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THE CATHOLIC AND THE WAR

By

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THE CATHOLIC AND THE WAR

WHAT should be the attitude of the Catholic in the present European War?

The Catholic national, owning allegiance to his belligerent Government, French or English, supports the policy of war because his duty as a citizen demands it; but whether his duty as a Catholic demands it is quite another matter. Yet if we do not examine that prime question and answer it rightly, we shall be failing in the most important duty of the moment.

The vicious habit of advocacy has become almost second nature with men in most modern European countries and particularly in England. It is taken for granted that a statement on some subject, no matter of what importance, is made not on rational grounds, but on grounds of affection or interest: that the question is then examined as a hired lawyer would examine it with the object of influencing the reader. The 'best case' is made out, not as a statement of the truth, but as the proposal of a plea. This vicious habit of mind poisons most of our public utterance to-day. It is at its worst in the wretched falsehood called 'propa-

ganda,' the whole object of which is to deceive and bias minds, whether neutral or ignorant, so that we shall bring them into a mood of supporting ourselves.

To this point I will return later; but for the moment let us separate and emphasise the fundamental original question: 'What should be the attitude of the Catholic *as* Catholic towards the War quite apart from his national allegiance?' What is his duty in the matter, not as a citizen, but as a member of the Church Universal?

That is the point I propose to examine in the following pages.

The first duty of a Catholic because he is a Catholic is to put reason at the service of truth. It is the business of a Catholic throughout life to do two things. To tell the truth and to use his reason. Of all names given to the innumerable shifting religious groups of our time, the name *Catholic* alone implies, in practice, a constant and careful use of the reason: the recognition of reality. It is in this that we of the Faith differ from all those around us.

For *their* religions or philosophies are matters of emotion, attitudes to which they are led by habit or affection. We alone possess a system of philosophy which corresponds exactly to the known facts of human life, and explains that life and informs it; and this advantage we enjoy because we attach particular and sacred value to truth; that is, to reality as it is discovered by the human reason which we regard as the great gift of God to Man: the gift whereby Man resembles his Creator.

Let us, therefore, not only despise but forget all pleading and consider only the fundamental issues of the conflict. When we have grasped these we can decide whether that conflict involves great issues of right and wrong and which alternative, our victory or the enemy's, would promise moral fulfilment.

It is our business to enquire what victory of which antagonism would subserve the cause of justice.

We must at the outset eliminate irrelevant matter. It is irrelevant to the issue to discuss, attack or support, any particular form of human government, save in so far as that government affirms principles contrary to the moral teaching of the Catholic Church.

We have nothing to do as Catholics with the three main forms of political arrangement in society, monarchy, democracy and oligarchy (generally, but loosely, called in modern speech 'aristocracy'). A just war may well be fought in support of the principle of monarchy or of the democratic principle or to defend a cherished aristocratic system; but no Catholic can say: 'I support this war for democracy (or monarchy or what not) because that form of government is alone consonant with true religion and philosophy; that is, with the Catholic scheme.' It is not in vain that the Supreme Pontiffs have emphasised the indifference of the Church to the various forms of human government. It is in the very nature of the Catholic scheme that the Church should pro-

nounce herself free from attachment to one political arrangement or to another. The organised Church acting in a particular society may well be connected with a certain form of government; as was, for instance, the Church of France until the end of the eighteenth century closely associated with the French monarchy, or as the Catholic priesthood and people in Ireland and Poland are inevitably nationalist. But the universal Church is not concerned with these local affections and necessities. We may as individuals be profoundly convinced of a direct and necessary connection between, let us say, egalitarian democracy and right living. We may as individuals find it difficult to understand how anyone can reconcile with his sense of justice the vesting of privilege and special powers of government in a group determined specially by wealth. But even with this last form of government, plutocratic oligarchy, the Faith has no specific quarrel of its own. If people like that kind of thing, let them have it. It contradicts no doctrine of the Faith. It runs counter to no moral precept. If in a society of this kind the rich were humble and used their power wholly to the glory of God and the good of their fellow-men they would be commendable as Catholics. If the purest democracy in the world were to establish laws destructive to the family (which is of divine institution) or to restrict the free exercise of the Catholic religion, then that democracy would be condemned, by every standard of the Faith, as much as though it were the most irrational tyranny.

