

hung on their speeches it is not likely that it would have turned out as it did. It took a Father Coughlin, a Huey Long, and a Hearst press, uniting in a campaign whose passionate appeal to prejudice was only matched by its mendacity, to produce this result. It was the flood of telegrams and letters which swept over the capital in response to the grossly distorted descriptions of the issue broadcast by the Detroit priest and the Hearst newspapers which set senators howling on the senate floor that entrance into the court would involve American armies in the settlement of European disputes. Probably no senator believed such nonsense when the debate opened, but by the time radio and press had completed their rabble-rousing there were numerous signs that certain senators had actually come to take such rant seriously.

But such an interpretation of the vote, soothing as it is to the wounded self-esteem of the peace forces, is altogether too superficial. If Father Coughlin, and Huey Long, and Will Rogers, and Mr. Hearst's kept journalists registered a new triumph for demagoguery, it was because the material was at hand for the demagogue's use. The swiftness, quite as much as the passion, of the popular response to the demagogic attacks on court adherence merits reflection. The effort to rouse the masses had only two weeks in which to operate. That it should have succeeded as it did speaks volumes as to the normal state of the public mind. No such reaction would have been possible, however adept at the arts of propaganda the opponents of the court, had not the general public already been suspicious of all proposals which involve international commitments. The demagogue does not create the mass-mind; he gives voice to what is already there.

This should be borne in mind in relation to the charges of mismanagement which are now being freely leveled against those who conducted the fight for court entrance in Washington. It is true that there have been more brilliant parliamentary campaigns. The fumbling of the administration stretched all the way from the nonchalance with which the resolution was introduced—the nation being assured that the vote would be so overwhelmingly favorable that there would be scarcely a semblance of opposition—to the incredibly bad tactics by which the Norris and Johnson reservations were first rejected only to have the Johnson reservation accepted after the hour of opportunity had passed. Quite possibly, if a vote had been forced almost as soon as the resolution was favorably reported, when there were votes available for forcing action, the decision would have gone the other way.

But to say that this should have been done is equivalent to saying that the United States should have taken this step without caring whether the people of the United States were heartily in favor of so doing. Would it have been for the good of the nation, and of world peace, to have entered upon an international obligation as important as that of membership in the world court while a large part of the nation remained unconvinced of the wisdom of that act? We doubt it. On the contrary, we believe that membership entered upon under such circumstances would be more likely to

lead to international misunderstanding and strain than to contribute to the growth of a genuine world reign of law.

Before those who favored American entrance into the court dismiss this defeat as merely the work of demagogues and inept parliamentary tacticians, let them look certain plain facts in the face. Setting to one side all the balderdash and all the downright lying which were flung about in this struggle, there yet remain three factors which are amply sufficient to explain why hosts of Americans made plain their reluctance to see their nation take the step proposed by the President. Those three factors are the post-war disillusionment, the general resentment over debt repudiations, and the suspicion with regard to the purposes of a court which renders advisory opinions.

Little needs to be said concerning the post-war disillusionment of the American people, except to say that it is deeper and more bitter today than ever. The masses of this nation are cynical over the purposes for which the war was fought, and more cynical over its outcome. The sacrifices made to overthrow the Hohenzollerns, in order to bring in Hitler, seem to millions one of the most ghastly betrayals in history. Such revelations as have recently come from the inquiry into the armaments industry add to this common feeling. A bitterness results which, whether justly or unjustly, extends to all the agencies of Versailles. The American public, in other words, began to suspect as long ago as 1919 that the treaty of Versailles was ethically rotten. It would not lift a finger to grant permanence to that treaty. And its deepest determination at this moment is never to become involved again in commitments out of which similar instruments of international immorality may come.

There are persons in the United States—especially along the Atlantic seaboard—as well as in Europe who have no conception of the resentment felt by the masses in this country at the repudiation of the war debts. It is idle to attempt an argument as to the special nature of those debts, or to point out the small effect which their non-payment has on the nation's tax bill, or to seek to raise a counter-argument with regard to the "repudiation" involved in America's recent gold policy. To the American public at large one fact, and one fact only, matters. European nations have repudiated debts honestly incurred, after having been given what the American is convinced were remarkably generous terms of settlement. That means, in the eyes of the man on the American street, that the nations of Europe are dishonest. That means that the less America has to do with them, the better. It is well to state the case thus baldly, for only as it is so faced can its force be appreciated. Argument as to the merit of this public feeling has only minor relevancy. The existence of the feeling is the fact which must be taken into account.

