

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

'UNE BELLE EQUIPE' is the title of a stimulating account in the Canadian *Revue Dominicaine* of the work of the 'Cerf' publishing house in Paris:

They are only seven Friars Preachers, but they control one of the most triumphant of the Catholic movements of France, that of 'Les Éditions du Cerf.' True, they have the whole-hearted support of many of their colleagues in the Dominican Order and of a splendid group of the laity. But they alone form the permanent central organisation.

From his earliest days as a Dominican each of them had dreamed of a gigantic apostolate which would utilise modern technical resources of propaganda to the utmost. The great theses of St. Thomas, which had enabled them to penetrate into the heart of the Christian mysteries, seemed to them to be too substantial a nourishment to be served as they stood to the men and women of to-day. So they made up their minds to give a modern presentation to the eternal message of Christ, which their scholastic studies had enabled them more clearly to understand—a presentation adapted to the comprehension of modern men.

It is now many years ago that they began to put their ideal into execution . . . When so many false shepherds were leading the masses astray, when so many demagogues were making themselves the apostles of inhuman causes and leading the people into the slavery of the State, the Machine, the Majority, they proclaimed aloud the claims of God and the dignity of the human person . . . They must address living thought to living men in living language.

Such an enterprise cannot succeed without going about it the right way. *La Vie Spirituelle, La Vie Intellectuelle, La Vie Chrétienne*, the *Qu'en pensez-vous?* series, and all the other 'Cerf' publications, owe their vitality, their mordancy, their power, to the fact that their authors keep in constant contact with those who are engaged in the struggle of life. All kinds of people come constantly to their offices: working-men, technicians, professors, authors, artists, ministers of State, ambassadors. What they print is the result of real contacts . . . To the poor and to the rich, to the learned and the simple, these enthusiastic apostles teach, in language completely up-to-date and intelligible, the authentic Christian attitude to the real problems of the day.

They might have imitated the 'prudent' who wait to see which way the battle is going before joining the conquerors in cries of victory. Their role as scouts, as front-line sentinels, though more dangerous, seems to them to be preferable. They show that the defensive policy, begotten of timidity, is not the only one to be employed by Catholics

Such a procedure involves risks. There are not wanting enemies, and the envious, who keep a wide eye open for every false step. So each of these fathers awaits the day when he will be thrown overboard. That matters little so long as the ship keeps on her course. Several of them have already been sacrificed in this way during the past ten years

Accused, envied, attacked, the Dominicans of the Boulevard de La-Tour-Maubourg continue courageously their apostolate, surrounded by a growing number of sincere friends who admire their energy, their enthusiasm, their disinterestedness and the soundness of their teaching.

WAR AND THE CLERGY. The *Christendom* Group has prepared a document of great importance and interest for circulation to all the clergy of the Church of England. It reminds them—'in no spirit of patronage or criticism'—that 'Upon nobody is the duty of preparedness more urgent than upon the clergy, for, in a time of war, it will be their responsibility to interpret the Word of God to their people in a situation in which every Christian will be faced with the most painful and puzzling questions of personal decision and action.' The greater part of the document falls under four heads:

I. What is 'A' to do?

The first decision which the layman (or laywoman) will expect his pastor to help him to resolve will be that of his personal action. 'Ought I to fight? And if not, what ought I to do?' Only the absolute pacifist can give a universal reply to these questions beforehand. It would be extremely comforting if the issues involved were so clear that all Christians could come to the same decision on this point. This, however, is unlikely to be the case. The present situation is so involved, and so much of the relevant information is inaccessible, that the rights and wrongs of a present-day war are extremely difficult to assess. If, however, the Church is to bear any witness at all, it is essential that the clergy shall not simply take their lead from the

Government and allow themselves to be turned into nothing more than recruiting officers for the armed or unarmed forces of the nation. There is a whole body of theology on the conditions of a just war which it is the business of the clergy, both before and during the conflict, to interpret to their people, so that whatever decisions the latter may come to will have been made not on grounds of prejudice or in blind obsequiousness to the Government, but as members of the Christian Church and through reflection upon the Christian Faith. The Church's united witness may not consist in all its members taking the same action; it can consist in their taking their different actions on the same Christian principles.

