

CATHOLICISM AND POLITICAL MYTHOLOGY

J. M. CAMERON

Professor of Philosophy in the University of Leeds

IN our day the Church is present, as it were, only on the margin of politics. Even in those countries, such as Ireland and Spain, where the Church is in one sense an obvious power in politics, the action of the Church is still marginal; for the substance of politics, however it may be constituted and whatever analysis of it we may offer, is what it is by reason of those secular forces which determine the character of politics in other states where the Church institutionally is of little or no account; and the fundamental decisions of the political authorities are always in the last resort swayed by secular considerations of precisely the same kind as those operative in non-Catholic societies. There is, outside the Soviet Union, the popular democracies, and China, a common social pattern, diversified in appearance and in its degree of maturity and in the political superstructure it bears, but still a common pattern: that of the capitalism of the mid-twentieth century. It is a capitalism distinguished by vast technical achievements, a steady flow of consumers' goods in the more advanced countries and the promise of similar bounty in the backward countries if only—no doubt this is a very large if—the problems of investment and population increase can be solved. It seems obvious to many that the masses in at least the United States, Great Britain, Western Germany, Scandinavia and similar countries, have 'never had it so good'. That it is nevertheless a sad society is reflected in its characteristic art. That it is an immoral society is made plain, not so much by the sexual licence, the passion for gambling, the violence so characteristic of its great cities, all the things that attract the ready censure of the moralist in and out of the pulpit, but rather by the way it spends its vast resources. Schools, hospitals, decent houses, handsome towns, the care of the old, the feeding of the hungry in the backward countries, these are obvious priorities in so rich a society; but they are commonly secondary to quite other concerns: advertising, palaces for oil companies, banks and pornographic newspapers; and—above all—defence, and a defence that is no defence but a threat to annihilate others a few minutes before we are ourselves annihilated.

This is a highly schematic and in detail unjust account of mid-century capitalism. But, despite all that is richly human within these societies, all that toughly struggles with the trivialities of the admiss

society, all that responds with generosity to the claims of the weak and the oppressed, it is no farther from the truth than is a telling caricature from its original. We live in a corrupt society, quite possibly in a doomed society, and one doomed, not by the political conflicts within it, but by its incapacity to free itself from the demons released when the first atomic bombs were dropped upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It would be unfair, but not so unfair as all that, to say that Catholics have very little to offer in face of this situation. Much moralizing goes on, it is true, rather in the style of MRA. (Indeed, it is alarming to find a certain rapprochement between prominent Catholic figures and this dubious movement.) There is much mulling over an ill-defined body of doctrine sometimes known as 'the social teaching of the Church', a mulling over which has no political consequences whatever, for the doctrines considered remain at a high level of generality, so that often quite opposite lines of policy seem equally compatible with them (contrast, for example, the savagely competitive societies of the United States and Western Germany with the apparent paternalism of Spain and Portugal, both of them equally approved by some Catholic publicists), and a good deal of what is said on such topics as private property and nationalization is calculated to comfort those who are satisfied with things as they are. In Britain and the United States there are tiny groups—the group round Dorothy Day, for example—more or less at odds with things as they are; in France such groups are much bigger and much more important—and for this reason France is, of all the western countries, the one where the critically minded Catholic (cleric or layman) feels less stifled than elsewhere. But the general picture is one in which Catholics, both the masses and the élites, are, except in certain specific fields such as those of education and sexual morality, contented with mid-century capitalism and prepared to defend it as a way of life against what is held to be the relentless and unceasing threat of world Communism to subvert it.

The comparative absence of the Church from the life of politics is not something peculiarly characteristic of the twentieth century. The rise of industrialism overtook a largely somnolent Christendom odiously content with the division of powers and of spheres of influence between throne and altar. The middle-class revolution and modern capitalism overcame a world wrapped in dreams of a social order, hierarchical and sanctified by the decencies of religious observance, the substance of which had dwindled to nothing. The terrible fractures of the shell of this order, from 1789 onwards, were put down to the machinations of a handful of agitators and *illuminati*.