From the beginning, the provision for advisory opinions has been an obstacle in the way of American entrance into the world court. The reservations adopted by the senate in 1926, and the reservations proposed this year, have all had to do with advisory opinions. The amendment of the constitution of the court, made

in 1929 in answer to American objections, was an attempt to convince the United States that the dangers of a misuse of the advisory opinion function of the court has been guarded against. The Christian Century believes that, either by the adoption of the senate reservations or by the operation of the new restrictions placed upon the court, or by both, the interests of the United States would have been sufficiently safeguarded to have made negligible the danger that American interests or independence of action might be affected by any advisory functioning of the court.

Nevertheless, the fact of the advisory opinion remains, and so long as it remains it will militate against American confidence in the court. Advisory opinions are, *per se*, repugnant to the whole genius of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence. In the case of this particular court, they constitute its one indisputable connection with the league. Every time the court renders such an opinion it by so much adds to the belief that its function is primarily political. The verdict rendered by the court in the Austro-German customs union case of 1931, which was used so effectively by opponents of court entrance to prove the political nature of its decisions, was an advisory opinion. Its purpose and its nature were political, and all the buttery talk in the world could not disguise that fact. And it is quite possible that popular suspicion of the court's good faith will not subside sufficiently to make a new campaign for entrance practicable until the court has rid itself of the advisory opinion feature altogether.

To point out these reasons why so large a part of the public approved the decision of the senate is not to minimize the gravity of the situation revealed by the vote and campaign which preceded it. That raucous cry which rose from the floor of the senate, "To hell with Europe!" reflects a state of mind which, in the long run, can produce nothing but tragedy. It was as an offset to that state of mind that entrance into the court, despite its present weakness as a juridical body, would have been of most value. And it would be a wholesome thing if now, the country over, individuals and groups who do not believe in committing America to a future of irresponsible isolationism, would write to their senators, letting them know that the public opinion which can be marshaled by a Father Coughlin and a William Randolph Hearst is not the only public opinion in the nation.

But this resumption of steady effort to bring the power of the United States to bear on the building of a world order in which "law not war" shall be the ultimate appeal should proceed in the light of realities. The realities of American public opinion have been revealed by the court campaign, however distressing the revelation may have proved. It is fruitless to ask for American participation in the European system while that system remains founded on the immoralities of Versailles, insists on debt repudiations, and subjects its judicial bench to the political purposes of the advisory opinion. It is still the conviction of The Christian Century that the next step which the United States should take in discharging its responsibilities to world peace is entrance into the Permanent Court for International

Justice. Such entrance will become possible, however, only when the court has been clearly set free from implication in the European political system.

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## Barthianism and the Rape of China

KARL BARTH is exercising a growing influence upon the thought of Japanese Christians, and his theology is one of the factors which will determine their attitudes and policies with reference to some of the practical problems which oriental Christians are now facing. This is made clear by the report of a joint conference of Chinese and Japanese Christian leaders held in China several weeks ago. It is possible that Barth and his occidental disciples will say that the Japanese misunderstand him and distort his teachings to a conclusion that he never intended. This may perhaps be true; it would be somewhat surprising if it were not true, for to translate a theology into a language "wholly other" than that in which it was thought out, and to transport it half around the world and transplant it into a culture radically in contrast with that in which it originated, is to supply the most favorable conditions for misunderstanding and distortion. But even so, the lineaments of Japanese Barthianism, as depicted in the report of the conference, seem fairly recognizable.

First, though, it ought to be said that the fact that such a conference could be held at all at a time when there is so much tension and mutual suspicion between the two nations represented, that it could continue for some days with increasing intimacy of friendship, and that it could come to a climax by the formation of a permanent fellowship which looks forward to making the conference an annual event with meetings alternately in Japan and China—all this is profoundly significant of the place which Christianity holds in the orient as a unifying link between two mutually suspicious nations. The Christian element in each is small, but influential out of proportion to its numbers.

The common Christianity of strong minorities in these two countries furnishes no immediate solvent for all the problems which nationalistic pride and ambition supply so abundantly, any more than it is a guarantee of peace and good will among the "Christian" nations of the west, but it exercises a pull in the right direction. It sets up barriers against contagions of nationalistic hysteria and war madness. It means something that these Chinese and Japanese Christians could listen quietly to each other's interpretations of their respective governments' policies and their frank descriptions of the minds of their own people, and part the best of friends.

