

do for the community, but also what the community does for the individual, and what members of the community do for each other. Birth-prevention is bad enough without calling it murder. The question of hunger-strike is touched on in passing, but not resolved. The bombing of military targets is mentioned more than once, but left rather in the air without reference to atomic warfare. As peace depends on world order we should have liked to see some development on international law.

When Father Aegidius talks of Ireland being excluded from the United Nations he is speaking off the theological record to an Irish audience, and has not said the last word. No doubt, ideally, if all the nations had a perfect charity the United Nations would be spared the threat of war. Unfortunately things are not so simple, and history shows that even in Catholic lands, politics come before religion.

Students of social science will find here an elementary introduction in synthetic form to Catholic social theory according to the principles of Aquinas. It is not quite correct to call this study a 'social philosophy' since it is a popularized theology of social order based on authority, with a good sprinkling of moralizing asides.

The Irish Dominican Publications must be congratulated on producing a well-printed volume.

AMBROSE FARRELL, O.P.

EXPERIENCE AND INTERPRETATION; the Gifford Lectures 1952, second series. By C. E. Raven. (Cambridge University Press; 21s.)

Canon Raven has called his Gifford lectures an attempt to set out a modern *Religio Medici*, implying perhaps that it is still paradoxical for a man of science to profess any religion. His main contention is that both science and religion are interpretations of experiences which are in reality prior to them; the experiences themselves cannot be formulated except through the interpretations which allow us to understand them and communicate them to others. It was a presupposition of the centuries during which Cartesian influence predominated, that once conceptual terms had been found for expressing experience, the experience itself could be safely forgotten; to our own less parochial awareness, no longer limited either in space or in time by the Greeks, experience seems more important than any of the ways in which we formulate it. The consequence is that we now have a chance of reconciling science and theology in a way that was impossible while each was looked on as an abstract system isolated in its own terminology. Canon Raven's book is important for the very reason that his constant care is to get behind superficial oppositions to a level at which they merge in a single experience. His book is far from perfect; readers must hack their way through the jungle of its learning; it is seldom

prudent and not always coherent; but it is pioneer work of real value, an adult attempt to integrate our belief.

It is now quite generally admitted that the common idea of nature as something able to be explained completely in terms of mechanism is due to what Whitehead called 'the fallacy of misplaced concreteness'; the totality of what is given to experience being replaced by an abstraction from that totality. As a biologist, Canon Raven reaches this conclusion readily enough; he brings interesting evidence against those theories which try to exclude purpose from the evolution of nature by seeking explanation in terms of natural selection and random variation. He is led to look on the world as a community of organisms at various levels of development, the process of whose evolution is only to be accounted for by the educative action of God. This action is not simply external to the organism; God must also act within. Canon Raven complains that orthodoxy now refuses to think of the Holy Spirit as acting in nature; and if he is less than fair to the Church which still sings at each Pentecost 'the Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole earth', it is difficult to deny that as individuals we now look on, say, St Francis' attitude to nature as at least eccentric, despite the fact that it is essentially the attitude of the gospels.

If nature is thus commonly thought of as a dead world, the supernatural realm of spirit will seem entirely separated from it, lying, to our imagination, somewhere above it. Yet, obviously enough, this is a travesty of the gospel picture; that implies no separation in the natural and supernatural activity of Incarnate God. Here, for Canon Raven, is language which is very close to experience, to be contrasted with the interpretation in terms of fourth and fifth century theological conceptions. For the language of function is closer to experience than the language of state; the gospels tell us what our Lord did rather than what he was. Modern science also prefers the language of function; that is why, according to Canon Raven, it provides a more satisfactory basis of interpretation in the modern world than does traditional theology. Here again he goes too far; even though we did not believe that the fourth-century formulations had been produced through the providential action of the Holy Spirit, we should still have to admit that they were the best means of safeguarding the truth for an age which did not think, like the Apostles did, in terms of function. And despite the influence of science, do we not still remain more in sympathy with Hellenistic ways of thought than with Syriac ones? Yet while we shall refuse to abandon our heritage, we may well admit that we find great difficulty in giving more than what Newman called 'notional assent' to traditional theological statements. We should remember that St Thomas' restatement of the old truths with

the help of new learning brought life to theology in his time; and at the end of this fascinating book may find ourselves asking whether the scientific world-view can do for us what Aristotle did for the thirteenth century. Perhaps it can; perhaps (as others have suggested) we shall have to wait until we have assimilated more of the philosophic wisdom of the East.

LAURENCE BRIGHT, O.P.

THE PROPHET ARMED: Trotsky 1879-1921. By Isaac Deutscher. (Oxford; 30s.)

As epigraph to this first volume of his life of Trotsky Mr Deutscher quotes Machiavelli on the obstacles encountered by innovators: 'All armed prophets have conquered, and the unarmed ones have been destroyed'. And certainly this first volume is the story of a conquering hero, from his taking command of the revolutionary Soviet in 1905 to his organization, almost single-handed, of the Red Army during the civil war. His arms were his skill in oratory, he was a very great orator; his power as a writer, he was the greatest of the Marxist writers; and his undoubted flair for administration to which Lenin bore witness. The one arm that he lacked, and the arm that was to bring about his fall and his banishment, was his inability to judge persons and above all his miscalculation, due in large measure to personal hostility, of Stalin. Prophet he certainly was—witness the remarkable insight in the view expressed in 1904 of the direction in which the party would move: 'The caucus substitutes itself for the party; then the Central Committee for the caucus; and finally a dictator substitutes himself for the Central Committee'.

Mr Deutscher, using the private papers of Trotsky which are now preserved at the Houghton Library of Harvard University, does full justice to this fascinating story—though one could have dispensed with the *longeurs* of the journalistic squabbles of the emigrés in the fourteen years before the October Revolution—and restores Trotsky to his rightful position in Russian history from which Soviet 'official history' has completely eliminated him. He shows how the tragedy began when Trotsky threw in his lot with Lenin in 1917, despite an instinctive repugnance for his ideas (Trotsky had always supported the mystique of the Soviet against the Party) which had kept him in opposition to the Bolsheviks from the split in the Party congress in 1903. It may be that this repugnance had its roots in the incompatibility of the Jew who had his links with the Western world and the closed Russian minds of Lenin and Stalin. But this does not emerge from Mr Deutscher's work, massive though it is. For he is too concerned with the 'dynamics of history', with the Russian working class which he