

review, *Revue des Jeunes*, is appearing at Lyons in unoccupied France; in spite of the utmost disapproval of the non-Christian invader, other Catholic periodicals like *L'Esprit* have reappeared; Stanislaus Fumet has even started *Temps Present* under the new title of *Temps Nouveau*.

A further reinforcement of hope is the fact that Labour as represented in the Free French contingent under the Catholic leadership of General de Gaulle, has also spoken. Henri Hauck, *Conseiller au Travail des Forces Françaises Libres*, issued an appeal over the air to Labour, oppressed and in chains, in France or deported to Germany. M. Hauck, representing workers who are free, speaks, he says, for every shade of opinion, for every social category; however much they may have lost in the downfall of their country, they still possess one thing—their dignity as producers and citizens, they have 'forgotten their divisions of yesterday to think only of their effort to-day, their victory of to-morrow.'

The one fact that Labour, both abroad and in France, has 'forgotten its divisions' is of itself a most hopeful augury for the future of France which may well have its most solid foundation in its own strong and tenacious workers. Hitler seems to be already marching to his doom which will mean the freedom of the French nation; that it should be a united nation is essential to its welfare and that of Christendom.

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JACQUES MARITAIN AND 'THE DISASTER'

THE illustrious Catholic philosopher has not been idle during his enforced exile in New York. He left France at Christmas, 1939, to undertake his usual lectures in the Universities of Toronto and America, and then came the fall of France. He sojourns in a free country and believes it his duty to aid his own country to rise again, and to help to bring about the triumph of the universal human ideals and values symbolised by Christian Democracy. To this end he is writing books, articles and lectures. His students are the great public of Europe and America; his studies and ideas converge upon the philosophy of modern politics. He is not enclosed within the narrow confines of any party, but soars to the heights, untrammelled

by preoccupations with slogans. In all his social writings his calm judgment, at once profound and deeply human, has always stood out. The philosopher usually follows the paths of mere speculation; Maritain takes pleasure in turning the searchlight of Catholic philosophy upon the living reality offered in the succession of great events through which we are now passing.

His latest book, *A travers le Désastre*,¹ should be read with care. It embraces the entire field of the French disaster, studying its fundamental and intimate causes. In his opinion, something essential in the subsoil of the French soul had been corroded, and this had brought in its train other factors, joint causes of less moment, but which, converging upon a single point, have broken the strength of its physical and moral resistance to the torrent of evils which broke upon France with the advance of the German motorised columns.

The French nation was *politically* demoralised, although in its heart it still preserved the life-blood of its moral virtues, which gave it its greatness in the past. It is the bankruptcy of the bourgeoisie as a class, says the French philosopher. The political world and the ruling classes ceased to feel themselves French, in order to think, feel and work, some against Moscow and the others against Berlin. A sterile 'anti' climax, the product of fear and the strategy of defence, directed the mentality of those social classes that oppressed the national soul of the French people, like a shell cramping its movements, its activities and its heroisms. For this reason the noble French nation has a loathing for 'politics.' Maritain fervently defends the nobility of politics, in the sense of the guidance and government of the peoples, but he lashes at it when it becomes the hotbed of party ambitions and the jumping-off ground for personal or group advancement. With Machiavelli, observes the author, politics was separated from morals in the speculative order; in modern times this terrible misfortune has been put into practice, and the nation which is 'naturally Christian' wearies of the politics which, to its cost, has no moral whatever; it has tired of such a farce. Politics—and Democracy too in its traditional Christian sense—needs to be restored on the bases of the supertemporal value of the human soul (from which derives the dignity of man, making him superior to the whole physical universe), brotherly love, justice and the solidarity of the common good. Perhaps society is passing through one of those periods of 'purification' and of the liquidation of ideas and philosophical claptrap which have grown up out of an estrangement from God, who has been replaced by the people themselves unfettered

¹Collection 'Voix de France,' New York,

by morals, by the unfeeling divinity of the all-absorbing and tyrannical State, or by the dreams of an epileptic ambition for a 'Master Race.'

The evil has reached the marrow and affected the very essence of the organism; for this reason Maritain makes no 'gestures of satisfaction' over the political exploitation of the religious appearances which some applaud in the policy of the men of Vichy. Ideas and conceptions such as hierarchy, law, labour, organised economy, and even the Catholic religion, are in danger of being discredited and made hateful to a good people. It may be doubted whether the triumph of these noble ideals can result from the government measures taken by those whose authority is exercised simultaneously with more or less enforced 'collaboration,' and whom public opinion will force to give way to better solutions in the day of victory. When a nation suffers the humiliation of an occupation, such as that of France by Hitler, it is dangerous in the extreme that with this period of bondage is incorporated a time of moral improvement and the correction of past errors. The men of Vichy will do no good by fusing their policy with Christian principles, those very principles which in the long run must inspire the reconstruction of France.

