

THE THREAT OF COMMUNISM. By A. S. (J. P. McGinity, New Bridge Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; 1s.)

This is only a small pamphlet of twenty-odd pages. But, based on the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, it explains most clearly how a complete materialism lies at the foundation of all Marxian communism, and how therefore communism is, and always will be, fundamentally and necessarily anti-religious. There are many Catholics, just as there are many sympathisers with some communist aims, who do not at all realise the reasons for the inevitable conflict between religion and communism. Let them spend one shilling and learn. This pamphlet should be at the bottom of every church, it should be in all Catholic bookshops, and in every bookshop that is not under communist auspices. When it arrives it should be bought by the ordinary Catholic, and read with care, so that, when he gets to work next morning, he will know just what many of his work-mates are talking about, even though they probably do not know themselves. He will also realise again the constant importance of the cardinal virtue we call justice, and the responsibility of those unfortunate people who, by refusing justice in any sphere, are only helping to dig their own graves and probably the graves of many others as well.

B.D.B.

TOWARDS A NEW EPOCH. By Nicholas Berdyaev. (Geoffrey Bles; 6s.)

The world-wide upheaval through which Berdyaev lived the last ten years of his life caused him to modify some of his views, but death prevented his ideas from crystallising. Consequently the essays set forth in this little volume do not give us any new system of philosophy or any new teaching on religious or social problems; but many of the points raised should set the reader thinking. Many problems are outlined, the solution to which will have to be hammered out in the years to come, such as the apparent inconsistency of Catholics in demanding freedom of religion in the twentieth century and suppressing heresy in the earlier days when the Church could call in the aid of the secular power. Many of the statements made will receive universal acceptance, being very much to the point in these times. Other remarks are provocative but most worthy of consideration. But there are exceptions. Few mediaevalists, for instance, would agree that 'man's free creativity' and 'his immense creative forces' were 'paralysed during the Middle Ages'. Many remarks which to the reader who makes the acquaintance of Berdyaev for the first time in these pages seem tantalisingly suggestive yet irritatingly vague are clearer to the student of his earlier and larger works. Thus on page 111 he tells us that 'I was a Marxist in my youth but I have never been a materialist'. The explanation he gives of the rise of existentialist philosophy (p. 113) is interesting. Most of us would be surprised to read of 'Catholic morality, in which the egoism of the family plays such a part', but when a

member of the Anglican episcopate speaks of the 'selfishness of having large families' we realise that the common denominator of Christian principles is diminishing. Berdyaev's discussion on Marxism and a universal morality (p. 29) is well worth pondering. The reader who receives a number of disconcerting jolts as he peruses these essays should examine his own conscience and that of the society in which he lives before expressing indignation at the presumption of the author.

RICHARD BLUNDELL, S.J.

ART FOR ALL. (Art and Technics; 6s.)

Underground movements have often inspired great works of art from the prehistoric times of the cave dwellers and their painted bison. If the underground section of the London Transport Board has not exactly inspired great art it has certainly commissioned designs from all the most notable among contemporary artists. This monument to the posters of forty years (1908-49) reveals the success which has attended the efforts of the publicity executive in this department. Dame Laura Knight, Graham Sutherland, Rex Whistler, McKnight Kauffer, Barnett Freedman, Rutherford and Brangwyn are only a few of those whose work is here presented in excellent reproductions (coloured and half-tone) and who have helped to encourage people to be carried quickly through the bowels of London to many surface spots of interest. The well-known map by 'Max' Gill, of such delight to children 30 years ago, could not, of course be given its due in this format, but it is a disappointment nonetheless to find only a small reproduction of a design with far less incident. However the book is well worth its six shillings for it includes also three essays on the poster.

C.P.

THE ADVENTURE OF PUBLISHING. By Michael Joseph. (Allan Wingate; 8s.6d.)

Michael Joseph can speak with authority on this adventure as he has made such a success of publishing himself. And he writes in a way which will interest and entertain even one who is only mildly attracted to the question of the modern book. For those interested or implicated in the publishing business his words are of the greatest practical value. His message however is in general gloomy as he foresees a slump in the book trade after its peak period induced by the unnatural conditions of the war years. In order to prevent disaster in the trade he advocates two plans which should be considered by all publishers: a concerted attempt to limit the number of books produced and an arrangement with the commercial lending libraries and the public libraries for the cost of books supplied to them in such a way that thousands of readers reap the benefit of the author's words while hardly contributing at all to the livelihood of author or publisher. All who think books are expensive should read the chapter on 'The Price of Books'; the selling price has risen by 20 or 30 per cent while the cost of production has increased by 160 per cent on pre-war price.

C.P.