

or even because, as suggested recently, he is regarded as "a scheming, mediaeval" prelate.

There are good people everywhere who pray for peace among all the children of God. And our social structure in these United States is not such as to encourage the throwing of any but very small stones. Nevertheless, if we are to take a constructive part in world politics our leaders cannot assume that religious questions are unimportant. They may be only annoying in some of the districts represented on Capitol Hill: in some parts of the world they are political problems which vitally affect international relations. The atomic bomb is no weapon to be placed in the hands of Innocents Abroad. U.L.

Editorial Notes

Some Catholic leaders in this country seem intent upon hastening a war with Russia. Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen recently created a "scare" by reporting that a Russian agent had been apprehended in a Congressional committee hearing. The report was without foundation and has been rigorously denied by Washington authorities.

More serious than this charge was Sheen's assertion that "the world is rapidly being divided into the two camps of the comradeship of Christ and the comradeship of anti-Christ. The lines between these two are being drawn. How long the battle will be we do not know. Whether swords have to be unsheathed we know not. Whether blood will have to be shed we know not. Whether it will be an armed conflict we know not. But in the conflict between truth and darkness, truth cannot lose."

In the same spirit, the St. Louis Council of the Knights of Columbus has been publishing a large advertisement in our metropolitan press, decrying the policy of our government toward Franco's government, and declaring that opposition to Franco is inspired by communism and by "hatred of Christ." The advertisement was published a few days after Hermann Goering had cynically testified at Nuremberg that he regarded the Spanish civil war as the opening act in the drama of the world war, and that he had made use of it to train his air corps. Of this relation between Nazism and Franco, the Knights of Columbus advertisement said nothing.

Let us admit that the world faces a very serious dilemma in regard to the relations between Russia and the West. We do not know whether Russia wants peace, for her actions seem to bely her protestations. On the other hand her ever widening system of unilateral security is undoubtedly conceived by her as a defense against what she regards as our unilateral system. It would be well for us to remem-

ber, when we are outraged by Russian policy, that we have the atomic bomb, that we are still stock-piling bombs, and that we have given no assurance not to use the bomb first. However right, therefore, our political judgments may be that Russia is not trustworthy, our religious judgment must be that we are not as trustworthy as we regard ourselves.

Whatever our political judgments may be upon friend or foe, the religious element is lacking if it does not contain the reservations drawn from St. Paul's warning: "Whosoever thou art that judgest, thou thyself doest the same thing," and from Christ's warning, "Judge not that ye be not judged."

The perennial heresy of Catholicism is to compound political and religious judgments too simply. This is most pathetically revealed when the Knights of Columbus declared that opposition to Franco was inspired by "hatred of Christ," and when Fulton Sheen sanctified all the moral ambiguities of our Western world with the conception that we represent the "comradeship of Christ," besieged by "the comradeship of anti-Christ." We may, as a democratic world, be relatively just. But it is religiously offensive and morally and politically confusing to hide our fears and our lusts, our imperial impulses and our pride of dominion behind our loyalty to Christ.

What makes the Russians so offensive and so difficult to deal with is precisely their self-righteousness. Having no sense of a God who judges them as well as their foes, they always come to the simple conclusion that opposition to them is inspired by fascism. But faith in God does not save us from such self-righteousness, if we use our faith merely to claim God as our ally and identify our righteousness with the goodness of Christ. Such religiously inspired self-righteousness can actually be more vexatious and confusing than the secular variety.

It may be offensive to Catholics to remark upon the fact, but communism is in many of its aspects a secularized version of Catholicism. Both of them find the point of sinlessness in history too easily. Fortunately the Vatican organ has warned against some of the very tendencies which our American Catholics have betrayed. It has declared that Stalin's desire for peace is "Christian" and that a cynical attitude toward the Russian desire for peace is "less Christian." One can only hope that this profounder Christian insight in the Roman Church may prevail against the fury of fanaticism, developed here.

All our moral and spiritual resources may not avail to avoid a conflict between Russia and the West. But as Protestant Christians, we ought to be able to avoid the heresies which lurk in both the communist and the Catholic forms of self-righteous fanaticism.

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