But to return to Barth. The Japanese delegates to the conference reported that the most significant current development in the Christian movement in Japan is the influence exerted by the dialectical theology of Karl Barth. This was the statement of one who an-

nounced himself an out-and-out Barthian, though he did not approve his master's resistance to the German government's program for the church. On this point, apparently, the Japanese feeling for the sacredness of the state prevailed over the concept of the right of the church and of the individual Christian conscience to independence from political control. Indeed, the Japanese state and the Nazi state are alike in being something more than merely secular and political organizations, to the minds of their loyal subjects; they are mystical entities.

Passing over this reservation on the part of the Japanese Barthian, we find the gist of his position in this: "God is absolute and man is sinful. Religion teaches submission to God, not endeavor for the development of personality, nor for happiness, nor for the realization of ideals such as freedom and equality." But, he was asked by the Chinese, what does this mean with regard to the actual attitudes and conduct of men who wish to do the will of God? Must they not try to follow patterns of conduct rationally and logically consistent with what seems to be the will of God? For example, "if a person devotes his life to the promotion of international good will, and regards this as doing the will of God, would he not have to refuse to exploit or to kill citizens of the so called enemy country?" The answer was that God could not be submitted to any such human test. Which seems to mean, in this connection, that man must not be submitted to the test of carrying his conviction into action if there is any chance that he will thereby compromise his loyalty as a subject.

Just here it does not seem that Barthianism, at least in its Japanese interpretation and application, is any great help toward the prevention of war in the far east. Christianity with this coloration is an instrument better adapted to the support of nationalism, even in its most aggressive forms, than to carrying the principle of good will into action in a time of crisis. The Chinese leaders present at the conference felt this way about it too, and anxiously inquired, "What then is to prevent our Japanese Christian friends from coming to kill us tomorrow?"

But the quietism and inactivism implicit in the Japanese version of Barthianism received an even clearer illustration, and in a field where the possibility of disobedience to the state did not enter in to complicate the question of a Christian's duty to fulfil the will of God consistently. It was pointed out that the sale of narcotics, especially heroin, by Japanese in the so-called war zone and in other parts of north China is an evil fraught with devastating consequences, and the Japanese delegates were urged to use their influence at home to arouse public sentiment and put some curb upon this death-dealing traffic. But the Barthian again drew upon his dialectic to declare that any such appeal is merely "man's idealism, which is of no avail."

Beyond that point it is scarcely possible for the Christian mind to go in withdrawing from the world and renouncing responsibility for participation in any program for the betterment of social ills. When the pendulum reaches that extreme, it is ready to swing back. This interpretation of the utter other-ness of

God—and the utter impotence of man to save himself or to advance the kingdom of God or to make any improvement in the conditions of human life—may be a perversion of Barthianism, as the fantastic theories of miraculous conversion in vogue a century ago were a perversion of the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, and the "anti-means" theory of certain Baptists who denounced missions as an impertinent interference with God's plans were a perversion of the Calvinistic doctrine of the sovereignty of God. But every theology has to bear some responsibility for the distortions to which it gives rise. Barthianism in Japan seems to have at least a good start toward the development of a system of thinking in which personal piety will be divorced from every practical task which oriental Christians confront.

## Fads

EDITOR THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY:

SIR: One of the great advantages of living to be over fifty is that you begin to see how things come out. In order to be a judge of fads it is necessary to have been through a number of previous fads. A file of hospital reports is a record of shifting fashions in operations, and an old board was recently found in the cellar of a suburban church inscribed "Cyclists invited to the service."

After fifty you can remember the birth, rise and fall of many crazes. Some are born of dramatic or tragic occurrences, as when a drowning catastrophe in some college or other made the ability to swim a condition of graduation in nearly every college in the land. Soon no one will be allowed to graduate who has not demonstrated his or her ability to alight from an airplane in a parachute. Some fads are born of books, as when Hall's "Adolescence" or Freud's "Introduction to Psychoanalysis" was published. Whist and bridge flourished in periods when people began to doubt if their next remark were worth making—a condition fatal to all conversation.

The wave of nearly every fad leaves something of slight value on the beach after it has withdrawn. Bygone operations left the knowledge of their futility, the bicycle left the automobile, Hall's "Adolescence" left "progressive education," Freud left the "unconscious," the Coolidge era left the Empire State building.

When you are over fifty you can really enjoy the solemnity with which the fad of the moment is worshiped. Believe it or not, an article has recently appeared on "Charles Dickens: A Biological Study of His Personality" which has as paragraph headings, "The Endocrine Glands of Charles Dickens," "His Parathyroid Gland," "His Adrenal Glands," "His Pituitary Gland" and "His Thyroid Gland," with the opening sentence: "Charles Dickens for much of his life may be considered especially as the product of an exceptionally vigorous thyroid." Next?

Yours with due solemnity,

QUINTUS QUIZ.