

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

THE CATHOLIC COLONY movement in U.S.A., associated with the American CATHOLIC WORKER and with LITURGY AND SOCIOLOGY, owes much of its inspiration to the pioneer Catholic Land Movement in England, and in particular to Father Vincent McNabb. It has the advantage, not only of the example of the English experiment, but also of being able to learn from its mistakes. A leaflet recently issued by the LITURGY AND SOCIOLOGY group states its present position and prospects:

We have come to a turning-point of our work in which you alone can help us, for it is your work as much as it is ours. You have read in *Liturgy and Sociology* of our Farm, of the School to be held there this summer, and of our plans for a Catholic farming commune and a permanent training school for the liturgical and social apostolate.

The Farm is important as the base for all these activities. But it is even more important for the very existence of our parish social and liturgical work. As you know, we consider this parish work, the chief justification of our group, and of *Liturgy and Sociology*, which is the organ for the propagation of the ideas and theories we are working out in practice. We feel that the Parish is the natural unit through which Catholics may be reached and may achieve the fuller religious and social life which has been termed "integral Catholicism."

We have therefore devoted ourselves entirely for the past year to this work in parishes, under the direction of the Pastor, in whatever field he could use our services. We have never set a fee for this work, and though the Pastors have in each instance contributed as generously as they could, we have foreseen from the start that we could not expect to entirely support ourselves, our growing family, and the others who have wished to join us in our work in this manner. We have taken temporary and part-time jobs whenever we could to help support the work; but we see in the partial subsistence we will have from the Farm, and later from the School, our only hope of continuing it.

It will at once be seen that there is nothing which could be charged with "segregationism" or "escapism" about this American movement. Firmly grounded by liturgical worship in a living realization of the meaning of the Mystical Body with all its implications of social responsibility, and working in close collaboration with parochial activities in

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the industrial areas, as well as with the activities of THE CATHOLIC WORKER,¹ the Catholic farming communes are to be precisely centres of Catholic life for the masses of Catholics still living in the cities or in isolation in rural parishes. This impression is amply confirmed by the special "Farm issue" of LITURGY AND SOCIOLOGY. It announces a "Farm Summer-School" to be held on the farm owned by the group in Massachusetts at which town-workers will be enabled to spend two weeks in this embryo Christian society. There is to be daily High Mass, Lauds and Vespers in English, Compline in Latin, manual labour for all, intellectual work consisting of "classes" on Christian sociology, Liturgy and life and the doctrine of the Mystical Body. Barns and cabins in the neighbouring forest are to be used to house participants; "students able to bring cars are urged to do so—they will be very useful at the farm." But the "Farm Summer-School is only the beginning of a training school (a very practical one with a large parish to work in) for these apostles from which they can go and establish other centres." The object of these American community groups was described by Dr. Paul Hanly Furfey in his *Fire on the Earth*. "Such communities," he wrote, "would consist of lay people of both sexes, both single and married, with only those priests and religious who would be necessary to serve their religious needs . . . They would be free to work out their own distinctive culture, to found a more just and decent economic system, and to live more perfectly the life of the Liturgy."

1 The full and co-ordinated programme of the American *Catholic Worker* is set out as follows:

- I. *Clarification of Thought* through
 1. The Catholic Worker; Pamphlets, Leaflets
 2. Round Table discussions.
- II. *Immediate Relief* through
 1. The individual Practice of the Works of Mercy
 2. Houses of Hospitality
 3. Appeals, not demands, to existing groups.
- III. *Long-Range Action* through
Farming Communes providing people with work, but no wages, and exemplifying production for use and not for profits.
"Allied Movements" with which the *Worker* collaborates are: 1. Co-operatives, 2. Workers' Associations (Unions), 3. Maternity Guilds, 4. Legislation for the Common Good (political action), 5. Distributism.

