

Germany's "Inner Emigration"--and Some of the Survivors

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"AREN'T you ashamed of yourself, maltreating a fellow-human, being like this?" Count Leo Tolstoy once indignantly asked a brother officer whom he saw brutally strike a soldier who had fallen out from the ranks: "Haven't you read the Gospels?" But the officer calmly replied: "And haven't you read Army Orders?"

Between 1933 and 1945 many German writers, especially the older ones, wondered how they could possibly comply with the barbaric "Army Orders" of the Third Reich and at the same time conform to the laws of decency and humanity. But could anyone really expect to render unto God the things that are God's without challenge to Hitler's claim to the totality of a German's personality? The German writers of Jewish origin were, in a sense, fortunate, in so far as they were excluded as a group

from the possibility of coming to terms with nazism.

As for the non-Jews, quite a few preferred exile to being supervised by Goebbels' Reichsschrifttumskammer. Among those were such outstanding people as Bert Brecht, Leonhard Frank, Oskar Maria Graf, Annette Kolb, the Mann brothers, Erich Maria Remarque, Albrecht Schaeffer, Fritz von Unruh and Carl Zuckmayer. After Heinrich Mann had been ousted from the presidency of the Academy of Writers, the great poet, Stefan George, although a nationalist himself, refused to take this office and preferred a voluntary exile in Switzerland, where he died in December, 1933.

However, the majority of writers did not leave the fatherland. Some jumped ardently upon the Nazi bandwagon, like Hanns Heinz Ewers who discarded his liberalism to glorify the pimp and killer, Horst Wessel. Or the turncoat Hanns Johst who in one of his chauvinistic dramas made

the hero exclaim: "Whenever I hear the word Kultur, I am ready to shoot!" Other authors were more reluctant to swear allegiance to the Third Reich, yet they remained in Germany because they were primarily Germans and considered nazism only a transitory phenomenon, or because nazism did not seem to them entirely devoid of positive aspects, or because they simply did not wish to lose their security.

SINCE the fall of Hitlerism all those German writers who had not actively and ostensibly supported the Third Reich now like to be referred to as "Inner Emigrants," presenting themselves as people who, intellectually, had nothing in common with Hitlerism, had even attacked it as much as this was possible, although they had never actually left German soil. In the strict sense of the word, however, only such non-Nazis as the renowned novel-

ist, Ricarda Huch, who has been engaged in writing a comprehensive history of the concentration camps, or the satirist Erich Kaestner who is now editing an independent literary magazine in Germany never were tainted with any Nazi affiliations at all. Most of the others have, in different degrees and for different reasons, contributed to the unleashing of dogs of war, to the horrors of Auschwitz and Maidanek, even though they may not have approved of the atrocities committed by the Third Reich.

By a strange irony of fate, whatever little anti-Nazism managed to develop under the very noses of the gentlemen of the Reich's Chamber of Literature, came, not from former leftist or bourgeois liberal writers who had remained in Germany and were constantly being shadowed by the Gestapo, but largely from the nationalists who, through their earlier writings, had prepared the

German youth for the Hitler state. These "rebels" had previously written against the Weimar Republic, against democracy, pacifism, internationalism. They had clamored for a powerful, militaristic Germany, led by professional soldiers. They came to resent the Hitlerite version of their dreams not so much because they disliked the Nazi atrocities—as many of them probably did—but primarily because they resented an uncouth plebeian corporal as Fuehrer and all the aspects of common philistinism he stood for.

ONE of the best known of these "national revolutionaries" (or "national bolsheviks," as they were often called) was Ernst Juenger. In the first World War he had received from the Kaiser the Pour le Merite Order for gallantry displayed in action. In the era of the Weimar Republic he

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had written several books assailing pacifism, glorifying war as a way of life, and thus paving the ground for the Nazis. "We cannot possibly be nationalist enough," he wrote in 1925. "The merging of all Germans into the great empire of one hundred millions which the future will bring—that is an aim for which it is worth while to die and to beat down all opposition."

ORDINARILY one would have expected a man who had coined the phrase "total mobilization," to become an ardent propagandist of the Third Reich. Juenger, however, kept aloof, and in a novel, "The Marmor Cliffs" (1939) even attacked the Nazi regime in metaphoric language: Hitler is identified as the novel's "chief forester" who leads a gang of ambitious and ruthless men to conquer a nation of peaceful shepherds. In "Gardens and Street" (1941) Juenger declared that if he had to choose between Bellona, the war goddess offering to teach him the art of commanding twenty regiments, and Minerva, the goddess of wisdom offering to teach him the art of stringing twenty words together in a beautiful sentence, he would decide for the latter. Thereupon the Voelkischer Beobachter commented sourly: "For us twenty regiments seem to be of greater importance."

