



EDUCATION IN NAZI GERMANY

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side of Italy or to any ideal inside their conscience. They have to a very large extent lost the respect both of their political enemies and of their political allies. Yet, in all fairness, and making due allowance for the weight of certain interests and ambitions, I may say that I believe in the honesty of Gentile's intentions. It was difficult in 1922 to withstand the temptation to see one's cherished ideals enforced, through a Fascist strength which was still unaware of itself and of its goals. But there is no greater danger for the intellectual than to accept the temptations of political power. There is no more unforgivable betrayal of intellectual freedom than being too clever, too Machiavellian, accepting whatever means is offered us to reach our goals. We live in a serious world, which requires integrity far more than cleverness. And we need many freedoms. But we must remember that no freedom, whether educational or economic or religious, can be brought about by methods which deny political freedom.

(The Graduate Faculty)

EDUCATION IN NAZI GERMANY

BY FRIEDA WUNDERLICH

THE dictatorships of our time are distinguished from similar forms of government in the past. They are the outgrowth of a new mentality, in Russia and Germany one may say of a new religion. "As Christianity was not content with erecting its own altars," says Hitler, "but was forced to destroy the altars of the heathen, so fanatical intolerance alone can make it possible to build up the adamantine creed of National Socialism."¹

According to this creed neither humanity nor the individual

¹ Hitler, *My Struggle* (Boston and New York 1933) p. 190.

has value. All rights and duties are derived from the folk. It is the folk one lives to serve, the folk as a mystic community of blood, including not only the nation but all of Teutonic stock.¹ German blood is superior to the blood of other races, hence the right to expand, to conquer inferior races, to make room not only for the sixty million Germans of today but for the two hundred and fifty million Germans of tomorrow.² War, even so, is not a means to an end; it is an end in itself, it is the highest form of life just as violence and force are higher values than persuasion. There shall be no civilian population, the army shall be the nation. To quote Hitler, "From the children's primer to the last newspaper, every theater and every cinema . . . must have this one great mission, to rearm . . . until the smallest child repeats the glowing prayer 'Almighty God, bless our weapons.'"³ With this war-philosophy, peace, tolerance, personal freedom, equality, self-determination, neutrality and humanitarianism must be fought as weak offshoots of a degenerate liberal era. They must be replaced by heroism, ruthlessness, violence, obedience, discipline and honor. The imbuing of the people with this new doctrine is called education. No longer is education conceived as the training of men and women to be competent and free characters, able to form their own judgments and to confront new situations in a new way. Education implies no faith that the individual can adjust his life by his own mental effort.

It will not be possible to win over those who have known liberty. These adult dissenters will disappear with the passing years, but the new generation must be cast in the new mold. "If the older generation cannot get used to us," says Hitler, "we will take away the children and rear them in our spirit."⁴ And so they do.

¹ "From blood and soil grows the man who feels the bond of race, the man with military bearing, with a firm political will and the heroic way of life" (E. Kriek, "The Education of a Nation from Blood and Soil" in *International Educational Review*, IV, 1934, p. 109).

² Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich 1930) p. 766. The German edition of Hitler's book is cited when passages have not been published in the English translation.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 715.

⁴ Speech of Hitler, summer 1933.

Just as the claim of the state to govern the life of the citizen is totalitarian, unlimited, so also must education be totalitarian.

Totalitarianism applies both to time and to space. Education in the Third Reich includes all age groups, beginning with pre-school children, ending with death. Kindergarten and school are supplemented by party organizations during leisure time. The young German enters the Hitler Youth at the age of ten, passes to country camps, labor camps, the boy then to storm troops, the army and veterans' organizations. Practically every phase of life is education. Press, radio, theater, books, movies, are possible agencies, part of a gigantic scheme of indoctrination. The whole of life is subjected to the new form of education, continuous check-up, espionage, censorship, even terror. Concentration camps, with their indescribable horror of bodily and mental tortures, are called educational camps by the Nazi government.¹

Totalitarianism is a party monopoly of education, excluding equally family, club and church. While destruction of the family is not the positive aim, nevertheless parents and children are estranged and families are dispersed by the various party organizations; while destruction of the church is not openly advocated, the church may not influence children in the spirit of its faith. The totalitarian state can tolerate no other authority, least of all an authority that itself claims to be absolute.²

The aim of National Socialist education is to "serve the nation in the spirit of National Socialism,"³ that is, to awaken sound

¹ The commander of the notorious Oranienburg concentration camp says, in speaking of the history of the camp: "I have seldom seen such admirable educators as my old S. A. men" (*Hamburger Nachrichten*, March 24, 1934, evening edition).

² The doors of private preparatory schools are closed to new pupils (decree of April 4, 1936), and terror has been used to force the children out of the Catholic schools.

