

# Voices from Germany

HANS SCHNITZER

THE funeral was yesterday. They found him in the *Landwehrkanal*. How he got there is not known to the authorities. They say he committed suicide. The proper way to commit suicide in the "Third Reich," prescribed by the authorities, is to wrap oneself in woolen blankets and to then tie them on the top as well as on the bottom. The blankets are furnished by the ordnance department, and the men for wrapping the bundles are assigned from some S.A. (*Sturm Abteilung*) staff.

This time it was Schmid.

Klaue has not been found as yet.

Bennals is under protective arrest. How he got there, he does not know, because he has not regained his consciousness. He has a few slight wounds around his head, just six. And his broken ribs ought not to be the reason for his still being unconscious either, says the doctor. And this fellow should know, he is not a Jew and has been practicing medicine for at least three months.

Frau Bremer is of no use for anything. She gets hysterical about a mere trifle.

Well, she has seen how they arrested young Plinz. They fetched him out of his bed, and blood was streaming over his face when they pulled him along the street, she says. Two of them held him by his legs and his head bumped against the cobblestones. And now she gets a nervous breakdown at the least provocation. It is obvious that she could not distribute handbills, that is, illegal handbills. Flock has disappeared; without any official assistance. He is in hiding. He has taken to his heels, although nobody really intended to do him harm. In the house they are saying that he is afraid, because an S.A. man has threatened to chop him to pieces.

Of the whole unit, nobody is left but Lehmann and Zilinski. They have to do all the work. The hardest job, however, is the distribution of the leaflets. And that is quite a lot for two men. When they get caught, they will be hanged; that's the new law, or—if clemency is recommended—just beheaded, with the axe. Lehmann and Zilinski are well aware of this, but still they distribute their leaflets. They put one in each public telephone booth. They put one in every mail box so that the people at the post office will get them. But they can't get at the masses. The beat is too dangerous.

Zilinski says: "You must mail them."

"Have you got the money?"

Lehmann's doorbell is ringing. Lehmann moves stealthily to the door and looks through the peephole. He comes back and says: "A beggar." Whereupon Zilinski remarks: "We must go begging for the money."

"That's another criminal offense."

"Yes. But it's only six months."

"All right. Let's go and try. I think we

better take Papen Street. The people around there still have money."

Zilinski and Lehmann dress in their good suits. It will be all right, sure. Zilinski stays on the street while Lehmann goes into the houses. Lehmann starts at the top floor.

"Excuse me, lady, for bothering you. I am out of work and this morning I got the news that my poor old father has died. I would like to go there, but I haven't the fare..."

"Where do you want to go?"

"To Pillkallen. Not directly Pillkallen, just near Pillkallen, Peterwitz."

Twenty pfennigs.

Next door. "Excuse me, lady, ... Pillkallen ... near Pillkallen ..."

"How do you want to get there? Via Rossitten?"

"Yes. Via Rossitten."

After Lehmann finished four hours' begging for the fare to Peterwitz near Pillkallen, he counts two marks thirty-eight pfennigs. It

would take them ten days to get the postage for 300 letters. Then they sit in Lehmann's flat, brooding on how to go about it. It is high time. The longer the handbills lie around the hotter they get. Lehmann and Zilinski put the leaflets in envelopes. Zilinski takes eighteen and goes along with Lehmann. In one house the former puts one envelope in each letter-box. When the people open the letters, he's gone.

But only half an hour later the street is crowded with police. At home Lehmann fumbles around. He takes his calipers and measures a *groschen*. Diameter: 22 millimeters; thickness: 2 millimeters.

His wife asks him: "Do you want to *make* money?"

"No, no, I just want to see how big the thing is." Lehmann drops the calipers into his pocket and leaves. He goes through the streets and stops at a hardware store. Then he enters.

"What can I do for you?"

"Some little brass washers."

"What size?"

"Diameter: 22 millimeters; thickness: 2 millimeters."

"For a boat?" "Yes. How much?"



"GENTLEMEN! A CASE FOR STERILIZATION!"

