

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Last War For The Junkers?

Mann, Klaus

1945-03-04

Nutzungsbedingungen

Bei zahlreichen Dokumenten auf monacensia-digital.de sind die Urheberrechte bereits abgelaufen. Sie sind gemeinfrei und dürfen ohne weitere Rücksprache mit der Monacensia weiterverwendet werden.

Bei den Dokumenten, bei denen noch Urheberrechte bestehen, müssen für eine Weiterverwendung stets die Rechteinhaber*innen angefragt werden sowie eine Publikationsgenehmigung der Monacensia eingeholt werden. Das Zitatrecht bleibt hiervon unberührt.

Zur Erteilung einer Publikationserlaubnis wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus

Literaturarchiv

Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München

E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

Terms of use

The copyrights for numerous documents on monacensia-digital.de have already expired. They are in the public domain and may be reused without further consultation with Monacensia. In the case of documents for which copyrights still exist, the copyright holders must always be contacted for further use and publication permission must be obtained from the Monacensia. The right to quote under copyright law remains unaffected by this. To obtain permission for publication, please contact:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus:

Literaturarchiv

Address: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München

E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de



The Junker generals, saluting Nazi storm troops during a demonstration in Berlin, must also be destroyed for a lasting peace.

Last War For The Junkers?

By PVL KLAUS MANN
Staff Writer

We are determined to break up for all time the German General Staff.

THIS SIMPLE statement which appeared in the communique issued by Marshal Stalin, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill following the Crimea Conference is pregnant with the most far-reaching consequences for the future of Germany and of the world. For it means that this time we are not likely to repeat our past mistake, sparing German militarism after German defeat. This time we have decided to exterminate, once and for all, its very brain and heart. Moreover, the specific reference to the German General Staff seems to indicate that Stalin has reversed his attitude towards the captured German generals in Moscow.

After Stalingrad, the Russians encouraged the foundation of a Union of German Officers, which comprises 50 high-ranking military personalities and operates in connection with the Free German Committee—the latter consisting partly of exiled functionaries and intellectual leaders of the former German Communist party, partly of German PWs.

Clearly, the immediate and most important function of the Officers' Union is to influence by means of broadcasts and through other channels the morale of the German troops and, more especially, of the German officers still remaining in action.

THERE WERE rumors, however, widespread and persistent, if without official confirmation, to the effect that the Soviets were planning to use the German generals also for political purposes and even to set up the Officers' Union as a provisional German government in Königsberg and subsequently in Berlin.

In such a case, the first administration of defeated Germany would have included men like Field Marshal General Friedrich von Paulus, the former commander of the German 6th Army which was annihilated at Stalingrad, and General Walther von Seydlitz, former commander of the 41st Army Corps. Von Paulus, the highest-ranking member of the organization which he

joined only after 13 months of deliberation in captivity, does not belong to the old Prussian nobility, although he might be called a "Junker" on his personal record and character. But von Seydlitz, the president of the Officers' Union and vice-president of the Free German Committee, is certainly as blue-blooded as they come, and so are most of his colleagues—many of them hailing from East Prussia, now almost completely conquered by the Russians, and including such aristocratic names as von Luetzow, von Huelssen, von Buelow, and even one Count Heinrich von Einsiedel, who is a veritable great-grandson of Bismarck.

In short, if the rumors about Stalin's intentions had proven correct and if the German generals had been entrusted with the formation of a provisional government, it would have meant the establishment of a Prussian Junker regime under the auspices of the Kremlin—a rather paradoxical prospect, not without disquieting implications to anyone familiar with German history and interested in the future of Europe and in the maintenance of peace.

WHAT KIND of creature is a Junker really? According to Webster's Dictionary, a Junker is a young German noble; esp., a member, of any age, of the Prussian aristocracy, often implying conservatism, haughtiness, etc.

What comes to mind when we think of the Junker type, are monocles, frozen faces, clicking heels, cramped bows, convict haircuts, horsewhips, arrogance, and the complete absence of grace, urbanity, and any sense of humor. The Junker's tradition is that of the feudal lord. To him, anyone not belonging to his own caste is an inferior being—hardly to be considered human, and just good enough to be exploited and bossed about.

The Junker's vision of the world is as simple as his political program. In his opinion, it is beyond any doubt and question that Germany should be the master of the world, that Prussia

is the master of Germany, and that he, the Junker, is the master of Prussia. He thinks of himself as the master of the master race—and, even more remarkable, the master race has always recognized him as such.

