

The Revival of Anti-Germanism

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JUST AT THE TIME when the prolonged crisis over the freedom of West Berlin precipitated by the Soviet Union has made a close American-German understanding most necessary, American public opinion has been the target of the most intensive "Hate Germany" campaign since the war and immediate postwar years. The purpose of this campaign is to convince Americans that Nazism was not a horrible aberration, but a characteristic manifestation of German character, that the great majority of Germans were and are Nazis at heart, that the German Federal Republic under Konrad Adenauer is a thinly camouflaged version of Hitler's Third Reich. The natural

conclusion would be that it is folly, or worse, for the United States to commit itself to the defense of West Berlin, or of West Germany.

One can distinguish four moving forces behind this revival of anti-Germanism, following a period when the revival of free institutions and the spectacular successes of a free economy in the German Federal Republic and the increasing exchange of tourist and cultural contacts between America and Germany had created an ever firmer basis for friendship between two countries which are allies in NATO under a common threat of Soviet aggression.

(1) The most obvious beneficiary of

hostility and distrust between America and Germany, or between other noncommunist states, is the Kremlin. Soviet propagandists are equally interested in creating anti-Germanism in America and anti-Americanism in Germany. Indeed those two sentiments have a mutually accelerating inter-action. When the Germans read of books and films that give a false, distorted and defamatory picture of their country they are apt to indulge in retorts which, in turn, give Americans the impression that Germany is not a reliable ally.

So it is no accident that Soviet propaganda, in diplomatic notes and radio broadcasts, repeats the tired old phrases about "Adenauer's Nazi Generals" and "the revenge-hungry Bonn militarists" with all the tiring intensive iteration of a high-powered advertising agency trying to make popular a new brand of soap or cigarettes. In many ways Free Germany has been the greatest Soviet disappointment and the greatest Soviet stumbling-block. In contrast to the situation in France and Italy, there is not a single Communist in the West German Bundestag. The German economic revival has raised the general standard of living to a point where efforts to stir up class hatred and envy have little prospect of success, especially in view of the terrific difference between the booming prosperity of the Federal Republic and the drab poverty in the communist-ruled "German Democratic Republic." With the chance of subverting West Germany from within therefore almost nil, it is natural that Soviet propaganda should try to isolate Bonn from America and from its European allies by playing over and over again the old records of "Nazism" and "militarism," although, as any visitor can testify, both are conspicuous by their absence in the new free Germany that has risen from the

ashes of Hitler's insane grandiose schemes of empire.

(2) It was natural, indeed inevitable that the barbarous crimes of the Nazis should leave behind a legacy of deep and bitter hatred among some of those who felt identified in faith and blood, if not by still closer ties of relationship and friendship, with the victims of these crimes. It is a testimony to human capacity for generosity and fairmindedness that, from the first bleak days of the occupation, many Jews, both of German and of American origin, drew a clear distinction between Nazi fanatics and the German people as a whole and made notable contributions both to outliving the Morgenthau Plan spirit of the first postwar years and to giving a clear picture of the moral, as well as the material achievements of Adenauer's regime. One may cite, for instance, this judgment of Professor Hans Kohn, at the end of his thoughtful and stimulating work: "The German Mind":

"The German Federal Republic is not a temporary makeshift; it is the first consolidated German democracy, the first German state for well over one hundred years to be part and partner of the western community, a community united in its desire for a free society, but rich in its diversity. In this diversity the German Federal Republic has its place."

But a hard core of irreconcilables, convinced that nothing good can come out of Germany, remains. Here one finds much of the organizing driving force behind the anti-German campaign and also a good deal of its mass audience.

(3) Crude commercialism. One anti-German book or film, successful in box-office terms, inspires a dozen imitators. And it sometimes happens that the advertisements of a book, in the hope of catching anti-German readers, considerably distort and misrepresent what is in the

book. Unfortunately it is probable that more people read advertisements and reviews than go through a book from cover to cover.

A good illustration of this point is the manner in which the advertising department of the Macmillan Company handled a book entitled *Schizophrenic Germany*, by John Dornberg, editor of *The Overseas Weekly*, a publication for American servicemen in Germany which started the attack on General Edwin A. Walker. Here is an advertisement which appeared in the quarterly *Foreign Affairs* for July 1961:

“Did you know that:

“Over 40,000 German youths belong to para-military groups?

