

The Catholic Record

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LONDON, SATURDAY, MAY 24, 1924

PERSONAL LIBERTY AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

It may not be amiss at this time, when the daily papers are filled with the accounts of actual or threatened strikes, to bring to mind some Catholic principles which must govern those who belong to labor unions.

It must be remembered that there can be no infringement by any organization on the personal liberty of the citizen. Personal liberty is the most sacred inheritance of the citizen. The right to employ his powers as he chooses, to dispose of his affairs as he wills, save only so far as such right is limited by the rights of others, or by the welfare of the community—this is nature's gift to man. By nature no man is endowed with authority over his fellows, or warranted in depriving his fellows of one jot or tittle of their liberty. Civil society, indeed, is superior to the individual citizen, and in certain circumstances may abridge his liberty; but civil society possesses this pre-eminence for the sole purpose of rendering secure the liberty of its members by fostering among them the spirit of reciprocal justice, and by repressing attempts on the part of some to invade the rights of others. If a part of his personal liberty is surrendered by the individual to civil society, it is only with a view of more effectively protecting the remainder; and, even then, what is surrendered to civil society is only what is strictly needed for its corporate life and integrity, so much and no more—so inalienable by the will of nature and of nature's God is the boon of personal liberty.

Personal liberty is the sovereign end and aim of civil society. It is in civil society that personal liberty finds its safeguard against anarchy, the deadly foe whose reign is the reign of might over right, of the strong over the weak, of the animal over the rational man.

No stronger advocates of personal liberty can be found than members of trade-unionism. It is to these very principles of personal liberty that they who enter upon a strike justify their action. Whenever individual workmen or combination of workmen refuse to work, no one claims the right to compel them to work, for the simple reason that in the enjoyment of their personal liberty they are free to work or not to work. Therefore strikers, who by intimidation and violence, prevent others from working, are acting in direct contradiction to their own principles.

The individual man, whoever he is, possesses in virtue of his manhood rights which are inherent in his nature, and of which he can not be deprived neither by his fellow-man nor by society. One of these rights is the right to live, and to acquire and possess the means of living. For a group of men to deprive the individual of this right would be thwarting the Providence of God. The individual man is a creature of the All-wise Creator, a child of the All-powerful and loving Father; he is put upon earth for a purpose, and that destiny he must be allowed to work out.

Next to the right to life, the most sacred right of man is his right to private property. A man's property is, indeed, part and parcel of his life, not only because it is the means by which life is sustained, but, also, because it is the fruit of his labor, the product of the activities of his being. Whoever lays destructive hands upon private property commits a crime not only against the individual, not only against the State, but against civilization itself. Private property is the foundation of social growth and civilization. All plans of economic reform that do not respect private property, and up-

hold its rights, are self-condemned at their very inception, and all hopes to which they give rise are illusory and deceptive dreams. There can be no justification, therefore, for the acts of violence and of intimidation that usually accompany strikes. Such acts are contrary to the public good and to personal liberty. If not condemned they would lead to anarchy, which aims to destroy the very foundations of society.

LEST WE BECOME CASTAWAYS

By THE OBSERVER

All Catholics perform the penances enjoined by the priest on them in the Confessional; but they can do and ought to do much more. The penances given in the Confessional are, in these days, extremely light. A few rounds of the beads, a Mass, a few prayers, are very light penances. Catholics ought not to rest content with these little things. There should be voluntary penances. The greatest saints have imposed penances on themselves.

Holy men have condemned themselves to life-long penance though they had committed only a few sins, compared with the acts of many Catholics today.

In the early days of the Church the penances imposed by the Church were much more severe than they are now. Penitents were sometimes required to prostrate themselves at the church door, where they implored the prayers of those who went in or out. A few Our Fathers do not make up for a hundred mortal sins. A few days abstinence does not satisfy the justice of God for years of drunkenness. We are disposed to forget that every mortal sin deserves eternal punishment. Catholics are too prone to rest satisfied when they have done the penance which was imposed on them in the Confessional. That is not enough.

