

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

THE CATHOLIC PRESS. The leading article in THE TABLET of June 12th was devoted to a consideration, mostly appreciative, of last month's *Extracts and Comments*. It admirably sums up what we conceive to be the position and function of the Catholic Press when it says: "The Catholic Press is unofficial and privately owned, but it receives steady and invaluable official support, and it has a double responsibility: to keep it as plain as it can that it alone is responsible for what it writes and says, to fulfil a representative function towards the whole Catholic body." THE TABLET itself under its present management (however much one may sometimes disagree with its viewpoint) invariably endeavours to show a right and proper sense of its own place and to keep the balance between its "private and unofficial" and its "representative" characters. Having asked to be given as good as we give, it would be ungraceful to complain at the stings in the tail of this leader. We are told, for instance, that we "use terms like 'pro-Fascist' theatrically to excite prejudice." It is very difficult for us to see that our use of this term was "theatrical," and if it excites prejudice we hardly think that the fault is ours. Nor do we understand why some who are so enamoured of the *thing* are so sensitive about the *word*; nor do they tell us what other word they would have us use to describe their fondness for authoritarian regimes and for the Italian regime in particular. (Is there not perhaps something prejudice-exciting in the bald designation of Mr. John Eppstein as "of the League of Nations Union," disregarding his claim to attention as a first-hand student of the League itself on one hand, and as a leading authority on Catholic Tradition regarding international relations on the other?) Our list of analogous Fascist characteristics is then described as "a long catalogue of denunciatory description." Perhaps; but is it unjust or untrue? A more understandable charge is that of "insularity" levelled at our assertion that "we think that the problems at our own doorstep are too pressing to allow us to spend much time in discussing the value of Fascism in preserving a Catholic cultural tradition which we have not got"; and we are rightly reminded that "the fortunes of our own country are, in fact, not separable

from the issues of the great conflicts now going on in varying forms over the mainland[sic] of Europe." We think our regular readers will know that we are by no means unconcerned for these things; but we would plead for a sense of proportion in the apportioning of space, and a recognition of the fact that whatever authoritarian solutions may be tried to meet the problems of supposedly Catholic countries, they can be of no use whatever to us, and may easily serve to distract our attention and energies. We notice with thankfulness that THE TABLET (May 15th), in reviewing Canon Rocafull's *Crusade or Class-War*, explicitly repudiates the view still fanatically maintained elsewhere that General Franco's campaign is a "crusade", and takes the more moderate and defensible view that "the movement has the support of the Church because it is fighting to re-establish a civilized order in Spain, but it is the character and intention of its enemies which, more than anything else, have determined the virtually unanimous alignment of the Church, both clergy and laity, on the Nationalist side."

THE STAMPEDE. It is yet too early to assess with any accuracy the repercussions on English Catholicism of the more fanatical forms of the Franco-ophile campaign in our press and pulpits, though such hearsay reports as we have been able to collect, especially from industrial districts, are anything but reassuring. It is undeniable, however, that many sectarian-minded non-Catholic publicists have made every endeavour to make the most of the situation. Such understanding as that displayed by Mr. Maurice Reckitt in the current number of CHRISTENDOM is therefore particularly welcome:

We have witnessed in the Roman Catholic communion, just at the moment when the social consciousness of that communion seemed to be reaching a climax of informed awareness, something like a stampede to the Right, under the impact of the Spanish tragedy. It is easy for Anglican zealots of the social revolution to be contemptuously superior about this tendency, cheerfully to confess the guilt of the Spanish Church and to make light of sufferings in which they are not called upon to share. Yet it should not require too great an effort of the imagination to conceive what would be the strain upon those of us who really treasure the Catholic heritage and the devotional opportunities of our own communion if we found ourselves in an England

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wherein most of our parish churches were burnt out, a large proportion of our priests murdered, and the practice of our religion rendered virtually impossible. No doubt it may be said that the Spanish Church brought these persecutions upon herself, and that the English Church, whatever her weaknesses, has no such criminal record and need anticipate no such dire punishment. Such propositions are, to say the least, disputable; but the point is that Roman Catholicism has been subjected to a strain which we have not been equally called upon to feel, and, though we may well believe that the reaction most characteristic of its adherents has not been such as to reveal the deepest Christian undertaking of what is involved in the tragedy, we may not reckon lightly the sufferings which that tragedy has imposed.

