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Children in Germany today.

Mann, Erika

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Children in Germany Today

Erika Mann

Ladies and Gentlemen:-

The choice of the subject on which I am to speak to you today pleases me, for it is one of the most burning, most important for the future in the midst of this world overfull of problems. This world has, during the past five years, fallen into two parts, before our very eyes, and we ourselves, ^{the population of the world,} whether consciously or unconsciously form two armies opposing one another as ~~XXX~~ enemies. There are no two ways about it: a true War of ideals and thoughts and principles has broken out. I hardly need to tell you that I am referring to the ^{aggressive} ~~war of attack~~ which the Dictatorships of this world have started against the free democracies, which, for their part, are but gradually taking up their defensive positions. All eyes are focussed upon Germany, because she is the mightiest and most expansive among the aggressive dictatorships. What have we to expect from this direction? What is being prepared there? What will the future of Germany be? And what effect will this future have upon the future of the entire world? These many questions can be united into the one simple one: how are children educated in Germany today? What will they think and how will they behave? when they are grown up? For the children of present-day Germany spell the tomorrow of Germany. Germany's future will determine whether there will be peace in Europe. But the future of the whole world depends upon the peace of Europe. And so it seems to me that the problem of ~~the existence of~~ children under Hitler is truly the core of the whole matter.

Before I speak to you of the essence of National Socialistic
education, and before I show you the face ~~XX~~ and methods of this education
and what ~~and what~~ chances of success ~~this education~~ ^{it} possess, let me tell you a little
story: a little ~~perschal~~ experience that occurred last Summer.

This, ladies and gentlemen, was the experience I referred to. I have pondered about it much and often asked myself: what sort of person will this Fränzchen become? And what, fundamentally, is a "good National Socialist"?

The National Socialists themselves, are not troubled by any doubts: "A good National Socialist is a person blindly devoted to the "Führer", ^{on who} Adolf Hitler, ~~and~~ fanatically follow his many aims and methods. The Nazis use the word "fanaticism" as though it designated an admirable quality; the word "blind", too, in the land of the Dictator, is a positive adjective, qualifying something "good". The "Führer" has described his aims and methods in "My Battle", and has consistently adhered to them ever since. There is a chapter in "My Battle", 25 pages long, that deals with the education of youth. It is illuminating to quote some passages from these 25 pages. For the lives of all the children in Germany today are directed by these 25 pages and by nothing else on earth. Mr. Hitler says: "Beginning with the child's primer, every theatre, every cinema (movie, talkie?) every advertising bill-board must be submitted to one great mission ~~and to~~ nothing else in the world, until the prayer of fear offered up by old-fashioned patriots, "Lord, set us free," shall be changed in the brain of the smallest child into the burning entreaty: "Allmighty God, do you one day bless our weapons!"

Besides this, Mr. Hitler says: "The curriculum of the schools is so to be arranged that every young individual leaving school shall be neither halfway a Pacifist, a Democrat or anything else, but entirely a German." (P. 473, 474.) *in my Battle*

Elsewhere, speaking of Pacifism, the "Führer" says: "Whoever in this world truly desires the ~~conquest~~ of the Pacifist idea in this world

work with all his might toward the conquest of the world by Germany. (p. 315) The education of German children is to be dedicated to this greatest of his ambitions: the conquest of the world by Germany. Everything must be subordinated to this goal. "Above all," says Mr. Hitler, "all education must be so planned that our youthful compatriot is, from his early childhood, impregnated with the conviction that he is, without qualification, superior to all other peoples." (p. 456) At the same time the "Führer" demands that first the body - as the most important element - then the character, and only in third and last place the mind of the child is to be cultivated. Altogether Adolf Hitler has an unsurmountable aversion to mind or ~~XX~~ spirit. He says: 1.) "The youthful mind should not be burdened with things which to 95% it will never make any use of." (p. 464, 465) With equal clarity the "Führer" tells us what this youthful mind does need: "Feeling for race and knowledge of race must be burned into the heart and mind of youth, through reason ~~and~~ until it becomes an instinct," (475 - ~~XXXX~~ 476), "beyond that the young must learn to remain silent, not only when they are justly found fault with, but they must also learn to endure injustice in silence. (459), For "if education omits to foster in the child, a tendency to endure wrong and suffering in silence, no one can be surprised if ^{when a man is/} ~~XXX~~ later, at the front, for example, all letters deal with nothing but mutual complaints and lamentations."