Maritain deals comprehensively with the men responsible for the Armistice. He has no word of approbation for what they did then. But he tries to explain it. The over-riding reason was that those responsible had lost faith in the people of France, in their spiritual and temporal vocation; they were the victims of foreign and enemy propaganda. The motive was undoubtedly deeply patriotic. None of those soldiers, least of all the aged Marshal of Verdun, would have hesitated to sacrifice his own life for the good of his country; but their mentality was beset by exclusively military factors, they were biased towards the 'Right,' and they believed that the Popular Front and Communism had dried up the fountains of the perennial energy and moral greatness of the good and exemplary people of France. In reality, the working masses had been the victims of an able propaganda which sowed confusion and distrust in their soul. They had lost their bearings as a result of the Russo-German pact. Nevertheless, when the moment of sacrifice arrived, all of them, except the Communists, marched calm, sane and patriotic, to the battle front. This people, says Maritain, immediately learnt the difficult art of prevailing over misfortune, and their resurgence is daily more evident, their conscience is becoming clearer, and they are waking from the bewilderment and the nightmare which resulted from the brutal blow of the Nazi war machine upon the head of the French nation. In spite of this unanimity in sacrifice at the front,

the war had in fact all the characteristics of a 'civil war.' There was no lack of defeatists and wishful thinkers who pinned their hopes to a 'Latin block' or Mussolini's style of authoritarianism adapted to France. It is not easy to calculate the harm which weekly reviews of this nature did among the troops during the first nine months of gloomy idleness, of intrigues and representations, which had much of tragedy in them.. When I left Paris in the sorrowful procession of evacuation, among the two millions who were fleeing without knowing why nor where, I met a Frenchman, a former combatant but now poisoned by the 'anti-Moscow,' cry, who told me: 'We shall have Hitler, but we shall be free of Blum.' Others, with the best intentions, in their sorrow over 'to-day' sacrificed 'tomorrow.' The 1,800,000 prisoners of war are like a bad dream, and not a few, in remembering them, forget 'France.' This is very understandable.

Jacques Maritain recently gave a warning that the war is not being fought for a merely national end, it is not only for France; other more vital interests, of a universal nature, are at stake. The French people must not attempt 'to be free under the Nazi tyranny,' but to save themselves by 'freeing the world from the menace of Hitlerism.' To this end, he pleads for the permanence of the Anglo-French 'entente.' Its breakdown would be a catastrophe for our present civilisation. Perhaps France, in her days of hecatomb, had no man of sufficient vision to perceive the enormous advantages bound up in Mr. Churchill's proposal to M. Paul Reynaud, to unite the two Empires under the same authority. Some 'puritans' did not want to subject France to British hegemony, and believed, falsely, that they could be Frenchmen under the German jackboot. There were a few who raised the banner of 'Free France.' Maritain hopes much from General de Gaulle's movement, but he does not yet pronounce himself officially for it. However, we have noticed that since the publication of the book under review he has taken some steps towards the 'De Gaullists.' Now that the 'French National Committee' has been constituted, perhaps something more decisive may be expected. We must not forget that the sage professor of the Catholic Institute of Paris guards as an honourable title his neutrality in regard to party politics. He likes to think that rather than opposition between Vichy and De Gaulle, there is a kind of division of work in the painful path towards the liberation of the fatherland. What pains him is that Vichy has not proclaimed its fidelity to the principles for which France took up arms and is not behaving loyally towards its former ally. This problem is a question of simple 'honnêteté.'

It is not surprising that the book should arouse comment of various kinds. No one, however, will deny the lofty views, independence of thought, admiration for the People of France and penetrating vision with which he scrutinises the inside causes of the catastrophe and points out the road to be followed towards purification and resurrection. No one will question his faith in the moral values which rise above technical ability and material force, his community of affection and 'passion' with his compatriots under the hard trial of the German occupation—in a word, his detachment in judging the events which are tormenting humanity in this tragic hour of its history. Maritain has written a profound book, sober, calm, clear-sighted and constructive.

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REVIEWS

INTERNATIONAL ORDER

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND INTERNATIONAL ORDER. By A. C. F. Beales (Penguin Special; 6d.)

'Why doesn't the Pope condemn Hitler and Mussolini? Why is it that, though one and the same God is acknowledged by all the great European nations, the peoples of Europe are . . . praying to that God, each of them, for victory? Why is it that their Churches are encouraging them so to pray, each in the national cause . . . ? What claim has the man of religion to be listened to by the man in the street, if religion matters so little that it can be harnessed to lesser causes and used to multiply mass-slaughter?' It was a good thing to begin this book—the importance of its appearance as a *Penguin* need not be stressed—with these questions; for the lack of an adequate answer to them is convincing many that they were right to think religion a racket, and is even driving some Christians to the same conclusion. To argue to such a conclusion is irrational; but it is no less tragic for that. Mr. Beales supplies answers; and his argument is full and formidable. The only major fear that one has for the success of the book is that perhaps the simultaneous treatment of the two distinct, though obviously interdependent, themes—the 'neutrality,' let us say, of the Papacy, and the fundamental principles of international order—may dismay a type of reader who would have followed with interest the more immediate and concrete questions, but will think the more abstract theme 'beyond him,' and so may never reach the 'answers' at all. Whereas, if he had first been given the immediate statement of papal policy,