

SCHOOL FOR BARBARIANS

by

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with an introduction by

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INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT MY WHOLE long journey from East to West and back again across the vast continental stretches, the author of this book, my dear daughter Erika, was beside me; her faithful help enabled me to meet the demands of an enterprise, fruitful and gratifying indeed, yet at the same time not always easy. How often did she not act as interpreter between me and the public; both with the press, and when, after a lecture, I was questioned by the audience! I would answer in German, English being still rather hard for me; and she would skillfully translate — skillfully, and as I think very much to the advantage of my replies; since there was added to their content the charm of a sweeter voice and the animation of a gifted and intellectual feminine personality.

Accordingly my pleasure is great in being able to act the interpreter in turn between her and the American public; and to introduce her book to readers who are interested in the political and moral problems of the day. It has a repellent subject, this book: It tells, out of a fullness of knowledge, of education in Nazi Germany and of what National Socialism understands by this word. Yet strangely enough, the book is the opposite of repellent. For even its pain and anger are appealing; while the author's sense of humor, her power of seeing "the funny side," the gentle mockery in which she clothes her scorn, go far to make our horror dissolve in mirth. It enfolds the unlovely facts in a grace of style and a critical lucidity; and most consolingly opposes to the shocking and

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negative qualities of malice and falsity the positive and righteous force of reason and human goodness.

The fundamental theme of the book, education in Germany, proves to be an extraordinarily fruitful point of departure for an exposition of the whole National Socialist point of view. That it should be a woman who has chosen it is not strange, but it is surprising to see what a comprehensive and fully-informed portrayal of the totalitarian state results from this deliberate limitation to a single theme. The picture is so complete that a foreigner wishing to penetrate into that uncanny world might say that he knows it after he has read this book. All the grim concentration of the present German leaders on the single thought of the power of the State; all their desperate determination to subordinate to that idea the whole intellectual and spiritual life of the nation, without one single human reservation—all of it comes out with startling clarity in this description and analysis, accompanied by a wealth of only too convincing detail of the National Socialist educational program.

I say program because it is of the future. It is an inexorable first draft of what the German of the future is to be. Nothing escapes it. With iron consistency and relentlessness, fanatically, deliberately, meticulously, the Nazis have gone about putting this one single idea into practice and applying it to each and every department and phase of education. The result is that education is never for its own sake; its content is never confined to training, culture, knowledge, the furtherance of human advancement through instruction. Instead it has sole reference, often enough with implication of violence, to the fixed idea of national preeminence and warlike preparedness.

The issue is clear! It is a radical renunciation—ascetic in the worst sense of the word—of the claims of mind and spirit; and in these words I include the conceptions truth, knowledge, justice—in short all the highest and purest endeavors of which humanity is capable. Once, in times now forgotten, we knew a definition: “to be German, means to do a thing for its own sake.” The words have lost all

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meaning. German youth is to devote itself to nothing for its own sake; for everything is politically conditioned, everything shaped and circumscribed to a political end. The sense of objective truth is done to death; it is referred to something outside of itself, to a purpose which must be a German purpose—the purpose of the State to have absolute power over the minds of men within its borders, and to extend its power beyond them.

Such an arbitrary purpose, such a permeation of all truth and all research with political aims, makes us shudder; and the shudder is even more physical than it is moral. The program is so violent, so unhealthy, so convulsive that it thereby betrays how ill-adapted it is to the nature of the people upon whom it is inflicted—or rather, who believe that they must inflict it upon themselves. The glory of the German nation has always lain in a freedom which is the opposite of patriotic narrow-mindedness, and in a special and objective relation to mind. Germany gave birth to the phrase: “Patriotism corrupts history.” It was Goethe who said that. The true and extra-political nature of this people, its true vocation to mind and spirit, become clear today in the very immoderation, the “thoroughness” with which it abjures its best, its classic characteristics, offering them up on the altar of totalitarian politics at the behest of leaders who do not feel the sacrifice. This people of the “middle” is in actual fact a people of extremes. Shall we have power, shall we be political? Then away with spirit, away with truth and justice, independent knowledge and culture! Heroically it throws its humanity overboard, to put itself in alignment for world-mastery.

Should not one remind them of the words of the Scriptures: “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” The words do not deny the existence of power. They do assert the truth: that power must have content and meaning, an inner justification in order to be genuine, tenable and recognized by mankind; and that this justification comes only from

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spirit. Is it not hopeless folly to seek after a good by means which emasculate and demolish the very good one is striving for? How do the German people and their leaders picture to themselves the exercise of a European hegemony paid for by such moral and intellectual sacrifices as are demanded by the National Socialist plan of education? Have, in fact, a people any calling to power, when they must make such sacrifices to achieve it? When they must put at their head all the lowest and basest elements, all the worst and crudest, most un- and anti-intellectual, and give these absolute power over themselves?

