

the transition from easy friendliness among his flannelled companions to a cold rage at the Dauphin's arrogance. Perhaps more company commander than commander-in-chief, he nevertheless did look and behave very like a gallant soldier, and his love-scene with the delightful Katharine of Suzanne Fuller at the end was charmingly gauche. In flannels, service dress or combat smock, the English were true to type, and rather cleverly not least in full mess kit at the final triumphant ball. The French were slightly over-dressed from start to finish, and their horizon blue more 1914 than anything the English wore; I liked the Dauphin's high-strung racial pride, and the old king, in dressing-gown and slippers, was more moving than often in furred gown. About the use of cinematic back-drop and excessive gunfire I was not so sure, but there is no doubt that it all raced along so fast, with the aid of wonderful revolving gadgets and the truncated text, that one did have very much the impression of a breakneck adventure story with a splendid hero: which is, after all, perhaps what Shakespeare would have liked. Certainly, the feeling that these few, these happy few, were indeed a band of brothers was very marked, and the common soldiers had that indefinable, off-hand independence which is the hallmark of the British under discipline.

For myself, I enjoyed this rather rum production as a curiosity, but though the modern military equipment forced one to re-estimate character and situation, on the whole the play had been subjected to unnecessary manipulation. It would have been better value had it been more Shakespearean.

MARYVONNE BUTCHER

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FATHER HUDDLESTON AND SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Sir,

Four years ago under the above title I severely criticized Father Huddleston's book *Naught For Your Comfort* in *BLACKFRIARS*. In view of recent developments in South Africa, and particularly a series of statements by the Catholic Bishops, the Editor has agreed to print this letter. Another statement has recently been made by the Catholic Bishops which destroys the foundations of the criticisms I made at the time, and in a letter to *BLACKFRIARS* in 1957.

In the ten years after the war in which Father Huddleston worked in South Africa, and at the end of which he wrote the book that caused such a tumult both here and in England, well-wishers of the non-Europeans had a confusing problem. It was quite clear that, with Africa emerging so rapidly, the old plans of keeping the majority of non-Europeans in South Africa in subjection had to be changed quickly. Liberal opinion was pressing for the abolition of all discriminating laws restricting their rights politically

and economically. But the solid body of white voters, in effective control of the country, was apathetic or opposed—as it still is. The most intransigent and numerous part of the electorate, the Afrikaners, floated the idea of a solution of South Africa's racial problems by partition of the country, justifying by such a purpose the continuation of the discriminating laws until partition was achieved. So violent and immovable did this predominant group, with the country in their hands, seem to be, that others thought this might be the only road to peace. The Catholic Bishops did not condemn discussion of it.

Father Huddleston took a firm leap into the middle of all this, saying that integration was the only Christian principle, setting out to arouse world opinion about it. He claimed that this was the only possible conclusion of Catholic principles. This I attacked as being incorrect, and also as endangering the whole freedom of the Church for mission work in this country by attaching the word 'Catholic' to something too narrow, and moreover courting a head-on collision with the immovable Nationalist government where no absolute principle was at stake. But the Catholic Bishops have never agreed even to consider any possible good in the partition idea, and their statements have become progressively more uncompromising all on the one line: that integration, the progressive concession of all citizen rights to all in the present framework of the Union, is the only justice. The partition idea, from the point of view of the Church's authoritative lead, must be seen now as having been only a side-line of some individual Catholics, held by them (as by myself) as an alternative, and as possibly the lesser of two evils.

While *Naught For Your Comfort* could be criticized on details, on the main principle of the solution of South Africa's problem it coincided with the lead given by the Catholic Bishops. Its general rightness, its forcefulness, and the part it played in awakening opinion at a crucial time, are too well known to need comment. The Catholic Bishops have no doubt considered their principle in its fullest implications. It looks humanly impossible to have it applied in South Africa without violence, which could be terrible where emotions are so dark and strong. Their latest statement deals at length with the need of prayer, and South Africa needs the prayers of many if it is to get through its next ten years without disaster.

St Peter's Seminary,
Donnybrook, Natal

FINBAR SYNNOTT, O.P.