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An Address to German-Americans of Yorkville.

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Klaus Mann:

An Address to German-Americans of Yorkville

At a mass protest meeting against the Nazi atrocities, held last Friday in the overcrowded Yorkville Casino, Klaus Mann, son of Thomas Mann, and himself a renowned writer, made the following address:

Only a few weeks after the Munich agreement, after that famous "peace in honor," that old "peace for our time," the Nazis are showing, once more their true face to the world—and it looks quite repulsive. Even the British Conservatives—so eager, before, to come to an understanding with Mr. Hitler—are shocked by the new Nazi horrors—by this inhuman, unchristian persecution of racial and religious minorities. Mr. Chamberlain himself seems to be somehow disturbed. A wave of protest goes through the civilized world. It is obvious: this time Herr Hitler—more and more insolent, after his recent successes—went definitely too far. The world is accustomed, nowadays, to many atrocities. What happened now in Germany is somehow too strong—even for this not very sensitive time. The international public opinion reacted—most definitely in this country. Everybody who still kept a certain feeling for the dignity of human beings, is deeply disgusted. To be a German—or to be from German descent—becomes almost a shame.

True Germans Against Pogroms

I said "almost"; because I want to emphasize the fact that not all the Germans are responsible for these unspeakable horrors, and that not all of our compatriots agree with the criminal tactics of Hitler, Goebbels and Streicher. Many of them are disgusted—as deeply as any American or British citizen. And I am not just speaking about Germans living abroad—in this country, or elsewhere. I know that many Germans within the Reich feel the same shame, the same disgust. In Germany they have to remain silent; but this silence already was somehow embarrassing for the Nazi leaders. It was the hostile silence of many, many Germans which made Goebbels realize that the majority of the German people did not like and did not want this kind of atrocities.

I Speak For the Other Germany

I am a German myself, and I belong to an old German family which is much more typical of the real Germany than certain people who hardly know how to talk or to write in German. The German tradition of the Mann-family is purer and older than the German tradition of Mr. Schickelgruber-Hitler from Braunau in Austria. We are disgusted, and our ancestors, those dignified patricians of the Free Hanse City Lübeck, would have been disgusted as well about the Nazi atrocities. And I know that thousands, millions of German families—within the Reich and abroad—feel and think as we do.

I am speaking for these thousands and millions of German families when I express here my own feelings, my father's feelings, the feelings of my sisters and brothers and friends. I am speaking for "the other Germany." I know it exists.

Hitler Is Not Germany

Hitler is not Germany. There is opposition against him in our country and among the Germans abroad; the Nazi-Gestapo might be able to silence it; it never will be able to kill it.

There are still moral and political forces in Germany, strong enough, powerful enough, to create a new Germany—after Hitler's fall.

"After Hitler's fall—the chaos!"—this Goebbels-slogan was repeated a million times—and, astonishing enough, the world believed it.

I am sure, when Hitler saw his friend Chamberlain—because, after all, he is his friend—he told him: "Of course, you could break me—but do you know what would come after me? Bolshevism! The chaos!"

"After Hitler's fall—the chaos!"—but why?

It is not at all my intention to defend the German people. I know they are guilty, in many respects. But, still, isn't it somehow insulting against this nation to think it wouldn't have any constructive forces to create a new state, a better order, when this bad state, this wrong order finally have vanished?

After Hitler's fall—the better order! The German Republic—truly democratic—after Hitler's fall!

The honest tolerance, toward all nations, all races, all religions; the peace in honor; the peace for our time and for the times of our children and grandchildren—after Hitler's fall!