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Religious Bulletin  
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In The Heart Of New Germany.

A reader of the Bulletin who not long ago visited Germany brings back these impressions which he got from an intelligent Catholic mother; she gave them with this word of caution: "If I talk honestly, promise not to say anything to anyone. You can't tell; it might mean my death."

Back in 1933 we never elected Hitler and even today I can't force myself to say, "Heil Hitler!" The men here in the neighborhood who first worked for Hitler, who gave the soap-box speeches for him were called by everybody, "The Wolves." They were low and impudent and strutted around in their uniforms to everyone's disgust.

Don't believe that justice reigns here in Germany. Two of my own boys came home one Saturday night not long ago singing some old innocent school songs. Somebody here in town said their songs were communistic. Immediately my boys were fined. What could they do except to take their medicine, bitter as it was, simply because they did not stand in with the Hitler organization. You have no idea unless you live here the hatred among families that this new order has caused. I can't believe that even Hitler would permit many things to go on if he knew.

I still get a little pension on account of my husband. Well, the winter before last a stranger came and asked me why I was not subscribing to the newspaper, National. He reminded me impudently that I was getting a pension. I didn't want the newspaper at all but I subscribed for three months for the sake of peace. Then a little while ago this stranger with another man came here again. This time I got impatient and told them: "I am getting a pension because of my husband, one of my boys is now in the army, another is in the labor camp. That's national enough for me!" I haven't heard from them since, but who knows when I will?

In one issue of our Catholic newspaper, there was a story about the youth organization. The Bishop had written some things about the government and repeated some prohibitions that he had previously made. Well, the government decided to confiscate that issue. Officials came here to the house one Saturday night to take away that issue of our paper. I refused to give it up, even when they told me I would have to bear the consequences. What may come of that I don't know.

The government is after the young men most of all. Boys who have just finished school must join the Hitler youth organization. My youngest was the last to go. What leaders those boys have! If they were only decent and respectable individuals it wouldn't be so agonizing to entrust the children to them. The whole business of weaning youngsters away from their religion is progressing slowly and silently. This year no schoolboy is allowed to serve Mass or to take part in any Church procession. Before long they will know nothing but Hitler. I know a good Catholic man, a public official in his town. That man was in agony one whole Sunday expecting to be locked up simply because his little boy had just made his first Holy Communion. That is the way the pressure works--here in this community where nearly all of us are Catholics! Bishops in their recent pastorals are showing good fight. Priests, many of them, are in prisons; one nearby parish priest who is in prison I know very well. If you complain, for whatever reason, you are a communist. Everywhere you see the word, "volunteer" but concealed in it we know is the meaning "you must." Newspapers will say that so-and-so many have volunteered to join the Volks wohlfahrt; but those who do not join soon feel the pressure. No one however intelligent gets very far unless he is a socialist; if he is a socialist he needs little else.

PRAYERS: (deceased) Dr. R. T. Flannery, Ill, mother of Jim Wotschall (Morr.); father of Vincent Frobst (Walsh); aunt of Paul Howard (off-campus); J. Clifford's aunt & uncle.