

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

A CATHOLIC SECULAR NEWSPAPER is a thing for which BLACKFRIARS has clamoured for many years. The courage of the new proprietors of THE CATHOLIC HERALD is bringing our dream rapidly within measurable distance of realization. A hint that something of the sort might be expected was dropped in an announcement in the issue of June 2nd:

We do not wish to set ourselves up in competition with the other journals and periodicals which serve the needs of the Catholic public and do so much to instruct and edify many non-Catholics. But we know that there is no limit to the fields in which the Catholic can and should interest himself, nor to the ways in which the Catholic can study the contemporary world in the midst of which he must live his life and through which he must save his soul. In particular, we, as converts to the Faith, realise that there is room in Catholic journalism for a more sympathetic invitation to non-Catholics to see the world with Catholic eyes The task which we have set ourselves cannot be achieved in a week, a month, nor even a year. But we wish to lay deep and firm foundations, and gradually to build up on them a rejuvenated Catholic Journal, strong with the strength of its fifty year old inheritance, yet strengthening itself still further with the new life incorporated in it.

The issue For June 16th tells us that the promoters have received the heartiest encouragement from Cardinal Bourne and the Archbishops of Liverpool, Birmingham, and Cardiff, and the aim of the new venture is explained by Fr. John-Baptist Reeves, O.P. Having disposed of rumours that *The Catholic Herald* had come into Dominican ownership and control, he acknowledges that 'this paper is now pursuing ideals of journalism derived immediately from Fr. Bede Jarrett.' Under the heading *Our Aim*, Fr. Reeves continues:

This is a Catholic newspaper. At the present moment every natural and supernatural means is being used to the utmost to ensure that it will always remain so—uncompromisingly so. On every necessary occasion it will firmly proclaim itself Catholic, and make any sacrifice that may be required to prove itself so. But on ordinary occasions it will be as reticent about its

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Catholicity as a solid Catholic layman usually is in the course of his day's work among non-Catholics. Our strongest influence on our fellow-countrymen is exercised through our daily contact with them As soon as we find ourselves getting on friendly terms with non-Catholics we find them plying us with questions. At first these questions are not about the revealed doctrines of our Faith, but about human worldly affairs. Conversations with a non-Catholic do not usually begin with the question : 'How can there be three Persons in One God?' 'Why should marriage be indissoluble?' Do they not rather begin : 'What do you think of the cabaret at Peccadillo's? of the Australians? of the Arsenal? of continental policy? of Mussolini, Hitler, Dolfuss?' The matters discussed in this paper will become more and more the ordinary secular matters discussed in the ordinary secular papers—or rather that ought to be discussed in them. . . . All such matters will be treated in this paper from a strictly Catholic point of view. They will be treated as far as possible by Catholic laymen, calling freely upon the clergy to help them with direction and correction, but—except where some ecclesiastic happens to be exceptionally expert in some lay matter—not to replace them in any function that laymen are competent to fill in the Church. The writers in this paper as it advances towards its ideal will not necessarily be Catholics always. Always they will be potential Catholics, and full use will be made of that part of them which is already stepping over the threshold into the Catholic Church.

Such 'aims' will recommend themselves so naturally to our readers that no words of recommendation are called for from us. We would only remark that the period of transition will be a difficult one for *The Catholic Herald*, and express the hope that, without prejudice to support of the more 'ecclesiastical' newspapers, it will receive all the support and encouragement it deserves.

