

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

School of Humanity. (Speech.)

Mann, Klaus

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

School of Humanity. (Speech.)

Three years ago, when I came to this country and started to deliver, occasionally, public speeches ~~in American cities~~, the American institution of the question period or public discussion, which usually follows the actual lecture, still was quite new and somewhat confusing to me. Now, of course, I am quite accustomed to this kind of direct conversation with the auditorium, and I really would hate to miss it. For, very often, the discussion turns out to be much more stimulating and instructive than the speech itself - :at least, this is the way I feel about it; since: what I have to tell, in the lecture, is more or less familiar to myself, while the questions people sometimes are asking, really are most surprising. - There is a certain sort of questions, of course, that still ~~seem to me~~ ^{strike as} somewhat puzzling and embarrassing. I don't quite know what to answer, when people expect me to be a professional prophet. ~~When~~

"What would Hitler do if Stalin...." - ~~and~~ Or simply?

"How long is this war likely to last?"...If I only would know...! Our, still more complicated, question that demand something ^{like} a ~~reversed~~ talent for reversed prophecy. For instance:

"What would have happened if the Treaty of Versailles would have been different??"

Or: "What would have been the course of German history if Hitler would have killed, ten or five years ago?"

Or - most confusing of all - : "Why doesn't anybody kill Mr. Hitler??"
....Then, of course, I feel like if I should apologize, for not having tried it myself...

.....However, there are plenty of more serious and sensible questions, and some of them are asked in almost every meeting I address. One of the questions, that come up again and again, is this:

"How about the younger and the youngest generation in the Third Reich? How about those boys and girls who were between ten and sixteen

(German)

years old, when the Nazi dictatorship was established, and who, consequently, don't know, or don't remember, anything, but what the Nazis want them to know and to remember? - Won't those unhappy boys and girls be morally *and intellectually* ~~spoiled and ruined~~ - for good? Aren't they ignorant, and conceited, and don't they really believe, that Germany is much better than other country, and their Führer much greater than any other human being, and that the Jews are dangerous parias, and the cause of all evil? - Isn't there a doomed generation in Germany? Isn't there a generation that never will be fit for life in a Democratic state?"

Thus people keep on asking, ~~at~~ⁱⁿ almost every meeting I may attend. And I think ~~there~~ there is a great deal of sound and serious reasons for asking questions like this. For, very obviously, the problem of the youth in the Totalitarian States - and, more especially, the problem of ~~the~~ Nazi German Youth, is one of the most crucial problems of our times.

Some people, who apparently are keenly interested in the problem of German youth, may have read a little book my sister E. has published some time ago. It is entitled "School for Barbarians", and is dealing with the methods of education in the Third Reich. This book - which contains an impressive lot of very authentic and most horrifying material - could make the most most optimistic reader pretty pessimistic, concerning the new generation in Nazi Germany and its future development. It actually is impossible, to read the many quotations of Nazi German school books or the varied utterances of Nazi pedagogues without getting alarmed. For the children are forced to learn, and expected to believe, the most sickening, most absurd and most dangerous nonsense. Their souls and minds get literally poisoned ^{with} ~~by~~ the endless repetition of Nazi propaganda, ~~and~~ ^{with} the slogans of hysterical nationalism, insane race prejudices, and the indecent praises of the Führer's divine personality.

Besides, the members of the Hitler Youth are, very frequently used, ^{by the government} to do the most cruel, most brutal, most abominable things - disgusting crimes that, even in Nazi Germany, grown-up people might refuse to commit. It is known, for instance, that during Programs, November 1938, youngsters have been obliged to take an active and even leading part.....it seems somewhat questionable, whether or not one ever may succeed in changing this kind of young brutes into reliable, decent ~~members~~ citizens...

Yes, indeed, there are grave reasons to watch and to judge the present state and probable future of German Youth with apprehension and profound fear...Optimism would be senseless, even dangerous.

On the other hand, ~~it~~ being hopeless and thoroughly pessimistic also would be a mistake - especially as the ^{same} ~~matter~~ we are discussing is Youth and the future of youth. There is an ancient saying: that there is hope as long as there is life - which certainly is still more true, if "the life" in question happens to be young life; life that didn't really get yet its final form ^{nor its delivery} and final character...

I don't really think that German youth is doomed altogether - : although I admit, that it is badly endangered. - And I have some reason for this relative optimism of mine...

