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German Children Still Think Might Is Right, It Seems

By Cpl. KLAUS MANN

Staff Correspondent

AACHEN, June 15—A remark by a school child in this first-to-be-captured German city has revealed the imprint of Nazi ideology on German youth, even as they try to be pro-American.

I pointed out to him a little dog which was being walked about by an old lady in front of the school building. When I said that I should like to have such a dog, the lad offered to run down and "confiscate" the animal for me.

My refusal left him completely flabbergasted. I tried to explain to him that it would be a very bad thing indeed to deprive the old lady of her property.

"I think that's all very silly," the little German kept saying. "You're an American, aren't you? Well, then, what could that poor old woman do to you if you took her dog? You're much stronger than she is. If I were in your position, I'd certainly take the dog."

The little boy was "pro-American" all right; but in his heart he was still a Nazi.

Aachen itself, however, is the first German town to return to normal—at least so far as the education of youngsters is concerned. Ten schools for children of ages from six to ten have been opened here since June 4, after a careful screening of all teacher personnel and a thorough revision of schoolbooks. Today 1,300 children of the first four grades are attending classes again,

with 27 instructors—most of them devout Catholics—teaching them the fundamentals of reading, writing, history and arithmetic.

Dr. Karl Beckers, SHAEF-appointed school director, told me that the children seemed to enjoy going to school again after a year's interruption. In his opinion, the minds of these youngsters have been barely affected by Nazi doctrines, or if so, only in a superficial, reparable way.

Some of his new pupils, he said, are a little difficult to handle, though—a relaxation of discipline resulted from the Nazi pedagogical system.

The group of children I watched in one of the new Aachen schools, however, behaved themselves—at least in the presence of foreign visitors. They greeted us nicely with "gruess gott"—there was no "Heil Hitler." When I asked them questions about the Fuehrer, they just giggled and said "Fuehrer—kaput."

All of them appeared tremendously interested in anything American—not only in the candy we had to offer, but also in our jeep, our uniforms and so forth.

Several little boys told me it is their dream to go to the U. S. as soon as they are grown. Clearly, all of them are impressed by American efficiency, wealth and success.

But more than a few months' schooling will be needed to erase the remnants of 12 years of Hitler.

June 16