

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

THE ANTI-COMMUNIST MENACE. Father S. J. Reuver, S.J., treats excellently in THE CATHOLIC WORLD (November) of *How Not to Fight Communism*:

As far as Communism is concerned we might just as well consign our text-books to a bonfire. For the communism they speak of (which is so easy to dispose of) is not at all the Communism that is threatening the civilization of the world at present. When, O when! shall we stop saying and hearing that "Socialism advocates state ownership of the means of production and distribution of wealth, Communism advocates state ownership of absolutely all goods"? or that "Communism and Socialism advocate equal wages for all—skilled and unskilled, industrious and slothful; but under such a system man will lack the proper incentive to work. Therefore . . ."? When shall we cease wasting time on the learned *reductio ad absurdum*, that since Communism denies absolutely all private ownership, even of goods of consumption, it must necessarily deny individuals the right to eat food and wear clothes; since consumption is *par excellence* an act of ownership? And what purpose is served by holding profound disquisitions showing the difficulty or impossibility of distinguishing adequately between goods of production and of consumption? But confusion of thought is not monopolized by any narrow group: we still hear Catholics and non-Catholics, educated and uneducated—labourers, mechanics, physicians, lawyers, business men—asking why Communism is objectionable if it is divorced from atheism, implying in their question that on this condition it would be unobjectionable. They have not yet come to realize that the fight is not about communism (whatever that is), but about Communism, namely, the political-economic-social-religious system of life at present partly established in Russia and being propagandized throughout the world. Call it Communism if you will (Lenin calls it Socialism, in the present preliminary stage), but it is a definite concrete working out of the Marxian and Leninian ideology, with everything thereby implied and with all its bearings on the diverse functions of individual and social life.

The writer continues with a frank discussion of "some of the difficulties of our anti-Communist position. These difficulties come from two sources, namely the actual concrete circumstances in which we are situated, and also the reliance of some anti-Communists upon arguments that never had any life or at least by this time are eligible for interment . . ." He shows in some detail how many of

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the economic and metaphysical arguments commonly alleged against Communism are unconvincing and invalid.

Though it is a valid argument against Communism to maintain and prove that it is contrary to human nature, the appreciation of this most fundamental argument presupposes a broad foundation of general ethics, which in turn presupposes a course of studies. But to present this argument to a hungry or dole-relieved crowd! It has been well said that "an empty stomach has no ears." And even if Communism is contrary to human nature, it may well be asked in retort whether the present condition of millions of workers and unemployed is according to human nature or contrary to it.

Shall we urge that Communism is atheistic? Communists (at least in this country) deny the atheism of their system. Their denial, of course, is thoroughly unconvincing to anybody who knows even the elements, but such knowledge is not universal. . .

Still, putting aside the question of the atheism of Communism, are we going to argue that American Capitalism is theistic? We should like to make it such, of course. But the Capitalists feel that we are abstract theorists on this point; whatever they may do or think on Sundays, their business god is the law of supply and demand of labour; they are willing to profit by our denunciation of Communism, but they neither subscribe to our reasons for the denunciation, nor do they accept the conclusions at which we arrive. And the Communists retort to us by asking what the Church is doing *effectively* (as distinguished from "publishing Encyclicals") to secure living wages for the workers. We answer (among other things) that the Church is not a political power with an army and police force; that it must win over employers by persuasion and not by force. And they reply that since the Church has not succeeded in spite of its great numbers and its age-old established position, it evidently never will succeed; that the Communists themselves will take over the job and do effectively what we are trying vainly to accomplish; that Russia is an example of what can be accomplished. . .

Into this fertile field comes the Communist and argues convincingly—for his argument is both alluring and true—that there must be something wrong with our present system if it does not serve to distribute to the masses an equitable share of the abundance that surrounds us. Shall we say that maldistribution is not *per se* but only *per accidens*, as some of our textbooks put it with grim humour? Or what other logical devices shall be used to ward off destruction from the greedy employers who—blinded by their selfishness—cannot realize what is going on, and are still hoping they can escape the necessity of paying a living wage? They say it is impossible, industry cannot survive it, the neces-

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sary surplus would be consumed and business would not withstand a period of strain without a reserve of earnings. Honest or dishonest, this contention is in accord with the Communist's thesis and is welcomed by him; for he maintains that the capitalistic system is essentially unworkable, unless it relies on the exploitation of the proletariat.