The first comforting fact I have in mind is this:
that youth always used to be, and probably will remain, a very flexible kind of material.

...It may be ~~very~~ easy to influence and to impress very young people, up to a certain degree; but it is difficult to keep influence upon them, once ~~one~~ has lost the direct contact with them. Many pedagogues had to make this experience. Children accept very soon ~~certain~~ slogans, and fashions, and believes. But they are inclined to forget them pretty quickly as well. For children - as all of you know - are a very impressionable, but scarcely a very faithful sort of human beings...

I remember - :when I myself was a kid...:during last world war...
Nationalistic spirit in Bavarian schools - as everywhere...Believed it;
took it seriously.Used to give,as the other boys did,my greetings:
"May God punish Britain!" ("Gott strafe England..") - We were told that
all of our generals were great heros,and that the Kaiser was next to
God.Finally,we had to learn,that the Kaiser was not next to God but in
Holland....^{We felt - what Americans would expect in that case, that would be so what?} which meant slight disappointment.|- - - Forgot very soon
everything we had learned about "decadent France" and wicked Albion...
Changed our attitude.France ~~be~~ was my favorite country,when I was
16 years old...

This kind of memories are encouraging.For they allow me to believe,
or to consider it to be likely,that those Nazi kids,too,may forget soon
what they have ["]hastely learned...Today,they have to give their greeting
"Heil Hitler!" But I wonder if it means much to them...Some of them
even dare to make harmless little jokes with the Führer's sacred name.
They pronounce:"Drei Liter!" - (Three Liters),instead of H.H. Do they
think of three liters of beer,those cynical little creatures,while
they should have in mind their Führer's genius and power?...Would be
too bad...

Questionable whether this whole Nazi-nonsense really is rooted very
deeply,already by now,in the immature minds and souls...Other question:
if all those parents and teachers,who are forced now to educate and
to influence children in Nazi spirit,really and seriously want to do
so...I like little story about German Mother who taught her child to
end her prayers ,each night,~~with~~ by saying:"Thank God for our great
Führer A.H." - The child,faithfully,followed instructions;then,one
night,turned bewildered to her mother and asked:"How will I end my
prayers if Hitler dies?" - "Oh,"said mother,"just say 'Thank God.'"

I am sure there are plenty of German lads who ~~can~~ sincerely enjoy
brutal,militant life in the Hitler Youth Organizations.But I think,

they only do so
~~this~~ mainly is, because they don't know anything else... For it is not likely that German youngsters are more ruthless and more stupid, by nature, than un-educated little fellows in other countries. I guess, there are cruel and silly boys everywhere, and everywhere they would be willing to ^{commit it} ~~do~~ nasty things - if they would be permitted or even ordered to do so... In Nazi Germany, of course, this brutal type of youth has become the leading one, as the Totalitarian State needs and uses him for its own sinister aims....

But there are more gifted, higher developed, more intelligent young people as well - everywhere, including even Nazi Germany.

Intelligent youth always is inclined to be in opposition; to be against the ruling power, the dominating slogans - just because they are ruling and dominating. In Germany: youth has been opposed to the Weimar Republic when it was in ^{act} power. To be anti-democratic then was kind of revolutionary, daring, modern, new... Nazi movement presented itself as a revolutionary movement... That's why young people have been for it... But, now - since the Nazis are not only ruling but actually dicta-ting every thought and every word that should be spoken - now, it has become much more daring to adhere to other ideals - for instance, to show any sympathy for the conceptions of Democracy and Freedom. The brighter and spiritually more independant ones among the German boys and girls actually are fed up with antisemitic slogans, narrow-minded nationalism ect - even if they believed in ~~it~~ ^{that}, in the beginning. For almost seven years, however, they ~~have got~~ too much of that rotten stuff, which, first of all, may have seemed exciting to them. Since then, however, it has become much more thrilling to read some forbidden books: the writings of Marx, or of Sigmund Freud, or the Old Testament. Liberal trends, international trends, religious faith, pacifism, the admiration for Heinrich Heine or the singing of Mendelsohn's immortal melodies -: all this kind of thing has ^{got a} become adventurous and attractive, as it is *(against) them*

have become things to do,
dangerous and daring.

-6-

So this is the double foundation of my relative optimism:

average youth will forget;

more intelligent ~~pe~~ young people are in opposition, already by now.