Is the world to be won over in such a wise, even after one has dominated it? Can a power persist and be applied, when it had to assert itself against the whole pressure of scorn and hatred which such methods invariably call forth? Is it not indeed a pathetic delusion, that a people who have put themselves or been put in the position of the German people today could ever conquer anything? A people intellectually debased and impoverished, morally degraded — and they expect to conquer the earth! It makes one laugh. We do not get the better of others by destroying ourselves; and nothing is more foolish than to take all idealism for stupidity. Truth, and the freedom to seek it, are not luxury-products which enervate a people and unfit them for the struggle of life. They belong to life, they are life's daily bread. The saying "Truth is what profits me" springs from the depths; from the convulsions of an anti-idealistic ideal which deludes nobody, uses nobody to its own good, but simply hastens its own collapse. It is an open secret that German science is deteriorating, that Germany is falling behind in all the domains of the intellect. The process will go irresistibly on, it will be irretrievably consummated in fact, if the sort of people who have the say today are given enough time to put into execution their malignant program of national "fitness."

I join with the author of this book in the hope that the higher

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gifts and necessities of the German people may assert themselves betimes against presumptions so false and so hostile to life and to the human spirit.

THOMAS MANN

New York, May seventh, 1938.

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PROLOGUE

THE LITTLE SWISS TOWN of St. Gall is very near the German frontier. And Mrs. M., who has come out of Germany especially to speak to me, is to meet me here. I park my little Ford in the square; a huge car, a magnificent pale Mercedes in front of the hotel, catches my attention — dusty, just come from Germany, from Munich, as the license-plates show. Its number is conspicuously low, the number of a government official. I feel uncomfortable at the sight. Mrs. M. shouldn't even be speaking to me. It's daring to receive me, even in a friendly hotel on neutral ground; she could be arrested for it when she returns to Munich. For haven't I been guilty of high treason — or at least what they call high treason over there? Haven't I failed to show the respect due the gentlemen of the Third Reich? Haven't I chosen to leave their rule rather than accept it — to get out, go anywhere to escape the whiff of blood — Prague, Amsterdam, New York, St. Gall?

I look around for an owner for the Mercedes, and to make sure that no one has recognized me. But, in the still noon, the hotel square is deserted. I take heart, run past the doorman, up the wide old staircase to Room 14. Mrs. M. wishes to speak to me, in spite of the danger and although she does not know me personally. I knock, and she opens the door.

She is tall and blonde — a slim, strong woman with blue-gray eyes, a little bridge of freckles across her nose, and tanned bare arms. In her light linen dress, she looks like the perfect advertisement for a summer resort.

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"I almost imagined that was your car," I begin, "— the official one in front."

She starts a little.

"An official car?" she repeats, and, very low, "Did you give your name downstairs?"

She has the nervous habit of looking about furtively, as if there might be people under the bed, past the curtains, behind the door. It is a phobia of those who come out of Nazi Germany.

"Returning today?" I ask.

Yes, she is. This is a day trip; they expect her home.

Now that we are speaking, we close the windows without a word and in perfect accord, this woman from Germany and I.

She has the Southern accent that I love. And she will be able, surely, to tell me about Munich, my native city, my childhood home that I have not seen for over four years. Sometimes in dreams I wander in its streets, or float dreaming over the Marienplatz, across the old section of the town, down towards the Isar River.

But Mrs. M. and I have things to discuss; no time for emotional excursions into dream cities.

She has stayed in Germany. No reason to leave; she and her husband are both all-Aryan. Her husband a well-paid physician; they have a pleasant apartment, a decent existence.

"As a matter of fact, it's *not* a decent one," she says. "It's degrading. But what *are* we to do?"

Of course, Dr. M. is a member of the Party and of the Reich Medical Association, and of the *Fachschaft* (the Nazi professional union) — he must be, to exist. I needn't ask about that.

"And you? Do you belong to any of the women's unions (*Kameradinnenschaften*)?"

"Woman's place is in the home," she quotes her Führer's inspired, living phrase.

And then laughs and admits that she is a semi-official personage in Munich.

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"I'm blessed not only with a perfect Nordic long-and-narrow skull," she goes on, "but I have the precisely correct pelvic measurements too, the desired bust, and the prescribed breadth of hip. The gentlemen on the Board of Health examined and tested, felt and measured everything, and found it all just about perfect. Then they photographed me, and listed the figures on the picture; and, all year, I've had the honor of gracing the calendar. The perfect brood-mare, recommended by the State! It would be funny enough, if it weren't so sad, and so disgusting," she adds, and the officially tested-and-photographed, guaranteed-genuine Nordic mouth is smiling wryly.

"And now you want to leave? After all this time, why?"

She opens her little bag, and pulls out a leather case. "This is why," she says, unfolding the leather photograph frame, with its six pictures.

I look at the baby in his poses, laughing, shouting, crying, waving his hand, making a little fist. "His name is Franz," his mother says, setting the frame up, on the table before us.

"I beg your pardon," I venture, "but I don't quite understand. Is it because of him that you want to leave? But your little Franz is an Aryan; everything will be easy for him, all doors opened. You see, we on the outside aren't so much in favor of emigration," I have to add, seeing her surprise. "It's worse than you expect when you go away — harder, less friendly — and then, we think — you will understand — that those who can stay in the Reich safely should stay. Especially if they are *not* in accord with the godforsaken brainlessness about them. "It is so *important* that a little intelligence and reason should remain within the country."

