

THE REHABILITATION OF MAN—A CONTEMPORARY GERMAN VIEW*

HUMAN experience has proved that the traditional sources for Man's ethical guidance are assorted philosophers, theologians, seers, sages, poets, and humanists. They have ready answers in terms of their respective faiths and fields. Their voices and conclusions are generally accepted because of the prestige, eloquence, piety, or dramatic talent of the spokesmen. Yet the only sound foundation for ethical systems is Man's aspirations and desires. Aspirations are as much a part of Man as are all his other traits; all of them are what they are as a result of our whole evolutionary and social history. In his long experience on earth Man has found that certain forms of conduct are to his advantage, on the whole and in the long run, and that other sorts of behavior are disadvantageous from the point of view of his objectives. The former have been called good and the latter bad. From the standpoint of the satisfaction of his aspirations and desires, as well as from the standpoint of mere survival, it has been obviously wise for Man to be guided by his experience.

For the last half-century or so Germany has been conspicuous in the world as a spot where the social and ethical problems of modern man have claimed the attention of her poets and writers. They have been less complacent than those of most European countries. Germany's political leaders were, to her doom and bitter experience, false leaders. Her poets were not calm Olympians as Goethe once was. Instead they were battlers, propagandists, lawyers, philosophers attack-

* A public lecture delivered at the Rice Institute on November 26, 1950.

ing the social iniquities, physicians examining the ills of our time, prophets announcing the dawn of a new age, soldiers fighting in the first ranks for whatever they believed to be right, unscrupulous politicians identifying political programs with fundamental morality; and therein as usual in any man's country, they had practically no difficulty winning followers. Among the most frequent topics and problems which some representative German authors and poets have treated during the past half-century of world-wide ferment and upheaval are the following:

1. Decadence of the individual, family, and nation—a phenomenon of the twentieth century.
2. Postwar convulsions of the German people as a sequence of World War I.
3. German concept of the struggle for the soil and the pseudo-doctrine of racial superiority and purity.
4. The horrors of totalitarianism, a scourge of humanity.
5. Spiritual resurrection of man as a *sine qua non* for moral rehabilitation of mankind and the establishment of world peace.
6. The absolute postulate for the establishment of universal brotherhood of Man.

All these problems find their culmination and their solution in the acceptance of a radical re-orientation of thought and actions by the German people in particular and by the world in general.

This sort of movement is not a new phenomenon in German literature. The harbingers of this doctrine of regeneration of humanity were the expressionists. The champions of that literary movement arose before World War I and reached their height in the postwar period. The movement was greeted with exaggerated hopes by the younger generation. They expected the liberation of the human soul from

the bonds of philosophic materialism and scientific mechanism which, at the turn of the century, held Western man in its grip. No one anticipated that this spectacular movement would last scarcely a few years and would then sink silently into oblivion. But, at the same time, we do not fully realize to what extent the creative literary forces of our present day are indebted to those pioneers who first had the courage to break the fetters of a mechanized universe and to open up new vistas for the purpose of freeing Man from the misery of the empty aestheticism of later literary movements. When we look at the literary creations of this era we may be justified in saying that expressionism, as a literary movement, was not a failure, but that many of its protagonists were sadly led astray by mistaking mere movement for progress, negation for criticism, distortion for satire, outcry and convulsion for emotion and passion. The sufferings of World War I find an echo in the stammering, babbling, weeping, and rejoicing of the characters of expressionism.

As a corollary to this movement there appeared after the disillusionment of World War I a violent revulsion from war which became a general feature of German literature. Pacifism was at its zenith in 1929 and was then as normal a need to a world disillusioned with war, as a good rest is to a man who has passed through a violent football scrimmage. The year of 1929 was the year in which Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* appeared. It became a world sensation. Its fame spread like a forest fire throughout the civilized world. His work gave expression to the cry "No more war!" It served as a literary bridge between Germany and the U. S. after World War I. Other war novels were written in great numbers. They preached that the only cure possible in a mad world of greed, war, and shallow civilization was a return to

Nature, to brother-love, *Brudermensch*, a theme which very many German authors treated.

