

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

CATHOLIC 'CORNHILL' AND CATHOLIC 'STRANDS.' Seventy-five years equal nine hundred *Months*. Seventy-five years ago, into a world very different from our own, *The Month* was born. In its 901st number, that for July, the Editor modestly recalls its fine history of achievement for Catholicism in England since those early days 'when Catholics were learning to express themselves, though their attitude would have to remain for a long time a defensive one.' If to-day the exertion of positive influence on public opinion concerns us more than defence of our own loyalty to the faith of our fathers, this has only been rendered possible by the indefatigable and often pugnacious defence which *The Month*, among others, put up in those days. But, as its Editor now recalls, the far-sighted Newman realised from the first that there were still more effective lines for an English Catholic review to follow:

A magazine, then, which, without effort or pretence, in a natural way, took part in all the questions of the day, not hiding that it was Catholic to the back-bone, but showing a real good will towards the institutions of the country, so far forth as they did not oppose Catholic truths and interests, showing that it understood them and could sympathize in them, and showing all this in the medium of good English, would create in the public mind a feeling of respect and deference for the opinion of the Catholic body which at present does not exist . . . As to the direct inculcation of Catholic truth, as such, in such a periodical, I should dread its effect . . . It seems to me that what is to be aimed at, is to lay a Catholic foundation of thought—and no foundation is above ground: and next, to lay it with Protestant bricks . . .

Things have changed a little, if only a very little, since Newman warned *The Month* even before it was born that 'Catholics are not a reading set,' and it is to *The Month* itself that we owe much of the change. Now, as hitherto, it is doing a great service in the application of Catholic principles to current problems, and if it is still somewhat more busied in the ready-made than in the made-to-measure department, it is no less indispensable for that.

We are reminded that *The Month* was modelled to a large extent on Thackeray's newly-founded *Cornhill*; Newman considered that, while avoiding technical subjects, it should not be a magazine of 'light literature,' and in this country the need for a Catholic magazine of light literature for the large *Strand* public has never yet been satisfactorily filled. Once again we would draw attention to *The Irish Rosary* edited by the Irish Dominicans. Its name is an unfortunate handicap against its meeting this need in England to the extent we could wish; but it is an astonishing sixpennyworth for those who are looking for a good light magazine as distinct from a 'review.' And it is steadily getting better and better. Among the excellent regular features may be mentioned the incisive Editorials, the very sensible 'Letters from London' of Peter Pensive, and the short stories of Fr. Edwin Essex, O.P. But pride of place must be given to Michael Burt's brilliant records of the proceedings of the Chutnipur Q.E.D. Club. (It is high time we had these collected in book form.) The Club has recently, with the assistance of Mr. Martin Lloyd-Barclay, been discussing the Banks—and very instructive and entertaining the discussion has been. 'An Hour in the Village Library' by Brigid Redmond in the July number is another good sample of how ideas can be put across to the magazine-reading public. The English *Rosary* is a much smaller affair, but it too, under the editorship of Fr. Walter Gumbley, O.P., is making renewed and successful efforts to meet the need for a sensible and unsentimental popular Catholic magazine. The *Holy Name Monthly*, edited by the Irish Dominicans in Australia, is a newer venture in the same direction; particularly noteworthy has been the series 'In Defence of the Jews' by Fr. McEvoy, O.P., in recent issues. It is perhaps a pity that none of these bear names that those of us with an aversion to parading piety would like our neighbours to see us reading in undergrounds and buses, or pass on to companions in the factory or office. The mid-Victorian founders of *The Month* were in this respect wiser in their generation. We wish *The Month* a maximum of happy birthdays to come—and a minimum of 'returns.'

CONSCIENCE-NARCOTIC. One value of a recent correspondence in the Catholic weeklies is justly assessed by the Editor of *The Sower*:

The discussions on the morality of war that are going on in the various organs of the Catholic press and which are kept alive by the very virile and provocative Pax Society will not, we think, have any great success in inducing Catholics to become conscientious objectors in the next war; but they do have an effect in steering the drift of public opinion towards a realization of the futility of war. The more we discuss the reasons for war and the conduct of war the less likely we are to be stampeded into fighting as the only way out of the next crisis when it comes. It is too late to be reasonable after the first shot has been fired, so let us do our thinking before the rifles are handed out.

