

An Age of Greatness

GERMANY IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: *The Social Background of the Literary Revival.* By W. H. Bruford. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1935. \$6.

Reviewed by STEFAN ZWEIG

WHEN Mr. Bruford in the Foreword to this book states that it is intended primarily "for the English student of German literature and thought," he speaks with an engaging modesty. For the book, admirably constructed and lucidly written, holds much that is new even for Germans and those who have long interested themselves in German literature. Its main concern is with baring the source of that amazing efflorescence of letters which characterized the eighteenth century in Germany, and disclosing the springs which nourished it and the spiritual climate which conditioned it.

The German classical period was unique, entirely dissimilar to eras of like activity in other countries. The Shakespearean epoch fell in the reign of the most powerful monarch England ever knew; Spanish letters reached their zenith with Calderon, Lope de Vega, and Cervantes at the moment of Spain's greatest ascendancy; and the classics of French literature, the works of Molière, Racine, and Corneille, appeared in the brilliant age of Le Roi Soleil. In general throughout the course of history great periods of artistic activity have coincided with intense national ardor and political ferment, almost as though the will to power and victory of a people of itself generated speech, song, and artistic expression.

But with Germany the case was strikingly different. Its greatest outburst of art—the magnificent moment that produced Schiller, Goethe, Kant, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Fichte, Schelling—came in the darkest hours of national dissension. Whereas in France in its great day the concentration of intellectual and artistic activity in a single city made of the court a veritable academy of the arts, the Ger-

man artists worked, simultaneously to be sure, but in complete isolation, each at a different court, each in a different city, each hardly aware of the existence of the others. From the very narrowness of the environment that constituted the background of the separatist states sprang an intense individualism. The isolation of the artists, as Mr. Bruford makes interestingly evident, the constricted character of middle-class and bourgeois life, served to secure for them a measure of mental peace, while the lack of a standardized style and the absence of any generally accepted conventions made for that individualistic quality of German literature which is at once its virtue and its danger. Precisely because their environment was so narrow German artists gained a sure insight into the realities of life and an understanding of the background and folkways of the German people. Because they were subject to no powerful rulers but to provincial overlords they were able to preserve independence.

The varied social and communal elements which went to the making of this bourgeois world Mr. Bruford sets forth in a manner which happily unites learning with vivacity with the result that there starts out from his pages a vivid picture of artistic Germany and Austria on the eve of the nineteenth century. So illuminating is Mr. Bruford's discussion, so masterly its presentation, that it becomes a pleasure again to join the ranks of students and once more to sit under an instructor. Goethe once said that a work of art can never rightly be understood if seen only in its completed state and close at hand. So, too, the great accomplishments of German genius in the classic period can best be apprehended if viewed in relation to their genesis and to the pattern of the century of which they were a part. In the grateful task of recreating and analyzing the Germany of the eighteenth century Mr. Bruford has rendered the highest assistance.

Stefan Zweig, the eminent German critic and biographer, is the author of "Marie Antoinette" and "Erasmus." His latest book, a life of Marie Stuart, is to be published in August.

Guiding Motives of National Behavior

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE POWERS. *Published by the Council on Foreign Relations.* New York: Harper & Brothers. 1935. \$1.50.

Reviewed by R. GATEWOOD

TO those who look upon the conduct of foreign affairs simply as a matter of negotiation or aggression, this book will appear as an enlightening surprise. The essays which compose it attempt to set forth the basic elements which govern each great nation in its relations with the others. Geography and racial dissimilarity are obviously the paramount considerations in determining the interests and the ideals of a power as they affect its neighbors, and, though it is mainly to the first point that the seven distinguished authors confine their remarks, their manner of expression gives abundant evidence of the second.

For France, as Jules Cambon points out, the guiding motive is security; consequently, she seeks to prevent any aggressive act by organizing the balance of power in Europe. Sir Austen Chamberlain sees England's role in world affairs as that of an umpire between conflicting camps on the Continent and as the hub of a great commercial confederation. Both these powers, through the instrumentality of the League and otherwise, have proceeded to embody these conceptions in a series of multilateral treaties. To some of these Italy and Germany are parties, but the articles by Dino Grandi and Richard von Kühlmann reflect sentiments that spring from a mutual antipathy to the Versailles settlement which, on the one hand, failed to give full play to the *sacro egoismo* of an overpopulated peninsula, and, on the other, dealt a sad blow to Teutonic power.

Karl Radek denies utterly the idea that geography governs the course of foreign policy: Russia's relations are conducted solely for the benefit of the workers all over the world. Yet geography has certainly had some influence on the series of non-aggression pacts which the U.S. S.R. has concluded with all its European neighbors and it is vital in all disputes with Japan who is seeking, asserts Viscount Ishii, only the recognition of racial equality and a security that resembles England's in its preoccupation with the events of the neighboring continent. As for the United States, John W. Davis finds the key to its external actions in the doctrine of isolation, but he urges a fuller participation in international life and a continued championship of arbitration as a means of settling disputes.

There is little impartiality in these essays and, in several instances, a marked variety in the interpretation of historical facts. The book, however, is undoubtedly a sound guide to the terms in which the purposes of the powers will be expressed for some time to come.

