoria, O.P.:

“If the injustice of the war is evident to the subject, he is not permitted to fight, even if the Prince [i.e. the sovereign civil authority] orders him to. That is obviousness itself.

“1. No authority can order the putting to death of an innocent person. Now in this case the enemy are innocent persons; it is therefore not permitted to kill them.

“2. The Prince sins in declaring war in this case; but ‘not only those who do wrong but they also that consent to them that do it are worthy of death’ [Rom. i, 32]; consequently, neither have the soldiers any excuse, if they are of bad faith.

“3. It is not permitted, even by order of the Prince, to put to death innocent citizens; no more is it permitted to put foreigners to death.

“It follows that if in their conscience the subjects are convinced of the injustice of the war, it is not permitted them to wage it, whether or not they be in error; that is obvious, for ‘all that is not of faith is sin’ [Rom. xiv, 23].” (*De Jure Belli*, II, ii, 1.)

Domingo Bañez, O.P.:

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“If the soldiers are certain that the Prince has some doubts about the justice of the war, it is not permitted them to fight, whether they be subjects or mercenaries; . . . for such a war is unjust . . . and the soldiers know it; consequently, it is not permitted them to take part in it.” (Comm. in S. Th., 2a 2a, xl. 1., dub. 6.)

Juan Lopez of Salamanca :

“If it seems to a subject that the true prince, who does not recognize any temporal superior, wages an unjust war and calls together his subjects for such a war, the subjects, whose conscience would thus be harmed, must not comply with the orders given them for it is better to obey God than men [Acts v, 29].” (Tract. de Bello.)

St. Antoninus, O.P. :

“The subject of him who wages war, if he follows him in an unjust war, knowing that it is unjust, is not, because he follows him, excused from sin nor exempt from the reparation of the damage which he has himself caused.” (Summa, III, iv. 2.)

Domingo Soto, O.P. :

“The task of determining the justice of a war falls especially on the princes; hence, the soldiers will be excused, even though the injustice of the war is evident to the prince. However, the injustice can be so flagrant that the subjects themselves could not be excused.”

THE CATHOLIC WORKER writer concludes :

There is the mediæval doctrine, and why should it not still be applied? Indeed, we of 1938 are in an eminently better position than our forefathers of several centuries ago to judge of the righteousness of a war we are called upon to participate in, for not only have we many more sources of information than they had concerning the events leading up to the war, but due to a great increase in educational opportunities, we also possess a larger historical background concerning wars in general. Hence it is that, armed with this background, we can penetrate the superficial appearance of justice of a present war and see it for what it is.

We are not sure that things would be quite so easy; we have a sneaking suspicion that our “sources of information” may do as much to confuse as to enlighten counsel. Certainly we can make no dogmatic pronouncement in advance on the justice or injustice of a hypothetical war. It is probable that, even in the event, it will be impossible, and that even competent ecclesiastical authority will refrain

from doing so. It will be a matter for each individual conscience; and it is probable that Catholic consciences will find different and opposite solutions. We can only recall the fact that it is a matter of conscience and that it is not permitted us blindly and unthinkingly to follow the herd. These reminders are the more necessary because, as Don Sturzo says at the conclusion of an important study on the scope and limits of civil obedience in the modern State (*VIE INTELLECTUELLE*, Sept. 10):

It has been observed that, notwithstanding the unanimous teaching of theologians, neither clerical nor lay Catholics have ever paid the least attention to their duty not to take part in an unjust war. On many occasions members of the clergy have taken the initiative in justifying war . . .

It is only too true that facts, ancient and modern, demonstrate that (a) it is difficult in time of war to free oneself from the heated atmosphere required and to judge objectively the moral character of a war in which one's own country is involved; and (b) a heavy responsibility rests on these Catholics . . .

It is clear that the citizen, even though he stand alone, who in conscience believes that in a particular case a war is manifestly unjust, has the duty not to obey, not to co-operate, and even to oppose the war if it is possible, according to the measure of his responsibilities. That will be for him the best sacrifice he can make for his conscience and for the good of his country.

