

blue. The triumph of the archaic occurs in the sky, which is pure gold leaf.

However, it is not the technical composition or the juxtaposition of colours that is ultimately significant in this panel, except in so far that they reflect the inner harmony; its strength and glory lie in the convincing portrayal of two souls in communion with God.

M. SHIRLEY.

OBITER

IT IS ALL TOO EASY for people today to get hot under the collar at the mention of the Soviet. There is much to incite irritation and defiance in the behaviour of the U.S.S.R. But anger prevents a reasoned and objective study of the facts about Russia. A Quarterly which cuts away from the topical political scene to study quietly the social and economic institutions of this enormous and novel experiment at socialisation is to be welcomed; and such is *Soviet Studies*, edited on behalf of a special department of Glasgow University by J. Miller and R. A. J. Schlesinger (Blackwell: 7s.6d. an issue; 25s. per annum). There is little danger of its being crypto-communist, though who knows what sort of pressure the editors may have to resist. In the Editorial note to the first number (June 1949) some of the difficulties of such an undertaking are suggested.

The U.S.S.R. offers its own peculiar difficulties as a field of study due to the difficulty of access for the foreign student, both to the country and to sources of information regarding it. On the other hand, the Soviet Union offers advantages. . . . As a highly self-conscious society it produces an unusually large body of statements about its own aims, methods and achievements which, whatever critical analysis they require, are a valuable source of evidence, if only as the verbal element in the machinery of government and cohesion.

Readers will have to study with their eyes open. The first article, 'From Munich to Moscow', is by E. H. Carr, a fact that may not encourage every reader. The bulk of the Quarterly is taken up with 'Reports and Commentaries' and 'Reviews' which will be found to be of great value.

* * * *

THOSE INTERESTED in international documentation should turn even more readily and more securely to Abbé R. Kothen's *Fiches Documentaires*, published by E. Warny, 2 Rue Vésale, Louvain (120 francs for 1949 issues). This amounts to a collection of upwards of 10 leaflets in a folder every month, each leaflet containing the text of some important pronouncement from the Holy See, noteworthy

articles on Scripture and Science, Religion and Revolution. All are of importance for assessing modern current events and thought. It is no 'Digest', but a carefully selected documentation which should be of great use to students. The June set includes the Pope's Allocution to Italian Catholic Action, a study on Soederblum, on the English experiment of factory chaplains, etc.

* * * *

AMONG NEW PERIODICALS from abroad the most noteworthy is the monthly *Culture Catholique* (2,725 francs per annum from La Colombe, 5 rue Rousselet, Paris 7), the editorial board of which includes Pères Bouyer, Daniélou, Dubarle, Régamey, and M. J. Folliet. The first issue (June 1949), devoted to *La Présence de la Pensée Chrétienne*, shines with talent from first to last, beginning as it does with Cardinal Suhard on the Presence of God (was this his last work?), and the Papal Nuncio, and ending with Professor Gilson. In view of the discussion at present continuing in the pages of BLACKFRIARS Professor Gilson's article on *La Catholique et la Politique* is of special interest. He shows that a Catholic not only may belong to any party whose principles are not contrary to the spirit of the Church, but also may take his place in any regime—imperial, monarchical or republican—which itself is consonant with the principles of the Church.

As there are parties beyond the possibilities of a Catholic, so there are also political régimes unacceptable for the Church, but it is for one and the same reason: they meddle with religion which does not concern them and of which she has the care. To take an extreme case, it is a mistake to think that the Church condemns the Soviet régime as such. One may dispute its value and prefer others to it, but if the Russian people at the moment wish to conduct their affairs by a centralised hierarchy of 'councils' all depending on the supreme Council, it is their own affair. It may be that the method is bad; it may be so for other peoples in general, or yet for the Russian people themselves at another point in their history. . . . These are practical problems of which no ideal solution is possible and which Rome does not take it upon herself to resolve for those who may have to face them. What the Church forbids Catholics, and she has the right to do so since they claim to have her on their side, is not 'sovietism' but 'marxism', that is not so much a political régime as an ideology in which atheism is a fundamental principle.

Therefore, he continues, such a condemnation is not an interference in the political liberties of the faithful. These simple principles are unpleasantly complex in their concrete expressions, particularly as the 'other worldly' view of the Catholic tends to make him detached from politics. There is always this constant tendency to be either

too immersed in politics and indifferent to religion or too religious to bother about politics. But the solution is not a '*politique de christianisation*', which is asking of politics what the Church alone can give.

* * * *

SUCH WORDS provide a suitable warning for those, such as the Editor of *Christendom* and perhaps BLACKFRIARS itself, who look for a 'Politics of Grace' (*Christendom*, June 1949). But there need be no confusion if *Christendom's* explanation of this phrase be properly weighed. 'It can be only in so far as Christians come to the political tasks of their time with the special insight characteristic of those suffused with the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love that they will be able to do for the world something which they alone must do if it is to be done at all'. But to be anxious to wage a 'holy war' against Communism reveals, as the editor of *Osservatore Romano* pointed out on Holy Saturday, a dangerous confusion. The weapons to be used are not violence or political agitation but prayer and the restoration of social justice. 'If one should think of a war with Russia, of her eventual defeat . . . if one should think of a Soviet liquidation to liquidate Communism, he would fall into unpardonable equivocation.' We quote from the *Catholic Worker* (U.S.A.) for May, which translates some of this important Editorial.

* * * *

America (4 June 1949) recalls the stormy career of Père Bruckberger, the Dominican who played such an important part with the Maquis during the war but who became deeply involved with some of the 'collaborationists' under Marshal Pétain. From his exile in North Africa he writes to defend himself, but, if *America* is correct, his is an eminent case of the ease with which religious enthusiasm may be seized by political groupings and used for worldly purposes.

* * * *

Ecrits de Paris, the monthly review which contains many articles of interest to those who follow the confused politics of the French, can now be obtained for 30 shillings a year from British Monomarks Ltd., BCM/Revue, London, W.C.1.

The Month, which continues to hunt with the hounds of Marcel, Joad, Daniélou, Copleston, Tristram, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, C. S. Lewis (all in the July issue), honours Knox's Bible with a trilogy of talent. Waugh argues from his established premiss that Mgr Knox is a complete master of the English language. But we are refreshed to hear that a more poetic diction has crept into the second volume of the Bible which has not yet appeared.

LOCUM.