Fr. Reuver rightly insists that the situation can be met only "through understanding, and then a patient exposition, of the philosophy of property, which includes the fundamental principle that private ownership, far from being destined to exclude common use, is justified only on the plea that it makes possible the wide distribution of temporal goods." But his article is no essay on how Communism should be fought, but is intended precisely to "indicate the difficulties of theoretic refutation and the need of prudence and thorough understanding," and to hint that theoretical solutions are futile, and that the only solution of any worth is a practical one consisting of a wider distribution of the means of production; and for those who are not owners, a living wage. Communism, it is true, is not merely an economic nor merely a religious problem; but the political and social phases will solve themselves if men are given the opportunity of living like human beings and are taught anew that they—both employer and employee—are God's children.

CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP. It is good news that THE CLERGY REVIEW is to be restored again to the proportions of a full-sized review in January. The November number contains a very sound article on *The People and the Liturgy* by Canon E. J. Mahoney, from which we extract this very good sense:

It is a vast subject with many aspects, but it is at least possible to mention one or two things which are obstacles to the liturgical movement. We would put, first, as being radically the opposite of all that the liturgy means, the destruction of a popular service, in which all can join, for a liturgical one confined to a few chosen experts. The Rosary or the Jesus Psalter, for example, heartily recited by the whole congregation, is nearer to the reality of public worship than Vespers sung by a select choir who, no doubt, together with a few altar servers, are thoroughly enjoying themselves. The papal commendations of liturgical worship suppose that the people are taking part. It is a herculean task to get them to take part, but well worth the effort. They can be taught Sunday

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Compline, which is practically invariable, exactly as they are taught the ordinary Benediction chants. The same applies to the Mass. Very effective children's Masses exist in which all join in vernacular singing; the words correspond sufficiently to the actions of the priest at the altar. It would, we think, be a retrograde step to replace this congregational act by a Mass in which the children do not join. It has been proved that it is comparatively easy to teach children a plainsong Common and the Mass responses. Plainsong has become almost synonymous with liturgical revival, but it is regarded in some quarters as a type of music which can be executed only by trained singers, led by a *maestro* conducting the performance with a rapt expression and the most extraordinary manual dexterity. Conducting a Symphony Orchestra seems easy by comparison. As we regard the matter, the introduction of plainsong favours a love for the liturgy only because it is possible for the people to join in the singing of a plainsong Common, whereas they cannot join in the singing of *Turner in F*. If it is restricted to a trained choir, the people remain "dumb spectators and outsiders," as the present Pope has described them. With a body of singers acting as a background or assistance to the rest, and by repeating the same chants each Sunday, a congregation can be taught to sing the Common and the responses.

The movement can be helped along on the positive side by getting very clear in our own minds what it is we are aiming at. "Ante omnia considerandus est finis et secundum finem dirigendus est cursus." The end desired must always be the salvation of the people, and translated into the terms of our present discussion this means that it must be our endeavour to foster the faith and the charity and the piety of the masses of the people by gradually directing their minds and hearts towards suitable liturgical devotions. They love processions because they feel they are actively taking part in something. Why should they not take part in Rogation processions—the responses to the Litany are simple enough; or in the procession on Palm Sunday and Candlemas? Pious Confraternities attract them because they feel they belong to an organization and are part of its life. Why should not this identical spirit be developed so as to make them more conscious of their membership of the Church and of their part in its worship, especially in the Mass. Even a modest attempt to direct the interest of the people in this direction will open an inexhaustible store of material for sermons and instructions; explanations of the prayers and rites of the Mass and appropriate references to the Collects of the Missal, will create a natural desire to follow the priest more closely by using a Missal: the variety obtained by the different "methods" of assisting at Mass will be found in the variety of the proper and of the litur-

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gical Seasons. Sermons and instructions on the Sacraments could take the form of explaining the text of the Ritual. Some understanding, for example, of the rite of Baptism might induce the faithful to be present themselves when Baptism is administered and to renew their own baptismal promises.

