

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

THE VATICAN AND WARMONGERING. To those who would identify the Vatican with "Fascism and War" may be recommended this editorial article from OSSERVATORE ROMANO (23.I.38):

War is over; and peace is at an end. To-day peace is the great Dream; war is the great Reality . . .

Nor is it enough for some to declare that war is inevitable. They must theorise about it; construct a political and ethical system to justify it. They construct for it theories of Progress through effort and sacrifice, theories of perpetual tension; political theories of self-interest entailing expansion and conquest, ethical theories of heroism and honour. The Gospel itself has been used to prove that Christianity—because it is not an inert quietism or selfish pacifism, but a doctrine of renunciation and of the glorification of suffering, of triumph over adversity, a divine alchemy distilling life from death—that Christianity itself means War. There is always a stock formula ready to change the blind destruction of war into a treasure-house of righteousness. St. Thomas is quoted: There are just and unjust wars. True; but the fact remains that the judge is here the party in the case and that the sanction is made to precede the verdict. Meanwhile the theorists of the "Great Reality" so overstate the case and claim the support of morality and the doctrine of charity that adherents of the "Great Dream" begin to suspect error, to scent a heresy. But to bring the dispute before a tribunal whose law was the Gospel, and whose public prosecutor was Aquinas, would be quite another matter. Then we should be told that we are mixing up religion with politics. . .

But we, mindful of Him who remains ever a Father to his quarrelling children . . . shall remain faithful to the "Great Dream." We shall do so because of our faith in the Redemption, in the salvation which has opened to souls their way to everlasting life and to nations the hope of eventual healing. We cannot believe that the words and the sacrifice of a God for human brotherhood can also be another "Great Dream," nor that to prevent its being so that very violence must be invoked to which Christ opposed His charity. We are faithful to our ideal because history bears witness that humanity has never climbed straightforward like an eagle to the stars. We are faithful to it in the name of loyalty, still more in the name of intelligence, for if peace

were an illusion, if it were illusory to hope to establish it without force of arms, then all friendships, *ententes*, pacts and alliances would be but cunning tricks of misplaced ingenuity.

We are for peace because we believe that it is war that is the Great Unreality . . .

THOUGHT AND ACTION. *Contemplata aliis tradere* is the Dominican motto. It means that thought is not a mere means to action to be subordinated to its exigencies, but that action should spring from, and be directed by, right thinking conducted for its own sake. A Dominican therefore, oppressed by the current prevalence of activism, will give a yelp of joyful recognition at so fine a statement of his own ideals as that contained in the editorial *Action and Escapism* in the current issue of ARENA. This editorial has been prompted by certain criticisms of that review's austere critical and intellectual integrity and its concern with "subjects of literary and philosophical importance for their own sake." These criticisms have nevertheless been valuable, if only because they have elicited so excellent a statement of principle and policy—a policy which, under existing conditions, calls for considerable courage:

The policy of *Arena* has been to publish articles by writers who have had a specialised training in those subjects of literary or philosophical or sociological importance on which they write. We aim at accuracy first of all, and we do not care whether our conclusions are conventional or unconventional, so long as we have in some degree achieved an unconventional precision of thought in reaching them. Nor do we mind if no striking formula of action emerges, provided that we have made some small contribution towards clarifying the matter in hand . . .

The current number well exemplifies these ideals, and shows that the editors are determined to meet the urgent need for a first-rate English quarterly of Catholic criticism. It includes an important essay by M. Gilson on *Christendom and the French Tradition*; Fr. Gerald Vann, O.P. contributes, to the series on *Creators of the Modern mind*, a brilliant description of the work and influence of *Hobbes*; D. A. Traversi's illuminating study of "*The Winter's Tale*" should assure him his place in the front rank of contemporary critics. Fr. Wrighton is, we think, less happy in his

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effort to fit Kierkegaard into a "type," but his essay may serve to introduce the challenge of existentialism in circles where it is little known or understood, and the parallels with Newman are suggestive. An article which contains such phrases as "If the Means Test were abolished it would merely be one more step on the road towards the dissolution of the family," and "It is said that the Means Test tends to break up the family because young people leave home rather than help their parents when the father is out of work. That is a slander on the working people of this country" is presumably inserted for amusement only—and anyway is offset by an article in the contrary sense by Mr. R. P. Walsh—but the joke seems to us in very doubtful taste. The standard of book-reviewing is high; some phrases from a view by Fr. A. R. Birley demand reproduction:

