

Pisa (1409) and Constance (1414)—convened primarily to end the schism, where the 'schismatical' parties met to act in common accord to a common end, the general good of the Church. That method was effective in the Latin Church. It seemed, therefore, to be the right way to reach peace with the Greek Church. Gerson, writing after the Council of Pisa which he mistakenly thought had already solved the Latin schism, addressed these words to the King of France: 'Men of good will ought to work valiantly that the council which has been decreed should be held within the three years. And since the Greeks can and wish to join in, there is (so it would appear) no more apt arrangement for the peace of which we speak than the said council should be, nor could this business be accomplished in any better way, just as the last council was necessary for the peace of the Latins.' The Council of Florence was the fulfilment of Gerson's hope. Though some of Gerson's views were more radical than those of several of his contemporaries, he was not an isolated thinker. The history of the time had imposed a reassessment of values and every one came under its influence to some degree. The Council of Basel exaggerated the new ideas to the limit. The Council of Florence reduced them to a juster proportion, subordinating them to the established principles of a sound theology.

Note: In next month's issue of BLACKFRIARS an article will appear on 'The Background of the Council of Trent', by H. O. Evennett, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and in the following month Edmund Hill, O.P., will contribute an article on 'The Vatican Decree'.

MORALS AND POLITICS

LORD PAKENHAM

THERE is generally understood to be some special link between morals and the career of the politician. Every professional man, the business executive, the professor, the actor, the doctor and the barrister (to confine ourselves to laymen) encounters plenty of moral problems in the course of his career and in the case of the last two categories—lawyers and doctors—a number of well-known issues are recognized under the headings of forensic and medical ethics. But there is generally thought to be more to it than this in the case of politicians. They not only encounter personal

problems in politics, but they assume a duty, consciously or unconsciously, of applying political principles which are often presented as an extension of the principles of ethics.

The three distinguished men whose lives are wholly or partly portrayed in three recent books¹ were outstanding national figures in the 1930's and it is tempting to compare them in their respective attitudes to the tremendous challenges of that period. There is bound to be something artificial in doing so, for whereas the first volume of Mr Bevin's life and the full life of Lord Lothian come to an end in 1940, *Full Circle* is the second volume of Sir Anthony Eden's Memoirs (published first) and covers only the period from 1951 to 1957. And yet it is perhaps possible to abstract from all else, including Mr Bevin's truly heroic creation of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and study one question only which faced Lord Lothian in the thirties, Mr Bevin, in fact, in the thirties and forties, and Sir Anthony Eden in the thirties, forties and fifties. It is a question which faces us still—the question of the moral reply in terms of political action to what one judges to be organized evil.

In the thirties and first half of the forties it was the Nazi menace. From then on it was the Communist menace, which was still with Sir Anthony after Mr Bevin had worked himself into his grave. But the tragic quality of Sir Anthony Eden's volume is supplied by his attempt to cope with yet another menace—that of Colonel Nasser—and to do so according to the principles which he had acquired rightly or wrongly from his long experience of coping with the larger dictators. The third man in his central story was not an enemy, but in his eyes a most inadequate ally—Mr Foster Dulles. He also is generally regarded as a man of high principles, but they were not of a kind which made much sense to Sir Anthony Eden in practice.

'The question', it was said in a famous book, 'is *qua mente*, and all these men had noble ideals.' Allowing for human frailty, that can certainly be said of our three statesmen. 'The Kerrs', says Lord Lothian's biographer, 'have two family mottoes. The one, *Sero sed Serio*, "Late but in earnest", is most apposite to the few months of intense effort in Washington which at last revealed Philip's true quality and crowned his career. The other, "Forward in the name of God", was the inspiration of his life.' It would be ungenerous not to accept that verdict, which if one compares Lord Lothian

¹ *Life and Times of Ernest Bevin*. Volume One, 1881-1940. By Alan Bullock. (Heinemann, 50s.)

Lord Lothian. By J. R. M. Butler. (Macmillan, 42s.)

The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden. (Cassell, 35s.)

with ninety-nine politicians out of a hundred is pre-eminently true. At the same time Catholics will scrutinize with special care and acclaim with gratitude the very candid chapter entitled 'Religion', in which Lord Lothian's gradual departure from Catholicism and acceptance of Christian Science is gently and tactfully revealed.

The story of his relations with his family after his change of religion is very edifying. When his mother died in 1931 he was at her side reading to her from St John's Gospel. Two years earlier he had written, 'We shall find ourselves some day together in the Kingdom of God where opinions and beliefs are swallowed in manifest truth, of that I am sure. And please do not think that you are to blame for what you would call the loss of my faith. You established my faith in God, which is what alone really matters. If I hadn't had the upbringing which you and father gave me I should not be where I am now. . . . We will meet in Heaven anyway and can talk about our differences if any remain then.' Could there be anything more sincere or tender?