German Universities used to be headquarters of Hitler movement - before it was established as dictatorship. Now - we are informed - :headquarters of opposition. ~~Young men are fed up with marching; eager to learn something for a change.~~ - Illegal literature, underground pamphlets, definitely more popular than "Mein Kampf", or the philosophy of Rosenberg. Many students risk freedom, or even life, for distributing and reading anti-Nazi-literature... I know some of them; visit us, in Switzerland or in Holland..... Significant and amusing case of German student I have met, the other day, in ~~the~~ this country. Was sent, as a so-called exchange student, from some German place to some American University. Had the special order to make Nazi propaganda among American boys; to spy a little - ect. Followed ^{instructions} ~~orders~~, faithfully - for a certain while... Really was an ardent Nazi - when he arrived... After a few months, however, he gradually started to change his mind. Simply felt: Life in a democratic land was better, and more promising, and more amusing. There is more fun, and more interesting duties... Decided not to go back. Saulus had become a Paulus: Nazi propagandist, turned into zealous friend and defender of Democracy...

Encouraging - and, of course, perfectly intelligible. When that fellow arrived, from Heidelberg or from Munich - five shirts of Ersatz material and three copies of "Mein Kampf" in his little suitcase - the Nazi world was everything he knew. (Just as young Russians don't know anything but their dubious paradise... The young man, in Moscow, who had conversation with famous French author; ~~did not believe~~ was mighty proud of new subway in Moscow; did not believe there is any subway in Paris....

Young bolsheviks figure: wicked capitalists are eating roasted babies of proletarian slaves with their luncheon; young Nazis: United States ruled by a diabolic gang of Jewish sorcerers, ^{whose} ~~the~~ helpless tool ~~of~~ is a certain President by the real name of Rosenberg...

Finally, our fellow began to grasp, that ideas of this kind are a bit fantastic, and don't have very much to do with reality. He also understood, after a certain while, that for a young human being, life is safer and more colourful in a Democracy, than it ever could be in a Totalitarian State.

The danger is: that the young people who are forced to live in a Totalitarian State, simply don't know what Democracy means and get grotesque ideas about Democracy - :while, on the other hand, the youngsters, who are lucky enough to be ~~the citizens~~ at home in in Free country, may be inclined to take the institutions of Democracy as a matter-of-course. - I have mentioned before the natural - I ^{even} ~~almost~~ may say the biological tendency of youth to be opposed to the ruling powers; to the moral and political principles that are officially accepted and followed. - - Young people, on the whole, are utterly curious. They always presume, that things that are unknown to them, are likely to be more interesting and even better, than the things which are part of their daily life. - - I have met pretty many intelligent boys and girls, in this country and in other Democratic countries as well, who are willing - or, at least, half-willing - to believe, that live in a Totalitarian State - either communist, Fascist or Nazi - may be more exciting, more heroic, more modern, in short - more interesting, than the orderly life in a Democracy.

This sounds pretty childish and immature; but - after all - :why ^{isn't} ~~should~~ sixteen-or-nineteen-years-old males or females be a trifle immature and romantic? It is just this irrational element that makes them charming, and that makes them dynamic.

The Nazis - and, in a somewhat different way, the communists too - certainly know: how to use and to misuse the immature dynamics of youth.

It is our task - the task of the pedagogues and writers, of the parents and older friends - to bring it home to the youngsters, that the Democratic way of life is not only more morel than the Totalitarian form, but also much more exciting... What is Democracy? The French philosopher Jacques Maritain - who is a faithful Catholic and yet a honestly progressive thinker - has called it: "The organization of human liberties." This seems clear and convincing enough. For the basical idea of Democracy is this:

that the State exists for the development of individual lives,
not individuals for the development of the State.

Consequently, the Democratic ideal of education is: education for the sake of the individual Human Beings - while the Totalitarian States, in principle and praxis, bring-up the young generation merely for the sake of the Nation - which actually means: the supreme goal of Totalitarian education is, and must be: to prepare the boys for the military service - by training and over-training their bodies, and by confusing and exciting their minds with the aggressive slogans of nationalistic and racial prejudices and hatred. The girls, on the other hand, are expected and actually obliged to renounce any kind of ambitions, but this single one: to produce as many sons as possible - new soldiers, or - to use the ugly German expression - : new Kanonenfutter, new victims, new targets for the guns...