I look away from the pictures. But Mrs. M. is speaking without her hesitation, now — volubly, clearly, her smooth forehead lined by two deep lines of anger and decision.

"No," she disagrees, "he wouldn't have an easy time at all — he would be miserable. Reason! I've had four years of that, and I'm through with that kind of reason. I can't even get chicken soup for the child, or stewed fruit, or a good broth. There's no chance of buying

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reasonable food in those war-camps of cities. Not even hominy!" she cries, "nor rice!" accusingly. "There's a shortage of eggs today, and tomorrow it will be butter. And it's so much worse all the time — everything's grown worse in four-and-a-half years — food, clothing, laws and spies. No one lives in safety in our country." She shakes her head indignantly. "Not even the most harmless people know what it's like not to be in constant danger — of arrest at any moment, denounced by anyone who finds it worth his while, for some unfortunate remark he may or may not have made. If my husband has to press a Nazi patient for his bill, we live in fear of his saying we've made fun of the Führer, or joked about the Minister of Propaganda. And if that happens, we'll both be arrested with no one to ask why — and our son would have to manage for himself."

I like her, standing beautiful and defiant, looking down at the pictures of her son who will have to manage, and who cannot have his hominy, and will not have his rice tomorrow. I pretend to know less than I do, and seem more ignorant to find out what this woman really thinks and feels. I need to discover the reason driving her out of her country after four-and-a-half years of "reason." So I tell her that I know she is unhappy and worried by material lacks. But it isn't so different from wartime. "I was a child during the War," I argue, "we really had hardly a thing to eat, but we were gay, alert children."

Mrs. M. interrupts me here. Her voice trembles with impatience. "What *are* you talking about? As if you didn't know the difference! As if you didn't know how sensible things were, comparatively, during the War! Germany was really threatened then, from the outside, and we did without things then for a good and sufficient reason. But now, in peacetime, so that we may threaten and bluster and our fine Herr Führer may rattle his saber and act like a madman until the world is in panic? Really, it isn't the lack of butter that makes me decide — it's all the other things. I want the child to become a human being, a good and decent man who knows the difference between lies and truth, aware of liberty and dignity and true reason, not the op-

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portunistic reason 'dictated by policy' which turns black white if it's useful at the moment. I want the boy to become a decent human being — a man and not a Nazi!"

Our drinks arrive: gentian brandy, from the big healthful mountain gentians — tasting like the meadows and pastures of the mountain country that is our home country, this woman's and mine.

"To the young gentleman," I drink the toast, "to Junker Franz — may he become a human being!"

We will have to go, soon; she, so simply, back to Munich (I feel it in the pit of my stomach and in my knees), and I "home" to Zurich, where my parents are now living. But I want to hear more from her, and the afternoon is advancing. I pretend ignorance, a little ashamed to be asking her questions that are not entirely frank, ashamed to subject her to these questions, now that her angry determined look has passed, in this late light, to helplessness and tenderness and perplexity before the meanness and injustice she is remembering. I ask her how much she can expect to influence Franz when he is a little older. She has admitted that she is afraid of the schools' influence — the new schools, which teach that the German people are 100,000,000 strong (generously including all the German-speaking population, Dutch, Austrian, Polish, or even American), and that one is German by the grace of God and the State, and in God's name by the grace of the Führer of the Third Reich and his Archangels, the Leaders of the Third Reich.

She expects nothing.

"There's no influence possible," she tells me. "It isn't only school, it's the Hitler Youth Group, enforced camp life, *Wehrsport* — sport whose purpose is to teach defense from martial attack — and by then Franz will come home, saluting with his hand up. Then, if I suggest that he go and do his lessons, he'll say, 'But I'm going to target-practice!' And if I tell him he'll never learn anything that way, with those bad manners, he can denounce me. And, at first, I shall only be warned."

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"And what about religion?" I ask, knowing the answer as I speak, "Won't his religious teachers affect him?"

The answer is that the best of them will be in concentration camps, under the pretexts of rape, robbery, or having sold their stamp collections into foreign countries (which is punishable by death). But she tells me a story instead:

"A friend of mine, a girl from school, married very young, right after graduation. She married a Jew. And her son, Wolfgang, who is seven now, is a half-Jew. I asked her how he was the other day; and she said, 'He's fine — a little better today, really; at least the sun's not out.' I didn't understand at all. She had to explain: 'On fine days, all the other boys play in the yard — and then he cries because he can't play with them — of course he can't, he's half-Jewish.' The mother was quite calm as she said that," Mrs. M. finishes, "but I won't forget her face as she said '... at least the sun's not out.'" She looks away. "And Franz, growing up, will be among the boys, true Christians, in brown shirts, playing in the yard, while little Wolfgang cries and cries."

