

OBSERVATIONS

MILITARISM. ‘Spirit of the professional soldier,’ says the dictionary, then adds, ‘undue prevalence of military spirit and ideals.’ I doubt whether industrial democracies have ever really suffered from that, despite occasional bursts of jingoism. The notion of a rude and licentious soldiery is about as antiquated as that of a heavy dragoon or a dashing hussar. It is worth enquiring whether the civilian contribution to the moral evil of war does not exceed that of the soldiers. The hysterical hatred fostered by lying propaganda was more vicious than physical violence, and even as regards the organization of frightfulness, civilians took a major part. Politicians starved children after the armistice. It is ironical that the attacks now on a military class and tradition come largely from those politicians and publicists who were most shrill during the war and most vindictive immediately afterwards.

SUMMA THEOLOGICA, 2a-2ae: xxvii. There is a natural apprehension that the new Germany may revive that prussianism which we fought with some reason and satisfaction ‘twenty years ago. All the same, many of the press attacks on the renewed military spirit of Germany seem inspired by a somewhat podgy and black-coated conception of peace as that economic condition of ease in which modern business and finance can thrive. Geneva has its points, but its capitalist-liberalism is not one of them, anyhow not at the present time when the most vigorous elements in Europe do not hold with such a sociology. Peace goes deeper than economics. It is not a compromise for the sake of ease; it is not comfort; it is more difficult and arduous and human than that. Strength and integrity are among its conditions. Nations must be completely themselves to be at peace. A religious community does not—or should not—flatten out the individualities of its members, and international peace should respect the spirit of the nations, their differences,

BLACKFRIARS

their strength. It is not cosmopolitanism, but an association of nations on terms of dignity and it implies even a certain tension. This is a nobler peace than a merger based on economics, but it is admittedly dangerous. For all that it should be attempted. But it can only be sustained by something deeper still than philosophical consciousness of nations. By a common religion.

POTSDAM. Some of us have the impression that the Germans have too quickly imagined that because they lost the war their military greatness has been forgotten, and that in consequence they are now over-parading their prowess. Perhaps this is a natural reaction to the flood of defeatist literature that came from Germany after the war. But their military tradition does not need this publicity. Germans are rightly proud of the fighting virtues of their race. We have experienced them, and need no reminder. And as an element in the German nation, why should they not be emphasized and valued? Though not in our line, Hindenburg is a type we can all respect; and von Hipper and von Richtofen are names that command our regard. The Weimar Republic was something less than the Germany we admire; it is our hope that the new Reich will not be so too, and that it will not too humourlessly and solemnly exalt the qualities of force and effort and lose the old geniality. Nietzsche's philosophy is not without its dignity, but he took himself much too seriously. Yet we can sympathize with the restoration in Germany of the old regimental traditions, the pride of nationality, the sense of action and effort; we can even understand the semi-militarist character of the national revival.

HEIMATSCHUTZ. Possibly they do these things more gracefully in Austria, where the test is manners rather than race, human rather than bio-chemical. The inheritors of the Hapsburg tradition are not likely to bother their heads about Aryans. Round the old empire a true civilization was formed—and many of us still regret the passing of its

OBSERVATIONS

political framework. Eugene, Mozart, Maria Theresa, Haydn, Czernin, Taaffe, Apponyi, Jellalich, Radetsky, Piccolomini—what difference of blood, what unity of culture. Fascism in Germany may yet be a debtor to the patriotic fascism of Austria.

POLARIZATION. To return to the subject of our relations with Germany. You must respect somebody before you can be really at peace with him. Friendship is a state of balance, not of subjection or patronage. Here is an illustration. Most of us have seen many unworthy war films, civilian productions in the sense of our first observation. **But** one exception was the film *Coronel and the Falklands*, produced about six years ago under Admiralty auspices. **I** saw it in London (and still remember the ear-splitting rivetter employed among the sound-effects), and a year later in Munich. On both occasions its reception by the audience was almost identical. The same silences, the same applause.

BARTH VERSUS MUELLER. Deprived of State support, the 'German Christian' movement seems to be collapsing. Many believed that it stood for a genuine revival of Christian life in the Lutheran Church. 'The strife of ecclesiastical politics is over, now begins the struggle for the souls of men,' optimistically announced Reichsbischof Müller. Karl Barth and the Pastors' Emergency League thought differently. To them the movement signified unwarrantable State interference in affairs of ecclesiastical polity **and** religious conscience. Whilst professing loyalty to the Nazi State and enthusiasm for religious revival and ecclesiastical reform, they have triumphantly withstood the *Gleichschaltung* of theology and encroachment on the 'freedom of the Gospel.' It is not without significance that many 'German Christians' have already enrolled themselves in the ranks of the Wotan-worshippers. Without the resources **of** Vatican diplomacy, without the backing of a world-wide Church, denied the means of

BLACKFRIARS

propaganda which the Government placed in the hands of the 'German Christians,' the Emergency League has struck a blow for religious freedom against erastianism which compels our admiration and gratitude. Herr Hitler has washed his hands of the whole business and Nazi officials have been forbidden to meddle in Church affairs.

LUTHER AD LIMINA. The chaotic state of the Lutheran Church has called forth a remarkable appeal from the Protestant Carl Thieme for a return to Catholic unity and to the Papacy. The 'German Christian' controversy, he says, has not killed the Lutheran Church, it was dead already. He asserts that if Luther could see the present confusion of his followers, he would bid them return to Rome. In Luther's name he urges the dissemination of the conclusions of recent Protestant scholarship which establish historically and scientifically the primacy of Peter and his successors. 'If the Word of God is profitable to me in every way, then it is profitable to me through him whom God Himself has established as His supreme spokesman on earth.' He concludes with an appeal to the Roman Church, 'not as our elder brother, but as our father,' to receive back 'the prodigal sons of the Evangelical Church into their Father's house'—not indeed as individual converts, but as corporate communities with their own pastors and vernacular liturgy.

PENGUINS. Social creatures in a black-and-white habit. In the Birmingham Art Gallery there is a great canvas representing them over the title, *Dominicans in Feather*. Hence one reason for the signature to *Excerpta*, which will give every month a selection of topical notices from our contemporaries, home and foreign.

JACOBIN.