We have all the more need to remember this point because, for various reasons, we have been deluged with appeals for the defence of our cause in the present struggle on the ground that it is the cause of democracy. Men have even been found who are not ashamed to describe even the English political system of class government itself as a democracy.

A second thing which we must eliminate at the beginning of the discussion is the arguments from the good or ill conduct of a belligerent.

We may discover our opponents to be disloyal, cruel or what not, and ourselves to be chivalric, humane beyond the ordinary; but neither the virtues nor the vices thus affirmed directly concern the main question, which is: What is the moral issue of the war and how does this issue stand the scrutiny of Catholic moral philosophy? Under that scrutiny do either of the main belligerents conform to the aims of a just war? If they fail so to conform, in what degree do they fail?

Another irrelevant issue again, like that of democracy, is perpetually being thrust upon us and confusing our judgment: the issue of *conduct*. An enemy of evil character may be reformed and yet remain the enemy. The belligerent with a just cause may sully his conduct of hostilities with excesses of violence, or vile tricks, or pride; but his cause will none the less remain just.

We keep, then, in view as the one guide through the labyrinth of debate the outstanding matter which may be put thus in question form: 'What

are we fighting for?' Having got the true answer to that question we can compare it with the scheme of Catholic morals and see on which side of the boundary we stand.

Technically, the belligerents at the moment of writing (February, 1940) are the governments of France and Great Britain on the one hand, directing operations from Paris and London, and the government of the Third Reich on the other, directing operations from Berlin. But the word 'technically' here is fully restrictive. It means that for some technical purposes (as for instance the definition of contraband) Great Britain and France and the Third Reich are alone concerned. But we all know that in practice the field of belligerency is wider than this because it includes on the enemy's side the Communist or Soviet Government, directed from Moscow. The civilisation represented by the two Western powers, France and England, is at issue with a new conception of society; with a hitherto unaccepted code of political morals. The struggle is engaged between an ancient political tradition upon the one side and what is, in morals, a revolutionary affirmation upon the other. What the ancient political tradition is we all know. It is that which we have inherited from at least the past three thousand years and presumably much more. The best generic term for it is 'Europe.' It recognises a certain public law common to relations between all States, particularly between those States which proceeded from what was formerly known as Christendom. The general



good of civilisation remained recognised with us of the West, however vaguely, as something superior to the particular good of any one province or unit. There was about the right of a nation to its own life something comparable to the same right in an individual, especially in a free individual under our Christian society. To destroy a national life by force had about it a savour of murder and even those in the past who have most sinned in this fashion have attempted to find some excuse, however far-fetched, which could be put forward in at least partial defence of their act.

But the new moral forces by which we are challenged, the moral forces set at work from Moscow and Berlin, deny the sanctity of the ordinary national conception. They deny not only the sanctity of that conception as attached to modern nations, but as attached to polities of any kind. They would deny it to the old City States of the Mediterranean as to the large monarchies of more modern times. They propose to base the future relations of human groups upon the accomplishments of force. They do not accept the indictment made against them by the old civilisation (that is, by Europe), which indictment nominates them as infamous for the breach of treaties. They do not regard a treaty or pledged word of any kind between governments as having a moral value. This is the issue of the whole affair; not the contrast between a despotic State and the States of more liberal government; the contrast of one inherited system of international morals, of which

until recently no man would dream to express a doubt, and a new revolutionary theory according to which those morals may be denied.

It may be urged, of course, that we have not here a quarrel between two systems, because the revolutionary system is not a system at all. If a man tells you beforehand that he is not going to keep his word there would be no question of contracts or, indeed, of any common action. In pure theory the new morals of Berlin and Moscow are not even bad morals, but mere anarchy; but in practice we perceive them to be based upon a definable conception, which is this: *Wherever a government and its armed force have the strength to impose this or that, whether upon their own nationals or upon others, they may do so.*

The thing is summed up in the repeated assertion that what we call *right* at any one moment is no more than the inherited result of *force* applied at an earlier moment in the past. The root of this false philosophy, so far as the Germans are concerned, is to be discovered in a different conception of time and existence, which their writers have expounded from about one hundred and fifty years ago onwards. The core of it lies in the word 'becoming.' Nothing 'is.'