We believe, that the independent, thinking, thoroughly cultured individual is likely to be the most efficient and most reliable member of the community. We assume, that it is, indeed, very definitely in the vital interest of the State to bring-up young men and young women, who are proud and clever, courageous and experienced, ~~and~~ - in short: men and women who really deserve the designation of personalities.

The clear and admitted aim of Democratic education must be to create perfect citizens - "des citoyens", to use the fine French expression which dominated the rhetoric of the Great Revolution - ; while the Totalitarian State, always being afraid of independent thinking and ruthlessly suppressing it - wants subjects without will, without imagination, without pride and without knowledge. The German word "der Untertan" - which, ^{quite} significantly, is un-translatable - means the radical contrast to the French notion of "le citoyen", and to the American conception of the citizen - that comrade-like fellow-man ~~whom Walt Whitman worships~~ whose praises Walt Whitman has sung in immortal verses... It may turn out - to the surprise of many people - that the free citizen of the Democracies, even as a soldier and in the crucial times of War, is ⁱsuperior to ~~the~~ that ignorant slave, the Nazi Untertan... For the soldier of the Democracies realizes, what values and institutions are at stake, what is threatened, and what he has to defend...

The young people in the Democratic countries have, above all, to grasp two essential facts - and we must help them to understand very clearly these crucial matters - :

X that the values and institutions of Democracy are not a matter-of-course, but are seriously threatened and endangered, everywhere;

X and: that those threatened values and institutions are ~~worthwhile~~ worthy of being defended - in spite of their being imperfect. We have to admit it quite frankly, that the Democracy we possess, is far from being perfect; perhaps even ^{still} far from deserving the great and honorable designation of "Democracy", in the full and ~~and~~ engaging sense of this word. For - true and perfect Democracy is ~~not~~ an aim, not a possession; it is a task, but ~~not~~ a convenient good we could enjoy like a motorcar or an ice box. - True and perfect Democracy is not yet ~~a state - which means: it isn't as yet~~ something finished and stabilized - ; it rather is a process - : something ^{improving; something that is} that is becoming, developing, on its way... The Democracy we actually know

and possess at this moment, is worthy of being defended - as it is the only form-of-state allowing and encouraging the citizens to build up that future organization of national and international life, which we may call: the true and perfect Democracy.

^{people} Young, usually and by nature, are more interested in the future than in the present time; and they are more concerned with the present time than they are with the past. Therefore, we must convince them, that the Democracy that is coming, is not exactly what our great-grandfathers have visualized - for it must be the Democracy of the XX. century, not the Democracy of the XVIII. or the XIX. century; it must be the modern Democracy of a young generation. - Those who may believe, that the ideal and the conception of Democracy is identical, and always must remain identical, to the bourgeois liberalism of the XIX. century, are entirely mistaken. - We have to convince the young people, that the process of evolution of Democracy is a highly dramatic process.

→ In short, we have to dramatize Democracy.

→ We have to dramatize the Democratic pedagogical system.

→ Education has got to be undertaining - beside other, more profound qualities it should have. Let's use modern art and literature, modern science; let's use the movies, the magazines, let's use dance and sport and philosophy and political discussion and all kind of sport - :all this, in order to make education more alive, and to bring it closer to Life ~~to~~ itself; to make it more stimulating, more inspiring, and more exciting.

I know: a lot of things already has be done, or ^{are} ~~is~~ in preparation - in varied European countries, - in Scandinavia, Switzreland, France, Holland, England - , and, above all, ~~in~~ many things have be done in this country. When I am visiting certain progressive ^{American} colleges, I am delighted and very

much encouraged; and while I keep watching those young boys and girls - discussing, reading, flirting, playing games - I cannot help thinking: this really is what I would call Democratic education - the education of freely thinking, freely playing, freely working human beings...

