

Maroons, fugitives from the deep south and the free Black immigrants from the mid-west would have led to a greater understanding of their individual adaptation to the Canadian scene. Perhaps most disturbing is the manner in which Professor Winks first establishes the nebulous nature of his topic (he guesses that the "... Negro proportion of the population probably is no more than two percent...") and then proceeds with grandiose designs to: "... examine the history of Negro life in Canada from 1628 to the 1960s, and by so doing to reveal something of the nature of prejudice in Canada..." "... to use the Negro's story as a means of examining some of the ways in which Canadian attitudes towards immigration and ethnic identity differ from the American..." "... to show the Negro as an actor in the context of an emerging national history..." "and... to inquire into a neglected aspect of Canadian-American cultural relations." Any serious historian who attempts to draw all of these conclusions for an entire nation from subject matter which is limited to a decidedly small, racially-unique, and relatively-poorly documented ethnic group, is treading on thin historical ice. It would have been better had Winks concentrated solely on his one central theme of race prejudice in Canada. His evidence, incidently, proves that the Canadian response was in no way unique, and tends instead to demonstrate, in this matter at least, how very alike we are to all Americans.

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PIERRE THIBAUT. — *Savoir et pouvoir; Philosophie thomiste et politique cléricale au XIX^e siècle*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1972.

The charge that the nineteenth-century revival of Thomist philosophy was fundamentally a matter of clerical politics is not new; it was made by contemporaries who opposed the revival. But in this case the thesis is argued by a young Québécois who is trying to "settle accounts" with the recent past. Until about a decade ago, Thibault claims, instruction in the French Catholic school system was so thoroughly shaped by Thomist categories of thought that for generations of Québécois the Aristotelian-Thomistic universe remained the only "natural and evident" one. When Thibault made the traumatic discovery that Thomism was not the only philosophy worth serious consideration (about 1964, he tells us), he became "obsessed" with finding out how this curious "blockage" had occurred. This book, which was originally presented as a doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne, is his contribution to an answer.

Thibault dates the absolute reign of Thomist philosophy in Quebec from September 9, 1879, when Laval University decided upon rigorous conformity to *Æterni Patris*, Pope Leo XIII's recently issued encyclical enjoining adherence to Thomism as the philosophy most acceptable to Catholicism.

But the subsequent fortunes of Thomism in Quebec (and elsewhere) are taken as known; Thibault is primarily concerned with explaining the origins and significance of the papal effort to restore Thomist philosophy.

In opposition to the view that Thomism had been the *philosophia perennis* of Catholicism, Thibault points out that Catholic philosophers had practically abandoned scholasticism by the late eighteenth century. Acceptance of Cartesian ideas, the triumph of a royal absolutism hostile to Thomist political theories, and suppression of the Jesuits (who had been the staunchest defenders of Thomism since the Council of Trent) were among the forces that contributed to the decline.

Then, in the climate of reaction that followed the French Revolution, a small group of Italian Jesuits (restored in 1814) took the initiative in promoting a return to Thomism. Thibault tries to show that their motives were more practical than philosophical. Thomist epistemology, in particular, offered an attractive alternative in the face of practical difficulties posed by other theories of knowledge current in Catholic circles at the time. The theories developed in reaction to eighteenth-century rationalism (various forms of traditionalism and fideism) were inadequate for the purpose of apologetics in an increasingly scientific age. Reason had to be safeguarded to the extent that it would remain available to provide a rational basis for religious faith. At the same time, the competing "spiritualist" and "idealist" theories popular among other Catholic thinkers (ontologism and similar theories deriving from Platonic and Cartesian notions of innate ideas) implied a subjectivism, a possibility of direct communication of the individual with God, that was potentially anarchic and anticlerical. Thomism offered a middle way that would preserve both reason and clerical authority. According to neo-Thomist epistemology, it is theoretically possible for human reason to know God and his principal attributes with certainty. But given human weaknesses, divine revelation nevertheless remains necessary for the mass of mankind to attain a sufficient knowledge of God and the moral law. And of course, men must rely on the authority of the Church for the proper interpretation of revelation.

Thibault believes that the other major concern of the early neo-Thomists was the Church's relationship to changing political circumstances. Sensing that it would be unwise for the Church to rely too heavily on the support of the rather shakily restored monarchs, they sought a theory that would justify the rights and influence of the Church in the coming age of representative government. With Thomist political philosophy, which justified political authority in terms of natural law (as opposed to ideas of divine right), the Church could retain an "indirect power" over temporal affairs through its claim to be the authoritative interpreter of the natural law.

As long as Rome looked for support to conservative monarchical governments, popes like Gregory XV and Pius IX prudently restrained the claims of the more zealous neo-Thomists. The Thomist revival gradually

won converts among Catholic thinkers, but Thibault maintains that the movement would have remained marginal if it had not been championed by Pope Leo XIII.

Leo XIII clearly the crucial figure in Thibault's story, is portrayed as an ambitious careerist whose reasons for supporting neo-Thomism were the same practical considerations that inspired its earliest proponents. The pope's Jesuit education, his service as a papal nuncio to Belgium, his episcopal experience in Italy from 1845 through the hectic years of unification, and his role in the first Vatican Council are all interpreted in this perspective. Thibault strives to show that the attempt to impose Thomism as the one orthodox Catholic philosophy was not only consistent with the pope's supposedly "liberal" political and social policies, but was in fact the indispensable base for his grand design to restore the influence and power of the papacy and the Church. As Thibault interprets *Æterni Patris*, Thomism was supposed to provide doctrinal unity, an effective apologetics, reconciliation with modern science, and, above all, a political theory that would accommodate modern state forms while safeguarding the Church's rights and influence.

Thibault argues his case with considerable force and skill; a brief summary scarcely does him justice. Although he offers no new evidence, his effort to marshal every available fact and interpretation in favour of his view means that his book provides a useful if tendentious synthesis of an impressive volume of literature on the history of Thomism. The major weakness stems from the same circumstance that gives the book much of its interest — the author's emotional involvement with his topic and his tendency to read back into nineteenth-century church history the concerns of Quebec today. In particular, there appears to be an anticlerical distrust of any exercise of ecclesiastical authority. The most serious example is Thibault's interpretation of Leo XIII's advocacy of the Thomist concept of "indirect power" as nothing more than an ambitious clerical lust after political power. Leo XIII's many encyclicals show quite clearly, in fact, that he completely accepted the principle that the state should be sovereign in its own sphere. The claim to indirect power was no more than insistence that the political sphere remained subject to the Church's moral judgment. It did not imply a positive direction of secular political authority as to the ways and means of achieving the common good.

On balance, however, Thibault's study is well worth reading, both for what it has to say about the nineteenth-century revival of Thomist philosophy, and for what it tells us about the mentality of a generation seeking self-liberation from an educational system that was in part a product of that revival. The book is well indexed and the author has provided an extensive bibliography.

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