Whatever befall us, may there this time be no mutual recriminations among Catholics for those whose consciences bid them fight or refrain from fighting.

MODERN WARFARE. Some will hardly believe themselves in 1938 when they find Don Sturzo so ready, in view of "le régime sociétaire et de droit international où nous vivons, par l'existence d'organismes tels que la Société des Nations, la Cour de la Haye, l'Union Pan-américaine," to "presume" the justice of a war waged by a modern "democratic" state. It is difficult to share this simple faith, but in any event we must not overlook the fact that the most serious problem for the Christian conscience to-day is less the justice of a cause than the realisation that even the justice of a cause cannot justify inherently evil means. Maritain again emphasises this point in an article, *War and the Bombardment of Cities* in *THE COMMONWEAL* (Sept. 2.):

War is a scourge worse than plague or famine; to consider it as a means good in itself for the achievement of political objectives is to be a barbarian. Yet there is the right of legitimate defence through armed resistance against an aggressor. Still, to refuse to carry even into war a concern for what is just and what is human is to allow oneself to become a murderous beast. In the very midst of horror a human being must try to remain human.

Warfare to-day tends to be a paroxysm of ferocity directed and accentuated by technology. There can be no question of making war human; rather is it a question of not permitting war to become infinitely bestial.

Some say that "that stage has already been reached; we shall never again have any war which is not a total war. And it is better that war should thus be allowed to bring itself into disrepute and become a mere form of organized savagery. Mankind will then be forced to disown it."

Anyone who makes such statements does not know human nature. Horror alone cannot prevent mankind from acting. To allow, even during a period of extreme crisis, human conscience to resign its function; to allow human reason even in time of war to consider it a good thing to allow bestiality, is an error for which one pays a high price, whether the error arises from the cynicism of the adherents of total war or from a pacifist purism which is blinded by a *politique du pire* into accepting pessimist inaction. The ultimate well-spring of our earthly hopes is that intangible thing which we call conscience. Let barbarians do their worst with their machinery for racking our bodies; as long as free consciences exist, they cannot destroy our souls. The thing which must exist, and must exist before everything else, and which we cannot foreswear without losing all, is our refusal to call evil good and good evil.

The conditions under which modern warfare is waged have destroyed the whole edifice of positive international law with regard to war. There remains only the natural law and those unwritten laws to which Antigone appealed.

The very first unwritten law, the first moral precept recognized in this matter by conscience, is that the man who wages war should not destroy more of the physical heritage and human lives in the nation he is fighting than is necessary to obtain victory. Total warfare—which is justified on the ground of the prompt conclusion it achieves by means of destruction for destruction's sake, killing for the sake of killing, without let and without measure and with the greatest possible amount of terror; and which inevitably turns into a war of extermination, for

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terror does not shorten but, on the contrary, prolongs war—is thus the worst form of barbarism and bestiality. It is a bestiality of man, which is far worse than the bestiality of an animal; it is a barbarism of civilized men, which is far worse than the barbarism of savages. . . .

So we must unconditionally sustain every protest of human conscience against the crimes of total war and we must act against these crimes. And we must also sustain the protests of conscience against war itself; we must act against war, against that monstrosity which is modern war, against that crime which lies in desiring war, in poisoning millions of men with lies and hatred, so that finally they destroy one another—millions of men who of their own accord would want peace, would want nothing better than to spend in peace that brief space of time from the womb to the grave during which everyone in the world is a living human person.

It is from within that everything has its beginning. Because mankind wishes to justify itself in its own eyes, public opinion, aroused to indignation, can accomplish much against the crimes of total war and against war itself. Arousing such public opinion is necessary; treaties and international conventions are necessary. But nothing can be accomplished so long as each one of us does not feel within himself his responsibility to the world and to his own conscience; so long as we remain unwilling to tear from our own hearts every vestige of hatred and blind resentment against any nation, whatever it may be and whatever may be its form of government, whether democratic, fascist or communist; so long as each one of us scorns the power of love.

