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Broadcasting to German women.

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Erika Mann:

Broadcasting to German women.

-I-

General Approach :

I consider the following to be true with regard to the majority of our German listeners, be they male or female. It ought, therefore, to be borne in mind by anyone talking to Germany's women.

1.) All Germans listening to our broadcasts are risking their lives by doing so. This means that what we ~~must~~ say should be extremely worthwhile. It will be better for us to say less than to alienate our audiences by saying lots of things many of which ~~will~~^{fail} to justify the danger involved. We shall have to be exciting in some way, - either moving, or frightening, or elevating, or revealing; when we try to be funny, we ought to be exceedingly funny, very daring and snappy. Our jokes must be fit to be repeated and they must hit hard. Experience ^{if made} shows that wisecracks that would be utterly successful within Germany are apt to flop when broadcast from abroad. We should never forget that a German comedian who dares to poke fun at the "azis from a Munich stage, bravely endangers himself, while not endangering his audience. We endanger our audience, while not endangering ourselves. That's the decisive difference.

2.) There are four ^{main types of broadcasts} ~~kinds of broadcasting~~ which I should classify as follows, according to their importance and effectiveness.

a) simple, uncommented newscasts. (It is the news for the sake of which the majority of our listeners tune in on our broadcasts.)

b.) News-talks, or objective commentaries, explaining the significance ^{and meaning} of various news-items to our listeners, who, in many cases, will be

unable to straighten out matters for themselves.

c.) Personal talks,- appeals, or "sermons" ,given by well-known personalities and directly addressing Germanys women, mothers, wives, or any other group ^{who have to recognize the} ~~who would recognize the~~ speaker as an authority in his particular field.

d.) "Features",- scenes, sketches, presentations of a literary or musical character,- parodies, imitations (of Hitler, for instance) etc. It ought to be remembered, however, that, according to all reports received in London, "features" generally fail to be successful, which does not mean that they ought to be omitted. It merely means that, where there is no news-value on the one hand and no strongly personal appeal on the other, there will have to be powerful qualities of some sort. Harmless "genre"-pieces ^{from} ~~in~~ the Munich Hofbraeu-Haus, or old-fashioned horror-scenes from a Concentration-Camp will not do.

3.) We shall have to assume that the majority of our listeners used to be "good Nazis" and, even today, are "good Germans". They are "patriotic" and adhere, if not to all Nazi-slogans, so at least to the formula "right or wrong, my country". At the same time, however, the majority is worried, dissatisfied, disillusioned, undernourished, scared and bewildered. Many are dull and resigned, others nervous and easily excited. The Germans as a whole, but quite particularly the women, are politically ignorant. They always have been. In fact it was partly their lack of political education that helped Hitler into power. Needless to say that political education in Germany has decayed since 1933 and that, today, most of the political terms and concepts current in the U.S.A have become meaningless to Mr. Hitler's subjects. Even notions like ~~humanism~~ "freedom" should not be used without being defined. "Democratic freedom"- the Germans have been told for a decade, "is the

freedom to be unemployed; the freedom to starve to death; the freedom to be exploited by private racketeers, - etc."

We shall, therefore, concentrate on tangible, practical themes, rather than discuss politics with out listeners. The happenings of German every-day-life should be our subject. We ought to study the German Press and dig out any human interest-story, anything we consider to be disturbing, disquieting, alarming to our female audiences. Furthermore: it is a generally accepted fact that the older German generation furnishes the greater part of our listeners, whereas Hitler's youth has, so far, been virtually unapproachable. We may, therefore, count and work on the memory of those to whom we talk. The first world-war and its outcome is still fresh in their mind. It will be useful to compare its various stages with those of world-war number two. But, here again: we should avoid any too "professionally political" approach, but should stick to the simple human aspects. For instance, the health-situation will prove to be a useful theme to be discussed. As there are virtually no physicians left within Germany and as rumors concerning the outbreak of diseases in the east are wide-spread, it will be easy to upset our women by reminding them of the devastating results of the "Spanish Grippe" ⁱⁿ 1918. Things are going to be worse this time. They are going to be worse in every respect. Have our listeners forgotten how they have grown worse, ever since 1933? We should remind them of the gradual decay that has gone on ever since then and is still in process. Where will it lead to? We shall have to indicate where it will lead to if, a), they follow their "Fuehrer" to the disastrous end, - b), if they make an end themselves, before the Nazi-defeat will be obvious to the world, including the German armies. Both these points will, of course, ^{have to} be ~~handtled~~ with the greatest care, as we

must never committ ourselves. However, it will be possible in general terms to picture the difference which would necessarily exist between a Germany which has flatly been defeated, and a Germany which, after having voluntarily overthrown her political and military leaders, stands ready peacefully to cooperate with a peaceful world. The sinner - and we should never deny Germany's guilt - who bethinks himself will be accepted, whereas he who remains stubborn to the very end will have little to hope for.

