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EDUCATION UNDER THE NAZIS

By Charles A. Beard

EVERY system of education, besides being embedded in the context of a given civilization, presents certain aspects by which its nature may be judged. Among its outstanding features are the scheme of administration; the body of objectives or principles for controlling instruction; the class-room procedure; the code of rules governing the admission and conduct of students; and the degree of liberty allowed to private institutions.

Administration may be highly centralized as in France; or it may be decentralized as in the United States, where each state, and to some extent each community, manages its own schools and makes its own curriculum. It may be especially concerned with the mechanics of providing equipment; or it may be particularly interested, as in Germany, in regimenting the bodies and thoughts of pupils.

The objectives or controlling principles may be sharply enumerated and defined; or they may be only partly prescribed by law and decree, leaving a wide discretionary power in the hands of teachers and local formulators of curricula. So likewise with class-room procedure. It may range from rigid and exacting drill to an individual freedom bordering on anarchy. It may demand unquestioning obedience and impose fixed dogmas on pupils; or it may permit, even encourage, the presentation of conflicting views, and favor the exploration of opposing conceptions. In other words, the teacher may imitate the drill sergeant or follow the example of Socrates.

The code of rules for the governance of pupils may confine admission and promotion to favored groups, and subject student life to a harsh discipline; or it may open wide all channels of education to talent, irrespective of birth and position, and throw upon maturing pupils a high degree of moral responsibility for their conduct. Private institutions of learning may be encouraged by public policy and granted a wide area of liberty; or they may be subjected to State discipline, perhaps abolished entirely.

It is by studying closely such features of any educational system that we can most firmly grasp its forms, animus, and meaning for contemporary life.

Yet it is apparent, from what has been said, that we are not dealing with complete opposites. Every system of society, from that of primitive Indians to a highly complex civilization, imposes some positive obligations on training or education, and enforces them by custom or law. Respect for monarchy is not taught in the schools of the United States, nor is it conceivable that any state in the Union would permit the formulation of a curriculum based on the monarchical principle. America is a republic, and republicanism is inculcated in American schools. Every revolution in the Western world has bent education more or less to its purposes. This "law" of history is illustrated in the writings of George Washington, Benjamin Rush, and Thomas Jefferson, and in the efforts made after 1776 to establish a system and theory of American education. Here, as elsewhere in human affairs, it is a matter of degree, of emphasis, of spirit. It is with some such caution against hasty generalizations that we approach the development of education under National Socialism in Germany.

II

In speaking of a country which has no fundamental law, where the will of one man makes and unmakes law, it is difficult to discover the precise form and content of educational administration. Yet some features stand clearly written in the official publications.

Whatever rights the German states once enjoyed over their respective systems of instruction, it is certain that Adolf Hitler, as Leader and Chancellor, makes general educational law whenever he finds it convenient to his purposes. An example is to be found in the law and ordinance of April 25, 1933, requiring state governments to limit the number of students admitted to schools and faculties, applying the percentage ratio to "non-Aryans," and bringing private schools under these limitations.¹

State ministries of education continue to exist in attenuated form, but they are subject to Reich law. Moreover they have been completely overshadowed by the action of Prime Minister Göring and Reichsminister Rust late in 1934 in fusing Prussian and Reich administrations. This official act created a single Reich and Prussian Ministry of Science, Education and National Culture, with six departments covering every phase of education,

¹ *Zentralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichts Verwaltung in Preussen*, May 5, 1933, p. 128-129.

schools, libraries, museums, literature, the arts, theater, cinema, and ecclesiastical affairs.² There is, accordingly, documentary support for the proposition that the administrative supervision over education in Germany has been brought under a single national office and that the scope of its authority embraces every intellectual activity even remotely related to education.