No one who has any close knowledge of the Vatican has any doubt at all about the complete independence of the Holy See, but the geographical position of the Vatican City and the nationality of the personnel of the Cardinals in Curia, the Nuncios and the Curia, make continual manifestation of this independence imperative. Any suspicion that the nationality of the personnel of the Curia influenced the Holy See's politico-ecclesiastical decisions, as well as any suspicion that any Great Power had a predominant influence at the Vatican, would not only endanger the moral authority of the Holy See in the world at large but also lead to a weakening of the ready responsiveness of Catholics to the Pope's directions. Given the extreme seriousness of the issue at stake everything should be done so to demonstrate before the whole world both the *romanità* and *cattolicità* of the personnel of the Curia and the complete independence of the Holy See that no one, unless in manifest bad faith, could even suspect anything else: for, in the words of Pius XI himself in the encyclical *Ubi Arcano Dei*, the sovereignty of the Pope "must be an absolutely independent sovereignty and must manifestly appear as such."

AMERICANA. The most vivid description to date of the character and work of the spiritual revival in U.S.A. associated with the CATHOLIC WORKER appeared in the December number of SCHWEIZERISCHE RUNDSCHAU (*Die Axt an der Wurzel*) by Father H. A. Reinhold. The subject is placed in its threefold setting of the drab slums of Mott Street, New York, of the political and economic background of contemporary America, and of the wide background of

world-Catholicism.¹ There are lively pen-portraits of Dorothy Day, the ex-Communist, ex-atheist "heart and hand" of the movement, and of Peter Maurin, the Breton peasant immigrant, who is its brilliant "head." The work of ACTU (Association of Catholic Trades Unionists) which has sprung from the CATHOLIC WORKER movement is also described. The writer stresses the movement's own refusal to become itself an organisation, for fear that in so doing it would betray the Spirit. "Let us hope," concludes Fr. Reinhold, "that this article will prove not a monument but a clarion call." We hope it will be translated for our benefit in England. Another witness to the vitality of contemporary American Catholicism is the INTERRACIAL REVIEW which is struggling for the Christian principle of race-equality against the current American treatment of the negro population (10 cents. monthly from 220 West 42nd Street, New York). In the sphere of "right thinking" excellent work is being done by THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN, the "Quarterly Journal of Philosophy" published by the University of St. Louis, Mo. The January number is typical, containing basic articles on *Logic or Experience*, *The Philosophy of History*, *The Philosophy of the Natural Moral Law* and good critical work on current philosophical writings. This periodical should be found of the utmost value by Aquinas Societies, study-circles, etc., which are on the lookout for solid, but brief and non-technical, treatment of fundamental and contemporary problems. ORATES FRATRES of the monks of Collegeville continues its fine work for the liturgical apostolate. The current issue contains a further instalment of Karl Adam's *Dogmatic Bases of the Liturgy* and an account of the workings of the highly successful Liturgical Missions of the Mont César monks in Belgium. The older established COMMON-

¹ The writer's opinions of the faded promise of kindred stirrings outside America are best left in the decent obscurity of the original: "1936 schrieb ich mir einen kleinen Aufsatz über die katholischen Jugendbewegungen und ihren wahrhaft revolutionären Charakter von der Seele. Was ich damals über Deutschland sagte, gilt nicht mehr. 'Sept' ist gefallen. 'Catholic Herald', London, hat sich zu weiter nichts als einer den Durchschnitt überragenden Zeitschrift entwickelt und hält nun geruhsam und mit seiner Leistung zufrieden um Haupteslänge über der alten Position, ohne eine Bewegung bisher entfacht zu haben. 'Colosseum' zeigt bedenkliche Neigungen, im allgemeinen Strom der Faschismussympathie mitzuschwimmen, und die verschiedenen Geschwister des New Yorker 'Catholic Worker'—Sydney, Ottawa, London usw.—zählen alle von ihm, ohne ihn jedoch an Fülle und Tiefgang zu erreichen. Zwar glaube ich, dass man den 'Catholic Worker' nicht ohne weiteres nachahmen kann."