The most extravagant form of this frame of mind was that which so startled the French commentators when they first came across it. 'God is not; He is becoming.' But without going into all that mysterious stuff—and great rubbish it is—one may put the matter more clearly by saying that this

new philosophy among the Germans had produced a state of mind from which the conception of an absolute right and wrong was absent. A yet simpler way of putting the theological point is to say that Germans of this kind had fallen into idolatry. They had refused God His place and had substituted for Him another supreme authority and another object of worship. This idol was in their case (as might have been expected) *themselves*. It is an idol which can be expressed in various terms; such as, Germanism or Teutonism or the Fatherland or the German People. Hence the formula applicable in Courts of Justice: 'Anything is just which is for the profit of the German folk'.

Of the other twin among our enemies—the Moscow one—the same is true, with only this difference: that there is a different idol. The idol set up by the cosmopolitan gang which has captured complete coercive power over the unfortunate Russian people, is an alloy of two things which are not nationally connected, but are none the less organically connected. That is, the one does not in pure reason imply the other, but, as men are made and in human circumstances, the one is in practice accompanied by the other. The first of these elements is a craving for complete equality among men, an equality material as well as moral; the second is an intense hatred of the Christian ethic and doctrine, involving the determination to abolish the practice of the one and spiritual allegiance to the other.

The Soviet, or Bolshevist, or Communist effort

(it is called by all three names) is directed to the destruction of private property. The idea driving this effort is the desire to abolish the power property gives, when it is abused, of rendering the destitute man subject to the will of the man who possesses the means of production. Communism arose as a protest against this servile condition, which had come to weigh heavily upon the social life of industrialised communities. It arose in protest against what is called Capitalism: that is the exploitation of a destitute majority by a possessing minority. If a restricted number of men in a community have the disposal of the land and the machines and the stores and the material and the food and the clothing and housing and the rest, while the great bulk of men have either nothing or a most insufficient proportion of such things, then the minority in possession has the destitute majority at its mercy. It can say: 'Unless you work for our profit and under my orders in a half-servile condition with us for your masters you cannot be clothed or housed or live at all.' The Communist solution of this injustice and oppression was the vesting of all control over the means of production in the hands of the community and its officers, which meant, in practice, saving people from being slaves of the rich by making them slaves of the State.

But why was there an organic connection between this Communist conception and a fixed, violent hostility to the Christian ethic?

At first sight there would seem, as I have said,

to be no rational connection between the two ideas. The monastery is a Communist institution; most religious orders are permanently Communist institutions. Yet Communism cannot escape from being the most violent and persistent enemy of that very religion which made the monastery and religious order.

The reason is that the fatal obstacle to any complete Communist social experiment is the family. The family cannot be fully free without property. It can only continue itself and its independence through the institution of ownership, especially of ownership in land. But it is at the very heart of the Christian ethic that the family is a sacred and indissoluble institution prior to the State. There is present in Catholic eyes a perversion and a disease when the State over-rides the family; when, for instance, it takes over the formation of the child, his instruction and moral and lay teaching, and makes such a monopoly compulsory to the exclusion of the parents who alone have original rights in the matter.

Communism could not be imposed upon a society so long as that society was Christian and, therefore, as a necessary consequence, the votaries of Communism hate and seek to destroy the Catholic Church. They forbid the Christian rites to be exercised, or hamper them, whether in their Eastern or their Western form; they forcibly prevent the teaching of the great Christian doctrines to children. By these means, coupled with the forbidding of inheritance and, therefore, of family continuity, they are establishing their new revolutionary State.

hey propose to expand its power over an area beyond its present borders, through the attraction of material equality and the spectacle of a society wherein no man is under servile or semi-servile subjection to another, but only to the officers of the State. All the evils of Capitalism are thus destroyed at a blow and have substituted for them other evils which seem horrible to free men, especially to a free Christian peasantry, but which seem to the servile victims of Capitalism less horrible than their present insecurity and exploitation.

There we have the plan of battle set out. On the one side, States which under two different forms of idolatry control the lives of all their citizens and are, therefore, able to concentrate a maximum of power, especially for war. On the other side, States which preserve the tradition of human dignity and freedom, of the Christian institutions, whereof the central one is the family. But these States are weakened by an insufficient distribution of property. It is true to say that the French and English alliance is defending all that was ever called European civilisation. But the enemies of that alliance are right when they accuse it of plutocracy. England suffers from this disease of government by wealth more than does France, but both nations suffer from it in different degrees. That they suffer from it is their chief element of moral weakness; but their elements of strength are far more considerable; for men who have enjoyed political freedom, even under bad economic conditions, will always defend that freedom.