³ Decree of December 18, 1933 (*Zentralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichtsverwaltung in Prussia*, p. 43, hereinafter referred to as Z. This publication appeared until December 31, 1934. On January 1, 1935, the Reichs Ministry for Science, Art and Education was formed, and since that time the official publication has been *Deutsche Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, Amtsblatt des Reichs und preussischen Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung und der Unterrichtsverwaltungen anderer Länder*, hereinafter referred to as A).

racial forces¹ and to make youth ready for defense. A new type of man must be educated with "a will of steel in a magnificent racial body."² Intellectualism with its scientific impartiality has to be obliterated. It poisons conviction, weakens instinct and so undermines the will-to-power.

In schools the curriculum has been framed in this spirit. It centers around physical training, including defense sports, history, raciology, eugenics and folk sociology. To provide the necessary time for these new subjects courses in mathematics, foreign languages and other intellectual subjects have been cut down or dropped. In raciology the superiority of the German race has to be demonstrated to the pupil by confronting him with the inferiority of the Jewish race. "From this race superiority emanates the denial of democracy and of other levelling tendencies (such as the United States of Europe, universal civilization, and so forth)."³ Raciology must be made the basis of all other subjects in order to produce a racial style of life.

For the teaching of history it is ordained that western civilization has been produced by the Nordic race. The folk idea has to be stressed in contrast to "the poison of the international idea which threatened to devour the German soul."⁴ Brothers of German stock who live outside Germany have to be included. "Instruction has to show how the decline of western power was due to biological degeneration, to humanitarianism which kept alive the unfit." Geography must teach the destructive consequences of the Treaty of Versailles and point out the need of space for the German people to live. Rivers and mountains are to be studied as the basis for military operations. Siegfried Passarge, an

¹ Decree of January 5, 1935 (A 42).

² Decree of January 15, 1935 (A 46). Also, "The national state must direct its educational work in the first place not so much towards pumping in mere knowledge as towards cultivating thoroughly healthy bodies" (*My Struggle*, p. 166).

³ Decrees of September 13, 1933 (Z 1934, p. 52) and January 15, 1935 (A 43). Children have to prepare pedigrees of their families, listing the diseases and oddities of all members. These family trees are checked by a special staff.

⁴ Decrees of July 20, 1933 (Z 197) and January 15, 1935 (A 42).

authority in education, recommends¹ that the teacher of geography close a description of the *Föhnwind* (a strong south wind) with the following words: "Today a Föhn storm rushes over our German fatherland. Nervous, weak people do not feel well, but healthy vigorous youth breathes again. Marxian swamps dry up; poison-loaded Soviet mosquitoes flee. The Jewish Augean stables which affected the air have fallen down. Cleansing and refreshing is the German Föhn. And whom do we thank for this glorious movement? Our leader, the genius sent from God." This is the description of a wind in a geography class.

In the rare cases in which classical languages are taught, translation exercises are taken from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Reading texts in all languages are selected to illustrate the leader principle. Plato's State is studied to develop the race theory.² Religious teaching shows death for the fatherland as the highest form of brotherly love.³ Pacifism is explained as error, the human falsification of the realm of God. Christ did not condemn war, but recognized struggle as a fact. The Old Testament, the oriental character of religion, has to be dropped as immoral, as not Germanic in spirit.⁴ Teachers seriously compare Hitler to Christ and glorify the leader as the "revealed instrument of divine providence."⁵

The focus of training is readiness for defense, suitably adjusted to every age. Even the kindergarten shall "encourage the boy to long for adventure and a helmet."⁶ In schools the program of outdoor sports⁷ comprises obstacle races, formation marches, topography, map-reading, vision practice, direction-finding by day and night. The higher school grades have pistol and rifle practice, throwing of hand grenades and cutting of barbed wire, all to

¹ *Geographische Wochenschrift* (1933) pp. 985 ff.

² Hans F. K. Günther, *Platon als Hüter des Lebens* (Munich 1928).

³ "Richtlinien der Religionslehrpläne der thüringischen Schulen" in *Thüringisches Amtsblatt*, no. 20 (December 7, 1933).

⁴ It shall be referred to only to explain race questions, declares a decree of the Ministry of Education of Anhalt (January 1937).

⁵ Hans Kerrl, Federal Minister for Church Affairs, in a new year message, 1934.

⁶ Bavarian Minister of Education Schemm, in a speech.

