

## EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

THE MORALS OF MUNICH. Amid the clamour of enthusiasm for and indignation against the Munich agreement comes the calm moral judgment of *Christianus* of LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE:

The theology of war has during the past few years made a considerable effort to apply itself to the new conditions of international relationships and to new conditions of war itself. It has reached a conclusion which has the authorisation of the agreement of an Archbishop of Paris (Cardinal Verdier's *Petit Manuel des questions contemporaines*), of a Bishop of Berlin (Mgr. Schreiber in a speech of 8.II.31) and, by a curious coincidence, of Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich.

This conclusion is that, in our days, only one kind of war can be lawful in conscience, namely, a war of legitimate defence against unjust aggression. However, this conclusion is divided into two conclusions: the state which is the victim of aggression has the right to resist by force; and other states have the right to go to its assistance to defend—in defending the attacked state—violated international order.

In all other cases modern warfare would appear to be a means out of proportion with the end to be attained. It is better to undergo even an unjust injury than to employ so terrible a means to resist it, a means which subjects even the victorious party to injuries a hundred times greater than those which it would otherwise suffer.

Now the "case" before us in September was precisely one of imminent and unjust aggression. If war had broken out, Czechoslovakia would have been in the position of waging a war of legitimate defence. France, like every other nation, would have had the right to play the role of policeman for the righting of this violation of international order, and she would have been the more obliged to do so by reason of treaty obligations which she never repudiated. The case is therefore clear; and France has rightly maintained that if the aggression by force had taken place, she would have kept her word.

But the manner in which aggression was avoided and peace preserved itself raises a further complication. It is unquestionable that France and Britain brought pressure to bear on Czechoslovakia to submit to the German demands for this purpose.

So the further question arises: Were France and England right to resign themselves—in order to preserve peace, and that per-

haps only for a time—to allow all their post-war policy to be destroyed, and to make these humiliating proposals to Prague?

To answer this question of conscience, we must again recall the general principles of the theology of war. If we were to be morally justified in refusing to give way to Germany's unjust pressure (unjust, because whether Germany's *cause* with regard to the Sudetenland was just or unjust, it was unjust to threaten to achieve it *by aggression*), we should have made sure that war, of the kind that was imminent, would not have been a remedy worse than the disease it was intended to cure.

In giving way we acquiesced, it is true, in a grave international disorder whose repercussions may yet become more grave. But would such a war have better safeguarded international order, understanding by that the order of justice among the nations?

The very most we could have hoped for was a crushing victory followed by a treaty which, in view of the imbroglio of nations involved, it is very improbable would have established a better order of justice.

For this reason, and in accord with the practically unanimous instinct of the people of all nations, and, it would seem, with the opinions of the highest moral authorities, *Christianus* considers that it was morally right and wise to submit.

Though not always perhaps so clearly formulated, Catholic opinion appears to be pretty well agreed on the subject, and in its condemnation of "Left" agitation. Mr. Donald Attwater wrote in *THE COMMONWEAL*:

For a man of "the left," even though an unpolitical one, these have been shameful days. With the honourable exception of the Independent Labour Party (Maxton's lot), all the left parties, the self-styled democratic parties, from the parliamentary labourites to the communists, have been drumming up a "resistance to aggressors," "making a firm stand" war. They are ready to sacrifice tens of thousands of innocent, inarticulate and helpless people in this and other countries, to cast them into a war that those people are terrified of and do not want. Speaking to an audience of strong leftish views on the evening of September 28, I ventured to say: "However undeliberately, English labour leaders and socialists are betraying the people; the English democratic parties are betraying democracy." The statement was received with applause.

These have been shaming days for a "pacifist." When all the big peace organisations should have been using all their influence, energy, and resources to oppose war, in any circumstances, to confirming and making articulate a huge determination among

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the people not to countenance or support any war, a large proportion of them are wasting their time with political preoccupations and even aggressive anti-aggression, drumming up for a "firm stand," i.e., war. Thanks to this and to the left parties, hundreds of people who ten years ago were swearing, "I will not fight in any circumstances," are now saying, "I will fight, but only against this or against that." Among the peace organisations that are still firm for resistance against all war is the Catholic-controlled Pax, small but faithful.

