

Pater non est Filius, Filius non est Spiritus Sanctus, Spiritus Sanctus non est Pater', pronounced with infinite fatigue and followed by a long sigh which, amplified, sounds like a crowd cheering. Another opening gambit is: 'In the Holy Trinity, there are five notions, four relations, three persons, two processions, one nature and, according to some, no argument'.

ITALIAN OPINION Church, Culture and Politics

CONTEMPORARY Catholic writing and discussion in Italy is naturally much affected by the special situation and responsibilities of the Catholic body in the national life. Since the war the government has been continuously in Catholic hands, and the republican Constitution itself, which came into force in 1948, is in large measure a product of Catholic minds. To say this is already, we shall see, to hint at certain elements of tension, and therefore of interest, in the situation.

One notes, then, a general emphasis on politics and questions of public morality—of *costume*, a term for which we have no exact equivalent. There are of course currents of interest worth remarking that go in other directions. Recent numbers of the monthly review *Studium*, edited at Rome by the University graduate section of Catholic Action, contain, for example, noteworthy metaphysical essays by P. Prini and S. Vanni Rovighi (this lady's work is especially interesting) while M. F. Sciacca, who directs the philosophical section of *Humanitas* (Brescia), continues his speculations in the Augustinian tradition. There are signs too of interest among the laity in theology, especially in such theological issues as are suggested by Christian reflection on the unification of the world by means of scientific technique with the consequent dwindling of old barriers between races and cultures. Here and there one notes a keen interest in non-Catholic forms of Christianity and in the eastern religious traditions. A certain 'eirenic' concern is in the air, and in Italy such concern is less limited by factors of national history than is normally the case in England. Examples of this trend are, on the popular level, *La Rocca* (Assisi), the organ of the Pro Civitate Christiana movement with its stress on 'Cristo nel mondo', and, on a more sophisticated level, the Florentine review *Testimonianze* edited by the Scolopian Ernesto Balducci. 'The actual state of things', wrote Balducci in 1958, 'confirms our Christian intuition, which may be expressed by saying that the axis of history is now moving, on the scale of values towards theology, in the geographical sphere towards the Mediterranean. So already our attention is drawn more to Gandhi (not to mention more august names) than to Marx, more to Taha Hussein than to Khrushchev, more to Ramakrishna than to Hegel, more to Père de Foucauld than to General de Gaulle' (*Testimonianze*, May 1958, p. 4).

These words are a warning to put first things first, yet if I lay my present stress on political and social issues (as these arise out of and directly relate to the Italian scene) I shall not be dealing with trivialities. For in a particu-

larly lucid and, as it were, exemplary way the post-war Italian political scene poses essential problems involved in the co-existence of the Catholic Church with modern democracy. The various Christian-democratic movements which have appeared in Europe since the latter half of the last century all involve an *internal* tension which is apt to give them, viewed from outside, an appearance of paradox or even of incoherence. How can the authoritarian claims and rules of the Catholic Church be reconciled, in the concrete contingencies of political and social life, with the liberties claimed for human nature as such by the liberal-democratic tradition? Yet that such a reconciliation is possible—and desirable—is precisely what Christian democracy affirms. And the interesting thing about Italy in this connection is that here historical circumstances have combined to give to that affirmation both a special urgency and a special difficulty of realization—a special urgency because of the Fascist experiment in anti-democracy, a special difficulty because of the local presence of the papacy and because of its head-on clash with the foundation-members of modern Italy, the liberals of the Risorgimento.

The Constitution of the modern Italian republic¹ represents a return to the liberal Risorgimento tradition—interrupted by Fascism—together with what may roughly be called a Christian Socialist element whose main sources are the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and the writings of Giuseppe Toniolo. In the actual drafting of the Constitution De Gasperi's influence predominated, and De Gasperi was the most distinguished survivor—apart from its founder Don Sturzo—of the old Partito Popolare which Mussolini had suppressed. Working under De Gasperi were younger men who had come to maturity in the 1930s and whose conception of Christian democracy owed much (apart from the sources mentioned above) to the writings of Maritain. The most distinguished of this group is perhaps Guido Gonella, who has recently given a lucid account of his collaboration with De Gasperi, in a lecture ('The contribution of Christian social thought to the preparation and composition of the text of the Constitution') given as one of a series sponsored by the Christian Democrat party on 'I Cattolici e lo Stato'.² Gonella's lecture itself presupposed Professor De Rosa's expert survey, in the same series, of the wider historical background—the gradual emergence after 1870 of a *positive* Catholic alternative to anti-clerical liberalism, the gradual acceptance by the Italian Catholics, under the cautious direction of the Holy See, of parliamentary democracy, and the consequent formation of the Partito Popolare.

