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Thursday, November 7, 1946

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National Council of Catholic Women

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Armistice Day 1946

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Autumn Thoughts

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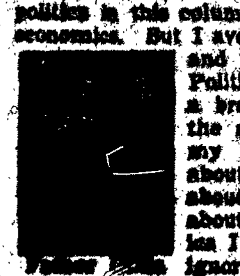
Politicians of Old

Election time brings into open activity politicians, good and bad. Good politicians seek the good of their [illegible] the people, bad politicians seek only their own [illegible]. The Pharisees who sent their disciples to entrap [illegible] were bad politicians. They came in [illegible] friendly. They had no intention [illegible] of helping the people through [illegible] talk. They wish[illegible] before the populace as an enemy [illegible]. A trick question was put to Christ: the [illegible] He would surely put Him into [illegible] the collectors [illegible] hypocrites. He did not [illegible] because it was not a [illegible]. His answer gave them [illegible] in their duty to be [illegible] the things that are [illegible] that are God's." Obedi[illegible] to divine au[illegible] Christ in His [illegible] politicians, [illegible] with their [illegible] recommended to [illegible] Christ can find our in[illegible] in our service of [illegible] never have occasion to hear Him ad[illegible]

Father Gillis Says:

Waste of God-Given Food is Wicked

I think I said recently that I never discuss politics in this column. Still less do I discuss economics. But I avoid politics for one reason and economics for another. Politics in the high sense is a branch of ethics. Ethics is the science of morals. It is my job to know something about morals, that is to say about ethics and therefore about politics. But of economics I am blandly and happily ignorant.



Father Gillis

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When I was in the university a little while back — economics was still called the "dismal science." It seemed to consist largely of statistics. I have a congenial ingrained dislike and distrust for statistics. Also I never could understand Karl Marx, the economist upon whose classic, "Das Kapital," the communists have built their theories and their practice. I don't like either their theories or their practice. Nor did I as a student take kindly to Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations." Too heavy for my taste. I would rather tackle even metaphysics. Likewise I get bewildered when someone — as often happens — throws Henry George's "Progress and Poverty" at me.

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Pardon the autobiographical details: I think them necessary in view of what I am about to say.

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Now what I am about to say is this: to buy some hundreds of thousands, if not some millions of tons of potatoes only to let them rot on the ground is a sin that cries to heaven for punishment. It was heaven that gave us that food. When I say "Heaven" I mean God. To destroy what God has given is a sin. To destroy food is a particularly grievous sin. To do so, as to kill little pigs and plow crops under may be good economics (that is to say good in the opinion of some crack-brained new school of economists) but in that case I can only say that good economics is bad theology. In this case (as indeed in every case,) theology coincides with common sense and economics (the kind I would prefer to call pseudo-economics) is synonymous with lunacy. Those who do such things, are, if not crazy, criminal.

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I remember how stunned I was as a boy in Boston when I heard that the potato crop in Maine was so large one year that the farmers threw the surplus product of their farms on the railroad tracks to be crushed into pulp and left to rot in the sun and rain. It seemed to me in those days, even before I ever heard the word "political economy" that there must be a screw loose in the machine for marketing the fruits of the earth. Here was Boston a short hundred miles from the potato farms and it didn't pay the growers to ship their crops to that nearby market. If I had been told that such incidents were inevitable because of capitalism, I might have turned socialist.

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Lately — years later — the same thing happened with regard to the apples in the orchards of New York State. They were allowed to rot on the trees or on the ground. The big city was only a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles away. There was a great broad river, flanked on both sides by railroads, one with four tracks and the other with two. In addition there were magnificent highways. But with a river, six tracks, and any number of roads, it didn't pay to bring apples to the city where scores of thousands of people were insufficiently fed.

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The same was true of the ice in the Hudson River, before the days of electric refrigerators. The ice company, which seemed to have a monopoly, harvested only a percentage of the crop and let the rest float out to sea.

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All these things, we were told, were necessary to keep prices up. It seemed like part of a vast capitalistic conspiracy. It must have made many communists. It may have made some anarchists. It seemed crazy. It was crazy. Worse still it is sinful and should be declared criminal.

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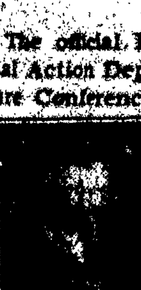
But now the Federal Government is doing it. To me it makes no difference whether the government is Democratic or Republican, New Deal, Old Deal, Raw Deal or No Deal. I say the destruction of God-given food is wicked, and, in a kind of way, sacrilegious. It won't do any good for economists (of a certain sort) to tell me I don't understand their theories. I have confessed that I don't. But I still flatter myself with the feeling that I know common sense when I see it. When a theory violates common sense, I cling to common sense. And so, I think, do the people. In this instance the voice of the people is the voice of God.

