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DISPLACED POPULATIONS	The Editor	353
MOVING POPULATION	Finbar Synnott, O.P.	357
THE ASSIMILATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN AMERICAN SMALL TOWNS	Geoffrey Stone	366
CHINA'S POPULATION PROBLEMS	H. C. E. Zacharias	371
THE FIFTH ETAT IN GERMANY	K. E. Meyer	373
LUTHERANS, PLEASE REFUTE!	B. D. H. Miller	381
ERIC GILL: A REPLY	Walter Shewring	385
REVIEWS: T. Charles Edwards; Andrew Beck, A.A.; R. S. Austen; David Lutyens; Antonella Lothian; Ivo Thomas, O.P.		388

DISPLACED POPULATIONS

THE more or less absolute poverty which is proper only to the vowed state of Christian perfection has an uprooting effect which would be disastrous if applied to a whole people. That is one of the reasons why the idea of Christian poverty is difficult to understand although so fundamental to social teaching. It is in fact the wrong, negative type of poverty which in various ways has contributed so heavily towards the advancement of communism. It is one of the effects of uprooting bound up with the wrong aspects of poverty which we wish to consider here.

Man, having been formed the keystone of the created universe, naturally takes his place in that universe as exercising his power over it. Individual man dominates an individual section of the universe and in this way both integrates and is integrated into that part of creation. It is natural to man to be located on the earth's surface in various ways according to the individual, the family, the tribe, the race. He grows up where he cultivates the land and directs the beasts of 'lower' creation. It is more than a fortuitous accident of birth that a man is Scottish, or Greek, or Indian. He, his family, his clan, have to surmount the special difficulties arising from a highland or a lowland life, from extremes of heat and cold, from rainy and dry seasons. And in exercising his power and so overcoming these difficulties he becomes a part of that place. It is natural to man to be localised.

He can however be 'placed' in this way on the earth's surface in a very general way when the creatures which he directs and whence he derives a living are moving creatures. The man who is attached in this manner to herds of cattle and sheep is localised only according to the needs of his sheep and cattle with their pastures here and there on hills and lowlands, or the needs of goats on the mountain sides. Other races, more developed and civilised, are dependent at once on beasts and on fields; they direct the fertilisation of the soil as well as the mating of their animals. And these two types, I suppose, divide completely the natural man, the nomad, localised by his herds alone, the peasant grown into a landscape and turning it into a countryside.

But the nomad, precisely because he has not developed to the full his relationship with the rest of creation, can do no more than begin a culture. No organised civilisation can be constructed with tribes which are moving about the face of the earth. Their culture can often be very profound and significant, as witness the literature of the nomadic Jew in days of the Patriarchs, but it remains primitive. His arts are bound to be limited to more or less useful furnishings which are portable, like the ark of the Covenant; architecture and sculpture, a fully liturgical religion, a highly articulated system of government, these things form little or no part of the herdsman's life. There is, of course, a shading off into a more localised type of life, as we see in the history of the Jews themselves when they came to settle in the promised land and to build their temple. There are also various kinds of nomads. The sailor for whom the sea is the same salt water all over the globe holds on to one spot on that globe only through his family. He strives to dominate the more elemental elements of air and water, and for that reason he is less localised. Again there is the friar whose cloister is the whole world because of his more absolute interpretation of poverty, and who for that reason was the cause of an abbreviated liturgy held within the covers of a 'Breviary', and who cut down the elaborate ceremony of the stabilised monasteries. Such men have inspired artists and have themselves painted and sculpted but their architecture, like the sailor's ship, has been plain and useful. Functionalism rather than ornamentation characterises the work of the wanderer.

The peasant, on the other hand, is the foundation stone of a fully integrated society. It is he who relates Frenchmen to France and the Sicilians to Sicily. He is the link between Sussex men and their county, between the inhabitants of Barra and their Hebridean home. For him not every piece of land is the same, as the sea is for the sailor, but his own plot of land with its peculiar power of producing

certain roots or corn better than others, with its special groupings of trees and streams and hills, he is the master of all this. And so his home is his kingdom and the kingdom of his birth is built up on his home and on thousands like it. The great medieval architecture, the tremendous monastic liturgy, the civilisation which has known the universities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Cambridge, all have grown up from the 'grounded' man with his few acres and his few cattle. He has been the link between these particular men, whoever they may be, and their particular country. Not all are peasants, but when society was most stable and most fully developed the monk in his stall, the professor in his rostrum, the king on his throne, all had grown up as belonging to some countryside, or to some small township, mastering a place of their own. Patriotism is the property of a peasant. We look for loyalty to the farmer, the local tradesman, the small merchant in a market town. From such as these it spreads to the whole country. That is why local loyalties to be found in Wales and Scotland, and to a lesser extent in Somerset or East Anglia, should be the groundwork for unity and not the instrument of division. Indeed a United States of Europe would be possible if man understood the true architecture of society with its foundations dug deep in the million places where individual families are grounded.

