SECULARISM AND 'MYTH OF FORCE' IMPEDE JUST AND LASTING PEACE

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Pope Pius XI spoke prophetically in 1928 when he said, "Our heart is disturbed by many bitter anxieties; for if in most places peace is in some sort established and treaties are signed, the germs of former enmities remain, and there can be no stable peace or lasting treaties, unless there be a return to mutual charity to appease hate and banish enmity."

But what necessitates this return? If the Christian philosophy of life were accepted we would never have strayed from the path of righteousness. Now disillusioned by the futility of war, it is only natural to look back to a more unified society and hopefully to scan the horizon for the dawning of the day when peace will come; and again we shall have the opportunity to win the peace we lost at Versailles. Glibly we say "history repeats itself" but little do we profit from this maxim. As sage historians, it would be well for us to consider the errors of the past.

In the divorce of civil society from religious society and the influence of the Church, many fundamental realities were forgotten. Monsignor Sheen puts it forcibly, "We want men to forget the Fatherhood of God, and then blame them because they do not act like brothers." Yes, men have forgotten the unity of mankind. Materialistic evolutionists have succeeded in their purpose — to replace the Christian philosophy that God is our Father; that all men are brothers and communely redeemed through Jesus Christ with a "survival of the fittest" theory which justifies force and plunder. According to Pope Pius XII the "law of human solidarity and charity in dictated and imposed by our common origin and by the equality of rational nature in all men, to whatever people they belong." Therefore, deny man's common origin; deny the possibility of an omnipotent God Who looks upon all regardless of color or nationality with an impartial eye of love and you can easily give rein to bigoted nationalism.

The world is a family of nations; and, if any one of them should understand the trials of a small weak nation, it ought to be the United States, the sea Declaration of Independ-

POPE PIUS XII

ence consecrated that we wanted to "assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle us."

"Nationalist aspirations in what are often called the 'have not' nations, Germany, Italy, Japan, Hungary are in conflict, open or half-concealed with the Powers who got the best deals in the era of industrial awakening of the world, deals which were stabilized and sealed by the rapid intensification of Nationalist feeling." This potent statement of Michael de la Bedoyere certainly explains the desire of the weaker members of the family of nations to secure what they had been denied.

According to its preamble the purpose of the Treaty of Versailles was to replace war by a firm, just and durable peace. Professor Jongsma asserts a keynote in his explanation of why that preamble became a "tinkling cymbal." "The great emphasis on nationality during the war and the diffusion of the idea of national self-determination made political and economic international relations after the war more difficult than ever. Diplomatic intrigues, economic rivalries, jealous quarrels and new oppressions fanned the flames of old hatreds and overwhelmed Europe with another dangerous hysteria."

Yes, the world squandered its chance to make peace in 1919 because, in the words of Father Benjamin Masse, S.J.: It it widely ignored morality and religion in both private and public life. It failed to recognize the most important fact of our time — the interdependence of nations in a shrunken world. The unity of the human race demands an international world community in which the moral force of right would replace the physical force of might. According to Christopher Dawson "the principle which Woodrow Wilson invoked as the inspiration of his program — the principle of justice to all people and nationalities and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak — is a principle which nineteenth century liberalism inherited from the Christian tradition and which has been once more proclaimed by Pope Pius XII as an essential principle of Christian civilization."

Like the prodigal son of the gospel story our modern civilization has "wasted its substance living riotously" far from our Father's guiding Hand, the Church. Man has been declared sufficient unto himself. The secularism, which has been characteristic of our civilization for the past three hundred years has been characteristic of our civilization for the past three hundred years, has resulted in the exclusion of religion and morality from public life.

Seeds of secularization were sown during the Renaissance when the radical humanists defied reason in a return to the paganism of Greece and Rome. During the Reformation Luther's revolt put the minds of men on the road of material progress at the cost of the spiritual life and ushered in a period of individualism which resulted in a complete separation of Church and State. The explanation for the grave evil of secularism in mankind in the refusal to accept the principles of the moral law, which springs from God, the true source of all authority.

In a guilty statement Christopher Dawson has said, "Religion gradually retreated into man's inner life, and left social and economic life to the State and to a civilization that grew steadily more secularized." Divorce of religion and morality from social, political and economic life indicate a spiritual and material suicide upon which the State journeys aimlessly and the individual perishes.

Despite the cries of responsible thinking, fundamental moral laws were cast aside as plain prescriptions that certainly could not be applied to modern life. In the words of Christopher Dawson, "The dominant religious mentality of the nineteenth century is to be found not in the writings of the philosophers but in the minds of men who were completely indifferent to philosophy and theology, who were convinced that the world was governed by natural laws which were as certain and as easy to understand as the laws of mechanics, and who had no doubt that the progress of science and technology would lead to the establishment of a rational and humane society."

Woodrow Wilson's idealism certainly came into sharp conflict with Allied materialism at the Versailles conference and in most cases materialism triumphed." As the Jesuit Father Masse forcefully points out "The large nations cooperated with the League only to the extent that it advanced their individual interests . . . Each one sought either alone or with allies in the old tradition of power politics and exaggerated nationalism to secure its own security and prosperity." In less than twenty-five years we have seen that "power politics" is very liable to act as a boomerang. Japan voted with Great Britain and the United States at Versailles and as a result received Germany's possessions in the Pacific as mandated islands from the League of Nations. Then came Pearl Harbor! Then the fall of Singapore, the Gibraltar of the East.

