

way that enables us to place man and his needs and aspirations at the centre of our decision-making. We shall be able to start breaking down the division of labour which makes work a joy for the minority even when it is a curse for the large majority of us. We shall be in a position where it is no longer possible for a worker to describe his working experience in the following bitter terms:

'I work in a factory. For eight hours a day, five days a week, I'm the exception to the rule that life can't exist in a vacuum. Work to me is a void, and I begrudge every precious minute of my time it takes. When writing about work I become bitter, bloody-minded and self-pitying, and I find difficulty in being objective. I can't tell you very much about my job because I think it would be misleading to try to make something out of nothing; but as I write I am acutely aware of the effect that my working environment has upon my attitude towards work and leisure and life in general.'¹

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Note

It has only been possible to give a very brief description of the history and ideas of the Workers' Control movement in the compass of a short article. Probably the best single book to read to obtain a wider knowledge and understanding is: *Workers' Control*, edited by Ken Coates and Tony Topham, published by Panther Modern Society at 50p.

In addition the Institute for Workers' Control publishes a whole range of books and pamphlets; details are available from the IWC, 45 Gamble Street, Forest Road West, Nottingham, NG7 4ET.

The End of Her Latin?

by Edward Quinn

When Hans Küng attacked infallibility as it has been understood in Roman theology until recently, he was accused by no less a theologian than Karl Rahner of being in effect a liberal Protestant. But the majority of friendly critics were more inclined to ask what all the fuss was about. Nobody took this theory of infallibility seriously any longer. There were undoubtedly situations where Church and Pope had to take a stand and, if the promises of the Church's endurance were to mean anything, this must mean infallibility in

¹'Factory Time', by Dennis Johnson (Nottingham tobacco worker), in *Work*, Ed Ronald Fraser, Penguin Books, 1968.

teaching: the Holy Spirit would guarantee the Church's freedom from error on such occasions. But they were rare enough and a 'sensitive exegesis' could always take care of out-dated definitions.

Charles Davis, a little earlier, had chosen to leave the Church because he could not accept the current explanation of papal claims, the present 'structures' which prevent even the most sympathetic bishops from treating their subjects with charity or even justice. But Gregory Baum and others were at hand to show that this brilliant young theologian was still too much entangled in nineteenth-century apologetics.

The latest critic of Church structures, more particularly of the papacy, is Fritz Leist. Angry as he is and in deadly earnest as the above were in deadly earnest, he is not a young man. He will be sixty in 1973.

Although Leist is even more critical than Küng of the usual presentation of the doctrines of the primacy and infallibility, it would not be incorrect to formulate the main thesis of his book in this way: even if we accept these doctrines in the sense explained by the most 'conservative' theologians, we are still faced by papal claims for which there can be no warrant in the New Testament or even in Vatican I. In a word, why should submission to papal teaching and ruling authority involve kissing the Pope's toe?

It doesn't of course. But *The Prisoner of the Vatican*¹ provides abundant evidence that any Catholic who goes a little beyond Sunday Mass attendance in his involvement in Church life is very soon entangled in a system and under a domination which owes more to the outlook and institutions of pagan Rome than to the spirit of the New Testament. The evidence for all this is found mainly in the *Annuario Pontificio*, the very title of which betrays the official Roman attitude. We are far removed from amiable controversy about 'ministerial priesthood' and the contrast between the presbyter of the New Testament and the priest of the Old Law. The Bishop of Rome is *pontifex* and Supreme Pontiff at that, however much he may conform in his personal holiness to the image of *servus servorum Dei*. And the whole system, developed over centuries, but still largely arrested at the feudal stage,² is built around the figure of a priest-king or priest-emperor.

In the *Annuario* he is given the title of *Vicarius Dei* and his dominion is universal. It is a question of 'spiritual' dominion, of course, and even this is not imposed on those who owe no allegiance to the Roman Church. But the cradle Catholic and the convert who has accepted the Petrine claims clear-sightedly and in absolute freedom are alike expected to conform to the system, to venerate the Holy Father as sacred beyond all others in the world and as visibly embody-

¹Fritz Leist, *Der Gefangene des Vatikans*, Kösel-Verlag, Munich, 1971.