Incidentally, it was unexpected to find in CHRISTENDOM this charge of cynical unconscientiousness in this matter of war and peace:

We are surprised to find ourselves awarding the quarterly biscuit to *Blackfriars*. On Spain, Penguin states that the insurrection was "morally unavoidable" in view of the situation in July, 1936—though "it is not necessary to exculpate all but Leftists from all responsibility for creating that situation." Behind this guarded remark there seems to lurk the argument that when one has created an immoral situation one is morally entitled to act upon it; that having made government impossible, one may then rebel. Oh no!

No indeed, CHRISTENDOM! We must respectfully decline this biscuit. We would merely say that when one has created an immoral situation, or, (what seems here more to the point) permitted or provoked others to create it, then one is morally

obliged to clear it up; that when government has become non-existent, or has abdicated in favour of an anarchical tyranny of groups, parties and syndicates, then one is morally obliged to re-establish it, whatever one's own responsibility for provoking the situation. That this was the Spanish situation in 1936 may be disputable; we only expressed the opinion that the evidence for it seems to us pretty overwhelming. It will be remembered that we expressly distinguished this question for this other question of *means*; and that of the *de facto* suitability of the means for achieving that end is yet a further question.

“DETEST AND ABJURE.” We are delighted to see that in the September CLERGY REVIEW, Father M. Bévenot, S.J., takes up the question of the formula of profession of faith which is required of converts on their reconciliation with the Church. For, as the writer himself moderately expresses it:

It must be a not uncommon experience of priests whose work in a busy parish includes much instruction of converts to meet with difficulties over the Profession of Faith which they make at their formal reception into the Church. There are things to be explained, which somehow have been overlooked in the course of instruction; perhaps the word “oecumenical” is an unintelligible mouthful; perhaps, even, a certain repugnance is shown to some of the phrases in the Profession, a repugnance which may even be a serious obstacle to taking the final step. Certainly the present writer has so often heard regrets at the wording of the *Professio Fidei* from those who are far better qualified to judge than he is, that the conviction has grown that the time may have come to open the question of some slight alterations being made, which would remove any unnecessary difficulties that there may be in it. The Church in the Mission field studies the language and habits of those among whom she is working, in order to frame her instructions and her vernacular prayers in a way that they will understand. Perhaps we, at home, tend to forget that a wording which is familiar enough to us may strike quite discordant associations in the minds of those about us, whose acquaintance with the Church's life has so far been entirely external, and who know nothing of her vocabulary.

Fr. Bévenot recalls Dr. Orchard's remarks on the subject in *From Faith to Faith*, words of which many priests must

have heard an echo from their converts, and proceeds to what he modestly calls a little research into the origin of the Profession of Faith as we know it to-day, in the hope that others may be able to supplement them and perhaps improve on the alterations which are suggested in them . . . The suggestion is not so bold as it may appear at first sight: only two years ago the Holy Office approved of such a revision for several dioceses in France, and there seems no reason for thinking that it would not grant a similar approval for England.

After patiently examining the obscure history of the present formula, Fr. Bévenot states the objections to some of its phrasing, and finally proposes a new version which will meet these objections with a minimum of alteration. His new version seems to us very successful. One word only we would query: is not "I have been *opposed* to that Faith" still a little too strong for sincere use by many modern converts, whose previous attitude has been in many cases purely negative, indifferent or ignorant, and who sometimes have not been even nominally ascribed to any anti-Catholic body? Perhaps some more indefinite word, which would cover all possible cases, might yet be found. This is a very small criticism of a valuable proposal to meet a serious need. We would express the earnest and respectful hope that it will be given the consideration it deserves by those who are in a position to do something about it.