“There may be an underground ring, operating with the tacit co-operation of German authorities—to help ex-Nazis escape trial and arrest?

“As many as 685 anti-Semitic incidents have been *officially recorded* in one month alone?

“You’ll discover more about these and other aspects of present day Germany when you read this penetrating study of the smoldering remains of Hitler’s Germany that could ignite at the least provocation.

“Now you can read one of the first fully documented accounts of West German hypocrisy.”

All this might suggest a violent diatribe, like the work of T. H. Tetens which will be discussed in detail later. But if one reads Dornberg’s work one comes across passages which make nonsense of the advertisement, such as the following:

“Although the fact that 40,000 young Germans belong to rightist and militaristic organizations is alarming, in all fairness one must take into consideration that these forty thousand represent only a small fraction of Germany’s ‘teen’ and ‘tween’ population. In comparison, the Federal Youth Ring embracing fourteen organizations and

the various state youth rings has a total membership of almost six million. . . .

“*In fact the nationalistic and militaristic groups represent less than one percent of all Germany’s organized young people. Instead there are thousands of jazz clubs, movie fan clubs, athletic organizations, cowboy clubs and hundreds of other activities, all of them democratically oriented.*” [Italics supplied]. Mr. Dornberg also states that only three Bundestag deputies (out of four hundred ninety seven) “can be associated closely with the Hitler regime.”

(4) A certain lack of sophistication and a political naivete that make some Americans, even when they have no special antipathy to Germany, susceptible to suggestions that Germany might “try it again.” The significance of the tremendous shift in the balance of military power in favor of the Soviet Union is not always understood or appreciated. This alone would make any German independent military adventure so suicidal as to be almost unthinkable. Nor are the motivations and political implications of the “Hate Germany” campaign always clearly perceived. It was both regrettable and pathetic to see, among the signers of tributes to a book, a volume that is a rabid misrepresentation of what has happened in Germany since the war, the name of a venerable religious leader, long known as a staunch anti-communist. He apparently did not realize that there is no better way to play the communist game than to libel the country that is one of the strongest bulwarks against communism, the German Federal Republic.

Of the three main exhibits in the anti-German campaign two are books, William L. Shirer’s *Rise and Fall of The Third Reich* and T. H. Tetens’s *The New Germany and the Old Nazis* and the third is the film, *Judgment at Nuernberg*. Shirer’s book and *Judgment at Nuernberg* must

have reached, directly or indirectly, an audience of millions. All deserve some analysis in depth. We may begin with the film.

Technically and artistically *Judgment at Nuernberg* deserves a high rating. It is one of few long films which hold the viewer's attention from beginning to end, except perhaps when the grim photographs of concentration camp victims are shown at length. But how the emotional and propaganda cards are stacked!

The theme is the trial of four Nazi judges who lent themselves to passing unjust verdicts during the Hitler period, three from utterly base motives, the fourth from a kind of perverted nationalist idealism. The hero is a homespun American jurist from the Middle West, who tries to get to the bottom not only of the case under trial, but of German character and psychology in general. There is also an emotional military prosecutor, whose favorite series of pictures is a set of ghastly photographs of surviving prisoners in such dens of squalid cruelty as Belsen and Buchenwald. There are several discussions between judge and prosecutor, on one side, and high American military officers, on the other. The latter suggest that at a time when the Berlin blockade has underscored the Soviet threat it is not good policy for an American court to be passing severe sentences on German nationals. This viewpoint is indignantly rejected by the crusading prosecutor and the idealistic judge, who concludes by pronouncing sentences of life imprisonment on all four defendants.

The impression is conveyed that no political objective is comparable with carrying out this particular bit of "victors' justice." The film again and again, by innuendo and indirection, identifies American-German co-operation in resistance to communist aggression with Nazism. And it seeks to depict all Germans as being responsible for Nazism and the bestialities of

the concentration camps. There is no recognition of the fact that the average German could no more have prevented what a small group of fanatics and sadists did in concentration camps than the average Russian could have stopped the maltreatment and starvation of millions of victims of Stalin's slave labor camps or the massacre of some fifteen thousand Polish officer war prisoners in the Katyn Forest and other places unknown.