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BACK—OR FORWARD—TO THE LAND? It is a matter for deep regret, and even for alarm, that the idea of such Catholic communities no longer occupies the attention of the majority of English Catholics. If the idea is considered at all it is usually, except among the faithful remnant of the supporters of the Catholic Land Associations, only as a joke. Yet the need for similar experiments in our own country grows increasingly imperative. An increasing number of Catholics, especially among those on the threshold of life, is finding life and work in our modern industrial and commercial centres spiritually unendurable and morally impossible. Countless thousands more are being compelled by their environment to abandon in greater or lesser degree the full living of Christian life, consciously or unconsciously to disobey the commandments, or even to abandon their faith altogether. One does not need to be a prophet to foresee that this state of things will (even if there be no catastrophic crash of the present system) grow steadily worse, and that it is high time that we started to form nuclei of Catholic life and culture to attempt to provide for whatever the future may hold in store. Such centres of Catholic life and culture are moreover a *present* necessity. It is futile for us to preach the social programme of deproletarianization through the restoration of property if we can make no provision for the deproletarianized; futile to preach the human world of human work if it is not to be had. In its beginnings, and still in its few remaining farms and training-schools, the Catholic Land Movement held out a fair promise. Unfortunately the movement has failed to inspire the Catholic body as a whole. BLACKFRIARS has said before, and we say again, that the supporters and propagandists of the movement are themselves largely responsible for this. The movement has been presented to the public in a guise which, we think, misses the real point. As INTEGRATION has said: "Morality and culture must be based on the truths of religion themselves, not on sentimental antiquarian feeling for the ages when Catholicism was the religion of Europe. For we have to create a new culture, not only to hark back to an old one." It stands to reason that any such experiments in building up a new Catholic culture will begin on the "land" (not otherwise would it be possible to attain the requisite degree of economic independence), and its foundations—as

of any stable society—must always remain on the “land.” But we cannot see that it is any part of such a movement to make the land an end in itself, almost the sole occupation of the community, nor that it will preclude the possibility of the development of the community into villages and even cities. Nor will it be the object of such a community to get “back” to anything; on the contrary it will regard itself as a step forward to a new Christian civilization. So considered, it will not spurn either the spiritual or material heritage of the past; on the contrary it will be one of its principle objects to preserve what it can for posterity. While rigorously subordinating the use of machinery to the higher needs and values of the human soul, it will have no objection to machinery as such, nor preclude the possibility of a more extensive use of scientific technique in later stages of its own evolution than would at first be possible or desirable. Still more important, such Catholic communities, which must necessarily be relatively small in their beginnings, will not live in splendid isolation from the rest of the world. On the contrary, they will be precisely centres of life and activity for the Catholic body generally. They will work in close harmony with Catholic religious and social action in industry; and conversely Catholicism in the towns will do all in its power to support and stock them. They will recognise that their work is of far more extensive importance than the support of the few families who will at first be able to join them. They will collaborate closely with the vast majority whom necessity, choice or a sense of divine vocation induces to continue in the larger centres of population.

IS IT ESCAPISM? The desirability, if not the positive necessity, of such experimental Catholic communities is, we think, blindingly obvious, and it is a thousand pities that they have come in this country to be inextricably associated with tenets and tastes which have nothing to do with the essential issue. The record of the arrangements for a new settlement at Prior’s Wood Hall Farm in Lancashire in the current issue of *THE CROSS AND THE PLOUGH* shows that the English Catholic Land Movement is, in spite of setbacks and lack of general interest and support, by no means defunct; but other items in the same issue will hardly allay misgivings regarding the outlook and spirit of the movement. Spokesmen of the

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movement (as this same number of their organ shows) do not take criticism kindly; but the matter is of too great importance to Catholics generally and to national welfare to be allowed to drop. One contribution is directed to the charge of "escapism" which has been levelled at the movement; it is hardly calculated to ingratiate those of us who are disappointed and disturbed regarding this feature in the literature of the Land Associations. We are told that we are "negligible," that we have "crude ideas," that we are guilty of "a childish begging of the whole question," that "disliking the mental and moral effort of a break with the modern monstrosity" we "take refuge in a bankrupt word," that we deny free-will and finally that we are, apparently, heretics. All this, though hardly helpful, might be allowed to pass. But the writer, instead of fiercely rebutting the charge of escapism, instead of trying to convince us that the Land Movement does *not* seek to escape from the realities of life and of history, but on the contrary to promote the general good of society, proudly pleads guilty to the charge, (though he rejects the term "escapism" as modern, and therefore "idiotic.'). Critics of this aspect of the movement (who are *ipso facto* classed as "opponents") are told that they "decline rather pointedly to meet us on the question whether industrialism is fit for Christian men." To this it can only be said that we decline to give answers to foolish questions; and this question is a generalization to which no categorical and universally valid answer is possible. (We might as well ask if the manger or the cross are fit for Christian men.) But our readers are well aware of our own views regarding industrial conditions and will readily understand why we are profoundly affected by the relative ineffectualness of the Land Movement to get to grips with the problem. The same writer tells us, in a sentence which we do not profess to understand, that "'Progress' is as much a heresy as Manichaeism" (we had always supposed it was a moral obligation); but however that may be, it is certain that Regression is no part of Catholic doctrine. We submit with some insistence that a cult of the primitive just because it is primitive, a contempt for the modern just because it is modern, a pose of rustic simplicity which cannot recognize satire when it sees it (we have in mind a note on page 2 of the same organ), a cult of some inherent sanctity in

