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Mann, Klaus

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Two Confessions.

"The Wave of the Future", A Confession of Faith, by Anne Morrow Lindbergh; Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.
"The Moral Basis of Democracy", by Eleanor Roosevelt; Howell, Soskin & Co., New York.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh has lived in both France and England, as well as in America. She likes the French, English and American way of thinking, living, speaking, and acting - in fact, she prefers the "old world" of Democracy to the "new world" of the totalitarian states. She may be "completely prejudiced and conditioned by the way of life" she has led - as she admits with a slightly embarrassed frankness. She just can't help it - that's the way she is. A peace-loving woman, full of culture and common sense. Besides, she respects, of course, the codes and laws of Democracy. "They were not perfect, perhaps, but they made possible a mode of life I shall look back to the rest of my days with nostalgia."

The italics in the last sentence are ours. For we deem it significant that Mrs. Lindbergh uses the past tense when praising, "with nostalgia", the charms and merits of a "dying age." The "dying age" is the one we are living in - or rather, this problematical age of ours seems to be partly dying - partly very much alive, according to the dexterous interpretation of Anne Morrow Lindbergh. There is a doomed world - "the world in which we were brought up - the good, the Christian, the democratic, the capitalistic world." - The identification of the two notions "Christian" and "capitalistic" strikes me as somewhat daring. As to the epithet "good", used by Mrs. Lindbergh in connection with Democracy, ^{it} should be understood in an ironic sense. She does not think, really, that those "Have Nations" - as she likes to call the Democracies in contrast with the totalitarian "Have-not Nations" - are so very good altogether. Mrs. Lindbergh, is objective enough - despite her frequent sojourns in France and England as well as in America, to realize that the "Democracies" - which she punishes consistently with

a couple of ominous and puzzling quotation-remarks - are tainted by such ugly sins as "blindness, selfishness, irresponsibility, smugness, lethargy, and resistance to change." The ^{major} ~~little~~ change that should be accepted by the Democracies is, in Mrs. Lindbergh's opinion, nothing less than - Fascism. It's not that she admires blindly the European dictators: on the contrary, she opposes "those barbarisms" from the bottom of her heart - "even if they are on the wave of the future."

It is this wave - the ^{formidable} ~~dynamic~~ wave of the future - Mrs. Lindbergh is most keenly concerned with. She is spellbound by its boisterous tune - which sounds exactly like the Horst Wessel Lied... Small wonder: for Herr Hitler himself, with the dashing swiftness of a well-trained cowboy, has leapt upon that thundering vehicle - the wave. There he sits - slightly rocked by the motion of the stormy waters, but proudly erect and altogether irresistible. Anne Morrow is passionately devoted to pilots, wave-riders and the like. What a ludicrous attempt! she feels - to resist "the inevitable push of progress" (which is Fascism.) The "Forces of the Past" (Christian-Capitalistic Democracy) should recognize ^{at last} the hopeless plight that is theirs. What are they waiting for? - asks Mrs. Lindbergh, slightly irritated. ~~There they are - pitiful and dreary, already stinking with putrefaction - and, on the other side, those effulgent "Forces of the Future" - streamlined arch-angels, full of dynamic pep and entrancing aggressiveness. Surrender! - this is the only advise Mrs. Lindbergh has for the unfortunate countries not yet ruled by Hitler. Yield! - she insists, with a desperate eloquence. Don't resist!...~~ It almost sounds like an order. "There is no fighting the wave of the future, any more than as a child you could fight against the gigantic roller that loomed up ahead of you suddenly."

She is either extremely muddled, or unusually hypocritical. What makes her book so unpleasant is her method of taking constantly back

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as though ashamed of the very convictions
her own statements. ~~Whether her own ideas and emotions are in an alarming~~
she propagates. ~~state of confusion, or she tried deliberately to confuse the reeling~~
~~minds of her readers.~~ True, she appeals to our lenity by admitting, right
in the beginning, that she is indeed no "specialist in history, economics,
or foreign affairs." Also, she wants it to be understood that "to write
or to speak is almost inevitably to lie a little." Yet, it strikes us as
kind of staggering when she assures us, naively and positively, that it is
by no means "a defeatist acceptance of the inevitable" what she urges -
while she actually preaches and propagates nothing else. She insists
also that she does not advocate strict Isolationism, but at the same
time recommends a "solution" that should be "as American... as a boy's
slang, as backyard life in small towns, as baseball and blue jeans."
She turns rhapsodic when describing the peculiar beauties of a typically
American October - "which has no resemblance to its sister in Europe."
(We suppose, however, that Mrs. Lindbergh found October weather in Florida
exactly as "purely American" as ~~it is~~ ^{that} in Detroit or Seattle...)-
Her meteorological reflections lead her to the conclusion that America
~~on the one hand,~~ should avoid all entanglements with sordid European affairs -while,
on the other hand, adapting herself to the youthful impact of totalitarian
European ideologies. America is strong -; not quite strong enough, though,
to resist that notorious wave. Yet, America as Mrs. Lindbergh sees it -
comfortably aloof from the nasty stride in ~~Europe~~ the other parts of the
world - is in the pleasant position "to judge the tragedies clearly"-:
in short, to "take a planetary view of the world's troubles." - "A
planetary ~~view~~ point of view is necessary at times," - which is not
surprising to hear from a lady so experienced in aerial voyages. She
looks down - looks around - , and what ~~he~~ ^{on the one side} sees is a pathetic bunch of
Christian capitalists, trembling under "the gigantic scepter of fear" - :
on the other side, a magnificent army of athletic demigods, invincible

