

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

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Why a Native German Fights Germany.

Mann, Klaus

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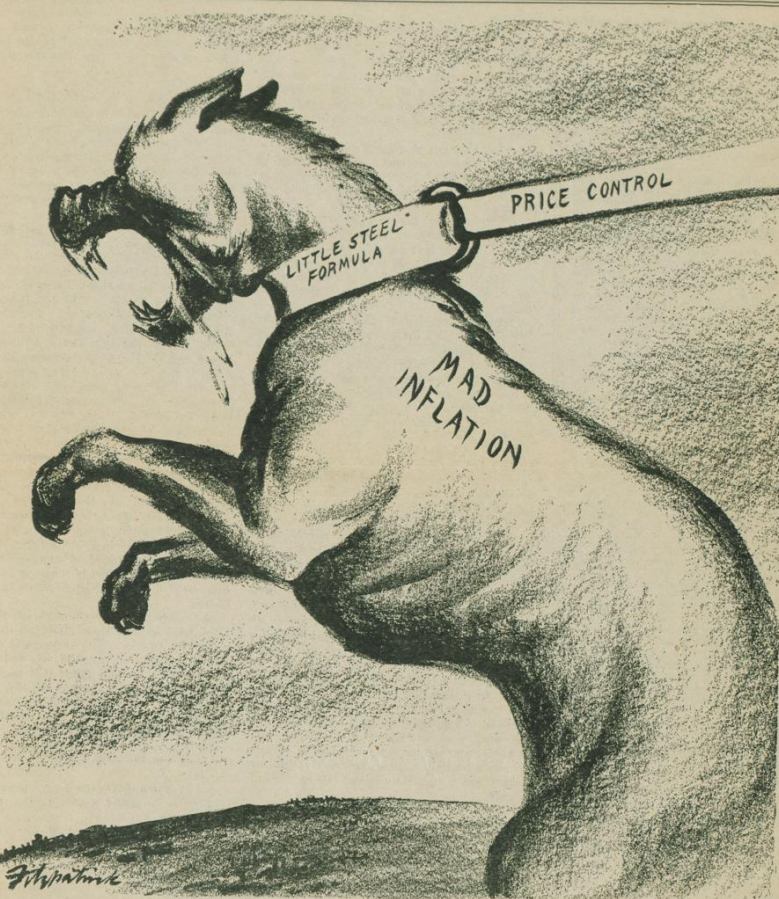
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HOLD HIM!

Why a Native German Fights Germany

The Mirror
of
Public Opinion

Writer son of Thomas Mann says that he, like thousands of others born in Reich and now in Allied armies, feels loyalty to new homeland and knows Nazi menace at first-hand; failed to stop rise of Hitler or to rouse world to its peril, so took up arms eagerly.

Sgt. Klaus Mann, With the United States Army in Italy, in the Stars and Stripes, Rome

First came the greetings from the President, then came the physical examination. When I was through with the physical, and was found all right, the psychiatrist asked me only one question: "You're of German origin, aren't you?"

"Well then, do you really feel capable of fighting Germans?"

I said, "Yes, sir, I do!" And I am afraid that I grinned a little while saying it. The question struck me as funny.

In the course of my life in the Army, I was asked the same question repeatedly. Maybe the question isn't so very funny, after all.

It is not quite easy, perhaps, for any non-German person to understand why those most familiar with Germany are most eager and most determined to fight Nazism and to help wipe out that obnoxious plague.

The Manns Chose Exile

I am sure I speak also for the thousands of other former German citizens now active in the various armies of the United Nations in saying that our militant resolution has a two-fold psychological and moral source: first, our natural loyalty to a new homeland to which we are deeply indebted; and second, our intimate, first-hand knowledge of the mortal danger which Hitlerism means to civilization.

To me, as to most of the other German fugitives from Nazi terrorism, it was a matter of course to contribute our humble bit to the war effort of the democracies.

It seemed to me that my new job was to continue doing with new weapons and under new conditions what I had been doing all along for the past 10 years. To fight Hitler and everything he stands for was indeed my main occupation, ever since the Nazi dictatorship was established, in 1933.

My family and I left the Reich voluntarily, as did many other Germans, as soon as Hitler came to power. We left because we felt that a country taken over by the Nazis would be an impossible place to live in—a place where the very air was stifling and poisonous. We left because we realized that Hitler would inevitably lead the German nation to war, to disgrace and to disaster.

Anti-Nazis Had Double Mission

We might have thought and acted differently—in fact, we might have found that it would be more useful and more honorable to stay at home—if there had been a chance to fight Nazism within Germany.

But there was no such chance—especially in the case of people who were so notorious from the Nazi point of view, as was the Mann tribe.

The German anti-Nazis in exile had the double mission of warning both the world and their former countrymen. But most of the Germans believed in Hitler as the Messiah—sent by God to increase the greatness and glory of the Fatherland, and the world wanted peace at any price—even at the price of appeasing the arch-enemy of peace, Adolf Hitler.

The arch-enemy, meanwhile, became stronger and stronger. In the end he was

so powerful that he could no longer be appeased. The great showdown had become inevitable.

Could people of our kind stay aloof under such circumstances? Could we waver? Could we hesitate?

