

HITLER—ENTWICKLUNGSMOEGLICHKEITEN!

THE late German revolution gives opportunity to enlarge on the present situation of Central Europe. The fall of the Republic, the rise of Hitlerism and their influence on national as well as international politics, leave much room for speculation. The reports about Jew-baiting, the contradictory pronouncements of Nazi leaders, the compulsory silence of critical public opinion, all these present some aspects of recent happenings, but they certainly fail to convey understanding. It is said that Germany has lost many friends in England; expressions like barbarism, dangerous nationalism, etc., occur in every discussion on the subject. Indeed, the most unfavourable image of Imperial Germany shows its face through the 'National Revolution'; at least to the average Englishman.

It is a difficult task to give an impartial view about a national upheaval when confronted with suspicious public opinion and still more when the writer, for different reasons, has much in common with that opinion. Hitlerism, until now, has little to show that would claim sympathy from the foreign observer. Yet, however much the Nazi movement may be disliked, it would seem that it is incomprehensible in its essential force. This difficulty of understanding, which sometimes expresses itself in astonishment, more often in disappointment over Germany, gives the basis and encouragement to this article.

There is little need to enlarge upon the causes which drove Germany to despair. The history of the war and post-war period are known. Nothing else but the feeling of economic disaster plunged the nation at large into National Socialism. An impoverished middle class, utterly disappointed workers, and an upper class both resentful against the Republic and genuinely concerned about the decline of their nation, all three combined in Hitlerism to defend their existence. Hitler, the mouthpiece of a sentiment strangely combining old national ideals and

modern though vague ideas, attracted the millions and organised them in a fashion that gave evidence of no little genius. Why did people follow Hitler? If rational motives are expected in answer to this question, few can be given. People did not reason. They simply felt that things could not go on as they were and hoped that Hitler would put them right. It was a great advantage for Hitler that he was not committed to anything definite. Those who disapproved of Marxism, of the influence of Jewish business, of Republican inefficiency, of Capitalism, all found enough in common with him to join his movement. A vague irrational fear led to Hitler. These vague notions found an outlet and concrete expression in forms like anti-Semitism, excessive nationalism, and ruthless war against Marxism.

Like most popular sentiments these manifestations have an element of justification. A considerable influx of Jews from the East spread all over Germany after the war. They were believed to be of an inferior type and commonly regarded with suspicion. Jews, furthermore, stood in the limelight as great financiers and in the Marxist politics. In both respects they were largely regarded as enemies of the national good. While German youth stood without any chance of a job, Jewish lawyers and doctors spread everywhere. Particularly in Berlin this feature of undue prominence was bitterly felt. There are about three thousand five hundred lawyers in Berlin and more than half that number are of the Jewish race, while their proportion in regard to population reaches not quite one per cent. Whether justified or not, this gave sufficient ground for discrimination by a nervous and high-spirited population.

Deplorable as Jew-baiting is to Englishmen and Germans alike, the more important feature of Hitlerism is its excessive nationalism. Fourteen years of economic and political depression have taught the world the price of war. The new militant spirit of Germany gives sufficient ground, therefore, for grave concern lest the world may be plunged again in the disaster of an armed contest. This anxiety of English people is understandable. If the Ger

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mans are what they believe them to be, a conflict with Poland seems likely. Yet every man who knows post-war Germany can easily discover that the present spirit is very different from that of the days before the war.

The militarist régime of pre-war times is definitely rejected by large sections of the population, while almost all condemn those excesses of it which made it a menace in the eyes of the world. The completeness of this rejection may truly be said to be the cause of the present attitude, a reaction against it. The internal breakdown of 1918, the reconstruction of the national administration on lines contrary to the old system had produced an inferiority complex which made sound national life impossible. People were Communists, or Socialists, or Nationalists first, and Germans afterwards. Party and group each went before national ends—a deplorable state of mind, although starvation and the teaching of unreal internationalism were partly responsible for its growth.

The peace settlement of 1919 and subsequent events brought ill-fate to international co-operation. More than anywhere internationalism lost credit in Germany, where people suffered directly from its failure. The economic crisis did the rest to shake the faith of the people in any current creed, whether religious, political or economic. Germanism, *Deutschtum*, replaced them all in the heads of many a worn-out German. Old parties completely disappeared, others lost much of their vitality, while the new creed, the new hero, won the support of the people.

National co-operation but not aggressive nationalism is the true aim at the bottom of the Revolution. Simultaneously there grows a strong sentiment against the inferior treatment of Germany at the Council of Nations. This sensitiveness may express itself in ways which are highly unsympathetic to foreigners. Yet, twelve years after the complete disarmament of Germany and fourteen years after the solemn pledge of the Allied Powers in the Treaty of Versailles, the world is still armed to its utmost—certainly a plausible ground for distrust on the side of the

defeated. Hence Germany's claim for equality and the partial revival of militarism. But a new Germany has grown since 1914. Traces of the old may play a pre-dominant part in the present upheavals, but they never can put back the clock. To the average German *Deutschtum* means a sound national life. In his opinion, the revolution is rather more social than national. Social reconstruction on a national basis is the aim of the people and of Hitler, however much this aim may lie hidden behind all kinds of reactionary and irresponsible talk.

The revolution of 1918 was a reaction against the old Imperial Germany. Then Germany plunged to a certain extent into Marxism—a mode of thought which relentlessly disclosed to the people the absurdity, the injustice and the weakness of the old system. But this negative attitude prevented all constructive thought. Indeed, the greatest charge against Marxism is, that it corrupted the mind of millions. Excellent work may have been done by the Socialists, but if so, it was done in contradiction to their own doctrine, thus creating a cleavage between leaders and supporters.

This state of stagnation has been broken and in reaction against it much has been revived from pre-republican times. In particular, old forms of splendour are employed with great effect upon the masses. They are old means, yet the old ends are gone.

So far it may be seen that the present change in Germany is not the revival of ambitions which were supposed to be a European menace.

That completes the scope of this article.

What actually will be the results of the Hitler régime as such, whether good or evil, political success or failure are still a matter for speculation. Recent events indicate a tendency towards social reconstruction on lines of vocational re-organisation. Catholic Germany has always advocated such a form of society and these endeavours, though dating from the times of Bishop von Ketteler,

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have gained immense support recently since the appearance of *Quadragesimo Anno*. Many Socialists, too, moved on similar lines on the password of 'Industrial Democracy,' while the powerful Fascist movement aims at an imitation of Mussolini's Co-operative State. There still goes on a ruthless fight against the supposed enemies of the State, hand in hand with more positive activities. As we said before, the state of affairs is still too unsettled to enable us to pass judgement as to its future, but the relation between Hitler and the Centre Party, the actual co-operation between the government and Christian Trade Unions give sufficient ground for hopeful anticipations.

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PICTANTIAE

EXHIBITION OF RELICS.—Among those taking part in the Albert Hall meetings are : The Bishops of London, St. Albans, Truro, etc., etc.—(*Sunday Times*).

Fifty per cent. of slum dwellers live in the slums from choice, and not from necessity.—(*Sir William Ray*).

The Socialist Party was critical of the B.B.C., and said its news bulletins were prejudiced against it. The very tones of the announcers on the microphone were Conservative.—(*Sir Kingsley Wood*, in Parliament).

Electrical Music in the Church. The Best of Music—by the Finest Talent. (1) For use where there is no organ—or when there is no organist. (2) To play hymns and anthems, suitable for accompaniment to congregational and choral singing. (3) To furnish music for preludes, offertories, communion and recessionals. (4) For regular Sunday Services, for weddings, for special occasions, for funerals.—(Advert. in American magazine).