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Literature In Exile

By Klaus Mann.

TWO RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS by German authors now in exile reflect a spirit of genuine, wise, intellectually mature humanism. They are in a sense co-related, inasmuch as both are a representative compilation of the shorter works of their eminent authors, written over a period of many years, and heretofore published scatteringly.

"*Aus vielen Jahren*" (Of Many Years), published by Querido, Amsterdam, Bruno Frank, dramatist lyric poet and romanticist, calls the collection of his best short stories and verses. "*Begegnungen mit Menschen, Buechern und Landschaften*" (Meetings with People, Books and Landscapes), published by Reichner in Vienna before the Anschluss, is the title Stefan Zweig gave to an important selection of shorter essays from his pen, the work of three decades. Both works furnish a fine, clearly defined portrayal of the aptitude and the intellectual wealth of their authors, since both works include only what is authentic, lasting and thoroughly pure in both character and form of the work of these writers. It seems to me well and significant that Bruno Frank and Stefan Zweig, at the present moment in disfavor in their German homeland where their works are now forbidden, choose this very time to prove so impressively, by these two verily representative volumes, the legitimacy of their artistry and their convictions.

As a young man Bruno Frank already excelled in the domain of the story. There is an unbroken line, leading from one of his earlier works, an appealing and artistically perfect narrative "*Der Goldene*" (The Golden One), to his three famous stories "*Die Tage des Koenigs*" (The Days of the King), built around the figure of Frederic the Great of Prussia, and ending with his "*Die Monduhr*" (The Moon-Clock), a masterly concise contribution to literature. All these works are imbued with the same spirit that has always characterized Bruno Frank's writing: the spirit of genuine sympathy for all humanity, or, to be more exact, for all that which is alive. At no time is this spirit jeopardized by an even remote approach to the sphere of the vulgarly sentimental, for it is not a loving spirit only, but also a skeptical one; more Voltarian than Franciscan.

Stefan Zweig is always most "himself," when he writes about others and particularly so, when he writes about other artists. That is to be expected of a man of his spiritual life and of the singularly constituted intellectual personality that is his. His extraordinary capacity for understanding of the fate and nature of others, the partly innate, partly trained sensitiveness, with which he conceives and interprets the thoughts and the forms of other writers, stamps him as a literary essayist and critic of the first rank. His great, marvelously plastic and clear portrait of the Belgian writer, Verhaeren, for instance, is a classic of interpretative prose. The same may be said of his efforts with respect to Arthur Rimbaud, Sainte Beuve, Balzac and Henri Barbusse. This precious gift of intellectual receptivity and readiness has proved valuable not only in the case of purely literary subjects, but also when Stefan Zweig resorts to other themes, as for instance a work on the rhythm of New York or a work dealing with the musical genius of Toscanini. This copious volume of essays gives us an idea of the all but inexhaustible variety of phenomena, which delight the susceptible, tolerant and, in the truest sense of the word, cultivated intellect of this Austrian.



BRUNO FRANK.

THE EXPRESSION "*vertrauender humanismus*" (trusting humanism) means that we should not and must not lose faith in humanity and its future, in spite of our bitter knowledge of the wickedness and folly of human nature. A profession of faith in this "trusting humanism" may be found on one of the last pages of a new, most interesting book by Konrad Heiden, entitled "*Europaeisches Schicksal*" (European Fate), published by Querido, Amsterdam.

Heiden has been acclaimed only during the past few years—during the years of exile—for his book, "*Geschichte des Nationalsozialismus*" (History of National Socialism) and his two books on Hitler. In his book, "*Europaeisches Schicksal*," he does not occupy himself, as in his previous works, with any historical or current political details, but rather with "man" and more especially with "man of today"—with his problematical present and his problematical future, with the dangers that threaten him, with the gigantic possibilities that still remain to him.

The focal point of Heiden's contemplations is not, as the title would lead one to believe, so much the isolated "European fate," as the fate and the problem of the planetary mass, which Heiden recognizes as an indivisible entity. Heiden's psychological and sociological conception of the modern "mass man" gives evidence, as do other parts of his book, that he has read the renowned work of the Spaniard Ortega y Gasset, "*The Revolt of the Masses*," to advantage.

Fundamentally, Heiden's talents lie more in an historical and political than a purely speculative and philosophical direction. However, the multifariousness of his moral, sociological, political or psychological views contain much that is new, or at least appears new in this connection, and which might have an advantageously clarifying effect. Heiden expresses himself best and most impressively, when he is concerned with the actual complex of themes: freedom and want of it, individuality and anarchy. The question of the relationship of the individual to society, and of society to nature, is at all times a moot one with Konrad Heiden. It runs like a leitmotiv through the intellectual composition of his book.

I cannot, in this article, enter into the manifold details of Heiden's sociological-philosophical treatise. But it is an honest, judicious and valuable contribution to a great discussion, a discussion that never ceases and that the years of decision, of world historical crisis, intensify. I mean that this work is a contribution to the eternally vital discourse on man's destiny on this earth. The moral lesson which constitutes the essence of the author's reflection is this: the fate of man is not subordinate to inescapable, immutable historical laws of causality. Man must want a better future and he will have it. The book is splendidly prefaced by one of Spinoza's sayings:

"Peace is not only the omission of war, it is a virtue that emanates from the soul."

(Editor's note: This is the second of a series of articles written from Amsterdam for the Book Page of The Post by the novelist, Klaus Mann, son of Thomas Mann.)

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