

Moral Witness to the Problems of Modern Man

The Popes and World Government by Emile Guerry. Helicon. 254 pp. \$5.50.

by Peter Riga

It may seem to some that Vatican II has already accomplished a great deal towards bringing the moral force of the Catholic Church to bear on the agonizing problems of the modern world. History, of course, will be the final judge as to whether this is true or whether reform will prove to be a simple letter of the various *schemata*, as has happened before in the history of the Church. Yet, whatever the outcome, history, both secular and religious, will have to bear witness to the courageous efforts of the modern popes from Leo XIII to John XXIII to make moral witness relevant to the problems of modern man: world peace, disarmament, civil rights, economic development, nuclear warfare, the international community.

If the Church, through fear or timidity, sinks back once again into its protected ghetto, it will most certainly not be the fault of these leaders of Catholicism. If the Church is made relevant, credit will be due, above all, to Pius XII and John XXIII. The work of the former prepared the *aggiornamento* of the latter. John could never have done what in fact he did do except for the groundwork of Pope Pius XII. The present book by Archbishop Guerry amply bears this out.

Pius XII sought for the full eighteen years of his pontificate for solutions for international conflicts and, in the process, evolved a whole doctrine concerning the need and obligation to form a juridically sound and effi-

cacious international community for the promotion of the common good of mankind. Time and again, Pius singled out the United Nations as the first valid and efficacious step in this direction. The dangers to world peace are so great, the problems of the developing nations are so many, that only the concerted efforts of all nations under the authority of one juridical organization directing these efforts for the good of all would suffice. The obligation of all men and certainly of all Christians, to foster, promote and strengthen such an international community was, for Pius, so evident that he never ceased to inculcate this doctrine throughout his pontificate. The texts and messages of Pius are ably handled and their implications brilliantly outlined by Archbishop Guerry.

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John XXIII had only to take up and solidify the work of Pius. In a true sense, *Pacem* was really the work of both popes. The footnotes throughout *Pacem*, referring continuously to the work of Pius, bear abundant evidence of this.

Both popes recognized the dynamic revolution which men are undergoing today. It is a human revolution where freedom and independence are the watchwords: freedom from grinding and humiliating poverty and misery; freedom from the imperialism of the old world from which over a billion people have received their independence. This freedom is everywhere threatened. In their ideological struggle both East and West, under varying pretexts, dominate the rest of the world politically, economically and militarily. This freedom of human revolution was crushed in Hungary by Russian tanks; it is being crushed today by the American napalm bombs in Vietnam. There exists the real danger that

these ideological struggles will lead to the destruction of the human race as we know it.

The popes appeal beyond ideology to what is common to all men: they are human persons with rights and immense dignity. This must be the foundation of the national and international community. In the Christmas message of 1942, Pius XII drew up such a list of fundamental human rights and called for a juridical order to protect these rights against every arbitrary assault. This list is strikingly similar to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the U.N. in 1948. John XXIII made explicit reference to this declaration and praised it (*Pacem*, par. 143). Men, these popes make clear, are part of the one human family, united as they are in nature and dignity and whose common Father they all have in heaven. This was no metaphor for the popes, and all other characteristics of race, color, national origin are subordinate to this one great fact. From this comes the obligation of understanding and benevolence which alone can create a respect and an atmosphere in which fear and distrust are banished.

It is ironic that at a time of maximum danger for mankind we have maximum misunderstanding and fear. Our century has discovered interplanetary space but has hardly begun to explore the space which separates men from each other because of ideology. We have thrown up massive bridges, but we do not yet know how to build bridges from people to people and to join the two sides. If the world is to survive, an atmosphere of mutual dialogue must be initiated. Pius indicated its necessity for world peace; John attempted to erect such a bridge. With many of the causes of rebellion and revolution changed by social and interna-

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tional justice, communism and capitalism will have to change—and already have, at least to some degree—during the course of history.

Two of the greatest obstacles to world peace which Pope Pius XII had to face were nuclear war and world poverty. These continue to be obstacles for us.

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What Catholic theology has, to date, taught us about the "just war" is as follows: the killing of one's fellow human beings in war is permitted as an act of self-defense. In such a war, some non-combatants are unavoidably killed as well. This is permitted if their death is an unintentional side effect of the war itself. One must have exhausted all means for a peaceful solution. Furthermore, one must have well founded reasons for believing that the objective can be accomplished by war. Its advantages would have to be greater than its disadvantages and the evil done to the enemy must not exceed his guilt. Finally, the war must be waged with as little cruelty as possible and its end must be peace which *eo ipso* excludes all acts of terror and reprisals.

It can safely be said that this has been the traditional doctrine of the "just war" in Catholic theology. It is doubtful whether such a war has ever been fought, but for the sake of argument, let it be said that at least, from a moral point of view, such a war was thinkable. A short reflection on nuclear weapons makes a mockery of the "just war," but so too has conventional warfare ever since the American Civil War introduced "total" war.

In this respect, Pope Pius XII was cautious in his judgment. It is true that he justified ABC warfare under stringent conditions, as Bishop Hannan has recently pointed out at Vatican II. But it must immediately be said that the bishop missed the whole point of Pius' reasoning in this matter.