It will be surprising if *Judgment at Nuernberg* does not get a warm reception behind the Iron Curtain. It may or may not be a coincidence that this is the third of Mr. Stanley Kramer's productions which seems to fit in neatly with the Moscow outlook on world affairs. He also put on *Death of a Salesman*, an admirable object lesson in the heartlessness and degeneration of American capitalism, and *On the Beach*, where the audience is shown the gloomy picture of life on this planet totally destroyed by a nuclear war. Insofar as this would have a serious effect on public opinion in the United States and other Western countries it would be a hearty plug for appeasement. Unlike *Judgment at Nuernberg*, *On the Beach*, one suspects, would not be considered wholesome fare for Soviet movie-viewers. But this would not be the first time that a propaganda moral deemed good for export would not be considered proper for internal consumption.

Comparable in mass impact with *Judgment at Nuernberg* is William L. Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, a book which has remained on the bestseller list in the second year of its publication and acquired the additional publicity of being serialized, in abridged form, in *The Reader's Digest*. There need be no criticism of this long work, insofar as it gives a documented record of the crimes of the Nazis against their political opponents in Germany, against the Jews, against the

peoples in occupied countries of Europe. To be sure, Alan Bullock's *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* is a far better guide from the standpoint of historical depth and objectivity.

Shirer is a journalist, not a historian, and a thorough and searching analysis of his book by Professor Klaus Epstein, of Brown University, in the April, 1961 issue of *The Review of Politics*, published by Notre Dame University, reveals Shirer's superficial and onesided approach to German history and his failure to consult many valuable sources of information on the subject of his book. Professor Epstein diagnoses as follows the four major failings of Shirer's work:

(1) Its over-all conception of German history is unbelievably crude, and precludes the author from asking many of the most important questions that need to be answered about the Nazi period. (2) The book is completely lacking in over-all balance; it is marred by glaring gaps in precisely those areas of the Nazi record where new research is most urgently needed. (3) Many of Shirer's interpretations show a curious inability to understand the nature of a modern totalitarian regime. (4) The book is in no way abreast of current scholarship dealing with the Nazi period.

Again and again Shirer, writing not as a historian, not as an objective journalist, lapses into the familiar methods of the wartime pamphleteer. So he finds that German history from 1871 until 1945 runs "in a straight line and with utter logic." Nazism is "but a logical continuation of German history." He represents Nazism as a peculiarly German phenomenon, ignoring the effect of the First World War and its aftermath in spawning totalitarianism in various European countries. In Russia it took the form of communism, in Italy of fascism. He also attempts to represent Hit-

ler's rise to power as something the great majority of the German people accepted willingly, even enthusiastically. In a masterpiece of glib and superficial misjudgment he writes:

"The Third Reich owed nothing to the fortunes of war or to foreign influence. It was inaugurated in peace-time, and peacefully, by the Germans themselves, out of both their weaknesses and their strengths."

It is surprising that a journalist who was in Germany at the time should so completely fail to recognize as important causes for the rise of Hitler resentment against the political injustices and economic absurdities of the Treaty of Versailles, and, still more important, the years of bleak mass unemployment when the rise in the number of the unemployed and the membership of the Nazi Party went almost in parallel lines. To quote Professor Epstein again:

Shirer's limited insight into modern totalitarianism leads him inevitably to dogmatic assertions concerning the collective guilt of the German people for the crimes perpetuated by the Nazi government. Burke does not know how to draw an indictment against an entire people; Shirer does. His blanket condemnations sometimes bear, in fact, a suspicious resemblance to Nazi doctrines of race and nationality.

If there were any doubt that Shirer belongs in the category not of serious historians or journalists, but of war pamphleteers it is dispelled by a curious article which he published a few months ago in the mass circulation magazine *Look* under the title "If Hitler Had Won the Second World War." This was a fantastic picture of Hitler invading and overrunning the United States as easily as his armies conquered Norway, Poland or Yu-

goslavia and then inflicting all the horrors of a Nazi regime on America.

The course of history showed that taking on Great Britain and the Soviet Union at the same time was too much for Hitler and there is not a shred of evidence to show that he ever contemplated invading the United States. Indeed so far as one can judge from his writings, Hitler scarcely took account of the United States. His primary interest and ambition was in carving out a big German empire in Eastern Europe.

