

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE CASE FOR ITALY

*To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS*

SIR,—As an admirer of Dominican thought already exasperated by the ultra-fastidious rarefied atmosphere of BLACKFRIARS I really must explode over the attitude Fr. White takes up over the Italo-Ethiopian question. In spite of the qualifying parentheses I am sure such writing at the present stage can only embitter Italy and increase the dreadful self-complacency of England as a whole.

The very cautious advance of Generals de Bono and Graziani is obviously in the nature of peaceful penetration rather than of war in the strict sense. Moreover, knowing the good faith of the Italian people as a whole, it is ludicrous to quote phrases about the wickedest war in history. Even if I am wrong here it would be surely better to appeal to England to put on sackcloth and ashes for having given the example that Italy is now following, especially after our greedy snatching of German colonies after the war, not to mention the present programme in Belfast almost on our doorsteps which the Government refuses to investigate.

But perhaps the worst side of the affair is that in the ultimate struggle with Prussia and Russia such propaganda as Fr. White's is helping England to drift still further towards these enemies of Christendom. May I direct your attention to Dr. Denis Gwynn's notes in the November *Clergy Review* which contains the following sentence (p. 408) from the pen of that sober, well-informed writer: "When the issue has to be faced squarely it may indeed become a direct conflict between the Grand Orient exploiting the League of Nations in alliance with Moscow and the traditional forces of the Right which may find themselves ranged in support of a bankrupt Fascist régime in Italy."

I am, Sir,

Yours sincerely,

(Rev.) GERALD FLANAGAN.

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There is a rarefied atmosphere which even Dominicans breathe with difficulty, and this one must confess he had not foreseen the alignment of Stalin, Hitler, Baldwin and the Grand Orient against a penniless Mussolini supported by traditional forces. When that happens, he promises to be *very* sorry for the Duce, though unable to see how this will make present wrongs right. Meanwhile he is concerned with the *intrinsic right or wrong* of the case for

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the Italian campaign, which is independent of Italian bitterness or British self-complacency.

If a "cautious advance" makes a war not a war, much history will have to be rewritten; would the advance, however cautious, of a well-armed Italian army and air-force on, say, Lowestoft, be considered a "peaceful penetration"? Let Fr. Flanagan go to Italy and tell the Blackshirts that their *guerra* is no *guerra* at all and see how *that* will embitter them. I suspect he will find they prefer to be taken seriously. But I hasten to add that by Italy I understood the present Italian Government, and not the Italian people.

V. W.