Mrs. M. is drawn up tall again, defiant and hard. "I'd rather have the right to comfort that boy when he cries, than *not* to have the right to slap my own son for that kind of revolting cruelty!" That is the alternative, the one choice of rights that is left.

She adds: "Have you any idea what a great man Wolfgang's father was, before the government changed? He was a physician and surgeon — my husband's superior at the hospital. Just after Hitler came in, they had an emergency operation, a little 'Aryan' boy with appendicitis. Peritonitis had begun; it was a matter of life and death, you see, and the Professor, who still held his post, was performing the operation himself. And in the silence of the operating room, deep under the anaesthetic, the child began to scream, suddenly, shouting phrases cut so deep into his soul that they remained even during the death under ether. 'Down with the Jews!' he cried out, 'Kill the Jews, we have to get rid of them!' My husband tells me that moment

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gripped him — the calm Jewish Professor, going steadily on with the operation, the knife not trembling, everything going ahead to save that screaming child. And, really, on the other side, a thing like that is far worse than any humiliation for a child, far uglier, more hopeless. It drives me mad to think that my son might ever be able to turn to death and murder in his sleep, because he had been taught to do so, and because I had no right to stop that teaching. I don't think that could happen to me — it's unreal, a nightmare; but it has the power of a nightmare, weighing on my chest, sitting at my head night and day; it tortures me until I weep; and when I sleep it cuts off my breath. But, profoundly in me, I know — as we know in dreams — it isn't true, I shall never let it go that far, I shall see that my son is brought up differently. He must never pass, on the way to school, those newspaper stands, where the *Stürmer* is up with all its obscenities; he must never define *Rassenschande* (the intermarriage or mingling of Jews and Aryans), nor the best ways of doing away with the French, the Jews and the students of the Bible. Let him learn what is right, not what is expedient; let him learn something of use in his life, and not spend all his time at target-practice. Then he won't denounce me, he will be quite fond of me and listen to what I tell him, when we speak. And he will love and serve the country we live in then; but he will know, too, that the love of freedom and justice comes before everything."

Outside, it has begun to rain, an almost invisible small drizzle that darkens the little room Mrs. M. of Munich has rented for the day in the hotel at St. Gall. My car is open, and I realize, in a corner of my mind past all these thoughts, that I shall have to sit on wet leather. . . .

But we still have a few details to go over. Mrs. M. is handing me her husband's papers — copies of all his certificates, diplomas going back into his childhood. His high-school diploma is touching to me, now that it is given to an unknown person so that it may speak for him somewhere, across some ocean.

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"Professor X. in Y. knows about us," says the woman, "he seems to be slightly interested. . . . Here is a letter of recommendation from *Geheimrat* S. — I thought that might help."

"Of course. Yes." I nod hopefully, but I hear my own voice, a little uncertain as I speak. "Surely it will. . . . I do hope for the best."

And now we are saying goodbye. Mrs. M. packs the photographs in the leather case. She holds a frame, waving to me with her other hand. "*Auf Wiedersehen*," she calls, "*Auf Wiedersehen* . . . in freedom!"

"Yes," I answer from the door, "*Viel Glück* — and may it be soon!"

* * *

Three weeks later I read that a physician and his wife have been arrested. Dr. M. of Munich has been placed in the concentration camp at Dachau; Mrs. M., in a Munich prison. They have often made derogatory remarks, it had been reported, about the construction program of the National Socialist regime. The son of this pair, Franz M., aged fourteen months — the paragraph concludes — has been committed to the State Children's Home. In this manner, it is to be hoped, it may still be possible to make a good National Socialist out of the boy.

HEIL

THE LIFE OF EVERY HUMAN being in Germany has been fundamentally changed since Adolf Hitler became Chancellor. When German democracy gave way to Nazi dictatorship, the upheaval was as drastic to the private life of the individual as it was to the State. Before February, 1933, the German citizen thought of himself as a father, or a Protestant, or a florist, or a citizen of the world, or a pacifist, or a Berliner. Now he is forced to recognize that above all he is a National Socialist.

The Führer's National Socialist *Weltanschauung* has to be gospel for every German citizen; his plans, and even the means to those ends, are to be unquestioningly revered.

No German group was more stringently affected by the changes of the dictatorship than the children. An adult German must be first a National Socialist, but he can — by now — be, in the second place, a shopkeeper or a manufacturer, without his shop or factory belonging to the State; but the German child is a Nazi child, and nothing else.

He attends a Nazi school; he belongs to a Nazi youth organization; the movies he is allowed to see are Nazi films. His whole life, without any reservation, belongs to the Nazi State.

Adults in Germany still retain some private interests, some knowledge of the world outside, where everything is so different from the picture inside Adolf Hitler's head. But the young have no individual interests; they know nothing of another world, with another rule.

The Führer's best bet lay, from the very beginning, in the inexperience and easy credulity of youth. It was his ambition, as it must be any dictator's, to take possession of that most fertile field for dic-

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tators: the country's youth. Not because of any ignorance of the young, but because whoever has them has the adults of tomorrow, and can flatter himself he is lord of the future.