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WEAL has been going through a difficult period (ESPRIT comments: En 1937 cet estimable hebdomadaire s'est empêtré, en prose et même en vers, dans la défense de la civilisation occidentale. Ce fut du délire: charitablement nous nous tairons . . . Nous espérons que la revue, moins belliqueuse et plus sage, retournera à cette défense de la justice sociale aux Etats-Unis qui lui avait donné quelque renommée.''), but it remains a good example of what a Catholic "lay" weekly review can be. A return to a more calm and critical attitude to contemporary events is indicated by its publication on February 4th of *Maritain looks at Franco* by C. J. Lucas. "In these few remarks," he concludes, "I have tried to be faithful to the spirit of what M. Maritain writes. He has been misunderstood because he has plumbed a little deeper than the average person is willing to go. However, Catholics should realise the issues which are at stake, and the necessity of an uncompromising fidelity to the Truth." Though we are not sure that Mr. Lucas has followed M. Maritain into all those depths, his exposition may be recommended to the latter's detractors and abusers in this country. Congratulations are due to THE PRESERVATION OF THE FAITH, the lively and progressive periodical of vital apologetics and spirituality from Silver Spring, Maryland, on the attainment of its tenth anniversary. In these ten years it has roped in the services of most of the worthwhile Catholic writers in America and England. Dorothy Day's *To an Agnostic* is a first-rate regular feature. THE CHRISTIAN FRONT continues its work in the scientific discussion needful to bring Christian social principles into practical application. The February number includes a good article by Fr. T. E. Davitt, S.J., on *Labour and Ownership*, which states the case, hinted at in *Quadragesimo Anno*, for workers' ownership and partnership contracts. The Paulists' CATHOLIC WORLD, under the editorship of Fr. Gillis, continues to provide American Catholics with an enlightened general review and magazine, while the American taste for synthetic reading is met by THE CATHOLIC DIGEST. The indexing of the vast output of Catholic periodical literature in English is undertaken by the Catholic magazine Index section of THE CATHOLIC BOOKMAN of Detroit, Mich. BLACKFRIARS contributions will be found regularly listed in its pages.

AMENDES HONORABLES. Mr. T. S. Eliot has kindly written to us drawing attention to a grave misunderstanding which may arise from our all too brief reference to his important observations in the current CRITERION:

In your admirable "Extracts and Comments," which I invariably read with profit, I am a little nettled to find, in the current number, a brief reference to my having commented "charitably" on Lord Nuffield's benefactions to Oxford. While I hope that my comments always show Christian charity . . . I take a mild exception—not to the brevity of the reference—but to the use of the word "charitably" in such a brief reference. Are you sure that all your readers will take it simply that I have shown Christian charity towards this appalling blunder?—and that they will not interpret your remark as meaning what in journalistic language is called "qualified approval"? I wished to express unqualified disapproval . . .

We would deeply regret any such deplorable misunderstanding; and can plead only that the justice and urgency of Mr. Eliot's comment seemed to us so self-evident that we were the more impressed with his charity and moderation. We can find less excuse for having referred with such casual brevity to Mr. Eliot's important and almost solitary protest against a situation fraught with a threat of sheer disaster to the University of Oxford. For, as Mr. Eliot goes on to complain, "So far as I know, mine was a solitary voice of warning against the subjection of the Oxford 'Dominus Illuminatio Mea' to the purposes of materialism." Still more deplorable is that fact that, so far as we are aware, no effort has yet been made by the responsible authorities to meet Mr. Eliot's protest, let alone to avert the irremediable degradation to which their action has exposed the University.

Brother George Every, S.S.M., has kindly sent us an advance copy of a letter which is to be published in full in the next number of CHRISTENDOM:

A paragraph in *Penguin's* admirable review of periodicals in the January *Blackfriars*, contrasting Fr. Casserley with Fr. Micklewright, and Barthian tendencies with what he calls the "monistic and immanentist 'Christian Platonist Nominalism'" of F. D. Maurice demands a protest. Fr. Micklewright's is not the only possible view of Maurice, and is at certain points highly controversial . . .

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But though I have no doubt that *Penguin* is right and Anglicans in general and the Christendom group in particular have a lot of thinking to do about Nature and Grace, in the process of thought Maurice does not seem to stand for theological liberalism, but for the supremacy of the Bible and the creed over the scholasticism of St. Thomas and over the classical Protestantism of Luther and Barth.