A mixture of the practical and the moral approach can be recommended. We ought to be both, practically convincing, and morally moving, - be it in an elevating or a frightening manner.

While discussing the actual events of the war, we should again concentrate on its human aspects. What does, - for instance - the re-capture of Moshaisk mean to their boys? How does the situation in the occupied countries affect their husbands? How will their own daily life and that of their kids be affected by America's entry into the war? Etc.

[illegible]

* It goes without saying that we are not suggesting that Hitler's game be played and Jews be excluded. For merely tactical reasons, however, the percentage of Jewish contributions should be kept within certain limits.

II.

Outlining one specific approach.

It is our admitted goal to bring about the collapse of German morale. In order to achieve this goal we shall not only discourage our listeners by forcing them to realize the ultimate hopelessness of their situation, we shall also mirror for them their own thoughts, fears, apprehensions, and doubts, many of which they may never have admitted to themselves, but which we know to exist just the same. We shall not, however, preach to them and say: "You doubt - don't you? You are afraid - are you not?" We shall, on the contrary, present them with a living specimen of what many of them already are and what we wish the rest of them to become.

Once or twice a week a German woman - reads out of her diary. She is very German, indeed, utterly patriotic, devoted to "Fuehrer und Vaterland", an obedient citizen of the "Third Reich", deeply ignorant of conditions in the outside world. Despite all this, however, doubts, fears, and apprehensions ^{obscure} are creeping into her lines. Life has become dark and frightening. It has ^{stark} become lonely. Even two years ago the house was ~~ultra~~ full of love and laughter. The boy was only sixteen, then; of course he had to spend a great deal of time in the "Hitler-Jugend". Yet he still belonged to her - to a modest degree. Now he's in Russia. She hasn't heard from him for months. The Fuehrer has commissioned Professor Trost with the creation of beautiful memorials for all soldiers killed in action. She doesn't want any beautiful memorial; she wants her boy. It's so cold in Russia; there are rumors of diseases having broken out on the eastern front; all Austria has been turned into one gigantic hospital, so they say, and thousands are being killed by our army-doctors, just because they ^{are not any longer} ~~are not any longer~~ fit for this war. Why has his Christmas-leave been canceled? Why doesn't she hear from him? Of course, one has to be patient. One must trust the Fuehrer and his

wisdom. Must one? Her brother whom she loved was killed in Poland right in the beginning of the war. How full of confidence he had been! And her husband seems to remain in France for ever. Is it true that he has been refused a leave for almost a year? Or does he prefer to stay where he is? Has some French Belle got hold of him? She herself is not a Belle, - she is not good-looking any longer. How could she be, when she even lacks the soap to shampoo her hair? She has aged for years since this war broke out, this terrible war which an envious world forced upon Germany, and which the Führer never wanted, nay, which he promised to prevent. Has he never wanted it? Why, then, has he ^gprepared for it, ever since 1933? Why had the boy to be educated the way he was? Why had the country become one enormous army-camp, long before there was any talk of an attack on Germany? Had Germany been attacked? My God, she mustn't ask silly questions, mortally dangerous questions, questions she would be 'liquidated' for, if anyone knew. Nobody must know. Nobody must know about any of her minor but numerous misdeeds, either. If the Blockwart saw the bit of butter she illegally purchased in the country! If he discovered the woolen blanket she should have given to the "Winterhilfe"! She means to keep the blanket for the boy so that ~~he'd~~ he'd be warm, when he'd come home on leave. The boy! He's only eighteen. Never had she expected him to get into this war which should have been over long long ago. It was a terrible disappointment when it was not over after the collapse of France. But, clearly, England ^{be finished} was bound to ~~finish~~ in the ~~HHH~~ fall of 1940. Let's see: what did she write in her diary, then? She reads. The phrases ring with hope, with false, erroneous hope, as she now knows. Who planted such hope into her heart? Never mind. Don't ask dangerous questions again. It's bewildering, just the same. She's feeling rotten today, - today, February the 22nd. What did life look