Whereas the expressionists dreamed of regenerating all Humanity, the National Socialists restricted their regenerative fervor to the German race. Moreover, while expressionism was violently individual in spite of its collective consciousness, *Wir-Bewusstsein*, National Socialism humbly accepted regulation from without. Expressionism followed the lines of Walther von Rathenau's struggle against mechanization of the spirit, *Mechanisierung des Geistes*; with the Nazis, spirit was as mechanized as modern armies are. Expressionism stood for ethical ideals, National Socialism for State ideals; the ideal of one is the regeneration of mankind, that of the other regeneration of the race—the German race, the *Herrenvolk!*

To put this philosophy of National Socialism of regenerating the German race into practice, the state approved literature, found literary purveyors who extolled the principle that the race derived its finest and purest qualities from the soil and its inhabitants. The result of this was the demand for regionalistic literature, *Heimatliteratur*. Race and soil were treated extensively as the leitmotif. Regeneration of the German race was also to be brought about by emulating positive qualities of legendary and historical heroes of Germany's past. Achievements of the great men and women of the glorious German middle ages were written into stories to form the examples to be followed by the people of the Third Reich. Literature became a service to the people, *Dienst am Volke*, not to analyze the diseases of society and individual heroes, but to eulogize the community and the race. To carry out this perverted program tales were stamped out of the holy earth from 1933 to the mid-forties, like the

bristling German army. It must be realized, however, that the literary purveyors of this Nazi era enjoyed a strong circulation, because their works were readable.

But the very essence of this cultural plan was the repudiation of that common European civilization which is based on Graeco-Roman culture and inspired by the ethics of Christianity, even where in direct opposition to Christian dogma. Among the most prominent authors and poets who definitely preached that literature is not concerned primarily with artistic merit, but with political aims, are men like Hans Grimm with his novel *People without Living-space* (*Volk ohne Raum*), a vast book of immense range and power. It contains the very germs of the German obsession of, may we call it, national weakness? Their own authors call it the German vice, *Laster*, of being persistently and constantly misunderstood and misinterpreted in their political aspiration by other representative nations in the world. The irony about Grimm is the fact that he, as the apostle of the new plan of regenerating his nation, foreswore the inhuman and awful goings-on of his own erstwhile admirers and disciples and joined the camp of the Inner Emigration that consisted in having nothing more to say or write about the German people who had gone beserk in their treatment of the peoples of Europe, in their mad plan of world domination. Many other authors joined in this Inner Emigration, and though remaining in Germany during the reign of the brown termites, kept silent and refrained from writing.

Again others who could not be forced into the Nazi mould, or were driven out because of their Jewish origin, sought and found refuge abroad. Many gained a vast reading public outside Germany. I mention only a few like the Prague-born Jewish author Franz Werfel with his *Song of Bernadette*, a world best-seller appearing in 1942, furthermore Vicki Baum

with her book *Grand Hotel*, Emil Ludwig with his Lincoln and his Roosevelt biographies.

In the group of German writers whose composite voices have been raised in our day in behalf of a moral rebirth of the world we must include Dr. Albert Schweitzer, if one uses the German language as a yardstick to measure German literature and philosophy. German is his mother tongue, because the Alsatian dialect, in which he is deeply rooted, is German. His books on civilization and ethics, as well as his autobiography, *My Life and Thought*, are written in the German language.

His very constructive and thought-provoking works in behalf of moral regeneration of Man were greatly strengthened and reinforced by the writings and pronouncements of two expatriated German Nobel Prize winners: our fellow American citizen Thomas Mann and the Swiss citizen Hermann Hesse. Both men were forced out of their native Germany through a chain of circumstances previous to the fateful year of 1933. In this galaxy of German authors devoted to the cause under consideration, I include (among many more) Fritz von Unruh, who also found refuge in the U.S.A., and finally also Ernst Wiechert, a less known author in our country. The last did not leave Germany during her recent darkest years and was incarcerated in a horror concentration camp for almost a year. All these men come from vastly different origins, backgrounds, training, and social advantages; yet all, without exception, uphold the doctrine that the crisis of the twentieth century is moral, not economic, political, or social. The modern world is troubled because modern man is troubled—troubled as never before in history. It is not too much to say that fully ninety percent of all the current problems engrossing our attention have their roots in a desire for an ephemeral type of temporal security. As Monsignor

Sheen says in his book, *The Peace of Soul*, "we no longer speak of the problems of men; we are now forced to consider Man as the problem." The five men whose world view, *Weltanschauung*, I shall bring to your attention show in their writings the same power of truth, the same power of conviction, and the same faith that a moral force can become an even more effective instrument of national policy than a physical force.