⁷ Decree of January 16, 1933 (Z 31).

cultivate endurance and to "introduce the secondary school pupils to defense-mindedness."¹ The warrior state dooms women to inferiority, stressing physical training, child-bearing and care of the household.²

The number of secondary school pupils decreased from approximately 450,800 in 1926 to about 350,500 in 1936.³ All elementary school graduates were formerly eligible; admission has now been restricted in the "interests of national reliability and physical fitness."⁴

Children with the best records in the Hitler Youth, of which I shall say more presently, are educated as future leaders in the Adolf Hitler boarding schools. These are secondary schools which aim at developing character and team spirit by means of more than usually intensive physical and political training.⁵ Not the Minister of Education but the National Socialist Party determines the curriculum and supervises them.⁶ Final leader training is given in the "Order Castles" (*Ordensburgen*) of the party. These Junkers, as they are officially called, are the aristocracy, the upper class of Nazi society.

The first period of Nazi power saw a nearly insurmountable lack of politically reliable educators trained in the new doctrine. All who could not be trusted had to be removed, hence the lay-off of recalcitrant teachers and university professors. The remainder had to undergo additional training in National Socialism, supervised by party officials, and are supposed each year to be overhauled in Nazi training camps.⁷ Teachers are obliged to participate in national festivities such as nailing of swastikas, May

¹ Merkblatt für Abiturienten, Reichsministerium des Innern, January 28, 1933 (Z 41).

² Decrees of May 10 and 23 and July 8, 1935 (A 233).

³ *Amtsblatt*, 1936, p. 131*.

⁴ Decree of March 27, 1935 (A 125, and 1936, p. 93).

⁵ Decree of the Führer and Chancellor, January 15, 1937.

⁶ Dr. Ley and Baldur von Schirach, in the *Reichsjugendpressediens*t, January 17, 1937.

⁷ Decrees of September 13, 1933 (Z 244), December 15, 1933 (Z 52), August 9, 1934 (Z 248), March 30, 1935 (A 162), April 27, 1935 (A 206).

Day and so forth. They march with banners, in closed ranks, dressed in uniforms. They are expected to undertake political work in party organizations, or they risk their jobs. The teacher of the future, "the Storm Troop leader of German education,"¹ to quote the Minister of Education, must pass through labor service and storm troops before being admitted to the training colleges in which all candidates must spend their first two terms in concentrated political drill.²

The leader system of administration operates.³ In the democracy the school principal, usually as *primus inter pares*, was obliged to discuss all decisions in conferences of teachers. Now he decides alone.

A far more important instrument of National Socialist control than the school is the Hitler Youth, organized like an army by youth itself, appealing to them through a variety of activities, marching, camping, singing and sport. Since it was not possible to have all children join voluntarily, membership has now been made compulsory. Baldur von Schirach, the leader of the Hitler Youth, cites a complaint by toy merchants that children do not need toys, that what they want are tents, javelins, compasses and maps.⁴ The trade adjusted itself. Toy shops are filled exclusively with miniature machine guns, tanks and soldiers. The Hitler Youth is the organization which fully exploits field sports. Here children fight sham battles, here they sneak up on their enemies under cover, here they throw hand grenades and shoot. Marching through the country they sing:

"Youth, youth, we are the soldiers of the future,
Bearers of coming deeds.
With our fists we shall fell our opponents,
Leader, we belong to you."⁵

¹ Speech in Lauenburg, June 24, 1933.

² Decree of February 18, 1933 (Z 7).

³ Decrees of April 3, 1934 (Z 121), December 9, 1933 (A 1935, p. 6), December 20, 1935 (A 1936, pp. 74, 76).

⁴ Baldur von Schirach, *Die Hitlerjugend, Idee und Gestalt* (Berlin 1934) p. 84.

⁵ *Jungvolklieder* (Plauen i. V.) song no. 1.

Or another song, which is in the repertory of these children:

“Comrades we march to the field,
Red today, tomorrow dead,
Comrades it must be that way.”¹

Achievements in the Hitler Youth are given credit at school. Teachers are obliged to respect the authority of youth leaders.

At the age of eighteen boys may enter the storm troops, where military exercises take the form of group fights. Then labor service begins, voluntary under the democratic government but now compulsory.² It combines work on the soil with the usual military training and political instruction. Thus the boy grows up surrounded by party care; no other influence disturbs his education as military and physical soldier of the Third Reich.

Activities for adolescent boys are staged with admirable skill and understanding of the needs and longings of this age. Most of the activities appeal to instincts of violence and adventure which western civilization has persistently tried to refine. Some of the innovations would be valuable if carried out in a different spirit, without assiduously nursing hate, aggression and war. I refer to the so-called “country year”³ which at the age of fourteen takes city children into country camps in order to give them an understanding of peasant life and a period of physical education.

Girls’ activities, though sometimes valuable for giving the city child contacts with rural life, have not exercised similar attraction. The voluntary housekeeping year,⁴ taking girls of fourteen into families as apprentices, did not arouse the love for domestic service that was intended. Camps for adolescent girls have sometimes fallen into disrepute because the new doctrine of girls being destined to serve men and to strive for motherhood has led to irregular and premature sex experiences.

