

of comparatively new assumptions. In one discussion on marrying on a grant, a student observed that if undergraduates were forbidden to marry while still supported by the taxpayer, they would only live together. The implication appeared to be that the onus was on the State. Whilst this is clearly a minority opinion, the fact that such a statement can be seriously made is a symptom not to be neglected.

In the end, the groan of the taxpayer may be heard again. Assuming that the university population reaches 135,000 within the next decade, it is estimated that the cost to the public would rise from £229 millions to £338 millions if the means test were abolished. By then, Norwich and Brighton may have been succeeded by yet another university, beginning as a circle of wattle huts in Avalon.

M. A. WILEMAN

FRENCH OPINION

THE Algerian war has left so deep a wound in French life that it is rarely realized in this country that the end of the war would be by no means the end of the story. The problems of conscience created by a revolutionary war are scarcely going to be resolved by a particular armistice, and a recent issue of *Informations Catholiques Internationales* provided concrete evidence of the effect of the war on many of the young Frenchmen who have served in it. An enquiry conducted by priests of the Mission de France, themselves concerned with the pastoral care of soldiers serving in Algeria, underlined the appeal of the Cardinals and Archbishops of France last October for a recognition of the absolute rights of conscience in refusing to co-operate in positive evil. And the 'reflections' of a young Catholic, on his return to France after two years in Algeria, under the title 'A Clear Teaching to Deaf Ears', provides impressive evidence of how little effect even official ecclesiastical condemnation of torture and other excesses of repression can have when 'many no longer reason in terms of "Catholics" but in terms of "Catholics of the Left" or "Catholics of the Right", as though it were a question of two Churches anathematizing each other, and who only select from the Church's teaching what happens to coincide with their own principles'. It is significant that a recent number of Jacques Soustelle's *Vérités sur l'Algérie* publishes a letter from an officer serving in Algeria which attributes the Declaration of the French Bishops to the propaganda of 'progressive' priests, and that the outcome will be an anti-clericalism worse than any France has ever known.

Esprit would probably be regarded by French 'integrists' as a principal source of the 'progressivist' heresy. Its emphasis nowadays is perhaps more sharply political than when it was founded by Emmanuel Mounier in 1932 to reflect 'personalism and the struggle against established disorder'. The

November issue (of well over three hundred pages) was devoted to 'Sexuality', and a formidable series of articles by doctors, moralists, sociologists, writers and 'ordinary people' deals with the subject (aided by elaborate questionnaires) under such titles as the 'dimensions', 'expression', 'ethics' and 'practice' of sexuality. It is a valuable example of the *documentation* at which the French excel, and we shall return to some of its contents later this year when BLACKFRIARS will be considering the problems of food resources and over-population.

The December issue of *Esprit* has an interesting summary of attempts at a 'dialogue' between Christians and Marxists in France during 1960. It is an old and inconclusive story, and a measure of Marxist sympathy for the philosophies of Teilhard de Chardin and Gabriel Marcel scarcely seems a serious advance from the prepared positions of Communist orthodoxy. As Jacques Natanson remarks, 'There can be no dialogue between *the marxist* philosophers and *the Catholic* philosophers. First of all because, thank goodness, there is no *one* school or *one* current which is *the Catholic* philosophy or *the Catholic* thought. Pluralism is here the rule, and it is first of all among themselves that Catholic thinkers must do the dialoguing. Nor does the fact that there is *one marxist* school make a dialogue any easier. For a school can be nothing other than dogmatic, especially when it is the intellectual expression of a party as disciplined as the Communists. And dogmatism can't, by definition, allow itself to be questioned.'

La Table Ronde (December) naturally gives pride of place to France's Nobel prizewinner, Saint-John Perse, and Christian Murciaux recalls the mystery of a poet who is so hard to classify. He sees his war-time experience as an analogy of his whole achievement. 'A traveller with no luggage, he has broken his links with all the past. The beings that he evokes in his poems are phantoms. There remains of his unpublished work, after the visit of the Germans to his house in Paris, nothing but a heap of ashes. In this extremity of being stripped of all, reduced to himself, Saint-John Perse bears witness to an extraordinary equanimity of soul. He welcomes disaster, as he had welcomed the favour of men, with sovereign detachment. The poet is no longer his country's ambassador but rather the representative of a mysterious country of which he is both the sovereign and the legislator.' And so it is that the exile *par excellence* writes his *Exil* and recovers his true country, 'an imaginary island . . . where the words of a poet alone are real'.

L'Express (December 15) printed the text of Saint-John Perse's address on being officially given the Nobel award at Stockholm, 'The Mission of a Poet'. It ends: 'It is for the undivided poet to bear witness among us to man's double vocation. It is for him to raise a mirror before the spirit of man, faithful to his spiritual fate. He must evoke even in this world a human condition worthier of man as he was in the beginning. . . . Confronted with nuclear power, can the poet's lamp of clay be enough for his purpose? Yes, if it turns man's memory to clay. It is enough for the poet to be the bad conscience of his time.'

Etudes (December) has a valuable survey of religious television programmes in France by Robert Rouquette. He recalls that in Germany a

recent controversy on televising the Mass drew forth some strong words by Karl Rahner, who in particular questioned the use of the Mass for purposes of proselytism. He demanded a certain 'metaphysical modesty' in making the Mass available to all, and recalled, for instance, the ridicule with which such a ceremony as the creation of new cardinals was received by unbelievers. In France the Mass is televised every Sunday, and the article has a searching analysis (of profit to producers in this country as well) of the difficulties involved, and of the danger of superficiality and the 'ersatz' presentation of a rite which essentially demands the sort of participation which television cannot create.

HEARD AND SEEN

The Ambassador's Choice

THE John Hay Whitney Collection of paintings in the possession of the outgoing American ambassador to London has for the last six weeks drawn crowds to the Tate Gallery, attracted perhaps by the legendary worth of a private collection such as could scarcely exist nowadays in England. And it must be admitted that these seventy pictures, mostly acquired in the ten years that followed the end of the war in 1945, have the patina of eminent acceptability. Apart from a stray Blake, two Zoffanys and a group of American paintings, they reflect the definitive arrival of the impressionists and post-impressionists as the artists most appropriate for embassy walls.

But Mr Whitney's choice is marvellously sound. As Sir John Rothensteiny remarks in his introduction to the catalogue (which is itself worthy of so magnificent an exhibition), the criterion has not been a mere 'programme', but rather the inherent quality of the actual painting. Thus Braque is, in the gallery sense, not at all well represented, but the two land- (or rather land-and-sea-) scapes of his *fauve* period in the collection are wonderful in their own right; one can at once see why they were bought, and how irrelevant it would be to insist that they should be 'matched' by his later work. Picasso, indeed, is represented by a splendid cubist *Homme Assis* as well as by a tender portrait of 1905, but once more it is the autonomous interest of the picture that matters. We feel that the whole collection, however 'safe' it may seem, is the vindication of the individual picture's right to please.

And of the pleasure there is no doubt with such things as a superb Derain painting of Charing Cross Bridge, which, placed at the far end of the last gallery, gives a dominating note of brilliant colour to the whole collec-