The Yardstick

By Rev. Geo Higgins

Strengthening Organized Labor

The official Labor Day statement of the Social Action Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, recommended that "special efforts . . . be made to bring the advantages of unionism to clerical and supervisory employes and to the people in the service occupations." The statement, incidentally, should have made reference also to the urgent need of a union for farm laborers. The omission was an oversight.



Father Higgins

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Very probably the Department will find it timely to issue a similar recommendation annually, at least for several years, for the task of organizing the neglected workers in these four important categories is proverbially difficult and slow.

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But progress is being made in spite of the difficulties, as is evidenced by two developments which have hit the headlines since the Labor Day Statement was released. The first was a welcome announcement that the American Federation of Labor has granted a charter to a newly-established union for farm laborers.

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President Mitchell, the youthful founder of this newest AFL affiliate, made it clear in his maiden speech at the recent AFL convention in Chicago that he doesn't intend to organize the occasional "hired hand" on the family-size farm. He admits that there may be perfectly valid arguments, under present conditions, against attempting to enroll this type of isolated worker into a standard labor organization. Mr. Mitchell is a realist. His guns are aimed at industrialized farms — those latterday plantations which Carey McWilliams has described with an accurate sense of the hard reality of things, as "factories in the field."

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Mr. Mitchell knows that there has been an "agricultural revolution" in the United States which has been almost as disastrous in some of its human consequences as was its industrial prototype in eighteenth-century England. He intends to salvage the victims of this rather silent and unnoticed revolution by helping them to help themselves in a bona fide organization of farm laborers.

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His job is a thankless one, but the betting odds are in his favor. And if the Associated Farmers retaliate by branding him with communism, he has a lot of friends, including some Catholic priests, who will gladly testify in his behalf. More power to him.

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The second development is equally encouraging and considerably more dramatic, as witness the opening paragraph in a recent story in the New York Times (on the financial page, no less): "Almost daily through the narrow streets that knife through the granite bluffs of Manhattan's financial district there are voices heard which, in a bygone day, would have grated harshly and even incomprehensibly on the ears of those who cherished the status quo."

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Puts you in mind, doesn't it, of the good old days of Sacco and Vanzetti. But no, it isn't as bad as that. The reporter is merely preparing — very gracefully, indeed — to announce that union organizers, who have always talked a lot about Wall Street, have finally discovered where it is and have decided at last to organize the Stock Exchange. Brokers need not apply, but stenographers and clerks will be extended a very cordial welcome.

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It was said above that this is an encouraging development. It is, indeed, for Wall Street is obviously a symbol. And if Wall Street can be organized, the job of unionizing white-collar workers in other parts of the United States will, of course, automatically become much easier.

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But perhaps the most encouraging feature of this rather unexpected development is the belated change of heart on the part of the men who control the "Street." The New York Times reporter assures us that "although there exists considerable resistance to current efforts to organize the financial community, most leaders in Wall Street accept the trend as inevitable and are prepared to meet it." That's very good news indeed. Congratulations are in order all around.

AS WE SEE IT

Ignorant Catholics

By DAN PATRICK

In his radio talk, beamed to the eighth national congress of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Pope Pius XII made one of the most significant pronouncements of his entire pontificate.

Most secular newspapers simply headlined the news account of the broadcast as a papal declaration to the effect that "the greatest sin in the world today is that men have begun to lose the sense of sin."

The Holy Father, of course, did make that statement and it is of considerable importance. But the fact remains that it simply served to modify the main thesis of the address which one of the nation's leading Catholic newspapers headlined as follows:

"Pope Denounces Ignorance of Catholics"

Your diocesan newspaper attempted to convey the same thought — perhaps not as bluntly but nevertheless the Courier - Journal emphasized the papal warning against "interior menaces" to the Church.

Now how did the Holy Father "denounce the ignorance of Catholics?"

The Pontiff was quite specific on the subject when he said at the very outset of his talk:

"That body of which you are members has been threatened. That Body of Christ which is His Church is menaced not only by hostile powers from without, but also by the interior forces of weakness and decline.

"You have been alerted to the danger. The growing weakness, the devitalizing process that has been going on — we speak with sorrow in our heart — going on in not a few parts of the church, is due chiefly to an ignorance or, at best, a very superficial knowledge of the religious truths taught by the loving Redeemer of all."

In other words, the Holy Father believes that too many Catholics in too many parts of the world know too little about their faith. It is not difficult to carry this thought to its obvious conclusion — Catholics ignorant of their faith are not equipped to answer the countless challenges which are hurled at it day in and day out in offices, clubs, factories and even on the streets.