Whenever a mortal sin is committed, honor and glory due to Almighty God are taken away from Him, and due atonement must be made. It is fit that the body should be punished; for it is the body that gets the pleasure of sin. The body is of miserable origin; it is formed of the dust of the earth; it is condemned to die and to moulder in the grave; yet it is this body that is the recipient of the sinful pleasure in the offences of lust, greed, drunkenness and sloth; in all the sins that minister to the corrupt inclinations of fallen humanity. Therefore it is fit that the body should receive the punishment. But we are very tender and considerate of this body of ours; we do not like the idea of punishing it.

Most of the vices are directed to procuring for the body some pleasure or some gratification. That the body may be comfortable, may feel easy, may be clothed in a way to set off its supposed beauty; that the eyes, the ears, the taste, the touch, may be gratified, is the object of the foulest and most detestable vices. Men steal, cheat, drink to excess, indulge in lust, and in laziness, in order that this body may be gratified. And from temptation to that gratification no one is immune. The great Apostle Saint Paul said: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest while I preach to others I myself become a castaway." If Saint Paul was not immune, who is?

"I am delighted," said he, "with the law of God, according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is, in my members." Saint Jerome beat his breast with a stone. Saint Bernard threw himself into a frozen pond. Saint Benedict stuck his flesh with thorns. What did they mean by acting like that? They meant to conquer their flesh, that they might not sin by the flesh. They did not hold themselves safe from sin; not they. They knew and fully realized that the devil was permitted to tempt them.

The spirit of the modern world is to pamper and pet the body. So strong is this spirit that there are many Catholics who believe firmly in the principles and doctrines of their holy religion, who, nevertheless, are deeply affected by the spirit which is all about them in the world, and are disposed to argue that fasting is useless, and that self-denial is unnecessary when the thing we deny ourselves is not itself a forbidden thing. We have met Catholics who, without any intention of denying the teaching of the

Church, were disposed to question the wisdom of fasting as an old-fashioned practice which might have been all right when people—as they say—were so much stronger than they are now, but a practice which is unsuited to the times in which we live.

All such excuses and distinctions are, of course, mere expressions of the human dislike of denying the body anything that it craves, and the imaginary rights of the body are the more exaggerated the more we think of them, and the more the cravings of the body are indulged. There is nothing that is so feared in these days as pain or severe restriction of any appetite. Small inconveniences are magnified; and a deprivation which our fathers would have thought it beneath the dignity of a man to complain about, is made the subject of loud and angry discussion.

The decoration and adornment of the person occupy so much attention as to move sensible people to laughter; and those who have a keen sense of humor are sometimes able to laugh at themselves when it comes home to them that they are childish in their years of adult age. Women are the principal offenders in this regard; but not by any means the only ones. Men are very fond of gratifying their vanity too. But, if you want to hear a vigorous protest, just try to take away from people something with which they want to gratify their stomach. Here is a very excellent opportunity for self-denial. If we want to do something to mortify the body, the opportunity is always at hand. People are so fond of eating that any day in the year they have the chance to deny themselves right in their own homes.

THE CAMPAIGN of opposition to the Council by the Masonic Lodges in Europe is also recalled. On platform and in the press they carried on a violent warfare, asking nothing less than the intervention of the several Governments of Christendom for obeying the Pope's call for their presence in the Eternal City. Notwithstanding, "never in the history of the Church," writes the same Roman correspondent, "was there so magnificent a gathering of prelates. From the five continents flocked Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Generals of Religious Orders, each accompanied by his theological consultant, and around the tomb of the Galilean Fisherman they gathered on the appointed date to assist at High Mass sung by the Sovereign Pontiff. The Vatican Council was opened." Should the re-opening take place, as scheduled, in 1926, we may be sure the gathering will be no less august than in 1869. There is now not a single survivor of that of 1870. It has been the writer's privilege to know well several of these men.

THE REED SCHOOL BILL

The real scholars of the nation, such men as President Elliot of Harvard, President Hadley of Yale and Dr. Henry S. Pritchett of the Carnegie Foundation, are opposed to the Sterling-Reed educational bill, and the "common people," including the farmers, are likewise opposed, according to Mr. William Trueman, Treasurer of the New York State Rural School Improvement Association.

"The only ones who want such legislation are the professional educationalists who have fallen down on their job." Mr. Trueman told the members of the Committee on Education of the House of Representatives, at a hearing on the Sterling-Reed measure here.

