

## INTERFAITH ENCOUNTER

As we observe in our lead editorial, this magazine is committed to dialogue between men of different and even opposing views. One of America's most distinguished Catholic theologians—Father Gustave Weigel—last month welcomed the Protestant-Catholic dialogue as a new and major development in American life.

Thirty years ago, Father Weigel thinks, such a dialogue could not have taken place. But we have learned much since then, both about each other and about the necessity for communication between the several religious faiths.

"A climate of suspicion and resentment is not

the proper environment for virtue," Father Weigel states, "and it certainly weakens national unity. It is equally good for both Protestant and Catholic that they understand each other thoroughly and that they learn to trust each other in their differences."

To trust each other in our differences. This is the condition without which no communication can take place. The interfaith dialogue implies no compromise of essential views on any side. It does imply a deepening of views on every side and a willingness to learn from each other. We agree with Father Weigel that the developing exchange of ideas between men of different faiths is one of the most hopeful signs in the United States today.

## *in the magazines*

Bertrand Russell's declarations on the subject of the nuclear stalemate have involved him in what looks like a running debate with Sidney Hook. In the April 7 issue of the *New Leader*, Hook took Russell to task for telling Joseph Alsop that, if the Communists could not be persuaded to accept controlled nuclear disarmament, the West should disarm unilaterally even if this meant Communist world domination. This utterance was received by Hook "with a feeling of great personal sadness." And he commented, "Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! . . . When they listen to sentiments like this, why *should* the Soviets consent to controlled nuclear disarmament? All they need to do is wait and the world will be given to them on a platter . . ."

The *New Leader* for May 26 carries a rejoinder by Russell which chooses not to debate the inevitable outcome of his position, as Hook has analyzed it. Rather, Russell devotes himself to an elaboration of his highly publicized remark that he would prefer Communist domination to nuclear extinction. "Human history," Russell writes, "abounds in great disasters. One civilization after another has been swept away by hordes of barbarians . . . The men who think as Dr. Hook does are being un-historical and are displaying a myopic vision to which future centuries are invisible. A victory of Communism might be as disastrous as the barbarian destruction of the Roman empire, but there is no reason to think that it would be more disastrous than that event. While the human race survives, humaneness, love of liberty, and a civilized way of life will, sooner or later, prove irresistibly attractive."

For Hook, however, "a Communist world could easily become a scientific Gehenna—something in-

comparably worse than the destruction of the Roman empire by the barbarians . . . Communists have always argued that it is justified to bury several generations, if necessary, in order to fertilize the soil of history for a glorious future to be enjoyed by the still unborn. In some respects, Russell's argument is similar except that, as an opponent of Communism, he puts the glory much further into the future. Cosmic optimism, however, seems no more credible to me than historical optimism."

In "Thirty Years of Salazar," which appears in the May 30 issue of *The Commonweal*, Francis E. McMahon gives a comprehensive account of the Salazar regime in Portugal—its theoretical base (Charles Maurras' *L'Action Française* movement in the Twenties) its economic achievements, its record of Church-State relations, its colonial problems, its foreign policy. The greatest danger to the regime, McMahon concludes, is the one that troubles most modern dictators—"their final legacy is generally a political vacuum." Thirty years of Salazar have not as yet assured Portugal's future.

Of great informational value, too, is the May issue of *Social Order*; its lead article, "Duties to Underdeveloped Countries" by Leon H. Janssen, S. J., is followed by a symposium on the subject to which a dozen experts lend their knowledge and judgment.

PAMPHILUS