

EXTRACTS

MORE DANGERS AND EXAGGERATIONS have had to be pointed out in Paris by the Conseil de Vigilance of the Archbishop: 'a deliberate separation of faith from temporal action, the data of faith should not interfere in the business undertaken in the civil and social spheres'. This sounds baldly heretical, but Robert Rouquette devotes an article in *Etudes* (March 1952) to a detection of its more subtle manifestations. Sincere christians are struck by the essential tie that links the newly established world of the workers with marxism; even the materialist atheism of marxism is admirably adapted to the psychology of the workers and provides them with a philosophy and an explanation of history which is scientific and in tune with their life. In their view the Church as an institution is wholly allied to capitalist ways of life and thought; and even what they call the *mystique* of the Incarnation employed by Abbé Godin and such men is inspired with a spirit of conquest. It is in fact impossible to win the workers over to a social order that is specifically christian; that would be to force an *a priori* set of ideas fashioned in a bourgeoisie milieu upon a living and evolving society. So they would supplant a '*mystique d'Incarnation*' with a '*mystique d'assumption*', which seems to mean that the christian must assume the new values of revolutionary marxism. It would seem to be necessary to sink the faith in the darkness of the Spirit, to live intensely in utter darkness so that it could emerge afresh in this new sort of society purged of all its old bourgeoisie institutionalism. The Church must become once again the authentic 'People of God'. The author sums up the position:

The scientifically inescapable triumph of the marxist society is the first condition for the meeting of Christ and the workers' world. In this meeting moreover christianity will receive more than it brings; it will have purified itself and the gospel will have been clothed with a new and better presentation. The only action, then, that is left to the Christian is to help in the realisation of this first condition, but without visualising the future conversion of the proletariat.

We need not follow the author in his answer to this position. The position itself may seem unreal and absurd in a country which has not had to grapple with mortal intensity with the presence of communism. But it shows that in such countries the appeal of communism does in fact seem to reach down to the depth of the worker's being because it seems to be, and is in some ways, so realist: it accepts the break with nature and with God which was effected some centuries ago. The Christian's answer must surely be to live his life wholly on every level; to realise first in his own life the healing power of Christ healing the double fracture. But the Christian must be as realist as the marxist and

recognise that both fractures have occurred, recognise that he himself is a 'de-racinated', uprooted man.

Among the actions which are at once natural and supernatural, attempting to heal both the fractures, is that of the Scout and the Camp run by Christians. *Évangéliser* (January, 1952—Liège) publishes a double number on 'Scoutisme et Sainteté' which comprises the papers and discussions of a study week for Scout chaplains. If anyone is doubtful of the Christian benefits that may be developed from the Scout movement they should read this volume. In England the same principles are at work in what has been called 'Apostolic Field Work'.

For the past four years the Catholic full-time Youth Leader of St John's Cathedral Youth Club, Portsmouth, has organised a camp for boys. . . . For a fortnight every summer the camp provides a combined retreat and holiday for about fifty boys, ranging from eleven to seventeen. The first week is for about twenty-five under-fourteens, the second for the over-fourteens. . . . The boys mostly come from poor as well as lapsed homes, some are orphans living with non-Catholic relations. Each year some of the boys have been on Probation (a matter which is kept extremely secret though those boys sometimes prove the best in the camp).

Boys from good homes are there too, and the grown-up helpers are mostly undergraduates or seminarists. The Chaplain, usually a Dominican, lives in the camp and gives daily talks to the campers who are also helped in their assistance at daily Mass. It is impossible to give details here, but 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating', and the effect on the boys have so far been most striking. The correspondent, who furnishes these details and who is one of the organisers, feels that this example could be followed throughout the country with notable effect in re-christianising the slums and cities.

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