II. What does War mean?

One of the great difficulties of the Christian, in the next as in the last war, will be to retain his faith in the providence of God. 'Can there be a good and almighty God behind such horrors as these?' The clergy will have to teach their people the truth of the idea of the judgment of God, to which Old and New Testament alike bear witness. In a time of peace people unconsciously assume that it is the chief business of God to make the world comfortable for men, quite regardless of whether or not men are doing the will of God, and that God exists in order to buttress up a non-Christian order of society. Now catastrophe, of which the most obvious form is war, does not mean that God has deserted His people; it is the sign that His judgment has begun and that He is purging His people by fire. This was the message of the prophet Jeremiah, and, imperfect as the Old Testament revelation is when compared with that of the New, it is far in advance of the religious notions of many good and sincere Churchpeople to-day. The clergy have few more urgent duties to-day than to interpret catastrophe as the judgment of God and to show how God's judgment is not a vindictive infliction of punishment, but the purgation of a diseased and apostate world by His love.

III. The Christian and His Enemies.

The great danger to the soul of the Christian in time of war is that, under the influence of propaganda and his own passions, he should conceive his own country as a community of angelic crusaders bent upon the righteous extermination of a race of devils. But the Christian is ordered by his Master to love his enemies, and he knows that the greatest of the virtues is charity. And, however strongly he is convinced of the justice of his cause, he must recognise that the men and women against whom

he is fighting are on the average neither more or less sinful than he is himself and are equally convinced of the justice of theirs. In time of war self-righteousness towards oneself and hatred towards one's enemies are sure to be encouraged by every government involved with all the force at its command; but, so far from being virtues, they are, from the Christian standpoint, two of the worst of vices, and if the clergy were to preach them to be practised by their people it would be a scandal bordering upon apostasy. For we are bidden to love them that hate us and bless them that curse us.

Side by side with the preaching of love should come the preaching of penitence, for the one sure fact about modern war is that it arises not just from the greed or pride of one nation or leader, but from the whole sinful situation in which we are all involved; its periodical recurrence is the inevitable outcome of a mode of life, both personal and communal, which is essentially sub-Christian and in which the sins of every one of us have a part. Whether or not we are convinced that our country is in the right, there can be no doubt that each one of us is in the wrong, and a great part of the Church's action in the next war should consist in a movement of corporate penitence for the part which each one of us has played in producing a situation in which not only are men conscientiously compelled to slaughter their fellow men, but Christians are conscientiously compelled to slaughter their fellow communicants. For one of the things that war does is to bring out into the open the real ghastliness of the sin in which we all have our share.

IV. Looking towards the End.

Every country going into a war hopes to win it, and, if it does win, it has then the magnificent opportunity to exercise the Christian virtue of forgiveness. The making of peace-treaties is never an easy matter, and it is hardly the function of the Church and the preacher to attempt to dictate their details. They can, however, insist on the right motives, and in another war it should surely be the Church's duty to protest against such sheer vindictiveness as was manifested in the slogans 'Make Germany Pay' and 'Hang the Kaiser,' with which even our pulpits resounded at the end of the last war and which have largely contributed to our present distress. The Christian prays daily for the forgiveness of his trespasses; in time of war there will be ample opportunities both for preaching and for practising the condition upon which he asks for that forgiveness.

CHRISTENDOM AND CATASTROPHE. There is a great deal more in the current number of *Christendom* which bears witness to the Group's courageous determination to confront current and imminent events with sound Catholic principle. There is a first instalment of D. M. Mackinnon's 'The Task of the "Christendom" Group in Time of War.' There is also a great deal of sense in the 'Notes and Comments':