through their "superb equipment" and the "national spirit" incited in their hearts. Curiously enough, what looks like fear - even like the "gigantic scepter of fear" - from the planetary point of view, turns out, if seen from a lower, more ^{earthly} ~~worldly~~ angle, to be the natural reaction of men whose lives and possessions, laws and ^{traditions} ~~mores~~ are threatened. The planetary view, for all its obvious advantages, has apparently a somewhat distorting effect upon the privileged eyes of pilots and pamphletists. The same "dynamism" that seems admirable to Mrs. Lindbergh in the case of the Totalitarian States, becomes, in her opinion, an alarming symptom of ~~blind~~ hysteria when she discovers its traces in the awakening spirit of Demo=
^acracies.

~~She thinks that a man who defends himself against a frenzied aggressor, acts like a fool or a coward. Why? - Because the fellow who was attacked, happens to be "not perfect." Nobody has pretended he was. But the question is if the frenzied aggressor is better - or if he is, perhaps, even a little worse. We may ask ourselves, furthermore, whether the attacked one has a chance to improve by ~~surrendering~~ sacrificing everything he treasures - or ~~rather~~ rather a chance when resisting, by ~~defending~~ fighting for the sake of his most valuable possessions.~~

I do not dare to decide whether or not ~~■~~ Anne Morrow Lindbergh is consciously one of those "skillful propagandists" whom she suspects in ^{certain} "Pro-Ally" circles. ^{What} I know positively, however, ^{is} that ^{her} ~~this~~ dubious "confession of faith" works actually as a piece of ~~pro~~-Nazi propaganda.

It is apt to discourage and ~~confuse~~ bewilder those who are wavering and uncertain - ; to incite and encourage others who are already inclined to join the side they think winning. It is a feeble little book, indeed - poor in ~~thoughts~~ thoughts, arbitrary in its arguments, embarrassing in its occasional lyricism - ; yet, we must not underrate the dangerous force of its impact. For it comes from a woman bearing a popular name and admired by many for what she has done and written. I imagine some of those men and

women whom I have known in this country, reading Anne Morrow Lindbergh's little book - : club ladies in provincial towns, college boys, business men, country doctors, teachers, They may be impressed by a certain surface elegance of ~~her~~ ^{her} style; by that ostensible "objectivity" of her judgements; They may enjoy her poetic ~~remarks~~ ^{outbursts} concerning the month of October, a boy's slang or our dying civilization. They do not like Hitler or Stalin or Mussolini, ~~like~~ those men and women I visualize ~~reading~~ reading "The Wave of the Future." But they begin to believe - gradually, without realizing themselves the change that takes place in their minds - that, after all, ~~they~~ ^{the dictators} can't be so bad, ~~these dictators~~ since they are so successful; that the Totalitarian philosophy may prove compatible with the American way of life; that Democracy seems, in fact, kind of stale and a bit out-dated. The high taxes, the unemployment, the political bosses - is it worth saving? Let's ~~try~~ take a planetary view, for a change...

What ~~and disastrous~~ ^{affairing} mess of half-truths and three quarter-lies! - distortions, simplifications, misinterpretations...

They ought to read other things.

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They ought to read, for instance, what Eleanor Roosevelt has to say about The Moral Basis of Democracy: it sounds certainly more inspired and at once more realistic than Mrs. Lindbergh's ambiguous confessions. While the first lady of the air adheres to a faith which "is not seen, but felt; not proved, but believed; not a program, but a dream," - the First Lady of this land has ideas that can be at least discussed, if not proved. Mrs. Roosevelt, too, is clairaudient for the muttering noise of coming thunderstorms and realizes that far-reaching changes of our social ~~conditions~~ ^{order} are both inevitable and desirable. "We are, of course, going through a type of revolution," she says, soberly and frankly. She does not believe, however, that an endangered

civilization could be or should be saved by abandoning its fundamental traditions - the Christian heritage and the revolutionary ideals of liberty and justice. It is, indeed, a dynamic Democracy that she wants and praises - a Democracy "which is alive and actively working for the benefit of all individuals, and not just for a few." She is fully aware of the mistakes and insufficiencies inherent to Democracy in its present form. "So long as we have the number of unemployed on our hands which we have today, we can be sure that our economic troubles are not over:" ~~Philosophies~~ In formulations like this her sorrowful concern finds its candid expression. The remedy, however, is not to be sought in "philosophies and methods which have appeared in other countries." Those much-vaunted philosophies and methods turn out to be nothing in themselves but the virulent manifestation of a moral and economic crisis - the very crisis, in fact, that causes the mal-functioning of social institutions all over the world. To save freedom by sacrificing it to tyranny - could fatuity go further? The loss of freedom does not guarantee social security and streamlined organization - on the contrary. The loss of freedom means and guarantees ~~nothing~~ misery, boredom and degradation. There is nothing after civilization except the jungle. There is no adventure after liberty - only the curse of slavery.

