

The defeat, after ten years, of the campaign against the worker priests is of course extremely welcome. It means, for instance, that one of the more obvious signs of class discrimination in the church has been removed: the idea that doing a job in Metro-Vickers makes you a worker and that this is somehow incompatible with the priesthood, whereas 'teaching the humanities to the sons of gentle-folk' is altogether different. All along the real principle has been that if we cannot recruit the ministerial priesthood exclusively from the middle-class (and the Holy Spirit seems tiresomely unaware of the importance of this in the distribution of vocations) we can at least ensure that during their training and in their presbyteries the clergy are conditioned to accept the proper class-values. The talk of this or that work being 'unsuitable' to the priesthood has always been simply a way of putting this politely.

In theory at least this principle is now abandoned, but potentially dangerous concessions have been made. We are not simply to ordain workers who will remain workers, we are to have priests who will become workers; from the secure normalcy of the 'priestly life' men specially chosen for their incorruptibility will venture forth into the alien world of work. This is still thought to be a dangerous undertaking, and so it is. So long as clerical students are taught to identify their ministry with certain class forms, their vocations will be endangered when these forms are found irrelevant to their life and work. Only a real priest-worker is secure in a factory or indeed anywhere else.

The old thinking appears again in the idea that a man may fully immerse himself in the world of work and yet abstain from politics. However, the important thing is not the words on paper but what is tolerated in practice. This matter, amongst others, is discussed in this issue by Terry Eagleton. We think, and we hope readers will agree, that the urgency of the topic justifies us in printing an article somewhat longer than has been or will be usual in *New Blackfriars*.

Contemporary church history is in danger of crude simplification in terms of 'progressives' and 'reactionaries'; we believe it is part of the job of a monthly such as ours to try to present the much more complex realities of the situation. With this in mind we shall be publishing a series of fairly detailed reports from abroad beginning this month with Louis Allen on the state of mind of France. These surveys are not ecclesiastical news but are to provide the cultural, social and political background in terms of which the life of the church in the world may be understood. Next month our German correspondent discusses the recent elections and asks whether the German Church is really as progressive as it appears from over here; in some respects he finds our own hierarchy a good deal less reactionary.

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