

O B I T E R

EAST AND WEST. *Frankfurter Hefte*, published, of course, 'under Military Government Information Control Licence', has been considering the future of Germany—a subject on which German opinion is hard to come by. The editor, in a realistic article, insists that what young Germans need is a noble end to aim at:

'Renouncing all merely national ambitions, we must strive to bring the entire worth of our national powers into a new European solidarity, so carrying out the task entrusted to us Germans of bridging the gap between East and West. . . . What others do is not our affair. Our business is only to cease to hanker after a definitely obsolete tradition and to lay the foundations of a new tradition of German world-citizenship and of a Germany conscious of her function in Europe'.

It is a pleasure to welcome once more a German review of Catholic inspiration, and its inclusion of an article by M. Maritain (on 'The End of Machiavellism') is, we hope, a first sign of that intellectual free trade which the recovery of Europe demands.

A 'CONTACT' PUBLICATION, *Britain between West* and East**, which 'glimpses into the life, work and thought of Britain and in the spheres of her two giant neighbours', deflects criticism by a prodigality of colour printing and of typographical ingenuity which one has hitherto associated with American advertisements for fountain pens and food. But behind the flashy façade much useful documentation can be found, and Professor Arnold Toynbee, as might be expected, provides an epic setting for the debate:

'While civilisations rise and fall and, in falling, give rise to others, some purposeful enterprise, higher than theirs, may all the time be making headway, and, in a divine plan, the learning that comes through the suffering caused by the failures of civilisations may be the sovereign means of progress. Abraham was an emigré from a civilisation *in extremis*; the Prophets were children of another civilisation in disintegration; Christianity was born of the sufferings of a disintegrating Graeco-Roman world. Will some comparable spiritual enlightenment be kindled in the 'displaced persons' who are the counterparts, in our world, of those Jewish exiles to whom so much was revealed in their painful exile by the waters of Babylon?'

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'EVANGELISER', a new review to be published bi-monthly by the Belgian Dominican Province, reflects the emphasis on the Christian apostolate as Christian *tout court* which has been so notably expounded by the Abbé Godin in *France, Pays de Mission?* and by the

Abbé Michonneau in *Paroisse, Communauté Missionnaire* (both published by Editions du Cerf, and obtainable from Blackfriars Publications). 'Everything has been already said, and yet everything needs to be said again', writes the editor. Tradition, 'which expresses in a word the Church's perennial truth as well as her adaptability to the times and places in which she lives', is the foundation of the work of evangelisation. But fidelity to tradition by no means excludes, indeed it demands, a candid examination of the methods we adopt. The first number of *Evangeliser* is full of promise, and we are glad to send our fraternal congratulations on the appearance of what may be described as an active brother to *The Life of the Spirit*.

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DISTRESS IN EUROPE has no close season, and the illustrated report of the Catholic Committee for Relief Abroad (39 Charles Street, W.1.) is a reminder that the work of relief does not end with the provision of food and clothes (though in these respects the C.C.R.A. has brought help to many thousands). Catholics are, or should be, able to transform 'welfare work' through the fire of supernatural charity, and indeed for many displaced persons the C.C.R.A. 'flash' has become the symbol of friendship rather than of officialdom. Help is needed, and should be generously offered to those countless thousands of the household of Faith—'displaced persons' (or, even worse, 'D.P.s') to officials, our brethren in Christ.

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'IRENIKON', catching up with events which the war concealed from the Continent, defends Cardinal Mercier from the charges made against him by Mr Oldmeadow in the chapter on the Malines Conversations in his biography of Cardinal Bourne (1944). The same number has a valuable article on the French Protestant community established at Cluny. Incorporating many traditional monastic features, the Rule is yet very simple:

Ora et Labora, ut regnes.

Let your day, your work and your rest, be vivified by the word of God.

In everything maintain an inner silence so that you may dwell in Christ.

Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes: joy, mercy, simplicity. The community was established at Christmas, 1940, and its influence is already considerable. Special emphasis is given to the Liturgy, largely drawn from Catholic sources. Mental prayer is practised in common, and such devotions as the Stations of the Cross have been introduced. But it would be mistaken to judge Cluny by the standards of Protestant religious orders in this country. It is the creation of something new, not a development, and Maurice Villain remarks:

'At Cluny we are at the extreme edge of Calvinistic Protestantism, or rather we are present at the birth of a new movement, which can only be described as a miracle'.

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'COMMONWEAL' (October 11) has an article by Jacques Maritain on the eighth beatitude, 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake', which finds words for the anguish of many Christians confronted by the unimaginable suffering of the innocent in Europe today.

'I am thinking of those poor beings who had done nothing except their humble daily tasks, and upon whom in a flash death pounced like some wild beast. Sacrificed by the whims of war and of savagery, persecuted not for the sake of justice about which they were not even thinking, but for the sake of the innocent fact of their mere existence at an unlucky point in time and space. What are their sufferings and their death except the likeness and brief summary wherein we may see the sufferings of millions of poor wretches throughout the course of the centuries, shattered without defence by that great mechanism of pride and greed which is as old as humanity? . . . It all seems to take place as though the passion and death of Jesus were something divinely vast, that it must be shared by men in its various and contrasting aspects in order that some picture of that passion might be available to its members and in order that men might completely participate in this great treasure of love and of blood. . . . For them there are no signs, for them hope is stripped as bare as they are themselves; for them, to the bitter end, nothing, even from the direction of God, has shone forth in men's eyes. It is in the invisible world, beyond everything earthly, that the kingdom of God is given to these persecuted ones, and that everything becomes theirs'.

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CATHOLICS in the universities are a discernible minority today, and that fact is largely due to the Newman Association and its junior branch (for undergraduates), the Union of Catholic Students. *Cruz*, the new magazine of the latter (5 Lovaine Row, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 6d), is to appear twice each term. Excellently printed, it is a bold and cheerful sign: and two pages in honour of St Thomas Aquinas rightly urge that the Catholic student should follow 'St Thomas's heart as well as St Thomas's head, in prizing and seeking first and last that knowledge of God which is not the work of human study but of grace'.

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