Ideological passion and uncontrolled righteous anger have swept the labourites and corrupted the integrity of the peace movement. Heaven alone knows what harm has been done to the consciousness of many individuals by this anti-German, anti-Hitler, anti-fascist, anti-Mussolini, anti-aggression, anti-this, that and the other campaign, how much prejudice, emotion and hatred of fellow man it has engendered. We Catholics have been justly criticised for the aberrations of our opposition to communism, especially our "looking for communists under the bed" as Mr. Shuster puts it well. But what about looking for "fascists" under the bed? What about calling Neville Chamberlain a fascist? At least we now know, what some of us have long suspected, that the democracy of the democratic parties in Great Britain is ready to kill and maim and hate in vindication of its principles.

Nazism, fascism, are abhorrent, as abhorrent as communism. But Nazis and fascists and communists are none the less our brothers and children of God.

Discordant notes have been struck by "the only RIGHT intellectual weekly" (THE WEEKLY REVIEW) and the independently-minded (and in many ways welcome) Catholic PEOPLE AND FREEDOM NEWS SHEET. Both rely on the Tabouish dogma that totalitarian powers stop at blackmail, and do not proceed to war. Nobody who had listened in to the German radio during that week could believe that the Nazi leaders could or would have called their own bluff.

AFTER MUNICH. The crisis would seem to have taught us nothing. The hopes of a new order of peace and justice, which Mr. Chamberlain brought back when he displayed that sheet of notepaper at Heston aerodrome, have been answered by nothing except a record-breaking acceleration in armament. The hideous treatment of the Jews in Germany has shattered reawakening confidence in Germany. Hitler

(let us admit it) strikes us in a vulnerable spot when he would counter our indignation by mentioning Palestine—and the sooner we deprive him of that trump *tu quoque* the better. But his principle that crude brutalities committed in Germany are nobody else's business—a logical enough consequence of racism—reveals a state of things from which the very possibility of recognition of human solidarity, without which there can be no international order, is excluded. A series of remarkable editorials in *THE NEW ENGLISH WEEKLY*, of which a few extracts follow, are almost alone in showing a grasp of the deeper implications of the situation—

In the last twenty years Europe, which has for centuries been pulling about its ears the ruins of Christendom, has at length in its totalitarian areas begun to blast away the very foundations themselves and build new. The triumph of instinct over reason and of the mass over the person, the cult of violence and the return of torture, the subordination of law to political expediency and of truth to propaganda, the cultivation of contempt for the weak and of joy over their sufferings—all these things which in the Europe of the Enlightenment were first scouted as moral impossibilities for the future and then lamented as irresistible trends, have now become the conscious and applauded goals of whole nations. In England it has not been so. No; yet we may clutch at this straw of consolation only on condition that we realise that a straw is all it is. For while the great dictatorships have been fortifying themselves with energy drawn from the inspiration of their hideous heresies, the democracies have learnt only how to disbelieve. The word of power among them has been the corrosive term "debunking." We have become self-conscious about the old tenets and slogans which once we took so confidently for granted, and now can only see them as hypocrisies. The Right is growing dubious of "Empire"; the Left is becoming sceptical of "Progress"; no one is expected any longer to stand up for **dogmatic Christianity or mongamous marriage**, and the public is even becoming a little suspicious of "sound finance." Yet, equally, scarcely anyone professes faith in any constructive alternative to these things. And now Mr. Baldwin has been superannuated we have not even a politician left who attempts to re-embody for us the once enchanting myth of England, Home and Beauty.

Debunking may be at moments a salutary tonic; it is an impossible diet. We cannot survive indefinitely upon a regime of spiritual blood-letting. We must find our way to a faith, and

to action upon the basis of it for the transformation of our national life. Meanwhile the immediate question is upon what we are to found this policy of peace at all costs upon which the public mind appears to be resolved. For the truth is that to take away the expectation of war is to take away the basic assumption on which our political and still more our economic life has been carried on, with increasing explicitness, for the last dozen years. We may truly say that if this terror had not existed it would have been necessary to invent it. Yet it has, of course, existed, not only for all the racial and diplomatic reasons with which our press and publicists make us reasonably familiar, but for those economic ones to which they less often (and then confusedly) refer. It is a remarkable fact that at the very moment when the most violently explosive situation in history was failing in fact to explode, and the talk was everywhere of a long farewell to the war danger and a "general settlement" in Europe, the immediate reaction of the *Evening Standard* was to call for a yet more intensive re-armament "There were, and are, one million, eight hundred thousand *willing hands*, Britain's unemployed, a host greater than any that now stands to arms in Europe" not yet at work on munitions. "Whatever the cost of switching present plant to defence production or of installing new machinery or of purchasing from abroad, the country can afford it and *will find the cost cheap* by comparison with the gain of security." If this is the peace of Chamberlain, then indeed it passes understanding. Of war it would seem that we must say that the modern world can neither live with it nor without it. . .