It is equally evident from the mass of laws and decrees spread over hundreds of pages that German educational administration is not concerned merely or even primarily with providing favorable physical conditions for intellectual and moral life in institutions of learning. On the contrary, decree after decree shows that it is above all interested in imposing a rigid pattern of life and thought on teachers and pupils alike, and is openly hostile to every manifestation of free inquiry and discussion in the schools — from the bottom to the top. The subjects to be taught, the books admitted to school rooms, the papers and magazines bought for school libraries, and the very spirit of instruction are prescribed in minute details. No room is left for private opinion, for experimentation, or for the consideration of any questions deemed “out of line” by the administration. The life and sports of students as well as the thought and conduct of teachers are brought within the system of regimentation. The declared purpose and program of education is to crush all liberty of instruction and all independent search for truth, and to “incorporate German youth in Home, Folk, and State by the awakening of sound racial forces and the cultivation of them with political goals consciously in mind.”³

Moreover, the central control of educational administration is strengthened by general legislation touching the reorganization of the professional civil service and the retirement and promotion of civil servants. Under this legislation the Reich was permitted to enter the field of education hitherto reserved to the states and take over the control of the teaching personnel in its higher ranges. It was permitted to dismiss professors and teachers, along with other officials, whether employed by the Reich, the state, or the cities. It was also empowered to transfer officials from high posts to low and from low to high, as well as to dismiss and retire on pension. While the law provided for the retirement of pro-

² *News in Brief*, published by the “Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst,” December 1934, p. 20.

³ *Amtsblatt des Reichs- und Preussischen Ministeriums für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung und der Unterrichts Verwaltungen der anderen Länder*, January 5, 1935, p. 6.

fessors at the age of sixty-five, "reliable men" could be continued in office by "administrative order."

By legislation just cited and by practice, the Prussian Act of 1852 guaranteeing a certain academic freedom was abolished. Under that Act, the university professor in Prussia, like the judge, and unlike the ordinary administrative official, could not be transferred against his will and could not be demoted except through proceedings in a disciplinary court. In other German states a similar immunity from arbitrary administrative intervention was established by law or custom.

This celebrated *Lehrfreiheit* is now at an end. Administrative officials can discharge, retire, transfer, and promote at their pleasure. Rectors of universities are no longer chosen by members of the faculties, but are selected by the ministry of education. Faculties have lost the right to control the admission of new members. The minister in charge may appoint any man — an insider, an outsider, a foreigner or a German, a competent university graduate or a vigorous Nazi educated in "the university of hard knocks." Thus all protective safeguards against administrative removals, transfers, and demotions have been broken down, and the teaching profession stands defenseless before the administrative machine. In addition, teachers' organizations, which formerly sought to advance the interests of the profession, have gone the way of the trade unions and have been incorporated in the Nazi system.

As if the official administration could not be counted upon to drive out all teachers unacceptable to Nazi authorities, a special law was issued early in 1933 creating a student union at every university (*Deutsche Studentenschaft*) and welding these bodies into a national organization. Each student union was composed of "Aryans" and led by Nazis; and the national organization was likewise under Nazi direction. On April 28, 1933, the national leader of the organized students ordered local student leaders to report on professors to be expelled on account of their Jewish origin or deviation from orthodox Hitlerism. He likewise instructed them to make separate reports on professors whose political views and teaching methods were deemed "correct." Not content with drawing up lists of proscribed and favored persons, student leaders howled down professors, made riots in classrooms, and applied bitter epithets to all opponents and critics, even of the mildest type. Their methods were so disorderly

that some "coördinated" newspapers dared to deplore their tactics.⁴ Nevertheless the student unions aided vigorously in the great "administrative purge."

Under laws, decrees, and administrative practice, the German educational system was "purified" and "regimented" from top to bottom. Hundreds of professors were ousted — retired on pensions, expelled without pensions, or driven into exile. The long list of eminent scholars forcibly retired or expelled is a veritable honor roll of German science and learning.⁵ It includes not only leaders in the humanities, to whom "political" or "social" taint might be imputed, but also pure scientists far removed in their interests from the turmoil of the forum. When a few professors resigned in protest against this attack on scholarship, they seemed to accelerate rather than diminish the vigor of the assault. As the process of decimation continued, professors who remained saw that they could only save themselves by paying at least lip service to Hitler, even if they were "Aryans" engaged in research in physics or chemistry.