They are uniformly against government attempting to force false moral attitudes upon their fellow citizens. They teach the lesson that no government can make a man be good or Christian or tolerant. That is not within the province of government. If government undertakes to do so, it becomes a tyranny.

First let me present a few of Dr. Albert Schweitzer's views on this subject under discussion. He defines civilization as the sum total of all progress made by Mankind in every phase of action and from every point of view, in so far as this progress is serviceable for the spiritual perfecting of the individual. Its essential element is, he says, the ethical perfecting of the individual and the community. Dr. Schweitzer explains how the crisis of our civilization is manifested in the discrepancy between material and spiritual progress. We are making rapid advances in technology and science, but these have made themselves independent of spiritual and ethical values. This concept of a decaying civilization which appeared in the mid-twenties has been confirmed in the following decades. However, Dr. Schweitzer is not a fatalist; he does not believe that we are inevitably doomed. A restoration of civilization is possible if we learn again how to relate our material life—economy, technology, research—and our social life—politics, domestic and international—to the ethical as the highest value.

His ethics is essentially religion. Thus Christianity as interpreted and actually lived by Schweitzer means "to live and act within the world as one who is different from the world." It is devoid of the other-worldliness and defeatism of those introverted Christians who leave the world to the free-for-all of competing selfish egotists. Also, placing the center and responsibility for ethical thinking and living in the autonomous individual rather than on the compulsions of external authority, Schweitzer lacks the authoritarian spirit of some Christians. He believes that this particular philosophy of ethical autonomy and secularism provides a balance of spirit and nature that is needed today. Racism and power politics have betrayed the spirit, whereas utopians and naïve democrats and all sorts of sanguine people of good will have comfortably ignored the nature of Man and nature in Man. Only if we achieve a unity of idealism and realism can we hope to rebuild Western civilization. Schweitzer's philosophy as well as his life of service can guide us in our effort to achieve this unity.

But whether or not we accept the philosophical foundations of Schweitzer's teaching, we must admire the greatness of his ethical personality. To use Stefan Zweig's simile with regard to Schweitzer: he is like a magnet that attracts dead iron-filings and magnetizes them; so, those devoted to a higher cause attract more indifferent people and imbue them with their own devotion. Among human beings there will always be leaders and those that are led in the matter of world view, *Weltanschauung*, as in any other; but the decisive question revolves itself around whether the influence of the leaders results in the dependence or in the independence of those that are led.

If there are to be large numbers of people with independent minds, it is obvious that the preservation and stimulation

of individuality are all-important. Schweitzer without a doubt has great reverence for individuality and values all its rights as inviolable and sacred. In this respect he is a democrat. The terribly impersonal element in democracy as expressed in communism, is absolutely foreign to his way of thinking and his way of life. He prizes the rights of the individual too highly as they are profoundly spiritual in sense. Collectivism expressed in communism and the other isms of the thirties and forties always aims at the destruction of individuality.

Schweitzer himself, in posing the question "Where is the road that will bring Man back from barbarism to civilization?" answers it in this way. It is exclusively the individual personality which must be looked to as the agent in the new movement. The renewal of civilization has nothing to do with movements which bear the character of experiences of the crowd; they are never anything but reactions to external happenings. But civilization can revive only when there shall come into being a number of individuals of a new tone of mind, independent of the one prevalent among the crowd and in opposition to it, a tone of mind which will gradually win influence over the collective one, and in the end determine its character. It is only an ethical movement that can rescue Man from the slough of barbarism.

And one thing more from the pen of Dr. Schweitzer: "A new Renaissance must come, and a much greater one than that in which we stepped out of the Middle Ages; a great Renaissance in which mankind discovers that the ethical is the highest truth and the highest practicality . . . I would be a humble pioneer of this Renaissance, and throw the belief in a new humanity, like a torch, into our dark ages."

Those pronouncements and views come from a man whose father was a minister in a humble Alsatian village. This man,

Albert Schweitzer, in possession of four doctorates, all earned in the University of Strassburg in theology, music, philosophy, and medicine, the last at the age of thirty-seven to become medical missionary in Equatorial French Africa, has indeed made contributions to the advancement of civilization which are immeasurable.

