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Boxer and War Author, Former Foes, Discover Rare Harmony of Ideas

Syracuse Journal (Syracuse, N.Y., USA)

01.11.1929, Seite 13

Original:

Signatur: R-A 2.1.009/011

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Editors note: This is the second and last of series of articles concerning the interesting meeting in Berlin recently of Erich Maria Remarque, author of »All Quiet on the Western Front,« and Gene Tunney, retired heavyweight boxing champion of the world. Remarque and Tunney served as privates in the German and the American army, respectively, during the World War and their opinions on the subject of international strife command attention everywhere.

By Walter Dietzel.

I. N. S. Staff Correspondent.

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BERLIN, Nov. 1.—Gene Tunney, the Greenwich Village boy, who rose from a private in the A. E. F. to the boxing throne of the world and then abandoned his hard won fistic glory to lead the life of a country gentleman, and Erich Maria Remarque, the German schoolmaster, who wrote of his experiences in the most talked of book of the year, found much in each other to admire.

The two men concluded that in many respects they were much alike. Both had climbed from obscure origins to worldwide fame and affluence and both had developed a common hatred for the pageantry, the suffering, the hardships, the horror, that is called war.

Their meeting at a luncheon table in a Berlin restaurant was as interesting to them as it was to the Berlin newspaper man who had introduced them and who acted as their interpreter and to the gaping curious who sat around them. They wanted to know of the other's beliefs and ideas – the other's innermost thoughts on the vital subject of war – and it was gratifying to them to learn that they were in harmony.

Not Real »Author.«

In the former pugilist's opinion, Remarque in writing his book had fulfilled the mission of an author of his generation.

»Call me a book-writer rather than an author, please.« Remarque replied to this. »I firmly believe that the strength of my book lies in the fact that it was not written by a professional *litterateur*. Authors of that kind too often allow themselves to get estranged from real life. They look at people and things, register both, and keep away from them. They too often record life from a pedestal, and that's why they miss the hearts of humans. They do not live the lives that they are writing about. I lived with the characters of my book. That's the whole secret, I think.«

At this juncture, Remarque revealed that he intends leaving Berlin to settle down to work »somewhere« incognito. He is constantly harassed by people who wish to »meet« him, who

wish to ask him about his book; people who wish to have him lecture, who wish to have him write articles on the war, who wish all kinds of favors.

May Write New Book.

Perhaps he may write a new book, he said, but it will not deal with the war.

After this, the conversation turned to the possible causes of war and the possibilities of preventing a recurrence of war.

»Unless the minds of responsible representatives of nations are radically changed, we cannot hope to outlaw war.« Tunney declared. »I believe in Plato's theory of government through the selection of the fittest. In accordance with the great philosopher's schemes, statesmen should go through a thorough physical training during the first 10 years of their lives. The next decade should be devoted to their mental education, and the third 10 years to their political education. Trained thus, they should make better diplomats than most of those we had at the beginning of the war.«

The interpreter interrupted with the question as to what both thought of the possibilities of a promotion of world peace through the Anglo-American understanding brought about by President Hoover and premier MacDonald.

»MacDonald is certainly honest and sincere in proposing disarmament,« said Tunney. »He has worked his way up to the top. He has lived with the people, and knows how to appeal to them.«

»I doubt whether conferences alone will prevent future wars,« Remarque said. »I agree with you when you say that we have to change the minds of our diplomats, but we have to change the minds of the peoples, too, so that they should never again yield to the fever-begetting psychosis through which the nations were carried away at the beginning of the war.«

Talk About Boxing.

Tunney and Remarque talked a great deal about boxing, for the German writer is interested in the pugilistic art, especially as it was exemplified by Tunney in his victories over the great Jack Dempsey.

»I should love to put on the gloves and have you teach me boxing as you do it,« Remarque said. »I feel that every man should learn the fistic game, for there is nothing in the world like the reassuring feeling that a man can protect himself from physical assault in any emergency.«

Then and there it was arranged that they should meet in Brioni, Italy, where Tunney will reside next spring and that Remarque should have the boxing lessons he desired.