Another blessed outcome of the correspondence should not be overlooked. We know now that those busybody clerics who are fearful that the next war is to be a mass-murder of non-combatant populations are upsetting us about nothing. (That the late Holy Father, in the remote fastnesses of the Vatican, should have shared this cynical view is regrettable—but *de mortuis* . . .) We know now that the authorities of Whitehall are all pukka sahibs who could never dream of expecting anything of us but good clean fighting—or of admitting it if they did. As for A.R.P., that does not mean at all that our Government anticipates that kind of a war, still less that it would carry that kind of warfare into enemy territory: it is obviously just a simple precaution from bombs which chance *per accidens* to miss their military objectives. Baldwin's much publicised warning about the character of the next war of course did not mean what it said, say what it meant, was dropped as an *obiter dictum*, or (alternatively) was never said at all. All the other utterances to similar effect of statesmen and soldiers have all been quoted in pacifist literature; *ergo* are unworthy of credence. It is indeed distressing that clerics—and theologians at that—who cannot possibly be expected to know anything about *facts*, should presume to misdirect the jury by considering even the possibility of such eventualities. Penguin's conscience was nearly re-

duced to the required state of torpor when he chanced on this:

The policy intended to be followed is to attack the German towns systematically. It is intended to concentrate on one town for successive days and then to pass on to several other towns, returning to the first town, *until the target is thoroughly destroyed, or at any rate the morale of the workmen so shaken that output is seriously interfered with.*

That comes from a Memorandum published by the British Government in 1918. It is quoted in that very unpacifist book, *World War in Spain*, by Arthur Loveday. May our conscience-soothers get their ingenuity to work on it without delay, lest we get restless again.

WHEN IS A NON-COMBATANT . . . ? But the Editor of *The Sower* himself has an all-in theory which is still more consoling. The 'Catholics and War' discussion, he considers,

would flow more rapidly if the disputants would look at war as it really is and not as it was two, four or eight hundred years ago. In those days fighting was done by professional soldiers; the rest of the population kept out of the ring. Nowadays war is a totalitarian business; we are all in it. To talk, therefore, as some of the disputants do, about the 'morality of killing civilians' is to assume conditions that no longer exist. There are no civilians, in the sense of non-combatants, in modern warfare, and to argue as though there were is, first of all, to mislead the discussion, and secondly, to conceal the real horror of modern warfare by giving the impression that it is, like ancient wars were, a fight under rules between specially chosen participants.

So bang goes the first principle of all the restrictions which Catholic tradition has imposed on the right to kill in warfare. Bang go all the constructions of international convention; bang, it would seem, their very basis in natural law. The very definition of war as *status per vim certantium qua tales sunt* no longer has any moral relevance. We are all *certantes* now, and the word might as well be dropped out of the definition. Now the remarkable thing is that *The Sower* Editor does not advance this theory to

prove that Christian participation in war can no longer be justified; he makes it quite clear later on that he does not hold that. What it is that he is trying to prove is not very clear; but if his readers draw the conclusion that it is that indiscriminate slaughter is now justified, they cannot well be blamed. But (since we are likely to hear more of this comfortable theory) the premisses deserve examination. Leaving aside the rather questionable generalisations about the character of 'ancient' wars, is it true that there are no non-combatants nowadays? In other words, are all subjects of an enemy state fair game for lethal weapons handled by Christians? Is it true that modern warfare is in this sense totalitarian? Now the authorities have hitherto agreed that 'absolute' or strictly unlimited 'totalitarian' warfare has never existed and never can exist. They have maintained that war, however murderous and 'total,' must always of its nature be to some extent limited. (Hoffman Nickerson's *Can We Limit War?*, chapter ii, may be cited for full discussion of the subject.) And however difficult the 'totalitarianisation' of war may make it to draw the line clearly between combatants and non-combatants, and whatever principle of classification we employ, it is difficult not to agree that non-combatants there always must be. No amount of mechanisation or conscription can ever make combatants out of babes in arms or babes unborn, out of the senile and the imbecile and the bedridden. Most of us, conscious of the heinousness of murder, and aware that Christian morality sanctions killing in warfare only if it is to be justified by the necessity of suppressing the unjust use of force, will prefer to extend the non-combatant category to all who are not (whether as principal agents or as their unfortunate and probably guiltless instruments) engaged in the employment of force. Before *The Sower* makes combatants of everybody it should give us its reasons instead of these airy and dangerous assertions; if it would sanction our killing anybody and everybody who is a subject of a state with which ours is at war, it should say so plainly, and tell us on what we are to base this unlimited right to take other people's lives. Perhaps this is not what *The*