A second author whose services to the progress of Humanity looms very high in the world of literature, is Thomas Mann, whose origin is in the patrician bourgeois family in Luebeck in northern Germany. His conclusions for the necessity of a regeneration of mankind appear and reappear in all his novels; they are even of greater concern in the Joseph cycle, written during the recent war, and in his newest book, *Dr. Faustus*, which appeared in 1947 in German and came out in English translation the following year. Thomas Mann's characters are ill, and they form part of an ailing world, a world he has depicted in his numerous stories of a decadent Europe. As in Melville's *Moby Dick*, all races of the world compose the crew that has gathered to pursue the white whale, so in many of Thomas Mann's stories, all the nationalities of Europe and all classes of society constitute a large body of humanity that is in need of moral and spiritual re-orientation, and thorough rehabilitation. With illness and hypochondria and neurosis as the norms of its civilization, is it any wonder that life itself reappeared in savage, pre-civilized guise as the will to violate, the will to kill, the will to destroy? Once the death wish became so prevalent, was it any wonder that the world catastrophe came which engulfed all Humanity in the murderous Second World War?

Thomas Mann, the author of decadence, does not consider society a tragic balance of the powers of good and evil. Into his outlook there enters the belief in the final triumph of humaneness, in the ability of man to fight off the powers

of evil. If humaneness is developed in the human being he will, after having gone through a great many difficult experiences, reach a godlike stature and will establish righteousness on earth. In his unceasing fight against fascism, Thomas Mann pointed out with unflagging conviction that a fascist victory was unthinkable. The struggles against fascism, he pointed out, were skirmishes of the external fight between the forces of reaction and progress, in which humaneness was bound to emerge victorious. To amplify his thesis Mann turned to the history of Joseph the Excellent, retaining in the details of the plot of his Joseph novel all of the Biblical story. The Joseph story is a philosophical novel; it is not a treatise in theology or metaphysics. It is not a book about God, but about what the religious liberals used to call "the idea of God in human experience." The main thesis of this novel is that *humaneness is eternal and evil mortal*. Thomas Mann strengthens this by means of original argumentation, to the effect that humanity had always believed that its soul was eternal. Verification of this fact is found in the Christian belief in the resurrection of Christ and in pagan beliefs in the rebirth of gods—Dionysus, Adonis, Osiris. The involved Semitic, Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian antique mythologies are utilized by Mann to stress a simple point: the human being as such is great.

The living forces of Mann's talent, his belief in Mankind and his love of truth, enjoy powerful support from all freedom-loving people all over the world. Like the real international poets, if there be such, Mann is able to lend a metaphysical aspect to the menace and ugliness of human existence, thereby linking our earth with those spheres towards which every man is aiming, consciously or unconsciously, with or without the help of religion.

Humanism, Thomas Mann explained in a public address in

the late thirties, is in no way an academic matter and has no direct concern with erudition. Humanism is, rather, a state of mind, an intellectual leaning, a condition of the human soul that involves justice, liberty, knowledge, tolerance, grace, and serenity. He also said in connection with this: "Would it not be simplest and best to consider humanism the opposite of fanaticism?"

Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann's brother, said: "Americans are probably justified in their conviction that they are destined to help form the future culture of the world." His brother Thomas predicts, in his address on the topic, *The Coming Victory of Democracy*, Europe will unite with America in the great tasks of Humanity. Again and again he advocates the practical and actual application of all the lofty tenets of human ideals contained in democracy for the purpose of rehabilitating Mankind in general and his native Germany in particular. As a champion of democracy he possesses the unwavering conviction that democracy alone has only the best of intentions towards humanity, as it wishes to elevate Mankind and wishes to teach it to think and to set it free. He glorifies in its concept of seeking to remove from culture the stamp of privilege and of disseminating its aims for education and world peace and harmony among men. He regards the respect for the dignity of Man as one of the main cornerstones in the democratic structure of society. In Thomas Mann's view, democracy as a worth-while possession cannot be neglected and just taken for granted as even physical things die off, disappear, are lost if they are not cared for and if they do not feel the eye and the hand of the owner.

Even America, Thomas Mann points out, feels that democracy is not an assured possession since it has enemies, is threatened from within and from without, and has thus

become a problem. It possesses powers of self-renewal, but also requires the iron pressure of disciplinary restraint to keep it under reasonable control. To enjoy democracy and make it work demands Mankind's best efforts. It is not something given or granted or legislated into power. It must be won through conquest and self-sacrifice. He states that our daily experience with Humanity exhibits its injustice, malice, cruelty, its average stupidity and blindness, its crass egotism, its deceitfulness, cowardice, and antisocial instincts. Yet this strange and mysterious creature called Man, in spite of his depravity, shows on the other hand a keen sense of Honor, an appreciation of Art and Science, a passion for Truth, the creation of Beauty, and the idea of Justice. It is on the safeguarding of these latter spiritual values that Humanity is ever and ever reconstructing and rebuilding itself towards creating a better world in which to live.

