True Concept Of Authority Threatened, Lecturers Aver

By Helen Mauffin

The United States must set the example for the other nations of the world by improving its own internal economy and by showing its interest in, and ability to share international obligations.

This view was expressed by Prof. Jerome G. Kerwin of Chicago University in a joint lecture on "Authority in Peril" with Prof. Yves Simon of Notre Dame University, Sunday evening at the Rochester Chamber of Commerce. The lecture was the seventh in the Christian Culture Series.

Professor Kerwin traced the growth of the idea of authority, especially since the thirteenth century. Feudal lords regarded as oppressors brought a break in authority in civil and social affairs. Nationalism developed and absolute monarchs held sway. The break in the unity of Christendom placed power in the hands of national churches. Control exerted by Philip II of Spain and Louis XIV of France dominated most of the church and the idea of "divine-right monarchs" asserted itself.

"In the Western World, the notion arises that authority means irresponsible authority," said Professor Kerwin. He cited the philosophies of Locke, Jefferson and in the extreme the philosophy of the American Revolutionists.

WRONG CONCEPT

Revolutionary movements, he explained, usually hold to the idea that the individual must oppose the state and the individual is against authority. From these viewpoints, it is concluded that the state is a necessary evil, and that the less the state does, the better it is. This, the lecturer declared, is a complete reversal of the political philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. The state is good and its functions are positive, not negative.

In the world today, there is also a denial of social and corporate responsibility. "We have forgotten that we have rights and corresponding duties. There is an unwillingness on the part of many to assume the burdens for the common good of the community."

While liberty was offered in the masses in the nineteenth century the majority could not see that the benefits of society and of the goods produced were coming to them. They could not see how this supposed liberty was offering them security.

CONTRASTS LEADERS

At opposite extremes above two leaders, the lecturer recalled, who saw the plight of the common man of that day. They were Karl Marx and Pope Leo XIII.

Anti-religious and hostile to the Church, Marx realized the plight of the common man but his remedies for existing evils were unsatisfactory.

Pope Leo XIII on the other hand, the speaker continued, knowing the need of the people saw that Society at the time was not realizing its obligations and set forth the right principles to guide it. With the world fast becoming a unit due to ease of interportation, there was a misunderstanding of the basis of democracy itself. The attempt was to justify democracy on a pragmatic basis—it's right because it works.

There is need, the Chicago University professor declared, to understand that a social democracy does not cease to be a democracy and that democracy must show that it can enter the sphere of accepting obligations and can duly assume her role of responsibility.

DEFINES AUTHORITY

"All are agreed that some authority is necessary and that there are various kinds of functions of authority," Professor Simon said in his lecture. The light of truth, he explained, leaves no choice.

Under normal conditions, the speaker pointed out, knowledge of truth is a matter not of authority, nor of liberty, but a matter of objectivity. Authority substitutes for the evidence of truth not yet reached—as a beginner in any field of knowledge must accept the authority of the teacher until after a certain length of time the truth is reached. This function of authority he termed substitutional.

He considered an ideal society in which there are enlightened and virtuous persons. Among these there must be unity of action and to assure that there must be unity of judgment. In this form of society all must submit to the same line of action to preserve the unity and this is authority. This is the essential function of authority.

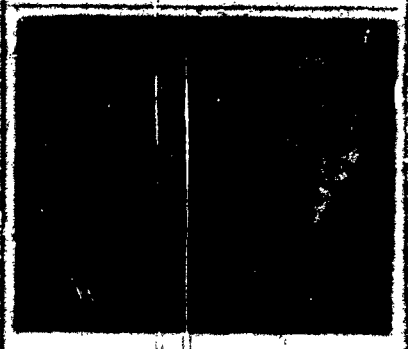
In the ideal society there is need of a central organization—a central authority—with the purpose of providing for and safeguarding the common good. This is a most necessary authority.

"As soon as you have an association of rational beings, a division of labor naturally takes place," explained Professor Simon.

The participative function of authority he said is exemplified when the individual willingly lives under leaders considered better than himself.

"Even if we see no conflict between authority and liberty," Professor Simon concluded, "we should know that all things will not always run smoothly and that it is in the field of the political scientist to invent checks to be imposed on authority, especially the authority of a weak man in power."

Both speakers were introduced by Thomas H. O'Connor, News Editor, CATHOLIC COURIER. The series is under the direction of the Rev. Hugh Hadley, C.S.B., of Aquinas Institute.



Courtesy Times-Union

PROFESSORS James G. Kerwin and Yves Simon were on the Chamber of Commerce platform yesterday evening in a joint Christian Culture lecture, seventh in the series.

ROUND THE WORLD WITH THE CHAPLAINS

Soldiers, Fighting in Jungle, Tell Chaplain How Much They Appreciate His Visits.

Mobile in Stretcher, Priest Can Be Chapel in Africa—Then Takes Over for Hospital.