agriculture just because it is agriculture, neither need be nor should be features in such a movement. Our friends of the Land Movement persist in the confusion between fact and value, between process and progress, to which we have previously called attention. We are told that those who presume to criticize the movement have a "notion that a real assent to the modern developments is of obligation." We *do* insist that modern developments are *facts* which must be faced whatever we may think of their value. It is more encouraging to find that another contributor does recognize the obvious fact that the industrial-capitalist "system has brought into existence millions of human beings who cannot suddenly be transferred into pre-capitalist conditions." Exactly; and that "cannot" is no denial of free-will, as the other writer would seem to suppose. And this leads back to the central issue: that our task is to build a new culture and not (however much we may learn from the past) to hark back to an old one; and from the nature of things the conditions of that culture will not be pre-capitalist but post-capitalist. Any efforts to form that new culture can only be cramped and nullified by confining it in the moulds of ready-made and possibly romanticized ideas of the past. Moreover, such efforts to achieve the impossible (even if they be supposed to be desirable) will inevitably be dismissed as mere harmless eccentricity by those on whom they will depend for support. Is it yet too late to hope that our Land Movement may be rejuvenated and become the power which it should be?

CO-ORDINATION. But perhaps the most important lesson that we have to learn from U.S.A. is that of the collaboration and unification of the various phases of our social action. There is a distressing and stultifying atomisation of our endeavours in this country; and more particularly between those engaged in the industrial areas and those associated with the Land Movement. To read the pronouncements of the latter, one might think that the Encyclicals did nothing but proclaim the desirability of small ownership and had nothing whatever to say about the present needs of wage-earners engaged in industry; while the former are often so preoccupied with ameliorating present conditions as to seem to disregard the ultimate aims and ideals of

“long-range action.” The latter, again, are apt to scorn any endeavour to find practical solutions to existing problems; the former to dismiss as unrealistic cranks those who visualize an ultimate radical transformation of society. Says a writer in the July number of the English CATHOLIC WORKER “The J.O.C. is the only answer to those who say that we cannot be real Christians in an industrial society—claiming that machines and factories and mass-production kill our souls. In the J.O.C. we get a sense of vocation and a vivid realization that we can realize our eternal destiny in the coal mine, in the factory, and everywhere in this life.” That is true; and the J.O.C. way of self-immolation through industry has received the high praise of the Pope in *Divini Redemptoris*. But this is not to say that this is anything but an abnormal condition of things: capitalist-industrialism is not justified because the relatively small proportion of Jocist operatives by almost heroic self-sacrifice can find in it a means of salvation. Catholic social action within the industrial and wage-earning spheres will be dissipated if it loses sight of ultimate aims; and in particular of the aim of “inducing the wage-earner to attain to property.” On the other hand, social action which is more directly concerned with the construction of a property-owning society will similarly come to grief if it cheerfully disregards practicable ways and means adapted to existing realities. The Catholic social programme is a straight play, not a disconnected series of variety turns. However we may be preoccupied with one particular role, we must fail if each one of us does not keep one eye on the whole plot and on the roles of other players. This means co-ordination: close co-operation between (for instance) the Catholic Social Guild and the Land Associations. In the lack of such co-ordination, as the Abbé Jacques Leclercq has recently pointed out, in this failure to view its programme in its totality, lies the tragic weakness of the Catholic social movement. “Le mouvement social chrétien possédait les principes nécessaires à corriger les abus du libéralisme économique et à assainir la vie sociale. *Il n’a pas su les dégager dans leur ensemble avec une fermeté et une précision qui les imposassent: il lui a manqué un grand théoricien.*” Failing the “grand théoricien” we should at least “get together” to pool our resources, experience and forces

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to present the Catholic social programme as the organic unity which it is. Only in this way can we bring about that unity of our thought and action for which the Holy Father has so insistently pleaded, and which is indispensable if our several endeavours are not be rendered sterile.

CONTEMPORANEA. ARENA (No. 2) pursues the Catholic *Scrutiny* formula with admirable zeal and varying success: Dr. Mathew's brilliant moral tale on the Death of a Liberal, and Nicholas Breakespeare's cheery account of Vatican policy relieve. *Arena* deserves support.

