

be held, so that they might learn about the papal social teaching, and about social work as done by Catholics. Again, some members of the Guild of Catholic Professional Social Workers of Great Britain last year gave papers at a seminar on 'supervision' held in Italy, and another member is the president of the Social Workers' Section of the Union.

A less specialized body holding consultative status is the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (U.M.O.F.) grouping thirty-six million women all over the world, including the Catholic Women's League and the Union of Catholic Mothers, and this country has a representative on the executive board. From these few illustrations, and many more could be given, it will be seen that Catholics in this country have every opportunity to be internationally minded, and to join in the world apostolate on the lines of the Pope's directives.

Men seem to have received little attention in this article, but their international bodies are well known; perhaps one might touch on a work in which they are joining in this country, that of the International Catholic Girls' Society, a constituent body of U.M.O.F., working here under the auspices of the National Board of Catholic Women, in order to help the crowds of foreign girls coming over here to work. The Knights of St Columba are on the committee, in order to advise on business matters relating to the hostel near Victoria Station, which was recently blessed by Cardinal Godfrey. Through this work, this country is also associated with the Catholic Commission for migration and emigration, with its headquarters in Geneva, also doing a work inspired by the Holy See.

It may be added that those who belong to no special professional or cultural association in this country are, as Catholics, committed to an international outlook by virtue of their Catholicism. Day by day the liturgy encourages us to pray for 'all nations', and certainly at the offertory of the Mass, when we offer the chalice with the priest '*pro nostra et totius mundi salute*'.

EVELYN WHITE

ITALIAN OPINION

Left or Right?

OFFICIAL reports on the Italian economic situation are more cheerful than at any time since the war. Industrial production is up by 6 per cent compared with 1958, and the average national income is rising. Italy as a whole, with its intelligent hard-working population, is becoming increasingly industrialized. This development, however, brings special problems and difficulties, and of these *The Economist* has recently made a useful analysis which was reprinted by the Catholic 'leftish' fortnightly *Adesso* (Milan) in its issue of June 15. Though enormous sums have been invested to develop the South, the results, for reasons which need not detain us here, are so far

unsatisfactory; and while the industrial North flourishes and the backward South receives special favours from the government, central Italy is in a bad way. In Tuscany, Umbria and the Marches the peasants are leaving the land and such industry as there is seems—at least in the last two provinces—to be stationary or declining. And, speaking generally, the two chief defects in the Italian economy still await their remedy: high unemployment and shocking inequalities of wealth and poverty. As the *Civiltà Cattolica* (June 4) remarked: 'an economy cannot be called healthy if increased production is not followed by a juster distribution of the national income, and if there is not work for everybody'. The opinion is gaining ground that in order to solve these urgent problems more drastic structural reforms are required than the Christian Democrat governments of the past twelve years have dared or cared to undertake. There is much unrest among the educated young and a leaning towards more extreme solutions and policies, whether on the Left or the Right. Within the Christian Democrat party itself (the D.C.) the leftward trend is strongly represented, notably by the gifted young men who run *Politica*, a fortnightly published at Florence but widely read by politically progressive Catholics all over the North and Centre. This group, for example, agrees with the Communists (the P.C.I.), with the Socialists led by Nenni (P.S.I.) and by Saragat (P.S.D.I.) and with the 'radical' (and incidentally decidedly anti-clerical) papers *Il Mondo* and *Espresso* in demanding the nationalization of the electrical industry.

So we come to the much discussed *apertura a sinistra* ('opening to the Left') which has been the central issue in Italian politics, and of course for the D.C. in particular, since the fall of Fanfani's left-centre government early in 1959. Amintore Fanfani, the former party secretary, is the acknowledged leader of the left wing of the D.C. (though his public statements are marked by a studied moderation); and if within the next few years a left-centre government manages to establish itself—which would necessarily require the support, though not the active collaboration, of the Nenni socialists—Fanfani will presumably be at the head of it. Meanwhile, however, any suggestion of collaboration with the P.S.I. is denounced by a minority in the D.C. itself (the same which brought down Fanfani in 1959 and prevented his forming a government, though encouraged to do so by Moro, the present party secretary, again in April this year), by powerful vested interests, by the great bourgeois newspapers, and by the political wing of Catholic Action, the *Comitati civici*, under Professor Gedda.