In his latest novel *Dr. Faustus*, septuagenarian Thomas Mann presents the long-expected discussion of the German Problem. The title is symbolic for what under the name of *Faustian* has long been regarded as typical of the German character: the boundless striving, the oscillating between extremes, the tragic inability to reach a compromise with life as it is. The novel, likely to be discussed for many years to come, is undoubtedly one of the greatest literary works of our time, the unique value of which will hardly be sensed by the average reader in our decade. Future critics may perhaps even call the novel the most important book of the forties.

Although continuing to remain unmistakably German in his writing, Thomas Mann has elevated German literature to the level of world literature. He shares this honor with Hermann Hesse, who, as the 1946 Nobel Prize winner for

achievements in German literature, has done so much towards upholding the torch of the human soul. Son of a stateless Baltic German missionary and a Swabian mother, he attended German and Swiss schools. His home atmosphere was one of Christian cosmopolitanism and piety. Refusing to be trained for the ministry, he emerged as a successful novelist at an early age. Since 1912 he has lived off and on in Switzerland, of which country he is a citizen. In his writings he has given a splendid account of his spiritual struggles and his philosophy of life. More than any contemporary German writer, Hesse occupies himself with the old and ever-new question: What constitutes human happiness? What is the meaning of the restless longing in Man which agitates his soul and allows him no peace?

Hesse centers his attention around the individual person as such, the human being disentangled from the limits of natural realism, geography, and time. Reality in the ordinary sense, for instance, becomes almost meaningless. It is the reality of the human soul that matters. Consequently Hesse's world is diametrically opposed to the contemporary realism of a Hemingway or a Steinbeck. One of his outstanding books that had a tremendous influence on the younger generation of Germans after 1918, to whom it meant almost as much as Goethe's *Werther*, is his novel *Demian*. The novel was reissued in the U.S.A. in 1948. Hesse emphasizes in this novel that a human being should develop himself to the highest level of his possibilities. The corollary of this conviction is, of course, that Man is innately good. The idea that fate (destiny) is not outside us, but in us, is one of the simplest discoveries that Hesse makes again and again in his works; he has captured this especially in his *Demian*. Its hero's total effort consists in his returning to himself and his possessing himself deeper and deeper. The road to deliver-

ance does not lead to the right or to the left; it leads to one's own heart, and there alone is good and there alone is peace.

Man is led to his inmost self by devious routes. To seek one's self means seeking one's fate and this means the desire to love one's fate. This also means seeking God, and the goal of all seeking is the realization of one's self as the highest aim of one's existence. Thus all this searching has only one goal: i.e., realization of that which is divine in ourselves, in our souls. Hesse says that this has been taught by all the wise men of the whole world, Buddha and Schopenhauer, Jesus and the Greeks. There is only one wisdom, only one belief, only one concept: the knowledge of God in us. But Hesse, while deeply religious, is in no way dogmatic. He is not utopian in his views. He is also not one of the so-called political realists, *Realpolitiker*, in their misconception of reality. He is well-acquainted with other realities than those which lead to war and death. He experienced them a thousand times in himself and he is acquainted with their benefits and blessings. He knows his Socrates, his Christ, and his Goethe, he knows the sacred power of these great interpreters and mediators between the spirit of God and Man.

All of Hesse's political essays—political means for him always humanistic—distinguished themselves through a uniformity of sentiment, through a central thought that aims at humanism, and finally through unwavering devotion to the principle of the "Golden Rule" in behavior of man to man. Even in these essays, Hesse is mainly an artist, a creative human being. His poetic works cannot be imagined without his views which are revealed unreservedly and honestly in his essay entitled *War and Peace*.

Hesse's political credo is centered in the realization of turning our backs on the prophetic and pessimistic pronouncement of the Austrian poet Grillparzer: "From hu-

manity by way of Nationalism to bestiality." Twice in his life Hesse saw Europe embark on the unholy path of blood, and he had the bitter experience that his appeals to the reason and hearts of men were spoken in vain. He tried to no avail to supplant the awful pseudo-myth of race, blood, and nation with the true myth, the myth of spirit.