In the "Christian Crisis," Michael de la Bedoyere sums up the reality peace very effectively. "Twenty-five years ago the Powers which claimed to be fighting for Christian ideals of justice, liberty, civilization, democracy won their chance to remould the world according to their faith. They failed utterly."

In the words of Pope Pius XI, "Too long the law of force has prevailed and has dominated little by little that natural kinship of mankind and pity which the law of Christian charity has perfected." Victory will not give us peace. It will only give us an opportunity. Let us replace force with love and utility with justice! With St. Augustine we must agree "It cannot be believed that God should have willed the kingdoms of men and their government to be outside the laws of His Providence."

On Guard!

By Rev. Patrick J. Flynn

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that we have not diluted our declarations; that we are not fighting to pull ancient abominations out of pillow fires; that the result of victory is not an unconscionable which puts our earlier souls to sleep."

And:

"These books (Atlantic Charter) pledges . . . march with our armies. They sail with our navies. They fly with our eagles. They sleep with our martyred dead."

And again:

"We are standing by our guns with epic heroism. I know of no reason why we should not stand by our ideals. If they vanish under ultimate pressure, we shall at least have kept the record straight; we shall have kept faith with our soldier sons."

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In his current feature article in the current issue of COLLIER'S, Archbishop Francis J. Spellman reveals how he arranged for the G.I. soldiers to receive absolution with generals at the Papal audiences. Writes the New York Prelate: "One day I attended an audience which the Pope grants to Allied soldiers every day of mass. When our armies first reached Rome, arrangements for these audiences were made through the Vatican diplomatic channels, and pleasings were assigned according to military rank. Then only officers were admitted. Now the doors are open to all. In the course of the mass which precedes the audience all receive Communion under both species and confess their private sins."

"When I left for the Holy Father, he said again and again, 'The only gun required is the uniform.' Now at Papal audiences, despite the distinctions, there are Colonels shoulder to shoulder with privates and G. I. uniforms of all descriptions. From many countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, America, France and Poland. His passage among them, blesses all the religious articles they bring; and everyone is amazed to see him totally unguarded and unprotected." . . . Thus true democracy is best demonstrated at the Vatican, for already Pope Pius XII has personally greeted more Allied fighting men than any of the leaders of the United Nations.

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In view of Russia's ruthless treatment of Poland we note that the recent Pastoral Letter of Bishop Joseph F. Gawlina, Military Bishop of the Polish Armed Forces and Ordinary of the Polish Refugees from Russia contains this significant passage . . . "We Poles, as a nation which has principles more frequently, its citizens, contrary to our own bodies the Laws of Nations and Commission; as a nation which knows them as they actually are and not from propaganda or posters, that that I is our duty to cry out in the whole world: Brethren, beware, a great danger is threatening you. It does not concern us only. Do understand us. The evildoer is stalking about with lightning speed. Not only the (Papal) Encyclical 'Mit Brennender Sorge' but also 'Divini Redemptoris' hits simultaneously a tempest, which perhaps is even yet to come . . .

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What is the great danger against which the holy father warns the whole world? The answer is found in the Encyclical 'Divini Redemptoris' in which Pope Pius XI pointed the evil of Nazism and 'Divini Redemptoris' is the name Pope's famous encyclical against Atheistic Communism. What Bishop Gawlina is saying to the Poles is what is true of the rest of the world. Pope Pius XI — and in his person all the Popes — was the first prophet of the danger of Communism.

Religious Films, One, Two In Year's 10 Best Movies

By CHESTER B. BAHN
Editor, THE FILM DAILY

NEW YORK—"Going My Way," Paramount's box office sensation, written, directed and produced by Leo McCarey with Bing Crosby starred and Rise Stevens and Barry Fitzgerald in prominent supporting roles, is rated 1944's Number One feature release by American critics and reviewers for press and radio participating in the 23rd annual Film Daily Ten Best Pictures poll.

Four hundred twenty-eight ballots were cast for the Paramount picture in the coast to coast and border to border contest, which saw the critics of 184 newspapers, magazines, wire services and syndicates and the film commentators of 36 radio stations participating. The total number of participants in the 23rd poll was 676 before the polls closed. After the deadline, it may be noted, ballots continued to be received and had it been possible to include them, the participants' total would have exceeded substantially the 800 mark.

In 1943, 489 critics and commentators cast ballots. The increase this year is significant, reflecting greater press and radio interest in motion pictures against the obvious handicaps of paper rationing and the loss of many recognized critics and commentators to the armed forces. This with the third successive year that radio's commentators are first were invited to participate in The Film Daily's pioneer survey of critical opinion.

"Going My Way" took the lead from the very first, and finished well in advance with over the runner-up rival, "The Song of Bernadette," 20th Century-Fox's moving picturization of Franz Werfel's inspiring story. "The Song of Bernadette" was produced by William Perlberg and directed by Henry King.

The third "Ten Best" niche goes to "Since You Went Away," produced and written by David O. Selznick, directed by John Cromwell and distributed by United Artists. A margin of 94 votes separated this picture from "The Song of Bernadette."

EDUCATORS CANCEL 1945 CONVENTION

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. — The annual convention of the National Catholic Educational Association, which was scheduled for the week of April 2, here, has been cancelled. It was announced following a meeting of the organization's general executive board.