THE SPIRIT OF MALINES. Professor Dompropst Paul Simor contributes to the June HOCHLAND a well-informed record of the efforts towards the reunion of England to the Holy See from the time of Pusey to the present day. He points out that the complexity of the problem is no less sociological than theological, involving as it does the establishment of understanding with a communion which has long independent history behind it and which has evolved its own deep-rooted traditions, language and modes of

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thought. Of the late Lord Halifax he writes: 'It is impossible to deny a real greatness to the life of this man, a greatness enhanced by tragedy. Truly amazing was the pertinacity with which he clung to his ideal and, in spite of repeated set-backs, recommenced his task over and over again.' The Malines Conversations were 'a sensational event for the whole Catholic world' and, having Cardinal Mercier's authority behind them, were generally regarded favourably 'despite the fact that English Catholics were as little pleased as in the days of Cardinal Vaughan that French theologians should be the representatives of Catholicism and should display their deep interest in the ways of Anglicanism.' Although Professor Simon finds it difficult to understand what practical result was hoped for from the Malines Conversations, he considers them an important step in the right direction:

They were not religious conversations of the old type which consisted of sectarian controversy in which adversaries did their utmost to down their opponents. We have no use for that sort of thing nowadays. . . . Manning left behind him a noteworthy memorandum in which he enumerated nine obstacles to the spread of Catholicism in England, one of which was the 'spirit of controversy and polemic theology' which destroys more than it effects. In striking contrast to this controversial attitude was the 'spirit of Malines.' . . . The unity of Christendom appears once more to the consciousness of millions of Christians as a necessary following of the will of Christ. A new generation has arisen which will never again permit the Christian warfare to degenerate into party-strife, but seeks rather to experience amidst the anxieties and catastrophes of our time the assimilation of new life into the *Una Sancta Catholica*. Viewed in this light the Malines Conversations were indeed a step to unity which will make Lord Halifax to be ever remembered with gratitude by those whose great undying ideal is the One Holy Catholic Church.

THE COLOSSEUM Number Two takes up its *Positions*:

The end of man does not lie in the state or in economic organization, but in God. . . . A mere intellectual apprehension of the truth about God and man is impotent to revolutionize society; it is the purpose of the *Colosseum* to do all in its power to transform an interesting speculative theory into a dynamic force and vital principle of action. . . . Utopias are the opium

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of the people—whether the utopia be that of Wells or Stalin, Sir Arthur Keith or Goebbels, or the sex-utopia of D. H. Lawrence. We must fight our way through the clap-trap of the pseudo-scientists and give the masses the truth about the universe and themselves. . . .

Such *Positions* are familiar to those acquainted with young Catholic movements abroad, but come with refreshing strangeness in English. These 'Christian intellectuals' have made Mr. Middleton Murry's 'gorge heave'; and doubtless many Christian gorges will heave too before *The Colosseum* has done. It will not regret it; and neither shall we.—To this number Mr. Eric Gill contributes an excellent article on *Morals and Money*; the chief point of which is that, just as assent to Christian Faith postulates a certain way of thought, certain general truths and the exclusion of certain incompatible philosophical errors, so the living of the Christian life presupposes a certain social and economic environment which is fast disappearing from the modern world:

What is needed is, first of all, the realization by the parish clergy that a system of capitalism, run neither in the interest of the production of good things nor the comfort of the consumer, but solely in the interest of 'the City,' the money-power, the international lenders of money, the banks, is a system incompatible with Christian morals, inimical to Christian morals, destructive of Christian morals. . . . Why should the clergy take their politics from the newspapers rather than from the Gospels, Epistles and encyclicals? . . . It is notorious that the Church is anti-Marxian. But is it equally notorious that she is against the commercial world and all its usury? It is not. Most penny whistles (loveliest of instruments) are silent; the big trumpet speaks and he is far away in Rome.

Mr. G. M. Turnell contributes an interesting criticism of the 'Traditionalism' of Mr. T. S. Eliot:

Mr. Eliot does not belong to the European Tradition. He is neither possessed of a European consciousness nor does he feel as a European. . . . I am not arguing that Mr. Eliot is cut off from all traditions, which would not be true. The whole point is that he owes his intellectual formation not to the European but to the English and American traditions. . . . The difficulty of Mr. Eliot's position comes from the fact that

while belonging to one tradition, he is constantly trying to apply the standards of a different one.

The criticism is sufficiently serious to merit Mr. Eliot's attention.