Georges Schreiber

"One mark five for highly finished ones, ninety-five pfennigs for die-cut ones."

"300 die-cut ones," says Lehmann.

Zilinski and Lehmann go begging again, get another two marks and again buy little brass washers. Then they address their envelopes. After dark they go looking for an automatic stamp vendor. Zilinski watches, Lehmann puts one little brass disk after another in the slot. Kling, one stamp. Kling, another. Kling, Kling . . .

"Okay?" asks Zilinski. "Sure."

"Say, boy, that's a good one. Now our revered government has to distribute our leaflets." "And without any risk to us."

The next day it is in the papers. The Communists even send their leaflets through the mails. Obviously Moscow has sent more roubles. Lehmann says to Zilinski: "Why don't you look in the business section? Maybe, the output in brass has increased two hundred thousand tons this month."

Translated by ANDOR BRAUN.

## TENDERLY

Mammy . . . mammy . . .

The sun shines east, the sun shines west,

The sun shines . . . smash the soldiers.

Take the brains out.

Clean the skull.

Make a loving-cup

For sixty Camp-Fire girls

Drinking root-beer tenderly . . .

Tenderly, my solemn chick.

Tenderly, my evening bells.

Tenderly . . . no wine or beer,

And nail upon the toilet-wall

The fatal sign: "No Cameraderie.

Leave and enter quickly." . . . jars

Of Sinbad's perfume purify the air,

Recommended, advertised

In True Confessions, Snappy Wails,

Crumpled writing-paper known as hearts,

Stock-market figures functioning as brains,

Bill-boards on the mountain-side

Of this debacle . . . tenderly

My Broadway whores

Manicuring, currycombing

Pigs, newspaper-columnists

So very tenderly . . . the dog

Ran amuck and bit a priest

Walking to the Armory

To bless the soldiers, bless the bayonets,

Bless the Springfield rifles, bless the watch-fob,

Bless the Treaty of Versailles,

The coroner, the morgue, the banquet-speech.

Bless, bless, bless . . . they shot him on the streets—

The dog—the priest was cauterized

So tenderly . . . a young street-cleaner

Took the body in his can

And sang with rapture out of key:

"I can't give you anything

But love, Baby.

"I can't give" . . . the voice trailed out

So tenderly . . . so very, very tenderly.

MAXWELL BODENHEIM.

# Correspondence

## The Student Convention

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In your issue of January 16 there appeared an article entitled *The Students Learn*, dealing with the student conferences held in Washington during the Christmas vacation. It included a number of misstatements in regard to the tactics, policies and actions of the Student L.I.D. I hope you will print a correction of them.

Passing over the inference that the L.I.D. had to be solicited for its support of picketing at the Mayflower Hotel in protest against the exclusion of Negro delegates to the N.S.F.A. convention from the latter's "grand ball" (actually the news as to this matter came to the L.I.D. entirely independently of the N.S.L., in fact, through our own members, and the picketing was planned as a joint enterprise of the N.S.L. and the L.I.D.) there seems to be two main points of criticism: the line of action pursued at the Conference on Students in Politics, and the refusal of the offer of amalgamation with the N.S.L.

As to the first of these, it is charged that the L.I.D. was guilty of breach of faith, of contract, of agreement, of covenant, and what not, in differing with the N.S.L. on the tactics to be employed in the Conference. It is altogether a mistake to say that we refused to co-operate with the N.S.L. in attempting to secure the adoption of a resolution condemning the N.R.A. It was mutually agreed, though the resolution was part of our joint program, that this would not be done. No member, either of the N.S.L. or of the L.I.D., urged such a resolution on the floor of the Conference or in the Executive Committee. It was tacitly dropped by both groups. To bring the matter up now, in view of the silence of the N.S.L. at the time, is altogether unwarranted.