But naturally Catholics will ask themselves sadly, Why did he have to do it? The long nervous breakdown before the first war, coupled with the therapeutic influence of Lady Astor, will seem too superficial an explanation. He had contemplated when at the Oratory the career of a priest, and even after he left Oxford 'Father John' was very happy about him. But 'Father John' had an interesting apprehension at that time. 'His greatest danger will be the worldliness, and I mean by that not frivolity or the like but a tendency to let his mind get warped by the prevailing views he will hear and read about.'

Apart from his devoted family life, there is little evidence, after he left the university and went to South Africa, of Catholic contacts. It may be that this 'worldliness', though certainly not if the word is used in any ordinary sense, was responsible for his gradual decline of faith, and also for his failure to react as quickly or as strongly as he should have done against a new and exciting force like Nazism. I must repeat that, in any ordinary sense of the word, 'worldliness' as a pursuit of his own worldly advantage was the last criticism that could fairly be applied to Lord Lothian, whether in the political or the religious sphere. In the special sense used about him when he was a boy by 'Father John', however, it throws some light on what is otherwise mysterious—that a man of such inflexible moral principles should exhibit on occasion a distressing political fluidity.

Sir James Butler mentions the doubts cast on his judgment. 'One of those who knew him well said that he had "a mind of fine

steel; another that he had a mind like a fresh pat of butter, which would take any impress and record it sharply and accurately". Lord Eustace Percy thought that both were true; in his opinion 'the second quality tended to take control after Lothian's breakdown in 1912 and the mind of fine steel did not take charge again until he went to the United States as Ambassador. . . . In Washington he found himself. The tragedy of his life is that he had to wait so long.' The reflection remains that even the finest spirits in politics, of whom Lord Lothian was certainly one, can hardly hope to apply moral principles with consistent wisdom; vocation and the accident of circumstances have much to do with it. In the meanwhile the morality is itself untarnished but may be left hanging in the air.

Mr Ernest Bevin, like Lord Lothian, at one time contemplated a religious career—in this case that of a missionary. He practised for quite a while as a lay preacher. There is little evidence, however, that religion played an important part in his conscious approach to politics during the years of the main activity described here. He told me after the war that he was interested in all religions and had by him an edition of Confucius which an ambassador had given him. 'I am afraid I have been so busy lately', he said, 'that Confucius hasn't had much of a chance.' That may have been true of his approach to Christianity also. There seems to have been added an additional conviction that political and industrial action was much more likely than spiritual zeal to improve the lot of the oppressed.

No one who worked at all closely with Mr Bevin has much excuse for doubting his greatness, even if greatness is itself impossible to define. His self-confidence, his loyalty, and his constructive imagination were elements in his strength and force. But abstract nouns, however many of them be piled together, do not add up to a human being. It simply remains a fact that Mr Bevin was outsize, both in virtues and defects, but with far more virtue than defect in his nature.

His record of resistance to Fascism, and later to Communism, can hardly be faulted. But from this record of the thirties there is one episode one would be glad to eliminate. Mr Bullock tells his whole story splendidly, and nothing is better done than the account of the Labour Party Conference at Brighton in 1935 when George Lansbury offered to resign the leadership of the Party if they wished to impose sanctions on Mussolini in order to stop the attack on Abyssinia. No one who was present will ever forget Mr George Lansbury's expression of Christian pacifism. 'I am ready to stand as the early Christians did and say, "This is our faith, this is where we stand, and if necessary this is where we will die".' But we will

find it as difficult to forget the extraordinary vehemence with which Ernest Bevin who followed him crushed him personally and politically.

Mr Bullock, broadly speaking, defends Mr Bevin on the grounds that his deepest instincts were loyalty and responsibility to the men he led. 'Both were outraged by the behaviour of Lansbury and Cripps, men who had accepted the responsibilities of leadership, had accepted decisions or at least let them pass without taking the proper course of resigning and then backed down on the grounds of conscientious or intellectual scruples when they had to be implemented.' Leaving over what has seemed to many people the personal violence of Mr Bevin on this and other occasions to those who opposed him, the interesting question is raised as to whether in politics one should expect to distinguish between a governing-class and a working-class integrity.

Mr George Lansbury clearly fits in to no such division, but would it be generally speaking true that the loyalty of a politician reared in the Trade Union Movement to the majority opinion would rate higher in relation to his personal views than would be the case with an old public schoolboy? Mr Bevin's resistance to conscription in 1939, though 'he had made up his mind long before Chamberlain that force was the only argument to use to Hitler', strikes one as a further example of excessive loyalty to the views of a movement which he was admittedly trying to educate as fast as possible.