like last year on this same day? She reads. Everything seemed radiant compared with now. "England facing starvation, America's feeling overwhelmingly isolationist, Roosevelt's Lend-Lease-program without a chance, Russia loyal to her pact with us, our victory a matter of months, if not weeks." How false, how terribly erroneous! Something must have gone wrong. Or was it that something was wrong? That something was wrong with this entire Nazi-enterprise? That something had been wrong with it from the very beginning? - "Right is what serves our purpose". How about that? Was lying, was denouncing and betraying one's best friends, was murdering "right" as long as it "served our purpose"? Hardly. And when it did not ^{even} serve our purpose any longer, what then? She can't find an answer to that, or, rather, she doesn't dare pronounce the answer she knows to be correct, deep down in her heart. One ought to talk to somebody. Maybe her neighbour, the young widow next door, feels the way she does. Maybe lots of people do. Maybe most Germans do. One ought to find out. This war must be stopped, - something must be done, - something would be done, if only "most Germans" felt the way she did and acted accordingly. Whose ^{fault} ~~guilt~~ was it when nothing was being ~~done~~ and when the slaughtering continued, terribly, senselessly, murderously? ~~Who~~ was guilty?

For the first time in years she desires to pray. Where are the little prayers of her childhood? Nothing but a bit of poetry comes into her mind, or is it a prayer, after all? "S'ist Krieg, s'ist leider Krieg, - o Gottes Engel wehre und fahre Du darain! S'ist Krieg, - und ich begehre nicht schuld daran zu sein."

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The German woman's diary, read in installements, about once or twice a week, should start, regularly, with some significant personal experience she had during these last days. It should continue by discussing in a

personal, very human way, the important events of these ^{last} days. Subsequently she should compare the present with the past (same date last year), should switch back to "now", and should conclude ^{on a comforting, though lately resolving} ~~with a comforting, resolving~~ note "it's up to us, - in a sense it is still up to us, - my God, why don't we do something? We should, we shall, - I shall see to it, I promise!"

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American Propaganda to Germany from London.
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While negotiating with the B.B.C. we ought to bear in mind that the evening-hours are the only good and "secure" ones, as atmospheric conditions will frequently prevent our German listeners - the majority of whom have nothing but their "VOLKSEMPFAENGER" - to catch anything we broadcast during day-light-hours. All important B.B.C.-broadcasting is either done, or repeated in the evening!

We should also remember that the sound of anything we "beam" over from here, though it may be recorded in London and strengthened, before being re-broadcast, will be slightly, if not badly distorted and make difficult listening. We should not think of ourselves listening to Churchill's ~~speeches~~ speeches from London etc. For we are free to receive the tone in full strength and sure to hear well, even if there are lots of side-noises to disturb us. Our German listeners cannot afford any such thing. They will often have to reduce the tone to a mere whisper which they will be unable to understand when it is drowned by noises. While in London I regularly listened to my father's broadcasts from the U.S.A. Some of them sounded all right; but many others were spoiled on their way across the ocean.

It seems, therefore, advisable to differentiate between those transmissions which, on account of their urgent news-character, have to be sent "on the beam" regardless of all possible disturbances, and those which could as well be recorded here and sent to London by Bomber.

However, there remains this third possibility:

An American representative of the Coordinator of Information could be stationed in London. Before his departure from here he receives instructions concerning the type and line of broadcasts the C.O.I. wants to be done. He remains in contact by cable and phone with his New York office

who inform him of any particular item they want him to stress and discuss, of any new angle New York has decided upon. He, on his part, makes arrangements with speakers and actors in London. The material to be used comes partly from the U.S. - by cable, telephone, or air-mail, ^{but will partly be} ~~partly~~ ~~produced~~ ~~in London~~ according to orders from New York.

The advantage of such a scheme is obvious: any American broadcast done by the London representative of the Coordinator will reach Germany with the same promptitude and clearness as do all B.B.C.-presentations (in the evening hours!)

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P. S. Please note:

Two evening-hours a week are preferable
to seven daylight-hours during the same period!