IN ORDER to appreciate the extraordinary position occupied by the Prussian noblemen and landowners, or Junkers, in Germany, one would have to go back to the early stages of German and Prussian history—to the 13th century when the Teutonic Knights conquered and colonized vast territories in eastern Europe. Some of the proudest Junker families are descended from those conquering knights. Others of less ancient lineage can at least boast of ancestors who fought under the early Prussian princes and kings—especially under Frederick the Great who, in the 18th century, made little Prussia a first-rate, formidable European power.

Prince Otto von Bismarck, the Iron Chancellor and founder of the Reich, was a typical Junker. Scion of an old Prussian family, established in the Mark of Brandenburg for many centuries, he always showed in his appearance, habits and views the characteristics of the country gentry. The same is true of Emperor Wilhelm II of Hohenzollern, although in his particular case certain neurotic-hysterical qualities were dangerously added to the traditional Junker pattern.

The main spheres of Junker activity in German life were—beside the administration of their vast estates—foreign policy and the army. Not that the Junkers were particularly qualified to handle diplomatic affairs—on the contrary, their tactless arrogance and lack of personal charm were rather apt to antagonize other nations. Yet it was their time-honored privilege to represent German interests in the capitals of the world.

THE ONLY field in which the Junkers really distinguished themselves is, of course, the art of waging war. War is their great hobby, their favorite sport

and their true profession: they love it. They are superb soldiers, skillful and experienced strategists. Up to 1914, almost all the outstanding German military leaders came from the Junker caste.

It is true that in the first World War one of the most vicious and most talented generals of the Imperial German Army, Erich Ludendorff, was of bourgeois origin, as were von Kluck, Groener, Max Hoffman, and some others of his colleagues. But they all tried to imitate the Junkers, in their military tactics as well as in their personal manners; and as for the most popular and most powerful one among them, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, he was indeed an arch-Junker—a paragon of Junkerism, so to speak—brutal and bigoted, narrow-minded, reactionary, anti-intellectual, practically illiterate. At the age of 80, the Field Marshal boasted that he hadn't read a book since his childhood!

It is, alas, characteristic of the German people that they not only worshipped a man like Hindenburg as a military hero but also made him the supreme chief of their young democratic state. With the old Field Marshal as President of the Weimar Republic, the continuation of the Junker influence was secured. Under the auspices of Hindenburg and his powerful coterie, the Junker caste survived the defeat of 1918 and the fall of the Empire, and was able to prepare—first secretly, then in the open—its second bid for military supremacy and world conquest.

IT WAS the Junkers, together with the Rhenish industrialists, who were most responsible for Hitler's coming to power. They meant to use the Nazis for their own purposes—first, to suppress all progressive and pacifist tendencies at home and to restore the power and prestige of the German Army; second, to establish, with the help of this formidably increased Army, Germany's hegemony in Europe and in the world.

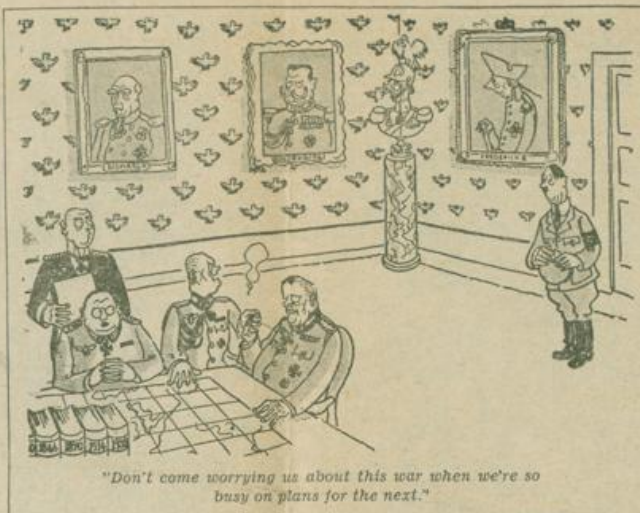
It should not be forgotten that Hitler and his first followers (above all Ernst Roehm, the founder of the SA, later "liquidated" by his friend and fuhrer) began their shady careers as agents and tools of the Reichsmehr—the regular German Army which, under the Re-

public as under the Emperor, was practically controlled by the Junkers.