After the "purification," the vacant chairs were filled by the appointment of loyal Nazis. As a rule these new professors were men without high standing, for the more eminent members of the learned class had not been friendly to the Hitler cause. If they had not centered their affections on the old monarchy, they had made accommodations with the Weimar régime. Thus in sum and substance German universities were subdued to the program and ideology of the Storm Troopers. They had not been exactly the homes of liberalism or democracy in the old days of William II, but they had maintained a certain pride in *Lehrfreiheit*. Today they have lost the last remnant of their former independence and have been turned into barracks for housing and promoting the interests of the Faithful.

Even the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for the Advancement of Science has not entirely escaped the steam roller. It has refused to apply "the Aryan clause" and still retains in its membership a few distinguished Jews, including Frau Professor Lise Meitner, specialist in physics and chemistry. And the only active Nazi in the Society, apparently, is Professor Eugen Fischer, Director of the Institute for Anthropology, an enthusiast in "racial

⁴ *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 26, 1933. For disturbances at Berlin and Kiel, precipitated by student unions, see *London Times*, April 25, 1933.

⁵ For the early expulsions from various institutions see *Manchester Guardian*, May 13, 1933.

hygiene." Moreover, at its silver jubilee in January 1936, President Max Planck proclaimed "the independence of science and the liberty of the individual scientist" and announced the receipt of a congratulatory telegram from the former Kaiser at Doorn. Nevertheless a message on behalf of the Society was sent to Chancellor Hitler, saying: "Science and business stand loyally by the German Reich which you created, knowing that only under your leadership and the protection of the armed forces can they perform useful work." Even so, the great Hitler organ, the *Beobachter*, attacked the Society, while paying tribute to the individual members, and raised the question whether there was room in the National Socialist State for the Society as at present constituted. It would seem that the liberty claimed for "science and business" by the Society is precarious.⁶

In the lower ranges, down to the common schools, regimentation has been perfected. Nearly all, if not all, the independent and experimental schools have been taken over or closed or driven into exile. State ministries of education were captured. Soon after the accession of Hitler, Storm Troopers visited lower schools, questioned teachers in front of their pupils, and expelled or arrested those found "disloyal." Any "purification" overlooked by private enterprise was completed by administrative action under various decrees and laws touching "the reconstitution of the professional civil service." Nowhere in the German educational system is any critic of the National Socialist creed tolerated. Outward conformity, if not enthusiastic devotion, to the official body of doctrines prevails everywhere, even in the confessional schools maintained by Catholics under the Papal settlement with Chancellor Hitler.

III

The body of principles controlling Nazi education, if apparently less official and precise than the legislation, is nevertheless clear-cut and emphatic. It contains both negative and positive elements.

It rejects and condemns everything known in Western Europe and the United States as "liberalism." Parliamentary institutions, liberty of press, speech, and religious worship, freedom of parties, discussion, and elections, equal rights for women, the inviolability of established law, and individual liberty within

⁶ *New York Times*, January 12, 1936, p. 31.

established law — all these things brought forth in struggles extending over three hundred years — are cast aside as bourgeois, effete, and contrary to “the German spirit.” If mentioned at all in courses of instruction, they are to be considered as foreign to the German people, as unworthy of their “race.” With these “decadent” institutions and practices is discarded the “internationalism” of the Cobden and Bright school and its modified forms of later years. That too is bourgeois and effete, out of harmony with the autonomy of the Third Reich.

