

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

It is with great regret that I see 'Commentary' in your September 1962 issue opened with the entirely erroneous statement that 'before the war 38 per cent of the world's population did not have enough to eat; today nearly 60 per cent go hungry'—more especially as Fr McCormack gives the correct information two pages later. Statistical statements should always be checked back to their source and not accepted on hearsay; and the publication of false information is bound to do harm.

Yours faithfully,

COLIN CLARK

Reviews

THE LIBERAL CATHOLIC MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND. The *Rambler* and its Contributors 1848-1864, by Josef Altholz; Burns and Oates; 30s.

The controversies provoked by Richard Simpson and the young Acton, and the ambiguous connexion of Newman with them are central in the intellectual history of English Catholicism in the years after the Oxford conversions. They had much to do with exacerbating the already difficult relations between the converts and the old Catholics and between the Italianizers and the others among the converts. Simpson and Acton were very provoking, bishops were very obtuse, Rome only half understood and was excessively irritated, there was never any really straightforward confrontation of the *Rambler* group with its critics: it was all an unsatisfactory, tangled, obscure and half-cock affair. It seemed that in the end it would lead to an explosion, with the apparent triumph of Manning and his party in 1870. But the ending was sadly farcical, with Acton, still within the Church and having received no formal ecclesiastical censure, chiding the aged and excommunicated Döllinger for his refusal to make absolute moral judgments on historical personages.

From the standpoint of today the whole thing looks like a storm in a tea-cup. It would be hard today to find even conservative ecclesiastics who would come close to making the Temporal Power a remote corollary of dogmatic faith or who would think it proper for a historian to pass silently over the more scabrous episodes of ecclesiastical history. But in one way the problem raised by the *Rambler* is still with us. The real fault of the writers in the *Rambler* was not so