If the Pope felt a call to respond to the appeal of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to speak a word at this time as the leader of Christendom, what could we wish him to say? . . . We are agreed that the spiritual authority must have something relevant to say about the great issues of the temporal order; it must be able to speak in Christ's name to the nations, and above all to its own members on their duty. To the convinced pacifist, of course, the position is simple: for him, the question is not on the political plane, but directly on the moral one. Whoever resorts to war commits sin. But if, with the common Christian tradition, we admit that there are causes which justify resort to force, what then? Are we asking the Pope to endorse the *Pax* position, and to say that the evil involved in modern war is necessarily greater than any good that can come out of it, and that therefore it is prohibited by the Just War tradition? If so, let us be clear what we are asking. The Pope would then be saying, not merely that Germany must not make war, but that if she does, England must not resist her. If, however, what we are asking is simply condemnation of aggression we are back in the political field; it is a matter of political quite as much as of moral judgment to say what is aggression and what is justifiable use of force in defence of just rights. The question who is the aggressor largely depends on the date from which we start to consider it. If Germany says it was aggression to take Dantzig from her at Versailles, is she adequately answered by the suggestion that she was the aggressor there in the time of Frederick the Great? If the democracies argue that the revision of treaties should be at the conference table and not on the battle-field, is not Germany right in saying that till she threw her sword into the scales it was very little revision she got or was likely to get? Can the Church deny the right of a nation to stand as a strong man armed, that its goods may be in peace?

Yet in the actual situation such arguments sound as unreal as the opposite suggestion that the democracies are shining Michaels standing on guard against the totalitarian dragons,

demanding the intervention of the Church on their behalf. Would not the true part of the Church be to quit abstract arguments, to come quite directly into the arena, to say, as a mother would say to her quarrelling, fighting children, that all of them are to blame; that there will be no peace till all admit it; that if and when all admit it there will be a chance to make a fresh start and to consider actual problems in the light of reason. Repentance and confession—open confession—would be very good indeed for the soul of Europe, and in fact for its psychological state. A reasoned demand for this by the Church, above all by an international Church such as is represented by the Pope, could quite conceivably meet with a response from Europe's troubled mind. So long as propaganda is applied simply to inflate each nation's sense of self-righteousness, so long the voice of reason has no chance at all. And this, because all lies are of the devil, it is emphatically the Church's business to point out. But in addition to these purely moral admonitions, the Church should not be afraid to declare that at least one ultimate cause of international friction obviously lies in the unsound economic structure which has already been condemned by papal encyclicals. There should be praise for the tentatives of the totalitarian States towards cutting free of this, and towards an attempt to resume into their own hands that 'despotic economic domination' concentrated in the hands of a few by 'the competitive economic order,' while the democracies should be reminded that if they lay claim to the name of freedom it is for them to show how such a right order of control can be reconciled with the right freedom of 'autonomous groups,' as demanded by *Quadragesimo Anno*. Finally, there is the juridical sphere. The Church should remind the nations of their duty to see and act according to international law, and to develop it, and to use force only in support of law where law is properly applicable. For the very attempt to see the international situation realistically and to be politically reasonable may, if not safeguarded, itself increase the tendency to forget the idea of law and to reckon only in terms of force on the one hand and expediency on the other. To the Christian folk of England and France, Italy and Germany alike, spiritual leadership should say—it is for you to bring Europe out of its madness, by repentance for the political sins of your own peoples, by releasing the tension resulting from false economic objectives, and by steadily upholding the claims of natural law. By grace you must interpret the truth about things.

Which is, in fact, just what the Popes have been saying all along. But war is not the only disaster we need anticipate, and the 'Editorial' does well to remind us that,

Modern civilization knows other ways than war of threatening itself with dissolution, and some may prove even more obstinately if less imminently menacing. There is the accelerating depopulation and possible race-suicide of the West. There is the world famine already predicted by the students of the now almost universal erosion resulting from 'the rape of the earth' which has been going on almost unobserved for decades under the spur of the sort of irresponsible avarice which the last century cheerfully identified with 'enterprise,' and hallowed in the cult of the pioneer. There is 'world revolution,' generally rather hazily envisaged, and slumping somewhat as a bogey with the increasing disinclination of the U.S.S.R. to cling to its 'messianic' mission of promoting chaos in the name of social justice, but remaining a possibility less for any 'ideological' reasons than because of a quite conceivable failure of finance-capitalism to overcome its accumulating deadlocks.

The number also contains excellent articles on 'The Church and Civilization' by Jacques Maritain, and an 'Appeal to the Christian Conscience' regarding 'The Tragedy of Spain' from Nicholas Berdyaev, which would move us more powerfully if we could accept his highly simplified, and we think scarcely just, interpretation of events.