Though De Rosa touches—discreetly—on such 'collusion' as there was between the Church and Fascism, he is not here concerned (and still less is Gonella) to face the anti-clerical criticism on the Christian Democratic party precisely at the point upon which this attack tends as a rule to converge, the point represented by article 7 of the Constitution.³ This important article acknowledges the independence and sovereignty in its own sphere of the Catholic Church and declares that the Italian State will regulate its relations with the Church by the Lateran Treaty of 1929—including the Concordat. It should be noted that this declaration is the only positive link between the republican Constitution and the Fascist State; as a whole the Constitution, as Gonella's lecture shows, expresses a point-by-point repudiation of Fascism. It is true of course that the connection with Fascism as such is a mere historical

¹ See N. Bobbio and F. Pierandrei, *Introduzione alla Costituzione*, Bari 1959.

² Rome, Edizioni 5 Lune, 1959.

³ See almost any number of the Roman weekly *Il Mondo*, the ablest 'laicist' journal in Italy.

contingency; to retain the agreement which Pius XI and Mussolini came to in 1929 is not as such to yield an inch to Fascism. Indeed the Fascist connection is probably only stressed by the critics for polemical reasons. In so far as they inherit the old Latin tradition of *laicismo*—a total opposition to the influence of the Church in politics and social life—their real *bête noire* is the Church and, in the Italian context, the Church's claim, as they would put it, to have undisputed control of the moral and religious life of Italy; and this claim, they declare, remains an ever-present threat to civil liberties so long as the government remains in Catholic hands and article 7 remains, as a bridgehead for 'clericalism', in the Constitution. And one has to admit that there is this at least to be said for the 'laicist' view, that the Church, in virtue of the Concordat, does hold a privileged position in the national life, and one which could lead in practice to procedures incompatible with the Constitution.⁴ There are at least the seeds of conflict. The Christian Democrats for their part are naturally sensitive to the accusation of disloyalty to the Constitution; after all, they had the chief share in its making. The secretary of the party, Aldo Moro, winding up the series of lectures already referred to, went so far as to say, 'the Constitution belongs to us'; and this 'because of our profound fidelity to the democratic method, . . . and because the Constitution, in some of its structural ideas, very clearly reflects the Christian vision'. And he concluded: 'The banner of the Constitution cannot be raised against us, for it is our own banner. It was lifted up by us and we have borne it with dignity, and shall continue to do so, as long as the Italian people choose to keep us in power.' Yet with all this one has the impression that the Italian Catholic laity are a little chary of meeting, except in rather abstract terms, the laicist attack—the suggestion that Italian democracy is seriously threatened by the Church; and this, perhaps, not because they are unsure of their position, but because they think it more suitable that in matters involving the policy and conduct of the hierarchy, the defence of the Church should be left to the clergy. But I offer this comment as conjecture merely.

And what of the Communist menace? But this seems to me, in spite of appearances, despite the space it occupies in the newspapers, essentially a less important matter than the one I have touched on above, the problems posed by Christian democracy as such. Communism could disappear from Italy tomorrow and those problems would remain. Communism is a contingent, one might almost say a marginal problem. It is true that the P.C.I. is the strongest Communist party in the West; but the problem it presents to Italian Catholics is one of tactics rather than principle. Can the Socialists be detached from the P.C.I. and so make possible that 'opening to the Left' which large sections of the Christian Democrat party (a notoriously heterogeneous body) desire? And, more fundamentally, how remove the social grievances that give Communism its chance? In Sicily Silvio Milazzo has broken with the Church and joined hands with the P.C.I. on the plea that 'anti-communism

⁴ For example, it is urged that article 5 of the Concordat, which excludes ex-priests from employment by the State, is against article 3 of the Constitution which declares that all Italian citizens have 'equal social dignity and are equal before the law, without distinction of sex, race, language, religion, political opinions or personal or social condition'. Again, Protestants in Italy quite often complain that they are not treated in the spirit of article 8 and article 19. A summary of these and other such grievances is published by 'Il Messaggero Evangelico', Rome: *I Patti Lateranensi* by G. Vingiano. On the juridical basis of the actual Church-State relationship see Bobbio and Pierandrei, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-8.

is a luxury which Sicily cannot afford'. These words are at once a challenge to the government and an implicit acknowledgment of the *economic* *raison-d'être* of Italian Communism. In this connection we may observe that by the explicit terms of the Constitution the Italian State is obliged to intervene actively to remedy the grievances of the poor, 'to remove those economic and social obstacles which in fact limit the liberty and equality of the citizens, and so hinder the full development of the human person' (art. 3). In the degree that this clause—of evidently Christian Socialist inspiration—is given effect in government policy, Communism may be expected to decline.