Everything savoring of Marxism is likewise discountenanced. The economic interpretation of history, except as applied to other countries, is repudiated. Labor internationalism is proclaimed a foe of the German race. The existence of classes and class struggles is denied. Both communism and social democracy are outlawed. German historical writing, formal enough in the old days, is being purged of all realistic tainting done in the Marxian style. Apparently no responsible Nazi has gone so far as to urge, like the agent of an American patriotic society in Washington, D. C., that nothing about Russia, except “the geographical facts,” should be taught in the German schools. But certainly the examination of Marxian writings in the scientific spirit is frowned upon as perilous to the unity and morals of the Third Reich.

On the positive side, the body of doctrine to be imposed on education is so voluminous as to overwhelm the searcher. This was of course to be expected. Long the happy land of pedagogues, pedants, and philosophers given to writing endless volumes, brochures, and articles on education under the auspices of a *Weltanschauung*, Germany was bound to be prolix in expounding and documenting the Nazi creed for educational purposes. Already thousands of titles crowd bibliographical pages, on everything political, racial, psychological, spiritual, and pedagogical. One has only to examine the footnotes to C. H. Tietjen's *Ganzheit und Heldentum als Grundlage und Wirkung deutschen Lebens und deutscher Erziehung* to discover that the German soul, science, mythology, and history have been explored and exploited to furnish justification for “the new education.” Already we have in profusion the *Einleitung*, *Grundlegung*, *Grundwissenschaft*, *Grundlagen*, *Grundzüge*, *Theorie*, *Begriff*, *Wesen*, *Praxis*, and *Pädagogik* of Nazi education.

Yet in this flood of books and articles a few stand out as authoritative and fundamental. First and foremost is Hitler's “Mein

Kampf." Like the Koran among Mohammedans and the Bible among Christians, it is quoted freely and reverently by all the writers of the new order. Its passages touching education even remotely are cited and elucidated. Nothing is allowed to controvert or contradict the revelation therein made. No other book approaches in authority this sacred text; but two or three other works take a high secondary rank. Among them are Rosenberg's "Blut und Ehre," and "Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts." For those having occasion to deal with difficult topics in political economy, Sombart's "Deutscher Sozialismus" is at hand. For the strong man, proud of his masculinity, and desirous of showing women their place, Bäumler in "Männerbund und Wissenschaft" provides guidance by tabulating the virtues of his sex and setting them over against the qualities of democracy "which ultimately leads to a condition where women are allowed to pass judgment on men." For budding soldiers there is no end of texts on the manly life and "the science of warfare."

Amid the profusion of ideas, opinions, assertions, and facts presented by the literature of the authorities, certain principles stand out as controlling dogmas for education. First of all is the doctrine of sheer force. The State is power, and Adolf Hitler is the State. With the aid of Storm Troopers, he seized the helm; by force he holds it. The will of the State is his will. Might is to be celebrated, and intellectual and moral objections put down by force. Not by common counsel, adjustment, and compromise are the people to make the supreme law. The Leader, master of force, makes it. This force is not a mere means to an end; it is a good in itself, to be praised, glorified, and deified. The man of brute strength who makes his will prevail is the type to be exalted, and in this man the soul of the nation is mirrored. As the strong man spurns weakness, pleas and arguments, and makes his will supreme, so the strong nation makes its way, spurning the rights and claims of weaker nations. This is the old dogma of Treitschke, without qualifications: *Der Staat ist Macht*.

In application this dogma gives to the Army the highest place in the nation's thought, affection, and life. The nation *is* the army. Adolf Hitler *is* the State. He expresses the will of the State. The army serves the State. "The object of our education," declared Hitler, is to produce "the political soldier." The system of education directed to creating the political soldier "should include all Germans, whoever they are and whatever may be

their functions. . . . Whoever has passed through this system of education is a political soldier. The military man in a strict sense is only distinguished from this soldier by the special instruction which he has received." Any other values that may be cherished are subordinate to this superlative value, and must not weaken or conflict with it. Intellectualism, urbanity, aesthetics, femininity, are decadent, says Bäumler; the new Germany represents the virile and dominating principle of life. The Army is the perfect embodiment of this principle.

