

## OBITER

THE 'MISSION DE PARIS', founded by the Abbé Godin only a few days before his tragic death in January 1944, is one of the principal agents of the apostolate associated with the name of Cardinal Suhard. His great pastoral letter, *Déclin ou Essor de l'Eglise* (which one would like to see made available in this country) laid down the principles which must guide those who work for the reconciliation of the pagan multitudes to the Church. Above all else, priests must be trained for the 'direct apostolate', recognising the real circumstances of a world without God. Their immediate task is to begin making the Church available to the thousands for whom the ordinary ecclesiastical organisation means nothing at all. Hence the *Mission de Paris*, a group of priests who live among the workers and some of whom themselves work in factories and docks. A priest is not, indeed, ordained to be a navvy: though it sometimes seems as though he can, and with approval, easily become a youth-club leader or an expert on finance. But in the initial stages of so immense an undertaking as the *Mission de Paris*, it is essential that the disinterestedness of the apostle may be known, and there is no surer way than through shared toil and poverty. *Etudes*, in its March issue, prints an estimate by André Rétif of the first five years of the *Mission de Paris*:—

A preliminary break with the bourgeois world has been deemed necessary for the effective functioning of a priest and for his mediation in the working-class milieu. Christ became man among men, poor among the poor. Paul became a Jew with the Jews, a barbarian with the barbarians. In China or Japan the missionary tries to assimilate himself as deeply as he can with the Chinese or the Japanese, so that he may offer to God as concretely as possible the civilisation, the culture and the soul of those foreign lands. The function of the worker priest will be to take up the worker strength and the weakness of the world of the workers so that he may transform them into the matter of his sacrifice, in union with the community to whom he declares the Faith. The sense of justice, the passion for liberty, the hope for a better world, the love of the brethren: all these the priest will mould with the grace of God, he will transform them through the love of Christ, he will mingle them with the bread and wine of the Mass, before he transmits God's answer through the saving sacraments of the Church. How can he hope to do all this unless he is really at one with the world he serves? The monk is pre-eminently vowed to God, so is the parish priest. But the worker priest, no less, is in his fashion wholly given to the service of God,

The analogy of the foreign missionary and his methods, which occurs so frequently in the writings of the Abbés Godin and Michonneau, provides perhaps the soundest approach to a problem that is as yet only beginning to be faced. 'What of the results?', visitors always ask of the priests of the *Mission de Paris*. 'Ask again in two hundred years' time', is the answer.

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THE CATHOLIC WORLD (March) provides an American view of another French undertaking, which might be described as the laboratory of the new apostolate. That is *Economie et Humanisme*, the group of economists and sociologists under Dominican direction, which publishes the quarterly of that name and organises a great variety of research into the social problems which the *Mission de Paris* and similar bodies meet at first hand. At its headquarters at l'Arbresle, near Lyons, 'E. et H.' is organising an international session from May 8 to June 4 this year. To Catholic sociologists of other lands its methods should be a healthy revelation. Teams of experts, whether trade-union leaders, economists, labourers, lawyers or doctors, gather material about a particular area, under the direction of the central organisation, and in this way valuable documentation has been acquired concerning the *human* setting of economic problems. This material is essential for an apostolate that is to be more than a superficial tinkering with the world it hopes to redeem. But more important than the work done is the living fact of the teams themselves. Their work is the expression of their own life as a small community, praying together, seeking to further the kingdom of God through serving a world that has lost the sense of God.

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LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE (March) considers the question of 'progressive Catholics' in a long article under the redoubtable double signatures of Père Maydiou and Père Serrand. The political collaboration of Catholics and Communists is for continental Europe an issue less remote than it appears to us. (Yet a critical consideration of the names of British Communists will often reveal a Catholic origin, or at least an Irish one, and it is to be supposed that the two are most usually identical.) The immediate occasion of the article was a contribution to *Etudes* by Père Fessard (to which a reply by Emmanuel Mounier also appears in the latest *Etudes*), which submitted the claims of the 'progressive Catholics' to severe

criticism, especially as regards their separation of the Church's general enunciation of political and economical principles from her claim to indicate their concrete application. Pères Maydieu and Serrand submit Père Fessard's article, with its 'monolithic' interpretation of the Church's social action, to a detailed examination, and while they obviously hold no brief for the standpoint of the 'progressives' (against whose activities Cardinal Suhard issued a carefully-worded warning last February), they do insist on the need for a realistic approach to the question of Christian participation in politics—an approach that is rooted in 'the truth of Christ in all its radical intransigence'. This essay of forty pages is a notable contribution to Christian politics, and it is to be hoped that the local interest of its immediate origin will not limit the effect of its general thesis. From Belgium comes a further contribution to the debate ('Progressivism: Communism's new Trojan Horse') in an article in *La Revue Nouvelle* (March 15).

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THE INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW, in its first number (English edition: 20 Ovington Square, S.W.3; 5s. 0d.) goes far to realise its aim 'to be of service, not only to Catholics who are engaged in work for the cinema but to the industry as a whole'. Excellently produced, with numerous illustrations from stills, the review includes articles on the Vatican and Films, UNESCO's Film Programme, Thomist Philosophy and the Cinema, and a series of useful summaries of film work in various countries during the past year. Especially interesting is an account by Père Doncoeur, S.J., of the Hollywood film, *Joan of Arc*, for which he was the historical adviser. The great development that has taken place since the war in an intelligent Catholic interest in the cinema is admirably reflected in *The International Film Review*, and one may hope for it a large circulation.

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