"Later," "at the front" - this is the musical Leitmotiv which gives its stamp to Hitler's drum solo. It is for "Later, at the front" that the young are to be educated. "Later, at the front," it will turn out who is a good Nazi and "Later at the front" it will not be necessary to have learned anything else but the handicraft of waging war and the art of enduring Injustice in silence. Knowledge, the "Führer" thinks, would be mere balast.

Love of Peace, - or even the barest love of other human beings would be the most harmful ballast possible, - even so ^{harmful} ~~absurd~~ a feeling as ^{an inclination} ~~tendency~~ toward rest and order is to be rejected. - "For the greatest revolutionary changes on earth could never have so much as been conceived if the motive force behind them, instead of fanatical or even hysterical passion, had been merely middle-class virtues of rest and order. The Folk-state will have to see to it that a proper education of youth will some day produce a ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ species of man, ripe for the last, great decisions. That people, however, who first tread this path will conquer." (p. 475)

There we have but a few samples out of the program of education of the German Dictator. They could be increased indefinitely, almost. For today we have chosen these few quotations from the book "My Battle", but they are typical, it seems to us. We must add the affirmation of the fact that everyone ^{in Germany} actually does live according to the book "My Battle" as though it were a gospel and to prove this statement, we mention two examples of things that were actually recently ^{said} ~~said~~ by high Nazi officials in Leipzig. The Leader of the "Deutsche Arbeitsfront", Dr. Ley, declared "Our only aim and only goal must be, to follow the teachings of Adolf Hitler, the gospel of the German people." And the "Reichsstatthalter of Saxony" Martin Mutschmann added: "Our faith is the "Weltanschauung" of the Führer and nothing else. No one can serve two masters. This Weltanschauung expresses the will and the conscience given us by God."

There are two things we can say about the life of the German child with absolute certainty.

- 1.) The life of the child belongs to National Socialism.
- 2.) National Socialism fills this life with the din of war. It teaches the child "blind obedience" to the "Führer, and hatred toward everything that

does not blindly obey the "Führer". A book I have just completed writing about Youth under Hitler will bear the sub-title: "Hate Thy Neighbour", and it is true that hatred is the most/ used/ ~~XX~~ important instrument ~~/in~~ the education of German children for War.

I see the child as the centre of three concentric circles, which determine his life. The narrowest circle is the family: and one of the thousand promises made by National Socialism before it came into power was ~~that its main object was to~~ ^{and it would} protect the family. In all his angry speeches against pacifism, Democracy, and Liberalism, the "Führer" had said that the family was in danger of ~~XX~~ dissolution and that, as soon as he came into power, he would save it. As a matter of fact, however, the German family, up to the year '33 was quite intact, and the German citizen, a family man by nature, is only gradually becoming aware with painful surprise ~~XX~~, that the authoritarian State, which will tolerate no other god, is actually destroying all private life, and the family as the most important unity of private life is controlled, commandeered and being destroyed ~~by~~ this State.

Every German ~~citizen~~, whether man, woman, or child is a member of at least one Nazi-Organisation. These organisations: the party, "Fachschaft" "Buende" of women and mothers, Hitler Youth, "Jungvolk", "Bund deutscher Maedel" actually take up all the time that other occupations: such as the attending/ exercising of a profession, housework, ~~/~~ school, might leave free to the individual. Simply for lack of time no member of family has ~~XXXXXX~~ the possibility of devoting himself to the family and ~~then~~ would be the end of the institution: family, even if there were no deeper reasons for its passing away.

Here is one little anecdote out of the new Germany, which is quite faithful to reality although it sounds so distressing.

merely like a joke

A Father comes home and finds no one in. There is a note on the library table to this effect: "Am in the N. S. Women's Union, will be home late, Mother." So he places his little note beside the first one: "Am at a Party meeting. It is sure to be out late, Father." Next comes Fritz, the son. He leaves a note: "We are having night-drill- it will last until the morning, Fritz". Hilda, the daughter, is the last to appear. And she writes: "Must go to the night session of the B.D.M. Hilda." - When the little family finds itself reunited ^{at} toward two the next morning, they discover that thieves have broken in and that everything that could be moved has been stolen. But on the table is a fifth little note: "We thank our "Führer" that we were able to steal here so undisturbed. Heil Hitler! The Gang."