The Western alliance can say with truth that it stands for and defends all the main institutions of our civilisation and in particular the freedom of the individual and that human dignity from which such freedom springs.

In other words, this war is, like all wars, a religious war. And this character has appeared in any number of points, but more especially in the matter of Poland. The Catholic will, both by instinct and reason and what is more by the guidance of the Supreme Pontiff, continue to regard human dignity and freedom of the individual and the family, the institution of property and the right of the community to order its own affairs and to resist aggression from beyond its borders, as fundamental to all political action.

Therein lies the character and the strength of the allied cause; therein is discovered the sympathy which all free nations have for the allied cause; and thereon reposes the confident affirmation that the Catholic must on the grounds of Catholic belief support the allied cause; though it could do so more thoroughly and with greater power had the Allies not committed the enormous error of maintaining relations with Moscow.

So much having been said, let us consider what can be said on the other side. Only when we have done that fairly and fully can we be certain of our own position.

The main enemy case rests on this: that the peace imposed upon the Reich at the conclusion of the Great War was tyrannical and unjust. For

quite fifteen years after the War, if not longer, that thesis was also maintained in this country. It was the policy of Great Britain to spare the defeated enemy, and that policy was based upon two grounds. First, it was to our political advantage to keep up the balance of power on the Continent; second, it was to our economic advantage to restore Germany so that the Germans could pay interest on the vast loans to be extended to them by the international banking system especially centred in London and New York.

On both these accounts everything was done to belittle the claims to reparation advanced by the victims of the War. These claims remained in effect, for the most part, unpaid; but the enemy was made to suffer heavily at home after the peace by the continuation of the blockade, the German Colonies were seized (mostly by Great Britain), the German fleet was handed over and large groups of German property abroad under the control of the victors was taken from its former owners. In these various categories of grievance, the defeated enemy could in justice protest against the taking of his colonies. For the rest, his loss of wealth was an insignificant fraction of the vast losses imposed by his aggression upon the territories he had invaded and upon the merchant-shipping of the Allies. The moral question turned not upon the values lost, but upon the responsibility for the War as a whole. On that I do not think anyone who followed German policy and German speeches and articles and books and German life generally in the

years before 1914, can have any reasonable doubt. The Government of Berlin complained, for some ten years before 1914, that the German Reich was being 'encircled.' The French Government had allied itself with the Russian and when, in 1904, English policy changed from hostility against to friendship with France, there was certainly (on paper) a superiority in numbers against the Central Powers governed from Vienna and Berlin; and obviously that numerical advantage would increase if the Italians, as was possible, should abandon the German cause, to which they had hitherto been allied.

In reality, the odds in 1914 were very heavily indeed in favour of Berlin and Vienna. England had no sufficient strength by land; the French, who had the only fully organised armed force opposed to the coalition of the Central Powers, had nothing like half the men or material of their opponents; the Russians were not properly equipped and their numbers were, therefore, quite deceptive. It is difficult to estimate these things numerically, but counting the state of training and equipment and actual numbers available for putting in the field as fighting units, the Central Powers at the opening of the Great War had a three to one chance of success. They lost it by 'bunching' in the region of central Champagne. This bungle on the part of the German General Staff lost the Battle of the Marne and reduced the whole war to a mighty siege in which, paradoxically enough, the less powerful force was containing the more powerful.

The allied Germanic powers defeated the Russian armies and Berlin was able to start in Russia a revolutionary rising which destroyed the Russian State and as a consequence of which the harshest terms were imposed upon the defeated forces of Moscow.

But even with all the advantages of being thus released to exercise full pressure, Berlin and Vienna finally failed. One violent attack after another broke the Western and Italian fronts, but did not break them finally; the breach was always repaired. The last and heaviest effort against the West was made on July 15 in front of Rheims. Two days later, on July 17, Mangin, with a mixed force of Americans and Frenchmen, surprised the right flank of the enemy 'pocket.' He attacked Soissons, and from that moment the War was won for the Allies. It could not have been won but for the folly of the enemy's in bringing in America by provocation.