(By N.C.W.C. News Service)

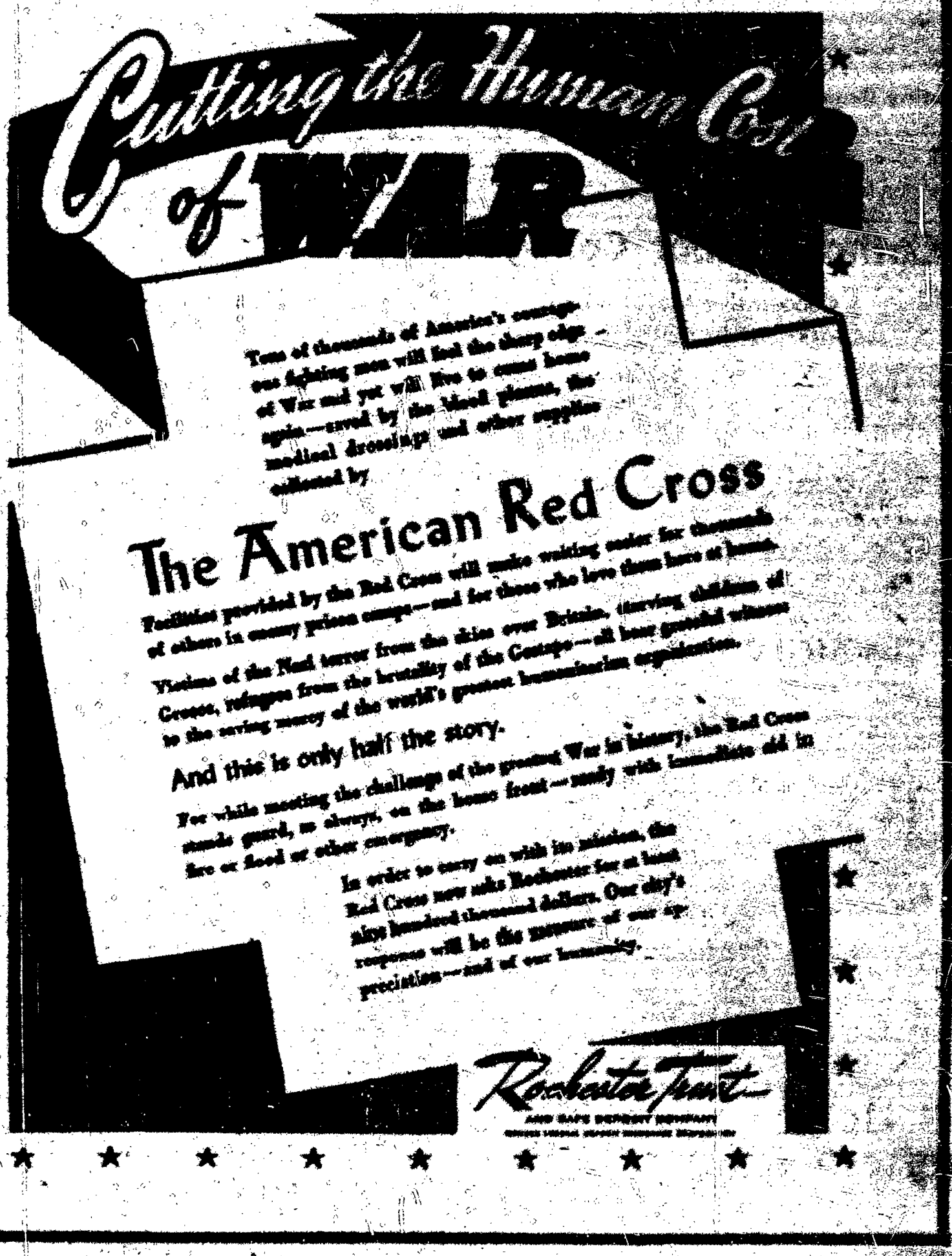
Encounters in Pacific Area

A chaplain assigned with troops engaged in jungle warfare, who derives no small amount of consolation from the way his work is being appreciated by America's fighting men, reported:

"I stood last night a soldier who told me this morning: 'Father, I guess I can walk a mile or two to the mission place where Mass is said on Sunday if you can make all that distance to bring Mass here.' Another soldier said: 'Come

[illegible] Army Chaplain Promoted to Major

OTTAWA — (NC) — The Very Rev. C. L. Hallen, Principal Catholic Chaplain of the Canadian Active Forces, has been promoted to the rank of Major, being Military also head of the Army Group Chaplain in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Bishop Hallen was appointed Principal Catholic Chaplain with the rank of Lieut. Colonel on July 21, 1939. On Aug. 21, 1940, he was promoted to a Full Colonel.

Comment: "Gosh, brother, I'll be late for my appointment at the synod you're shooting me. You had the same shirt—and I'll wash and [illegible]."