Sower means; but the impression which such statements must make on public opinion is deplorable. Few things about Catholics are more unintelligible to our fellow-countrymen than what seems to them our exaggerated and almost inhuman respect for human life when abortion, craniotomy, or euthanasia are under discussion, as compared with our still more inhuman callousness about human life when it is a question of war. That the Editor of *The Sower* cannot be insensible to this is happily proved by his inclusion in the same number of a truly admirable article by Mr. A. C. F. Beales on 'Catholic Action and World Peace.' After recalling the non-Catholic origins of the peace movements in this country, Mr. Beales continues:

The important point about this is not that it was a non-Catholic crusade so much as that, right down to 1914, in its later days of effectiveness and universality, the movement was constantly deploring the lack of support forthcoming from the Churches, and never able to understand it. Some Churches did support it; the Free Churches in England in particular. In other cases, as with the Church of England, the official ostracism could be explained if not altogether appreciated; for in the last resort the Anglican Church was a department of State with compellable allegiance to the secular authority. But the non-co-operation of Rome was quite baffling to men like Richard and Burritt. Rome was *the* international body of the world. To the Papacy, as to these eager internationalists and pacifists, national frontiers were in no sense absolutes. And yet, said Birrett (in a not too happy metaphor), 'The Church, the Lamb's wife, sits by with arms folded as if her children (at war) were only playing.' In a bitter moment, Henry Richard declared his suspicion that the Christian Churches would always temporize—reserving the right 'to go in for the next war.' . . .

One cannot wonder if the average Englishman, who is neither Communist nor Atheist, should misjudge the Catholic attitude to such enterprises as the League of Nations Union. His verdict is likely to be, 'Well, if you are so indifferent to the indiscriminate slaughter of modern war that you will not co-operate with us, who have the campaign in full swing, then to hell with the Pope.' That is sad. It is equally unsatisfactory that it should be the outsider who comes to *us* with the message in terms of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

JUSTICE FIRST. Besides Mr. Beales' article, Art Kuhl's 'Order Please' in the June *Christian Front* is to be warmly commended. He does well to remind us that

Until a peace conference decides someday to place the necessary prerequisites for peace, until the nations sit down and without rancor or vindictiveness settle their basic disputes, until some slight concept of the reality of unity that is the Mystical Body of Christ, a body founded on charity, justice, and order, enters the world, *we are going to have nothing that does more than bear a slight facial resemblance to peace.* Without organic unity there is war, and all the temporizings, yieldings, bi- and tripartite agreements, trade concessions, and protectorates can't do a thing to change that fundamental fact.

Now you and I—and even those who come after us—will probably never see complete peace this side of heaven. And yet we can still pray '*thy kingdom come to earth*'; we can still work for the coming of that kingdom.

The only trouble is that we can't kid ourselves. Peace isn't a little something that is whipped up overnight or that comes with the turn of the season. Peace flows naturally from certain previously placed conditions; so far we've been mightily concerned with the end product but haven't even concerned ourselves with the conditions. So far we've insisted upon forgetting that peace is a consequence only of order, and order is a consequence only of justice.

The word justice in that sentence means just what it says. It means justice within nations and justice between nations.

To those nations that are at the moment wrapped in the immediate prospect of conflict, perhaps the more important of those is the second—justice between nations. For the past three years no one has been particularly anxious about the establishment of order on the Continent. The nations have been alternately and variously concerned with grabbing everything they could or with giving as little as seemed necessary at the moment. At no time, so far as I can recall, has anyone among the diplomats seriously suggested that true justice had a place in the conferences; the question was only '*With how much can we get away?*' When the Pope recently offered the facilities of the Vatican for a meeting at which the demands of justice could be fairly discussed, each of the nations shuddered slightly and turned away.

But the plain matter of fact—you can't avoid the definition—is that you'll have no peace until you have justice. The nations

of Europe would do well, very well, to start putting their houses into order

Take care of order and justice, and peace will take care of itself.

LEGION OF JUSTICE. Not only in the international sphere is *The Christian Front* concerned with justice. In the same number Richard Deverall relates the beginnings in U.S.A. of a Legion of Justice, inspired by the success of the Legion of Decency, to organise Catholics for social justice:

Happily, a technique, a method for bringing this about has been tried at Cleveland, Ohio, by the local Catholic Worker group. Under the leadership of a priest from John Carroll University, the Rev. Wilfrid G. Lauer, S.J., they got together their friends and neighbours and pledged to one another not to buy any goods not made by a union, wherever possible. They promised to avoid 'bargain' counters, because they knew that such 'bargain' counters too often reek with the sweat and blood of Christ's exploited brothers and sisters.