This is not the place for a strictly political analysis of the crisis which began with Segni's resignation in February and led to the weak administration of Tambroni (the first D.C. government to owe its existence to the votes of the Neo-Fascists), but it is very relevant to observe that Christian Democracy in Italy is going through the gravest crisis in its history since Mussolini suppressed Don Sturzo's *Partito Popolare* in 1925. What may be called the De Gasperi phase is decidedly over. This phase was characterized by the attempt (until recently a necessary attempt) to identify Italian democracy with a 'centrist' coalition of the D.C. and the non-Catholic anti-Communist parties, with to the Left the great block of the Communists and

the Nenni Socialists firmly united in opposition. The situation is quite different now. It has become increasingly clear during the past two years that there is not enough strength at the centre effectively to uphold the Republic without a reinforcement of popular support from the masses on the Left, which in practice means without detaching the P.S.I. from the Communists and so making possible some degree of collaboration between the D.C. and the Socialists. But in the Italian context—given the fear of Communism, the strong capitalist vested interests, and above all the power of the Church and her traditional reluctance (in Italy) to allow the layman full autonomy in the political sphere—such a shift to the Left is an extremely difficult undertaking. A sign of this, of course, was the recent editorial in the *Osservatore Romano* peremptorily calling on the laity to conform their political decisions to the wishes of the Hierarchy, so far as collaboration with non-Catholic parties is concerned; a declaration which has not been well received outside Italy—see, e.g., the *Tablet* (June 4), the Dutch Jesuit weekly *De Linie* (May 28), the French Dominican *Signes du Temps* for July, and the American Catholic weeklies *Commonweal* and *America*. And, to be sure, that editorial was open to serious criticism. But it seems to me that its non-Italian critics are missing the mark who suggest, as many of them do, that such a way of talking to the laity may be all very well in Italy—given the Communist menace, etc.—but will not do elsewhere. This, I venture to think, implies a misjudgment of the actual Italian situation and of the historical function of Christian democracy in Italy, as this was defined, first by Sturzo and then by that great Catholic democrat De Gasperi. I think it quite untrue to suggest—though I cannot argue the point in detail here—that the D.C. is any less called upon, and any less competent, to take full responsibility for its decisions in the political sphere than is any other group of Catholic laymen in any other country. Another misjudgment, I think, is implicit in P. Serrand's suggestion, in the July *Signes du Temps*, page 22, that in Italy the *Osservatore Romano's* editorial '*a provoqué de la part de certains laïcs une critique sévère, comme la lettre collective de l'épiscopat italien sur le laïcisme*'.

For it seems at least misleading to bracket the two documents in this way. Not only has this joint Letter of the Italian Hierarchy (dated March 25) a greater authority than that unsigned editorial, but, where it touches on the relations between the clergy and the laity, it breathes a far more liberal spirit, a very much finer sense of the due limits of clerical interference in temporal affairs and of the autonomy and responsibility, in his proper sphere, of the layman. It must be borne in mind that the Letter is addressed to the *clergy*, and that the *laïcisme* (perhaps best rendered 'worldliness') which it denounces is viewed primarily as a temptation for the clergy. Hence the solemn warning to the clergy 'not to interfere in spheres where we have no right to tell people what to do (*fornire direttive*) because in such spheres each man is free to judge and choose for himself'. And the Letter goes on to warn the clergy of the danger of arousing opposition by 'excessive authoritarianism, by distrust of the laity, by narrowness and bigotry . . . and by a lack of discretion on those occasions when it is our duty to intervene in the sphere of politics'. I do not know what '*laïcs*' P. Serrand had in mind when he spoke of opposi-

tion to this Letter, but *Politica* at least—which stands politically as far to the Left as any Catholic journal I know—welcomed it enthusiastically, on May 1, in a full length article by Mario Gozzini.¹

