

# BLACKFRIARS

## A MONTHLY REVIEW

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### EDITORIAL

THE territory of European disaster is by this time so vast that any attempt at its invasion seems useless. Confronted with starvation, disease and the lack of even the basic things of life, depressed at our own ludicrously feeble resources, we are tempted to ask with St Andrew: 'What are these among so many?' It is not a new dilemma. For the Christian's reach, in a sense deeper than Browning intended, must ever exceed his grasp this side of eternity, and there is always something more for charity to do. Obsessed with the sense of the nicely-calculated 'less and more' that seems humanly prudent, we try to make even the love of our neighbour into a contract. How can a few food parcels cast into the abyss of Germany's hunger retrieve a desperate situation? What is the use of kindness to the stray P.O.W. when one remembers the organised iniquity of half a continent? Let governments begin to learn justice and then there will be hope.

So runs the argument, and it is a matter for joy that so many ordinary people in this country are deaf to it. The virtue of charity is simply not concerned with the obvious achievement: the worth of it is in the love of God it makes manifest. And as to rewards, we have

it on the authority of our Lord himself that whoever, as his disciple, gives even a cup of cold water 'to one of these little ones' shall not be forgotten. 'It is impossible for you to give the love that I ask', said the Divine Wisdom to St Catherine, 'but I have given you a neighbour that you may do for him what you cannot do for me: love him without any worldly thought, without looking for any gain or return'.

But it is hard to enter the minds—or the miseries—of anonymous thousands, and charity is in no wise lessened when it turns to those whose world we recognise. And there are bonds of brotherhood which we need feel no embarrassment in acknowledging amidst a universal destitution. Readers of *BLACKFRIARS*, one hopes, will feel a special interest in the German members of the Order of Preachers. On another page some account is given of their courageous determination to turn at once to the primary task of any Dominican—the apostolate, and especially the intellectual apostolate. The difficulties are immense and on a short view much else seems more urgent. The Dominican Fathers and Brothers are indeed doing valiant work for displaced persons and the other tragic casualties of war. But this has not deflected them from the desperately necessary job of relating Germany's problems today to their religious roots. It is idle to talk of a 'democratic' Germany as though it were a matter of producing a plan and expecting its immediate and enthusiastic adoption. Much hard work awaits Germany's spiritual and intellectual leaders, and they deserve all our help in their refusal to despair of a nation which produced an Albert the Great, a saint and a scholar, a Dominican whose greatest achievement was to be known as a minister of reconciliation.

How can we help? With books of all sorts, periodicals (especially sets of religious periodicals), paper (even clean scrap paper will be useful), typing materials, and indeed anything at all that can help a preacher, a writer, a teacher in his work. Sit at your table and think of all the things one needs—and takes for granted. Most of these are simply not to be had in Germany today. The need for food and clothes is tragically urgent, but there can be too a starvation of the mind which is no less of an anguish. Will Dominican tertiaries, friends of the Order and friends of Truth (which is to say the same thing) do what they can to help? Parcels may be addressed to 'ALDATE', *BLACKFRIARS, OXFORD*. They will be opened and made up into the specified shapes and quantities of the postal regulations. We are not asking for gifts of food and clothes, though any such gifts will of course be sent on to Germany also.

ALDATE.