The destruction of the family is by no means an incidental ^{by-} product of Nazi Dictatorship. It is a definite part of the program that has to be carried out if the Nazis are to attain their goal: the conquest of the world by the Nazis. For if the world is ever to belong to the Nazis, first of all the Germans must belong to the Nazis. But if the Germans are to belong to the Nazis, then they must not belong to anyone or anything else: not to God, not to their families, not to themselves. And so, to begin with, that time has been taken away from the Germans which they were in the habit of devoting to their families. Mere lack of time, however, would not have sufficed in destroying the family: the real moment of destruction lay at the point when lack of confidence in one another had grown within the family. Only when the Father began to mistrust the Mother, the Mother the daughter, the sister her brother, and the son his Father, - only then was the family really in danger.

The German child, no longer knowing what good, truly private "gemuetlich" family life was like, is probably unaware how deeply it has been robbed. But it must feel the lack of protective warmth, of affection,

and ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ security even if it is not conscious of this. I have seen and spoken to many German children who were sent to foreign countries for a few weeks' holiday. On an average they are not cheerful, not earnest, hard but not of firm character, sly not intelligent, unchildlike but not mature. These children do not play. They have no time for play but their thoughts are turned to war. Baldur von Schirach, "Reichsjugendfuehrer", admits this himself: "The toy store keepers complained to me," he writes, "that these babies no longer have any desire for toys. They are exclusively interested in tents, javelins, compasses and maps. I cannot help the toy store keepers, because I also firmly believe that the time for "Indians" ^{has} ~~is~~ finally passed. Take a look at the ten-year-old 'Pimpfe' (a new German word!) see how they march, holding their banners. They don't play anymore. They live for their group!"

No! This narrow circle about the German child, the one that used to be decisive for his whole life, no longer means very much. Since the family cannot be converted into a State organisation, the State fights the family, and for the moment there can be no doubt, that the State conquers the family.

The next circle is school. And this is already a matter of greater importance, since a curriculum can be altered, since the Men in Power have the might to control it almost entirely and since Propaganda Institutions for National Socialism can be inserted where, in the olden days, the child was "only" taught.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I could go on for hours telling you what is happening within the German schools today and to what an incredible degree the maxims of the "Fuehrer" which I quoted for you, are being followed there.

And, as a matter of fact, proof exists, that young people in the Universities, who but yesterday were enthusiastic members of the Hitler Youth Organisations, show themselves to be disgusted and disappointed. They even go so far as to protest. ~~Stoß~~ Leaders and Nazi great men, ~~who~~ disguised as professors, ~~XXXXXX~~ preach before empty seats. While those few, who show a little pre- and post-national Socialistic knowledge and a little pre- and post-nationalistic character, ~~in spite of the desert about them, filled with hatred~~ enjoy astonishingly great demonstrations of popularity. There are proofs that from the circles of young workers, too, again and again voices reach the world without: voices telling the truth, in pamphlets, sending out illegal oppositional material, and giving expression to their hope of a different and better future. It is also known: the Church is keeping its influence on youth, ^{its} and the power that is thousands of years old. This could not be overcome by a handful of ignorant upstarts.

We have ~~There are~~ objective proofs, ^{*we have*} ~~And there is~~ more and better than that. ~~There is a~~ ^{*We have*} deep conviction of the ultimate conquest of right and faith in it.

We believe in the power of renewal of the German people, which ~~was~~ politically ~~uneducated~~ ^{*difficulties*} distressed by the ~~difficulties~~ of an economically endangered period which threw it into the hands of a charlatan - saviour, coming to it out of the darkness. We have faith in the moral and spiritual sources of this country, now buffed under, but which produced everything ^{ever} great that came out of Germany. We believe in reason and in the indestructibility ^{*city*} of man's highest ideas and which cannot be wiped out of the hearts of German Youth for a long period. We believe in the ultimate victory of freedom and Justice and that ~~XXXXXX~~ truth will triumph.

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