As an inescapable corollary to the exaltation of force and the Army is the condemnation of everything associated with the advancement of women in civilization and the advancement of civilization through feminine interests and activities. The supreme function of woman, Hitler asserts, is the function of bearing and rearing children — especially soldiers. Equality of opportunity for women in education, the professions, and in public life cannot be endured in the man's State; it is a sign of degeneration, of liberal urbanity. Women are to be taught "their place" by men, and kept there. As a result the number of women admitted to higher education has been drastically curtailed. Exclusion by law has not come yet, but the result is being achieved by administration. Women are the servants of men; men are the soldiers of the State; and Adolf Hitler is the State. This doctrine controls the formulation of curricula for the schools.

Coupled with the exaltation of force and the Army and the restriction of women to biological functions, is the doctrine of "race." According to this doctrine there is such a thing as a pure German or Aryan race. To this element of race Germany owes her greatness and will owe still greater achievements to come. To use Dr. Frick's formulations, this race has led in the making of history; the ancient Greeks were blood brothers to the Germans and lost their preëminence because they did not have enough children and were overcome by "inferior and democratic races;" to Germanic invasions Egyptian and Sumerian civilizations owed their super-excellence; Germanic invasions of France, Italy, Spain, and England account for the superiority of those countries over Russia and the Balkans. The Teutonic race, which has made nearly all Western history worth mentioning and is about to make more "great history," has its purest breed in Germany. The breed must be multiplied. It must be kept "pure." Jews are condemned in language unprintable. They are to be

driven to the Ghetto or out of Germany. Whoever touches a Jew, trades with a Jew, carries on intellectual intercourse with a Jew, betrays his "Aryan" race. Praise of the German race, hatred for Jews, and contempt for other "inferior and democratic races" — these are doctrines to be drilled into the minds of young Germans in the schools. Thus the creed of Houston Stewart Chamberlain is carried to its ultimate conclusion and is made the national creed of a dictatorial State dedicated to the worship of force.

Associated with the body of Nazi doctrines is "faith in God." Hans Schemm would write these words above all education, in capital letters: Race, Arms, Personality, and Religiosity.⁷ He would unite the German people with God. Yet it must be conceded that the God of the Nazis is not exactly the Jehovah of the Jews or the God of St. Augustine. Nor does the Nazi conception square exactly with the God of Martin Luther. Indeed one extreme wing would go back to Tor and Wotan. While the Christian conception is by no means rejected entirely, it is sometimes elucidated by the saying that "Jesus was a German betrayed by the Jews." But whatever exegesis may finally decide, German children are to be taught in the schools to love, honor, and fear the German God, and they are to be taught by orthodox Nazis loyal to the State of Adolf Hitler. Moral and secular instruction has been set aside, and "religious lessons" substituted.

IV

The body of doctrines prescribed by the Leader and his party colleagues is reflected in the curriculum of the schools. Apart from mathematics, languages, and natural science, emphasis is laid on a kind of community civics (*Heimatskunde*), physical education, "racial hygiene," the history of the great German race, the heroics of war, and "religious instruction" designed to take the place of *Lebenskunde*, or non-confessional moral training. Before the school principal can take up the subject of race questions and race hygiene, he must seek the collaboration of the local Nazi party official in charge of "race politics."⁸ Party officials are also especially active in outlining and directing "religious" instruction — all to the end that the right line may be followed. For the inculcation of Nazi principles, particular reliance is placed on carefully prepared "history."

⁷ Hans Schemm (ed.), *Deutsches Bildungswesen* (1933), p. 6.

⁸ *Amtsblatt des Reichs- und Preussischen Ministeriums*, January 20, 1935, p. 27.