The man whose intrigues were most instrumental in overthrowing the last pre-Nazi Chancellor, General von Schleicher (a kind of enlightened and comparatively liberal Junker himself) and having him replaced by Hitler, was Franz von Papen—an extremely versatile and cunning politician who acted as the go-between for the ultra-nationalistic, ultra-reactionary Junker clique on the one hand, and big business on the other. It was under von Papen's influence that President Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor of the Reich. Of course, the Field Marshal despised the "little corporal"; but von Papen, the President's closest adviser, and the Field Marshal's son, Major von Hindenburg—a rather objectionable personality about whose present whereabouts there is scarce information—persuaded the old man that it was in the interest of the Junker caste and, therefore, in the interest of the Fatherland, to assign the Nazi chieftain. So the half-senile "Hero of Tannenberg" made the fatal decision.

NOW THE Junkers are disappointed; their clever little scheme didn't work. Now they turn against Hitler and would like to stop the war which they helped prepare and direct. They realize, and have been realizing for quite some time, that Germany has no winning chance. They try to disassociate themselves from the side which they know to be the losing one. They are looking desperately for an alibi. They try to prove to their compatriots that they, the Junkers, are not responsible for the military defeat, and to convince us that they cannot be blamed for the Nazi outrages.

There may be some Junkers, and



even a few Junker generals, who still stick to Hitler out of short-sighted opportunism or sincere conviction; but we may presume that most of them are by now fed up with the Nazi gang and would like to get rid of Hitler. It seems to be evident that men like von Seydlitz and his friends are at this point wholeheartedly anti-Nazi. So were Field Marshal von Witzleben and other Junker Army officers who

paid with their lives for their participation in the unsuccessful anti-Hitler conspiracy of July 20th last year. But even if the Junkers, or the majority of them, have now become enemies of the Nazi regime—does that automatically make them our friends? I, for one, don't believe it.

I do not believe that the Junkers would be able or willing to change overnight their character and their phil-

osophy; I do not believe that they are able or willing to renounce suddenly their age-old traditions and aspirations; in short, I do not believe that the Junkers can be and should be trusted.

There may be trustworthy, sensible individuals among them; but I daresay that as a class they are hopeless. I am inclined to believe that a United Press correspondent was right when recently reporting from Moscow that the captured German generals have proven "unregenerate... aware of Germany's doom, but revealing no sense of guilt or shame."

NO, A SENSE or shame definitely does not belong to the characteristics of the Junker type. If the Junkers now oppose Nazism, it is not because they have become conscious of the Nazi guilt and feel ashamed of their own connivance with the criminals, but simply because the Nazis have flopped. The Junkers, who would have joyfully profited by any Nazi triumph, don't wish to be compromised by the Nazi disaster.

No matter how docile and tractable some Junkers may now appear, the spirit of "Junkerism" remains essentially hostile to our way of life and even to the real interests of the German people. Even if reasons of expediency may make it seem advisable for us to deal temporarily with certain representatives of the Junker class, we should never forget that "Junkerism" is our Enemy Number One, and that it will have to be utterly abolished lest it provoke the catastrophe of a third World War.

Tell It To Your Chaplain's Assistant

By Pfc. JAMES E. GRAHAM
Special to The Stars and Stripes

I AM THE assistant to a Catholic chaplain in a station hospital in Italy. Writing as such, I neither know of any other military job that approaches mine in similarity nor do I believe that one chaplain's assistant can feel qualified to speak for all holders of the job. The reasons are obvious when it is realized that one chaplain will differ from another and that a chaplain's personality and way of doing things are outstanding factors in determining the nature of an assistant's tasks. An additional factor to be considered is the type of unit to which a chaplain and his assistant are assigned and its location.

Though some organizations are not so well equipped, we are fortunate in that we have a chapel and an office. Most of our office work is accomplished in the morning. The correspondence of a hospital chaplain is comparatively heavy. Many of the bed patients ask him to drop a line to their folks. Too, there is an occasional letter of condolence that has to be written to the family of a patient who has died. Every now and then, one of our nurses decides to get married and such an intention sets still further correspondence in motion. Also, there are the innumerable reports to be submitted that are the lot of every chaplain.

Other routine work consists in typing and then posting religious notices on the bulletin boards in all of the wards. Visitors come to the office, at intermittent periods, to ask for rosaries and various religious articles. Papers and magazines have to be distributed.

