Know that in one quarter of an hour spent before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament you gain more than in all the good works the rest of the day.—St. Alphonsus.

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The Literary Cavalcade

The Truth Must be Told

By John O'Connor

If a conspiracy of silence exists against Ann Su Cardwell's book, "Poland and Russia: the Last Quarter Century" (Sheed and Ward, $2.75) the American people have a right to know about it.

Here is one of the most revealing books of the war; here is a book that simply cries for publicity that men may be able to see more clearly the problems which exist between Russia and Poland . . . and between Russia and us when the peace table is finally reached.

Nor should we be blinded to the manner in which the Communist Party handled the problems of politics and religion when they first entered Poland in September, 1939. The evidence in this book provides a stern test for the Atlantic Charter and the Four Freedoms. Somehow, the Encyclical on Atlantic Concordance keep coming to mind . . . a document greatly ignored in these days of political expediency.

Now strange as it may seem continual reports have reached this reporter that "Poland and Russia" has been given little publicity in the major dailies and their Sunday supplements due to the direct request of officials in the government who are concerned with international relations — which latter might be damaged or altered by consequent publicity. "Political prudence" might be their excuse even if they are in the Office of War Information. But the truth must and will prevail. Mrs. Cardwell has done the American people a distinct service in writing this coldly factual and effectively damning book.

Ann Su Cardwell is not a Catholic. Neither is she a Pole. But she is a scholar and an alert and trained observer. Lest it be thought by the left wing and some of our "liberal" Catholics to be a hastily conceived idea, to suddenly rear up and "smear" the fighting Soviets, please be reminded that the book has been long in coming . . . and that the author lived a full 17 years in Poland. Nor were the neighboring countries and Russia strangers to her.

After the Russians entered the east half of Poland we heard nothing. Reports occasionally leaked out telling of plebiscites voting heavily to remain in the Soviet. Religion was never mentioned; the spectres of Siberian and central Russian labor camps began to arise. The fact that by this time the Soviet was an ally by virtue of a German attack, soft-pedaled these facts here.

The absolute dictatorship of this regime, described as such by President Roosevelt himself, lacked the efficiency of the German Gestapo in physical and scientific torture. But the same old pattern of political persecution, changed and wrecked monetary systems, the prison camp destiny of priest, peasant and leader alike, of families deliberately and cruelly torn apart—as in Evangeline—all these things are here.

American political machines, at their lowest ebb, never ran elections as did the organized and official Communist mobsters when they conducted "plebiscites" within the captured Polish territory. Miss Cardwell gives several instances of supervised voting. The reader may feel free to contrast this chapter with Molotov's report to the Soviet on October 31, 1939. He related the occupation of the territory embracing some 13,000,000 in this manner:

"The political significance of these events can scarcely be overrated. All the reports from the Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia show the population greeted their liberation from the yoke of the gentry with indescribable enthusiasm and rapturously hailed the great new victory of the Soviet system."

One is eager to know how, if the new regime was so rapturously greeted with such indescribable enthusiasm, so many Polish communities have been established in Siberia . . . all of people individually and coolly cut off from their respective families. These "communities" are literally work camps. One is tempted to ask why, if the reception was so great, some communities only saw 20 people out of one thousand vote for inclusion into the encroaching Soviet system. Too it must be explained to ignorant Westerners that a Polish citizen would never think to vote in secret in these elections. He gladly and joyously marks his ballot out in public for all to see. (And to think I once wrote a thesis on American political immaturity).

"Poland and Russia." This is one of the more ignored but most valuable books on the war. It is part of anyone's equipment who is pushing on intellectually to the consideration of post-war problems. "Poland and Russia: the last 25 years" may well indicate the trend of the next 25. No thinking American should be without it.

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It need hardly be added that before he reached home he was completely cured.

Prayer is Natural

"Many reason are given us why we should not pray, while others are given us why we should. But in all this very little is said of the reason why we do pray. The reason why we do pray is simply that we can not help praying."

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