Juenger, who served again in the army in the Second World War, was not bothered by the Gestapo—probably because he enjoyed the protection of the Wehrmacht. Interviewed after the war by the British poet, Stephen Spender, Juenger insisted that he no longer adhered to his former rabidly militaristic views. Karl O. Paetel, an independent German Socialist (who recently published in the United States a Juenger biography), had to admit, though, that this change of heart had not turned Juenger into a believer in the idea of democracy as we understand it. Significantly, a pamphlet, "The Peace," which Juenger wrote at the end of the war, has been widely circulated by nationalist and pro-Nazi circles!

THERE were nationalists who went further in their opposition to the Third Reich. Ernst Juenger's brother, Friedrich Georg, became famous through a daring lengthy poem, "The Poppy," which was circulated clandestinely throughout Nazi Germany. It begins innocently with a praise of the poppy and its juice, a hypnotic and a reliever of pain, and it leads up to a sharp condemnation of the swindlers and fakers, the demagogues and jugglers, dominating the Reich. While the author of "The Poppy" lived to see the end of Hitlerism, another lyrical poet, Albrecht Haushofer, a son of the famous geopolitician Professor Karl Haushofer, paid with his life for his rebellious verses. Related to these nationalists only through their spirit of opposition are such devoutly Christian poets as Werner Bergengruen and Rein-

hold Schneider, the Leipzig publisher, Karl Rauch, and the young Rhineland, Helga Grimm, who deplored in her stanzas the anti-Jewish pogroms.

Still, if we had to select one of the "inner emigrants" to assign to him a major role in Germany's process of rehabilitation, we would not vote for any of the aforementioned personalities. Our selection would be the novelist Ernst Weichert. Like Pastor Niemoeller, the deeply religious Weichert spent a good part of the Nazi era in concentration camps. This ex-nationalist was arrested in 1935 after having warned the students at the University of Munich in a memorable speech not to overlook the differences between good and evil, justice and injustice, real ethics and "the ethics of boxers." After having been released, he reiterated his attacks on the regime and was promptly imprisoned again.

In a novel, "The Simple Life," which became a best-seller during the Nazi era, he challenged the Hitlerites' lust for power: "To be satisfied with what one has is the beginning of wisdom. Men strive and fight for glory, but best of all is the sweat of one's brow." After Hitler's fall Weichert published his reminiscences

of the Buchenwald concentration camp ("the Forest of the Dead") and a comedy ridiculing German servility.

Many writers tried to escape from the bestiality of the Third Reich into "Das Innere Reich" (the Inner Realm); this was, significantly, also the title of one of various vaguely oppositional literary magazines. A few writers chose to fight the Nazis by resorting to historiography. Thinly disguised critical allusions to nazism can be found, for instance, in the late Hermann Oncken's biography of Cromwell, in Fritz Reck-Malleczwien's volume on the sixteenth century Anabaptists, and in Frank Tiess' novel on the Byzantine Empire. In many instances the Gestapo preferred to have such far-seeing historians removed from the scene.

FAIRNESS demands that we should credit all who dared to raise any sort of protest within the Third Reich. Still we feel justified in saying that not one really outstanding anti-Fascist writer emerged in the Nazi state: no one to be compared with Louis Aragon, the anti-Fascist French writer, even as far as talent and sincerity are concerned. For that matter, not a single important

book of any type originated in the Third Reich, although the Nazis had loudly forecast a striking renaissance of German life and letters.

Will the German people as a whole eventually realize that they were wrong in delivering their souls to Caesar? Perhaps they will. But it is doubtful whether such half-Nazis (or at best, quarter Nazis) as the "National Revolutionaries" around Juenger, or such vacillating characters as Hans Fallada or Ernst Glaeser, could lead them on the road toward humanity and universalism. For the next few years, at least, one feels that the real emigrants should have a greater share in Germany's re-education than most of the so-called Inner Emigrants, in order to give aid to whatever truly democratic and anti-Fascist forces may have emerged from the spiritual ruins of Germany.

Specimens of the literature of the "Inner Emigration" can be found in the following volumes: "Deutsche Innere Emigration" and "Ernst Juenger," both by Karl O. Paetel, "and 'Neue Deutsche Gedichte,' edited by Heilmut Lehmann-Haupt, all published by Friedrich Krause, New York.