

BLACKFRIARS

so far dogged the steps of industrial capitalism—abuses which spring from the hellish idea that a man employed in industry is a machine for increasing dividends, and is entitled to no more than his pay." Perhaps the most useful pages of this book are those which describe the sane Irish attitude to the monstrosity called "industrialism" and to the heresy called "progress." The distributist nature of the new economy is strongly emphasised, for "the Irish Government has never lost sight of the fact that Ireland is an agricultural country, and that the life best suited to her people is a life based on an equitable distribution of property." Legislation on agricultural matters has freed the Irish farmer from the machinations of the "anonymous usurers who play with the necessities of life to satisfy their own bestiality." Mr. de Valera told his people that this legislation would probably involve the foregoing of certain things and that "they would not have an easy time." "But his hearers belonged to a nation which has known less of luxury than any other, has learned to be happy with very little in the way of goods or money, and has immense reserves of spiritual strength to draw on." "It can at least be said that since Fianna Fail came into power no Irish man or woman need endure the agonies of destitution, which so many other countries have begun to take for granted, as the natural accompaniment of industrial capitalism on a lunatic scale."

The last chapter deals with Ireland and her relations with Europe and emphasises her value to the League of Nations. Perhaps she has been too ready to trust the integrity and single-mindedness of the great Powers, but at least to this collection of international adventurers she has shown a courage and sincerity which has not passed unobserved despite the cynicism and cowardice of her more pretentious neighbours.

BERT WATTS.

MISCELLANEOUS

ORDRE REEL: Paul Chanson. (Les Editions du Cerf; 12 frs.)

156 pages of dialogue, some of it as curt and rapid as that of an American talking film, put forward the principles and the organisation of an economic order which proposes to supplant capitalism and overleap the fascist-communist dilemma. A sufficiently tall order in practice. In theory Paul Chanson's thesis touches with extraordinary clarity and skill on certain precise points of difficulty in preparing "cet ordre nouveau d'inspiration chrétienne auquel nous devons tous travailler." Fundamentally supple; contingent and relative with regard to economic institutions, *Ordre Réel* is determined "par les réalités

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présentes et non point par un à prioriisme idéologique." This does not mean a pure relativism or the lack of decisive and permanent principles. It means (what is implied in the metaphysics of analogy) the recognition of intrinsic differentiations of mode in applying principles to contemporary reality. As an example, the organisation of agriculture and the crafts is based on the defence and development of personal and family ownership, while the ownership of industrial property is vested in communities of production, economic and not political in character, which guarantee to the producer—director, technician, skilled or unskilled labourer—a proportional control of the instruments of his work. It is strongly stressed that this organisation together with wider organisations on a regional or national vocational basis, the functions of which interlock, must be economic and not political in character. The danger of a priori political ideologies, of "étatisme" and its correlative, demagoguery, is clearly underlined. The solution: greater economic power, and autonomy for the producers expressed through ownership, (private or, in his own sense, communal) through economic organisations adapted to promote and defend different economic interests and modes of life rather than swamp them with uniformity, and the drastic curtailing of the economic initiative of the state. Against what Gurian calls the total politicisation of modern life with its concomitant mobilization of the masses under the banner of political ideologies, Paul Chanson argues an order which may be in a new and valid sense democratic because it is the reverse of demagogic.

The tempo of the book is so rapid, its matter is so condensed that the English reader will not easily escape without a headache. He will have earned his headache but it should not be allowed to dim certain precautions the author underlines.

In the first place, precisely because it is French and realist the economic order advanced should not be taken as materially transportable into other countries. By virtue of its own formal principles we may doubt the possibility of its being applied to a system so nearly bordering on formally perfect Mass Production as is, typically, our own. For where the work is not properly the man's work but the machine's work, it is difficult to see that ownership of its instruments by the workers themselves can have any more real meaning than what the political mythology of a totalitarian state would impose upon it. Is it valid to conclude that the very variety of the French economic life provides ground for an optimism our own senescent industrial system will not easily support?

BERNARD KELLY.