Of more immediate value as, so to speak, propaganda, is the idea of a liturgical week, on the lines of the many Conferences which take place annually. Schemes of this sort will only interest a very few, but indirectly the enthusiasm of the few will affect the masses, and it is with the masses of ordinary people that a priest is chiefly concerned.

PARENTS! SAVE YOUR CHILDREN from modern education is the slogan of the November number of *ESPRIT*. The drift of Bernard Charbonneau's *La fabrication des bons élèves* and Jacques Lefrancq's *Du massacre des innocents à l'orientation pédagogique* is sufficiently indicated by the titles. Criticism is detailed and drastic, but at the same time constructive. The writers will brook no reformism to ameliorate the stultifying mass-manufacture which has become substituted for education; they demand a thorough-going "personalist revolution of teaching, holding that revolution is more realistic and even practical than reform." "Our world is systematically slaying its children. At this time when the totalitarian states are attempting the horrible experiment of turning out men who are 'manufactured' through and through, our task ought to be to protect our children from this menace, because in each child lies some hope of a new generation of free and responsible human beings." The length to which totalitarianism carries this "horrible experiment" is illustrated in an accompanying article on *School, Church and State in Germany*; that the process of substituting "manufacture" for education is little less retrograde in England is the burden of *Education for Function* by F. G. Searle in the second number of *INTEGRATION*.¹ Mr. Searle's penetrating criticism is, however, concerned with a specifically Christian revolution in education rather than with a *merely* "personalist" one. His

¹ We would take this opportunity of assuring the Editor of this "Students' Catholic Review" from Cambridge that our previous remarks (*BLACKFRIARS*, July, p. 532) were no charge of un-Englishry, but intended to indicate to our readers the similarity of "spirit" which pervades his review with that of some of the most vital and estimable trends and movements on the Continent and in U.S.A.

remarks on school "sports" recall the Pope's stern words in the *Mit brennender Sorge*:

Moreover, by games the child, and the adult, is taught that subordination of the individual to the group which is perhaps the most disturbing feature of our time. The destruction of religion means that man is left with nothing to which he can be loyal, and to which he can subordinate himself, except the group. With the sanctions for the sacredness of the human personality removed with the denial of God, there is no protection of the individual against the tyranny of the group-mind. In games the child is *taught* to obey this tyranny. Commercial firms have not been slow to realize the value of team loyalty; willing slaves work better than unwilling ones. And there is more in the provision of playing fields for employees than disinterested concern for their physical welfare. The player's (and the spectator's) vicarious pride in his team prepares the way for a similar pride in the achievements of his firm. Factory workers at times express this pride; it is akin to the feeling that is supposed to inspire the workers of Russia. It marks the loss of the individual's pride in his own creative work, and the absorption of his own personality in that of the group. This state of mind is still more accentuated in the football fan. The factory hand or the office worker has had some small part in the achievements of his firm, ignoble and insignificant though it may be; but the football fan takes pride in achievements towards which he has contributed nothing whatever, and which are attained by men who do not even belong to his own district, but are bought and sold like cattle. Debarred from any possibility of creative achievement in his work, he falls back on that of others, however foolish that achievement may be. Indeed his whole life consists of vicarious experience, "substitute living," obtained from novels, cinema and sport. Instead of real personal achievement, he accepts that of others, or, when he plays games himself, the futile and purposeless achievements of sport.

The whole article is a powerful indictment. Parents and teachers who will act upon it and are prepared to run for their children the material risks it implies will be courageous indeed.

CONTEMPORANEA. FORTNIGHTLY (Nov.): *G.K.C. Prince of Essayists* by Hubert Waring.

MONTH (Nov.): A strong number includes *East and West*, a simple introduction to Sophiology by Abp. Goodier; *The Case of Dr. Coulton* by Hilaire Belloc; *The Servant Problem, A Growing Social Evil* by S. A. Bliss.

NOUVELLE REVUE THEOLOGIQUE (Sept.-Oct.): *Que gagne le matérialisme à être dialectique?* by E. Delaye, S.J.—an acute criticism of Marxism.

PENGUIN.