We hasten to explain that it was in no wise our intention presume to pass judgment on the authentic interpretation of the mind of Maurice, and are indeed relieved that Mr. Micklewright's exposition of his views is not to pass unchallenged. We would also assure Brother Every that we too, with St. Thomas himself, stand emphatically for the supremacy of the Bible and the creed over the scholasticism of St. Thomas!

CONTEMPORANEA. ANALECTA O.P. (Nov.-Dec.): A Letter from the Master-General of the Order of Preachers recalls the part played by Dominicans in the reunion of the Eastern and Western Churches at the Council of Florence, the fifth centenary of which is to be marked by renewed efforts for reunion.

ART NOTES (Jan.-Feb.): *The Undeveloped Resources of Catholic Art* by E. I. Watkin. Some account, with illustrations, of the new churches and schools of F. X. Velarde.

CITE CHRETIENNE (Jan. 20): *La place de la morale dans les affaires* by Georges Tellerman: ethics versus business integrity?

EASTERN CHURCHES QUARTERLY (Jan.): *The Orthodox and Edinburgh, 1937* by Dom Bede Winslow. Dr. Arendzen examines Sophiology.

HOCHLAND (Feb.): *Von Spengler zu Dawson* by Dr. Ludwig Arnold is a valuable comparative study and appreciation of Christopher Dawson's philosophy of history. *Das ökumenische Gespräch*: an estimate of the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences by Dr. Otto Iserland.

IRELAND TO-DAY (Feb.): *Man and the Machine* by S. J. Murray. *Democracy at Bay* by Cecil French Salkeld ("Denial of democracy is an admission that Christianity has failed."). *Eire or Ireland* by H. R. Chillingworth ("God may save Ireland; Eire is past praying for.")

IRENIKON (Nov.-Dec.): L. Zander gives an admirable critical appraisal of the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences as seen by an Orthodox.

REVUE THOMISTE (Jan.): *La nature de la Théologie spéculative* by R. Gagnebet, O.P.: Theology— affective piety or rigorous science? *La paix selon la conception chrétienne* by P. de Languen-Wendels, O.P. *De la connaissance poétique* by J.

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Maritain: "Poetry is knowledge, incomparably . . . To use it as a *means* for acquiring knowledge is to pervert it."

SCHILDGENOSSEN (Jan.-Feb.) includes *Towards a Christian Conception of the Universe*, a masterly essay by Romano Guardini; *Modern Marriage in Crisis and Revolution* by Josef Emonds; *Shakespeare the Christian: A New Interpretation of the Sonnets* by F. C. Rang; and an Introduction to Pascal's *Pensées* by Guardini.

SCHOENERE ZUKUNFT (Feb. 6): Dr. N. Grohauser's *Fragen um das englische Weltreich* concludes: "Only a 'moral revolution' can give England the strength to overcome the perils that beset it. We believe that such a spiritual and intellectual revolution in England is quite possible if only she can find the right leaders. Nobody in Europe could hope otherwise—the downfall of the British Empire would mean the collapse of the hegemony of Western man."

VIE INTELLECTUELLE (Jan. 10): *La conception chrétienne de l'ordre international* by L. Le Fur, Professor of the Faculty of Law of Paris: a clear and magisterial exposition, with practical conclusions regarding a Catholic's attitude to the League. (Jan. 25): *On doit se soumettre aux pouvoirs constitués* by C. Spicq, O.P.; the early Christian attitude to civil authority and the present-day applications of the same governing principles.

PENGUIN.

REVIEWS

THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

VON CHRISTLICHER EHRENHAFTIGKEIT, von Dr. Richard Egenter. (Kösel und Pustet, München; RM. 3.20.)

In recent years there has appeared in Germany a number of books which all display similar tendencies. They lay particular emphasis on the active as distinct from the merely negative virtues, on the power and dignity of man as seen through Christian eyes, and on a full recognition and affirmation of all "natural" values when co-ordinated with, and subordinated to, Supernature.

Are we to see in this merely a strategy of assimilation to current ideologies, a tactical move in apologetics? Or does it indicate a genuine process of self-examination and the appearance of a new realisation of the Christian consciousness? A non-German may be tempted to suspect a morbid symptom; but if it be such it is as a fever is not only a symptom of disease but also a process towards a new condition of health. The heresy which to-day, and not only in Germany, afflicts the Body of the Church and is testing its powers of resistance is not, as were the great heresies of history, a heresy in dogma which compels the more exact