Lest teachers be led astray by history written in the dry scientific style of Ranke or imported from foreign parts, Dr. Frick laid down a historical platform of fifteen points for the guidance of writers and teachers. They may be summarized almost verbatim as follows:

1. Role of prehistory in which is emphasized the high civilization attained by the ancestors of the Germanic race.

2. Role of the primitive race in which are prefigured all the great peoples and personalities of Germanic origin.

3. Role of the racist and national idea as opposed to the internationalist ideal so perilous to the German people, too much inclined to dreams and utopias.

4. Role of the great Germanic community scattered throughout the world and inseparably linked to the destiny of the Reich.

5. Role of political history which surveys the *ensemble* of large historic periods and takes account of their laws.

6. Role of the idea of heroism, in its Germanic form, which is inseparable from the idea of chief and leader.

7. Role of the heroic ideal, peculiar to the German race, always compelled to assert itself against an encirclement of enemies.

8. Role of the great migrations of peoples since the glacial epoch, which have determined the history of the Germanic race and assured the preponderance of Indo-Germanic languages.

9. Role of the great Germanic migrations into Asia and Africa which explain the pre-excellence of the Egyptian and Sumerian civilizations.

10. Role of the mixtures of races, with disastrous consequences — to be extensively developed and explained.

11. Role of the ancient Greeks, closest brothers of the Germanic race, with explanation of how they succumbed when the population declined and they were outnumbered by inferior and democratic races.

12. Role of the great Germanic migrations into Italy, France, Spain, and England, which explain the preponderance of these countries over Russia and the Balkans, which have not been fertilized by new blood.

13. Role of the conquest of territory east of the Elbe.

14. Role of modern history which shows how Germany was too easily receptive to alien influences, and then lost consciousness of her own qualities, through lack of knowledge of the laws of blood.

15. Role, in particular, of the last twenty years in the course of which Germany, having struggled against the coalition of her enemies, was betrayed by forces hostile to the nation and led to the verge of ruin by liberal and Marxian ideologues, carried down to the day when, in a heroic resurgence, she gave herself to National Socialism.⁹

In this large overview of history stress is laid on the prehistoric period of the Germanic race, peopled with semi-mythical heroes and celebrated in stories and songs of dubious authenticity. Here

⁹ *L'Europe Nouvelle*, April 6, 1935, p. 320.

in the dark shadows of primeval forests a noble race of mighty men prefigured the bodily strength, the fighting energies, and the earthy qualities of modern Nazis. With historic sources scanty, of comparatively recent date, and open to every sort of interpretation, the untrained Nazi teacher can freely manufacture primitive support for the Leader, the army, the subjection of women, and the glorification of force. There was no drawing-room gentility or Parisian aestheticism in the primeval forests of Germany. There men of huge bodies, big bellies, and hard fists displayed the virtues of the great Germanic race, unspoiled by foreign influences of the Liberal or Marxist direction. When the foes of Hitler charged him with returning to the primitive forests, his defenders accepted the charge, boasted of going back to the woods, and renounced proudly all claim to "general culture."

And what is the spirit of the class-room exercise? Among all the statements available none seems more in keeping with Hitler's sacred text and more authoritative than those of Hans Schemm, leader in the National Socialist Teachers Union and Bavarian Minister of Education. What is it that inspires teachers and pupils? "It is the consciousness that a Lord God lives in heaven, that this Lord God has sent Adolf Hitler to us, that he has allowed us the grace to become a people again." And how will teachers train the youth? "We will, Adolf Hitler, so train the German youth that they will grow up in your world of ideas, in your purposes, and in the direction set by your will. That is pledged to you by the whole German system of education from the common school to the university." That is enough, for "the dear Lord does not ask: 'What have you learned?' He asks: 'What have you lived?'"