Today, however, we live in an era of displaced persons. Families, tribes, races have been uprooted from the places in which they had exercised their civilising power for centuries, and have been cast adrift across the face of the earth. They have not even the anchorage of herds of sheep or cattle. They have no property. They do not even always desire property so long as they can have money in their pockets. The war has accentuated the problem into a violent crisis by the way it has uprooted millions of people in Europe, and the term 'displaced persons' has been coined to designate this particular type of moving population. But although with these poor homeless families the circumstances are so very much more acute the process of uprooting has been proceeding apace since the rise of industrialism. Wherever great industrial ventures have been set on foot 'labour' has been imported from any locality where it could be procured. Factories, mines, mills reared up their dark and smoking heads and the trek towards them began at once, thousands upon thousands of men and their families setting off as though bewitched. Local traditions, culture, civilisation are thus inevitably abandoned. A minority of the workers become integrated in the new locality in which they find themselves, as their children go to the local schools and mix with their new neighbours. But often the new place

is small or weak in its human links and the old traditions are swept away and nothing new exists to take their place.

Often the system is specifically organised to prevent local integration. An example of this may be found in the transport companies. Where 'bus drivers and conductors are able to run on the same route every day they get to know the places and the peoples at whose service their transport is run. They are, after a time, accepted by the local inhabitants and 'buses sometimes can follow closely the country and small town 'pubs' as local clubs and places of good fellowship. But many transport companies seem to regard such familiarity as undesirable; the men are given different routes and changed about over a large area so that they can take no roots. The 'bus service often ceases to be a true 'service' when run in this way by strangers. Mining too can become a local tradition and be the centre of local responsibility and pride. But where miners are taken long distances every day or even planted thousands of miles from their true homes loyalty, patriotism and responsibility evaporate almost at once.

That is why Communism is inevitable in this age of displaced persons. People often wonder how men can cheerfully receive orders from a foreign power and work with such enthusiasm against the well being of their own country. These people must remember that communism is organised at its centre by Jews and Asiatics whose nomadic origins make locality almost meaningless. These men think *naturally* in terms of world domination, just as the Jews in the time of Christ were expecting to be given power over all the earth. They are never properly integrated in any country; their natural instinct to exercise dominion over lower creation is not localised; now they have no longer the local cattle on which this instinct should by right be functioning; and so their horizon spreads out to envelop the whole universe. (That is why they make the best Catholics as well as the best Communists.) The men gathered under the Communist banner are displaced persons. Since the war the Russians have in fact seized every opportunity for displacing persons of all nationalities and localities. The result is practically inevitable. The article below on the moving populations of South Africa provides excellent examples of this natural tendency towards the breaking up of patriotism and local traditions and the introduction of internationalism. Evidence is to hand in every quarter: the French sailors provided one of the best breeding grounds for Communism in that country; uprooted transport workers, dockers, miners accept dictation from Russia without qualms. Lastly, the academic doctrinaire intellectual who has allowed his studies to sever him from local ties,

who has abused the internationalism of knowledge, he has been perhaps most powerful in spreading this new religion.

The present number of *BLACKFRIARS* contains several articles on the problem of populations and displaced persons because that is one of the fundamental problems behind the struggle between Communism and Christianity. It is no use opposing Communism, which feeds on real injustices, unless we can provide not merely a better redress for these injustices but also a means of re-integrating the people into localities. We must devise some way of re-placing the displaced persons, of slowing down and eventually stopping the movement of populations. One of the few places where any success in this sphere has been achieved is America, where hundreds of nationalities have settled down together and begun to lead a new localised life. The small towns of the U.S.A. should be an example worth studying in detail and *BLACKFRIARS* is here favoured by Mr Geoffrey Stone, an American who is in a position to lead the way in such an investigation. Perhaps the process of re-integration into a place is a thing which cometh not by observation; but certain it is that even should present Russian Communism be defeated it will be succeeded by something equally as unpatriotic and anti-social until populations are once more brought down to earth.

THE EDITOR

MOVING POPULATION

LESSONS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

THE population of South Africa has been formed by a series of migrations, all of them, if we except the prehistoric wanderings of the Bushmen and Hottentots, within recent times. The Native Africans came down from the central lakes within recent 'saga' memory. Their genealogies do not, of course, give dates. But probably 400 years covers the main movement. Among them came the invading Dutch and British. Other European races and, in large numbers, the Jewish people followed. There is a considerable number of Greeks and Syrians who, especially the latter but even to some extent the former, occupy a borderline position on the edge of the South African concept of 'European'. Into this mixture large numbers of Indians and Malays, and a small number of Chinese, were imported.

It would take many thousand words to describe the mere categorisation of South African population, in which Natives, Coloureds, Asiatics and Europeans have each a separate position, and each their