

the future. (For every poet is also a prophet, and Goethe more than most.) As the European *par excellence* whose ideal of a world community of the spirit was not after all so far removed from the Church's own aim, he may well serve as an example to some Catholics who have found their religion not incompatible with narrow nationalism. There is so much good in Goethe, as there was in the pagan writers of old. The Church knew how to assimilate all that was best in their work, and she will, we may be sure, do no less in the case of the greatest of modern pagans. Goethe was catholic, if not Catholic: let us try to be both. 'Every good and every perfect gift is from above' and few men have been more richly endowed by their Creator than he whose bicentenary we celebrate this year.

'*Der Grosse Heide*' others called him; for himself he chose a pleasanter designation. '*Das Grosse Kind*', he called himself once; and when we think of his impulsiveness, his unflinching interest in everything, his unquenchable optimism, he was a child indeed. May we not say of Goethe, as was said of a lesser man, La Fontaine: 'Dieu n'aura pas le courage de le damner'?

S. A. H. WEETMAN.

OBITER

Wort und Wahrheit, the Austrian review, commands a most distinguished list of contributors, including von Balthasar, Gotthard Montessi, Karl Rahner and the biologist Tans Andre, who is now teaching the Dominicans at Walberberg after having had to flee from the East. These are but a few of the people who make this monthly one of the most stimulating guides to contemporary European thought and culture.

'Now that he is able to survey these events in the light of the past five years the reader can scarcely fail to be disturbed by the author's self-righteousness, his readiness to pass judgment on other people seems to have blinded him to the fact that no one has a right to pretend that his own hands are clean. Nor can moralising and irony be accepted as answers to the questions posed by these events.' (Paul Viator, reviewing *The last days of Hitler* in *Wort und Wahrheit*, June.)

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THE DOMINICAN PUBLICATION, *Die Neue Ordnung*, as one would expect from the Dominican connections with the workers' movement in the Cologne area, is attempting to solve social problems, to evaluate the dangers and opportunities of collectivism and the true

meaning of Catholic teaching on property, in a very realistic manner. Recent numbers have also contained valuable discussions by Fr Koster upon the different parts played by the 'official' church and the body of the faithful in elaborating dogmatic definitions.

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THE REAPPEARANCE OF *Scholastik* after a period of enforced silence marks a major event in Catholic intellectual life. As was to be anticipated, this first number immediately attains to the standard which has come to be expected of *Scholastik*. Modern philosophers will be interested in Fr Lotz's article on Nietzsche's rejection of ontology; medieval students will be pleased to discover there the learned discussion by that expert on early scholasticism, Landgraf, whilst Ivanka's illustration of how Neo-platonism pervades the whole of European thought is likely to help all philosophers.

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IT NEEDS NO GENIUS to appreciate that the possibility of a Christian culture in the future depends largely on the action of the laity. Ernst Michel's very controversial works have lately voiced the strong fear that this possibility is going to be eliminated unless we escape from clerical repression, the laity being directed by priests who are not in contact with the real situation. A more judicious presentation of the same thesis is to be found in Karl Winter's essay on this subject in the June number of the *Frankfurter Hefte*. He thinks that more is to be hoped from the mentally alert, if physically undernourished, laity of Europe than from the stereotyped product all too frequently encountered in the streamlined clericalism of the U.S.

In an address to one of the French committees concerned with the future Germany printed in the July number of the *Frankfurter Hefte*, Eugen Kogon issued a very timely warning to all who are trying to build a new Europe. He said that foreigners must neither completely trust nor completely mistrust Germany: blind trust will only lead to disillusionment, mistrust will lead to nothing at all. The many different layers of society in Germany each needs to be treated on its own merits and the exercise of prudence and charity is essential. Not all the organs of the British daily press would seem to enjoy Kogon's sanity.

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SCARCELY ANY TOPIC likely to stir the Catholic mind and soul is being left untouched by the ever-informative *Orbis Catholicus* and *Herder Korrespondenz*. Persecution in the East, the position of Catholicism in Spain, church-building amidst the rubble that was Germany, the question of grace in Greene's novels, all these subjects are soberly and sanely dealt with. And yet most space of all is regularly

devoted to the Oecumenical Movement because the editors recognise that of all the scandals of this scandalous age the greatest and most pernicious remains that division between those who call themselves Christians; it prints letters from members of the Evangelical Church which show that good will is to be found wherever it is sought in good faith.

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ANYONE whose acquaintance with German Catholic activity comes entirely through the medium of reviews, or even through the perpetual 'Tagungen' which seem almost to be a national pastime east of the Rhine, might well be inclined to think of German Catholicism as dangerously cerebral. The falsity of such an impression becomes clear immediately one contacts the German Catholic workers' movement and in particular its organ, the *Ketteler Wacht*. For there is behind it over a century of continuous Catholic social teaching traceable to the great bishop Ketteler, Marx's most effective opponent, who was also Leo XIII's main inspirer on social issues. Not untypically it was a relative of Ketteler's, the Lion of Münster, an aristocrat of the aristocrats, Cardinal von Galen, who maintained the essential spirit of this movement during the grim days of Hitler. Without that bitter class-feeling which has even been known to poison Catholic organisations, the German Catholic workers' movement, with its deep, unpretentious and homely spirituality, contains many lessons for similar organisations outside Germany. During the past few years it has acquired many martyrs who are hardly even names in this country, the best-known of them being Bernhard Letterhaus and Nikolaus Gross. They were both executed for their part in the attempted rising of the 20th of July; by going to their deaths in the clear-eyed way in which they did, and by constantly affirming the primacy of spiritual values in the pages of the *Ketteler Wacht* they have helped to write one of the most moving chapters in the history of the Catholic worker.

'BONIFACE'.