

REMARKS

chorus of German pastors: *Bethlehem's a suburb of Berlin*, etc., etc. But *The Colosseum* promises construction as well. 'Stat Crux . . . The Cross on the Dome . . . the fortress of God . . . the house on the rock.' And

*Dis qu'as-tu fait, toi que voilà,
De ta jeunesse?*

is answered by *Deus firmavit orbem terrae, qui non commovebitur.*

We warmly welcome and commend to our readers this new quarterly.

JACOBIN.

EXCERPTA

YOUNG EUROPE. Those who are perplexed by the numberless new revolutionary movements in Western Europe will find much help in obtaining a bird's-eye view of the situation from Fraulein Demmig's article in the February number of DER GRAL. Although treating *ex professo* of *The Spirit of Revolution in France* she succeeds in integrating into her general scheme movements so diverse as German Nazism, Italian Fascism, the Belgian *Ligue d'autorite*, *Esprit nouveau* and the Flemish separatists, our own *New Britain*, Blackshirts and Greenshirts, as well as the French Groups: *Troisième Force*, *Esprit*, *Prelude*, *Re'action* and *Ordre nouveau*. 'To-day,' she writes, 'practically all Europe finds itself infected with the spirit of revolution. Although everything that has hitherto been understood by European unity seems to have collapsed, new points of contact and agreement have been established between the various nations through the common characteristics of their respective revolutionary movements. We can divide the European nations of to-day into two groups according as these movements have made greater or less progress: on the one hand is the Old Europe in which democracy, parliamentarianism, liberalism and capitalism still prevail, and the New Europe which has overthrown these things. But the nations even of the Old Europe—

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especially France, England and Belgium—are penetrated with the revolutionary spirit.’ Herself avowedly pro-Nazi, FrI. Demmig, nevertheless, shows great understanding of and sympathy for movements in other countries, and especially for the sentiments which animate Young France. She considers that the very variety and diversity of these revolutionary movements, whose ultimate aim she believes practically identical, will contribute to their effectiveness for the re-birth of Europe. ‘Just as Germany believes in her holy mission to the world, so has each other nation, co-ordinated in the human race and the supra-national Kingdom of God, its own particular mission . . . If Young Germany stands especially for the Instinctive, the Elemental, the Dynamic, so Young France stands for the Spirit, for the Intellect, for clarity of observation and of thought. To this outlook of Young France is approximated that of Young England.’

PERSONALISM AND FASCISM. FrI. Demmig’s comprehensive view of the underlying unity of the new revolutionary spirit in Europe is not always shared by the young revolutionaries themselves. There are in fact two distinct currents of revolutionary thought (Communism apart) in Western Europe to-day which, *prima facie*, are diametrically opposed. One is Fascism, which stresses the subordination of the individual and of individual interests to the State. The other, more amorphous, is represented by the numerous movements labelled ‘personalist’ by the French, which stress the subordination of the State to the preponderating rights and exigencies of the human personality. NEW BRITAIN, which may be considered as representative of ‘personalism’ in this country, has consistently maintained that ‘There are no terms between what we stand for in New Britain and any form of Fascism.’ The January number of the French *ESPRIT*, a review which stands for the similar admirable ideal of *renaissance solidaire de la personnalité et de la communauté humaine qui est, a tous degrés, une communauté de personnalités*, is devoted to criticism of *les pseudo-valeurs spirituelles fascistes*. Of particular value is the article by Roger Labrousse on *Quelques étapes de l’idée nationale*, which, although it does not so much as mention Fascism, is an illuminating account of

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the historical growth and distinctive characteristics of contemporary nationalism. Excellent and well documented, valuable not only as a study of Nazism but of the philosophy of Nietzsche, is the contribution of **H.-L. Miéville** on *l'Adventure nietzschéenne et le temps present*. Other contributions are interesting chiefly as an exposure of the wideness of the gulf which separates the revolutionary movements which Frl. Demmig clubs together. Catholic readers, affirming at once the subordination of the individual to the State and of the State to the Person, will be anxious to discover if the gulf is really impassable and whether both Personalism and Fascism may not be instrumental in a Christian re-birth of Europe. Study of the January *Esprit* suggests nothing so much as that the breach is due largely to misunderstanding.

NEW BRITAIN. We have spoken of *New Britain* as representative of 'personalist' thought in England. Its aims have been stated as follows: 'The foundation of this new movement is that the perfection of the individual is the true aim of national existence. It is liberation. It is freedom. That is why the alternatives to the present system known as Communism and Fascism are so definitely opposed by us. They both set before the world the ideal of personal happiness, of economic security, of social peace. They both find the fulfilment of their ideal, not in the individual man, one with all other individual men in spiritual unity, but in the 'community' in which the individual man can realize himself, or in the 'State' of which he is the willing servant. We in *New Britain* reject the values of these two ideals. We declare that the end of man is not to be found in the community or in the State, but in **God**.' Setting aside the question whether this principle is really incompatible with authentic Fascism, we need only remark that, thus stated, it is identical with that of the Christian Revolution and the Christian conception of society. But unfortunately *New Britain* is not at all clear about the God who is 'the end of man,' nor consequently about the real nature of the 'perfection of the individual' or his 'freedom,' whence it follows that the means advocated for the attainment of its objects cannot always receive unquestioning acceptance from Catholics. A remarkable editorial in the issue for Octo-

ber 25th on the *Necessity for Religion* stressed the point that 'A religion which is not any particular religion is no religion at all; to have the sentiment of religion without its form is to be in danger of losing the substance.' It continues pathetically: 'Yet it is hard to know what alternative there is to the present situation, and I for one would not find it possible to advocate a return to the Churches as they are to-day. The best that one can say is that people should stay where they are.' To *New Britain* in effect is due the credit of having recognized the necessity for a firm dogmatic basis if a New Britain is to arise, and the still greater credit of acknowledging that it cannot supply the need. There is a call for a *New Britain* with an enlightened and definite conception of God, of human personality and destiny. The dangers inherent in a 'personalism' which is unaffected by a definitely Christian conception of personality have been stressed by M. Ramon Fernandez while criticizing the ideas of MM. Aron and Dandieu and the *Ordre nouveau* movement (with which *New Britain* and *New Atlantis* have many affinities) in LA NOUVELLE REVUE FRANÇAISE (January). 'I believe,' he writes, 'that their idea of "personality" is meaningless unless it is explained in the light of the Christian idea of the soul. If we have a soul this "spiritual revolution" which they advocate is intelligible and indeed imperative; otherwise it is a myth.' If there are dangers of heresies in the State absolutism of the cruder forms of Fascism (though it should be noted that State absolutism has been repudiated in the most formal terms by Mussolini, and is indeed incompatible with the more intelligent interpretations of the doctrine of the Totalitarian State), there are dangers no less in some contemporary forms of 'personalism' which a writer in LA VIE INTELLECTUELLE (January 25th) calls 'the most formal and dangerous heresy which opposes Christian truth at the present time.' *New Britain* should be watched sympathetically but critically by Catholics.

PENGUIN.