And I remember, with a certain slight nostalgia, that even in Germany - in the Germany of the late Weimar Republic - young people were allowed to enjoy the free - although not an^ar^hchic - principles of Democrati^cal education... And not only the children of wealthy people, not just the privileged ones have had a chance to get culture and knowledge; there have been plenty of popular high schools, of lectures for young working men, of public libraries, public courses. ^{There: better, construction elements and trends in German democracy.} All of this, of course, has been destroyed since, by the Nazis. ^{Why did Nazis succeed in winning parts of youth - although only temporarily - we keep on asking ourselves. Rep. failed to solve problem of an unemployed youth.}

For a certain while, all of the international pedagogues used to be quite keenly interested in what we called the German Youth Movement - : varied organizations of young people, who liked to make excursion together, singing together, discussing profound philosophical problems together... Those boys and girls had a pride and somewhat aggressive manner of emphasizing the mere fact of their being young, and their forming a community... a community that was deliberately opposed to the ~~world~~ and social world of the grown-up people, of the bourgeois... The spiritual character of that strange phenomenon, the "German Youth movement", was very complex and even a bit confused. It was an essentially romantic movement, and quite un-political, in the beginning. Later, certain groups of the so-called "Wandervogel" turned to the Nazis and started to develop a nationalistic, anti-democratic attitude - while other groups became more and more radical and revolutionary...

A country school - a so-called "Free Community of Schools in the country" (Freie Landschul-Gemeinde) - which I attended for while, was * in a sort of loose connection with the Youth movement. The name of this school - which was situated in the most lovely landscape, near Heidelberg - was Odenwald=schule.

I mention it, as it seemed to me as an almost ideal sort of school, and as progressive German institutes of this kind, quite frequently, served as a pattern to modern pedagogues all over the world.

The Odenwaldschule was dominated by the spirit of tolerance, mellow wisdom and freedom. Great deal of liberty was given to pupils; could decide themselves, whether or not they wanted to attend a certain course - : as long as they did not disappointed the confidence given to them.

Boys and girls - very mixed crowd. International. Chinese children, dark boys from India, little Frenchmen, Scandinavians, many Americans - ect. Got accustomed to habits and ways-of-thinking of foreign nations and races. Very helpful... Made me grasp, how excellent the principle of international exchange students - provided, of course, that the students in question are not the spies and agents of a foreign government...

The leader - Paulus Geheeb - : picturesque figure, with long white beard, naked hairy legs, profound and very good eyes... He adored ~~Get~~ Goethe, was influenced by Chinese and Indian philosophy. His friend - Rabindranath Tagore. (The photo, signed by girl who developed it: "Two monks...", because of two long beards and funny clothes...)

Loved animals. Used to say: "When I am fed up with grown-up people, I am recovering by spending some time with the children. - ~~When I am fed up with chi~~ And from the children I try to recover by spending some time with animals..." - Still can see him: - walking along the cages, feeding the deers, and the rabbits, and the birds... He adored his big eagle... When he talked to him, he looked like a ~~figure~~ mythological figure - almost like a strange ancient God, or at least like a magician who is ~~under~~ able to understand, what the eagle says, and what children feel Odenwaldschulde, of course, also ruined - although old Geheeb not Jewish nor a radical... He left Germany; opened new school in Switzerland, near geneva; called it "School of Humanity".

School for Humanity - what a proud,inspiring name!What a daring name,too - considering the present state of mankind and the horrifying degradation of the very notion of "Humanity"...

Yes,we have to be self-confident and proud - otherwise the sinister fascination ~~of Fa~~ that Fascism may possess for ignorant and impressionable young folks,may be stronge and more seductive than the solid and real offers Democracy has to make to the young generation. - The Nazi movement has dared to call itself the Party of the Youth - which is just as untrue as its prentention of being "national" or of being "socialistic"...

What does the ~~Nazi~~ Totalitarian State actually offer to the young genera= tion? - A young man is even not allowed to choose the profession he likes - :if the Führer needs engineers,the boy has to ~~be one...~~ become one of them...And if some young writer or composer do feel like writing or com= posing in a style that is not agreeable to the Führer,they have to change their style,or else they must stop writing or composing...The Totalitarian State offers to the young generation:the ever-lasting military exercise and marching - which is dull;the ever-lasting repetition of certain slogans and empty declamations - which is still duller...And finally:the ~~cure~~ cruel boredom of killing and dying;the deadly boredom that is modern warfare;the senseless boredom of death-for-the-Führer...Death is dull. Life is colourful and exciting.

Life can be colourful and beautiful and exciting - :Democracy wants to make it so.Democracy offers to youth:the grand duties ~~of~~ and dangers of Freedom;the inspiring task of national and international collaboration; the promise of justice and progress - that old and ever-new dream of a better world which each young generation must try to fulfill and to bring closer to its final realization.Democracy offers to youth the light of science,and the eternal consolation of religion;it offers all the problems, all the struggles,all the hopes and all the adventures of Life.