The true state of affairs was very different and corresponded with fair accuracy to that described by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*. The middle-class revolution and the growth of industrialism were two aspects of a single process which had shattered the old social order beyond all possibility of reconstruction. The social ties of pre-capitalist society, between man and man, class and class, had been replaced by the cash nexus. Society seemed to be driving towards the point where it would be polarized between the owners of the means of production and a vast proletariat. The conflict between classes was not a fiction invented by Marx and Engels and put about by agitators: it was the plainest of facts in the England of Chartism or the Europe of 1848. And the response of the proletariat to the pressures of capitalism, the creation of the labour movement—trade unions, co-operative societies, political parties—is one of the great human achievements, an achievement rich in moral significance, for it represented much more than a merely defensive movement concerned with economic interests. It was in part a reconstitution of the human community fragmented by the rise of capitalism; and it created an entire world within which the politically conscious working man enjoyed a community of moral values and a community of aspiration. It is the immense *seriousness* of the world of the labour movement, its richness and humanity, that middle-class commentators, the Catholics among them even more than the others, have failed to grasp; and because they have failed to grasp this seriousness, they have failed equally to measure the tragedy of the corruption and decline of this movement in our own day.

Of course, in ultimate terms, for the believer, for the Church, which lives by the divine promises, the failure of the Church to be visibly present in the midst of great developments of the human spirit is not tragic. We live by faith, not by sight. The implication of the Church with the world is at all periods a trial of faith. One thinks of the degradation of the Papacy in the darkness of the tenth century, of Renaissance Rome, of the blood and agony of the seventeenth century the wounds of which are as yet scarcely crusted over. And yet it is important to put aside the temptation to quietism, a relapse into a peace which is quite other than the peace of Christ. 'All will be well', no doubt. To believe otherwise would be to lose one's faith. But there is a kind of peace of mind which is bought too cheaply, which represents not the victory of faith but a retreat into blindness and complacency. If in our own day there are those who (for example) treat, when faced with the problem of nuclear warfare in relation to questions of 'defence', the entire Catholic moral tradition

as of no account, as irrelevant to the conflict between Russia and the West—for is this not a conflict between Christianity and atheism, between the cause of God and the cause of the Devil?—this is a peace of mind bought too cheaply. Strangers and pilgrims we may be; but unless we are to relapse into a neo-Augustinian politics of a Lutheran type—and this would be to neglect the medieval and the modern political experience—we have to face the contemporary world of politics as that world within which Providence has placed us for purposes that we can, at least in part, hope to understand.

If the Church (in the sense of the actual historical community of the faithful) is, and has been throughout the era of the middle-class revolution, present only on the margin of politics, this is not a state of affairs to be altered by a simple decision. For one thing, this does not altogether depend upon Catholics, nor has it ever done so. We rightly feel as shameful those deficiencies in us which are in part responsible for this state of affairs. But the world necessarily resists the mind of the Church, and this is, and will be, just as true of a 'Catholic' régime as of any other. The Emperor Frederick II, Philip the Fair, Henry VIII, were products of a culture permeated by Catholicism, as are the Italian Communists of today. What has first to be done is something simpler and more humble: to understand how the present situation has come about; to understand our own society; to free ourselves from the major deformations that have overcome much Catholic social thinking; and patiently to explain to others how we see the tasks of Catholics today. The present writer would not wish to suggest that there is in the political field *one* saving truth which all Catholics of good will may be brought to accept; rather, that there is a multitude of obstacles to our thinking intelligently and responsibly about political matters. These have to be removed before we can even begin to do the job.

We are imprisoned within a number of political myths, forms of 'false consciousness', to use the Marxian-Hegelian terminology, that are demonstrably false but are nevertheless deeply rooted and hard to shift. This is almost a part of the definition of 'myth' in politics: a demonstrably false picture which is all the same cherished with affection and tenacity from motives which the cherishers are unwilling to recognize. This is clear enough if we take one of the great fundamental myths of our age, one with a wider influence than we commonly allow, and one which (scandalously) is not without influence upon sections of Catholic opinion: the myth of the Jewish world conspiracy. This myth is farcically absurd; its absurdity is demonstrable; but it is alive and vigorous in the minds of many otherwise rational people. Other myths which enchant Catholics—

though not Catholics only—are of a more complex order; and they are entertained with varying degrees of seriousness. I want to examine a particular instance; and then to examine the more generalized form of which this is a particular instance.

The Spanish Civil War was for European and American Catholics, as for liberals and socialists, a traumatic experience; and in both cases the war itself was transformed by mythical thinking into something that it never even remotely resembled. Here I am concerned only with the mythical thinking of Catholics. The Catholic account, set out in the Catholic press at the time, still present in the minds of the general run of Catholic publicists, is roughly as follows. The Spanish Civil War was a revolutionary attempt on the part of the Communist International to set up a Soviet State in Spain. The revolution was marked from the beginning by atrocities which revealed by their nature—the burning of churches, the murder of priests and religious, the prohibition of Catholic public worship—that a fundamental feature of Communist strategy was the destruction of the Christian religion. The attempt to set up a Soviet state was thwarted by a popular defence of the Church by Spanish Catholics under the leadership of General Franco, with the aid (it is grudgingly admitted) of Italian and German troops and war material, aid which was only solicited after the vast scale of Soviet intervention had become known.

