

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

In: The New Republic. Juni 1939.

Ernst Toller.

Mann, Klaus

Juni

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

British Tories' mentality at the precise moment when they realize that Hitler may push westward instead of eastward. At last they understand that fascism and Nazism "are closer together than people think"; and Germany is indeed "the" Great Aggressor. But the hopes from the previous era still hang on; a trembling umbrella still points eastward to remind Hitler that "the problem of the Ukraine is the ghost in Europe," and in accents of despair Mussolini's partnership with Hitler is denounced as a result of the democracies' lack of "psychological sensitiveness"—for Italian "dictatorship," Augur thinks, is very different from German "tyranny." As a last resort, like the devil who disguises himself as a monk, the manufacturer of inside news piously invokes the "fourth dimension," i. e., the Spirit. Apart from being a dimension and an "angle," this Spirit is the "idea of the Dominion of the White Race" mixed with the usual trivialities about individualism and totalitarianism and the inevitable phrases about the Higher Conscience.

To those who insist on explaining the Munich policies by stupidity rather than diabolical scheming, Augur's little book will serve as an almost unanswerable argument.

NORBERT GUTERMAN

Ernst Toller

IN THE FALL OF 1918, and in the years that followed, a young generation passionately believed: "This is the beginning of a new era! The monstrous suffering must not have been in vain. For four years man has been abused and violated. Now at last he is again finding himself. *Man is good. . .*"

"When we heard the word 'mankind' or 'humanity' in those days," Ernst Toller often told me, "tears came into our eyes!" He was the great voice, the legitimate representative of the German post-war generation. His very first works became world famous. The youth of all lands recognized its own hope, its angers and sorrows, in the dramas of young Ernst Toller: "Man and Masses," "Hinkemann" and "The Machine Wreckers." And behind his work stood the legend of his political martyrdom. Five long years, from 1919 to 1924, were spent by this militant humanist, this intellectual who was at the same time a man of action, in a Bavarian fortress as punishment for placing his talent and passion at the service of the German revolution.

Toller fought against infamy because he had a profound belief in the good in man. It was never merely a party or a political group with which he identified himself. His militant enthusiasm was placed in the service of the greatest and simplest ideas: freedom, justice, peace. He warned of the barbarism that threatened Germany when most of us were still blind. When his fears for our homeland were realized and Ernst Toller had become our fellow exile, he avoided the common error of seeing in Nazism the *sole* form in which infamy expresses itself. To cite but one example, he was deeply concerned with the tragedy of the Spanish people, and he translated his concern into action. He was a citizen of the world, and for him the term "mankind" always retained the stirring fascination it had when he was twenty years old.

Today one may well ask: if he believed so passionately in humanity and its better future, what drove him into suicide?

It is a long story. In trying to tell it one would have to go into much detail, and in the end there would still remain something dark and unresolved, the secret that man takes into his grave.

To be sure, there are reasons that one can give for Toller's fateful decision. Besides the bitterness of exile, the defeat of one's ideals, the personal and political frustrations common to all those in exile, he had more than his share of personal troubles. His nervous system never quite recovered from the five years he spent in prison; his insomnia often assumed the character of an agonizing illness. He was tortured by doubts as to whether or not his last works—especially his play "Pastor Hall"—found the response he had expected. The defeat of the Spanish republic meant to him much more than merely a political catastrophe. In Toller's character an almost naïve confidence was blended with an inclination toward melancholia. He feared it and sought to conquer it. All his ambition was centered in the desire to march ahead like a soldier. Deep inside he believed in the victory of his great, simple ideals. But time and again there came those dark hours, those sinister weeks, that were harder and harder for him to surmount.

The Nazis are jeering at his memory; to them his death means one less who dares to fight for what they think are outworn ideals of truth and justice. It is frightening and almost incredible that there should be Americans—even though but a few—who join in this chorus of infamy. Toller loved America—loved it perhaps more than any other country since he had to leave Germany. Yet it was an American—Mr. George H. Deatherage, national commander of the Knights of the White Camellia—who declared before a congressional committee that he and his sort were responsible for Toller's suicide. The fact that Mr. Deatherage is wrong is of small account. It is unlikely that Toller ever took notice of the Knights of the White Camellia. His concern over the growth of anti-Semitism could hardly have been so deep as his faith in the sound moral forces of this great democracy. No, the American fascists did not murder Ernst Toller: the enormity lies in the fact that they *boast* of having murdered him. Even Dr. Goebbels has not yet ascended to those heights of provocative and almost insane cynicism.

KLAUS MANN