

PASTOR NIEMOLLER

PASTOR NIEMOLLER looked fresher than any of the other passengers who came off the Sydney flying boat at Auckland, late in the afternoon of October 21. His wife was with him and two young Australians in a uniform very like that of the air force. They are two of the 14 full-time field-workers maintained by the Open Air Campaigners, the commando force of the Evangelical Churches. This body invited Pastor Niemoller to Australia and arranged his tour there.

In New Zealand, Pastor Niemoller is sponsored by the Bible Training Institute and the Y.M.C.A. The little group of secretaries at the air-port agreed that the Pastor could not speak to the press that night. It was then a few minutes to six o'clock, and at 7.30 he must leave for a reception. He flipped open his gold watch. "We can be at the hotel in five minutes? Yes? Then we have dinner—that will not take long. I have some free time this evening after all, namely, be-

tween seven and seven thirty." He laughed and led the party away.

MARTIN NIEMOLLER is 57 years of age. He was trained for the sea, commanded a U-boat in the first World War, and received the Iron Cross. As his autobiography shows, his patriotism was quite unquestioning, and he had more than usual zest for the technique and adventures of war. Disgusted by the Armistice and the internal politics that followed it, he resigned from the Service and worked as a farm labourer, meaning to farm on his own account when he had learned the art. After about a year he began to feel that was evading responsibilities to a country that was in a state of hopelessness. He found he longed to be a clergyman (as his father was), though he had no great urge to preach. He studied at Munster, and helped to support himself and a growing family through these years by working in spare time as a plate-layer on the railways, as an accountant and

A "Listener" Interview



PASTOR AND MRS. NIEMOLLER—a photograph taken on their arrival at Auckland

as a bank clerk. In 1931 he went to Dahlem, a wealthy parish on the outskirts of Berlin.

He had disliked the neutral, secular policy of post-war German Governments, and voted for Hitler's party in its early years, not only for the "posi-

tive Christianity" it professed, but for the hope it seemed to give of purpose and self-respect. In 1933 Hitler began to assume spiritual authority over the churches. Pastor Niemoller saw more clearly than most what was happening,

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