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Germany's Education.

Mann, Klaus

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GERMANY'S EDUCATION

* * *

By K l a u s M a n n

Some time ago,

A curious controversy recently developed among German refugees living in this country. ~~It all began with a speech~~ ^{It all began with a speech} ~~The whole affair was started quite unwittingly, though~~ ^{by Mr. Emil Ludwig who delivered a speech in Los Angeles, on the occasion of a Win the War - Win the Peace meeting. The high lights of Mr. Ludwig's address were wired to the New York Times and appeared there under the heading, Ludwig Asks Fight on "German People." According to this fragmentary report, the well-known biographer of Stalin and the Mediterranean referred to the German people as "a nation of warriors", and suggested that, after Hitler's defeat, a minor army of Allied professors and pedagogues should be entrusted with the tedious job of civilizing the Teutons. Without such an assistance - Mr. Ludwig said - the "master race" will never come to its senses: "Religion, history, philosophy all teach principles foreign to the German character."}

The polemics against this statement - or rather, against the inadequate quotations available in New York at the time - were opened in the columns of a German-Jewish weekly, Der Aufbau (Reconstruction). A German non-Jewish refugee of highest intellectual standard and unquestionable integrity - Paul Tillich, Professor at the Union Theological Seminary - announced his indignant disapproval of Emil Ludwig's views. "A sentence like, Hitler is Germany," wrote the angry professor, "is taken from the arsenal of the most preposterous anti-Semitic propaganda - this time directed, not against the Jews, but against the Germans."

This surprising thesis - ^{juxtaposing Mr. Hitler's} ~~the resemblance between German anti-Semitism and~~ Mr. Ludwig's anti-German attitude - constitutes the gist of Mr. Tillich's argument. To defame the German people indiscriminately, on account of one villain, namely Adolf Hitler, is exactly as unfair ~~and~~

~~as a short-sighted~~ - according to Mr. Tillich - as to hold the crimes of Jewish individuals against the Jewish race and religion. The professor challenged all his Jewish friends to come out against Mr. Ludwig - openly and sternly; or else he, Mr. Tillich, might find it impossible to continue his fight against anti-Semitism. In concluding his paper, he paid homage to those men and women who risk their lives by struggling, within Germany, for the soul and future of the German nation.

The following issue of Der Aufbau carried the unabridged text of Mr. Ludwig's address in its original German version. Neither the content nor the wording of this document justify or explain Mr. Tillich's ~~inordinate~~ ~~disproportionate~~ wrath. What Mr. Ludwig said in Los Angeles is perhaps not strikingly original, but it is surely not offensive. We are told, once again, that the Germans, as a political entity, cherish order rather than freedom; that they have a penchant for organized power in general and for military discipline in particular; that the sword is to them the only valid token of national greatness, and other truisms along this line. Mr. Ludwig refutes, eloquently and truthfully, the fatuous legend according to which the Nazi regime has been imposed upon the German people - against their will, as it were, by means of lurid intrigues. In reality, however, Hitler did not need usurp power in Germany; he became strong through legal elections and was finally called to the Chancellery by the legal head of the Weimar Republic, Marshal von Hindenburg. The Germans knew Hitler's political credo when they hailed him as their leader and saviour: by idolizing the Führer they endorsed the obnoxious philosophy of Mein Kampf. "For ten years," Mr. Ludwig says, "the Germans endure the adventurer, without any attempt to revolt in masses. The heroes in the concentration camps are isolated martyrs. Hitler is the legitimate representative of the German nation. He expresses its taste and its morality."

If this formula seems one-sided or exaggerated, the conclusions

Mr. Ludwig draws from it are reasonable enough. "It would be unfair and stupid," he says, "to enslave so intelligent and so ingenious a people. We must not imitate Hitler's methods after having fought them for years." Only the culprits - the Nazi chieftains - should be arraigned and punished. As for the German people, they should be free to maintain or to attain everything ^{attainable to the other nations} ~~that other peoples possess or can attain~~ - everything, except the right to equality of armaments. Mr. Ludwig is very explicit in this point. It will not suffice, this time, to dissolve or to reduce the German army, as it was stipulated in the Versailles Treaty. The Germans will always find devious ways of dodging legal restrictions, unless prevented from doing so by a strict control mechanism. In other words, the German police forces, the whole apparatus of the executive, should remain, for a number of years, in the hands of the Allied Nations. Mr. Ludwig wants Germany to be ruled, temporarily, by a foreign government, "in about the same fashion as Egypt was ruled, most successfully, by the English."

