

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

The Job Ahead In Germany.

Mann, Klaus

1945-05-13

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 efficient Germans will overcome physical chaos, but they'll need help in regaining a moral balance. Right—A supervised primary class at Aachen.



The Job Ahead In Germany

By Cpl. KLAUS MANN
Staff Writer

Military Victory Is Just The Start In Reeducation Of German People

BREAKING the power of Hitler's formidable war machine was a colossal task. That job, however, has been done. But the military victory is just a start, for ahead lie crucial problems that will have to be solved lest we spoil our triumph by jeopardizing the peace.

One of the vital issues confronting the victors in Europe is the re-education of the vanquished German people. If we fail in this task, the war will have been fought in vain. For there will be no lasting peace, unless we succeed in changing the German mentality. No matter what kind of conditions—military, economic, territorial—the "Unconditional Surrender" formula may imply, the issue of Germany's moral and political re-education remains of paramount, immediate significance. The German people will have to be disarmed, policed, in many cases punished; but they will also, and above all, have to be mentally cured.

IF WE want to fight a disease, we have to know its origins and symptoms. In what frame of mind are the men, women and children, with whom Allied soldiers have had to deal as they have taken over German cities, towns and villages?

It may be too early yet, at this point, for any definite picture of the civilian Germany of the future to emerge. Even now, however, certain typical German reactions are becoming more and more evident. And all available reports confirm one basic and alarming fact: that the shock of defeat, however dazing and bewildering, has utterly failed, so far, in enlightening and purifying the average German's mind.

The German people realize that they have lost the war, but they seem incapable of grasping the moral implications of their present debacle. Allied observers, both correspondents and soldiers, are struck and irritated by the Germans' complacency, self-pity and ignorance. They don't seem to regret anything, except their own unpleasant plight. They don't see why they, of all people, should have to suffer so much. "What have we done to deserve this?" they will ask you—all wide-eyed naïvets and bland innocence. "Haven't we always been hard-working, law-abiding citizens?"

THE GERMAN people show no trace of a sense of responsibility, much less a sense of guilt. They don't understand that their present calamity is the direct, inevitable consequence of what the German nation, as a collective body, has done to the world during the past five years.

They don't understand the necessity and the meaning of their humiliation, even though many of them appear meek and obedient. Allied military government officials seem to agree that the

German population is less difficult to handle than was anticipated. So far, acts of sabotage are virtually unknown. Overawed by the terrific display of Allied military force, the former masters of the continent forget, or prefer not to show, their usual arrogance. Their attitude is described as varying from apparently sincere desire to cooperate to sullen acceptance of a situation that cannot be changed.

WE SHOULD not be too impressed by such stories. For, to begin with, it is impossible to predict whether the situation in Germany will remain, in the long run, as calm as it has been up to now in most areas. The docility shown at present by many of the bankrupt "supermen" may be just a transitory, almost automatic reaction to the stunning blow of defeat.

BUT EVEN if we presume that the majority of the German people will continue to be fairly tractable, that would only mean a servile acknowledgment of our physical superiority—not a recognition of error in the way of Nazism.

For if there is anything the Germans understand, it is the voice of authority: they accept it, yield to it without questioning. As Nazi authority crumbled, the perplexed Germans turned to the next,

which was military government, taking orders from Allied soldiers and officials just as they used to take them from the SS and Gestapo. But they don't see that the "law" of the Gestapo was indeed the lawlessness and brutal anarchy of the jungle. Nor do they understand that they were wrong in electing and supporting such a terroristic regime, and that it would have been their duty as civilized human beings to protest against its outrages. They don't understand.

They believe in success, and if many of them appear now only too ready to deny their former affiliations with the once all-mighty party, they do so simply because success has failed the Nazi cause. To them, "success is the ultimate and only proof of the correctness of an idea," as one of their leaders, Dr. Robert Ley, has put it, concisely and cynically.

If Der Fuehrer had won the war, he would have been worshipped by the entire German nation. The axiom that "might makes right" has been hammered into German brains. They don't understand that Hitler's concept of a "master race" and his world-conquering scheme were essentially wrong—a glaring insult to human reason and dignity—and that no temporary or even lasting success could possibly have altered this absolute evilness. They don't under-

stand the difference between right and wrong, between good and evil.

IT WILL be our job to make the German people understand the fundamentals of human ethics. They must not go on believing that Nazism would have been all right, if only it hadn't flopped. As long as they abide by this basic misconception, they will not be able to overcome their present condition of moral blindness and confusion.

They must not get away with their hypocritical pretense that they "didn't know" about all the ghastly things going on under Nazi rule, both at home and in the occupied countries. Of course, they knew—and if they didn't, it was just because they found it more convenient to ignore certain ugly realities. Nobody in Germany felt like worrying about the horrors of Dachau and Buchenwald, as long as the Nazi regime seemed to be otherwise advantageous for business and Fatherland.

They "didn't know" that Hitler broke international treaties and that he was insatiable in his imperialistic demands. Was it really the Fuehrer who prepared and provoked this war? The German civilians, in their ivory-towered ignorance, had been under the impression that their government loved nothing as much as peace, but was forced into the present conflict by a sinister international conspiracy. "That is what Dr. Goebbels told us," they will insist, unblushingly.

They will have to go to school again and learn history—especially the history of the last 15 years. For they won't be able to find a constructive approach to the future, unless they revise their distorted view of the past.

TO THE average German, the future is just a blank space. Not the slightest sign of a reawakening of political consciousness or organization has been noticed anywhere in Germany. It seems that the Germans—traditionally lacking in political instinct and initiative—have now reached a state of complete apathy. I have found this discouraging indifference in the faces and voices of many German prisoners of war with whom I tried to discuss political ideas and prospects. What kind of government would they like to see established in Germany, after Hitler? My question was always followed by a stony, embarrassing silence. Finally one of them would speak up: "Rudolf Hess might be a good man to take over. . . ." And another Landser would suggest, somewhat reluctantly: "Or some kind of democracy wouldn't be so bad, perhaps. . . ."

Some kind of democracy! They don't understand the meaning of the word. They live in a moral, intellectual and political vacuum—which is the legacy of National Socialism. For the Nazi movement has never been based on anything like an authentic faith or a

(Please turn to page 12)

If the German people "didn't know" about the ghastly things going on under Nazi rule, it was because it was more convenient to ignore them. After capture of the murder camp of Buchenwald by General Patton's forces, the citizens of Weimar (above) were brought to view the brutal work of their government.