But the chances of the War do not concern the Catholic conscience. The rights and wrongs of it would remain the same whichever party had obtained the material victory. They remain the same to-day after our victory has been thrown away by the cupidity of the bankers and the subservience of our politicians to them.

Now on that matter of right and wrong the enemy is shown to be the aggressor in three ways. First, by the initiative he took in launching the attack, demanding the most humiliating conditions of surrender before he moved; next, by his con-

fidence and triumphant tone throughout all the first stages of the War; and lastly and most completely by his behaviour during his success: the terms of Brest-Litovsk, the massacre of Dinant and the enslavement of occupied territory. It was a matter of life and death for Europe that the power of Prussia should disappear. Unfortunately, the English did not understand the situation; but that blunder which has led to the present peril does not affect the moral issue. If ever a Government deserved to be restrained and its aggressive power cut down, that Government was the Government of Berlin in its conduct of the Great War.

So much for the main issue. But the apologists of Prussia, who are particularly strong among the educated classes of Great Britain, have another count. Whatever may be the rights and wrongs, they say, of the original struggle or even of the compensatory clauses of the peace, nothing can excuse the dismemberment by force of a European State, and by the Treaty of Versailles the German Reich was dismembered.

The argument is drawn from the time when there was such a thing as Christendom and when it was thought treason to Christendom to dismember or usurp any province thereof, any realm or republic which formed part of the general Christian commonwealth. Of the principles underlying such a commonwealth, Prussia has never taken the least account. On the contrary, the whole rise of Prussia for two hundred years was based upon the negation of the old rules binding Christian princes

into a common culture. But even though the culprit does not acknowledge the moral system whereby he is judged, his judges are bound to adhere to that moral system and if we did dismember a free state by the Treaty of Versailles we must give good reasons to excuse such an action.

But in point of fact we did nothing of the sort. Nothing was taken from the Reich in the Treaty of Versailles which did not, by the common rules obtaining in our civilisation, belong to others; nothing was taken which was a usurped property. Alsace and Lorraine were restored to France. They had been annexed by force, they had protested by public vote continually against that piece of violence, and though their territories had prospered under the new German industrialism, though the memories of the iniquity were growing old and there was much new blood in the greater cities, particularly Strasbourg, no one can have spoken, as I have done, with people of all classes up and down the place till the last few months before the War, without feeling a universal dislike of the occupation. It was an artificial position and an odious one. It continued to be such up to the outbreak of the Great War, and so obvious is this truth that there has not even been any serious effort to contradict it. It is debatable whether the two provinces would not be happier with greater autonomy and under a less centralised government. It is certain that they did not take part in the French religious quarrel and that they have in great part to be relieved of its effects; but there could be no

policy of reversing the policy whereby Alsace and Lorraine were liberated.

In every other case the Allies proceeded to the expedient of a popular vote and nowhere did they act in contradiction with its results. The Polish territories which had been occupied with flagrant cynicism by Frederick of Prussia and his partner in crime, the German Empress of Russia, Catherine the Great, were set free; but this was not done as it should have been done on historical considerations. Most minute attention was paid to the conditions of voting even at the risk of injustice to the Poles, many of whom were working elsewhere when the plebiscite was taken. The result of accepting a mere majority rule led to absurd consequences—of an artificial frontier separating one part of a town from another and even one part of a village from another, but at any rate, there is no denying that all the weight of the Allies was thrown into giving the Germans the best terms possible. The grievance of the Prussians was that they regard the Poles as inferiors whom they have a right to oppress.

Unless we accept that peculiarly Prussian doctrine, the settlement erred, if anything, against racial justice. It certainly did not err the other way. The same is true of the settlement made in the neck of Schleswig-Holstein. Here also territory had been seized by force and was restored by a popular vote, although in the interval the aggressors had stocked the ground with their own nationals. The same thing happened in the Masurian district. It is

Polish by speech and culture, but Protestant in religion and, therefore, lacking in sympathy with the rest of Poland. It voted to remain annexed to Prussia, and this vote was scrupulously respected.

There was in the whole affair only one small exception: the free city of Danzig.