Mr. Trueman declared modern educational methods, which the proponents of the Sterling-Reed bill would like to extend through federal aid, "have produced an unhealthy kind of precociousness which soon becomes a soggy cynicism in which religion is a joke and statesmanship becomes synonymous with graft." Such results have ensued he declared, because the professional educators, "instead of devoting their time to dispelling ignorance are rushing off to State legislatures and to Congress for big appropriations and grants of unlimited power."

Declaring that the proper standard by which to judge the value of educational methods is the results which such methods produce, he asked, in the following manner, to be shown the benefit resulting from application of modern methods:

"Is it in the Church, with its unseemly wrangle between the modernists and fundamentalists, and with cigaret smoking and fox-trotting in the church basements? Is it in Music? Let Jazz answer. Is it in the home? Read 'Main Street' and 'Babbitt.' Is it in literature? See the covers of our Magazines. Is it in politics? Consider the Veterans Bureau. Is it in statesmanship? Remember Teapot Dome."

Other speakers against the bill at this hearing were Superintendent

Robinson G. Jones, of the Public Schools of Cleveland; and Mr. Milton Fairchild, chairman of the Character Education Institute. Mr. Jones and Mr. Fairchild both approved provision for an adequate federal agency to do educational research work, but opposed the subsidy and appropriation features of the Sterling-Reed bill.

Dr. Thomas E. Finnegan, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Pennsylvania, spoke in favor of the creation of a Federal Department of Education and Federal subsidies to the States as provided in the Sterling-Reed Bill.

CHANCELLOR SEIPEL ANSWERS CRITICS

SAYS INTERNATIONAL LOAN REALLY SET THE NATION FREE

Accompanying the following article, Dr. Funder sent a letter to the Director of the N. C. W. C. News Service in which he stated that His Excellency, Monsignor Seipel, the Austrian Federal Chancellor, asked that the article be published to refute criticisms which "are making Socialist opposition to Austria's reconstruction."

By Dr. Frederick Funder, Vienna Correspondent, N. C. W. C.

Vienna, April 28.—Six months ago the N. C. W. C. News Service carried a story headed "Priest-Chancellor of Austria Highly Praised by American Financier," which was a report of a speech delivered at a banquet in Vienna by the American banker Otto H. Kahn. The Vienna correspondent of the Service thought it remarkable that a man who, by his racial origin and outlook on life is certainly a stranger to Austrian Catholics and could not be suspected of partiality to a Catholic priest, should speak in the terms of highest praise of the priest-statesman who presides over the destinies of Austria.

The Catholic magazine (here Dr. Funder named a bi-lingual monthly, published in the United States, the name of which is deleted as irrelevant to the arguments he advances) quoted this article from the N. C. W. C. News Service and then proceeded to show that "this whole transaction," namely, the reconstruction of Austria, "meant the subjugation of an entire nationality for generations to come."

Following this expression of opinion the distinguished (here Dr. Funder named a semi-monthly review the name of which is omitted for the reason heretofore given) in its issue of March 15 had the following to say:

"Now what conclusions can a thinking man with the power of deduction draw from Mr. Kahn's financial liaison with Austria?"

"A short while ago the writer happened by the mere chance to be thrown into the company of some industrialists, with whom was a financier attempting to persuade this group to buy all the Austrian securities they could possibly obtain. 'The people of Austria,' he said, 'are now well in hand; they are willing to go back to work at long hours and small pay; they are ready to eat out of our hands. I have investigated conditions thoroughly and I know that enormous profits are already being made through this loan, profits that run into thousands of per cent. And from every indication, conditions are sure to become even better for the people holding these securities.'

"That was last August. A few weeks ago this same financier committed suicide. His business affairs were in perfect shape; he had suffered a nervous breakdown. Perhaps blood money and the haunting of a starved and enslaved people still have the power of making the conscience of a modern financier uneasy and troubled."

In connection with the foregoing, (the name of the semi-monthly publication deleted) commented upon the manner in which the N. C. W. C. News Service interpreted matters of this kind as follows:

"One would have expected that the Catholic press, the leaders of Catholic opinion, if such exist—would have condemned this wholesale enslavement of one of the most Catholic of peoples. Instead we are led to believe that it was a laudable act, heralding the liberation and the reconstruction of Austria!"

