

## BLACKFRIARS

troubles. It may remind the reader that there is one Institution seeking, not to constrain or mock at the world's insanity, but to cleanse and fortify its innumerable unhappy cells.

P.D.F.

STUDIES IN THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL MOVEMENT. By Henry Somerville, M.A. (Burns, Oates & Washbourne; 3/6.)

Mr. Somerville renders a needed service by sketching the history of Catholic social thought and action in the countries of North-Western and Central Europe from the beginnings of the last century until the present day. The revelation of the extent and force of the movement will come as a surprise to many in this country. The writer has unfortunately been compelled to confine his study to certain geographical limits and to select his material to bring it into a small compass, but he has selected well and his critical interpretation of personalities and events does not obtrude on the objectivity of his narration. Another merit of his work lies in the fact that he is not content to view Catholic enterprises in isolation, but shows them in relation to other contemporaneous social and economic tendencies. An introduction gives an adequate statement of the principles underlying Catholic social action, and a detailed table of contents and a seven-page index make the work as valuable for reference as it is interesting to read. The preface is a hasty postscript interpreting events in Germany since February with a prematurity and bias which hardly accord with the balance which characterises the rest of the book. It is to be hoped that Mr. Somerville will complete his work with a study of corresponding movements in Italy, Spain, England and elsewhere.

V.W.

### GERMAN CATHOLIC REVIEWS

The chief preoccupation of German Catholic reviews is, inevitably, with the multitudinous problems of re-adjustment and policy occasioned by the National Revolution. This is not a local topic which we can afford to view with indifference. Not only does the bond of prayerful understanding and sympathy which should unite all members of the Body of Christ compel us to watch closely the response which German Catholicism is making to the demands which the triumph of National-Socialism imposes upon it, but the universal breakdown of the liberal-democratic order and the increasing power of Fascist ideals in other countries force us to recognize that many of the problems which confront German Catholics to-day may to-morrow be our own. Moreover it is no exaggeration to say that the future of Germany, and with it the future and peace of the civilized world,

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depends in no small measure on the success with which the Catholics of Germany are able to influence the ideas which govern the construction of the 'New Order.' It must not be forgotten that German National-Socialism, like Italian Fascism and unlike Russian Communism, is not a ready-made system with a pre-conceived and detailed programme, but a dynamic conception capable, in its early stages, of a great variety and contrariety of interpretations and developments. It is, unfortunately, almost exclusively with the more fanatical and unchristian interpretations (which undoubtedly inspire powerful elements in the Nazi party) that the English press has familiarised us. It is incumbent upon English Catholics to acquaint themselves with the level-headed and Christian, but no less genuinely loyal, contributions which German Catholics are making towards moulding the final form which the New Germany must assume.

It is impossible for us to analyse, or even to mention, all the many articles in which our Catholic German contemporaries treat the various aspects of the situation. One idea inspires them all, which is expressed in one word—*mitarbeiten*—which recurs with almost monotonous persistence. The one aim of the various writers is to state the principles and define the applications of specifically Catholic co-operation in the construction of the 'New Order' in its several departments. *ZEIT UND VOLK*, founded expressly to respond to present exigencies, continues the valuable work with which our readers are already acquainted. A selection of titles of articles from recent issues must suffice to indicate its standpoint and its importance for understanding the situation: *Catholicism, National-Socialism and the Idea of the Reich* (an account of the meeting at Maria Laach of the Catholic Akademikersverband in the presence of von Papen); *Our Will to Action* (by the auxiliary Bishop of Freiburg), *People, Führer and Reich* (by Fr. F. Muckermann, S.J.); *Was Bolshevism a real Danger?* (by the ex-communist author of *Das Rote Imperium*, who has lived and travelled much in Soviet Russia); *The Catholic in the Totalitarian State*; *The End of the German Masonic Lodges*; *Atrocity-Propaganda and the Hatred of Germany* (with a specimen from *The Tablet*); *The Idea and Evolution of the Obligation to Work*; *The Obligations of Capital*; *Germany's Resignation from the League of Nations*. Dr. Josef Krumbach, the Editor of this vigorous weekly, has kindly undertaken to write a special article for *BLACKFRIARS* in which he surveys aspects of the situation likely to interest our readers. It will appear in the December issue.

Although less definitely committed to Nazi partisanship, the older reviews follow similar lines. Particularly worthy of note

is the article by Dr. Franz Landmesser, co-secretary of the Catholic Akademikersverband, in the current issue of *DER KATHOLISCHE GEDANKE* on *Catholicism and the New Order*. The Catholic sociologist, he says, cannot fail to notice the fundamental agreement of traditional teaching as embodied in the Encyclicals with many of the ideals of the 'New Order.' He must welcome the downfall of the liberalistic ideology, already condemned by the Popes as a reversal of the natural order, with its subordination of social and human values to economic utilities. In the new 'corporative State' may be seen an attempt to realize the principles sketched in *Quadragesimo Anno* for the vocational reorganization of society. Dr. Landmesser then outlines the Catholic conceptions of the Person, the Family, the Nation, the State and the *Reich*, their mutual subordination and inter-relation, their inclusion in the Kingdom of God. He criticises frankly the shortcomings of prevalent conceptions of the Totalitarian State which, uncorrected by the supra-national conception of the *Reich*, is in danger of lapsing into Hegelian State-absolutism and nationalistic parochialism. He concludes by an admirable statement of the principles which should govern the formation of the Third Reich if it is to be worthy of its name.