Such is the popular Catholic account. It is false, and known to be false by many of those who nevertheless propagate the account.

The Spanish Communist party was of little importance at the beginning of the war. The major parties—and they were certainly in favour of using the war as a means of social revolution—in the Republican coalition in its first stages were the Socialists and the Anarchists, with their associated trade union organizations, and, in Catalonia, the P.O.U.M., a semi-Trotskyist workers' party. It was these parties, and these parties alone, that were responsible for the anti-clerical atrocities that marked the first stages of the war. (It is worth noting that the burning of churches and the murder of priests are not *new* phenomena in Spanish history.) The rise of the Communist party to a position, first of influence, and in the later, hopeless stages of the war, of nearly supreme power, was a consequence and a condition of the reception of military aid (material, pilots, specialists and—above all—G.P.U. men) from the Soviet Union. The Spanish Communist party, and the synthetic sister party set up in Catalonia, had no roots in the Spanish working class and was above all a party of the white-collar workers and even of sections of the bourgeoisie (e.g. the orange-growers of Valencia). Its close allies

in the Republican coalition were the Basque Catholics. (These latter, many of whose leaders, priests and laymen, are still in prison or in exile, are an awkwardness for the myth-mongers, more especially as the Basque country was one of the few areas of Spain where there was evident Catholic devotion before the Civil War, where, for example, mature males of the working class or the peasantry were to be seen at Mass on Sunday.) The Communists were throughout the war a counter-revolutionary force, strangling, when and in so far as they had enough power, the incipient social revolution, partly by their influence within the Republican coalition, an influence which sprang entirely from the carefully apportioned Soviet aid (aid which, incidentally, was paid for out of the gold reserves of the Bank of Spain), partly by the use of police terror under the leadership of the G.P.U. agents that entered Spain along with the tanks and the aeroplanes. (It is a macabre and appalling postscript to the war that most of the Soviet military specialists were liquidated in the later stages of the Great Purge on their return to the Soviet Union.) The scale of Soviet aid, always far less than that of the Italians and the Germans, was never considerable enough to give the Republicans a decisive advantage; it was enough to keep the war going until Stalin decided that Spain was expendable in the interests of his grand strategy. By the end of the war, if not before, an alliance with the Germans was becoming a genuine possibility. These are the principal facts denied by the standard Catholic myth. Naturally, the myth is used in various ways and in various forms. For example, the extent of Communist terrorism against the other parties of the Republican coalition is sometimes brought out in order to magnify the role of the Communists. But in general there is no serious attempt to see the facts of the Spanish situation in all their complexity. Everything is simplified and distorted in the interests of a prefabricated picture of base Communists engaged in an anti-religious war against single-minded defenders of the Faith. It is true, the counter-myth of constitutionally minded liberals and social democrats attacked without provocation by a Fascist counter-revolution is almost as distant from the facts, though it has greater surface plausibility.

I have already said that the myth of the Spanish Civil War is a particular instance of a more general myth. This myth I will now try to describe. It is the myth of the world conflict between the Church and Communism understood as being roughly conterminous with the conflict between the western Powers and the Powers of the Soviet bloc. Of course, that these two conflicts exist, and that there are connections of a kind between them, no one

would wish to deny; nor would I wish to deny that it is the steady policy of all the Communist states at best to hamper and at worst to destroy the influence of the Catholic Church and, though with less consistency, of other Christian bodies. The facts of a savage persecution in, say, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and China are plain enough. It is also plain that the Communists, in so far as we assume that what is put out for public consumption represents what they think, are also imprisoned within a myth which is the exact reverse of the Catholic myth: the view that the Pope, the Chinese bishops, indeed, all devout and active Catholics, are agents of 'western Imperialism' and spies for Britain and the United States.