A somewhat surprising article by Nicolas Berdyaev, contrasting culture and civilization, human nature and technics, adopts not only the thought but the language of Spengler; although advocating the flight from the machine which Spengler holds to be disastrous and the 'will to religious transfiguration' to replace the 'will to power.' Some time ago a BLACKFRIARS contributor argued that the basic antithesis of this line of thought was untenable (*cf. Spengler views the Machine Age*, BLACKFRIARS, Jan., 1932); and we are inclined to suspect that, despite a great deal which is extremely valuable in his thought, M. Berdyaev may yet prove an embarrassing ally to the *défenseurs de l'Occident*.—Other contributors include Giovanni Papini, Peter Wust, E. J. Oliver and Eugenio d'Ors. A good deal of space is devoted to Mr. Murry's criticisms in *The Wanderer*, marred, we think, by a jocular callousness in referring to the recent 'civil war' in Austria. Unavoidable or not, the levelling of 'Christian Social' guns on a Karl Marx Hof is no laughing matter, and it will be many years before the Christian Social movement throughout the world will have lived it down.

MAN OF ARAN—AND PALEFACE. In a rhapsody on *Man of Aran* in THE NEW ENGLISH WEEKLY, Mr. Denis Ireland writes of

the frightful impact of Flaherty's Atlantic rollers on Hollywood-cum-Elstree lath and plaster. Their effect upon a cinema audience is extraordinary. When they tower, topple and surge through the screen upon the auditorium, they seem to come like a great cleansing flood, bearing upon their crests the wreckage of a celluloid civilization—crooners, best-sellers, stupendous successes, red hot mommas, jazz babies and all. Not a kiss in a carload; and the only lingerie displayed looks as if it might have been red flannel. The waves, the waves, it is the waves, my soul, and every one of them knocking the big town hicks sideways—and not a bed, apparently, much less a bedside telephone in the whole apartment

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Mr. Flaherty, in short, has thrown a bomb labelled 'Sea' from the Western rim of the European world, just as Pudovkin threw one from the east in 'Earth.' He may not have meant to throw a bomb; probably, like the great artist he is, he was interested only in recording what he saw, and the disruptive effect of his record never occurred to him. Nevertheless, whether it occurred to him or not, Flaherty has packed a few reels of celluloid with the most frightful form of sociological criticism that exists, the criticism that consists, not in attacking, but showing a different way of life—a way of life that sends most of us out into the sunlight again feeling decidedly shoddy. That is the first point to note about *Man of Aran*—that it is, on reflection, first-rate sociological criticism. Western machine civilization cannot go back upon itself now because of the men of Aran, but a glance at their way of life is enough to confirm us in the knowledge that our present phase is only a bad smell—that we must go through to something else, or stew in our own cocktail juices.

PENGUIN.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS

DEAR SIR,

'Penguin' in the current issue of BLACKFRIARS records Mr. Edwin Muir's theory that Bolshevism is the modern equivalent of Calvinism. Actually does the analogy hold, beyond the similarity existing between any one intellectual revolution and another? The fact that Bolshevism and Calvinism are both 'anti-traditional, anti-romantic, functional and exclusive' hardly urges us to institute a useful analogy. Psychologically Calvinists and Bolsheviks may in many cases be similar types. But what is Mr. Muir's counterpart of the collective consciousness and co-operative basis of Bolshevism? Moreover, the determinism of Bolshevism is of a totally different origin from that of Calvinism, a symptom of a totally different psychosis, functioning to an altogether different end.

As your contributor Mr. J. F. T. Prince has frequently pointed out, a more provocative analogy is the double and paradoxical one which indicates to our shame (a) the parallel sureness, asceticism and zeal of the ideal Christian and Bolshevik; (b) the Materialist, earth-bound vision which relates Bolshevik Theory to 'Christian' practice, which we cannot lay wholly at the door of the Reformers.

DAVID MACKENZIE.

Buckfast.