The Pope was not measuring megatonnage, because this was beyond his competence. What the Pope did see (and the bishop doesn't) was the moral issue in all clarity. Thus from the Pope's message of September 30, 1954:

Every time the employment of a means entails such an extension of harm that it entirely escapes man's control, its use must be rejected as immoral. Here there would no longer be a question of "defense" against injustice and of the necessary "safeguarding" of legitimate possessions, but of the pure and simple annihilation of all human life within the radius of action. This is not permitted on any score.

What are his criteria? Not so much the megatonnage, but the indiscriminate massacre of non-combatants. He cites explicitly "The atrocities and the illicit use of means of destruction, even against the non-combatants and refugees, against the old, women and children; contempt for human dignity, liberty and life, from which result acts that cry to God for vengeance" (December 24, 1939).

It is obvious that this moral censure is for all types of indiscriminate bombings and conduct of war: from the obliteration bombings of Dresden to Hiroshima, the manifestations, *par excellence*, of total war. The question of technicalities, of *Davy Crocketts* or *Minutemen*, is beside the point. What came under censure by Pius XII through John XXIII and is now included in Schema 13 of Vatican II is the use of massive weapons which strike indiscriminately at whole populations. Nuclear weapons only make clearer the immorality of total war made popular by American, British and German aviators during World War II. It is only a logical step from the teachings of Pius XII to the famous text of *Pacem*: "It is unthinkable that in our atomic age war could still be the fit means

of restoring violated rights" (par. 127: Not "almost unthinkable" or "hardly possible" as the Paulist translation erroneously has it). Schema 13 simply codifies this teaching.

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There are many other obstacles to peace. The grinding poverty of millions of the world's peoples was continuously on the mind of Pius XII. The human revolution throughout the globe will no longer submit to this and the struggle continues with the rich (18 per cent) of the world growing richer (they consume 70 per cent of its goods) and the poor getting poorer. Unless this trend can somehow be reversed, there can never be peace no matter how many blockades the Americans throw up around Cuba or how many Marines are sent to quell a civil war in Vietnam under the specious guise of "anti-communism." There are some in the State Department who see this human revolution throughout the globe for what it is and have done something about it. But for too many of the world's people it is too little and too late; with the Americans growing "tougher" and the vast majority of mankind growing more impatient with narrow American parochialism.

The international doctrine of the popes offers a solution, a way out of an increasingly perplexing situation. By strengthening the U.N. instead of just using it, the U.S. could channel this revolutionary energy to human goals—not necessarily American capitalistic goals—and thereby to peace.

The work of peace in the international society is one of human rights, international and national social justice, respect of diversity of cultures, races, economic systems and political rule, respected international law. It is not a utopia of pious religious popes in Rome; in a nuclear age, this program has become the means of survival of the human race itself.

Instead of Violence

Arthur & Lila Weinberg, eds. Beacon. 486 pp. \$2.75

This volume contains, in addition to the more than 100 selections from the writings of people concerned with the problems of peace and non-violence (from Lao-Tse to Pope John XXIII), an extensive supplementary bibliography of over 200 books.

Political Succession in the USSR

Myron Rush. Columbia. 223 pp. \$5.95

"A theoretical analysis and historical account of the problem of succession in the USSR"—including an examination of Khrushchev's provisions for his own succession and their implication for the U.S.—were the aim of the present study, completed prior to the October coup d'état. The author has added a brief epilogue which deals with the Premier's removal from power.

American Support of Free Elections Abroad

Theodore Paul Wright, Jr. Public Affairs Press. 184 pp. \$4.50

Lessons from earlier chapters of our nation's diplomatic history lead the author to the conclusion that the insistence of the U.S. upon "free and fair elections" in troubled areas of the globe, "has not been very effective in achieving the goals of American policy makers," and often has some undesirable consequences.

The Authentic Morality

Ignace Lepp. Macmillan. 203 pp. \$5.00

Father Lepp, a French priest and psychotherapist, author of the recently published *Atheism in Our Time*, here explores the need for a "new morality" and examines a number of areas—including nationalism and international relations—where he believes the limits of traditional thought to be most apparent.

The Exercise of Sovereignty

Charles Burton Marshall. Johns Hopkins. 282 pp. \$6.50

Mr. Marshall discards the notion of the "obsoleteness of sovereignty" as a factor in international affairs, and in these "Papers on Foreign Policy" he deals with the characteristics and problems of the sovereign state today. The pieces have been grouped in three large divisions: "The Conditions of Foreign Policy," "The Risks of Sovereignty," and "Relations with New States."

Poverty on a Small Planet

Edward Rogers. Macmillan. 127 pp. \$2.95

The author is an Englishman who believes that even more than "a worthy act of Christian compassion," the relief of the world's poor is "a Christian imperative." He examines some problems and possible programs and challenges his readers "to envisage the campaign against world poverty and hunger as an alternative to war between nations."

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341

CONTENTS

Vietnam: The Treacherous Demands 1
Editorial

In the Magazines 2

Internationalism and the Nations of Europe 5
John Lukacs

The Other Bombs: France and China 9
Other Voices

BOOKS
Moral Witness to the Problems of Modern Man 14
Peter Riga

Current Reading 16

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