All of Hesse's works are characterized by an absolute honesty of purpose, by an active love and readiness to suffer. We cannot but feel inspired by his unfailing courage, by his willingness ever to begin anew and take upon himself the suffering of his age. One reads Hesse's stories with a loving and grateful heart, because they affect one so deeply, because they penetrate into Mankind's suffering, love, and life, because they help one to become a more real, a better man, because they teach Mankind to love Life and Humanity. His concise world view, *Weltanschauung*, consists in the following utterance: My sole concern is to be able to love the world, not to ridicule it, to be able to view it, myself, and all creatures with love, admiration, and respect. Happiness has little to do with the fulfillment of one's wishes. It is more blessed to give than to receive, and it is nobler and more beautiful and makes one happier to love than to be loved. Hesse's most recent great work is *Das Glasperlenspiel*, translated as *Magister Ludi*. In this two-volume work, Hesse has given his philosophy of Life and Man. Viewed from the perspective of German literary history, the work is the only great and important novel, *Bildungsroman*, between Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* and his *Dr. Faustus*.

In a civilization which is steadily being threatened by growing mechanization and superficiality, Hermann Hesse must, of necessity, be a lonely and often uncomfortable outsider, and yet we may be grateful that there are men like him. Especially in America we may listen to and learn from

a poet who has made the unique attempt of preserving and reproducing the spiritual achievements of Mankind in his literary works, and who, blending the best traditions of the Western world with the eternal wisdom of the East, is today trying to uphold the gospel of humaneness of Man in his dealings with Man.

In the group of German authors whose works show the most profound and most devoted interest in the re-orientation and rehabilitation of Man in his moral behavior, we find, to our surprise and astonishment, a German who traditionally, by all rights, belongs in a group of extreme nationalists and chauvinists. That person is Fritz von Unruh, who is associated with those poetic personalities that become the exponents, prophets, and teachers of their era. Springing from an old German aristocratic family that was closely associated with Junkerdom and the imperial house, he succeeded in severing his ties with the Prussian Officers' clique.

His father was a life-long friend of President von Hindenburg and governor of East Prussia. Fritz von Unruh, like his brothers, became an army officer. He even became the adjutant of one of the sons of Wilhelm II. In World War I he took part as a volunteer. He distinguished himself in this conflict with exemplary valor. But he looked at that war with the sympathetic eyes of a poet. The experience of World War I turned von Unruh into a pacifist. In his novels and poems Unruh expresses the thought that the restoration of order depends on the victory of expressionistic ethics: Humanity must turn away from mechanized civilization and find salvation in the love of all for all.

Unruh is a fighter for a new and better world. In front of and behind his realistic, symbolic, and pacifistic writings love, especially love for his fellow man, is the dominant

feature. He belongs to the most gifted dramatists of our era, and in his dramatic productions he warns us again and again of the perils of war and points out that the so-called "enemy" is also a suffering human being.

He was active as a politician; but when Hitler came into power, von Unruh voluntarily became an exile in order to fight against him. He was requested by the leaders of the Nazi propaganda to return to Germany, but he declined the invitation, although in Nazi Germany he probably might have been elevated to the position of national poet, something similar to poet-laureate in England. While in the U.S.A., he composed several plays and a biographical work, but never ceased to fight against Nazism in his homeland. His dramatic productions try to visualize a new age with a differently organized society. He never lost sight of the continuity which binds the past to the present and tradition to progress. Amidst the complexities of modern life and the atrocities of modern society, which he lays open pitilessly, he constantly seeks the realm that is to come, when life and society will be governed by the ideas of peace. Consequently his criticism is always constructive; his message is nearly utopian, but it is genuinely humane; his voice rings with the sonorous sound of life in its fullness and profundity.

Fritz v. Unruh expresses the idea that no organized group, no state has a right to take precedence over the individual when the dignity of man is involved. He dares to rebel against the powers of the state which demand absolute and unquestioned coördination and submission. His soul rejects the imposition as presupposing the monstrous claim of an infallible human authority, which not even the state can have.

In this concert of German voices in behalf of the rehabilitation of Man, I include a voice that was stilled through

death just last summer. Ernst Wiechert died on the 25th of August at his villa near Zurich, Switzerland, in which country he established residence after the recent war. Just previous to his death he visited California, where he is known to our movie industry, because his book containing his personal experiences in the Buchenwald concentration camp was made into a film.