The spirit of class-room procedure is illustrated in other ways. Physical activity is exalted above mere "learning." Corporal punishment has been restored in the schools. Much time is given to Nazi celebrations, parades, salutes, and songs. Religious instruction is often devoted to praises of Hitler as heaven sent. Writing late in 1934, Vivian Ogilvie, a teacher with wide experience in Germany, stated: "Up to now the religion lessons in the schools of which I have direct knowledge have consisted for the most part of talks about Herr Hitler and the glories of Germany. Children themselves told me that the teacher had said in the religion lesson that Hitler was the second Jesus, but greater than the first, because he had not only one Power but the whole

world against him. They were told that he once nearly lost his sight and it was miraculously restored. . . . The new headmaster addressed the school and said that Hitler had been sent by God to the German people and that he had been sent to the school by God through Hitler."¹⁰ Every week the children have a patriotic hour "devoted to the Treaty of Versailles, to the crimes of the Allies, the Jews, and the Communists, and to the great Germans. . . . Barbarossa, Frederick the Great, Bismarck" and Schlageter, who was shot by the French for causing an explosion in the Ruhr.¹¹

v

With respect to the principles controlling the admission, promotion, and governance of students, there has been some chaos in the Nazi system since 1933, but certain tendencies are fairly clear. Soon after the inauguration of the Hitler régime Nazi students, who had already started disturbances in universities and displayed contempt for the learning of the professors, began to drive socialist and Jewish students out of academic halls. What force began law has sealed. While education is universal at the bottom, admission to the institutions of higher learning is in effect a party affair and closely restricted. Before they are admitted, students must spend a season in a labor camp, win the approval of local Youth Leaders, and receive the stamp, "politically reliable." Even then they are not sure of advancement to the university, for the total number admitted is arbitrarily limited.

In the spring of 1934, the number of students who passed examinations entitling them to enter universities was 39,579. The number to be admitted was fixed at 15,000. Of this number 8,000 males and 1,000 females were accepted in labor camps by way of preparation, and less than one half of the 9,000 finally entered universities, either because the Nazi tests were too severe or camp life was too attractive.¹² Under the application of such tests the number of new students in the summer semester of 1935 dropped to 7,000, as against 20,000 in the same semester of 1932; and the total enrollment in that semester stood at about 70,000 as against 130,000 in the summer of 1933.¹³ After they are ad-

¹⁰ *Education under Hitler* (London, 1934), p. 6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹² *New York Times*, September 23, 1934.

¹³ *New York Times*, September 21, 1935.

mitted to the institutions of higher learning and have completed their academic work, students cannot proceed to habilitation as a doctor or receive the licentiate for a profession until they have demonstrated their "Aryan" purity, passed the examinations, and received the approval of the state ministry of education.¹⁴

Perfect regimentation thus characterizes all student life. The way to the university and careers is not open to talents on the basis of intellectual powers and attainments. No student can advance in learning without receiving the approval of Youth Leaders and Nazi party officials.

With increasing discipline in the State scheme has come a decline in the independence of private institutions. In fact nearly all, if not all, special and independent institutions of a liberal or experimental nature have been abolished or subdued. If for the sake of appearances an institution with an international reputation such as the *Hochschule für Politik* in Berlin has been permitted to retain a nominal existence, its staff has been brought "into line." Where Catholic schools are allowed, their teachings are subjected to close supervision for correctness in Nazi doctrines. In short, private and experimental work in education is dead in Germany — the old home of pedagogical luxuries.

VI

It would be easy at the close of this review to make many criticisms of the German system of education in terms of the liberal tradition, but it seems more to the point to consider its historical setting and promise. Every system of education, like all human institutions, is enclosed in history, is a phase of all culture in evolution. It does not spring suddenly, full-blown, out of nothing, and function apart from economy, arms, and the arts. Its significance must be sought not merely in its forms and spirit, but also in its relations with the rest of society and the world of nations — past and present.