The ignorance which Pius XII emphasizes is in strange contrast to the knowledge which enemies of the Church have on their subject matter.

Take the Communists for example. They are superbly versed in the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Stalin. Their thirst for knowledge on the cause they have espoused is never quenched.

Talking to a small group prior to his Rochester lecture last month, Louis Budenz, ex-managing editor of the Daily Worker, recounted how he spent every moment possible reading up on the latest declarations from Moscow, studying and restudying the doctrines of Karl Marx, snatching every crumb of information wherever it might fall.

He told the story of the great library on Communism he had assembled and how, after his return to the Church, he was wont to show his collection to Catholics. One man viewed the collection and then asked Budenz what he would recommend from the Catholic viewpoint as the best answer to this veritable mountain of propaganda.

Budenz told him simply:

"You have the best and most complete answer to all this in the Encyclical on Atheistic Communism delivered by the late Pope Pius XI."

The gentleman in question must have blushed at that answer for he was well aware of the existence of the encyclical but never took the time to study it thoroughly.

With the single exception of sermons in Church, the knowledge of the vast majority of our Catholics is limited to the Catechism they studied in grade school.

It is of the utmost importance that Catholics supplement that superficial knowledge of their faith with progressive learning over the years. Catholicism is not a mathematical thing. It goes far beyond the bounds of grade school and it has fundamental doctrines which must be applied to the changing course of world politics.

As the Holy Father says:

"Instruction . . . is indispensible, not only for children in Sunday Schools and for growing youth in higher classes. Religious instruction should hold a place of honor in college and university curricula.

"Millions, you well know, never enter college or university; and yet from their number will come leaders in important spheres of your national life. Are they to approach their tasks with the most meagre, shallow knowledge of God, of their loving Redeemer and their Mother, the Church?"

Upon YOUR answer to that question posed by the Holy Father largely rests the future of the Church Militant in these United States of America.

Priest Reveals Nickel Orchids

Boston — (NC) — Down Medellin way, in Colombia, South America, rapid strides are being made to establish the city as one of the orchid capitals of the world.

And much of the credit for this achievement belongs to the Rev. Miguel Giraldo, the humble little priest who was presented the Cross of Honor of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine at that organization's eighth national congress here.

Padre Giraldo says that the flowers which folks in the United States regard as delicate, grow in abundance down in Medellin, where they sell for 5-cents each. There isn't much of a market for them in Medellin, he said, because they are so commonplace.

But modern progress in the forms of the airplane and refrigeration have stepped into the picture and an airline company is flying orchids out of Medellin to the United States, where they are worth something, like their weight in gold.

Many of the orchid growers of Medellin got their training at the Eucharistic schools which Father Giraldo founded.

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Case Against Tito

By Sumner Wells

Washington — (NC) — Noting that many in this country regard the present Yugoslav government as dictatorship "of the most objectionable type," Sumner Welles, former Under-secretary of State, in a radio address asserted that the United States could propose grounds for ouster by the United Nations of the Tito regime as valid as those being urged against the Franco government in Spain by eastern European nations.

Mr. Welles pointed out that no matter how great the objections to the Franco regime, the U. N. is forbidden by its charter from intervening in the internal affairs of the Spanish people on the basis of present evidence. He added that the U. N. should look to the Spanish people themselves for action.

Washington — (NC)—Continued insistence of the Soviet bloc in the United Nations for action against Franco Spain "logically suggests political motives rather than considerations of pure equity and world stability," The Washington Star observes in an editorial.

The editorial says indications point to the fact that the Spanish issue will be debated as hotly in the U. N. General Assembly as it was last spring in the Security Council, and concluded that since "no evidence has been thus far adduced that Franco Spain is today any more or less of a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security than it was last spring, the impending debate before the Assembly seems likely to be a re-threshing of old straw." It adds that the United States, Britain and other U. N. members in opposing intervention are not defending the Franco regime "per se" but objecting to interference in the domestic affairs of a nation.

Calendar of Feast Days

Sunday, Nov. 10 — St. Andrew Avellino, at the age of 36 entered the Theatine Order. On the last day of his life he arose to say Mass but was stricken at the altar. He died on November 10, 1608.

Monday, Nov. 11 — St. Martin of Tours was noted for his charity to the poor. In 372 he became Bishop of Tours. His flock, though Christian in name, was still pagan in heart. St. Martin destroyed heathen temples and groves and completed by his preaching and miracles the conversion of the people.

Tuesday, Nov. 12 — St. Martin, Pope, occupied the Roman See from 649 to 655. Because of his opposition to the Monothelite heresy he incurred the enmity of the Byzantine Court and was seized and taken on board a ship bound for Constantinople. He finally reached the Imperial Court and was then banished to the Tauric Chersonese, where he lived for four months in sickness and starvation before he died.

