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How to Check the Germans

By Henry Hammond

Erich Remarque, Famous Novelist, Cautions World Against Emergence Of the Sinister Nazi Underground

An enduring world peace can be achieved only by a continual, intensive program of re-education and strict control of the conquered Axis nations, according to Erich Maria Remarque, world-famous author. »The basic point of such re-education should be to make it clear to the Germans that they brought disaster upon themselves,« he says. »The United Nations cannot afford to relax for one moment their efforts to re-educate these people.

»Those left in Germany today are broken completely ... not by devastation wrought by the great Allied air power, nor by the thorough defeat effected by the powerful ground forces of the United Nations. They were broken by 12 years of brutally-insidious propaganda, threats, terrorization.

»In 1933, millions of Germans were honestly anti-Nazi. But as time went on and the bestial, inhuman terrorization increased, every man had to buckle under or be placed in a concentration camp where he faced death, while his family faced starvation or worse. Not every man is born to be a hero; most persons are opportunists and follow the path of least resistance.

»The atrocities the American soldiers found in Buchenwald were not new. They had been going on since 1933 when Hitler first assumed control. At that time Buchenwald, Dachau and the other concentration camps were occupied by Germans themselves – Democrats, Communists, Catholics, Jews and other non-believers in the Nazi ideology. More than 100,000 Germans were killed before a single foreigner entered Buchenwald.«

The depths of Mr. Remarque's emotions were apparent as he spoke. »Nazis kept these camps filled as, for 12 years, they ›educated‹ the German people in their vile doctrine. Today one or two German generations are completely corrupted. The group from 18 to 30 years of age, which formed the greater part of the S.S. (the Elite Guard), knows none but the Nazi way of life. They had nothing to do but believe and follow.

»The older ones, who had managed to murder a Communist or two during the riots of 1931, were rewarded by being appointed Nazi party officials with attendant economic favors.

»Today many will insist that they were anti-Nazi and anti-Hitler all the time. Most captured Nazis will claim they were merely ›acting on orders‹ that they ›did their best to prevent

worse tragedies.◁ But every Nazi is a war criminal. Their leaders are arch criminals of all time and the Nuremberg Court should judge them so.

»It must be remembered that a *destroyed* Germany is much easier to turn into a *machine of hate* by clever propaganda than was the Germany of 1931. The Germans will forget what they did to the cities of Poland, to Stalingrad, to Rotterdam, London and Coventry. They will see only their own destroyed cities, their own maimed veterans.◁

The world can take no more chances, he says, and hopes Allied diplomats realize it. »While the key is education, we cannot expect favorable results in a hurry. You cannot expect to wipe out overnight 12 years of merciless, insidious, perpetually-pounding propaganda directed at millions.

»Today, after years of diabolical tyranny, the people of Germany are so afraid that even those who hated the Nazis still fear their friends, their own families and themselves. It will take time before they can believe the Nazis actually are through, especially with the possibility of an underground movement. What is left of the 500,000 trained German killers – S.S. Guards and the Gestapo – will be more dangerous in the anonymity of civilian clothes. It will enable them to strike in the dark, as they have been doing sporadically.

»From whom may we fear activation of a new inciting propaganda? Most persons will answer from the outlawed German General Staff. Actually that term is misleading. There was no mysterious gang of General Staff officers who could propagate such war-like activity.◁

At the head of the clique of possible trouble-makers, Mr. Remarques says, are the Prussian career officers, the Junkers, the Nationalists and the big capitalists such as Krupp and Thyssen. »Underneath is the great spider's web of doctors, professors, scientists, jurists, teachers and business men who are reserve officers and former members of the ultra-Nationalistic Student Corps. It is these latter,◁ he says, »who have spread the gospel of German superiority and the Siegfried Theory. It is they who always have been first to hear the German call to arms.

»Now the former German High Command seems to have retained the respect and admiration of the German people,◁ he says. »The onus of defeat is placed on Hitler and the Nazi party as far as the average German is concerned. The tightly-bound military clique, the real ruler of the Reich since 1870, is credited with fighting a brilliant, patriotic war that was lost only because of interference and inefficiency of the party.

»A long and necessary task for the Allies will be ›disarmament◁ of the German generals. Some of the important ones will be condemned as war criminals. The rest – the brains of the German army which used first the Empire, then National Socialist Germany as political vehicles for their plans for world conquest – will be preparing for future rearmament!

»When Kesselring, the German Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front, surrendered, he said Allied air power was the chief factor in the German defeat. The last official German High Command Communique of World War II alibied that the Germans finally were beaten by superiority of numbers.

»These words should provide the theme for the Allied re-educational program for the Axis nations – the German people and any people who foster a philosophy of hate must learn that they always will be outnumbered!◁

When the Queen Mary made her last pre-war voyage to the United States in September, 1939, a weary, dispirited and disillusioned man was aboard. His youth had been stolen by the

First World War; behind him was home, friends, cherished possessions; ahead was a strange land, strange people, an unknown future.

Yet for Erich Maria Remarque that voyage was the most fortunate one of his life. For behind him he also had left the rage of his enemies, probable imprisonment, possible death. And ahead he found freedom, wealth, fame. And a country he would accept and love for his own.

Ten years earlier Remarque had attempted to relieve himself of the horror of his war memories by writing them into his now celebrated novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*. The book catapulted into almost immediate world-wide popularity, sold over 3,000,000 copies in 29 languages. In Germany 1,200,000 copies were sold before the Nazis came into power, banned and finally burned the book, and deprived the author of his German citizenship.

In the United States he was written his way to still greater renown, first in California's Beverly Hills, then in New York, where he wrote his present best-seller, *Arch of Triumph*. His home is filled with a priceless collection of paintings and art objects snatched from the very clutches of the Nazis by a faithful house servant.

When Remarque applied for citizenship in 1941, he said he never would go back to Germany. »I am no longer German,« he said, »I do not think German, feel German, talk German. Even when I dream it is about the United States.«