If everything goes according to Mr. Hitler, Germans are to rule the world. "Whoever really desires the victory of the pacifist idea," he writes in *Mein Kampf*, "should use all his energy in helping the Germans to conquer the world." This future in which the Führer's obsession is to come to pass, can be made only by the apprentices of the Nazi State: the German youth.

All the power of the regime — all its cunning, its entire machine of propaganda and discipline — is directed to emphasize the program for German children. It is not surprising that the Nazi State considers it of primary importance that the young grow up according to Hitler's wishes, and the plans set in *Mein Kampf*: "Beginning with the primer, every theater, every movie, every advertisement must be subjected to the service of one great mission, until the prayer of fear that our patriots pray today: 'Lord, make us free,' shall be changed in the mind of the smallest child into the cry: 'Lord, do Thou in future bless our arms.'"

And, on another page: "All education must have the sole object of stamping the conviction into the child that his own people and his own race are superior to all others."

The Führer realizes that the education of German youth will have a tremendous influence on Germany's future — and on Europe's and the world's. He gives the problem the attention it deserves.

"If anyone asks me whether I have had trouble in the past, I must answer: Yes, I have never been without troubles. But I have mastered them. If they ask if I have troubles now, I must answer: I have many troubles. And when I am asked if I think I shall have trouble in the future, then I answer in the same manner: Yes, I believe that I shall never be free of trouble. But that is not the decisive thing. I shall master the troubles of the present and those of the future just as I mastered those of the past. But I have one great worry which really

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causes me trouble. And that is the worry that it may not be possible to educate successors for the leadership and political guidance of the National Socialist Party."

This matter of educating successors is a real fear. Hitler has maneuvered to make himself the absolute ruler of the lives of all Germans, and has taken over the lives of all of the German children, who not only are taken care of so that they live according to the will of the Führer, but also are made to have *no guide but the Führer*. And this is in the general air, that one breathes with such difficulty.

THE GREETING

Every child says "Heil Hitler!" from 50 to 150 times a day, immeasurably more often than the old neutral greetings. The formula is required by law; if you meet a friend on the way to school, you say it; study periods are opened and closed with "Heil Hitler!"; "Heil Hitler!" says the postman, the street-car conductor, the girl who sells you notebooks at the stationery store; and if your parents' first words when you come home to lunch are not "Heil Hitler!" they have been guilty of a punishable offense, and can be denounced. "Heil Hitler!" they shout, in the *Jungvolk* and Hitler Youth. "Heil Hitler!" cry the girls in the League of German Girls. Your evening prayers must close with "Heil Hitler!" if you take your devotions seriously.

Officially — when you say hello to your superiors in school or in a group — the words are accompanied by the act of throwing the right arm high; but an unofficial greeting among equals requires only a comparatively lax lifting of the forearm, with the fingers closed and pointing forward. This Hitler greeting, this "German" greeting, repeated countless times from morning to bedtime, stamps the whole day.

"Heil" really means salvation, and used to be applied to relations between man and his God; one would speak of *ewiges Heil* (eternal salvation), and the adjective "holy" derives from the noun. But now there is the new usage.

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German children say their "Heil Hitler!" as carelessly as they greeted each other in the War days with "God scourge England!" They will swallow half the consonants sometimes, making a strange new word. Or they will make a crack out of the "German" greeting, and say "Drei Liter" (three liters) instead of "Heil Hitler." That's fun, and no one can hold it against them. But always, formally and outwardly, and inwardly besides, the German child lives in the echo of "Heil Hitler!"

You leave the house in the morning, "Heil Hitler" on your lips; and on the stairs of your apartment house you meet the *Blockwart*. A person of great importance and some danger, the *Blockwart* has been installed by the government as a Nazi guardian. He controls the block, reporting on it regularly, checking up on the behavior of its residents. It's worth it to face right about, military style, and to give him the "big" Hitler salute, with the right arm as high as it will go. All the way down the street, the flags are waving, every window colored with red banners, and the black swastika in the middle of each. You don't stop to ask why; it's bound to be some national event. Not a week passes without an occasion on which families are given one reason or another to hang out the swastika. Only the Jews are excepted under the strict regulation. Jews are not Germans: they do not belong to the "Nation," they can have no "national events."

You meet the uniforms on the way to school: the black S.S. men, the men of the Volunteer Labor Service, and the *Reichswehr* soldiers. And if some of the streets are closed, you know that an official is driving through town. Nobody has ever told you that the high officials of other countries pass without the precautions of closed streets.

And here, where a building is going up, the workmen are gone — probably because of the "national event." But the sign is on the scaffolding: "We have our Führer to thank that we are working here today. Heil Hitler!" The familiar sign, seen everywhere with men at work, on roads, barracks, sport fields. What does it mean to you? Do you think of a world outside, with workers who need not thank a

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Führer for their jobs? Certainly not — what you have, imprinted on your mind, is the sentence, deep and accepted as an old melody.

