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What about Vichy? A Symposium.

Mann, Erika

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A SYMPOSIUM ; WHAT ABOUT VICHY

WMCA - 9:15-9:30 p.m. April 2, 1942

Announcer

This program is presented by the Free World Association over the facilities of WMCA.

The Free World Association is a group of men and women, leaders of thought and action in the free countries of the world and those struggling for freedom, fighting for the destruction of Nazism, for the freedom and security of the Society of Nations and of the society within nations.

Tonight you will hear about some of the phases of the struggle for freedom within unoccupied France. The Reverend Howard L. Brooks of Staten Island went to France to administer medical service with the Unitarian Service Committee. His vitally interesting report on what he saw in France is just published in book form - PRISONERS OF HOPE. Mr. Brooks is here to answer some questions to be put to him by two other authorities, by Erika Mann, author ^{foreign correspondent} and lecturer, who is herself ^{a voluntary} exile from Nazi terror ^{and has been living among us for 6 years} ~~and her husband, who is himself an exile from Nazi terror~~, and by William Bird, of the New York Sun, who was for many years head of the Sun's Paris office, and who is a specialist in French and European news.

The first voice you hear will be that of Miss Erika Mann.

Mann: Mr. Brooks, I am very much interested in Prisoners of Hope. It tells us a great deal at first hand, that we need to know. But it has a special quality that I think is important. It raises questions and makes one think, and that is so essential in times like these. May I ask you some questions?

Brooks: Certainly, Miss Mann.

Mann: One of the people you write about, Mary Fouquet has deeply impressed me.

Brooks: That's good. I'm glad you liked Mary. She was a very interesting person.

Mann: You portray her as a modern Joan of Arc, not only fighting the Nazis in unoccupied France, but even venturing to go to Paris and carry the fight into the lion's den. Yet you say she is very feminine indeed - a good housekeeper and a loving wife, not at all a type you would think of as "heroic". Is she typical of the women of France?

Brooks: Well, Miss Mann, courage like Mary Fouquet's is rare in any country at any time. But I met a dozen women with just such courage in the course of my travels, and in addition, many who had not the opportunities to do the especially risky work. Anyone who reads John Steinbeck's new book, The Moon is Down will catch the spirit of the vast majority of the French People.

Mann: I have another question about Mary, but I see Mr. Bird has one; Mr. Bird won't you take over the cross-examination?

Bird: Mr. Brooks, just now you spoke of Steinbeck's The Moon is Down. I was going to ask you a question on that.

Brooks: Go ahead.

Bird: What do you think of Steinbeck's idea of dropping supplies of dynamite or other weapons from airplanes - supplies to help such people as those of the French "underground" movement you describe in Prisoners of Hope?

Brooks: That's a beautiful passage in Steinbeck's book. But I do not believe this method is a practical one in the systematic re-arming of Unoccupied France. In the first place, there is the danger of observation. I see no way of making it certain that the arms would reach the underground patriots. They might very likely reach the agents of Vichy and the Nazis. And also, I don't see how it would be possible to supply sufficient arms for the job that way - or of maintaining secrecy, which is at this stage of the utmost importance.

Bird: You mention in your book that the British have smuggled some small arms into France to be used at the proper time by insurgent groups who may help support an Allied invasion. Do you know whether there has been a large quantity smuggled in?

Brooks: I don't know positively. I do know that underground workers have been arrested for transporting machine guns.

Bird: Miss Mann- didn't you have a question?

~~Mann:~~ Yes - I still want to go back to Mary Fouquet. You say, Mr. Brooks, that she was of English birth. Is she, and others like her, accepted as an equal by the French in the underground movement? In other words, are the French fighters for freedom recognizing the cause of the United Nations

as their cause, or are they merely interested in saving France for the French?

Brooks: Some of them do recognize the cause of the United Nations as their cause. Others are ultra-nationalistic. Naturally, the immediate problem of getting rid of the Germans is uppermost in everyone's mind. It is extremely important for future developments to let the French people know that we are thinking of peace aims on a world scope rather than on a narrow nationalistic basis. The kind of program that the Free World Association is working out - putting the "Four Freedoms" into action - would be an important factor in influencing French public opinion.

Nann: You think the French are interested in the whole world cause of freedom.

Brooks: Yes. The French were believers in collective security at one time, and they will be again if the United Nations can convince them they mean it to include the French people.

Bird: Do the Germans maintain armed garrisons in unoccupied France, or do they rely on the French government to put down rebellion and to repel any possible attempt at invasion?

