

in the magazines

With its October 30 issue, *The Commonweal* completes thirty-five years of publication. The Thirty-fifth Anniversary Issue is composed of editorials and articles published by *The Commonweal* in the last ten years. They cover a wide range of topics and, taken together, they provide a record of the problems and challenges religion has had to face in the last decade.

The editors have divided the issue into four main "chapters"—"The Christian in a Secularized Culture," "The Nature of the Catholic Response," "The Challenge of the Specific," and "Religion and Esthetic Values." The section called "The Challenge of the Specific" contains perhaps the most variety, addressing such issues as criticism of the UN, the Communist threat, the H-bomb, the McCarthy era, the problem of anti-intellectualism, religious and racial tensions in American society, pacifism, and social justice. An editorial dated July 29, 1955, on the eve of the Geneva conference (when peace seemed "to be breaking out all over"), remains a timely corrective to any currently renewed illusions about the nature of Soviet-American relations. "We have insisted," the editors write, "...that the struggle against world Communism cannot be solved by war, but that it cannot be solved, either, by refusing to recognize the struggle for what it is—a hostility that can have no end as long as Communism remains what it is. Our full diplomatic efforts must be exerted toward lessening the immediate dangers of war, toward seeking whatever compromises we can honorably come to with the Communist powers."

Another editorial warns against the temptation of the Christian to "write off a world" which, in its capacity for nuclear suicide, "seems already to have written off itself . . . The Christian cannot allow himself the luxury of despair even when the darkness seems everywhere about. He cannot merely retreat to his own certainties and fortify himself against disaster with his ultimate optimism. Christ wept over the things that were to come upon Jerusalem. His followers too must concern themselves with their time and place. Knowing that, in the final sense, everything depends on God, they must still act as though everything depended on them."

Orbis, the quarterly journal of world affairs published by the Foreign Policy Research Institute of the University of Pennsylvania, includes in its fall issue an article by Dean Acheson entitled "The Premises of American Policy." The former Secretary of State examines the imperatives of international

stability and cites some recent examples of diplomatic imprudence which have imperilled the chances for that stability. Mr. Acheson sees our task as twofold: we must strengthen the unity of the Atlantic nations ("the *sine qua non* of Free World survival") through NATO, and we must find some effective means of checking the Sino-Soviet drive for global hegemony. This second task involves an understanding of the scientific revolution and its effect upon the "uncommitted peoples" of Asia and Africa. But it is to the first task that Mr. Acheson devotes most of his attention.

Noting the failures of past policies to provide a lasting guarantee of military security, Mr. Acheson advocates a new military strategy for NATO which could "confront any Soviet ground probe with the very danger which the Kremlin wants to avoid—namely the risk of nuclear holocaust." "The transcendent Soviet objective," Mr. Acheson writes, "is to drive us from Europe. So long as the Soviet leaders believe that this objective lies within their grasp, for just so long will a conclusive settlement—in Berlin and elsewhere—be impossible."

"Human Estrangement and the Failure of the Political Imagination" is the subject of an article in the October issue of *The Review of Politics*. Written by Glenn Tinder, who teaches in the University of Massachusetts's Department of Government, the article is a penetrating analysis of the failure of contemporary politics to relate to the central fact of the contemporary human condition, which the author defines as "mass disintegration." With the passing of former social inequalities as the basis for political and economic reform, "new and equally sinister dominations have come to prevail." The consequent alienation of men from nature, from their environment and possessions, from their past and future, and from each other has become the pervasive subject of modern art, philosophy and letters. Of these realities the political imagination is ignorant. "It is 'the stranger,' far more than the proletarian," writes Mr. Tinder, "who now demands understanding on the part of those with political power." The more so, since "the ultimate peril implicit in the condition of estrangement is that of nihilism. . . . So long as we are oblivious to mass disintegration, and to the nihilistic proclivities which may arise from it, the imagination of those who deal with international relations is necessarily to some degree crippled."

PAMPHILUS