Curiously, it ^{is} ~~was~~ not this ~~fairly radical~~ proposition that annoyed and grieved Mr. Tillich. His anger was caused by Mr. Ludwig's much less controversial suggestions as regards the educational campaign to be launched throughout the Reich, as soon as the War is over. And yet this pedagogical crusade, as visualized by Ludwig, is not to be planned and carried out only by foreigners. He recommends, quite judiciously, the establishment of commissions, consisting of Allied representatives and of trustworthy natives, to investigate the political records of all German teachers and to supervise their activities. The spirit Mr. Ludwig wants to prevail in this educational system can hardly be called anti-German. "The portraits of Adolf Hitler," he suggests, "should be superseded, everywhere, by likenesses of Goethe. Where Goering peered from the wall, a Beethoven bust should be placed." Is that an insult to the German honor?

What a delicate, touchy thing is the German honor! - a fetish, infinitely precious and vulnerable, to be guarded with vigilant jealousy, even by refugees. The controversy about Emil Ludwig - of trifling significance in itself - is indeed revealingly typical. For many weeks Der Aufbau featured statements from more or less distinguished German liberals as regards ^{Mr. Ludwig} the future education of the German people. Not all of them, to be sure, were so fierce and bitter as seemed Professor Tillich in his initial attack - an emotional outburst which he subsequently modified and in part revoked. But even those who may have disapproved of certain implications in Mr. Tillich's first piece, seemed to agree with him wholeheartedly when he promised to carry on his fight against the growing Germanophobia, "no matter if it is propagated by Vansittard, Ludwig, Foerster, or the representatives of Nazi-occupied countries."

Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster to whom Mr. Tillich refers - the well-known pacifist and former professor of philosophy at Munich University - is the only prominent refugee who sided with Emil Ludwig. As for the others - political journalists, poets, and professors - they rejected unanimously and emphatically what they called "mass defamation of the German people" and stated their ^{intransigent} ~~profound~~ opposition to Ludwig's educational scheme. ~~They were all were extremely displeased at the idea of sending foreign pedagogues to the land of Goethe and Holderlin.~~

This consentaneous reaction does not come as a surprise to anybody familiar with the moods and tendencies prevailing ^{among} the political and intellectual ~~vanguard~~ leaders exiled from Germany. If the ~~German~~ Communists and Social Democrats, the Catholics, liberals, and conservatives, dissent from each other in almost every vital issue, there are at least two points upon which they agree, almost without exception: that the Nazis are evil, and that the Germans are good. Those expatriated patriots become very impatient and bilious when anyone is tactless enough to

intimate that, after all, the German people might be responsible, to a certain extent, for the colossal outrages committed by - the German people. Many a ~~reliable and~~ ^{dauntless} ~~plucky~~ anti-Nazi fighter in exile clings desperately to the illusion that most of the ~~people~~ ^{folks} back home share his own antipathy against Hitler. They believe in all earnest that millions of Germans keep acting like the Vandals, only because Hitler "compels" them to do so. And don't you dare to remind those wishful thinkers of the simple fact that Hitler is a German, after all, and that he would be just another maniac, if he did not command the enthusiastic support of a great and dynamic people.

It has long become fatuous to pretend that the majority of the German nation oppose their chosen government - grimly, if by stealth. Most anti-Nazi exiles (including myself, for that matter) ~~have~~ indulged in this comforting fallacy, until the course of events taught us a cruel lesson. Every month that passed since September, 1939, refuted another dream. The Germans ~~did not~~ ^{against} turn their weapons against the Nazi bosses; they turned them ~~the~~ peasants and working men in Poland and Russia, Norway and Greece, France and the Netherlands, Belgium and ~~Yugoslavia~~ ^{not}. They did ~~not~~ fraternize with the martyred peoples of the invaded countries; they fulfilled Hitler's orders with the ghastly precision ~~and efficiency~~ of soulless, monstrous robots. They made themselves the scourge of a continent, a menace to the world. They are hated now, from the Norwegian Fiords to the Isle of Crete - more bitterly, more implacably hated than were even the occupation armies of the Spanish Empire or the ravenous Huns. What right do we have to "oppose" the Germanophobia of the Czech and the Dutch? I would be ashamed to tell the survivors of Lidice (if there are any!) that the Germans are nice enough chaps, at bottom - just somewhat misguided by a handful of demagogues. In fact, it would embarrass, even frighten me to say anything to a man from Lidice, Warsaw, or Rotterdam: he might

recognize my German origin and might spit at me.

