

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

The Moral Conquest Of Germany. By Emil Ludwig.

Mann, Klaus

1945-08-19

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What They're Reading

ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH — By Norman Corwin; Simon and Schuster, New York; 150.

Norman Corwin is one of the ablest and maturest minds working for the American radio today. As writer, director and producer, he has enriched the airwaves more than most people who have worked for them. Concerning himself with contemporary themes, he has established that radio productions are an art form in their own right. His work has been consistently adult and on occasion it has risen to moving eloquence.

To celebrate the victory of the Allies in Europe, he wrote an hour's program for the Columbia Broadcasting System, and this script has now been placed between covers. Naturally, a radio production is geared for the ears not the eyes, but Corwin's script stands up well as reading matter.

It stands up well because Corwin has something to say. He is not content merely to celebrate the victory with the inevitable clichés. He wants to know what we learned from the war. He wants to be sure we shall not make the same mistakes again. The cogency of his presentation is evidenced by the fact that the questions he raises are just as vital today, now that the war in the Pacific is also won, as they were on VE-Day.

On a Note of Triumph isn't an essay, an epic poem, a photo drama, a play, a short story or a series of vignettes, as the book jacket insists. But it has qualities of many forms, and its writing has a poetry blended of a spacious, lyrical style and a feeling for colorful phrase used by the man in the street. In book form, the lines are often arranged as if they were poetry.

Corwin's script recalls that this war did not sneak upon the world out of the night. "Never has disaster had so many heralds as this war," he recalls:

Cassandra spoke from every lecture platform, and the notices were posted high and low:
A cabinet minister resigned at Downing Street, protesting:
A President cried, "Quarantine!"
Moscow sent food and guns to Barcelona;
A housewife of Duluth boycotted German goods;
An emperor of Ethiopia said in good French before the statesmen of Geneva:
"I came to give Europe warning of the doom that awaits it."

And Corwin goes on:

Signs and portents?
It was no furtive tapping on the window sill at night,
But clamorous pounding in the public square,
Blow after blow, like a monstrous drophammer,
Beating into shape the time to come.

What of the lessons? "Each lesson," Corwin wrote, "fell trip-hammer hard, with a bang that killed a citizen or two somewhere."

"We've learned out of World War II that we'd learned nothing out of World War I."

"We've learned that nations which don't know what they want will get what they don't want."

"We've learned that our east coast is the west bank of the Rhine, and that the defenses of Seattle begin in Shanghai."

"We learned at Munich that a soft answer doesn't turn away wrath; that if you offer your other cheek to a Nazi, you'll get your head blown off."

"We've learned that a newspaper right at home can lie with a straight face seven days a week, and be as filthy and Fascist as a handout in Berlin."

"We've learned that those most concerned with saving the world from Communism usually turn up making it safe for Fascism."

"We've learned that women can work and fight, as well as look pretty and cook."

"We've learned that the Germans came close to winning the first time,



NORMAN CORWIN

... what did we learn? ...

even closer the second time, and might damn well win if we give them a third time.

"We've learned the value of Allies in a world where any war is sooner or later a world war."

"We've learned that some men will fight for power, but that most men will fight to be free."

"We've learned that freedom isn't something to be won and then forgotten. It must be renewed, like soil after yielding good crops; must be re-wound, like a faithful clock; exercised, like a healthy muscle."

Corwin's script covers the high points that led to the war, the contribution to the victory of all the Allies and the agreement to work together to secure the peace. He ends up with a passage that sounds as if it were part Whitman and part Kipling:

"Lord God of trajectory and blast
Whose terrible sword has laid open
the serpent,
So it withers in the sun for the just
to see,
Sheathe now the swift avenging
blade with the names of nations
writ on it."



"With so much happening in the world, I've lost interest in the universe."
COLLIER'S

And assist in the preparation of the ploughshare.

Lord God of fresh bread and tranquil mornings,

Who walks in the circuit of heaven among the worthy,

Deliver notice to the fallen young men

That tokens of orange juice and whole egg appear now before the hungry children;

That night again falls cooling on the earth as quietly as when it leaves your hand;

That Freedom has withstood the tyrant like a Malta in a hostile sea,

And that the soul of man is surely a Sevastopol which goes down hard and leaps from ruin quickly.

Lord God of the topcoat and the living wage

Who has furred the fox against the time of winter

And stored provender of bees in summer's brightest places

Do bring sweet influences to bear upon the assembly line:

Accept the smoke of the milltown among the accredited clouds of the sky;

Fend from the wind with a house and a hedge, him whom you made in your image,

And permit him to pick of the tree and the flock

That he may eat today without fear of tomorrow

And clothe himself with dignity in December.

Lord God of test-tube and blueprint Who joined molecules of dust and shook them till their name was Adam,

Who taught worms and stars how they could live together,

Appear now among the parliaments of conquerors and give instruction to their schemes:

Measure out new liberties so none shall suffer for his father's color or the credo of his choice:

Fest proofs that brotherhood is not so wild a dream as those who profit by postponing it pretend:

Sit at the treaty table and convoy the hopes of little peoples through expected straits,

And press into the final seal a sign that peace will come for longer than posterities can see ahead.