ANTI-WAR-PSYCHOSIS. In these days when it seems to many of us that the secular 'Left' journals and leaders are betraying the workers in their readiness to sacrifice men for ideologies, it is refreshing to turn to the anti-war campaign which is being carried on in the organs of Catholic workers. The June number of the English *Catholic Worker* asks many pertinent questions:

The war threat is still with us. We must use all our energies to oppose any danger of a general war. In our newspapers the issues are simplified so that we do not always realise that there are pros and cons.

The root of any war that may come is in the unjust peace made after the last war.

If there is another war will we have a better peace? Or shall we merely make preparations for another war?

Do we expect democracy to survive a war? Will not the forces of evil, from the Right and the Left, triumph throughout Europe if there is a general war?

We know that Germany is an aggressor nation, apparently bent on provoking war.

Can we presume that Russia is sincere in wanting to defend small nations? If she is, she ought to give independence to Georgia. It is only a few years since Russia signed a pact guaranteeing the frontiers of the independent Georgia, and within a very short space of time she marched in and conquered it by force.

Can we presume England is sincere? May not there be something in Hitler's remarks about Ireland and Palestine and the North-West Frontier? Are our hands completely free from guilt?

If we are to fight a just war our side must be completely right. Is it?

If we are to fight a just war, our method of waging that war must be completely just. Will it?

Are we sure that we shall not spread campaigns of lying propaganda? That we shall not deliberately kill women and children (Baldwin, in 1936, said: 'The only defence is offence which means that you have to kill women and children more quickly than the enemy . . .').

Are we sure that our cause is worth fighting for?

Are we sure that justice will triumph? That the new Europe will be based on justice and charity, and that greed and envy will be banished?

If we are, then let us fight knowing that God will be on our side.

If we are not sure—

Far removed from Europe it is perhaps easier to be more emphatic. The Australian *Catholic Worker* has it:

In every land, under every flag, the war party is on the march. It gathers recruits from every political creed and every social philosophy. It storms the Chancelleries of Europe; it captures the entire secular press of every country; it wins the allegiance of millions in every continent. Artificially stimulated by capitalists hungry for markets, by fanatics, communist, fascist and democratic, bent on a new crusade, and by peoples wanting injustice, a lust for blood has created the damnable impression that terrifying slaughter is desirable, necessary and inevitable.

War is never desirable. War is rarely necessary. War is not inevitable. If men do not want war, there need be no war. Men make war. Men may make peace.

To-day the whole Australian press talks war. The German press, the Russian press, the English press, the Italian press, talks war. The world is full of the rumour of war. Those responsible for this hysteria are guilty of the most terrible mortal sin. They crucify again both God and mankind.

In Australia the war party is on the march again. It exerts a powerful influence within the three great political parties. It cuts across every social division. It governs the counsels of trusts and combines; it directs the policy of the Communist Party.

Faced with this appalling fact, Australian Catholic workers, who are called to be Christian in the fullest sense of the word, must frame a policy to meet a world situation created by people who owe no allegiance to Christ. Of all the tasks confronting Catholic workers and the *Catholic Worker*, this is the most tragic. In formulating its policy, this paper cannot commit the Church or its bishops, whose duty it is to preach those principles that make for peace in justice; this paper commits no one but its writers.

We are not only Catholics. We are Catholic workers struggling to ensure within the limits of justice the rights of the Australian people. We cannot spread communism, fascism or democracy by bomb and bullet. We cannot defend interests or interest. We can defend only rights. We have a right to engage only in a just defensive war, a right inseparable from our duty to promote justice between nations.

Unless we have tried—and exhausted—all other means, we have no right to engage in such a war. Without reasonable hope of success we have no right to engage in such a war. We have no duty to die for a splendid sunset.

The Preservation of the Faith (of Silver Spring, Maryland) presents some object-lessons of 'The Menace of Propaganda' from 1914-1918. It recalls, for instance, how

On July 27th, 1914, the *London Daily Telegraph* held that 'The real pivot of the situation lies primarily in St. Petersburg.' Two days later, the *London Times* spoke of the 'pacific leanings' of the Kaiser. Then the Austro-Servian hostilities commenced. The *Daily Telegraph* suddenly discovered, on July 29th, that the Kaiser held 'the issues of European policy in the hollow of his hand.'