An anecdote (a true story) well illustrates the dangers of the Catholic myth. During the war a Swiss priest was asked what he would do if there should be either a Soviet conquest of Switzerland or a Nazi conquest. He replied: 'If the Communists were to come, I would stay with my people, for I know I should be faced with an anti-Christian power. If the Nazis were to come, I would try to escape abroad; *for I fear I should deceive myself.*' That we should deceive ourselves: this is what we risk as we dwell within the myth. The western world has already passed judgment upon itself. The publication of the judgment is to be found in the explicit values of the affluent society and in the accepted concept of defence (the preparation of total war with nuclear weapons). Provided we do not quarrel seriously with this judgment, we are not only tolerated within western society; we are even given a place of honour, as front-rank fighters in the struggle against Communism, as indispensable providers of moral backing for the policies of N.A.T.O. Of course, the Church as such is not sucked into the myth. The utterances of Popes, of individual moral theologians and of particular national hierarchies, the witness of lay groups throughout the Catholic world, all these show an independence of the myth and are signs that the divine origin and mission of the Church are never permitted to be completely hidden. But if we take the Catholic masses, in so far as they are deployed politically through the Christian Democratic parties and the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States and receive their political formation through much of the Catholic press—notably that of the United States—then the situation is very different; for here the enchantment of the myth is virtually complete.¹

The bad consequences of imprisonment within the myth are many.

¹ Not all sections of the Christian Democratic parties are imprisoned within the myth. The French M.R.P. and the left wing of the Italian Christian Democrats are notably independent in their thinking.

The following may be singled out. First, there is a turning away from serious political analysis to a form of thinking which is paranoid and thus quasi-automatic. Secondly, there is a total lack of interest in the *truth* of political statements;² what are thought to matter are the supposed interests and intentions of those who make the statements (in this as in other matters there is a striking parallel with the vulgar Marxism of the Communists). Thirdly, there is a gross confusion, which is a betrayal by Catholics of their apostolic responsibility, between the Church and those political orders that are taken to be the institutional defences of the Church in the present situation.

The turning away from serious political analysis may be illustrated by the phenomenon of McCarthyism in the United States and by the reluctance to engage in a serious examination of Communism, especially since the death of Stalin. It would be idle to deny that the Catholic masses in the United States were largely convinced of the truth of McCarthy's picture of American and world politics; indeed, this picture is still widely entertained by those influenced by such powerful organs of Catholic opinion as the Brooklyn *Tablet*. That this picture is a form of mythical thinking need not be demonstrated in detail. McCarthy himself was always clear that the touch of fact would have disintegrated the picture; and although his allegations—that he had in his hand the names of so and so many card-carrying Communists in the employ of the State Department, and so on—were always given a factual *form*, the factual backing was never produced; in a sense—and this is the mark of mythical thinking—the question as to whether or not there *was* factual backing for these statements was profoundly uninteresting. In the same way, anti-semites have no interest in the factual truth of allegations of ritual murder or in the provenance of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. These matters have the same role in political discourse as magical explanations of natural processes in the natural sciences.

The failure to engage in a serious examination of Communism is more important, for it is characteristic of many intelligent Catholics who were never absorbed by the delusions of McCarthyism. Fundamentally, it springs from the desire that there should be, as it were, a counter-Church; and from this desire there springs the belief that Communism *is* this counter-Church. Further, just as in this form of

² A striking instance of this disregard of truth is to be found in a broadcast talk recently delivered over the Nairobi (Kenya) Radio by the Reverend E. Colleton, C.S.P. 'At the very beginning of the Russian Revolution a decree was passed declaring that all women between the ages of seventeen and thirty-two were the property of the State.' Thus Father Colleton. It is many years since we came across this fabrication. The talk is reprinted in *Christian Order*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan. 1960, edited by Paul Crane, S.J.

thinking Communism is disengaged from the historical actualities in which it is embodied, so, too, with the Church; the Church implicated in the world, with all the ambiguities and imperfections this involves, is refined into the shining and integrated enemy of a clinically pure Communism.

Communism is as much an historical phenomenon as Jacobinism. In both cases there is a revolutionary doctrine, extremely complex in its origins, which is caught up into a great political enterprise and becomes identified with a system of States. In both cases, the original dynamism of the doctrine is modified by the necessary political concerns of those who both hold the doctrine and occupy positions of power, positions which make their own demands, demands that cannot always be reconciled with what were originally taken to be the implications of the doctrine. In both cases, it is hard to say at what point the doctrine changes from a genuine belief to a manipulated ideology, useful as a means of bringing about political consequences desired for reasons quite unconnected with the doctrine, and from an ideology to a form of ritual speech no longer taken seriously by those who use it. It is easy enough to see that in the case of Jacobinism the change from revolutionary doctrine to manipulated ideology is as early as Thermidor, if not earlier. It is not much more difficult to see that the Bolshevism of as early as 1921 is already beginning to change its form under the pressure of the exigencies of the situation of the young Soviet State.