No doubt, the populations now slaving and bleeding under the Nazi yoke abominate the Germans, not only the German regime. This is not true, however, of public opinion in Britain or in this country. The sober and generous moderation of the Angle-Saxon powers is apt to counterbalance the inevitable bitterness of Germany's present victims. To the English-speaking world, this War is waged primarily against the Nazis, not against the Germans - notwithstanding the complicity of the German people in the Nazi atrocities.

The Governments ~~both~~ in London and Washington have repeatedly stressed their intention to differentiate, after the War, between ordinary Germans and those responsible for the criminal policy of the Third Reich. It is only some weeks ago that the President announced in a formal statement his determination to avoid mass reprisals. "The number of persons eventually found guilty," Mr. Roosevelt said, "will undoubtedly be small, compared to the total enemy populations."

Dr. Goebbels did not deem it wise to repeat these words to the Germans. He wants them to believe that they must all stand or all perish together. The club-footed publicity demon keeps warning the German ~~nation~~ that the collapse of the Hitler system ^{would be} tantamount to their ~~own~~ end as a race and ~~a~~ nation. But what evidence does he offer to prove his dire assertions? No responsible spokesman of the United Nations has ever said anything gruesome enough for the purposes of Nazi propaganda.

Characteristically, Goebbels has to have recourse to a rather obscure character named Theodore N. Kaufman, to convince the Germans that they are doomed unless they stick to their Führer. ~~and help him win the war~~ Mr. Kaufman is comparatively little known in his ^{alleged} ~~respective~~ homeland, the United States; but the Germans think he is quite a fellow. His pamphlet,

Germany Must Perish! (published in Newark, N. J.) enjoys a remarkable popularity in the Reich. Mr. Kaufman's baroque manifesto is being quoted in all Nazi papers as the most revealing document of American policy. "Do you want to know ^{how} ~~what~~ the Yankees really feel about this war?" Dr. Goebbels would ask his Germans, and then recite to them the succinct beginning of Mr. Kaufman's booklet: "Today's war is not a war against Adolf Hitler. Nor is it a war against the Nazis. It is a struggle between the German nation and humanity. This time Germany has forced a total war upon the world. As a result, she must be prepared to pay a total penalty: Germany must perish forever! In fact, not in fancy!"

In fact, not in fancy, the fabulous Mr. Kaufman is of course an irresponsible individual playing the enemy's game - unwittingly, perhaps. What Dr. Goebbels chooses to call the notorious Roosevelt-Kaufman Plan" is in reality either the bloodthirsty caprice of a political amateur, or else a clever manoeuvre hatched by Goebbels himself. Be this as it may, the fact remains that the Nazis depend on counterfeit documents, for want of authentic material disclosing ^{an} ~~the~~ Allied ~~intervention~~ plot against the German people.

There is indeed no reason to get hysterical about an ostensible wave of "anti-German hysteria" in Britain or the United States. Not that I share the apprehension of those who feel that there is not quite enough animosity to the Nazis; that the average American still is too detached and not yet really aware of the danger confronting him. No doubt, ~~this~~ ~~kind of anxiety is much less unfounded than the opposite fear, anticipa-~~ ~~ting an inordinate increase of anti-German emotions.~~ We would have to acquiesce even in that ghastly stimulus, hatred, if it proves indispensable to fight and to win the War. But victory will be infinitely more valid and glorious if it can be attained without hatred. And does not the British example show us that firmness and heroism are by no means incompatible with reason and tolerance?

No responsible and intelligent person, in Britain or in this country, wishes to "destroy" Germany. But the brightest and most honest minds are preoccupied with the German problem. The other day I received a letter from London, written by a young man personally unknown to me. After having read a book of mine dealing with Germany, he felt like submitting to me his ideas ^{about} ~~concerning~~ the same ^{disconcerting} ~~intricate~~ subject. He sounds candid and characteristic enough when he writes: "I have discussed these issues with friends and acquaintances on innumerable occasions. Those whose opinions on other matters I respect seem to share my difficulties and we never arrive at anything approaching a positive view or a satisfactory conclusion. The only people who seem to find it easy to be dogmatic are the stupid and the lazy. And even of these only a very small proportion are activated by any hatred of the German people as a whole. I think anyone living outside England would be surprised to learn how little hatred there is in this country for the Germans. I have lived and worked in Central London throughout the war, but when the news of the Cologne loco-bomber raid came through in my Office one afternoon ~~about~~, everyone's first reaction was quite obviously one of horror at the picture of death and mutilation conjured up by the brief communiqué. At the same time, of course, we all hoped for more and bigger raids, because we appreciate the vital part they are playing in our war effort. But there was no exaltation over suffering, no rejoicing that the citizens of Cologne were dying as so many Londoners had died.