²Bishops, of course, no longer maintain a baronial splendour, but neither have they obtained a *Magna Carta*, establishing beyond all doubt their collegial rights. And the position of the overlord remains untouched by Vatican II.

ing the Fatherhood of God. The kindness and understanding of men shown in long and wearying audiences do not in any way render these audiences less of a display of power and splendour. More important, the direct rule over each individual exercised in the name of the Pope by men sometimes less kind and always committed to the upholding of a system, secures an obedience which goes far beyond obedience to the gospel faith.

The secretary of state, curial organizations, nuncios throughout the world—all are living a curiously hybrid existence: neither simply devoted to the spreading of the gospel nor acting as strictly political representatives of the tiny Vatican state. Bishops, already chosen largely for their proved loyalty to the Pope, are expected to carry out quickly directives from Rome and are under constant surveillance from the local nuncio. Even then these successors of the apostles—who were told, ‘Let your speech be “Yea, yea; nay, nay”’—have to bind themselves by a whole series of oaths and must still have constant recourse to Rome on a variety of questions. Concessions here and there are precisely *concessions*. Absolute power over each and every individual in the Church remains in the hands of the Pope and Curia, with Congregations watching over and controlling every aspect of the life of the Church. Leist maintains that the teaching of Vatican II on collegiality, with its constant emphasis on papal authority, especially in view of Pope Paul’s *Nota praevia*, determining the interpretation of the text (‘not suggestions, but orders to the council’), really means that ‘absolute power will be exercised in future in the name of collegiality’.

Leist is particularly worked up on the subject of indulgences. It was bad enough that discussion on birth control and priestly celibacy was forbidden at the council, but why should the bishops have been prevented from discussing the far less sensational topic of the theology of indulgences? Leist maintains that it was because these, too, are a part of the structure of the priestly-imperial power. ‘Papal power and indulgences go together. It was so in the time of the great abuses when indulgences brought enormous sums of money to Rome; it is so today in a more sublime form.’ Financial interests are no longer involved, but prestige remains important.

The theology behind indulgences is that of an avenging God who forgives sin, but not its penalty. The Pope very kindly relieves man of this burden, even across the frontiers of death. Oddly enough it is mainly the more devout Catholics who try to gain indulgences, running in and out of churches to make up the requisite number of visits, generously offering them for the less devout who escaped hell by the skin of their teeth and are now delivered up helplessly to the ‘temporal’ pain of purgatory. This is all part of a theology of penance which pays little heed to penance as a virtue, to conversion, to God’s infinite mercy, but regards the administration of the sacrament almost exclusively as an act of judgment, by someone equipped

with 'jurisdiction', to be followed up by penitential acts or a further juridical release from those acts.

All this is familiar enough and it is restated in such detail, with such insistence and in such a simple style as to render many a reader impatient. It is only a matter of time, perhaps, before most of these trappings of power disappear and the Roman Church will be transformed without the need of our protests or angry criticism.

This is what Friedrich Heer maintains in a lively article in *Neues Hochland* of March/April 1972,¹ briefly mentioning Leist's book as the work of 'a distressed German Catholic'. His title runs: 'At the end of her Latin—the Roman Church's chances'. He thinks that this Roman Church—not the Catholic Church as such nor even the Church of the West, but the Roman Church as power-structure, as priestly kingdom or empire—will disappear by the year 2000: in fact, by her own efforts.

By the encouragement of ecumenism and the acceptance of a vernacular liturgy, the council has made it clear that the Roman Church 'has come to the end of her Latin and thus to the end of her claim to be the sole legitimate spokesman, advocate and representative of Jesus and his promises on earth'. She cannot invite Protestants to examine with Catholics the fundamental truths of faith and simultaneously persecute theologians for seeking new formulations of her own beliefs. The new liturgy is not merely a new translation nor does it mean merely greater variety in worship: it represents a new attitude of mind, the end of the Roman Mass as a sacred juridical action, subject to norms of validity, *adscriptam, ratam, rationabilem, acceptabilemque*, to be accomplished by the priest with dignity but impersonally.² It means that communications from Rome in this style, once the order of the day, will simply make little impact and soon cease to be understood at all.