Danzig is the mouth and port of the Vistula. Whoever controls Danzig is master of the life of Poland. Therefore, the Council of Ambassadors recommended the putting of Danzig, even as a free city, under Polish sovereignty. But that judgement was overridden. Danzig was not actually allowed to return to Prussia (wherein it had no historical roots), but was forbidden to become Polish. For the rest, it was left completely free, save that it had to observe the Polish Customs Union.

This error in policy lies at the root of the present tragedy of Poland. Had Danzig been restored to Poland, under however slight a link, it would have become mainly Polish, under economic stress, within a generation. As it was, the Poles were compelled to build the port of Gdynia, admirably equipped and flourishing. Only the other day the inhabitants of this great and prosperous new town were driven out like cattle by the Prussians, their property stolen wholesale, and all the work they had done in twenty years of increasing activity looted by the invader whose object it was, of course, to cut off Poland from the sea.

There is not in the whole of this story one point where the apologists of Prussia can make her out

the victim. Men ignorant of history and of geography have repeated the falsehood that the restoration of Poland involved the forcible annexation of two German provinces and partly of Posen. Those provinces were not German; they were Polish. There was a small German minority in that western part, but the great bulk of the place, its tradition and religion, were Polish.[1]

We may sum up and say that the territorial claim of the Reich had not a leg to stand on. There is no moral issue at all. It is otherwise with the wounded feelings of a people who had been enjoying supremacy for a lifetime and whose complacency was rudely affected by the result of challenge delivered by it to Europe in 1914.

It is obvious that the various restrictions imposed (on paper) by the Treaty of Versailles were galling to the exasperated vanity of Prussia and to those who had been brought up throughout Germany under a Prussian control which had lasted fifty years. To be forbidden to garrison territory upon the Rhenish belt of the Reich, to be forbidden to take arms again on a large scale, to be restricted in the building of ships of war—all this was humiliating. On the other hand, nothing was done to prevent the obliteration of all ancient frontiers

[1] Dean Inge has repeated this accusation. He has compared the annexation of Posen by Prussia to the restoration to England of an English county which should have been forcibly separated from England and handed over to Ireland. I can only conclude that his ignorance of Continental affairs is exceptional; failing that, he did not write in good faith.

between the German States or to prevent the re-establishment of conscription and the creation of a huge new army in the Reich for the purpose of furthering aggression, to which purpose that army was at once put; destroying first the Masonic State governed from Prague, next, with the utmost brutality and accompanied by wholesale massacre and loot, the Catholic State of Poland.

No wonder it is difficult for foreigners to understand what the apologists for Prussia in this country can have at the back of their minds or by what process of reasoning they arrive at the conclusion that those who govern at Berlin have been the martyred victims of aggression! There are, indeed, people who talk like that here in England, but it may safely be prophesied that their mood will not survive the events of the next few years—or months.

The chief point I purposely keep to the last. Even if we allow what it is in common sense impossible to allow: that the Reich was not a culprit, but a victim; even if we think that the artificial unity of the Reich, which is artificial because it is only kept together by the army, is something sacred and intangible; even if we are so ignorant as to conceive of the Reich as a nation like France or England, there yet remain two matters which make both the morality and the necessity of our participation in the present conflict indisputable. The first is the proclamation in so many words and still more vividly in action of that principle mentioned above, that no international

declaration or treaty is binding; but that they who possess, or think they possess, sufficient force, are free to break any engagement, however solemn, any pledge, however sacred, at will. That principle is a moral principle, a theological one if you will, which there is no evading. It makes the war of a different character from any other; for if the enemy contention be allowed all international order is at an end.

The Government of Berlin had solemnly engaged itself to permanent peaceful negotiation with the Government of Warsaw. It assured the rest of Europe that all idea of violence between Prussia and Poland had been rendered impossible. It had given its most solemn engagement in this matter. In the event, the moment the other obstacles and notably the freedom of Bohemia had been got out of the way, Poland was suddenly attacked without declaration of war, under a summons to give way or to die. Unlike the Czechs, the Poles preferred to maintain their honour and we may presume that this decision will guarantee their resurrection.

But the flagrant outrage against Poland was but the end of a long series of unscrupulous deceits. Europe had been assured as plainly and emphatically as possible that Prussia had no designs upon the independence of the Austrian State. This lie was kept up until the very eve of the march on Vienna. The statesman who had defended the independence of Austria was seized and imprisoned, Vienna was occupied under a threat of destruction

from the air and that centre whence had come the best part of German civilisation was degraded by Prussian tyranny in its worst form.