A requisition for altar wine has to be sent to the Quartermaster. We have been lucky, up to now, in that we have had sufficient wine for all our Masses. In the early days at our present abode, however, it was indeed a chore to find suitable water. Candles, in those days, were also scarce because we were sharing them with fellow victims of an unreliable lighting system.

“TEN I AM asked what is the outstanding reason why soldiers go to see the chaplain. I truthfully answer that I don't know, for when any soldier arrives on a private matter, I promptly leave the office. In answer

The Guys Who Joke Most About Chaplain Generally Know Best Where To Find Him

to another popular question—what types of soldiers bring their problems to the chaplain—I can say that the callers consist of all types and, what's more, the ones who joke the most about "going to see the chaplain" are generally the ones who are most aware of our location in the hospital area.

The great obstacle I have to overcome, in my own particular job, is the language problem. Any hospital is apt to be a lingual League of Nations. A patient is dying and he wants a priest to hear his confession. The confession will have to be accomplished by means of a translation card. This card has been an invaluable aid in periods of emergency. It's my duty to keep as many translations on hand as is deemed necessary. Once, though, when our outfit was still going to sleep to the roar of distant guns, I had to get an additional translation for the chaplain that I had assumed would not be needed. The patient was one of Der Fuehrer's boys.

WHEN I FIRST took over my present job, I anticipated days spent with my feet on a desk while smoking a big cigar. Although the mornings have proven to be fairly busy ones, it did look for awhile as though these pleasures might actually be accomplished on an occasional afternoon. But lo and behold, events gradually put us into a position where we assumed the status of rear echelon johnnies. Ergo, three afternoons a week now find me spending a pleasant hour with my comrades in drill.

Along with the feet on the desk and the cigars, I had looked forward to the use of a jeep. When drill ends the time comes for me to use the jeep, albeit not as I had first intended. I had rather hoped for trips that would necessitate going to Florence or Rome or Naples but I've finally become resigned.

As matters stand, everybody in the

outfit seems to feel that the jeep, with driver, is at their disposal at any hour of the day or night. This attitude is partially justifiable, in that all chaplains want to be as accommodating to members of their units as possible.

Our outfit is in a rather isolated spot, has been working hard and most of the men are glad to leave the hospital for an hour or so in order to get a change of scene.

One trip I frequently take is to the monastery where we have our altar linens laundered. Reaching our destination, we are invariably surrounded by civilians who, spying the altar linens, assume that I am a chaplain. This error is the cause of embarrassment to me and amusement to my fellow travelers, whom I have known for some months now and who are well aware that I have not always been doing work of a religious nature. They delight in making me the target of all jokes of the "Holy Joe" variety.

SINCE ASSUMING my present job, I have learned that it does entail certain conditions that were not at first apparent. Time was when I could join the boys in a congenial brew and nothing was thought of it. Those days are still with me as far as the men in the outfit are concerned. With each passing month, though, any outfit is bound to have new faces and now, when I draw my beer ration, I am the victim of an occasional uplifted eyebrow.

While the chaplain has never expressed an opinion as to whether or not he considers it fitting for me to buy three bottles of beer per week at the post exchange, he does lay down the law about one particular matter. He stresses that it is necessary for me to be on friendly terms with all of the men in my outfit. To him, this aspect of my



job is of the utmost importance. And by all of the men, he doesn't just mean all the Catholics.

IN A HOSPITAL, a Catholic chaplain's assistant sometimes finds himself working for the Protestant chaplain as much as he works for his own and the same, in reverse, applies to the Protestant chaplain's assistant.

Our hospital does not have a Jewish chaplain but one is located literally a stone's throw away. He is naturally interested in the welfare of the members of his faith who are in our unit. Our Jewish men are aware of this fact and are always keeping me on the ball by requesting that I obtain Mezuzahs and other religious articles with names that this guy finds difficult to remember.

Because of the hospital's schedule, my chaplain has decided that the best time to have Mass is in the evening. The congregation oftentimes contains several ambulatory patients who have seen recent action at the front. These men have known a nearness to death and seem to have a deeper appreciation of the goodness of God than do those of us who have had less hazardous duties to perform. One or two of these combat men will frequently request that they be allowed to serve at Mass, leaving me with little to do but to light the candles. Even so, at the close of each day, I am made aware that mine is a job that is truly worthwhile.