

## CATHOLICS IN EXILE

FOR some years now reports of the heart-rending plight of hundreds of fellow Catholics in Germany have reached this country. The more spectacular aspects of the Nazi persecution—the closing of Catholic schools or the dissolution of all Catholic Associations—are well known. But all too often the real measure of persecution is not fully understood because the sufferings of individual people by their very nature tend to obscure the fact of persecution. The man who lays down his life in the cause of Christ inspires immediate veneration. But the German martyrs are deprived even of the privilege of heroism. Although they do suffer, and heroically, their sufferings are cast in an unheroic mould.

The Professor whose academic career is made impossible for him, the rising young doctor who finds his practice melting away, the dismissed clerk who is unable to find fresh work, the student who realises that it is useless to hope for a degree—these are often men whose only crime had been their active participation in Catholic life. Perhaps the Professor edited a Catholic newspaper, the clerk was a member of a Christian Trades Union, the student an ardent supporter of Catholic Action. Now they are faced with the slow and unsensational martyrdom of unemployment and destitution.

The absorption of Austria into the Reich has increased the area of persecution, but the Catholics of Austria are in a more serious plight than their German brethren because the existence in Austria of supporters of Schuschnigg's Catholic anti-Nazi régime and of large numbers of non-Aryan Catholics increases the number of those faced with destitution unless they can find means of livelihood in other countries. Many of them are already in exile and hundreds of others are seeking to leave in order to escape the intolerable conditions in their fatherland.

Deeply moved by their sufferings, Cardinal Hinsley has issued an appeal to Catholics in this country to assist the Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany in its work

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of relief. His letter is printed elsewhere in this issue. Contributions to the general fund, offers of hospitality or of work, are ways of helping this effort to organise Catholic charity, and any offerings will be gratefully received by The Hon. Secretary, Catholic Committee for Refugees from Germany, 120 Victoria Street, S.W.1.

## EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

OUR AIM OF DETACHMENT. The complaint is sometimes made about BLACKFRIARS in general, and these *Extracts and Comments* in particular, that we habitually "sit on the fence" and adopt a non-committal attitude towards burning questions of the time. It is not, we are well aware, an attitude that always invites popularity or esteem. If we have angered some by refusing to enrol under the banner of General Franco, we have angered others by refusing to fall into line with some "Left Catholic" periodicals on the Continent by siding with the Spanish Republicans. On other complex issues, such as the recent activities of the Austrian Bishops and the Sudeten Catholics, we have refrained from passing any judgment whatever. We have consistently adopted a non-committal attitude regarding more domestic controversies which sharply divide Catholics at home: the issue of conscientious objection, for instance, and the contentions which centre round such words as "industrialism," "non-participation" and "infiltration." But not content with "sitting on the fence" ourselves, we are, we are told, only too willing to hurl insults in *both* directions. Such an attitude inevitably invites the charges of cowardice and of insufferable pretensions to superiority over our fellows. We derive some comfort from finding that similar charges are levelled against TEMPS PRESENT (April 22). Though we cannot pretend to be able to claim its self-defence as our own, a paraphrase of it may serve to explain the object at which we aim but perhaps too seldom attain:

We are sometimes reproached with being too dispassionate, with cultivating a too philosophical detachment and a temperateness of judgment which some find pretty irritating.