There are more placards as you continue past hotels, restaurants, indoor swimming pools, to school. They read "No Jews allowed" — "Jews not desired here" — "Not for Jews." And what do you feel? Agreement? Pleasure? Disgust? Opposition? You don't feel any of these. You don't feel anything, you've seen these placards for almost five years. This is a habit, it is all perfectly natural, of course Jews aren't allowed here. Five years in the life of a child of nine — that's his life, after four years of infancy, his whole personal, conscious existence.

* * *

Through the Nazi streets walks the Nazi child. There is nothing to disturb him, nothing to attract his attention or criticism. The stands sell Nazi papers almost exclusively; all *German* papers are Nazi; foreign papers are forbidden, if they do not please the men at the top. The child won't be surprised at their huge headlines: "UNHEARD-OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST GERMANY IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA!" "JEWISH GANGSTERS RULE AMERICA!" "THE COMMUNIST TERROR IN SPAIN SUPPORTED BY THE POPE!" "150 MORE PRIESTS UNMASKED AS SEXUAL CRIMINALS!"

"That's how it is in the world," the child thinks. "What luck we're in, to have a Führer! He'll tell the whole bunch — Czechs, Jews, Americans, Communists and priests — where to get off!"

There are no doubts, no suspicion at the coarse and hysterical tone of the dispatches, no hint that they may be inexact or false. No, these things are part of the everyday world of the Nazis, like the *Blockwart*, the swastika, the signs reading "No Jews allowed." They add up to an atmosphere that is torture, a fuming poison for a free-born human being.

The German child breathes this air. There is no other condition wherever Nazis are in power; and here in Germany they do rule

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everywhere, and their supremacy over the German child, as he learns and eats, marches, grows up, breathes, is complete.

But, past the general influence of Nazi atmosphere, three special influences in the Reich determine the life of the child: the intimate circle of the family, the school, and the Hitler youth organizations.

THE FAMILY

THE TWO SLOGANS BEST used between 1919 and 1933 by the rising National Socialist movement were: "With the help of National Socialism we shall rescue religion from the threat of Bolshevism!" and "With the help of National Socialism we shall rescue the *family* from Bolshevism, which is trying to destroy it!"

They struck home in Germany, appealing as they did to two prime concepts. Even at the outset, National Socialism knew very well what it was about when it frightened the great bulk of the German middle class with the warning that Bolshevism would destroy religion, and so annul all the rights of conscience; that it would tear the family apart and offer up its members to an all-powerful government; that it would deify this monster State in place of religion. The middle-class German, traditionally a religious family-man, listened with horror to all of this. Shopkeeper, caretaker's wife, married office girl, and well-brought-up society woman — they all agreed to support the National Socialists who desired to protect religion and the family, and who ought to be strengthened in their work.

Hans Schlemm, who in 1933 became Bavarian Minister of Education, published a challenging pamphlet two years before Hitler made himself Chancellor. He called it *Mother or Comrade*. Here were all the praises of the family as a unit, its rights under the state, and the individual rights of "millions of separate personalities." And he condemned the "completely automatic, mechanically-functioning 'mass-apparatus.'"

Today we regard with historical curiosity the eagerness of the man,

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ornaments their position in the State, commanded secretly to be kept a secret!

These are policies dictated by a bad conscience, directed now, not against a world of enemies, but against the most promising members of the new State in a commonwealth of people whose boast is of complete unity.

That's how things are. Hitler's regime says: We have enemies in Germany, many of them, and we can only pray to Wotan that, as in the past, they will fear us more than we fear them. But we have youth on our side. That makes us strong. Also, we have the guns.

They have the guns and that makes them strong. But the youth? There are proofs to the contrary. In this force of millions, who are supposed to be truly and irrevocably Nazi, the young men, the university men, are the first to show disappointment and disgust. They protest by leaving empty benches before Storm Leaders disguised as professors and by crowding the halls for those few who have a little knowledge of the extra-Nazi world. And these men were, yesterday, the State Youth.

There are other signs. Voices find the outside world. They are voices of young workers, students, men of deep religious convictions, and their expressions are of wrath and hope. Here is the spectacle of a country — uneducated politically, seduced by romantic nationalism and a charlatan who said he was a savior — whose moral and spiritual resources as a country are now forced underground. The forces still live. In the past, they nourished all the greatness of Germany. They survive; they cannot be withheld from the soul of a people; in the end, they are the highest concepts of human life, and they triumph, they emerge in the end.

EPILOGUE

IN NEW YORK, I LIVE IN a small hotel on the East Side. It is a pleasant hotel; the management advertises it as "continental." But I like it for its American details — closets and showers — no luxury in this country, of course, but I cannot help being pleased by them.

I have bought a tremendous quantity of cookies, candy, and some small white dice called marshmallows — sweet, tough, as elastic as rubber, and a little like Turkish delight. I tried one, and nothing could induce me to go on. But I bought the candy against the visit I am expecting, not for myself. There are going to be two guests to eat these cookies and candy: two boys who go to school in Connecticut and are spending this week-end with an aunt in New York. They are seven and eight years old, and came over alone from Germany eight weeks ago.