In the current *HOCHLAND* appears an interesting study by Dr. Schönningh of the life and thought of Bishop Ketteler, in which it is made to appear that the ideas of the great hero and father of the Catholic social movement in Germany were by no means dissimilar from those of Catholic Nazis to-day.

Many, not indisposed to be sympathetic with political and social developments in Germany, view with anxiety the prospects for art and literature under Nazi control, and it is undeniable that the prospects are grim if certain reactionary and obscurantist elements have their way. Here again, we believe, much depends on the success of Catholic influence, and it is encouraging to note that literary reviews such as *Hochland* and *Der Gal* continue their excellent work with no suggestion of change of content or programme. In this connexion it is a pleasure to record the assurances of the editor of the latter when, on the occasion of the completion of the twenty-seventh year of its existence, he re-affirms its constant policy. He sketches the ideals of a Catholic literary review—the co-extension of literature and life, consequent independence of passing literary fads which assume an esoteric outlook on art, persistence in viewing Time from the standpoint of Eternity and of the Incarnation—and he adds 'especially for our many readers abroad' that 'although we have perhaps ventured a greater definiteness of statement than any other periodical in contemporary Germany . . .

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we have so far experienced not the slightest restriction on our intellectual freedom . . . . Indeed we believe that now, for the first time, our day has come.' The quality of the contents of the literary reviews certainly does not suggest that Catholic creativeness has become hampered or atrophied, however much the litterateurs of 'Kulturboschewismus' may have suffered. Two critical essays are especially worthy of remark—the study of Dostoevsky's 'Grand Inquisitor' by Prof. Simon Frank in HOCHLAND (October) and the article on 'The Æsthetic Experience of Rainer Maria Rilke' by Dr. C. Schröder, O.F.M., in DER GRAL (September). This last will be found of great assistance towards understanding the most perplexing of the great Catholic poets of modern times.

Film-goers have long learned to look to Germany for a type of entertainment more profoundly satisfying than the average products of the American and British studios. They have learned with dismay of the 'reform' of the German producing firms and the absorption of the industry by the Nazi Ministry of Propaganda. The powerful lesson of Sovkino has not been enough to disillusion us of individualistic prepossessions of artistic freedom, and we find it hard to believe that the penetration of political interests, and artistic creation can be to the benefit of the latter. It may be truly argued that Hitlerism possesses no ideology capable of blending revolutionary theory, scenario and technique as Marxism does for Eisenstein, even though it may supply some corresponding enthusiasm and unity of purpose. It is, however, questionable whether the Soviet theory, which confines artistic creation to the cutting-room and regards all work on the set as the mere provision of raw material, does not unduly restrict the potentialities of the medium and whether the new German cinéastes will not rather benefit from the freedom of technique from such pseudo-metaphysics. If such a policy as that described by Fr. Ch. Demmig in DER GRAL (September) indeed prevails, we shall have good reason to look for 'a new era in the history of films,' a complete break with the standardized artificialities of Hollywood and a new realism on the screen in which real characters reflect the real genius and life of the German people. The writer calls for a complete purge of the German screen from all alien influences, and the development of an authentically 'national Cinema.' 'This does not mean that Brownshirts are for ever to march across the screen or that we are to listen to the constant reproduction of political speeches. It means the interpretation of the ideas on which the New Germany should be built, embodied in characters, plots, experiences, which, without sacrifice of individuality and particularity, are at the same time deeply rooted in the nation's

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struggles and in the common life and environment of the people.' The programme of production for the coming season certainly shows that Germany is to search into her own history and her own countryside for the themes of forthcoming films. Whether this strictly localized inspiration will achieve the universal appeal of the masterpieces inspired by international Communism remains to be seen, but there is ground for hope that, in one country at least, many of the aims of the international Catholic film movement will soon be realized.

V.W.

### RECENT ART EXHIBITIONS

IN ART NOW (Faber and Faber; 12/6) Mr. Herbert Read has aimed at producing a vade mecum to the theory and practice of modern painting, and an exhibition illustrative of the pictures he discusses has been arranged at the Mayor Galleries as a complement to his book. It would be more true to say that his book is complementary to the exhibition. His system, which is clear and comprehensive rather than critical, involves a preliminary chapter on aesthetics, in which he traces the spread of empiricism and of the genetic method, and then discussions of Matisse (on whom he is quite first-rate), the German expressionists, the abstractionists and finally symbolism and *surréalisme*. Mr. Read's characteristic is an apparently illimitable capacity for the reconciliation of opposites. He can accept Matisse for the purely aesthetic reasons for which Matisse can alone be accepted. He can accept Ernst for psychological reasons which to one less catholic would appear (as they have in the past appeared to Mr. Roger Fry) incompatible with the arguments he deduces in support of Jeaneret. He can agree with one critic that aesthetics are the philosophy and with another that they are the psychology of art. Mr. Read is in position of a serious critic reduced to acting as *compère* to non-stop variety.

Provided we expect no coherent critical standard, this book is of the greatest value. Mr. Read is an extraordinarily able mouthpiece for the artists whose causes he pleads. But his position, considered in the abstract, is quite illogical. Art is a question of form. Reaction to form alternatively can be sensational or intuitive. If it is sensational (classical), so far as modern art is concerned, it can be discounted; if it is intuitive, in so far as the intuition is subconscious, it implies a whole series of other subconscious reactions running along in a scale more or less parallel to the conscious and fundamentally literary reactions which, though they may be avoided in the world of first-rate artists even when vocationally they are genre painters like