It remains true, of course, that the Catholic political Left is frequently under fire from the Right, and that the shooters are sometimes priests. Thus the *Palestra del Clero* (from Rovigo in the Veneto) recently attacked, violently, both *Politica* and *Adesso*; the charges being, as usual, crypto-Communism and insubordination. And it is much easier for the Left to rebut the first charge than the second. In the heat of the fray—and Italian journalism these days tends to be pretty heated—tempers are sometimes lost and disrespectful things are said. In this respect *Adesso* is more open to criticism than other papers of much the same outlook—*Politica* or the brave little Genoese *Il Gallo*, or the less political *Il Focolare* of Florence. But on the whole one is impressed by the general seriousness and intelligence of political and social discussion in the Italian Catholic journals. There is some very honest self-criticism; for example, two admirable articles in the April and May numbers respectively of *Vita e Pensiero*, the monthly edited by graduates of the Catholic University of Milan: 'Considerazioni sulle correnti nella D.C.' by L. Burzio (April) and 'Cattolici di sinistra, cattolici di destra' by R. Orfei (May). The latter piece is particularly valuable and would be worth having in English. It is a concise and careful examination of each of the two main groupings into which Catholics—and not in Italy only—tend to divide with regard to action in the social and political spheres. The Catholic Left, preoccupied with the Marxist charge against Christianity that it takes one 'out of this world', is concerned to stress the 'temporal responsibility' involved in being a Christian, and to take as literally as possible the words of Pius XII that the world we live in 'must be remade from its foundations'. Its temptation is so to insist on this as to come to value the Faith for its temporal effects alone: 'the danger lies not in moving towards the Left but . . . in moving under the influence of the non-Catholic Left, and in allowing religious value to this movement alone, as if it were the only possible attitude for a Christian'. As for the Catholic 'Rightist', his obsession is unity: as there is one Christ, one Church, one Christian ethic, so there can be but one 'social formula' for Catholics; 'he is convinced that the Church's social teaching is also a specific political programme'. This error, from one point of view, is an *underrating* of the Christian social ideal by identifying it with a given temporal order; it is a failure to see that the ideal can never be perfectly realized in this world, and that therefore the religious man must always be, to some extent, a critic and a rebel. Thus both errors, the Leftist and the Rightist, meet in a common basic 'temporalism'; and the remedy for each is the same, a radical reversion of values by which religion is put first and politics second. Here Orfei's analysis rejoins the Letter of the Bishops, and recalls Cardinal Ottaviani's warning to the D.C. a year ago

¹ Had I the space I should like to develop what I have ventured to say in criticism of P. Serrand's allusion to the Letter of the Italian bishops, with regard to the comment on this document that appeared in the June number of *Études*, pp. 389-91. This comment seems to ignore those qualities in the Letter which I have stressed.

(which gave some offence at the time): *non servirsi della Chiesa ma servirla*.

It is fair to add, however, that the Leftish journals mentioned above, though always stressing the layman's responsibilities in the temporal sphere, show awareness of the danger of overrating time at the cost of eternity. This, for example, is the gist of M. Gozzini's criticism in *Politica* (May 1) of the French review *Esprit* whose March number on 'Coexistence and Peace' Gozzini denounces as utterly irreligious. The argument about *Esprit* had in fact begun in the D.C.'s official organ *Il Popolo* (Rome) on April 6; continued through two numbers of *Politica* (May 1 and 15), it was summed up in a very balanced way by D. Zolo in No. 25 (May) of the Florentine *Testimonianze*, one of the best small reviews, by the way, of religious interest to be found in Italy or indeed anywhere. Meanwhile in the *Civiltà Cattolica* for May 21, Padre Messinco, reviewing a new Italian study of Emmanuel Mounier, had given a qualified approval to the 'personalism' of the founder of *Esprit*; a fact worth noting in view of this distinguished Jesuit's reputation as a pillar of the Right.