"INTEGRATION." The August-September number of this review from Cambridge contains two contributions of outstanding importance. The first is a translation of that "theological conclusion" with which Père Congar, O.P., rounded off the symposium on "the reasons for the unbelief of our time" which *LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE* published during 1934-5, and to which we made allusion at the time. The other is a powerful and informative review-article by Mr. Louis Bussell on Viscount Lymington's disturbing book, *Famine in England*. The Editorial should do much to clarify the position, policy and wholly admirable intentions of this challenging periodical. Its categorical affirmations on certain matters of dogma and on the scope of Catholic Action will be read with delight by those who, like ourselves, have felt

misgivings on this score. Unfortunately it is not wholly free from those misrepresentations of other Catholic writers which may be thought an even more disturbing feature than any lack of technical theological precision; and we are a little uncertain what interpretation is to be given, in the general context of INTEGRATION, to the affirmation that "In the Christian religion there are not two standards of perfection, but one." To these matters we may return. For quite half the number is devoted to our unworthy selves: a twenty-five page article by Mr. Frank Searle and much of the editorial out of a total fifty-six pages. Our readers will perhaps be looking to us for a corresponding generosity in rejoinder. For the moment, at any rate, we must disappoint them. A very friendly visit from Mr. Searle had confirmed us in the belief that a protracted controversy would not only be unprofitable and disedifying, (especially in view of the very personal and acrimonious turn it had taken) but would misrepresent the real extent of our differences which did not, in conversation, appear at all so serious as might appear in print, nor so important as our agreements. As an alternative, encouraged by Mr. Searle's very Christian friendliness, we ventured to propose a frank and thorough *Auseinandersetzung* of our agreements and disagreements with a view to the publication of a statement of them, signed by both of us, to appear both in INTEGRATION and in BLACKFRIARS. This proposal at first received a warm and gratifying welcome, but at the time of our going to press, for reasons which we appreciate but deeply regret, Mr. Searle and his Editor have withdrawn their decision to participate in this solution of the difficulty. This seems to leave us with no alternative but a detailed rejoinder. The gravity of the charges, direct and indirect, of dishonesty, misrepresentation and imbecillity levelled at us in this article reflect so seriously, not only on Penguin himself, but on those who permit the printing of his "harmful" writing and on the intelligence of those who mispend their time in reading it, that they cannot pass without being challenged in some considerable detail. Moreover, the objective issues at stake are of the very first importance. The lateness of the date and the pressure on our space compel us, however, to postpone this disagreeable task of comment.

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CONTEMPORANEA. ART NOTES (Sept.-Oct.) is not content to talk, it illustrates generously. Letterpress includes *Outline of Modern Art* by Amelia Defries and *The Churches of Giuseppe Rinvolcri* by Mina J. Moore.

HOCHLAND (Sept.): *Was ist Katholizität?* Professor Paul Simon, with inspiration from P. Congar, shows the solution of the ecumenical problem to lie in the actualisation of the Church's inherent Catholicity.

ORATES FRATRES (Sept. 4): The Jocists' modern "Lay Folk's Mass Book" described by Stanley B. James. Also, a translation of Dom de Chabannes' early history of the dialogue Mass.

SCRUTINY (Sept.): *The Philosophy of Marxism*: an acute and original criticism by H. B. Parkes.

UNITAS: The June-July issue of this bilingual (English and Spanish) organ of S. Thomas University, Manila, P.I., contains a valuable lecture by the Dominican Master-General on *The Actuality of Saint Thomas*, showing the "modernity" of his experimental methods and some of their applications in modern sociology.

VIE INTELLECTUELLE (Sept. 10), realist as ever, faces up to the modern problems of leisure in a series of articles.

YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKER: the splendid mimeographed organ of the Y.C.W. (English Jocists). September issue includes important items on *The Y.C.W. Movement and Its Needs*; on Y.C.W. and Y(oung) C(ommunist) L(eague); on Y.C.W. and the I(nternational) L(abour) O(ffice); on Y.C.W. and Vocational Training and Apprenticeship; on Y.C.W. and the Cinema. All this, and several excellent "shorts," for twopence (plus postage) from 129 Malden Road, N.W.5.

PENGUIN.

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"CINEMA IN SOCIETY"

Sir,—May I draw the attention of your readers to an article to appear shortly in *The Weekly Review*, in the course of which I hope to reply to the questions and criticisms which Father Ferdinand addresses to me in your September number?

Yours, etc.,

MARTIN TURNELL.