

There cannot be many men who, rightly or wrongly, would subordinate their deep affection for a friend to political principle. Yet O'Higgins did not hesitate to take responsibility for the execution of his dearest friend—one who had been best man at his marriage a year before and was destined to be the godfather of his first-born child—when he felt that to do otherwise was to jeopardise the 'welfare and the safety and the freedom of the Irish people'.

Undoubtedly O'Higgins was cast in an heroic mould, yet the stern decisiveness of his nature was but the complement of a constructive mind that was never content to devise policy without ensuring the means of putting it into effect.

Outside the arena of statesmanship, for which he never doubted his vocation, O'Higgins was, as Mr de Vere White has shown, the most lovable of men—light-hearted, humorous, and at the same time utterly loyal and profoundly Catholic.

It is not for an English reviewer to pronounce judgment upon the rights and wrongs of that tragic period of rival expressions of Irish patriotism. Mr de Vere White, an Irishman, in spite of his high admiration for the subject of his book, has given his readers an impartial account of events. He has clarified a momentous piece of history without resorting to advocacy; and in doing that he has at once accomplished a task of vital importance, and paid a memorable tribute to a great Irishman.

R. D. JEBB.

Pr.

EDUCATION IN THE FORCES, 1939-46: THE CIVILIAN CONTRIBUTION.

By N. Scarlyn Wilson, M.A. (Evans Bros.; 7s. 6d.)

In a review in *BLACKFRIARS* of *Adult Education: The Record of the British Army*, by T. H. Hawkins and L. J. Brimble, published by Macmillan in 1947, it was observed that no such record could be complete without a consideration of the very large part played by civilians in army education during the 1939-45 war and after. We have had to wait nearly two years since then for a survey of that civilian contribution, and it was well worth waiting for. Mr Scarlyn Wilson had a very difficult job, to degut the masses of material, statistical and other, with which he must have been faced, and to construct therefrom a story that should be coherent and adequate and, as Sir Walter Moberly says in his foreword, the 'narrative combines sobriety of judgment with liveliness of presentation'. It is indeed as refreshing as it is unusual to meet in an educational report an illustration of the possible misleadingness of statistics that tells of an American couple who limited their family to two children because, they had read, every third child born in their State was 'coloured'; or to find Caliban adapted to fit the senior officers present at an R.A.F. lecture—'the aisle is full of big noises'; or to read of the jurisdictions of Command education officers that 'each had to look after an area which anyone save a colonial bishop would have thought excessively large'.

Many civilian organisations contributed to army education: local education authorities, public libraries, the regional committees of the universities and university colleges, extra-mural boards, the Y.M.C.A. (and auxiliary bodies, such as the W.V.S. How else, often, could lecturers have 'got there'?). The present reviewer, a soldier in the first world war, in close touch with the services in the second, has often been irritated by cheap sneers and unfair criticism (sometimes prompted by sectarian prejudice) of the Y.M.C.A.'s activities for the forces: it is welcome and to be expected that Mr Wilson should bring out clearly the much good educational and associated work done under its auspices. 'It is important to realise', he says, 'that the Y.M.C.A. has a canteen, but is not one. . . .' But the initials of most frequent occurrence in the book are C.A.C., a merciful abbreviation of Central Advisory Council for Adult Education in His Majesty's Forces. A considerable body of whole-time lecturers was in the employment of this council (and seconded for duty to the regional committee); and the C.A.C. in initiative, administration, and its advisory capacity at the highest levels was the most outstanding and influential body where the civilian contribution was concerned. Mr Wilson gives it special notice in his last chapter (and elsewhere), and what he writes is of interest not only to those who in one way or another were associated with the council's work.

Few lecturers, whether whole- or part-time, will disagree with Mr Wilson's summaries of the conditions and scope of their work, the advantages, difficulties and defects of such army schemes as Abca (current affairs) and B.W.P. ('citizenship'), the attitudes and reactions of their victims, and the results and value of it all. On this last and most important head Mr Wilson is, as always, moderate and just. 'Admittedly a percentage of the work in the field did serve little purpose. Some blame for this must be laid on lecturers who, to lack of adequate quality and substance in their talks, added the lesser crimes of unpunctuality and impatience. Sometimes the organisation was faulty. . . . Conditions were far from ideal, and the situation had to be accepted as it stood. The surprising thing is not that some time, energy and money were ill-spent. This was unavoidable. The surprising thing is rather that so much worthwhile work *was* done'. 'So far as quality was concerned, the most satisfactory standard was reached at residential or intensive courses. But this does not mean that results obtained from weekly visits to units in the field were disappointing. There is, of course, no way of assessing the precise value of what was done, but the same holds good of all forms of education which do not aim at the passing of a particular examination. It is, nevertheless, undeniable that real progress was made. . . .'

On the point of variations in receptiveness, keenness and ability shown by different arms of the services, and surprises sometimes provided by the Pioneer Corps, this reviewer would like to put on

record that in nearly four years of continuous lecturing the most consistently intelligent and keen audience he met, once a week for weeks, was a score of men from a Sanitary company of the Royal Engineers. And according to my experience, Mr Wilson rather underestimates the harm that was done by the temporary holding-up (however well-justified) of the Abca bulletin on 'Beveridge'. But he makes clear the importance of the civilian element—especially the C.A.C.—in maintaining academic standards and keeping army education as clear as possible of 'propaganda and pep'; in this, as in so much else, how much was owed to Dr Basil Yeaxlee, organising secretary of the C.A.C., does not appear, for 'throughout this book, references to individuals have, of design, been few'.

Mr Wilson's book is of interest and use to all concerned in or about adult education. Those ignorant of his particular theme will be astonished at the extent and scope of the work done in the forces between 1939 and 1946: 'immense' is not too strong a word, and it included most things from casual lectures for small groups to residential centres with courses up to a month's duration. As has been indicated, many organisations and people contributed to this; but Major-General Cyril Lloyd, Director of Army Education, has given as his considered opinion that 'had it not been for the far-seeing men and women who initiated the Central Advisory Council there would be little or no education in the army today'. In the idiom of the beneficiaries of that education, 'You've said it, sir'.

DONALD ATTWATER.

THE POPES AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS. By J. W. Poynter. (Watts and Co.; 7s. 6d.)

This compilation—rather unexpectedly from the Rationalist Press—was made by Mr Poynter before being reconciled to the Church. His purpose is to give an account, in a succinct form, and without controversial bias, of what the Popes themselves have said. When Mr Poynter does this he gives a fair summary, in the *ipsissima verba*, of the social encyclicals and allocutions. Unhappily, at times he feels called upon to interject comments of his own, quotations from the Catholic Press and comments on the quotations. To that extent he fails in his self-appointed task.

J.F.

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES. By Alfred O'Rahilly. (Cork University Press and B. H. Blackwell, Oxford; 2s.)

This sequel to *Moral Principles* displays the same clarity and readability as the earlier book. It is even more full and yet the addresses are light and easy for the radio-listener to grasp. Professor O'Rahilly has a facility for bringing out the rarely considered aspects of traditional social doctrine, and he does so even when his audience is likely to protest vociferously. His defence of