It was soon seen why this breach of faith had been committed. The occupation of Vienna turned the defences of the Bohemian quadrilateral, the fortified Bohemian frontier; and Berlin tore from Prague all those whom it chose to claim as Germans, though these had formed part of the Bohemian State for a thousand years.

Having acted thus, Berlin again solemnly pledged itself to preserve the new Bohemian frontiers. It violated them almost before the ink on the Declaration was dry. There is no parallel for such a series of perfidies in the history of mankind.

We are fighting this war, however, not only to chastise and break the contempt for honour, but also to destroy an outrage upon our common and European civilisation.

The actions of the Third Reich and its authorities in Poland are beyond the pale. The only excuse offered for them is that, perhaps, they have been exaggerated in the telling; but of their general horror there can be no doubt. Wholesale killing, wholesale looting, wholesale enslavement have been made in Poland the regular accompaniments of Prussian war; and if such things go unpunished, there is an end of Europe. It is here that Prussia joins hands spiritually with her Communist ally. Even were all clear-minded argument neglected and mere emotion thought sufficient, the emotion aroused by the bestial degradation of humanity at

the hands of the German Government would be enough to justify every effort at its destruction.

Now, the mention of the Polish infamy and in connection with it of the alliance between the Soviet revolutionaries and Berlin, makes me remember a consideration which my readers will not desire me to omit: the Jewish question. The Third Reich has treated its Jewish subjects with a contempt for justice which even if there had been no other action of the kind in other departments would be a sufficient warranty for determining its elimination from Europe.

The Jewish question is one in discussing which men find it hard to keep their heads. The passions aroused are violent and the political and personal consequences so great that whenever the Jewish question is raised the greater part of those to whom it is presented act without reason.

In the past, indeed until quite lately, the most popular irrational attitude (in this country at least) was to pretend that the Jewish question did not exist! In most parts of the world the attitude towards the Jewish question is exactly the contrary: the problem must be solved arbitrarily and without considering the claims of the Jews.

To a Catholic, possessed of a clear and universal code, moral and social, to a Catholic specially respectful of human reason in the application of that code, his duty is clear; but not on that account easy to perform.

The Jew has full claim not only to justice but to charity as a human being. He is, in the sight of God,

just what we are: a creature morally responsible to his Creator, made for beatitude, suffering from original sin, with no inherent vices, but performing both his good actions and his evil actions under the direction of Free Will. A contract to the benefit of a Jew must be observed as strictly as we should insist on his observing a contract beneficial to ourselves. Cruelty to a Jew is as odious as cruelty to any human being, whether that cruelty be moral in the form of insult, or physical. It would be wearisome to repeat what are for every Catholic obvious truths.

We have no special duty to Jews more than our duty to them as human beings and our fellowship with them in the common dominion of God. We are not bound to go out on crusade to rescue Jews in particular, any more than we are bound to go out on crusade for the rescue of Japanese or Irishmen. But we are bound to consider their claims to general justice and the amenities as well as the just rules of our civilisation. The persecution of the Jews by the authority of the Third Reich has, of course, been the most popular of their actions in the eyes of their own subjects; and, unfortunately, it has been almost equally popular in the eyes of men who are not the subjects of the Reich. You may hear men saying on every side: 'However, there is one thing I do agree with and that is the way they have settled the Jews.'

Now that attitude is directly immoral. The more danger there is that it will grow, the more necessity there is for denouncing it. The action of the enemy

towards the Jewish race has been in morals intolerable. Contracts have been broken on all sides, careers destroyed by the hundred and the thousand, individuals have been treated with the most hideous and disgusting cruelty.

The whole thing is typical of a crudity which is the mark of barbarism: for the Prussian is above all, immature. If no price is paid for such excesses, our civilisation will certainly suffer and suffer permanently. If the men who have committed them go unpunished (and only defeat in war can punish them) then the decline of Europe, already advanced, will proceed to catastrophe.

There is no need to single out the abominable treatment of the Jewish race at the hands of our enemies; it is but part of a general attitude for which the enemy must be called to account; and for calling him to account, the only moral agency permanently in being and consistent with itself and possessed of a rational framework is the moral theory of the Catholic Church.

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