Wednesday, Nov. 13 — St. Stanislaus Kostka was of a noble Polish family. Cured of an illness, he was inspired to enter the Society of Jesus. To avoid his father's opposition he was admitted to the novitiate in Rome. He lived there only ten months and died, as he had prayed to die, on the Feast of the Assumption, 1568, at the age of 17.

Thursday, Nov. 14 — St. Didacus was born in Spain in the middle of the fifteenth century. Entering the Order of St. Francis he remained a lay Brother all his life.

Show Their Colors

By J. J. GILBERT

Washington — There is a growing disposition to have public figures who have given grounds for doubts to declare themselves with regard to Communism. People want to know not only whether such persons are Communists themselves, but also the extent to which they are supporting and even coddling communists and communist propaganda in the United States.

This is a growing sentiment. It has been soft-peddled to some extent in recent months, because of a desire to keep it from becoming entangled with this year's Congressional elections. This may have been an unnecessary precaution, but at any rate it is expected that the movement will quickly gather momentum in the months to come.

It is to be expected, too, that those threatened with losing most by this movement will begin to cry "witch hunting." It is to be hoped that the American people will not be deceived. There is no valid reason why a servant of the people, or a person who is garnering large financial returns because of a certain popularity, should fear to say frankly and honestly that he believes in the principles on which this country is founded, and that he wants to see them continue for the benefit of all.

The House Committee on Un-American Activities will meet shortly, and, according to present indications will hear Louis F. Budenz and Gerhard Eisler on the same day. Eisler is the man whom Mr. Budenz identified as being the "agent of the Kremlin" who directed communist activities in the United States, and said he was the same as Hans Berger, who has written many articles in communist publications giving instructions for members of the party to follow.

This may afford an opportunity to launch the movement which more and more people are favoring. For example, Dorothy Thompson, the columnist, has expressed wonderment how Eisler, whom she describes as a "well-known German communist," ever managed to get into the United States in the first place.

The columnist said that "to get into the United States without a proper visa is difficult indeed, and for a known member of the Communist party is impossible." Yet, Miss Thompson says, "Mr. Eisler held only a transit visa, forbidding him even to land on United States soil, yet in two months he was free and at large." She asks "Who pulled the strings in the State Department to permit him to return to his native city of Leipzig in the Russian zone?"

The case of Archbishop Stepinac in Yugoslavia is pertinent, too. There is no question by now that the farcical trial and conviction of the Catholic Archbishop of Zagreb is but part of a larger pattern, and that Tito is moving to obliterate, if he can, the main obstacle to communistic domination of the nation — the Catholic Church. Protestants and Orthodox have joined with Catholics in sounding this warning.

This being so, there can be no question but that the United States has a very real and deep concern in what is happening in Yugoslavia. We have fought wars over such principles. And yet, there are those who insist that, for the United States to make known its interest in the preservation of these most fundamental rights, would be an unwarranted interference in the domestic affairs of other nations. Such persons may actively support the recommendation that even harsher methods be taken with regard to Spain. Let's be consistent.

A true American ought to be able not only to deny completely that he is a Communist, but also to denounce and oppose the principles of Communism. He simply can't believe in Americanism and Communism at the same time. Anyone who professes to be able to, doesn't deserve to hold public office, or public support. It isn't enough for a man to say he isn't himself a Communist, and to ask what all the hue and cry is about, when he allows himself to be duped by Communists. Such a man does more harm to American institutions than does the known Communist.

Washington has heard from several sources that, while the Russians are entirely honest in saying that they do not want war, they do nevertheless want territorial conquest and expansion and will get it by every "means short of war."

In such a situation, it is necessary for the United States to adhere to its own principles, which are quite different from Russia's. The citizens of the United States, and particularly the leaders among them, ought not to hesitate to say that they prefer what we stand for to what Russia obviously stands for. They ought to be willing to show, too, that their devotion to American ideals is not just lip service.

Byrnes Scans Prelate's Fate

Philadelphia — (NC) — The United States will continue "to impress upon the Yugoslav Government its obligations to adhere to basic humanitarian principles," Secretary of State James F. Byrnes stated in replying to a letter from Representative Michael J. Bradley of Pennsylvania, who had protested the condemnation of Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac of Zagreb.

"I fully share the concern with which you view this matter," Mr. Byrnes said, noting that the Yugoslav Government has "subscribed" to basic humanitarian principles of conduct "particularly by its participation in the United Nations."

Mr. Byrnes also said that he concurred "in the remarks made by Mr. Acheson (Acting Secretary of State) at his press conference with regard to the implications of this trial as tending toward the impairment of freedom of religion and worship."