Can we simply wait for these things to happen, smiling at the remaining oddities of ecclesiastical custom and behaviour? No. For one thing, those of us who are too old to want to be part of a married priesthood, theologians living in ivory towers, devout Catholics who treasure the trimmings as well as the essentials of the Roman faith, cannot be indifferent to the sufferings of individuals at the hands of the Holy Father's henchmen, the members of the imperial retinue, still concerned to the last to preserve the system and to reject in practice what they have promoted in principle. Secondly, for all our criticism, we love this Church. We do not want her to survive into Christianity's third millennium merely as a

¹Also from Kösel Verlag.

²Racing through Mass was certainly an abuse at that time, but it was an abuse which arose more easily when the congregation was disregarded and the priest concentrated simply on the correctness of word and gesture. Heer gives the example of a group of Austrian monks who had a wager about who could say Mass with the greatest speed: the winner took fourteen minutes. And I remember a very devout and conscientious priest in this country who felt that we ought not to introduce English in the liturgy, 'because it would sound terrible when we gabble it'.

Latin sect, but as that Church of Rome which, among all the Churches, will clearly and beyond all possible doubt 'hold the chief place in love'¹.

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After completing the above article

A singularly cynical note on papal power appeared in *Documentation Catholique* 6th-20th August, 1972, under the heading: 'What the Pope has done, the Pope can undo'. It accuses those who oppose the new *Ordo Missae* of upsetting simple people by saying that Pius V intended the missal of 1570 to be unchangeable for all time and that therefore recent changes are null and void. Some of us think that the recent changes are valid simply because Pius V was mistaken or at least given to hyperbole which should not have been taken seriously at the time. But the note does not say anything about this. It quotes the peremptory phrases of the Bull of 1568, which any ordinary mind would take to mean a prohibition of any infringement or contradiction of what had been ordered under pain of incurring 'the wrath of almighty God and the blessed apostles Peter and Paul', and explains them as merely curial style. It points out that modifications were introduced in 1602 and 1631 and imposed with the same kind of inflated language. Again, Pius X reformed the psalter and imposed the reform in 1911 in almost the same terms as his predecessor in 1568, threatening once again the divine wrath supported by bad-tempered apostles disturbed in their enjoyment of the beatific vision. Finally Paul VI putting into effect the liturgical changes of Vatican II uses rather less heated expressions, but insists that these statutes hold for the future, notwithstanding any past decrees to the contrary.

A second example is the dissolution of the Jesuits in 1773 which was to be 'perpetually valid, firm and effective . . . and to be inviolably observed by everyone'. In 1814 the Jesuits were restored.

The 'simple faithful' will be inclined to ask why this happy inconsistency was expressly excluded when it came to dealing with the question of birth control. The answer, of course, is also simple. Reforming the liturgy and suppressing Jesuits are matters of discipline, while statements on birth control are doctrinal utterances. But will some future Pope in the interests of ecumenism manage to wriggle out of the condemnation of Anglican Orders which very eminent theologians taught us to regard as absolutely final and irrevocable? They were not at all *gens simples*, only naive enough to suppose that 'final' meant the last word on the subject and 'irrevocable' not to be revoked.

Will Rome never admit mistakes, even in matters which no one takes to be infallible?

NEXT MONTH IN NEW BLACKFRIARS

E. L. MASCALL, on Egner on the Eucharistic Presence

HERBERT McCABE, O.P., on Transubstantiation: a reply to G. Egner

BRIAN WICKER on Analogy and Metaphor

with RICHARD MURPHY on Violence and SIMON TUGWELL, O.P., on Cistercian spirituality

¹Ignatius, *Epistle to the Romans*, prologue: translation by J. H. Srawley, S.P.C.K., 1920. Whatever the meaning attached by Ignatius to *προκαθήμενη τῆς ἀγάπης*, Duchesne's interpretation seems to express the substance of our hope for the future: 'As the bishop in his diocese presides over its works of charity, so does the Roman Church preside over those same works throughout Christendom' (*The Churches separated from Rome*, London, 1907, p. 86).