

## ***MORNING STAR***

In *Lumen* by Ben Pastor (Bitter Lemon Press, £8.99) Martin Bora is a captain in the Wehrmacht intelligence immediately following the 1939 invasion of Poland.

In this first episode of a promising and well-written new series he investigates the murder of an abbess whose rumoured mystical powers have gained her a popular following not appreciated by the church hierarchy nor the occupying power.

The danger in any fiction of this sort is the creation of a mythical “good German.”

It’s a figure beloved of those determined to eliminate from history the true good Germans, the communists, socialists, trade unionists and others who resisted Hitler in his homeland from the first day to the last.

By and large, Pastor avoids the trap. Bora is young and ambitious, posh and rather arrogant.

His aristocratic stepfather expresses open contempt for the nazis, but mainly because they are so revoltingly middle-class.

It’s only through chance encounters that Bora begins to catch glimpses of the new Germany’s true nature and gradually, reluctantly, he becomes aware of a growing disconnection between his image of himself as a good soldier and the shameful reality of his role.

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*by Mat Coward*