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The Greatest Bluff.

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The Greatest Bluff.

Nothing is decided while I am writing these lines, and everything might still be fluctuant when you will read this. Nobody knows what kind of tragedies or farces are in preparation, and only a fool - or a god would dare to predict the imminent events. Yet, these passed days - which were horrible days, indeed, and of almost intolerable tension for all of us - have taught us, at least, some lessons of essential importance for all friends of Peace and Freedom, for all the liberals in this country and everywhere on earth.

We, the German anti-Nazi exiles, kept saying, for almost seven years: Hitler is bluffing. All of his utterances and doings and preparations are nothing but bluff. His fanaticism is phoney, even his hysteria is faked, and his convictions, his so-called Weltanschauung does not exist in reality. Naïve people believed he was a "bulwark against bolshevism"; he surprised them ^{by} ~~with~~ his non-aggression-pact with Stalin. This was supposed to be his master bluff, and it turned out to be a failure - the big decisive failure, perhaps, in his dubious career. The Democracies did not get scared and did not ~~move~~ back down as he had expected them to do. His last and most tremendous trick did by no means ~~have~~ the overwhelming effect the swindler had calculated. Without any doubt, his spell is weakening. His friends are giving him up. Japan seeks the friendship of Britain - after having stripped ^d English ladies in Tientsin - ; Hungary wants to remain neutral; Turkey emphasizes her loyalty toward ~~England~~ the "Peace Front" - and who would be astonished if Hitler's most intimate friend, Signor Mussolini, will drop his ally in the near future? Who is going to help this bloody crook, who finds himself, all of a sudden, in a hell of a mess? Stalin - who is making the coldest and most intelligent policy any Russian czar has ever made - certainly is not interested in Hitler's victory, on the con-

for the sake of his country (not of any Third International)

trary. And it is almost inconceivable that the British ruling class - the same people who protected Hitler for such a long time - still could be eager to "save his face" - which for seven years ^{was} ~~is~~ the nightmare and the horror for all civilized human beings.

And don't expect the German working men to regard Hitler as a "socialist" because of his indecent and hopeless flirt with Moscow! The German antifascists who suffered in the concentration camps for their true convictions and risked their lives in the underground movements, certainly know who Hitler is, and how much, or how little credence his promises deserve.

It would be exaggerated to say that he betrayed any convictions since he does not have any of them. He is not a fanatic but the most sickening mixture of a ice cold little business man and an ambitious clown mankind has ever produced. He doesn't give a damn for his "suffering brothers in Poland" - who, by the way, are not suffering nor are his brothers. It is only and exclusively his own power he cares for; his fame, his success, his "legende" are the only matters he is interested ⁱⁿ ~~in~~. Even his power is bluff; he is not a war lord but a criminal. He is not in the position of risking an European war; he would have "marched" several days ago if he only could dare to do so. He simply hoped to get away, once more, with his dirty black mail trick. He did not succeed. He must fall.

"Great Britain wants peace," we read in Mr. Chamberlain's Note. "But the British people are profoundly weary of the endless crises of security. Peace and agreement must be on a lasting basis..." This expresses precisely our own feelings. But who is still believing - after all the lessons given to us - that any new "agreement" with Hitler would have the actual value of the piece of paper it was written on. There won't be peace before Hitler's fall. We must get rid of him.

The crisis in the very midst of which we still are, has proved, once

more and more definitely than ever before, that Hitler is the one big obstacle between mankind and permanent peace. Therefore, mankind is not going to endure him anymore. He is doomed. - Many mistakes were made by many people, many crimes were committed. It is not the right moment for discussing them. All we can do is to hope and to pray that Hitler may fall before his greatest bluff has changed into the deadly tragedy of millions of men and women.

Klaus Mann

Santa Monica , August 29 , 1939