It is reasonable to believe that with the death of Stalin Communism began to pass through yet another mutation. The entire period of Stalinism was in violent contrast with the critical and iconoclastic tradition of Bolshevism; and it was too profound and irreversible a social experience for it to be possible, even had such typical products of the Stalinist machine as Malenkov and Khrushchev desired it, to return to the earlier doctrine of Bolshevism. What is dead as doctrine may survive as ideology and as ritual speech.³ But the empirical and pragmatic character of latter-day Bolshevism is revealed in a hundred ways: the compromise between the old Stalinists of the apparatus, the pitiful remnants of the opposition and the new middle class of technocrats, scientists and administrators (in itself a considerable political achievement represented by the ending of the terror and the breaking of the independent power of the political police) has already produced consequences both within the Soviet bloc and in the relations between this bloc and other states the depth and importance of

³ I have discussed this question in two Third Programme broadcasts, 'Problems of Communist Language', reprinted in *The Listener*, 3 and 10 September, 1953.

which it is easy to underestimate. In any case, no political analysis which sees Mr Khrushchev and his lieutenants as the general staff of the world revolution has much relation to the complexities of the Communist world.

Many Catholic commentators are reluctant to admit this. It is as though the picture of a bloc of states every feature of whose policy must be interpreted in relation to the strategy of world revolution *must* remain a fixed point upon which to orientate oneself. Otherwise one would be lost, one would not know where to go or what to say. Politics as a spectacle would then be infinitely complicated, infinitely baffling, a vast maze in which one cannot hope to chance upon the guiding thread; in which all judgments are judgments of, at best, probabilities, in which cautious decisions have to be taken in the twilight of opinion, not the glare of knowledge; above all, it would follow from the very uncertainties of politics that the fixed point for the Catholic would be his own moral tradition, not the delusion of the great Communist world conspiracy which provides a justification for the abandonment of this tradition; for in the apocalyptic struggle against the Communist antichrist everything (so it is supposed)—lies, hatred, slander, mass murder—is allowed. It is easier to accept a world in which the Devil is external to ourselves, is embodied in an institution, than to face the presence of evil within ourselves; and so the fixed point has to remain.

If we really are, as I have argued, faced with a form of social consciousness that is in its fundamental features delusory, then it would be wrong to suppose that it will be overcome by intellectual criticism. Paranoia is not cured by argument. Nor is there on the social level any therapy corresponding to that from which something may be expected at the level of the individual. Social delusions are destroyed by forces that one cannot anticipate and by the relentless pressure of facts, a pressure that is in the end effective. Think, for example, of the horrid prevalence of the belief in witchcraft from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries; or of the short nightmare during which the delusions of National Socialism overcame the German nation. In terms, then, of political argument we cannot hope to achieve more than small and isolated successes, and that with individuals whose thinking is delusory in only the most superficial sense.

The really hopeful feature of our situation lies not so much in the growing signs here and there of political sanity among Catholics (here again, in relation to such a question as the war in Algeria, the French offer us a splendid example), signs of an increasing disposition patiently to examine the political experience of our century and

to draw the necessary conclusions, though many examples could be cited, as in that profound renewal of the Church which is becoming manifest in our day. The plainest sign of this renewal is the gradual restoration of the Liturgy to the people. A change in modes of worship, and one moreover which is the fruit of the labours of scholars and antiquaries, how can this (some may ask) be a sign of a profound renewal of the life of the Church? How can a change in modes of worship affect the social role of the Church and touch the life of politics? What relation could there be between the Offertory procession and the young men and women pouring along the road to Aldermaston, between the Gélinau psalms and the world of 'pop' singers? No doubt such questions almost ask themselves.