ART NOTES (3½d. from 59 Park Walk, Chelsea): a new paper to promote the interests of Catholic art and artists: H. D. C. Pepler, Geoffrey Webb and Fr. J. A. Burke contribute.

CATHOLIC WORLD (July): Don Sturzo contrasts *Corporatism: Christian-Social and Fascist*. In *The Man who might have saved Europe* George Shuster writes on a great Dominican tertiary, Dr. Heinrich Brüning.

CITE CHRETIENNE (July 5): how the Church is the "extension of the Incarnation" explained by Abbé Leclercq.

CLERGY REVIEW (July): *The Social Teaching of the Baptist* considerably elaborated by Fr. Vincent McNabb, O.P.

CRITERION (July): D. A. Traversi argues that "one cannot accept Dostoevsky as a spiritual guide for modern man" though "he is unrivalled in his exploration of certain aspects of modern disorder." In *The English Church and Money*, Henry S. Swaby tells how Calvin, followed by the Church of England, eliminated traditional teaching about usury. G. Tandy's *Broadcasting Chronicle* is unique in taking broadcasting seriously and intelligently.

DOWNSIDE REVIEW (July): Ivan Brooks makes a useful contribution to a Christian philosophy of art; Dom Hugh Connolly argues a Montanist origin of the *Didache*; Dom Christopher Butler records his *Impressions of Kierkegaard*.

HOCHLAND (July): *Ueber das Schicksal des spanischen Kirche* by Dr. E. Schramm: the breakdown of parochial life as one cause of the weakness and tragedy of the Spanish Church.

MONTH (July): F. L. Kyte on *A Nova Scotia Experiment in "Co-operative Democracy."*

REVUE THOMISTE now appears with greatly improved format and layout: P. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., and Jacques Maritain contribute important studies to the Mai-Juin number.

SEPT also appears in a new format which compares favourably with that of the great Parisian weeklies.

SOWER (July): excellent studies in *The Leakage Problem* by Fr. J. T. McMahon, and in *Peace and War* by Fr. S. J. Gosling.

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- TABLET (July 2): *Catholicism versus Fascism*: Fr. Hilary Carpenter, O.P., shows their fundamental antagonism; (July 9) Fr. Gerald Vann, O.P., announces the Holy Father's blessing and encouragement to the Union of Prayer for Peace.
- VIE INTELLECTUELLE (June 10): P. Tonneau, O.P., has a fine article on putting the Encyclicals into practice, on the role of Christian liberty and obedience in Catholic Action. Canon Cardyn introduces a terrible document on immoral conditions in factories and on how the J.O.C. is trying to deal with the horror.
- VIE SPIRITUELLE (July) includes several important and valuable articles on Christian unity: on *Unity of Faith: Realism and Formalism* by A.-D. Chenu, O.P.; on *The Unity of the Church and its internal dialectic* by M.-J. Congar, O.P.; on *The Sacrifice of Unity* by A.-M. Rouget, O.P.; on *The Conditions of Unity* by "Apostolus"; on *Cardinal Mercier* by J. Guilton and on *The Abbé Portal* by A. Gratieux. Dom de Chabannes appeals for congregational Mass (sung or dialogue) as the means to real unity among Catholics. PENGUIN.

REVIEWS

HISTORY

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. By Hans Lietzmann. (Ivor Nicholson & Watson; 10/6.)

This is the translation of the first volume of Dr. Lietzmann's new history of the Church, and in its 400 pages the first two centuries of Christian life are compressed sporadically. Its earlier sections deal with the contrast between the religious thought of the Diaspora and of the Palestinian synagogues, the last chapters analyse the final development of Marcionite Faith and the system of Basilides. Throughout it is a history of speculation and of sentiment rather than of action. The reputation of Professor Lietzmann as a scholar, his position as Dr. Harnack's successor at Berlin, his years of personal influence at Bonn and Jena, all gives his conclusions a significance which perhaps otherwise they would not possess. They would seem to represent, authoritatively enough, the present tendencies of opinion among non-Catholic German scholars. It is characteristic that the most important section of the bibliography refers to works published since 1920.

Standpoints of antithetic 19th century schools seem united in a new strange syncretism. Peter is in Rome, but he is still irreconcilably opposed to Pauline Christianity, the Mandaeans have no connection with the Baptist, the Naasenes are probably