Brooks: I don't know. They probably rely more on the French Government to put down rebellion.

Bird: What I mean is, if the Allies attempt a surprise invasion, say on the Mediterranean coast of France, would they have to overcome any strong resistance?

Brooks: That depends on the morale of the present French army. It is common knowledge that the rank and file are pro-British, pro-Ally. But there have been systematic transfers among officers. It is known that at least a dozen Generals and probably more high officers are in prison or in "protective custody". That makes it difficult to predict what kind of resistance would be made against an Allied invasion.

Bird: It seems to me one of the great lessons of your book Prisoners of Hope is the way it demonstrates the importance of keeping up the spirits of the French people by showing them constantly that we sympathize with them and consider them our partners in the war against the Nazis. From your experience can you suggest some ways that we might do that?

Brooks: Well the very fact that we are at war with the Nazis is the most heartening factor, of course. But if pamphlets could be sent into unoccupied France, presenting the views of the United Nations that would be a great help. The news over there is not news at all, but pro-Nazi propaganda you know. Except for the underground papers printed and circulated at the risk of death.

~~Mann:~~
~~XXXX~~
Yes - and the story you tell of those people who print and distribute the secret newspapers is a thrilling one.

Brooks: Another helpful thing would be a vigorous short-wave program broadcast into France - one that shows a real understanding of the problems facing the French people. And if the American Consulates in France were not so neutral that they appear to be collaborating with even the worst Vichy elements, the French people would take heart.

Bird: What do you think would be the popular reaction in France if the United States should break off relations with Vichy?

Brooks: The French people would feel that the United States had broken with the kind of appeasement policy which proved so disastrous to France herself. For example - it is very difficult for Frenchmen to understand why we should send supplies to North Africa, or why we should not give General deGaulle more recognition. In other words the French people would like to have us break with Vichy, which by its policy of collaboration has become hated.

Mann: Mr. Brooks - I notice that the Nazi press in France keeps on mentioning the Jews and the "Anglo-Saxons" together - have the Nazis succeeded in creating a strong anti-English and anti-American feeling among the French?

Brooks: No - not at all. And the attempt to link the Jews with the "Anglo-Saxons" as "war mongers" has been a flat failure.

Mann: I understand ^{there is} that there is quite a little anti-Semitism in France. Or is that a mistaken rumor?

Brooks: Anti-Semitism seems to be on the decline, I am glad to say. It's obviously Nazi origin has made it suspect.

Mann: One of the most interesting people in your book - he impressed you the most, Professor Raoul LaFarge, didn't he?

Brooks: Well, he was certainly one of the most impressive, Miss Mann. Like so many others, if he had kept still he could have escaped persecution, since he was so important.

Mann: Yes - and even with all his criticism and fighting against the Nazis, they did not dare to silence him completely. Professor LaFarge is a Catholic. Can you tell us what became of the great group of young socialist teachers who were pacifists at the beginning of the war and even proclaimed that

they were not going to fight? Have they changed their attitude?

Brooks: I can't answer for the whole group. Those I met had changed their attitude. I met not a single French pacifist all summer.

Mann: One of the most harrowing stories you tell, is the one about the so-called German food commissions, who are using French criminals they've set free to spy upon and inform against French shopkeepers. The criminals, you tell us, go from shop to shop, disguised as beggars, imploring the grocers for food to keep them from starving. And then, as soon as the storekeepers give them a piece of bread or a little milk, the criminals throw open their coats and reveal their official German ^{SPY} badges, and the goodhearted storekeepers are arrested for breaking the ration-card regulations.

Brooks: That's right, Miss Mann.

Mann: Don't you think such a low, unspeakably mean trick as that, almost betrays a — hopelessness on the part of the Nazis? What I mean is: if the Germans had the slightest hope, ever to live peacefully with the French in some sort of "new order", they would not resort ^{or} to methods which can only create the deadliest hatred possible? *Don't you agree?*

Brooks: The Germans have needlessly and stupidly antagonized the French people in their enforcement of food restrictions. Even people like those in the Basses Pyrenees who accepted extra rations as a bribe for rushing contruction work on power plants so that electricity could be sent across France to the Ruhr hated themselves for their weakness — and the same applies to the French factory workers who have to work for the German war production.

Announcer: You have just head a discussion, WHAT ABOUT VICHY by Howard L. Brooks, Erika Mann and William Byrd.

This program was broadcast byt the Free World Association over the facilities of Station W M C A .