"You can call this 'British hypocrisy,' if you like; but I don't think that is a fair name for it. In my opinion, a practicable plan which provides a reasonable future for the German people, while rendering a recurrence of their aggression impossible, would receive a fair hearing and even an enthusiastic response from the British people. All that stands in the way is not hatred but mental laziness in face of the difficulties

of the problem, and also of course a feeling of intense weariness and distaste for Germany, Germans, and German problems - a feeling that they are an intolerable and disgusting nuisance which in some unrealised way must be finally abolished or reduced to impotence."

The last sentence sounds as if my unknown correspondent had listened in when a party of prominent refugees discussed the issue of post-War education in Germany. For, of course, the controversy conducted by Der Aufbau is by no means unique. Similar disputes took place in London and in other capitals where German refugees gather. There is an ominous inclination among Germans of every type and colour to confound the universal interests of civilization and what they think the "honor" of their country.

I am not particularly ~~not~~ concerned in Mr. Ludwig's suggestions: to tell the truth, Mr. Ludwig's thoughts and statements have never excited me. What strikes me as alarming is, on the contrary, the unduly stirring effect his ^{innocuous remarks} ~~homespun words~~ have had on a number of cultured, well-meaning Germans. ~~The men who scolded Ludwig for his lack of patriotism are alto-~~
~~gether~~ ^{all of them;} upright democrats, unquestionably loyal to the Allied cause; - ~~otherwise the conscientious editor of Der Aufbau would not admit them~~
~~as contributors.~~ But their ^{sincere} ~~genuine~~ desire to see Germany licked, does not prevent them from warning the world against Germanophobia. While the Teutonic armies make havoc of the European continent, the exiled opposition worries - in all earnest and in all naiveté! - whether an American guest professor at Berlin University would be an insult to German youth, after Hitler's defeat. No wonder, under the circumstances, that my ~~unknown~~ English letter-writer ~~was~~ noticed among his friends as "intense weariness and distaste for Germany, Germans, and German problems."

The educational scheme to which Mr. Ludwig referred - but which, incidentally, is by no means his invention - seems feasible and humane. The Germans have lived in a state of cultural isolation, for terribly

many years. Disconnected from the currents of free civilization, they have lost their sense of proportion and of reality. They need moral and intellectual assistance to regain their equilibrium. To reject this indispensable help, before it was even offered, means to sabotage, already now, the coming reconstruction of Europe.

The Germans have to learn, above all, that they are not the center of the universe. Their conflicts and dilemmas, however crucial and intricate, must not continue to vex and puzzle the world. Should the Reich be divided? Should it remain intact? The very alternative may turn out to be surprisingly irrelevant, if and when the Allied victors succeed in creating tenable conditions in Europe and Asia. There are but two things that fundamentally matter: that the Allied Nations defeat Germany and Japan; and that they remain allied nations, once they have won the War.

Co-operating as allies, they can bring about an international scheme to which even the restive Germans may adapt themselves, eventually. But there can be no doubt that German nationalism would exploit, shrewdly and recklessly, any virulent or latent disagreement that might come up among the democracies. That is what happened in the decade following Versailles. The jealousies between Britain and France, and the estrangement of both from the United States, resulted in Germany's rearmament and in her present aggression. Evidently, the bankrupt ilk of Prussian Junkers and industrialists would ^{profit} ~~exploit~~, as cynically as last time, ^{by} any future dissension between the United States and Britain, or between both and Soviet Russia.

The German problem can never be solved as such. In a disorganized, quarrelsome world, the German character will always function as the effervescent energy precipitating the general explosion. The double-faced nation of Goethe and Goering, Hitler and Hoelderlin, will renounce its apocalyptic vagaries when universal conditions no longer tend to apocalyptic disasters. Protected and controlled by a sane, stable civilization,

that "unbearable nuisance" which is Germany, might become civilized in the end - capable once again of participating in the unending effort of man's self-improvement and self-education.

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