Another contribution to this number of CHRISTENDOM is the Abbe Kothen's description of *The Papal Doctrine of Catholic Action and the Jocist Movement*, and a new feature is *Reviews Reviewed* in which "Penguin" may be pardoned for recognizing a family likeness. Its observations on the new "Tradition" slogan of some Catholic contemporaries seem to us very much to the point.

A PARISH-PRIEST'S REGRETS. Protests against this stampede, few as they are, deserve to be recorded. On Press Sunday Father F. H. Drinkwater made the following incidental reference in the course of his sermon to his parishioners:

"As regards our weekly newspapers, in some ways they are better now than they ever have been, and I wish I could recommend them to you. I hope the time will soon come when I *can* recommend them to you, and I think you know pretty well why I cannot honestly recommend them at present. Since the Spanish war began, our newspapers, instead of using the opportunity to show forth the Catholic qualities of truthfulness and moderation and justice and charity, have frankly abandoned themselves to war-time propaganda, and are still doing so. You will understand the sorrow a priest feels in having to say such a thing and also his unwillingness to say any more about it from the pulpit. But if anybody cares to ask me personally I shall be quite willing to give them full reasons for what I have just said."

Enquirers were given a leaflet entitled *Some Reasons for regretting the attitude of our Catholic Newspapers in regard to the Spanish War*, of which this is the full text:

1. They have not only taken one side in the War, but have abandoned themselves to war-time propaganda. Nobody expects or wishes them to side with the Reds, but instead of showing

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a true Catholic example of moderation, justice and charity, they have fanned the flames of hatred and revenge. They have set partisanship before truth, constantly suppressing what is true and suggesting what is false, precisely in the manner of the less reputable worldly newspapers.

2. Instead of trying to keep Religion outside and above the war, they have done their best to involve Religion in it as deeply as possible, representing the war as a Crusade for God which every Catholic has to support.

3. Regarding atrocities in particular, instead of confining themselves to the true facts which were dreadful enough, they printed in the early months of the war many atrocity-stories of the more lurid and insufficiently-evidenced kind, such as usually are circulated in wars and revolutions to stir up hatred.

4. They are now regularly printing atrocity-stories, more or less authenticated, presumably belonging to the first days of the war, but without giving any indication of dates, so that uncritical readers think they are reading an item of current news.

5. They make a habit of insinuation against the ecclesiastical character of those Spanish priests and others who do not support the insurgents. Also insinuations of one kind and another against various English writers, for which they have had to make a number of public apologies.

6. In varying degrees they conceal from their readers the fact that in all countries where freedom of expression exists (France, England, Belgium, U.S.A., etc.), there are Catholic groups and periodicals which do not accept the view that the insurrection is to be supported as a Crusade for religion; or even necessarily supported at all.

7. They have for weeks sought to deny or whitewash the well-attested facts of the deliberate air-raid-massacre of civilians at Guernica, about which the only possible attitude for any civilized newspaper should be condemnation or regret.

INTEGRATION is the name of a new quarterly "Students' Catholic Review" published by a group of students at Cambridge (1/6 from Fisher House, Cambridge). Students' reviews are apt to come and go without arousing particular concern or interest. But INTEGRATION is nothing if not a challenge, and it has already succeeded in stimulating a quite unusual amount of acclamation on one hand and of antagonism on the other. It is certainly not a soothing review, and it neither asks nor will expect to be received with merely amiable politeness. It thus states its purpose:

As representing a Catholic student view, *Integration* wants to examine the forces that can produce a Catholic culture, and those

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that oppose it, and to consider the nature of a Catholic culture As students we are in contact with forces that would form us in a contrary direction. Not only that they negatively oppose Catholicism by ignoring it, but also that they positively advocate a barbarian paganism. We have, therefore, to find out for ourselves what Catholicism is, so that then maturity and experience can make it the foundation of our lives and thought, the only criterion by which sound Catholic judgments can be made In this light we are anxious to provide an opportunity for the discussion of all the problems with which Catholic students see themselves and the rest of the world faced.