I saw the smaller one when he was two, in Germany; all I know about him is that he is called Till and that his mother worships him. The larger boy was good-looking and robust, a dark boy named René after a French uncle. Their mother was French, before she married a German lawyer, and both parents (who had been divorced before, around a lot, and had wide knowledge of the world) were deeply disturbed about their sons' future. The mother said to me as I left Germany, "I wish you could take us with you — or, at least, take the boy!"

And now the boys are here. Their parents separated voluntarily from them, and at enormous sacrifice fought with the Nazi authorities for permission to send their sons to America. "It couldn't go on

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any longer," my last letter from their mother said, "it couldn't be looked at. . . . Look after the kids a little — ah, Till is still so small! And let René tell you stories, he's bright and very grown-up for his age."

Will he like marshmallows?

The telephone rings, and a small voice asks, in English, "Can we come up?" That must be Till; and I answer in German, "Yes, of course, come up!"

The first one must be René; then, unrecognizable, little Till; and, behind him, a third boy comes forward slowly. His bare head is covered with dark curls; deep blue eyes watch from his face that is tender and sensitive, although his brown skin and his healthy appearance are not delicate; he is broad-shouldered although of course a little thin, and holds himself a little in restraint. As I look at him, Till holds out his hand, and I realize that the boy I thought was René is not he at all, but a friend of theirs. He is American, and is wearing a kind of scout's uniform; he turns his cap in his hands — the scratched hands of the sort of boy who plays Indian; he looks like a child Lindbergh. Till is tiny for a seven-year-old; he might be five, except for the shrewdness of his look. His hair is smooth and silky, and hangs halfway over his ears in a pageboy cut. Under his bangs, his tilted, bright eyes give his face a Slavic touch, and with his broad cheekbones and wide, finely-cut mouth, he might be Russian or even Finnish — and he is the son of a North German and a Frenchwoman. He is the man of the world among us, and introduces the little American to me. "This is Bruce Findley," he tells me, glancing at him admiringly, "and this," he says to Bruce, "is the lady who (in English), as we hoped, is going to take us to the movies tonight." Bruce nudges him and they look around at René, who has been wandering around the room, and has stopped in front of my desk. He is staring at the portrait of his mother, very like him except for the brown eyes, and without taking his eyes away from it, he says, "When it hooted, everyone had to get off the boat. Mother

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stood below in the crowd, and I hid behind a post. But we didn't sail for a long time." His voice is husky; this is the first time I have heard it. "I waved," interrupts Till, "I didn't cry. . . ." He has discovered the marshmallows. "Sailings are always sad," I say to René, with my hand on his shoulder. "Here, let's have some chocolate." Bruce is showing his consent. He nods and rattles off, "*Schnitzelbank, Grüss Gott, Heidelberg, gemütlich, auf Wiedersehen!*"

"That's his German," Till explains. "He can say five things."

Till and Bruce concentrate on the candy while I make hot chocolate. René is looking around the room. "Nothing but American books?" he asks. "Don't you read German books any more?"

I tell him how much I like to read German, but that it is very important for me to get to know American books now. Till agrees, with his mouth full, "I only read American books!" he says.

René laughs. "And he can't speak German any longer!" he exclaims, with a curious mixture of contempt and envy. "Imagine forgetting so fast!"

But Till will not let that go by; he comes back defensively, "René drags his Hitler dagger around with him," he accuses, "and he's got his armband on, someplace, too!"

I look across at René's lowered head. "Why do you do that?" I ask him. "Did you like the *Jungvolk* so much?" He shakes his head, very hard.

"Oh, it's not *his* dagger," Bruce cuts in, explaining for him, and trying to shut Till up. "It's Gert-Felix's dagger, and armband, too."

"Yes." René looks up. "And Gert-Felix was my friend."

Till's mouth is still full. "But he's dead!"

"Yes," René repeats, "he's dead. The doctor said he must have died a minute or two after the shot." I begin to remember a story of their mother's about an accident during night practice. "It was really almost murder," René is going on, "no matter what the paper said." Bruce's arm is around his shoulder; it is hard to believe that the little boy with his toughness and his scratches can be so solicitous.

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"Everyone was supposed to bring rifles or pistols," René says, "but Gert didn't have any, and neither did I, so we brought flashlights, they were next best. Our leader was practicing aiming in the dark. We would hold up the flashlights and he would try to hit them. He was a fine shot, and it went very well at first. Then he went off his aim, and hit August in the knee. August didn't cry when he fell down; it was probably just a nick. We tied it up with our armbands."

"What did the leader say?" I asked. Bruce was listening to the German version of a story he must have known by heart in English as if it were a Wild West adventure.

"Oh, he swore, of course. August was holding his light too low, anyhow. Then it was Gert's turn. He was good and afraid, and held his light as high as he could. The leader was a little afraid, too, I guess. He shot to the left, and that was where Gert's forehead was. The light didn't go out. Gert didn't move at all. But the sound was different, as if it had hit a tree. Gert started to sway a little."