Mr Bevin would himself have drawn the distinction between working-class ideas of loyalty and those not of the upper class (who were known to be pretty good at hanging together) but of the 'intellectuals' from Sir Stafford Cripps downwards, and in our own time this has probably come to be true. The old aristocratic concept of retiring to one's estates when one ceased to see eye to eye with the Government would appear to have been superseded and the 'loyalty of the regiment' to have become a dominant idea of modern Conservatism. It remains to be seen whether the 'loyalty of the movement' can be pitted against it on equal terms. If so, it will be far more the work of the great-hearted and arresting Mr Ernest Bevin and the sublimely unobtrusive but equally dedicated Lord Attlee than of any other two men.

Sir Anthony Eden cannot be spoken about without respect and sympathy, even by those of us who regard Suez as a moral outrage, not to mention a piece of diplomatic and military fatuity. We must think of him in terms of his whole career, and while perhaps his finest hours came relatively early there is nothing in the story told here from 1951 to summer 1956 to tarnish the portrait of an

aristocratic politician, deeply versed in the diplomatic arts and just as genuinely responsive to the feelings of the ordinary man. To discuss Suez without reference to Sir Anthony's state of health at that time under pressures before which most of us would have collapsed far earlier seems to me impossible. To expect that kind of clinical treatment from Sir Anthony himself is clearly absurd. In the circumstances, one can but accept his narrative as an attempt of the greatest permanent interest to set out his own point of view.

I have heard it said by one who has worked with him much and admired him always that the whole Suez adventure, right or wrong, was extraordinarily out of character. He had always been the patient negotiator *par excellence*. But in his own eyes at least he was making a stand at Suez, for principles of international behaviour which he had always stood for but which our pre-war rulers as a whole had shamefully neglected. In the same spirit he condoned the Israeli invasion of Egypt as an act of self-defence and inescapable duty. He hardly seemed aware that to many people in this country the attitude of the United Nations to a line of conduct we might pursue would have an intimate bearing on its morality. In assessing the ethics of various courses to be pursued, neither U.N. nor America, nor Commonwealth, nor British Opposition opinion seems to have weighed heavily, though from a strictly diplomatic point of view he would no doubt claim that these factors had been given their proper attention. It is clear that he felt badly let down by the Americans, but that particular argument must be conducted elsewhere.

Sir Anthony Eden tells us little of his inner self in this essentially diplomatic narrative of a particular, if crucial, period in foreign affairs. One has no right, therefore, to deny a religious basis to his high-minded, patriotic, and till near the end internationalist approach to these tremendous issues. Until corrected, however, one is bound to assume that he could never have been responsible for Suez under any circumstances whatsoever if the connection between morals and politics had possessed for him a firmer, philosophical basis. One is left with the impression—fair or unfair—that there was a theoretical weakness somewhere there, with the result that in times of crisis diplomacy might take charge—a diplomacy, as in this case, liable to be mistaken.

The conclusion is not that there is one sealed pattern, one ideal relationship between morals and politics which can be imposed by professors of politics or theology on statesmen, though these gentlemen have much to contribute. Each statesman, thrown into the stormy sea, must at the crisis navigate himself in a human sense.

But if he has worked out his own relationship and integrated it into his being, he is most likely to come through unscathed and most likely to leave a name of greatness. All these three men under discussion had much virtue, ability and influence. On the moral plane there is no reason to give them an order of precedence. But when Mr Bevin was asked by King George VI where he had acquired so much knowledge he replied: 'Your Majesty, I plucked it from the hedgerows of experience'. Who shall say which of the three was most fortunate in his opportunities? But Mr Bevin had certainly acquired from his a greater strength in politics than the others.

PERSONAE

4. The Rahner Brothers

IN the course of the decade which preceded the Second World War a new trend in theological thinking became evident. The impetus came from Innsbruck with the appearance of an article by Father Jungmann in which he demanded a theology that would keep pastoral needs in view. Soon this became a movement known as kerygmatic theology. The name implied a desire to link theology with the 'kerygma' more closely, for our Lord and the Apostles had not separated theology from their preaching. So this new movement wished to end the divorce which had arisen between personal love of, and belief in, God and the dry formality of 'school dogma'. A discussion developed as to the advisability of making this kerygmatic theology a separate subject, but everyone was agreed on the general need. For it was part of a general tendency towards a fresh approach, which has been called by R. Aubert '*un désir d'un "ressourcement" de la théologie au contact de la source toujours jaillissante qu'est la Parole de Dieu proclamée et commentée dans l'Eglise*'. (*La Théologie catholique au milieu du XXe siècle.*)

This desire, manifested in a biblical, liturgical and patristic renewal, was then in evidence in Innsbruck and particularly in the work of Hugo and Karl Rahner. Born in Freiburg im Breisgau in 1900 and 1904 respectively, these two brothers joined the Society of Jesus in the South German province, but later transferred to Austria. Here they became professors in the University of Innsbruck, in which they have both in turn since held the office of Rector Magnificus.

The elder of the two, Hugo Rahner, specializes in the fields of