

CANADIAN CATHOLICS AND THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE

In London, in 1941 Denis W. Brogan, Professor of Political Science in Cambridge University published a book entitled: U.S.A. An Outline of the Country, Its People and Institutions. Speaking of the United States of America he wrote: "... in no Western society is the intellectual prestige lower than in the country than in the country where, in such respects as wealth, numbers, and strength of organization, it is so powerful."

Political scientists are always, as they should be, on the look out for relationships, hoping to discover causes of effects. It, no doubt, made Prof. Brogan, quite pleased with himself when he discovered, as he thought, that the intellectual prestige of Catholics was lowest in the ~~country where~~ non-catholic country where they are most numerous, are best organized and are better off.

Prof. Brogan's statement ~~never~~ moved not a few in the U.S. to write upon the subject. There was general agreement that his statement was true. Monsignor John Tracy Ellis, Prof of Ch. Hist. in CUA, went so far as to say that no well-informed American Catholic will attempt to challenge it. (AC and the IL, Chicago, 1956, 16)

I am not a Pol.Sci., but, from my superficial observations, as ~~an~~ a scientist, it seems to me the statement is not true. It seems to me that the intellectual prestige of Catholicism in Canada is lower than it is in the US.

About two years ago I spoke to the Newman Alumni Assoc. of Halifax, on the World Congress of Pax Romana in Nottingham in 1955, and mentioned how embarrassed I felt at the Assembly of the International Movement of Catholic Intellectuals to find that there was not present ~~even~~ even one Canadian layman.

~~In 1955~~ That same year, I was at an Assembly of the International Astronomical Union, at which there were 16 Canadians of which Dr Heard of Toronto and I were the only Catholics; that means there was only 1 ^{Canadian Catholic} layman

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Last month, I was present at the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics assembly in Toronto. ~~There were 700 scientists present, from all over the world~~ The list of delegates and guests included 105 Canadians. Four of these were French-Canadians. To the best of my knowledge of the 101 English-speaking Canadians listed, I was the only Catholic.; ~~there was no Catholic~~ I believe there was no ~~at~~ Catholic Canadian layman listed. I say 'listed' ~~advisedly~~ advisedly, because there was one Catholic layman participating. He was not a delegate or a guest, but host at the David Dunlap Observatory, Dr John Heard. I met Dr Heard at a reception. He introduced me to the Chief of the Research and Analysis Branch of the ^{US} Army Map Service ~~at Washington~~ to whom he said: "You know, I believe you and Fr Burke-Gaffney and I are the only Catholics here". Actually that was not true there were nine other Jesuits there, and there were Catholics from ~~Spain~~ Italy, France, Spain and Belgium. But, Dr Heard, head of the dept. of astron. at U of T is painfully aware of the fact that, in Canada, he is frequently at scientific meetings at which he is the only Catholic present.

Now, I am not pessimistic about this situation, but you young people who have yet to rear families should keep it in mind, and see to it that it is no fault of yours, if in the next generation that we are not better represented in the intellectual life of our country.

The Americans in analysing their position, have traced back their want of intellectual activity to penal days. ~~It is true that in the early days of this country, also, in English-speaking~~ But those days are gone. We are in a better position now. In Halifax, the present position of Catholics is due to the action of Catholic laymen in the days of its early history.

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Lack of an intellectual tradition.

In the early days of Halifax, Laurence Dolye, the first Catholic Lawyer of the NS bar had been sent to England to be educated.

After the potato famine in Ireland, immigration was from a poorer class of people who ~~themselves were~~ could not afford to have their children educated abroad, and whose only alternative was to send them, not to non-sectarian universities, like we now have, but protestant colleges.

Their grew up in Canada a people without a reading tradition.

Lack of serious reading habits is not the only fault.

The making of money and the being rich became the fashion.

~~Exx~~ Today, the attachment to material goods is still a handicap to intellectual endeavour.

There are, thank God, some laymen who rather spend their lives in academic circles earning less money than they could make in industry.

Plato: "in proportion as riches and rich men are honored in the state, virtue and the virtuous are dishonored."

In the 1940's Monsignor Ellis of CUA made a survey of Catholics in prominent positions, which can be summed up by saying that there were a higher percentage of Catholics listed in "Who's Who in Commerce and Industry" than in the "Directory of American Scholars".

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J.H.Newman: ~~LECTURES~~ ON THE PRESENT POSITION OF CATHOLICS IN ENGLAND, (NY,1913), 378:

(our **Non-Catholic** fellow-country men "must be made to know us as we are; they must be made to know our religion as it is, not as they fancy it to be; This is the work that lies before you, in your place and in your measure. (They must be made to see us in action, and be overcome.)

Canadian Catholics and the Intellectual Life.

In Europe, an ordinary mortal on meeting a professor, tips his hat; in the UnS., the ordinary American taps his head.

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Catholics have been ~~carried along~~ ^{caught up} in thi s un-intellectual atmosphere and been carried along in it.

This should be a cause of alarm to us if we reflect that many of the heresies which have made headway in the world and robbed us of nations are anti-intellectual in their roots. It is ironic to find that, now the heretics surpass us in intelctualism, and anti-intelleualism is commoner among those ~~who stand~~ of the faith which withstood anti-intellectualism.

Luther was a man of catch phrases, for instance: STAT PRO RATIONE VOLUNTAS: the will stands for reason (-he wld have it stand even against the intellect); his fides fiducilais,- a trusting faith, was a repudiation of the intellectual elemnts in the act of faith; he defended his position by calling, in his typically strong language, the inteklect "the devil's whore"

Other typical anti-intectual heresies of the past four centuries are the blind fatlism iof Calvin, the rigors of Jansenism and the sentemality of Wesley and his methodist followers .

In defending the truths of supernatural revelation of all these, the Chruch was at the same time was defending the validity of natural reason, and the primacy of the intellect.

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✱ If Catholics themselves do not sufficiently appreciate the reasoned position of the Church, I think it may be in large measure due to the fact that in Catechism and books on ~~apolo~~ elementary books on apologetics, they have learned the dogmas and decrees of such Councils as the Council of Trent and the Vatican without ever reading or hearing anything of the long discussions which led to the conclusions. In the Proceedings of these Councils, which are very lengthy, there are what are called chapters, which sum up the reasoned conclusions, and these are followed by the Canons, also known as decrees. For two years now there has been available a book entitled "The Sources of Catholic Dogma" a ^{the 13th edit} translation of a Latin book (Enchiridion Symbolorum) by one Henry Denziger. The first edit. of the Lat. vers. came out in 1854, that is before the Vatican Council., with succeeding edits. it was brought up to date, and has been a sine qua non in ~~many~~ seminaries for years.

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A spirituality of Christian humanism, centred about Christ conceived as the Divine Intellectual is as necessary for the ^{educated} ~~learned~~ as the concept of Christ the Worker is for all.

Catholicx intellectuals all too often whine about their not being appreciated or complain that the Church is not interested in them.

I find this attitude a curiosity when coming from those who are supposed to have keener powers of insight and understanding than others.

Surely, nowhere in the New Testament, were the thoughtful promised any other lot than to be misunderstood. Surely Our Saviour himself received no preference for the fact that he was head and shoulders over his friends in power of understanding and memory.

I mention these things because I believe there is