

**PAN-GERMANISM
VERSUS CHRISTENDOM;
THE CONVERSION OF A
NEUTRAL**

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Pan-Germanism versus Christendom; the conversion of a neutral by Emile Prum & René
Johannet

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EMILE PRUM & RENÉ JOHANNET

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Handwritten: PAN-GERMANISM

PAN-GERMANISM

VERSUS

CHRISTENDOM

THE CONVERSION
OF A NEUTRAL

BEING AN OPEN LETTER BY M. EMILE PRÜM

EDITED AND WITH COMMENTS BY

RENÉ JOHANNET

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PREFACE

THE spiritual drama whose theatre was the mind of M. Prüm involved a multitude of actors, but only two protagonists—M. Prüm and the partner he himself selected: Herr Erzberger.

A Catholic, the leader of the Catholic party of Luxembourg, a Catholic in language, thought, and culture, and of German sympathies, a member of the Permanent Committee of the International Eucharistic Congresses, Commander of the Pontifical Order of St. Sylvester, honoured on every possible occasion by the pontifical favour, an ex-Deputy, Burgomaster of Clervaux, and by profession a manufacturer, M. Prüm has filled, and continues to fill, a prominent position in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, where he has always been ready in the defence of Catholic liberties. Regarding the scholastic policy of the Prime

Minister, M. Eyschen, which was largely anti-clerical, as a mischievous importation from France, M. Prüm was, on account of his Catholicism, anti-French.

Then came the war, and the violation of the neutrality of Belgium and Luxembourg; accompanied, in Germany, by a state of exaltation which is not yet allayed. Then followed the German atrocities in Belgium. M. Prüm, who was favourably situated in the matter of observation, and particularly well informed, watched, observed, meditated, and drew his own conclusions.

The pamphlet here translated, which a curious hazard placed in our hands,¹ con-

¹ It first appeared in the form of articles published by two small Luxembourg newspapers—the *Clerger Echo*, appearing in the town of which M. Prüm is the Burgomaster, and *Fortschritt*, appearing in Diekirch; it was then published separately in booklet form, but was immediately seized by the Luxembourg police, in accordance with the request of the German authorities. However, we were enabled to procure a copy of this booklet. Here is the title in full—

Die deutsche Kriegführung in Belgien und die Mahnungen Benedict XV, offenes Schreiben an Hrn. Math. Erzberger, Reichstagsabgeordneter in Berlin. Von

tains the result of M. Prüm's meditations. After a careful perusal we are able to assert in all impartiality that M. Prüm has, by reason of his Catholicism, become anti-German.

By close association, M. Prüm was perfectly acquainted with the Catholic movement in modern Germany; he was assiduous in his attendance at the German Catholic Congresses, and he enjoyed personal relations with most of the leaders of the Centre; he was a contributor to those reviews which were the organs of the Centre, and he attentively followed the developments of this

Emil Prüm, Bürgermeister zu Clerf (Grossherzogtum Luxemburg). Dietrich. Druck und Verlag des *Fortschritt*. Inhaber: P. Cariers, 1915.

Which, being translated, is—

The German conduct of hostilities in Belgium and the instructions of Benedict XV. Open letter to Herr Mathias Erzberger, member of the Reichstag, Berlin, by Emile Prüm, Burgomaster of Clervaux (Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg), Dietrich. Printing and publishing offices of Fortschritt. P. Cariers, proprietor, 1915.

The pamphlet contains forty-two pages.

Le Correspondant of April 25 and May 10, and *La Croix* of April 21-23, were the first papers to mention the "Prüm affair."

great party—developments which, as we shall see, he sometimes found far from reassuring.

It was not without reason that he selected Herr Erzberger as his interlocutor. His motives, we believe, are not difficult to divine.

Herr Erzberger represents the new, up-to-date "man of the Centre," who is very far removed from the old heroic and disinterested type.¹ Born in 1875, he entered the Reichstag in 1903, where the sometime primary schoolmaster from Swabia rapidly became the spokesman of his party, even of the Empire, which recently sent him to Italy as its semi-official ambassador. An indefatigable worker, a man of violent character and sanguine temperament, after desperately opposing the Imperial Government he very soon became its blind and unscrupulous servant. On introducing the budgets of the army, navy and colonies, he has often adopted a semi-Pan-Germanist attitude, which the war was to transform

¹ See Appendix.

into Pan-Germanism of the extreme and unconditional type.

It was to this representative German politician that M. Prüm addressed his memorial.

It is a defence of Catholicism and a statement of its doctrine; but it is also a generous and high-minded inquiry into the evolution of the German Centre, conducted by an admirer of that party.¹

But we will leave the two protagonists to speak for themselves.

RENÉ JOHANNET.²

¹ We shall presently describe and comment upon the prosecutions instituted against M. Prüm by Herr Erzberger and the Public Prosecutor of Luxembourg.

² The Appendix and other comment by M. Johannet is translated from *La Conversion d'un Catholique Germanophile*, published by A. Quingnon, 16 Rue Alphonse Daudet, Paris.