I feel I should add his voice to those already mentioned because it rings out with a fervor, conviction, and sincerity that has strong and universal appeal, especially to youth. He was an East Prussian forester's son. Early in his life he learned to love the grave beauty of his Masurian homeland with its thinly-populated forest ranges, its moors and lakes. He loved also the slow, quiet rhythm in which life moves in these formerly most Eastern German regions, now part of Mother Russia together with the three defunct democracies along the Baltic. Wiechert's inheritance—contact with nature and mystery of the forest—shaped his personality and his work. The forest is his life, his philosophy, his religion, his judge, his refuge from wearisome civilization; it is his recreation, his joy, and his sorrow. In his works the forest is always in evidence and often plays the role of an acting personality. It can be the consoler of the world-weary, a relentless foe who avenges disloyalty, a healer for the one despairing of a life that has been all too cruel, a patient partner who helps the uprooted to send down new shoots into his estranged home soil. The characters of Wiechert's novels withdraw from modern (especially urban) society into the primitive life of the forest, back to nature, to escape to a land beyond the reach of life's confusion and anxiety to which they cannot give their approval.

He came out of the First World War, in which he served four years, totally disillusioned and a bitter enemy of

Western civilization. He became a violent opponent of the utter submersion of the individual in the nameless masses of regiments and of the complete loss of the personality of the individual soldier. He was also an ardent, indeed almost fanatical, individualist. In his reaction to the First World War and postwar conditions, he exhibited utmost contempt for Humanity in the aggregate, and for a society hard and efficient. He was contemptuous of spiritual values which sacrifice the individual to the community. For Wiechert this doctrine of hate was a phase. He found the purpose of his life to be in helping others whatever their need might be. In 1934 he wrote: "I was forty years old when grace came pouring over me and when the old form broke. It washed away all hatred and left me filled with love. It washed away what was familiar with law, security, tradition, and left me at the threshold of a new beginning. And from here I am building my house; a house for the humiliated and the insulted, a house for the poor, for those who are maltreated and oppressed. The "Haves" smile at this and the powerful shrug their shoulders. But could he be a poet at whose door the poor of the earth could not knock at all hours, whose door would not be open day and night so that God and the dying could enter over an unforbidden threshold and at any time?"

It is in keeping with this purpose that Ernst Wiechert stayed in Germany and spoke and wrote as long as he and his writings were tolerated by the government of the Third Reich. He knew well what price he might have to pay. However, he feared God more than men, and of his strength and courage he gave freely to all who sought his help.

He has given a heart-rending account of the martyrdom of Buchenwald concentration camp in his book *Forest of the Dead* (*Der Totenwald*). Under the barbarous treatment at the

camp, Wiechert was near death. Kind comrades helped him survive; their courage and strength were freely offered him by his fellow prisoners of all shades of political and religious belief. This revelation of human fellowship restored not only his faith in human beings, but a belief in God which was tottering. With the following solemn words he dedicated this book, one of the first significant expressions to come out of Germany since the recent war:

To the dead—in memory.

To the living—in shame.

To those to come—in warning.

In conclusion I wish to make it clear that the appeal which each of these five men made for the essential fundamentals of an ethical and moral civilization, to create a better and improved world, are not confined—by any manner of means—to representatives of the German nation alone. For these men realized that world-wide interpretation of Man's experience on earth provides the only valid basis for that invaluable prediction of probable costs and consequences of different possible courses, if Man is not reoriented and rehabilitated in his actions toward his fellow men. The creation of the United Nations, with all its humane tenets and humane organizations, was the only course open to work toward this objective.

However, in this, our own century, which has been frequently called the Century of Man, half of it already recorded history, the world is called upon to use supreme effort to meet a dark and ominously developed situation in the Far East. So is it any wonder, from the standpoint of experience and aspirations and self-preservation, that Humanity is indeed turning to moral and spiritual guidance

that will make it responsible for establishing and maintaining a peaceful and untroubled world?

In the last century it was the Anglo-Saxon Pax Britannica that gave Man on the whole a comparatively good and safe century. Now it is our American people and the American-inspired-and-created United Nations that are destined to create for us and the world a Pax Americana with all its humane aspects and blessings, as a price of preventing a Politburo-infiltrated or perhaps forcefully-imposed Pax Sovietica.

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