If we are inclined to suppose that a change in the modes of worship cannot have serious consequences for real life, this is because we have lost our hold upon the meaning of worship, that we no longer—outside the pages of the textbooks—see this as the central activity of the people of God from which everything else may be hoped for. The central activity of those who were brought into the Church by the first preaching of the Apostles was 'the breaking of the bread, and the prayers'.⁴ It was from this centre, and through what this centre was, that the task of preaching the good news to every creature was in obedience undertaken. The entire effort of the Church, which has seen the rise and fall of civilizations and has shown itself in every century capable of leavening the dough of unregenerate human nature, springs from and returns to 'the breaking of the bread, and the prayers'. It is true, the Eucharistic Sacrifice has an absolute value which is independent of the degree of fervour and understanding in those who offer it; but to contribute less fervour and understanding than can at a given time be had is (if the expression may be permitted) a degradation of the Liturgy, and is accompanied by a false separation between preaching and teaching and the Liturgy. When the priest says *Orate, fratres* with no thought that his brethren should heed or understand, when the Mass of the catechumens is recited at the altar while a sermon is preached to the congregation, when the Canon is ended and the people of God present at the sacrifice do not even know that it is their privilege to ratify it with the *Amen*, then the function of the Liturgy is obscured; and it is possible for an entire generation of Catholics to fail altogether to realize the nature of the sacrifice—*meum sacrificium ac vestrum*, the Church teaches us through the mouth of the priest—at which they are present throughout their lives.

The restoration of the Liturgy to the people is, then, not only a

⁴ Acts ii, 42.

means of enabling both laity *and* clergy to participate intelligently—that is, as mature men, not as children—in public worship; it is also a renewal of the teaching mission of the Church and a renewal which presents us with a *norm*, the sacred tradition embodied in the Liturgy, which brings with it a sense of proportion in devotion and a realization of the relatively peripheral character of ephemeral fashions in devotion. The Liturgy thus becomes, what in theory it has always been, the means by which we make our own the substance of the Faith. In this process of making our own the substance of the Faith many old things that appear to be new come to light. There is, for example, a fresh realization that we are the new Israel, ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation’;⁵ and with this realization a new awareness of the orthodox doctrine of the priesthood of the laity.

Here is, perhaps, one of the chief fruits, so far as one can anticipate the later developments of a movement that is still in its earliest stages, of the Liturgical Movement: the growth in maturity of the laity in the body of the Church. In the modern period the laity has come to political maturity; but within the Church laymen have tended to remain childish. The anti-clericalism (and the clericalism) endemic in Catholic countries springs from this contradiction between political maturity and religious immaturity. With the Liturgical Movement and all that may come from it we are presented with the possibility of overcoming the contradiction and with it the tension and the sterility which have so often characterized the politics of Catholic societies. The appearance of a maturity which is that of the complete man, a social and political animal who takes his membership of the supernatural society seriously and intelligently, is a solvent of mythical thinking. It is not accidental that the centres of resistance to liturgical reform and to that whole renewal of the life of the Church that goes with it are precisely those groups most deeply enslaved by the political myths of our time; nor is it accidental that the punishment for religious immaturity in Catholic societies should be the popularity of mass Communist parties, themselves strongholds of another kind of mythical thinking. The opposed myths are, as it were, parasitic one upon the other.

This renewal of the life of the Church through the Liturgy and the Bible is still in the main something to be prayed for, hoped for, worked for. That it is a matter of extreme urgency (not that we should be consumed with anxiety), as urgent for the missionary work of the Church as for the salvaging of the Catholic masses in the old centres of Catholicism, scarcely needs to be argued. I am

⁵ 1 Peter ii, 9.

tempted to think that the greatest possibilities are to be found in the United States. In such societies as those of England and France the egalitarian present is profoundly modified by the hierarchical past. American society has never known, in quite the European way, the pressures of the social and ecclesiastical hierarchies, and this gives its atmosphere a charm and an intoxication—if, as well, a certain crudity—that one cannot find in Europe. There is, of course, an enormous flaw in American egalitarianism: the failure completely to integrate the Negro community within the common society. But one guesses that the thousands of Negroes who come in a great torrent from Mississippi and Alabama and the rest of the Deep South to the industries and towns north of the Mason-Dixon Line are in part moved by the hope that the United States may be for them what it has been for the immigrants from Europe. And in relation to *this* problem American Catholics have a good record, better, perhaps, than that of the other religious bodies. It would be ironical, and splendid, if the most potent of the Catholic myths were to receive a mortal wound in the land of the late Senator McCarthy.

NOTICE

The next issue of *BLACKFRIARS* will be an expanded Double Number (July-August, price 3s. 6d.) and will include 'Mind and Brain' by Sir Francis Walshe, F.R.S., 'Christianity and the World Religions' by Professor R. C. Zaehner, 'The Ends of Marriage' by Thomas Gilby, O.P. and 'Paul Tillich and St Thomas' by Kenelm Foster, O.P. There will be surveys of the religious situation in Scotland, and of recent Spanish opinion, as well as the usual features.