

O B I T E R

THE NEW ORDER. It was a bold device to give to Hitler's slogan a Catholic meaning. For this is the title of the new bi-monthly review (*Die neue Ordnung*) published by the German Dominican Province. The first number states its aim:

'To assist in preserving the Christian culture of the West from ruin, and correspondingly to assist in its renewal and advancement . . . and this by setting forth not only its historical development and its historical significance, but more especially by considering its deepest sources, its contemporary claims and the possibility of its realisation'.

The articles include a study of Newman as an ecumenical figure by Mathias Laros, a most important discussion of Christian Socialism by Eberhard Welty, a closely-reasoned consideration of 'The disruption of nature' by Heinrich Christmann and a welcome announcement of the continuation of the German translation of the *Summa*, begun—by an appropriate irony—in 1933.

The second number of *Die neue Ordnung* fully maintains the high standard of the first. It is notable for contributions on the nature and importance of mysticism by Hieronymus Wilms, on 'The guarantee of—and danger to—the human person in democracy' by Josef Hofmann and on the social work of French Catholics by Leopold Jäger. Outstanding is an article on 'The German people and militarism' by Fr Laurentius Siemer, the German Provincial, who himself suffered imprisonment under the Nazis, and on his release was compelled to go into hiding.

His article is based on the history of the growth of Prussia, a political growth which was followed (after 1871) by an attempt at a cultural penetration of Germany proper. Prussia succeeded in creating a cultural centre in Berlin whose climax was reached in national socialism. Taking his proofs from history, literature and the arts, Fr Siemer shows (i) that the territories east of the Elbe, and their inhabitants, are not properly German, the Prussians being a mixture of Slav and German elements, and (ii) that militarism is proper only to Prussia and the Prussians, and not to the rest of Germany.

Prussia is essentially an East-Elbian state, and even after 1815 it was the East-Elbians who were given the key positions in the newly-conquered territories. For Fr Siemer the East-Elbian is heir to both Slav and German and has the characteristics of such a mixture: 'the capacity for suffering, for bowing down, for acceptance of the Slav; the love of heroic action and the enterprise of the German'. The

economic structure of Prussia made for arrogance in the ruler and servility in the ruled. Militarism was its endemic mood. To the German people proper, militarism was not congenial, as witness its reaction to the Imperial Italian wars and to the virtual absence of Germans in the Imperial and other mercenary armies.

'As the old German was a democrat, so was the Prussian born with the love of authoritative government. Therefore he expected everything to be planned and organised by the authorities. In contrast, the old German wanted an organic growth, not conducted by the governing strata, but rather supported by it'.

The influence of Prussia spread to the cultural field in the nineteenth century and Berlin drew to itself all those elements which abandoned their traditional expression and imbibed the Prussian air instead.

But now a violent change is taking place. The peoples east of the Elbe are being expelled from their homes and will have to be absorbed in the old Germany.

'It is easy to be terrified by such an event and the consequences of such a transmigration; easy to be outraged by the destiny that is thus accomplishing itself; easy to be concerned at the loss of national unity in the provinces of old Germany. But nothing happens by chance. Does not the forced sojourn in western and southern Germany of the East Elbian peoples, with their peculiar spiritual formation, suggest a necessary purification, through which alone will they be ready to recover their integrity?'

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THE AGENCY FOR INTELLECTUAL RELIEF IN GERMANY, under the patronage of Cardinal Griffin, the Bishop of Chichester, and the Master of Balliol, has been established 'to help responsible Germans to reconnect themselves intellectually with the life and thought of Western Civilization, and thus to assist them in the task of popular regeneration'. It hopes to establish English Lending Libraries in the British Zone, with Clubs of German readers responsible both for the choice of books and the running of the Libraries. This wise autonomy is designed 'to avoid both the suspicion of propaganda and the evil practice of intellectual spoon-feeding'. Full details of how help can be given may be obtained from the Secretary, Dr E. M. Vermehren, Worth Priory, Crawley, Sussex.

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Among other German periodicals, *Frankfurter Hefte* (December) has a valuable article by Walter Dirks on 'Party and State', *Wort und Wahrheit* (January) has an account of English Catholicism by Walther

Breitenfeld, and *Der Seelsorger* brings a note of Christian joy from Vienna.

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ETUDES (February) gives a French view of Germany ('Allemagne 1946' by Robert Bosc). The punning cynicism of the German joke, 'The more the sun of democracy shines on us, the browner we become', reflects the growing mood of disillusionment which is making the work of 're-education' only superficially possible. Speaking of the colossal bureaucracy of the occupying powers, M. Bosc quotes the case of a man who applied for a publishing licence. 'He is required by the Americans to submit to a sort of closed retreat, during which he is put through all the most modern transatlantic psychological tests'. The Germans are saying that the era of the *Rundbogen* (the Roman arch) was succeeded by the age of the *Spitzbogen* (the Gothic arch), and both by that of the *Fragebogen* (the questionnaire).

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HUMANITAS (February) continues to emphasise the University's task of reintegrating the material and spiritual aspects of society, and successfully counters a charge of fostering 'ecclesiastical politics'.

THEOLOGY (March), in an editorial comment that is unworthy of a review that has so ambitious a title, sees in a recent controversy on the limits of Catholic tolerance of religious error 'a warning against supposing that the Roman Church has abandoned its traditional teaching except where for the time being it has seemed politically opportune to do so'. The editor must not complain if appeals for 'Christian Co-operation' are likely to be coolly received when a representative organ of the Church of England betrays Justice and Charity by a sneer and more than a hint that Catholics are not to be trusted.

AMERICA (February 15) has an article on 'Separation of Church and State' by Fr J. C. Murray, S.J., which one may commend to the editor of *Theology*. Immediately concerned with the position of Catholic schools under American Federal law, it is nevertheless a clear statement of the general problem of parental rights in a secular state.

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