Mr. Chamberlain himself, with the Fuehrer's *billet doux* in his pocket, is as emphatic as Mr. Churchill that we must arm to the eyelids, and pointedly silent as to whom we must arm against. Armaments, too, are somewhat beside the point: for how shall a man defend a life he disbelieves in? Since we find that the more we get to know of the truth about our economic order the more we tremble for its effects upon Earth and Man, is it not clear that our position will be worse in any future crisis, however we may be armed, unless we put ourselves at once upon a path that leads towards some goal we do believe in? Moreover, as it is not mere scepticism we suffer from but active disbelief, the thing that we could have faith in must be in us. We know already what we ought to do. Instead of despoiling our mother the Earth, we ought to be cherishing her. Instead of exploiting equally Man and Nature, our evident duty is the culture and care of both. No people in the world could be readier to understand these things than we, who by no accident

have become the nominal—and the more than merely nominal—landlords of roughly a quarter of the globe, and of a fifth of its human tenants. . . . It is no longer necessary, and is clearly undesirable, to continue to stack our populations into vast cities, when communications are so swift and numerous. Indeed, it will be impossible to go on doing so, in view of the terrors experienced in cities a fortnight ago. Nor shall we dare to trust to sea communications for more than half of the food supplies of Britain, in sight of the changes in world power that shortly must ensue—even if, as will not long be the case, our trade relations justified such dependence. Merely to glance at such problems gives some idea of the portentous changes that cannot now be long delayed, and if we are to effect them without disasters, both our statesmanship and our national credit will be strained to their utmost limits. Home agriculture's claims will be met at last; both at home and throughout the Dominions we shall, willy-nilly, have to learn to regain a relation with the soil. All we are urging now is that we should not wait for dire necessity, but go out to meet our destiny with hopeful action.

THE NEW ENGLISH WEEKLY pins this its "faith" on Social Credit. Our own readers will give these words a wider and deeper significance.

CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. The 19th century idol of Progress has collapsed under the force of brute fact, and not the least of the miseries of the post-War "democracies" is that they have found no god to take its place and to give to men a motive for living and (what comes to the same thing) for hoping. Catholics may have reason for gloating over the destruction of one more false god; but they should not forget that the 19th century idea of Progress was in fact the perversion of a specifically Christian idea, and one which we can forget only at our peril. Our fathers were not wrong to believe in Progress; they were wrong to conceive of Progress as automatic and confined to material developments. We shall be yet more wrong than they if, in conformity with the mood of the time, we react by denying Progress altogether. (And have we not been told by certain Catholics that Progress is a heresy?) We shall in fact be denying a very essential and central element in our Christian faith. The point is worked out in REVUE THOMISTE by Professor Régis Jolivet under the heading *Le christianisme*

*et l'avènement de l'idée de progrès.* He shows how the Greeks, haunted by their conviction of the eternity of the world and its corollary of eternal regression, were unable to see any significance or purpose in the temporal process, or to co-relate time and eternity. Progress is inconceivable in a universe that has no beginning or end; the Greeks were precluded from the very possibility of a philosophy of history. What was denied to their wisdom was a fundamental truth for the chosen tribe to whom God made known the fact of creation in time (a truth unattainable, says St. Thomas, by unaided reason.) So "Judaism, in emancipating human thought from the nightmare of eternal cycles, set on their course the concepts of Liberty and Progress which were hidden from the hellenic world." What Judaism began, Christianity completed by an historic Incarnation and an historic Church, whose very law is free progress in time; time itself being seen to be embraced and explained by eternity.

The idea of progress is thus intimately bound up with the Christian revelation. It is Christian revelation that has taught men that time has a meaning, that it flows neither into nothingness nor into a cyclic repetition which is equivalent to nothingness, but on the contrary that it is orientated towards an end which is completion and perfection. St. Augustine's *City of God* illustrates this marvellously. Gerson drew attention to this when he said that with this work a human mind for the first time had ventured to attempt a synthesis of universal history. . . . This St. Augustine achieved by emphasising the idea, already present in the universalism of the prophets and essential to the Christian revelation, that humanity as a whole is as if were one man who progresses, amid trials and temptations, towards a supernatural end. . .

