

## BLACKFRIARS

### NOTES ON AN INDUSTRIAL TOUR<sup>1</sup>

The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilised but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time: so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the World from suicide.—*T. S. Eliot.*

IN the course of a tour of the Industrial North and Midlands extending over three months and meeting, in the main, working men, their wives and families, several facts have presented themselves that concern Catholics.

The first: that there is now at work in industry a generation more alive to the inequalities of the Capitalist system than there was ever before. This is undoubtedly the fruit of education. It is arguable how far this education (elementary and secondary) has been of real worth to the Nation as a whole, and it is quite certain that a great deal of the dissatisfaction with things as they are is *not*, as many magistrates and social workers would have us believe, entirely due to the influence of the Cinema. The Cinema certainly does harm in so far as it is largely amoral, but not in showing pictures of a standard of living that so many of the audience believe, quite sincerely, to be theirs by right; it is only exacerbating an already running sore.

The second: the great increase of Left propaganda and ideas. In the majority of factories visited there was either the group or an individual which had taken on itself the dissemination of ideas, sometimes literature, and always with extreme fervour. They are on the spot wherever an argument starts and, once having made their "contact," they do all they can to pin their man (or woman) down. Here it may be remarked in parenthesis that the lapsed Catholic is an easy winner as a Left Missionary.

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<sup>1</sup> These *Notes* are contributed by a "wage-earner" who has been enabled by a windfall to tour various industrial districts and, by obtaining temporary jobs, to see things from the inside. His suggestion of sociological missions, in which Catholic social teaching and the applications of the Christian life to present industrial conditions would be preached, is one which we earnestly recommend to the consideration of the clergy, both in industrial and in "white-collared" areas.—BLACKFRIARS.

## THE SOUL OF A CHILD

Wherever, on this tour, religion was discussed, the Catholic was appealed to as the ultimate court, and it was distressing to notice how rapidly that fine type of Nonconformist piety that had its root in the eighteenth century has degenerated among the younger men to a frothy humanism that is only faintly touched by Christianity as their forbears knew it. The older men are distressed, and are at a loss to remedy it. If it may be said without offence, Nonconformity is looking to the Group as a means of reclaiming its lapsed, and to some extent it succeeds—as did Toc H. for the War generation. But, taken as a whole, the working man does not respond readily to these movements, and for this reason it is easier to understand that, in so far as religion is generally considered by the workers at all, it is Catholicism that is cited, either as the saviour of Society or its ruin. This will be denied by some and dismissed by most as untrue. But both in the shop and the yards this was made abundantly clear. Catholicism is a "Thing" either to be loved or hated, and both love and hatred were real.

Among Protestants, generally, it was the personality that counted. There was never an appeal to what Wesleyanism taught or Anglicanism expounded: but what Rev. So-and-So said and, as often as not, a contrary opinion was quoted from the same communion.

It would do parsons good if they could realize how their warring voices were derided. It is tragic to read their complacent utterances on the growth of religion, based on the evidence that it is more discussed. It is not, perhaps, realized that it is often discussed only that it may be derided. The Catholic is wary of discussion and seldom speaks unless appealed to directly. It is because this wariness is known that the Left is attempting to win by guile what has seemed obdurate to direct method.

There is another side to this anti-God campaign in that it is spurring the indifferent to take sides. If a workman is a Catholic he is not allowed to forget it. Particularly the adolescent who has not long started work, who is flushed with the (illusory) freedom of man's estate. Among such are to be found the majority of the lapsed. And here let it be urged that the lapsed worker would find his way back more easily if it were convincingly shown him that his one hope of happiness lay in a Faith that knew his needs as a wage-

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earner before he was born or thought of; that, in its encyclicals, it has ever shown itself as his champion; that the reasons for its faith are clear and easily understood and, if properly applied, are more than a match for the anti-God Marxist.

Lest there be any misunderstanding it must be emphasized that it is useless to think that the Church's philosophy and social programme is likely to make much headway unless it is founded on and accompanied by the full spiritual life. The one must supplement the other.

Is it asking too much of the already heavily burdened parish-priests of the industrial areas for them to consider a week's mission based on the principles of quickening the spiritual life of the parish and at the same time *expounding the Church's social teaching*? It is obviously impossible to ask them to undertake the amount of study necessary for such a mission themselves, but there must be "religious" who would be only too glad of an opportunity to help in this most necessary work.

And let the meetings both in- and out-doors be open to all, Catholic and Marxist, but, for the Catholic, let him know that the Altar is his home. It is there, and there only, that he will find the strength to fight for all that he holds most dear, for without the initial strength to use them, all the weapons in the world are useless.

Finally, the author of these notes would beg the prayers of his readers for the Catholic workers and for those who do their utmost to destroy their Faith.

A WORKER.

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## THE SOUL OF A CHILD

THE presence or lack of certain philosophical or religious preoccupations at any period has a great deal to do with the prevailing attitude towards children and their education.

In primitive or spontaneous forms of human society the child is not a special subject of study. Children are naturally and roundly brought up in the large circle of the home, with its traditional wisdom and salutary rough and tumble.

In many of the Greek states, where political life was all-pervasive, it was inevitable that educational theories should