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Introduction To Barbarism

THE NAZI PRIMER, translated from the German by Harwood L. Childs, with a commentary by William E. Dodd, former ambassador to Germany. Harper & Bros. \$1.75.

THIS book, according to its translator, Prof. Harwood L. Childs of Princeton University, was issued last year as the official handbook for schooling the Hitler Youth, and as such represents the basic mental fare of some seven million young Germans.

Written for mass consumption, its style is popular and its approach pseudo-scientific. The reader with some knowledge of history and science will be appalled at the extent of the distortions and outright falsifications that go into the Nazified version of the various fields of knowledge. But a reader deprived of any other source of information may very likely be taken in by many of the assertions, since these are presented with such a positive and matter-of-fact air.

The book has all the familiar elements of the Nazi "world outlook"—attacks on Jews, Freemasons, Marxists, and the Christian Church, with their "catchwords" of "brotherhood" and "humanity." Predicating itself upon the obvious "unlikeness of men," this Nazi work erects an unchangeable hierarchy of six (!) European races: inferior ones, destined to be led, and superior ones, destined to lead, with the "Nordic race" as tops.

The most important and enlightening section of the book is that which presents the Nazi concept that *German territory has a threefold form*: a "political area," which consists of the present territory of the German Reich; a "population area," which includes all places in Europe where there are communities of Germans today; and a "cultural area," which further includes all regions of non-Germans that have been influenced by the German language or culture. This "German cultural area" also includes "the compact German settlements overseas" (the list is headed by the USA, Canada, and the South American countries); and of course there are the colonies Germany lost in the last war.

The chapter ingeniously entitled "The Political Area of the German Folk" gives the reader a fair idea of what "German" territories would have to be ceded to the Nazis in order to "appease" them until they were ready for further expansion. First are listed four "buffer states": Switzerland (seventeen out of twenty-four cantons German), Holland ("Low Germans"), Belgium ("two-thirds Germanic"), and Luxemburg. Then there are (or were) Austria (meaning thereby all the territory of the former Austro-Hun-

garian empire) and Liechtenstein. Add to this territories "robbed" from Germany and from the "German territory of Austria" in the war, which have been "partitioned among fifteen states."

The Nazi Primer is further evidence, for those who may still require it, that National Socialism means war, that it considers war its basic and permanent instrument of national policy. The "political will" that the book seeks to build up is a will to conquest. It aims to prepare a people to carry out the policy of a super-imperialism that would not be content with less than the whole world. That is the political significance of the "Nordic supremacy," "destined to leadership" tommyrot, of the "threefold form of German territory" concept, of the cry about "injustices" and the "need" for more territory, and of the policy of autarchy.

In fact, all the evidence makes it clear that in German National Socialism we are face to face with an old wolf in new, more modern, and more demagogic clothing. Through clever demagoguery, fascism has converted the old imperialism, Prussianism, and "divine right" into a camouflaged, streamlined, up-to-the-minute model that deserves to be lettered TNT.

Nor does fascist demagoguery hesitate to speak in the name of truth, reality, and justice. It advances claims in the name of that very German culture which National Socialism in real life denounces and persecutes. It professes a concern for the "humble comrade." There is no hint in the book, as former Ambassador William E. Dodd points out in a scholarly and vigorous commentary, of the existence of opposition, exiles, concentration camps, and other gentle "blood and soil" persuasions applied against any who indicate their dissatisfaction with wretched conditions. National Socialism has also cleverly established its scapegoats—Jews, Marxists, the Church, and "inferior races"—for its failures and defeats to come. Its "theory" affords great flexibility in political maneuvering, since it establishes grounds for directing Nazi fire against practically any country at any time the Nazi leaders decide it advisable.

This book should convince intelligent readers that America *must* in self-defense be concerned with Nazi theorizing and practice. The United States has more people of German descent within its borders than any other country outside of Germany; the book clearly implies that these millions are all properly part of the "community of Germans." The logic of Nazi racial politics leads inevitably to efforts to realize this conception. That Nazi ideology is not merely an academic matter is shown by the practical activities of Nazi propaganda and espionage in the USA, and by such events as the recent decision of the German-American Bund to circulate "a million copies" of a petition seeking to exclude Jews and others who were not "true white, Gentile Americans" from election or appointment as public officials—all in the name of "the principles which animated the framers of our Constitution"!

The translator's preface to *The Nazi Primer* calls for special comment. It is so painfully objective that it succeeds only in restating, in the most effective propaganda phrasing, what Nazi leaders told Professor Childs for foreign consumption. Thus, "the principal aims of the youth training program are three: character building, physical training, and training in the National Socialist world view." Childs refers constantly to this question of "character" and "capacity for leadership," without once in the slightest indicating specifically what the Nazi conception of character and leadership capacity is. Brutality, ruthlessness, deliberate lying, conquest of the weaker are all dominant characteristics of Hitler and his fellow führers, and we have a right to expect Childs, who in magazine articles loudly champions democracy, to be more concrete. What are we to think of the point of view Professor Childs adopts in his preface? To him the Hitler Youth is "this great organization" and Dr. Ley, head of the notorious Labor Front, is "that energetic, robust, and imaginative organization leader of the party." Further: "It is evident . . . that more attention is being given to character training, to education of the will, to physical development, possibly less to the objective training of the mind." (My italics.) And *The Nazi Primer*, the professor declares, is "a text by [!] and for the German people." BEN BLAKE.

★

BRIEF REVIEW

CHALLENGE TO FEAR, by Leslie Ault. Branch Publishers, Woodstock, N. Y. 35 cents.

In this thirty-eight-page pamphlet-poem, Leslie Ault has written an exciting document of the South Chicago massacre during the Little Steel strike. Although the discipline of the verse is often under question, there is no question of the poetic energy with which the theme is handled. Stumbling over rhetoric, getting caught occasionally in prose tangles, skirting the danger of cliché towards the end, the poem plunges ahead savagely, swinging the whip where it belongs, telling the story with anger, bitterness, irony; exposing the

Blue-coated defenders of law and order
And certified sterile clean white justice!

Our younger poets have been getting much censure for their carelessness in writing. It is true that there is a deep lack of fastidiousness towards much that these poets write. The poems are not carefully, scrupulously done. The reason is primarily either the impatience or inability to adhere to a poetic discipline. This is one of the main flaws in Mr. Ault's writing. However, this is more than amply balanced by an energy that demands to be heard despite the lame iambs and purple patches of rhetoric. This is the kind of energy which is blunt, dramatic:

The kind of evidence we need is plain:

Them bottles is superb; now get some slag;
We'll slug them with this evidence in court.

Some of the sequences are a little obscure. But the poem is a dynamo, sometimes wild, always giving out current.

NORMAN ROSTEN.



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