Its general attitude to these problems, as manifested in the first number, reveals an acute realization of a fundamental antagonism between "the environment in which the Catholic finds himself to-day" and the living of a full Christian life, and the several contributions are unashamedly directed to stressing antitheses rather than to seeking points of contact, agreement or synthesis. The influence of the spirit of crisis-theology, of the American "Catholic Extremism" movement and of the trends in Continental Catholicism represented especially by Léon Bloy is unmistakable (it has affinities to Bloy not only in its detestation of bourgeois civilization and all its works, but also in its contempt for whatever might seem to it to savour of liberal compromise on the part of Catholics). Many may think its interpretation of Catholicism on one hand and of "the modern world" on the other to be unduly one-sided, and the contrasts between them to be unduly heightened, but few would presume to deny that the antinomies to which it draws attention do in fact exist and present a Catholic with any sense of his calling with fearful practical problems which it would be sheer treason to disregard or gloss over. This Cambridge group is evidently going to take good care that we do nothing of the sort and to see that we mind our p's and q's. Its prose is as austere and definite as its outlook: a rare and refreshing feature which gives INTEGRATION an additional justification for its existence. Future developments will be watched with interest. However much one may dissent from (or merely dislike) particular views it expresses, and even its general outlook on life, it is too patently sincere and intelligent to be dismissed with a laugh. Its permanent utility will perhaps depend on little so much as its ability to laugh at itself, and (what comes to the same thing) its preservation of a sense of

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proportion which will forbid its righteous anger from degenerating into an embittered and harsh exclusiveness.

CONTEMPORANEA. CATHOLIC WORLD (June): *The Real Problem in Spain*: Editor Gillis persists in facing the real difficulty. *The Last Christian Democracy* by M. de la Bedoyère—No; it's Ireland.

CLERGY REVIEW (June): *Latin and the Laity*: Fr. Francis Moncrieff, O.P., pleads for audible, understandable—and understood—liturgy, and offers some valuable hints.

COLOSSEUM (June): Gurian on Bolshevist and anti-Bolshevist totalitarianism. An extract (all too brief) of Daniel-Rops' superb *Salt of the Earth*.

GERECHTIGKEIT (Vienna) (May 27): *Mensch und Untermensch* by Gerald Vann, O.P.

HOMILETIC AND PASTORAL (May): *Man and the Machine* by Dr. C. Bruehl: corporate ownership or abolition of machine-production? *Catholic Adolescence in Relation to Sex* by Dr. Mary Cardwell: how thousands of Catholic adolescent souls are lost through misguided or non-existent sex-pedagogy in childhood, and how easily it could be avoided.

HOWARDIAN (Laxton, Stamford): Robert Speaight in the stalls at *Murder in the Cathedral*.

IRENIKON (March-April): *Ecclesia de Trinitate*: the unity of the Church as prototyped by, and as participation in, the unity of the Godhead: a fine example of constructive theology by M.-J. Congar, O.P.

MODERN SCHOOLMAN (May): *Property and Human Character* by James McShane: Property strictly producer's and not consumer's goods; shows the relationship between ownership and (1) responsibility, (2) creative work, (3) freedom to exercise the right to work.

SEPT (May 28): *Catholic Unity* Number: includes contributions by Maritain, Daniel-Rops, Roulet, Scherer, Congar and Chenu.

VIE INTELLECTUELLE (May 25): *Souvenirs concernant Lord Halifax* by J. Guitton; *Le problème anglo-catholique* by Henry St. John, O.P.

VIE SPIRITUELLE (June): *Une expérience belge*: how J.E.C. is preparing young Catholic students to face modern life; *La mission des ouvriers et la clergé*: how J.O.C. advises the clergy to help young industrial workers to do the same. Also an important study by P. Massonnat, O.P., on the inter-relation of faith and mystical experience.

PENGUIN.