But the most important controversy was as to inclusion of a resolution urging that the organizations represented in the Conference affiliate with the American League Against War and Fascism—not, as stated in the article, a resolution to endorse the League. It was an unfortunate fact, not mentioned in the article, that the Conference was not permitted to adopt resolutions by virtue of an agreement with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, in whose building the meetings were held. This meant that the conservative elements present were able to bar radical action on the floor, and forced the question of the program into the Executive Committee. The L.I.D. was as much opposed as any group present to this result, but felt that the procedure was better than the adoption of no program whatsoever. Accordingly, its members supported this way of escaping from the dilemma. (It may be noted that two members of the N.S.L., including its member on the Executive Committee, likewise voted for the proposal, and only changed their minds on a second ballot after a hurried consultation with other members.)

In the Executive Committee, the L.I.D. members were instructed by their National Executive Committee to work for the adoption of the resolution up to, and only to, the point of incurring a split in the Conference. When it appeared that some groups, including notably the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A., were prepared to walk out and to refuse to participate in the Continuation Committee, if the resolution were insisted upon, the L.I.D. delegates exercised their discretion and voted against inclusion of the resolution. This was not to "ingratiate" ourselves with anyone. It was to keep the Continuation Committee in existence, on the theory that to split the Conference would completely isolate the L.I.D. and the N.S.L. from all possibility of contact with students on most campuses. The Conference had been called to establish a broader basis of program and organization. To have followed any other line

than that adopted would, we believe, have been to render that purpose unattainable. Moreover, a program was adopted, a program upon which most students present could unite. If it was "thoroughly emasculated" by omission of the resolutions on the N.R.A. and the American League, partial responsibility for the former must rest on the N.S.L., which agreed to drop it, while insistence on the latter would have destroyed the whole purpose of the Conference.

As to the question of amalgamation, there is a plain misstatement of fact. The vote was not, as reported in the article, fourteen for, and twenty-eight against. In the first place, the vote was on an entirely different resolution—a motion that until the time seemed more opportune for unification, in view of existing differences, the L.I.D. would continue to co-operate with the N.S.L. on specific issues. This was passed by an overwhelming majority, only seven or eight of the more than sixty delegates present at this session expressing opposition to it. A committee of five was elected to meet with the N.S.L. Since that time a joint program has been arranged.

Attempts to discredit the L.I.D. for its allegedly small attendance, and to minimize the vote on the ground that it is not representative of L.I.D. sentiment are wholly without foundation. Eighty-five delegates from thirty-five colleges and universities attended the convention. The conference had been called to discuss matters of organization, and the delegates came, many with instructions as to courses of action to be followed. To say that the procedure was not democratic is, therefore, almost ludicrous. Had an organized minority rushed through a plan for unification no such cry would have been raised. There was full and free discussion—the N.S.L. presented its reasons, adherents of amalgamation said their say, and so did opponents. The vote was taken and stands. The Student L.I.D. will adhere to it, believing the result to be correct.

Sincerely,

KENNETH MEIKLEJOHN,  
Member, N.E.C. Student L.I.D.

## A Reply

TO THE NEW MASSES:

In his letter to the NEW MASSES, Mr. Meiklejohn calls into question several points regarding relations of the N.S.L. and L.I.D. at the Washington conferences, which are entirely matters of fact and, therefore, scarcely open to dispute.

1. At no time did the N.S.L. agree mutually with the L.I.D. to abandon the plank condemning the N.R.A. Such a resolution was adopted by a number of the study groups and was urged by N.S.L. members both on the floor and in the Executive Committee.

2. Although it seems somewhat pedantic to quibble over this point, the resolution agreed to jointly by the L.I.D. and N.S.L. was for affiliation of the continuations committee or of whatever organization should emerge from the conference, to the American League Against War and Fascism. The agreement with the Chamber of Commerce prohibiting the adoption of resolutions was not known to the N.S.L., which would never have been a party to such an agreement. It had been made before the N.S.L. was invited to participate. Strange to say, no mention of this agreement was made by the L.I.D., at the time when the two organizations drew up their plans for co-operation, although it certainly was relevant. Indeed, the L.I.D. was largely responsible for the entire undemocratic procedure which the conference was forced to follow. The N.S.L. was particularly opposed to referring the matter of program to a committee set up prior to the conference, which in no way reflected the sentiment of the conference.