

assess and pass judgment on South Africa's efforts to enhance the welfare of South-West Africa. This means that the legal justification has been sundered from what is commonly held to be a moral responsibility. For the population of South-West Africa is 85,000 white and 488,000 non-white, and apartheid—which keeps the whites firmly in control—is under judgment.

If this decision exposes the weakness of the

World Court and the difficulty of establishing an international code of conduct, it also shows the need for that code and an effective Court. For when the legal paths to justice are clogged or closed those who are militantly determined to reach that goal will search out other paths. And in their efforts conflict will necessarily be heightened before it is resolved.

J.F.

in the magazines

Robert L. Holmes of the University of Rochester philosophy department answers those who challenge "the expression by churchmen of views critical of government policy in the area of international affairs" in an article prepared for the June 15 issue of *Christian Century*. Holmes concedes that perhaps "the churchman qua churchman should stick to his business, but the business of the churchman qua Christian—there is a difference here—is to address himself with all the power of his conviction to the most pressing problems of the day. . . . No human action, political or otherwise, is immune from possible moral evaluation, and for the Christian there is no conceivable moral evaluation to which his religion is not directly relevant.

"Kant once said, 'We do not enter church to serve God there: we do so in order to prepare ourselves to serve Him in our lives.' Surely if serving God in our live means anything at all it means that certain actions in relation to our fellow men are enjoined and others prohibited. To suppose otherwise is to insulate an ethical code from the very subject matter to which it is supposed to apply. The relevant question is not *whether* Christianity enjoins, permits and prohibits various things in our conduct, but *what* in particular it so enjoins, permits and prohibits; not *whether* the New Testament law of love is to be translated into terms applicable to human conduct, but *how* it is to be so translated. To leave this question unanswered—or worse yet, unasked—is to render Christianity a shallow and ingrown shadow of religion demanding little more of us than ritualistic piety.

"But suppose the question is answered by granting that churchmen may speak to issues concerning national policy, provided they confine themselves to 'general moral issues?'" the author asks. The judgment

here is that the churchman is less knowledgeable than the statesman in the area of specific policy decisions. "This view is mistaken," Holmes contends. "For once it is conceded that the churchman can properly assess actual and possible general policies, he cannot consistently be denied the further right (and, I should argue, the duty) to concern himself with the morality of specific policies. One cannot condemn or condone a general principle without condemning or condoning the particular acts and decisions subsumable under it—a point as much of logic as of morality.

". . . Granted, principles sometimes conflict and incompatible judgments may claim equal *prima facie* warrant. But what this shows is not that actions in the particular case are exempt from the scrutiny of Christian conscience, but that they deserve all the more circumspect examination from the standpoint of Christian morality. And it will not do to plead that since these are times of crisis we must stand quietly behind the government no matter what our convictions. For if a government's policy should be morally wrong, the prosecution of that policy may in the long-run constitute a greater threat than the crises it was designed to meet. . . ."

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Colm Brogan views with deep concern the widening audience being granted in England to "The Catholic Marxists," and the role of a "radical Catholic" magazine which circulates the views of this school of thought. In an article in the June 24 issue of the *Spectator*, Brogan notes that "the end of the Vatican Council came as a deep relief to a multitude of Catholics who had been nearly swept off their feet by the wind of ecclesiastical change. They had been faced with more changes in four years than had hap-

pened in the previous four centuries, and although they had shown exemplary loyalty, they looked forward to a period of quiet in which they might adjust themselves to the new order.

"Little did they know that an exceedingly active and pugnacious school of Catholic radicals regard the Council reforms in the same light as Communists regard bourgeois reforms in the secular world, and for the same reason. They believe that superficial changes can do little good and may do much harm if they distract the masses from seeking the true solution of their ills. To the Communists, that solution is to be found in the teaching of Karl Marx. There are Catholic radicals who agree."

A publication called *Slant*, the author goes on to say, "is the organ of an evangelising group which calls for a synthesis with Marxism, a rejection of the Papal social encyclicals, acceptance of the class war, the scrapping of almost all of institutional Christianity and the ranging of the Church on the side of revolutionary socialism."

But these "Catholic Marxists have some awkward questions to answer," Brogan asserts. For instance, "the *Slant* group are quoted as saying that Marx did not consciously reject God, but cast aside the phony escapism that passed for religion. They say, justly enough, that alienation was a key in Marx's thought, but they are remarkably disinclined to turn the key. Marx taught that the expression of the totality of man's being demanded the destruction of everything that alienates man from his work, from society, from nature and from himself. . . . Money and religion are the polarities of alienation. Money, said Marx, is the Beast of the Apocalypse, and, of course, a religion that is dogmatic, hierarchical and sacramental is trebly alienating, the Triple Tyrant of the Babylonian Woe. Anyone who denies that Marx's atheism was total and fundamental can be excused only by ignorance."

Of the increasing exposure being given these views in a number of circles, the author notes that "J. M. Keynes said that what was taught in the university classrooms of one generation was shouted in the streets of the next. This is by no means always true, but it is to the universities and other colleges, including teachers' training colleges, that the *Slant* group are directing their energies. Even the Newman Association, the association of Catholic university graduates, has been persuaded to give its countenance to *Slant* meetings. This can only be explained by the latest treason of the clerks, the fear of taking any stand which progressives could call obscurantist or reactionary.

"It is the students, with their minds half-formed and half-informed, malleable and susceptible to fashionable sophistries, who are the potential victims, the 'little ones' of the mass media of higher education. A heavy responsibility lies on those who offer them false guidance and, if they are not checked,

they will have much to answer for. Pareto, not noted for charity, said that nearly all men who deceive others begin by deceiving themselves. This excuse must be allowed to the Catholic Communists, if only to escape the judgment that Christ himself passed on those who offended against the innocent."

In a lively, provocative article which appears in the July issue of *Foreign Affairs*, the *Times*' Associate Editor, who was for many years its chief Washington correspondent, examines "The Press, the President and Foreign Policy." James Reston draws "the obvious conclusion" from his review of historical factors affecting the relationship of the three "that neither the press, nor the Congress, nor the Executive Branch has yet adjusted effectively to the new demands of the age. We are all following the procedures that were no doubt adequate when foreign policy was a secondary consideration. At the State Department, the men who are available to most reporters are not informed, and the men who are informed are usually too busy with the crisis to be available. On Capitol Hill, each committee is sovereign and assumes that Cabinet officers have nothing else to do but to repeat the same testimony three or four times to three or four different committees. And in the news-gathering agencies we go on doing more or less what we did a generation ago."

Reston continues: "Personally, I do not believe that the Constitutional assumption that 'the people know best' is a very reliable guide to the conduct of American foreign policy today. Similarly, even the modern techniques for reporting foreign news are not yet adequate to the subject or to the need, but we should be careful about reaching the conclusion that the remedy lies with a less assertive press. It is not the press that is extending its power to the detriment of a sound balance between public opinion and foreign policy, but the President, whose power in this field is greater than that of any head of government in the modern world."

And later: "We can irritate the President, divert him from his tasks, stir up his enemies, excite the public and force him to calm things down, and sometimes even make a persuasive point which he may modify a policy to meet. But his power is at the center of action and we are at the edge, and my conclusion from this is fairly plain. We may be a nuisance but we are not a menace. And the way power is running to the President, it would be unwise, I think, to concentrate too much on weakening whatever influence we have left."

Readers interested in additional comments by Tom Kahn on the "New Left" may wish to read his article in the July issue of *Commentary*.

PAMPHILUS