But the war-propaganda had not yet commenced in earnest, for on August 3rd the *Manchester Guardian* expressed a deep love for the 'highly cultured' German people, referring to the fact that 'Our two peoples have maintained unbroken peace since their earliest history.' By August 7th the temperature began to rise. Mr. H. G. Wells, writing in the *Daily Chronicle*, exclaimed: 'Every sword drawn against Germany is a sword drawn for Peace. The defeat of Germany may open the way to disarmament and peace throughout the earth.' Hostile alliances, to use a phrase of Leo XIII, made Europe a 'forest of bayonets.'

By August 14th the 'holy war' against Prussian militarism was in full swing. The thermometer burst late in August, 1914. Atrocity stories, foul pictures, denunciations, and wild tales filled the Allied press. No wonder that the London *Daily News*, on September 26th, could convince its readers that: 'We are fighting the common enemy of humanity.' Even that grand old figure, Gilbert K. Chesterton, was denouncing 'these venerated vandals.' England went mad within one month.

Do you not see in countless editorials and cartoons to-day a gospel of hate piled upon hate even in spite of a united will toward peace?

It then goes on to trace the evolution of a particular atrocity story:

Cologne, *Gazette*: 'When the fall of Antwerp got known, the Church bells were rung.'

Paris, *Le Matin*: 'According to the Cologne *Gazette*, the clergy of Antwerp were compelled to ring the church bells when the fortress was taken.'

London *Times*: 'According to what *Le Matin* has heard from Cologne, the Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been driven from their places.'

Rome, *Corriere della Sera*: '. . . the unfortunate Belgian priests who refused to ring the church bells when Antwerp was taken have been sentenced to hard labour.'

Paris, *Le Matin*: '. . . it is confirmed that the barbaric conquerors of Antwerp punished the unfortunate Belgian priests for their heroic refusal to ring the church bells by hanging them as live clappers to the bells with their heads down.'

Then this first-class atrocity story came to the United States!

Samples follow from the American Catholic press of those days, and the article concludes:

The lesson is clear enough. War-madness poisons even the minds of Catholics, who should above all men be leaders in the peace movement. We are amazed as we go over this study and profoundly moved when we recall the words of Pius XI back in his first encyclical in 1922. 'We behold with sorrow Society lapsing back slowly, but surely unto a state of barbarism.' We pray God to arrest this decline, to spare His people, to scatter those nations who want war.

CONTEMPORANEA. ART NOTES: Double Summer Number, generously illustrated, includes articles on Liverpool Cathedral, the Catholic chapel at Yale, and Christian art in missionary lands.

CITÉ CHRÉTIENNE (June 5): Dom A. de Lilienfeld on *Lord Acton and Liberty*.

CLERGY REVIEW (June): Canon George Smith contributes a helpful article on the theology underlying devotion to the Sacred Heart. Mgr. Ronald Knox equally helpful on prayer and 'schools' of prayer. Lord Clonmore at pains to explain Anglo-Catholic attitudes to the Holy See.

HOCHLAND (June): *Die Religion der Edda* by Eckart Peterich, and *Shakespeare. Nordischer Mythos und christliche Metaphysik* by Karl Schümmer: models of eirenic apologetic regarding German paganism and Christianity.

HOUSE OF HOSPITALITY NEWS (May): a real National Service.

LEADERS' BULLETIN, mimeographed organ of the Y.C.W., shows how English Jocists get to work (1/6 annually from 129 Malden Road, N.W.5).

SCHILDGENOSSEN retains a front-rank position as organ of constructive Catholic thought. May-June issue includes Philipp Dessauer on *Existenz*, of first importance for the understanding of Kierkegaard and the existentialists; F. J. J. Buytendijk on *The Origin of the Human Species* in the light of the most recent data and reflection; Guardini on *Dante*; Albert Mirgeler on *The Mission of Joan of Arc*; Sigismund von Radecki on *Christian Solitude*; and L. A. Winterswyl on the modern relevance of *Reading the Fathers*.

TERMINAL, the organ of the University of London Catholic Society, includes a new feature, *Forum*, for open discussion with unbelievers.

PENGUIN.