That man unto his fellow man shall be a friend forever." —H. T.

THE MORAL CONQUEST OF GERMANY—By Emil Ludwig; Doubleday, Doran and Co., New York, 260.

"1. You are entering Germany, not as a liberator but as a victor. You are supposed to govern the country, and you will not be regarded as a master unless you are strict and reserved."

"2. Never give way. Anything that is granted as a favor will be regarded by the German as his right, and he will subsequently demand twice as much. He considers fair play cowardice."

"3. Always speak English when dealing with the Germans. Many Germans understand English, others will easily find friends who do. As soon as you speak German you will be regarded as a man without self-assurance, who is seeking favor."

"4. Do not keep smiling. Never shake hands with a German visitor. Never offer a cigarette to a visitor unless you know him well. To the Germans you are the successor of Hitler and Himmler; they never shook hands."

"5. Always wear a uniform. A uniform is the symbol of authority to the Germans who for three hundred years have been governed by soldiers."

"7. Be polite to German women, but never be cordial as you are in your own country."

"10. If you are in need of something—a new lamp, a car, or a plane reservation—ask for it. There is none to be had, reply with an icy look and the comment: 'It must be here by 6 o'clock.' It will be there in time, and you will have gained in authority."

"12. Be on your guard against German professors who quote English or American literature and history, especially if they do so in English. Professors and scholars form the most dangerous group in Germany, for they have interest in a new Germany, yet still mean to promote the restoration of the old. Besides, a learned German always considers you an inferior—you will recognize that attitude in the amused smile which promptly appears at every tiny slip of your tongue."

These are some of the "fifteen rules for the American occupation officer in Germany" presented by Emil Ludwig in his recent book. They were drafted in 1943, and—as the author proudly remarks in a footnote—"widely reprinted since."

As a rather clever ratification and justification of the new dropped Allied non-fraternization policy in the Reich, Mr. Ludwig's maxims may have been welcome and useful. It must be said, however, that his "fifteen commands" are not free of distortions and contradictions.

The suggestion to speak always English when dealing with the Germans, for instance, doesn't make much sense.

As for the fifth rule—"Always wear a uniform!"—it may sound a little funny to occupation troops. Also, Mr. Ludwig, when recently touring Europe as a U. S. War Correspondent, probably found out that the best way of getting a plane reservation in occupied Germany is not to dart icy looks at German civilians. It is to be hoped that his stern comment, "It must be here by 6 o'clock!" impressed the American officers or employees in charge of air transportation for gentlemen of the press.

The most dubious point in Mr. Ludwig's set of rules is his explicit suggestion that American occupation officers ought to imitate the manners of Hitler and Himmler. There is something shocking about his argumentation: "To the Germans, you are the successor of Hitler and Himmler. They never shook hands. Therefore, you must not shake hands, either."

Does Mr. Ludwig think it would be a good idea for the Allies to perpetuate such institutions as gas chambers and racial laws in Germany?

The 15 rules for occupation officers don't occupy a central place in the structure of Mr. Ludwig's book; yet they are typical of both the advantages and the shortcomings of his style and approach. While most German refugee writers are rather inclined to whitewash their former countrymen, Mr. Ludwig is refreshingly realistic but at times somewhat rash in his judgments and capricious in his suggestions. A rather casual effort, the book "offers a case for the guilt of the German nation," as the author points out in his preface. He maintains that "it is both wrong and dangerous to accept a political distinction between Nazis and Germans, as German propaganda would have it. I frankly admit that

(Please turn to next page)

I do not believe that there are forces in Germany today which might be able to build another republic."

Mr. Ludwig is against democracy in postwar Germany. "Considering the misuse of free elections and popular representation in pre-Hitler Germany," he writes, "neither of them should be reintroduced in Germany for years. The same goes for freedom of the press."

He is against reparations: "Two lessons should be learned from the first separation swindle: First, not material reparations but disarmament is the core of any German settlement; and, second, no one should loan money to a defeated country in order to 'enable' that country to pay its debts. This time no reparations should be imposed."

He feels the Germans ought to be isolated from the rest of the world: "Germans should not be permitted to travel outside of Germany for about ten years. This virtual isolation is one of the purposes of postwar supervision. If Germans feel this restriction to be an offense, all the better."

Notwithstanding his general skepticism as regards the German character, Mr. Ludwig is not without hope: "The atmosphere of foreign rule with one hard hand and the teaching of tolerance and liberalism with one gentle hand will sooner or later prompt several million German young people to inquire about their own peculiar role in the society of nations. Then these young men and women must be informed that both self-government and moral equality with other nations will be restored to Germany once they themselves have rebuilt the Continent their fathers wantonly destroyed. In my opinion, that time will be around 1960."

This comparatively optimistic prognosis is modified by the following warning:

"A war between two or more non-German nations, however, would greatly endanger the whole program; for Germany would become a potential ally to each of the belligerents. But with world peace preserved for the next fifteen years, re-education of the Germans should succeed."

—K. M.