CRITICISMS ANSWERED

Every Catholic Austrian is bound to be grateful that American Catholic papers show their readiness to make a stand in defense of the liberty and the future of Catholic Austria, even when it is thought Austria's liberty is menaced by American citizens. I. e., the powerful financial magnates of New York. It is a noble and encouraging sight—in this world in which, notwithstanding peace treaties and the League of Nations, new acts of violence against whole nations are piled up day by day—to see Catholic Americans rise to protect a sadly tried nation against the violence of the money power. If, however, I now try to correct the views expressed in the (name deleted), I am doing so not to diminish those feelings of gratefulness, but to prevent the spread of erroneous opinions which might be fatal to us Catholic Austrians. For, if there should be "an enslavement" of the Austrian

people, it would be doubtful if there could be reconstruction of Austria. And if, by the Treaty of Geneva, Austria had been given over to foreign capitalists as their spoil of usury, what then would have been the part played in this transaction by the Catholic leaders of Austria headed by the Chancellor, Monsignor Seipel?

The financial reconstruction of Austria is based on the international loan granted in 1922 and guaranteed by the Governments of England, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, and Holland. The loan amounting to 35,000,000 pounds sterling, was intended to stabilize the Austrian krona, then declining rapidly, and to give Austria time to balance her domestic budget by a two year period of internal reforms. As is well known, through the monthly reports of the Commission General appointed by the League of Nations, Austria is making satisfactory progress in bringing order into her financial affairs. The whole world knows that Austria is the first among all the nations which suffered financial catastrophes, to stabilize her currency. This is true to such an extent that, with reference to the continual fluctuations of other European currencies, the Austrian krona has been accorded the amusing but not satirical title of "Alpen-dollar" (Dollar of the Alps).

SOCIALIST CHARGES REPUDED BY FACTS

Can it be that this success has been purchased at too great a price, even though it did not bring Paradise to Austria but only a slow and calm recovery? Has it been purchased by enslavement of the people by foregoing sovereignty, by submitting to annexation at the hands of international finance. It was such fears as these that were expressed by the Austrian Socialists in opposition to Monsignor Seipel when the work of reconstruction was started. Now, however, not even those stubborn opponents of Chancellor Seipel dare to maintain such charges any longer.

The loan of 35,000,000 pounds was divided among nine national groups of bankers. In the United States subscriptions to the loan totalled 5,400,000 pounds while Austria herself subscribed 3,800,000 pounds. The loan is to be paid within twenty years and, as security, Austria pledged the gross receipts from customs and the tobacco monopoly. These by far exceed the liabilities incurred under the terms of the loan. In January, 1924 for example, these receipts amounted to 380,500,000 Austrian kronen while only 73,500,000 kronen were required for interest and funding payments on the debt. So far, Austria has never experienced any difficulty in meeting payments of the loan as they fall due. Neither her political nor her economic freedom have been infringed upon. The conditions under which the loan was granted to Austria through the intervention of the League of Nations are reasonable. They are so, perhaps, not so much because the international financiers were moved by Austria's distress or because they were moved by the dictates of humanity to rescue a dying State, but simply because the nations that have guaranteed the Austrian loan were also obliged to guarantee payment of the interest. Therefore, these nations were interested in seeing to it that the financiers of their respective countries kept the interest rate as low as possible.

TERMS LOWER THAN OTHERS OBTAINED

The rate of interest upon which the loan was granted averaged 7%. This is lower than rates paid by other nations, incomparably richer than Austria, and with better securities, to offer within the past few years. Thus, Belgium had to pay 8% to float her American loan in 1921, and France in the same year paid 8.22%. Again in 1921, Czechoslovakia paid 9.08%. It would be quite unfair if we Austrians were now to say that we consider ourselves enslaved and overreached under the terms of a loan obtained at much lower rates than loans made to other and stronger States. This is particularly true in view of the fact that the burdens of this loan have not, so far, proved to be too heavy and it has helped us to tackle the problem of economic reconstruction with success. The American financier who, according to the statement in the (name deleted) was dreaming of profits running into "thousands of per cent" through this loan seems to have been already at the time he made the assertion, suffering from the mental derangement which later led him to commit suicide.

