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Men Against Hitler. By Fritz Max Cahen.

Mann, Klaus

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Reviewed by Klaus Mann.

As Herr Cahen is against Hitler, and very actively so, I would like to be for Herr Cahen. Since I myself happen to be a German exile, I am rather in the habit of recommending the works of fellow-refugees to the American public. In a case like that of Cahen's book my natural sense of political and human solidarity finds itself in an embarrassing struggle with my sense of responsibility as a ^{i/}critic. Herr Cahen's story contains some ^{good} ~~interesting~~ material, but on the whole is pretty poor. It does not have any epic power, and it gives too many personal and political details without sufficient continuity.

The first chapters, dealing with the author's experiences when he was the secretary of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, whom he accompanied to Versailles, are, strangely enough, more vivid and convincing than the descriptions of activities in 1939. There ^{are} some interesting and authentic observations concerning the European post-war politics, or personalities such as Erzberger and Brockdorff-Rantzau, and we get a bit of funny gossip about Hermann Göring, when he was not yet the Nazi Generalfeldmarschall.

During the decade preceding the establishment of the Third ~~Rich~~ Reich, Herr Cahen apparently did not have a very exciting life; anyway, we don't hear much about it. It seems the former diplomat was busy writing novels, for a certain period. I must frankly admit I knew nothing about those literary creations, before Cahen himself informed me of them.

In Mr. William's introduction Herr Cahen is mentioned as the "number one refugee" - a title of honor which may sound somewhat surprising to the other exiles. The mere fact, however, that Herr Cahen is almost entirely unknown among literary or political progressive Germans,

does not prove that his anti-Nazi activities, within the Reich or abroad, were not serious or important. ~~But~~ But even presuming that Mr. Cahen is actually doing useful political work, the statement that "he began the organization of an underground movement to combat the Nazis" strikes me as an absurd exaggeration. ~~Certainly Mr. Cahen knows as well as I do that his~~ ^{organization} ~~is just one of the varied groups opposed to the Hitler régime, and perhaps even not the most important one.~~ His way of writing about the other anti-Nazi politicians often is unfair and arrogant, especially if it comes to the communists. Mr. Cahen is opposed to the Volksfront (the People's Front), and dispises Marxism - and he may have excellent reasons to do so. In order to prove that communists really do hate democracy, he goes even as far as to quote Heinrich Mann, who enthusiastically is for the broad anti-Fascist front, including the communists. ~~But~~ But not only the "reds" are the objects of ^(Cahen's) ~~his~~ malicious attacks. There are nasty remarks about Social Democrats as well, and even about Otto Strasser, leader of the Black Front, and brother of Gregor Strasser, murdered by the Nazis. Herr Cahen, who started his career in this country as Strasser's "American representative", now has to make the following statement about his former boss: "He was a born intriguer, but he was really more a demagogue than a politician or a statesman."

/ Herr Cahen seems to be against most of the men who are against Hitler. ~~Apparently, his ambition is to become the Führer.~~ I am against Herr Cahen. Apparently his ambition is to become the Führer of the future German Republic. He will not succeed. For his book proves that his vanity is stronger than his belief in the cause.

Men Against Hitler. By Fritz Max Cahen. Adapted, with an Introduction by Whyte Williams. The Bobbs-Merrill Comp. Pub., New York. (2)

As Herr Cahen is against Hitler, and very actively so, I would like to be for Herr Cahen. Since I myself happen to be a German exile, I rather am in the habit of recommending the works of fellow-refugees to the American public. ^{In a} ~~the~~ case like that of Cahen's book Men Against Hitler, my natural sense of political and human solidarity is finding itself in an embarrassing struggle with my sense of responsibility as a critic. Even from the political angle, however, it may be better and wiser to tell the truth, and nothing but the truth.

Well, ^{the} the simple truth in my opinion is that Herr Cahen's story contains some interesting material, but is pretty poor altogether. The first chapters are dealing with the author's experiences when he was the secretary of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, whom he accompanied to Versailles. Strangely enough, the memoirs of 1919 are more vivid and convincing than the descriptions of the 1939-activities.

Mr. Wythe Williams, now the editor of the Greenwich Time, met Fritz Max Cahen at Berlin, in 1919. Apparently the young German diplomat impressed very deeply his American visitor, who is giving us, twenty years later, a colourful ~~memoir~~ picture of the scene in the Berlin Foreign Office. In Mr. William's introduction Herr Cahen is mentioned as the "number one refugee" - a title of honor which may sound a bit surprising to the other exiles, number two to.....? - I am afraid, some of the ignorant anti-Nazi Germans even may ask the naïve question: "But, after all, who is ~~the~~ Mr. Cahen?" ~~He~~ Perhaps most of them don't remember the novels Fritz Max Cahen has written, and I myself must frankly admit I didn't know anything about those literary creations, before Cahen himself informed me.

The mere fact that Herr Cahen is almost unknown among literary or political progressive Germans does not prove that his anti-fascist activities, within the Reich or abroad, were unserious or unimportant. On the contrary, I really

hope his anti-Hitler organization, the "German Popular Front", may be at least half as powerful as Mr. Cahen wants us to believe. But even presumed ^{Mr.} ~~that~~ Cahen actually ~~is~~ doing useful political work, the statement that "he began the organization of an underground movement to combat the Nazis" strikes me as an absurd exaggeration. It is painful for me to say that this man is misusing the good faith and the keen interest the American public has for our cause. Fritz Max Cahen may be a fascinating personality ~~poss~~ possessing a great deal of temperament and imagination. His liberal convictions may be strong and honest. But his boundless ambition is spoiling his character - and his book. His vanity makes him to tell many ^{superfluous} stories about his own life. What he has to say about other German exiles ~~is~~ often is unfair, especially when it comes to the communists. The fact that many of those people have risked and sacrific~~ed~~ed their lives for the "underground movement" in Germany, seems to be unknown to Mr. Cahen. "He decided that Hitler could not be fought by the old parties..." ect. Apparently his pretension is to become the "Führer" of a future German Republic. The conception he harbours of this future German State certainly is not bad altogether. There are many political details I agree about with Mr. Cahen. There is just one basic point about which my ideas ~~are~~ definitely are differing from his opinion. I don't expect this "German refugee number one" ^{One} ~~will~~ ever will be the "citizen number" of the German Democracy all of us are hoping and working for.

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