It is thus perfectly accurate to say that Christian dogma implies an essentially historical conception of the universe. Time is not radically homogeneous; it has a progressively increasing "depth," and in the phrase of M. Bergson; "il grossit en avançant." This holds good for both the individual and society. The individual has time at his disposal precisely to mature for his own destiny and to achieve his own perfection. Society should likewise, from one age to another, progress towards its own perfection which is to coincide more and more with the spiritual society which is its purpose and its end.

After drawing an illuminating parallel between the School-

mens' theory of time and eternity and the "moment" of Kierkegaard, the writer stresses the distinction between the Christian idea of progress and deterministic perversions of it:

The Christian conceives history as governed by a Mind and a Providence which beyond all temporal vicissitudes, conduct each man and all humanity to ends which transcend nature. From this point of view, progress is a continuum, as time is irreversible. Each moment of it has a value beyond it, and carries an eternal burden. No moment resembles another, and all moments constitute a solidarity. All have their parts to play in the salvation of the world. There is no vacuum in history; beneath all its apparent discontinuities there is a real continuity which links all the instants of duration and makes of them a whole . . .

The conflicts of the pagan thought of antiquity with Christian thought were similar to those of the modern philosopher who is at grips with the naturalistic conceptions which conspire to destroy what is left of the idea of progress received from Christian revelation. The notion of a necessary and fatalistic progress, which has dominated recent centuries, tends to become a mere replica of the ancient Greek idea of eternal return. So soon as progress is no longer conceived as resulting from the free play of human activities, above all when it is deprived of that moral aspect by which Christianity has endowed it with its real significance, it becomes no more than the mechanical evolution of a Destiny. No longer is it the reward of effort and conquest, but a simple acquiescence, or rather a servitude, to an impersonal and inexorable Law. By that very fact the concept of Civilisation becomes emptied of any real content. If the modern world is to regain its belief in Progress and to understand the conditions for its realisation; if it would seek to establish the only humanism which can give it *civilisation*, it must return to the Christian sources from which the very idea of Progress sprang. Apart from that it is impossible to foresee any future for humanity other than its final destruction by the proud and futile triumph over it of its own mechanical technique.

**RACIST VERSUS CHRISTIAN CORPORATISM.** The efforts of Catholic sociologists to show that their ideal of a corporative state is not a thin end of a fascist wedge have not always been convincing. It is good to have the matter set out with lucidity and thoroughness from the other side. This was done in No. 101 of Herr Rosenberg's "cultural" Nazi review NATIONALSOZIALISTISCHE MONATSHEFTE in a critique



of Othmar Spann, a leading exponent of Christian corporativism. The article, of which a summary appeared in *ZEIT IM QUERSCHNITT* (Oct. 15), is extraordinarily revealing of the fundamental opposition between the concepts of a corporative society based on Christian principles and one based on the idea of Race; the more so in view of the fact that its Nazi author clearly understands the former far better than many Christians, and the consequent irreconcilability of Christianity with Racism. He begins by warning his Nazi readers against being misled by the Catholics' opposition to individualism and Liberalism into believing that their theories are akin to those of National Socialism. The Catholics err (from the Racist standpoint) in that over and above human science they leave room for revelation; in that their conception of human society and human history is governed by a theology founded on that revelation; in that they regard humanity, rather than the race, as a reality and a unit (theology, it is argued, implies this "universalism"; science implies racism), in that the type of all society is for them the *communio sanctorum*—a theological "fiction" irreconcilable with the "scientifically demonstrable" unity of race and blood; in that they regard the unity of individuals to be brought about by their relationship to the "concept of Jahve" instead of by the identity of the blood group. These are the presuppositions of any conceivable Christian social hierarchy. The conclusion is reached that the ideology of Christian corporativism as outlined by Spann is the logical consequence of the principle, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." This principle leads inevitably, in the writer's view, to what he calls "political Catholicism." The Nazi principle is formulated, "We render to the *Volk* the things that belong to the *Volk*, and *thereby* we render to God the things that are God's." Behind any Christian philosophy of society and the State, "there lies Theology, and with it the Bible . . . This jesuitical theory leads to jesuitical politics. But the National-Socialist fact will find its completion in *scientific* theory. Jesuitical theory is based on revelation. National Socialism is based in the intuition, experience and scientific knowledge of Race." Perhaps the essential opposition between the Nazi "world-view," not

only to distinctively Christian teaching but to any belief based on the unity of human nature, has never been so clearly set out. It enables us to understand why the Holy See has thought Racist principles to be deserving of explicit condemnation and, as Joseph Folliet has put it, to add them to the museum of condemned propositions studiously collected by Denzinger. It enables us also to understand its particular anxiety and alarm at the infiltration of Racist doctrines into Italian Fascism.