Turning from politics to other topics of Catholic interest, one notes two rather disquieting statistical articles. In the *Civiltà Cattolica* for June 4 Padre Caprile gives a detailed account of Freemasonry in contemporary Italy. There seems to be no doubt that Italian Freemasonry is making considerable progress; new Lodges are being founded, new members enrolled. At the same time its traditional anti-Catholicism has been vigorously reaffirmed, for example at the annual meeting of the Gran Loggia Nazionale at Genoa in 1957: '[our] ideal is to laicize society, so that this in its turn may laicize the State'. Padre Caprile's article will act, no doubt, as something of a shock; it may of course also be used, or abused, by sympathizers with Fascism in view of Mussolini's suppression of *la setta*.

The other disquieting article I refer to is a note in that excellent little paper *Il Focolare* (April 17) pointing out the alarming decline in numbers—relative to the total population—of the Italian clergy over the past hundred years. This very serious matter is, of course, a major preoccupation of the present Holy Father. It is obviously connected with the general question of education, a matter that is much to the fore in Italy at present. The government has announced a ten-year plan for the reform of the schools, but nothing has yet been done to implement it, nor will anything be done until the country has a stronger government than the present one. In any case the Church does not like this ten-year plan, since it gives no assurance of State aid to the non-State schools. There would, of course, be an outcry if it did, for the republican Constitution explicitly declares that while private schools may be freely set up they must not be a charge on the State. Or is it that they *need* not be? The clause (art. 33, comma 3) is in fact not perfectly clear,² and those Catholics who are urging the cause of the 'free' schools can reasonably press for a clarification or revision of the Constitution in this matter. And of course far deeper issues than points of law are involved.

² Though for the laicist *Il Ponte* (Florence) it is: an editorial in the January number states bluntly that State-aid for 'confessional schools' is 'forbidden' by the Constitution.

Those who wish to acquaint themselves with the case for 'free' schools—as Italian Catholics, who are also loyal citizens of the Republic, see this—can be recommended to read the June number of *Vita e Pensiero*, which is entirely devoted to the question. One at least of the articles, 'Valore educativo della scuola libera', by L. Giussani, is of a quality that transcends the particular circumstances of the Italian debate.

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HEARD AND SEEN

Nicolas Poussin

IT is one of the happy accidents of travel to be able to recognize an echo, however unlikely or late. So it was that a few days after seeing the incomparable Poussin exhibition, which has during this summer given such appropriate glory to four vast galleries of the Louvre, a painting, by the nineteenth-century Provençal painter Granet, of the death of Poussin gave a sharpened pleasure to a visit to the collection in the Musée at Aix. Perhaps Poussin would not altogether have approved of this muddy picture, whose good intentions—its ordered grouping, its inherent gravity—are nevertheless plain to see. Poussin is shown dying with dignity, and the too easily assumed consolations of religion are recalled with deliberation. The great painter of *The Seven Sacraments* had always insisted on the primacy of order, in painting and in life alike; and in death, too, Granet's picture reminds us, as though to give the final point to an achievement that was all lucidity and light.

The Louvre exhibition, drawing on collections as distant as the Hermitage in Leningrad or the Melbourne National Gallery, provides the full evidence for the monumental work of a painter who has too often been labelled and then left to the art historians. The rehabilitation of Poussin is in fact principally due to English scholars, as the splendid catalogue shows, since it is almost exclusively the work of Sir Anthony Blunt and Mr Charles Sterling. Confronted by the sheer extent of the exhibition (and recognizing many familiar pictures from English collections which have found a true setting in these noble salons), one is first of all aware of the harmony of this great artist's work, for whom the discipline of painting is, as he said, ordained to delight. The long years he spent in Rome gave him more than a pictorial familiarity with the classical nobility of landscape and columned terraces, wonderfully though they enrich his pictures—in a *Bacchus and Apollo* no less than in the Ashmolean Museum's *Moses in the Waters*. The primal Roman virtues of *gravitas*, *simplicitas*, *pietas* seem in him to have flowered anew, and the coldness some complain of is not the absence of passion but its sublimation. Order, a sustained intelligence and a marvellous sense of design; if these are the qualities of classicism, then Poussin is indeed the classical painter *par excellence*. But so by this standard is Cézanne, for, as he himself