The space at my disposal is too brief for full comment on another interesting publication, sponsored by the Christian Democrats, but dealing with social aspects of contemporary Italian culture rather than with politics. *Cultura e Libertà* consists of seven lectures given last October at a meeting organized by a number of Catholic reviews concerned with culture in general or the arts in particular. All but one of these lectures deserve serious attention; the exception is that on the 'cultural' radio and television programmes; an uncritically superficial piece, in striking contrast with the brilliant lecture by A. Petrucci on the contemporary Italian cinema—a most sensitive and open-minded and at the same time profoundly Catholic treatment of the matter. The real achievement and also the perils of 'neo-realismo' are here acutely diagnosed, and without a trace of pomposity or patronage. In comparison with Petrucci's Catholic lectures—apart from Mario Appolonio's introductory one which deserves a word on its own—for all their evident seriousness, frequent acuteness and occasional profundity, leave one a little unsatisfied. Appolonio's introductory talk is a noble plea for a sincere examination of conscience on the part of Italian intellectuals, particularly those in the teaching profession. Himself a distinguished professor of literature at the Catholic University of Milan, Appolonio is deeply dissatisfied with the state of academic literary culture; lacking a true scale of values, it has succumbed to the snobbery of erudition and philological technique. 'We talk much of culture, but little about knowledge (*sapere*).' The vague term *cultura* has ousted the term *sapere*, and so *sapienza*, wisdom. Wisdom connotes a scale of values, which is precisely what we lack. The university culture of post-war Italy is nerveless, purblind, out of touch with the national life, socially sterile. Meanwhile the culture of the masses declines; the level of the press, the radio, television and cinema is culturally and morally low. So the indictment proceeds; it is one-sided, of course; a plea, not a detached analysis: but it expresses, I am sure, a discontent felt by many of the younger and more alert Italians today. They complain that their educational system breeds parrots and sycophants—in the moral and religious spheres as well as the intellectual. It is not for me to judge; but in passing I would note a really acute editorial in the October (1959) number of *Studium* diagnosing the characteristic intellectual weakness of Italians generally as a certain lack of education in the appreciation of the *opinabile*, of that which is mere matter of opinion or at most probable. This, as it seems to me, extremely acute judgment is offered as the explanation of that odd blend of conformism and dogmatic self-assertion (the latter in the political sphere especially) which, in the writer's view, is often to be found in Italian Catholics.

As I say, the other lectures in *Cultura e Libertà* leave me unsatisfied; not because they do not say many good things, but because they leave their respective themes rather in the air. G. Lombardi, after some stimulating pages on the Christian's freedom *vis-à-vis* the State, veers off into declamatory apolo-

getics. M. Marcazzan, whose theme is 'the School and the University', is polished, sober and reasonable, but a bit lacking in fire and force. He deplores facile criticisms of the system and observes, rightly, that they are often politically biased. He warns against the danger of a *politizzazione della scuola*, from whichever side this may come. The system of State schools—which in Italy means very nearly all the schools—as envisaged by the Constitution, is still young and its defects are like growing pains. The essential thing is to keep on reforming it as far as possible from *within*. The rather prickly matter of the religious instruction given in the State schools—a favourite target of the 'laicists'—is not discussed; but it turns up at the end of the book in the concluding remarks of G. B. Scaglia.

The remaining lecture, by A. Del Nocco on the relations between culture and politics in present-day Italy, is in a way the most interesting of all; but it contains too many ideas to be analysed at the end of an article. Its general drift seems to be that the Christian Democrats have not yet got a philosophy of politics; their political activity is not clearly related to a metaphysic. Thus this lecture is mostly critical rather than constructive. There is a long critique of the various possible approaches to Marxism; and finally a suggestion that the required philosophical synthesis may be found by developing the Christian platonism of Vico and Rosmini. For all its obscurity this lecture has the merit of confronting great issues in a serious self-critical way. That it has been printed in a semi-official party publication is a sign of intellectual honesty in those responsible.

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THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Criminology

ONE of the most disturbing features in this country during the years since the war has been the continuously high incidence of crime recorded by the police. During the last three years more than half a million crimes have been recorded annually in England and Wales. The latest issue of *Criminal Statistics* shows that 626 thousand indictable offences were reported to the police last year, a figure more than twice as large as that in 1938. In the nineteen forties this was thought to be attributable largely to the aftermath of the war and that, with the successful resettlement of returning servicemen, the development of the social services, the new system of education under the 1944 Act, the concerted efforts to provide large numbers of new houses, by the new provisions introduced by the Criminal Justice Act of 1948, the volume of crime would rapidly diminish to a figure at least as low as that prevailing before the war. But in the early nineteen fifties it was found that this was not happening. By 1952 the number of recorded crimes was already above half a million, and public uneasiness was clearly reflected in the *Report of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary* which stated that the bulk of crime for the country as a whole was such as 'to demand a very earnest consideration by all those concerned with the maintenance of law and order'. Since that date the crimes known to the police have increased by a further twenty per cent, and the continued existence of this phenomenon of lawlessness has come to be regarded as a major social problem.

This growth in the volume of crime recorded by the police has not been accompanied by any appreciable change in the trends in detection; in fact, there has been recently a slight decrease in the general rate of detection and during the last few years more than half of the crimes recorded by the police