In time of war pamphleteers and propagandists are required, along with more material weapons. There might be a case for an imaginative story of how the Soviet Union could compass the overthrow of the United States, along the lines of Constantine Fitzgibbon's *When the Kissing Had to Stop*, a picture of a Soviet take-over in Great Britain. But what is the sense or justification of publishing an imaginary picture of America under the Nazi heel, a picture that would have been fantasy when Hitler was alive and is double fantasy when he has been dead for almost twenty years?

The Hate Germany campaign reached a pinnacle of venom and absurdity with the publication (Random House) of a book by one T. H. Tetens, *The New Germany and the Old Nazis*. Mr. Tetens, who has not been in Germany since 1934, has a considerable background of publishing books full of embittered bile about the Federal Republic, the part of Germany which has emerged from Hitler's debacle with free political institutions and a booming free economy. He apparently finds nothing to criticize in the communist-ruled "German Democratic Republic," which, as a matter of fact, is not German, or democratic, or a republic, but a satellite dictatorship kept on a close leash by the Kremlin.

His next to last book, *Germany Plots*

with the Kremlin, deserves some kind of ignoble prize as one of the silliest and most fantastic works ever published in the field of international relations. In this book Mr. Tetens predicted that Adenauer in 1955 would betray the West and make a pact with the Kremlin; as of 1962 it unfortunately seems more likely that the West will let down Adenauer than that Adenauer will let down the West. More than that, Tetens accused "the Pentagon" of working closely with a Nazi center in Madrid, the existence of which was so secret that it was known only to . . . Mr. Tetens. Among other "secrets" divulged to the gaping readers of *Germany Plots with the Kremlin* was an allegation that the Nazis planned defeat in the Second World War so that they could later conquer the world more successfully.

It is a sorry comment on the judgment and selectivity of American publishers that a large firm gave further publicity to new fantastic yarns of Mr. Tetens, the boiled-down substance of which is that old Nazis and neo-Nazis are now running the Federal Republic, with Adenauer as a kind of cover or stooge. The method of Mr. Tetens is not unfamiliar for those who like to draw up indictments of a whole people or nation. Making use of what must be an extremely extensive clipping service, he puts together every item of news about Germany, however, trivial, indicating revival of nationalist sentiment, hoodlumism, anti-Semitism. He mixes in some ludicrously exaggerated estimates of leaders of small crackpot groups about their strength and importance. He makes no distinction between facts and rumors.

With this method, reporting only cases of juvenile delinquency and adult crime, of poverty among migrant workers and racial friction in housing and education, it would be easy to construct an image of America that might be accurate in some details, yet

overwhelmingly false on balance. In Mr. Tetens's compound of petty negative news and luxuriant fantasies of his own there is no place for the really big important facts about the Federal Republic: its identification and integration with a new united Europe, the almost complete disappearance of extremism, Right and Left, the tremendous contrast between the ill-fated Weimar Republic, with its mounting waves of nihilism from the Nazis, on one side, from the Communists on the other, and the steady, middle-of-the-road course of politics in Bonn, the successful rebuilding of such bases of a free society as independent courts, a free press, universities where the search for truth is not perverted by party dogma.

Of course it would be an exaggeration to say that no traces remain of a regime that ruled Germany with absolute power for twelve tragic years. But the important thing is surely that what Tetens and other purveyors of hatred for democratic Germany (curiously, or significantly, Mr. Tetens has not a word of criticism for the Soviet Zone, the one part of Germany where Nazi practices, through no fault of the East Germans, persist under the communist dictatorship) represent as the rule is really the exception.

For one German who may still get a surreptitious kick out of the Horst Wessel song or some other reminder of the Nazi past there are at least twenty who abhor the memory of the Nazi tyranny and the ruin, destruction and national humiliation which it brought. And a whole generation has now grown up without any sense of identification with Hitlerism.

As is often said about America, "it's a free country." If individuals and groups choose to unleash an unscrupulous hate campaign against Germany, or against any other country, and can find publishers for their views, there is no means of preventing them from expressing these views. But it does seem desirable that a movement which is clearly injurious to the interests of American foreign policy, which defames an ally and gratifies an enemy, which misrepresents and distorts the most heartening European postwar development, the emergence of a reconstructed prosperous Germany as a reliable ally in the Western camp, should be spotted for what it is and properly exposed.

After all, although one would not believe it after reading Shirer and Tetens and seeing *Judgment at Nuernberg*, we are living in 1962, not in 1942, and the threat to our national security does not come from Germany.