Democracy is not to be overcome but to be fulfilled - which it ~~has~~ ^{been up to now} never ~~was~~. It is no "out-dated" ideology - but still the most daring, most revolutionary program. - Eleanor Roosevelt is perfectly right when she ^{points out} ~~says~~ "that most of our difficulties arise today from the fact that in the rush of material development we have neglected to keep close enough to the Revolutionary idea, guided by religious feeling, which is the basis of Democracy."

How agreeable sounds her voice - at once passionate and resolute, ~~winged and stable~~ after the shrill and spurious accents of Mrs. Lind-

bergh's flowery eloquence. The unassuming pathos of Eleanor Roosevelt is neither that of a professional philosopher nor that of an ecstatic reformer. Hers is the sturdy kindness of a very intelligent mother - the good seriousness ~~and understanding energy~~ of a woman familiar with the realities of human life - the real pains, the real fights, the real satisfactions. At certain moments she assumes the voice of a teacher - not of a pretentious university professor ~~to be sure~~, but of a simple and cordial teacher who knows how to make interesting to the youngsters even the driest stuff. The look she takes back into the past is, in fact, as lively and reassuring as her reasonable vision of coming things. The timely relation between the early manifestos of American Democracy and our own involved and dangerous fate become clear, simple, convincing, if explained by this lucid and honest mind. Eleanor Roosevelt does not rave about the "skyscrapers of New York" or the peculiar qualities of an American apple - which Mrs. Lindbergh finds especially "scrisp, clear, tart, sunny, and crimson" - : she quotes the first Mayflower contract, *(the beautiful tenets)* William Penn, Thomas Paine, and Jefferson. She recalls the ethical impact of "The Rights of Man" and "The Age of Reason." She talks common sense. One feels better after having listened to her.

~~Her upright enthusiasm proves contagious - as does every impulse if it is true and intense enough.~~ Her articulate zeal should convince even those who were half-discouraged - ~~without~~ *lacking in* aim and faith. Our natural aim - here it is: to improve, to re-organize, to re-build Democracy. (But how could we succeed in ~~improving it~~ *doing so* if we allow ~~it~~ *Democracy* to be destroyed by its frenzied foes?) - And here is also the faith - the unshaken faith in the intrinsic dignity and ultimate goodness of man. A ~~very~~ rather uncertain dignity, it is true - and not a very reliable sort of goodness. Yet, dignity and goodness, ~~both of them~~ may be increased by the means of education and social progress - while they would certainly be ~~destroyed~~ *if* ~~by the ruthlessness of totalitarian philosophy~~ *democracy is destroyed in this*

stamped out by totalitarian dictatorship.

~~We have warned against~~ of Mrs. Lindbergh's booklet, though there are undeniably other documents of the Fascist spirit - both more impressive and more revolting. The significance of the booklet is due to the personal and social position of its authoress - We recommend the ~~manifesto~~ ^{booklet} by Eleanor Roosevelt - not only because we think it a fine and stimulating piece of writing; but also because it was written by a woman so close to the very center of administrative power in the United States. There is no other country on earth where the wife of the highest official could venture on so bold and realistic a criticism on existing institutions, ~~and where the nation's most representative name could appear as signature under an appeal of so refreshing simplicity and intelligent human kindness.~~ It occurs but rarely that intellectuals can subscribe, almost without stint, to statements and prophecies coming from those connected with actual power. Here is such a case. We should grasp its comforting significance.

~~Those who are inclined to defend or to overlook the turpitudes of Fascism as "necessary and minor evils", at the same time belittle or~~ ^{denounce} ~~overlook~~ all encouraging tendencies and developments within the realm of Democratic governments. Their eyes are blinded and their ears are deafened - blinded and deafened by ignorance, by fear, by malignity. They take the fumbling, theatrical gestures of morbid tyrants for the inspiring display of solid strength. Intoxicated by the nerve-wracking clamour of hollow rhetorics, they have long become incapable to understand, nay, to hear the gentle tone of civilized arguing. ~~Yet, the boastful shouting of demagoguery may die away - sooner than most of us would now dare to presume...~~ "It is the lowest voice that announces the tempest," says Nietzsche - who was initiated into the laws and mysteries of things to come.

There may be more thorough studies on Democracy - more original interpretations of its moral and social ^{problems} ~~basis~~. What makes Eleanor Roosevelt's ~~writing~~ ^{unpretentious manifesto} lovable and impressive is, above all, the firm integrity ~~of her character~~ ^{it expresses the} - ~~her~~ earnest striving for truth. Hers is, indeed, that "spirit of good will" ~~that~~ she demands and praises. She does not midigate the hardships we have to face. But she is not afraid. For she knows - calmly and confidently - that the wave of the ~~future~~ future is with her.

Klaus Mann.