TAILPIECE. Congratulations and gratitude to the boys of Ampleforth College who have started a STUDENTS' DISTRIBUTIST REVIEW (price 2d.) with a *Catholic Supplement*. A strong list of contributors includes Frances Chesterton, Montague Fordham and W. P. Witcutt, who argues that "Distributism is now not only to be advocated for sociological reasons, but on grounds of strict economic necessity." The Editorial shows a social awareness which we have little reason to believe is common among public-schoolboys, and from which their elders may learn plenty. The plum of the number is in the correspondence columns:

I am interested to hear of the production of a public-school review whose aim will be to defend the rights of private property. Private ownership of property is now menaced from many quarters—through the artificial creation of monopolies, through unnecessary bureaucratic interference, and through discriminating taxation—and any new move for its defence is very welcome.

The *Distributist Review* has my best wishes.

WELLINGTON.

Gad Sir, Witcutt's right. We're all distributists now.

CONTEMPORANEA. ARK (Oct.): Dom Ambrose Agius on *The Voice of Authority and Reason*: the Catholic theology of animals and man's attitude towards them.

ART NOTES (Nov.-Dec.): An excellent number includes articles by Eric Gill, Graham Carey, Thomas Gilby, O.P., and Kevin Williams, with several fine wood-engravings.

CATHOLIC HERALD runs a Work For All scheme which, if yet rather vague, arouses hopes.

CLERGY REVIEW (Nov.): Fr. Andrew Beck summarises recent findings which explode the alleged responsibility of Photius in the schism which separated East and West.

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- CHRISTIAN FRONT (Oct.): *I worked for Ford*: a terrible exposure of the cost (for the workers) of cheap automobiles.
- CROSS AND PLOUGH: A *Special National Safety Number*—"produced in the conviction that the Catholic Land Movement should play its due part in the greatest crisis that has ever confronted this country"—includes a detailed *Scheme for National Safety by Permanent Evacuation* which supporters are "begged to do all in their power to bring to the notice of M.P.s and other persons in positions of authority and influence." (2d. from Weeford Cottage, Hill, Sutton Coldfield.)
- MAGNIFICAT (Autumn): includes *Liturgy for the Unlettered*, *The Light-Symbol in the Liturgy* and *Liturgy and Conduct*—all excellent. This courageous little quarterly should do a power of good and deserves to be better known.
- MEN: A new *Quarterly For All Catholic Men*: lively, intelligent, instructive while uncompromisingly "popular." (3d. from 48 Fairway North, Bebington, Cheshire.)
- NEW REVIEW (Nov.): *The Sino-Japanese "Incident"* by G. L. She: a terrible indictment of Japan's conduct in China. *Race* by A. Lallemand: a valuable examination of the alleged anthropological basis of racism.
- ORATE FRATRES: *Contrition and Communions*: important admonitions to hesitant communicants. A translation by Donald Attwater of a beautiful *Byzantine "Benediction" Service*.
- PAX (Nov.) *Integration* by Dom Bede Griffiths: Can monasteries again become centres of social and cultural reconstruction?
- PYLON (Oct.): Developments of the *Union of Prayer for Peace* described by Gerald Vann, O.P. *Meditation before the Maps* by Sebastian Bullough, O.P.
- SCHWEIZERISCHE RUNDSCHAU (Heft 6): A penetrating study of the myth of Race from the Christian standpoint, by Otto Karrer. *Has the Church persecuted the Jews?* Dr. R. W. von Moos gives a learned and fair answer to the Nazi-Fascist *tu quoque*.
- VIE SPIRITUELLE (Nov.) *L'usage de l'angoisse*: a guide to Christian conduct in times of crisis.
- VIE INTELLECTUELLE (Oct. 25): A magnificent lecture by Père Chenu, O.P. on *Liberté et engagement du chrétien*. The full text of General Yagüe's splendid speech at Burgos. O. Leroy contributes a shrewd criticism of J. G. Frazer.

PENGUIN.