In order to appreciate the relief which it was to the Austrian people to obtain this loan, it must be remembered that in former years Austria, notwithstanding urgent representations to the powers, had tried in vain to demonstrate her urgent need for international assistance. Each time new hopes were aroused only to be dashed, the distressful condition of Austria became accentuated. As late as February 19, 1922, Mr. George Young, who represented the British Treasury in Vienna, said: "In an almost desperate situation the Austrians have shown admirable patience, endurance and courage."

Mr. Young promised help and once more it did not materialize. And then a new financial disaster came upon Austria in the summer

of 1922 and threatened the country with absolute ruin. It was at this time that we were able at last to obtain the international loan and the work of Austria's salvation began.

NO SOCIAL REFORM ABANDONED

To be sure, the country had to bear its share of the burden to bring about this salvation, by strict economy and by increases in taxation. But not a single one of the social reforms was given up. No one thought of touching the eight-hour day. On the contrary, the social progress and existing insurance of the working classes is to be abetted by general old age pensions for laborers and small industrialists; and this, through social legislation initiated by Monsignor Seipel's Cabinet.

The Commissioner General of the League of Nations, whose presence in Vienna is the only feature of the loan which might possibly be regarded as an infringement of Austria's sovereignty, controls the distribution of money raised through the loan and sees to the observance of the treaty concluded between Austria and the League of Nations with regard to details of the program of reconstruction. Dr. Zimmermann, the Commissioner General, was formerly Burgomaster of Rotterdam. He has, so far, performed his duties in cordial co-operation with the Austrian government and on several occasions has intervened to protect Austria from foreign claims which, without assistance from the League of Nations, she could not have resisted.

AUSTRIA FACES FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE

The part played by the Austrian Catholic people ought to be represented in the wrong light. Austrians must economize and work and, even today, they must struggle with many difficulties and cares. But before the inauguration of the work of salvation by the League of Nations, in the form of the international loan, the Austrians were menaced with an uncertain fate which seemed at times to endanger the very existence of the State. It was at that time that they were free and the serfs of distress. Today they can look forward with confidence to the future, and, as a result of the success attained so far, hope that in a few years they will be able to take off such chains of distress which still bind them.

It is true that the danger of subjugation of Christian civilization by international capitalism has never been so great as at the present time. But Christian justice demands that, among the many gloomy events, we recognize the work of the League of Nations as a bright spot and a work of liberation which, not without reason, is praised as a good example.

"KEEP THE PEOPLE UNDIVIDED"

— WAS THE PLEA OF CARDINAL MUNDELEIN AT CHICAGO RECEPTION

"It is our duty, yours and mine, to keep the people of this nation one and undivided; to keep far from them, alien influences and shield them against foreign propaganda; to repel from our midst those who would split us in two; who would halt our progress; who would hamper our mission for the peace, the happiness and the real prosperity of our people and our country."

This was the keynote of a remarkable home coming address delivered May 13 by His Eminence George Cardinal Mundelein before an immense welcoming throng in the Auditorium, Chicago's largest theater.

CITY'S LEADERS AT RECEPTION

Thousands of men and women, leading clergymen of all denominations, professional and business men and women, officers and members of scores of fraternal societies, parishioners of the 850 churches in the Chicago Archdiocese, directors and members of the Catholic charitable institutions, women's organizations, educational institutions, hospitals and schools, crowded into the Auditorium as a symbol of the city's tribute to its first Prince of the Catholic Church.

And far from the Auditorium, tens, probably hundreds, of thousands of others also heard the message, broadcast by two powerful radio stations whose sending radius covers the entire territory from the Alleghenies to the Rockies and from the far South to northern Canada.

Mayor William E. Dever acted as Honorary Chairman and D. F. Kelly, K. S. G., head of the Citizens Committee appointed to welcome the Cardinal, presided. Representatives of many racial groups and of other religious denominations also spoke words of welcome and acclaim. In his address, His Eminence said in part:

"To take one's place in the supreme Senate of the Catholic Church is one of the greatest honors that can be paid to a man here below. But to be accorded that honor with the approval and congratulations of those among whom I have lived for years is even a greater source of gratification."

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