

Mark's Baptism Into Naziism

In 1932 Mark felt the need for more experience in international affairs and applied to the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation for a fellowship abroad to study the ramifications of the Versailles Treaty. He received a generous grant in marks, which was deposited in a bank in Berlin. Shortly afterward the United States devalued the dollar and he was \$800 better off. He took a leave of absence from the Telegraph and my big-hearted mother agreed to take care of the children so I could go with him.

We sailed, in late February 1933, from New York on the Stuttgart of the North German Lloyd Line and landed in Bremen, March 6, two days after Roosevelt was inaugurated as President ~~in the United States~~ and one day after Hitler came to power in Germany. It was a momentous time. ⁹ During the eleven days on shipboard we ^{had} received radio reports of ~~the~~ earthshaking ~~events~~ ^{events} ~~mess~~ on both sides of the Atlantic: the bank moratorium in Michigan, Maryland, ^{and} other states; the condition of Mayor Cermak of Chicago, who ~~was fatally~~ ^{had been fatally} wounded by a shot meant for Roosevelt (in Miami); Henry Ford Sr.'s new bank, ^{and} the disappearance of his secretary, and many other items. [None, however, stirred as much excitement among the passengers, who were mostly Germans, as the news of ~~the~~ burning of the

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Reichstag, ~~the capitol of Germany~~, in Berlin, and of
 the national election to be held in Germany ^{on} March 5,
 the day before we were to land. ⁹ Our fellow German
 passengers were sure the Reichstag fire had been set
 by the Communists and that it was a stupid mistake. It
 would ^{to} crystalize sentiment against them, ~~they predicted~~
 and ~~would~~ assure the election of Adolf Hitler. [For
 this election Hitler's party had joined with the Nation-
 alist Party of ^{President} ~~Von~~ ^{Drake} ~~Hindenburg~~ and ^{Chamberlain} ~~Von~~ ^{Law} ~~Papen~~ to win
 throughout the country, ^{hoping} And it looked as if ~~he~~ ^{they} might
 bring it off. The Germans on the ship to whom Mark
 talked, ^{that included} and ~~he talked to~~ practically all of them, ^{since}
 it was a one-class ship, ^{they} believed there was nothing to
 do but let Hitler have his chance. He might, ~~be able~~,
 they argued, ^{be able} to give the country a stable government in
 this crisis through which they were passing.

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Late Sunday evening we learned that Hitler's party
 and the Nationalists had gained a slight majority
 a ~~little over fifty percent~~. ^{so}

Our arrival in Bremen the next afternoon, then, ~~was~~
 was both our and Germany's baptism into Hitlerism.
 The streets were thronged with Nazis, ~~swaggering~~
 and ~~down~~ in twos, threes, fours, and sixes, and every
~~few steps~~ snapping their arms upward and outward and
 shouting, "Heil Hitler!" They were taking full ad-
 vantage of the psychology of the ~~victory of the previous~~

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day's ^{victory} The election ^{having been} was the ~~first~~ first in many, many months in which one side ^{had} their side ^{had} obtained a majority.

Mark and I were incredibly naive. Like most illiterate Americans Mark knew ~~that~~ the Weimar Republic that ^{had} emerged ^{as a result of} ~~from~~ the Versailles Treaty was weak and ineffectual. He had been aware of Hitler's Nazis for a decade. But he, like the German people themselves, had little or no notion of what Hitler really meant or was to mean.

At ^{our} ~~the~~ hotel we asked directions to the Rathaus, a tourist landmark the Germans on the ship had urged us to see. The hotel clerk ~~however~~ advised us not to go ^{because a} demonstration that might become violent was taking place. The winning coalition of the Hitler-Socialists and the Nationalists were demanding that the Socialist senate of Bremen resign.

Bremen was one of the free cities of the Hanseatic League, that association of German cities established in 1405 for mutual protection and commercial inter-
course. "Free" ^{had} meant that each city ^{had} was its own state ~~with its own~~ legislature, and was not under the govern-
ment of any other province, though belong-
ing to the federal union that composed the German Reich. The Hitlerites had already forced the senate of the two other free cities, Hamburg and Lubec, to resign,

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and now they were demanding ^{that} Bremen's senate do the same.
 [disregarding the hotel clerk's advice, we set out and found that
 The quaint streets of the ancient city belied the
 turbulence of the revolutionary moves underway. Bremen had
 had its beginning during the reign of Charlemagne more
 than a thousand years earlier and had grown until the
 population on this ^{ch} Mark afternoon numbered 300,000.

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~~The streets were narrow and crooked; they twisted
 about in o's, s's, and y's. Half the time it seemed
 as if we were ^{walking through} ~~going up~~ alleys instead of streets, and
 the buildings were slim and old and picturesque. I
 could easily imagine Charlemagne living in any one of
 them. The many copper domes, streaked a soft green with
 age, bulged above the rooftops, and tall, slender steeples
 rose against the sky.~~

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~~Besides the Nazis, the streets were alive with
 bicycles. For blocks there were no automobiles at all;
 and when there was ^{one} ~~an automobile~~ it was a queer little
 contraption, nothing like our American cars. Naturally,
 there was no parking problem. Along an iron fence, we
 saw literally hundreds of bicycles, chained and locked.~~