If, as enthusiastic Nazis declare, the accession of the Hitler party to power was the greatest event in two thousand years, it did not mark a complete break with German history by any means. The worship of force, reverence for the Army and the military mind, contempt for liberalism and democracy, and love of prostration before power were all part and parcel of German respectability before the outbreak of the World War. Despite the

¹⁴ *Amtsblatt des Reichs- und Preussischen Ministeriums*, January 5, 1935, pp. 12-13.

tradition of *Lehr- und Lernfreiheit*, there had been politics in German education in the Hohenzollern era. Educational ministries showed preference for the savant who, besides being a scientific light, was "politically safe" and could deliver a glowing address on the Kaiser's birthday. The school system was then so organized as to steer most of the children of the people into vocations, and make difficult the path to the university.

Nearly every element in the Nazi body of doctrines was deeply embedded in the pre-war order. A single example may be cited. While Jews enjoyed a high degree of equality before the law, the creed of the German race was widely accepted and celebrated. After Napoleon overran Germany, the builders of the new Germany sought a better future in the past — in the primitive forests of the Fatherland. This conception of race purity and grandeur spread throughout German thought and was carried over into England, where Freeman, Green, and the Teutonist historians "discovered" the origins of liberty and parliamentary government in "the forests of Germany." From Germany and England the creed was taken to the United States. It long dominated historiography in Johns Hopkins University. It received solemn decoration from Professor John William Burgess of Columbia University in essay and treatise glorifying the Teutonic race as the race with a mission to build "National States" and to spread liberty, order, and civilization throughout the backward places of the earth. Freeman, Green, and Burgess preached the creed. The National Socialists in Germany have elaborated it, carried it to a logical conclusion, forced German pedagogues to teach it, and sought to make every German believe it. That which was once merely taught as "the truth" is now rammed down the throats of German children by the drill sergeant.

What will come out of education in the Third Reich? The answer to that question is bound up, of course, in the fate of all German economy and foreign policy, and few will be bold enough to declare that fate now. Yet there is no doubt about the tendencies of education in Hitler's State. For faith in independent research, frank consideration of conflicting views, open discussion, judicial temper, the things which mark liberal education, the Nazi system substitutes contempt for all these values. It scorns independent research, save in some branches of natural science. It suppresses conflicting views. It despises open discussion as effete, the judicial temper as a sign of weakness. Its purpose is to turn

out a generation of youth drilled in party doctrines and objectives, ignorant of all other considerations, contemptuous of other races and peoples, equipped with powerful bodies and narrow minds for the work of the State — especially its supreme work, war.

As the years pass this iron discipline gains in effect. There has been some resistance from children and parents belonging to certain political and religious groups to the system of regimentation. But as this generation passes resistance may be expected to diminish. If the Hitler régime continues for several years, the German people will be a people almost totally ignorant of the outside world and indifferent to all ideas and interests not contained in the Nazi creed. It is difficult to see how opposing ideas can make any headway in Germany against this system, unless there is an economic crash or a disrupting war. In fact the scheme of education, coupled with other propaganda, is designed to prepare the German people for hunger and misery and to glorify privation in the interest of Hitler's State. The whole case is summed up in the formula: "We can do without butter, but we cannot do without cannon."

Besides bringing up a generation predisposed to war and prepared to serve the military State when it is ready to strike, Nazi education shuts Germany off from intellectual intercourse with other nations. With independence of research and thought destroyed in German universities, students who once flocked there by the hundreds turn elsewhere. Except for branches specifically physical and mathematical, German science sinks toward the level of partisan charlatanry. German learned publications which once circulated throughout the world have dropped in quality and lost the respect that they formerly commanded. Nor do German students, apart from the exiles, expect to find a friendly reception in other countries or to derive advantages from study abroad. Turned in upon themselves, nourishing deep resentments, and lashed to fury by a militant system of education, the German people are conditioned for that day when Hitler, his technicians, and the army, are ready and are reasonably sure of the prospects of success in a sudden and devastating attack, East or West. To cherish any other conception of Hitler's State or of the aims of German education is to cherish a delusion.