

BOOK SUPPLEMENT

WORLD AFFAIRS

THE SPIRIT OF POST-WAR RUSSIA: SOVIET IDEOLOGY 1917-1946. By Rudolf Schlesinger. (Dennis Dobson; 8s. 6d.)

THE SOVIET UNION. By 'Sarmazius'. (The Sword of the Spirit; 1s.)

The main title of the book is somewhat misleading, its sub-title only less so. The opening words of the author's preface say that it 'deals with Soviet attitudes to general issues of Soviet life'; but even this hardly does justice to the historical and factual elements in the book. The publisher claims for it that 'here, in fact, are the answers to those many questions which we have been asking about the U.S.S.R.'. Whether this be true or not depends of course on what questions the individual reader asks; and there is no certain answer to the question, 'Are these answers reliable?' But the book is well-documented, Dr Schlesinger is very well informed, and to this reviewer the book carries a considerable measure of conviction (allowance being made for the author's skill in putting the most favourable interpretation on awkward facts). It is certainly of absorbing interest to read, and free from the difficulties presented by that 'special jargon' of Soviet 'ideology' which Dr Schlesinger deliberately avoids. (The index is lamentable, and there is a comic misprint in footnote 138 on page 145).

But in considering the religious question, at any rate, Dr Schlesinger does not bother himself about accuracy in what no doubt he regards as *nuances*: 'This [Roman Catholic] Church has its own political programme embodied in the papal encyclicals, which every Catholic is bound to believe infallible'. On the other hand, in face of the record and of the carelessness and irresponsibility of much of our speech and writing, we Catholics cannot reasonably complain if Christianity be misunderstood and misrepresented.

The 'Sarmatian' pamphlet is not a very good addition to the International Problems series. It says nothing new or in a new way, and its effect on the reader—unless he dismisses it as just one more bit of 'anti' propaganda—is likely to be increased dislike, with no desire to try to understand. Dr Schlesinger at least helps us to see 'how the other fellow's mind works'.
D.D.A.

AUSTRIAN REQUIEM. By Kurt von Schuschnigg, Chancellor of Austria. (Gollancz; 9s. 0d.)

This remarkable book by the ex-Chancellor of Austria consists of two parts, the one a reasoned explanation and defence of Austrian policy during his chancellorship, the other a diary of his experiences during the crisis of 1938 and his subsequent imprisonment by the Nazis. The first part is sandwiched between two sections of the diary