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~~By the curbs were numerous flower stalls, sweet
 smelling with bunches of lilies of the valley and plumes
 of lavender lilacs and glowing with deep red tulips.
 May The stalls negated any suggestion of violence, but
 it was there.~~

At the Rathaus, we found at least twenty thousand

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wrought-up men, women, and children milling about ^{the} ~~ancient building~~. Twenty or more boys were even perched on the great statue of Roland, legendary and symbolic patron of the Teutonic knights and guardian of the freedom of Bremen. Roland, clad in armor, stood forty or fifty feet ^{high} in awesome grandeur, in one hand his shield, in the other his sword. The boys, clutching Hitler flags in their fists, climbed over Roland's knees, stood on his feet, and hung from the crooks of his arms, yelling for the senate to resign. Nazis shouldered their way through the crowd, lifting their right arms in the fascist salute and shouting ~~again and again~~, "Heil Hitler." Incidents of violence popped like occasional firecrackers. One Nazi had his head cracked open with ~~the~~ ^{as} stock or gunbutt, evidently ~~wielded~~ by a Socialist or Communist who didn't like his politics.

A few minutes before five o'clock, four Nazis emerged from the Rathaus and, after saluting and booming "Heil Hitler," announced to the milling crowd, "We will stay here until eight o'clock tonight if necessary."

That proved to be all ~~that~~ ^{the time} it took. As we were finishing dinner in the nearby Essighaus, extra ^{editions} of the Bremen newspapers were ~~brought in and distributed free~~ ^{reported}. The senate had resigned and the Hitler flag ~~had been~~ raised over the Rathaus.

The Bremen papers also reported that the senate had declared it was resigning ~~reluctantly~~ to avoid trouble,

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and not ^{upon} its own ^{voluntary} responsibility.

We hurried back to the Rathaus, ^{whereby} ~~that~~ ^{by} this time the crowd had grown from twenty th thousand to at least thirty th thousand, packing the square around the building and spilling over into all the side streets. From ~~the~~ upstairs windows around the square, heads poked ^{out} and arms waved wildly. A Nazi band blared ⁺ martial tunes, ^{and} ~~then~~ the people began to sing at the top ⁺ of their voices, "Deutschland Deutschland uber alles."

Mark tried to explain the meaning of the crowd's reaction to the events of the evening ⁱⁿ his first German dispatch to the Macon Telegraph. He struggled ^{over it} to make his Georgia readers understand how such a stolid, sensible people as they considered the Germans to be had fallen under the spell of a despot like Hitler ^{but} he found ^{it} very difficult. That first day he thought it was a wave of hysteria that would soon ebb ^{out}.

"One could feel the intensity of the crowd," he wrote. "There is nothing quite like it except when a successful revivalist has a crowd in the hollow ^{of} his hand. Here were people who had been living on hope for more than fifteen years ⁺ and with little of that. Women in the crowd had sent their sons off to fight for the Fatherland in the ¹ First World War and had suffered indescribable hardships to help pay the price of the Fatherland's failure to win world hegemony ⁺."

rel. ref to last para p. 68
see earlier queries re Macon Telegraph
Apr. 15 and 59 etc.

There had been a depression since 1916, Mark continued, when supplies that had been ^{set aside for} laid up ~~to~~ the war were exhausted and the civilians were put on synthetic rations. The Germans saw the war as the beginning of all their troubles and they now hoped to ^{be rid of} wipe out the burdens it had imposed upon them.

The Nazis thought Hitler ^{was} offered ^{was} them a way out; he offered them leadership and a country united better than it had been for years. ^{He} Hitler offered to wipe ^{from} off the slate many of the domestic mistakes that had been made. He offered to swing Germany away from the socialism into which she had been ^{sinning} going more and more deeply, so that an ordinary citizen paid approximately one third of his income to the government ^{for} employment insurance and various other ~~forms of~~ benefits. Hitler stood for reaction. And the Germans wanted reaction.

"Sentiment swings like a pendulum," Mark wrote, "first to reaction and then to liberalism and then back to reaction, swinging endlessly through the ages, outright leadership and trying new.

"This crowd in the Rathus Square in Bremen was following in the wake of the old crowd in Rome that marched behind Julius Caesar, threw out the old Roman leaders and set up the triumvirate that led Caesar to the crown; it was casting out the town's elders who

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had been in power since 1920 and singing the praise of a new Messiah. As the vast chorus reached the last verse, a verse added to the national song with words appropriate to the Hitler movement. 30,000 right hands shot into the air and 30,000 ^{throats} ~~throats~~ poured forth the invocation for a "Germany ^{über} ~~über~~ ^{al} ~~al~~ ^{les} ~~les~~."

The change of ~~the~~ flags over the Rathaus symbolized the Hitlerism spell, Mark explained. ^{The} ~~This~~ so-called Hitler flag was the red, white, and black flag of the old monarchy. Hitler, ^{Von} ~~H~~indenburg, and ^{Von} ~~V~~on Papen had decided before the election that, if they were victorious, they would adopt it as their own the monarchy flag.

"The old flag," Mark said, "is a symbol to the German ^y of other and better days. The ~~Republic~~ ^{that} ~~which~~ had just been ended by the election had brought them a red, black, and gold flag; the Nazis contemptuously call it yellow, and many of them think it brought also misery and bad times. By embracing the old flag they somehow nebulously hope to bring back better times. It is a sentimental gesture. How much of reality it contains we shall see within the next few months."

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