Mr. Gatewood is an instructor in the Riverdale Academy, a well known school for boys.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE COMMUNISTS' CORPSE Richard Wormser (Smith & Haas: \$2)	Gaunt young Swedish gal baits cops to save pusillanimous suspect before she denounces killer.	It moves so fast it has you blinking. Plot a bit too tangled, but that's a small matter.	Elected!
THE TAU CROSS MYSTERY J. J. Connington (Little, Brown: \$2)	Gent with unsavory past and gentle recluse shot in English flat. Sir Clinton Wendover from tiny clues catches killer.	A problem in deduction solved step by step with ubiquitous but elusive criminal—and a bit too much machinery.	Staple Goods
IT COULDN'T BE MURDER Hugh Austin (Crime Club: \$2)	Mother poisoned: Father gassed: butler shot: rest of nasty family in danger till Peter Quint stops holocaust.	Square - shooting, fast-moving, spine - tickling thriller with a 6-minute egg detective and a baffling plot.	"Yeah man!"

The PHOENIX NEST

BY WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

THE John Newbery Medal, awarded annually "for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children" was established in 1921. If you have wondered who *John Newbery* was, he was a friend of *Oliver Goldsmith* and of *Dr. Johnson*. He first published books specifically for children, and his famous store in St. Paul's churchyard was frequented by the children of London. *Frederic G. Melcher*, editor of *The Publishers' Weekly*, donates the prize every year. *Hendrik Van Loon* has won it in the past, *Hugh Lofting*, *Charles Boardman Hawes*, *Will James*, and *Cornelia Shannon*, a Californian, for her novel "Dobry," a story of peasant life in Bulgaria published by the Viking Press. The selection was announced at the annual convention of the American Library Association in Denver, Colorado. The book was chosen by a committee of fifteen librarians. Miss Shannon had already written several volumes of fairy tales and folk lore, and was guest speaker at the third session of the convention. A noted Bulgarian sculptor, *Atanas Katchamakoff*, illustrated her book. . . . The eternal argument goes on as to whether, to authors, writing is really fun. *Fannie Hurst* has covered a lot of ground in saying, "I am not happy when I am writing, but I am more unhappy when I am not." Now *Mary Agnes Hamilton*, whose latest book is a Houghton Mifflin one, "Sentenced to Life," has made a much more cheerful statement. She avers:

If the true novelist were to be told that he had but three months to live, he would know what to do with them. He would simply glue himself to his desk and sit writing until he had finished his novel. Writing is fun. It is the greatest fun there is. Such fun that, while one is at it, nothing can spoil its delight.

Then, too, there is the point of view of *E. Arnot Robertson*, known for her "Four Frightened People." *The Saturday Review* has in its files a manuscript of hers, entitled, "One Frightened Writer." Watch for it soon! Certainly there is plenty to frighten writers: publishers, critics, themselves, and so on! . . . *Coward-McCann* are bringing out the first guide book for dude ranchers, "Dude Ranches and Ponies," by *Lawrence B. Smith*.

Joseph Brewer, President of Olivet College at Olivet, Michigan (and formerly my boss in the publishing business!) announces the Olivet Writers' Conference from July 12th to August third. Aside from President Brewer, the staff and lecturers will consist of *Arthur Pound*, *Carl Sandburg*, *Allen Tate*, *Caroline Gordon* (his wife), *Jean Starr Untermeyer*, *Dorothea Brande*, *Eleanor Blake*, and *Nannine Joseph*. A charge of \$150 covers board and room in Dole Residence Hall for the three weeks of the Conference, and tuition. All correspondence, including letters of application, should be addressed to the Reg-

istrar, Olivet College, Olivet, Michigan. . . . An ancient publisher and bookseller who, it seems, has never got his rights, was *William Jaggard*, without whose good offices one-third of Shakespeare's plays might have been lost to the world. Jaggard not only printed Shakespeare, but also *Bacon*, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, the works of *Heywood*, and the first complete translation of *Boccaccio's "Decameron."* Yet there is no mention of him in the English "Dictionary of National Biography," and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* ignores him! To corroborate what I say, read Professor *E. E. Willoughby's* book, to be published July tenth by *E. P. Dutton*. It's called, "A Printer of Shakespeare." There's a lot in it about the Elizabethan period that you didn't know. . . . The well-known poet, *Katherine Garrison Chapin*, has sent me the following sonnets for the *Phoenix Nest*:

FROM A TROPICAL SHORE

(For Elinor Wylie)

The pale green wave breaks on the curving shore
Burned white beneath the hot high sun of spring.
The soft sound is a fairy ocean's roar,

An awkward bird floats on a lazy wing.
Beneath my feet I crush the little shells
Pink, delicate and perfect, carved in light,
And watch the silver fish that leap the swells

Dripping with jeweled water in their flight.

You never saw this bright fantastic land,
This unreal ocean and imagined sky,
Or sifted with long fingers this pale sand,
Or breathless, watched the soaring heron fly

Against the low hung stars. Yet everywhere

I find your footprint on this shining air.

Walk with the western wind over this sea,
Companioned by that Spirit whom you knew

Too well to brook the infidelity
Which time and space were asking as their due.

Now touching light tipped fingers to the clouds,

And happy feet above a cresting wave
Fling to the sunset glow your thin worn shrouds,—

You two shall know no dry nor watery grave.

But where the polished nacre glows within

A shell, where violet clouds bring down the rain,

Or where the bubble moon is blown too thin,

And stars are drowned, you yet shall live again,—

Live in the lyric pulse, remembering
Singing, to soar, and soaring still to sing!

● "YOU CAN FEEL THE SALT-SPRAY IN YOUR FACE AS YOU READ THIS BOOK"—*Lewis Gannett, Herald Tribune* ● "FRESH AND WITTY AND INTIMATE; RICH AND UNUSUAL—WHOLE-HEARTEDLY RECOMMENDED"—*Robert Van Gelder, N. Y. Times* ● "IT IS THE REAL STUFF, AND AS FULL OF THE IRISH AROMA AS THE SMELL OF SEAWeed ON THE ATLANTIC BEACHES—UNFORGETTABLE!"

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