Till goes on with the story as though it were his turn. "Then he fell over," he recites. "First they put handkerchiefs on the wound, and when they were all covered with blood, they tried sticking moss in. He didn't speak or groan again; the army surgeon said that was a good sign."

"You weren't there," René speaks as if anybody who had not seen it knows nothing at all about life, and ought never to open his mouth again. "It was a very small hole," he says, "and there was hardly any blood, just a little at the eye. We didn't think it was anything. But Gert was dead by that time."

"And guess what happened to that leader!" Bruce challenges me. "He was just transferred to another group! And what do you suppose they did to Gert's father? They locked him up, because he complained, they stuck him in one of those concentration camps!"

"The papers said it was an accident: 'Our dear son met with an accident in the service of our fatherland.'" He puts the rusted knife

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on the table. We all look at it, at the white strip of cloth on the handle, with its red swastika.

"D'you keep that because it's Hitler's junk?" Till asks, with his sideward look.

"Because it's my friend's; and I'm going to keep it forever." Till is satisfied with that; he puts the last marshmallow slowly into his mouth.

The skyscrapers stand against a tall, pale sky. I want them to think of something else, and I propose the movies. *Snow White* is around the corner. "It's a German story," I tell René, trying to answer his reproach about German books, "and you can see how American it is now." But Bruce has seen it already; and Till is occupied, twirling the globe, tracing frontiers with his finger. "France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria," he spells out.

"Austria," repeats René. "You'll have to buy a new one."

"United States of America," Till reads.

"Want to be Americans?" asks Bruce. Till travels around Mexico with his finger.

"Well, yes, I'd like to," René answers, "but I can't quite imagine it. After all, I'm still German—I suppose."

Till pushes across the South Seas. "Sure I'm going to be an American!" Bruce welcomes him with a charming little bow and a smile of extraordinary nobility, as if he had the power to give citizenship. "We'll be glad to have you!" he says.

"What do you mean, *we*?" René asks, leaning on the window sill next to Bruce, half a head taller than the American boy, but slighter and less firm. "Who's *we*?"

"We Americans," he says. "We, the people."

"What about your government?"

"The government does what *we* want," says Bruce. "If it doesn't, out it goes!"

Till is delighted. But René looks a little startled at all this audacity. Bruce is going on, enjoying himself, declaiming:

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"... Our government is here to serve us. We chose it ourselves, and we obey it because we think it's right, and not because we're afraid. It's there to make us a happy, rich, and peaceful people. We don't want anyone to attack us, but we don't want war. And we won't stand for injustice anywhere —" he checks himself, embarrassed, and modifies, "that is, *too* much injustice. So if I shoot you I get punished; but I couldn't, anyhow, because there's no night practice, and there aren't any leaders, and besides I haven't got a rifle." René doesn't smile. He accepts the assurance.

We'll send "the family" a line before the boys leave. "*You* write," I tell them. My long, detailed report will be made later. Till writes in English, drawing in a confused mixture of German letters and the Latin ones he is learning here. When he finishes with "Much love, from your dear son, Till," René sits down, and fifteen minutes of phonograph-playing passes. We listen to the records while he writes, and at last I read:

"Dearest Mama,

"Today was a fine day, I think I'll get used to it here, but please come whenever you can. Everything here is very different, I can't explain just how. We are learning a lot, not so much about world theory and less about war. I like school pretty well. I'm practically never afraid any more. I have a friend, that's why I have to learn English fast now. It is dark outside already, you can see stars over the skyscrapers, but they are a little pale. Please come soon,

"to your son
"René"

There is a sudden scene before Bruce has his turn. The armband has been lying beside the dagger on the table, and the American has put it on. He throws his arm up. "Heil Hitler!" he cries, at attention.

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René goes dark, then very pale. "Stop it!" he shouts. "Take it off, please, Bruce, take that off!"

Bruce rips it off without a word, and sits down at the desk. René is apologizing for his violence. "I don't know why, but I can't look at it," he says, asking forgiveness. "It looked like Gert, and suddenly that night practice, and the cry *Heil Hitler, Heil Hitler!*" He is terribly pale; he trembles, terribly. "I won't see another, I don't want to see another swastika!" With a sharp movement, he reaches for the armband and tears it to shreds. For a moment, there is nothing but the sound of ripping.

"Now, now," I say, from across the room, "really!"

But Till is at his side, and sweeping the bits happily into the wastepaper basket. Bruce goes back to his writing. Crossing to the desk, René, quieted, lays the dagger before him on the sheets of the finished letter. "Here, it's yours!" he says gently.

Bruce looks at it without saying thank you; he looks at the knife as if it were extraordinarily beautiful, a delicate, rare, fragile thing.

"I know," Till laughs, and says in his little chirping voice, with its high child's twitter, "I know what you're writing! *Schnitzelbank, Heidelberg, auf Wiedersehen!*"

But Bruce is finished. Close to the curlicues of René's childish signature, his name stands, and below it, in brackets, to explain to the mother who is so far away and waiting for the letter, and who cannot know what "Bruce" means: "René's American friend, forever."