We had failed twice in our historical duty. We had not succeeded in preventing Nazism in Germany, and our voices had been too weak to arouse world public opinion to the imminence of the Nazi danger.

Now we had the opportunity to make good, to a certain extent, our previous failures. Now we had the chance to prove the sincerity of our convictions by participating in the fight against Nazi barbarism—the fight which the Germans themselves failed to wage in 1933.

The complete defeat and extinction of the Hitler regime is a vital necessity, not only for my new homeland, the United States of America, but also for the whole world and, in particular, for my former country, Germany. The Germans who still fail to see this will have to be taught a terrible, lasting lesson.

Must Fight for Supreme Values

I do not hate my former countrymen. I agree—as, I suppose, most Americans do—with the generous statement President Roosevelt made in his speech of Oct. 22, 1944:

"We bring no charge against the German race as such, for we cannot believe that God has eternally condemned any race of humanity; for we know in our land how many good men and women with German ancestry have proved loyal, freedom-loving, peace-loving citizens."

But if we, Americans of German stock, cherish freedom and peace, we have to help in defending those supreme values—even if the aggressors happen to be our former countrymen.

RADIO IS COMING OF AGE

From the Indianapolis News.

One of the things which continue to irritate American radio listeners is the constant interruption of important news broadcasts by commercial announcements. It is pathetic to listen to a heroic story like that of Easton, only to be jarred a moment later with a blunt plug for a product.

The broadcasting of news has become a vital public service. It has a brilliant future, one that should not be marred by commercialism or greed on the part of radio station owners.

Radio is coming of age in many ways. What may be perfectly legitimate in an entertainment program is highly objectionable in a newscast.

The Indianapolis News radio station, WIBC, on its own volition has halted all middle commercials in news broadcasts. This policy will pertain to all newscasts which originate in the WIBC studios. Over some of the network programs the station has no control, but it is urging the network to follow suit.

All four of the major networks, Mutual, Columbia, Blue and NBC, should join in this forward movement and likewise eliminate all middle commercials in news broadcasts.

Problem of Quebec's Aloofness Is Subject of Novel on Canada

"Two Solitudes," by HUGH MACLENNAN. (Doubt, Sloan & Pearce, New York.)

Most Americans probably think of Canada as a Northern wilderness governed by red-coated mounted policemen and thinly populated by prospectors and half-breed trappers; Quebec is the meeting place of Churchill and Roosevelt; Canadian soldiers are brave, tall, Anglo-Saxon and devoted to the British Empire. Therefore, recent news of mutiny in Canadian forces assigned to overseas duty and of a political crisis when the Dominion Government proposed conscription must have greatly puzzled many.

The theme of Hugh MacLennan's novel—the struggle between Anglo-Saxon and French Canada—provides an explanation of these events. As an explanation of this basic problem, the book is excellent, but as a novel, there is much to criticize.

Though today, in common with the rest of the world, Canada faces many problems, her old difficulty—that of reconciling two peoples, two ways of life—is still her fundamental dilemma. The French Canadians of the Province of Quebec constitute one-third of Canada's population. The majority speak only French and are strict Roman Catholics. They regard themselves as the real Canadians and the English-speaking Protestants as foreign conquerors.

MacLennan neither condemns nor approves this anachronism that is Quebec, but treats it with sympathetic understanding. He shows how the church controls the life of the community to an extent that was unknown in the Middle Ages, for in Quebec the medieval counterbalance, the power of the feudal lord, is gone. The parish priest, Father Beaubien, though bigoted and puritanical, devotes himself utterly to what he considers the best interests of his people. Indeed, the novel indicates that the transformation of the peasant into a factory worker, which the priest fights in his village, is not a happy one.

Even Marius Tallard, the rabid and ineffectual Quebec nationalist, is explained as a product of his environment and temperament, not attacked as a Fascist. Insensitive British Canadians who smugly judge the French Canadian by their own standards and find him childish are treated much less sympathetically.

The author assures us that this is a story "without any real villains"; the reader may wish that the characters had been given the chance to become real people. They have little opportunity to speak and less to act, for MacLennan constantly pushes them off stage and tells us about them.

In the last pages, the hero, Paul Tallard, who the shrewd reader will suspect is MacLennan acting under an alias, strangely enough determines to write a book about Canada. "A novel," he says, "should concern people, not ideas. . . . It is unfortunate that this author did not concern himself with the ideas alone."

FORREST CAMPBELL,
Washington University.

Best-Selling Books

As Compiled by the New York Herald Tribune.

NON-FICTION—"Brave Men," by Emilio Pyle, reported by US boatsmen out of 48; "Anything Can Happen," by George and Helen Papaschly, 24; "Try and Stop Me," by Bennett Cerf, 22; "Yankee From Omaha," by Catherine Drinker Bowen, 21; "China Is Me," by Emily Hahn, 16; "I Never Left Home," by Bob Hope, 16; "The Time for Decision," by Sumner Welles, 16.

FICTION—"The Green Years," by A. A. Cronin, 37; "Cassidy Row," by John Steinbeck, 34; "Great Sea," by Edna Ferber, 31; "Captain From Castile," by Samuel Shellabarger, 29; "Earth and High Heaven," by Gwendolyn Graham, 27; "Forever Amber," by Kathleen Winsor, 22.