These good people of Cleveland formulated a pledge for Catholic and non-Catholic consumers: '*As a form of Catholic activity available to all . . . to help the worker in his righteous struggle for a just, living wage, we pledge to buy and encourage the buying of union-made products made under fair labour standards insofar as it is possible. We further pledge that when a union-made product is known to use inferior materials, practises race discrimination, or indulges in racketeering, we will withdraw our support.*

That is the pledge of the first Legion of Justice organized locally last fall at Clevedon, Ohio, by this Jesuit priest, Father Lauer. It showed few results in the beginning, but gradually the men and women in the Cleveland Legion caught the idea. They started asking their storekeeper friends whether they bought from union companies. They refrained from buying cigarettes which were made by anti-union cigarette corporations. In a few weeks, Father Lauer reports, the local stores stopped stocking such cigarettes and carried only union-made cigarettes.

As Father Lauer says: '*Just as the Legion of Decency powerfully affected the morality of the movies through the box office, so the Legion of Justice can powerfully affect justice in labour conditions across the counter and through consumer action . . .*

When buying, ask your dealer whether the product is union-made and whether his own help is getting a living wage. This form of Catholic activity will encourage not only the dealer but eventually the producer to the use of union labor.

The Legion of Justice has great possibilities as an organization of the Catholic consumer to promote social justice. It would appear that it is one of the most practical techniques yet devised to promote social justice, and it is one which every Catholic ought to try and push in his or her own neighborhood, or in the councils of his local fraternal organization.

As soon as the idea spreads, regional offices of the Legion can be set up and local groups can be organized for direct consumer action. Father Lauer, originator of the idea, advises that parish priests give talks on the idea, urging their parishioners to organize a local legion. Pledges must be distributed, signed, and returned to national headquarters. White Lists must be prepared by responsible committees of the Legion listing those companies and corporations who are supporting labour unions. Companies which are extraordinary fair to their employees . . . should be brought to the attention of all Legion members. And Legion members, if they begin to buy such products, will aid employers who want to practice justice to increase and multiply. Selfish operators who want to practice injustice and fight good unions will soon find that Catholics and their friends will have none of their 'bargains.'

Parish committees can be set up to investigate local conditions, to discuss these conditions with local management, and to make reports to their membership on the conditions they find.

And throughout the entire Legion, study clubs can begin to meet to discuss economic conditions, to learn about unions, and discover why Catholics should organize to promote social justice

Vain? A dream? Visionary?

I wonder. I think it is one of the grandest visions a man ever had. *I believe that the vision of Father Lauer of Cleveland, and his group of Catholic Worker friends, will bring about the formation of a Legion of Justice in America which will be one practical answer to the call of Pope Pius XI for economic and social justice.*

It certainly will. And we shall look forward over here to seeing if Justice gets as good a press as Decency did.

- CONTEMPORANEA. CATHOLIC WORLD (July): Powerful editorial on the 'unnatural liaison' of the British Lion and the Soviet Bear.
- CLERGY REVIEW (July): Mgr. R. A. Knox on *The Prayer of Acts and the Prayer of Stupidity*. Mgr. J. M. T. Barton on *Consolatio Scripturarum*: towards a Bible-reading revival.
- CROSS AND PLOUGH: *The Rape of the Earth*: alarming passages from the monumental 'World Survey of Soil-Erosion': 'Man has enriched himself at the expense of the soil: the soil can only recuperate at the expense of man.'
- ESPRIT (July): Special Refugee-Problem number: favours 'assimilation' policy for France.
- FIDES (June): Special Papacy number.
- ORATE FRATRES (June 11): *The Case for Private Piety*: the late Dom Virgil Michel leaves a corrective to some form of liturgical-revivalism. *Catholic-Puritanism* by Fr. H. A. Reinhold: 'Let us hope that no historian of the future will ever do what we have done so regretfully: draw conclusions about our religious life and level from our church statuary, buildings, emblems and prayer books.'
- THEOLOGY (July): *Rome and Biblical Criticism*: the Rev. Thomas M. Parker writes with understanding of the Biblical Commission. *Poetry and Belief* by S. L. Bethell: an essay towards their reintegration.
- VIE INTELLECTUELLE (June 10): *Frères séparés* by M. J. Congar, O.P.; *Edward King, évêque de Lincoln*, by C. F. Wilgress. (June 25): An important symposium on the Cinema.
- VIE SPIRITUELLE (July): *Le mystère de Dieu* and *Lui en nous, nous en Lui* are valuable theologico-devotional contributions.
- YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKER (July): *Housing and the Worker's Life*: 'Our enquiries into the home life of the young workers reveal the most appalling conditions under which the majority of the working class have to live.'

(Consideration of current quarterlies will be given in September)

PENGUIN.