In all these various activities the boys and girls are merely

¹ *Ibid.*, no. 31.

² Decree of June 26, 1935.

³ Decrees of March 29, 1934, and July 13, 1935 (A 337).

⁴ Decree of September 17, 1934 (Z 292).

members of a collectivity, with no individual development allowed. The sensitive children suffer, and some of the stronger characters revolt, but youth on the whole, especially the very young, enjoy their special prestige as the future of Germany. They are pleased at playing war, living in mysticism and having little schoolwork. They enjoy having enemies whom they can flog and attack. Jews, Marxists, physically weak children, are free targets. Nazism fulfils the adolescent desire to throw off parental restraint and to live an unprotected life.

Membership in some Nazi organization is practically a prerequisite for university admission.¹ Together with the disdain of intellectualism and the virtual closing of professional careers to women, the result has been to reduce the number of university students by 38 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women.² Formerly academic life was happy and carefree with individual study and independent research. Now no decision concerning his studies, no right to plan his life, is left to the student. The first three terms must be dedicated to political education in companies of thirty students under a selected storm troop of reliable party soldiers in uniform, who are the chief trouble makers in the universities. With the fourth term scientific work begins, combined with sports and political studies.

Time must be carefully planned. There is compulsory participation in sports,³ military training, the science of military defense, raciology, folk sociology and politics. No student who does not meet the requirements of physical training is permitted to continue his studies. As in the schools, raciology and military

¹ Decrees of December 16, 1935, and January 16, 1936 (A 1936, p. 58), February 9, 1935 (A 69); law of April 25, 1933 (Z 128); decree of February 7, 1934 (Z 91). Students who are physically handicapped or do not like gymnastics are not admitted.

² First matriculations decreased from 18,300 in the summer of 1932 to 5,500 in the summer of 1936. Only a part of this reduction may be ascribed to the low birth rate during the war. The whole number of German university students decreased from 126,537 in 1931 to 76,808 in 1935/36.

³ Sports are regulated in detail by the *Hochschulsportordnung*, October 30, 1934 (A 1935, p. 6).

science¹ are not only to be taught as special disciplines, but must permeate all other teaching. Law schools teach war law; chemistry offers courses on poison gas; other courses are held in war economics, military geography, war psychology, and so on. The "science of national defense grows from a mere branch of knowledge into a general mental atmosphere,"² says Banse, adviser to the party in this branch of education.

It is inevitable that under the burden of new obligations little room is left for studies. Scholarship demands calm and an atmosphere of leisure. The student will find no leisure to devote to his studies. He leaves the secondary school at the age of eighteen with preparation inferior to the student of former days because school attendance has been reduced three years—by subtracting one year for military training and one day weekly for the State Youth Day, which belongs to the Hitler Youth—and because of the introduction of the new subjects already indicated. After graduation from the secondary school he spends half a year in labor service, two years in military service, one and a half years in political training. If he is ambitious he will serve in the storm troops in order to make certain of his career. At twenty-two, the lowest age for the beginning of higher studies, the boy is not better prepared than an American college freshman. As the state is interested in early marriages, studies have to be cut down. It is proposed to shorten courses and to eliminate vacations, which formerly were for the most part dedicated to independent research.

All safeguards protecting academic liberty against administrative interference have been broken down. In order to get strict supervision over the teaching body self-government has been abolished. The rector and the deans, formerly elected for one year from the faculty, are now appointed by the government and responsible to the ministry, as are the instructors who were for-

¹ Decrees of January 18, 1935 (A 48), May 2, 1935 (A 190), June 13, 1935 (A 284); *Amtsblatt*, 1935, pp. 109* ff.

² Ewald Banse, *Germany Prepares for War* (New York 1934) p. 349.

merly named by the faculty without confirmation by the state.¹ Professors may be transferred to other universities. They may be retired, discharged, promoted at the will of the government.² This possibility has been used to force out those who did not submit and to bring in party men. Scholars have been dismissed because some party members wanted their posts or some students wished to get rid of an inconvenient examiner.

The aspirant for a university chair must prove his political acceptability by serving in a newly created academy and in a defense sport camp.³ Reports dealing with the candidate's general behavior, with his achievements in camp and academy, will be filed with the state office which recommends to the federal minister that the application be either refused or granted. The examination of the candidate in his specialty will be only one of the factors to be considered. Nobody shall be appointed solely on the basis of his scientific ability. An official publication complains of the decrease in number and the change in quality of the rising generation of academic teachers: "In many fields of science it is today impossible to find suitable assistants. In most of the technical fields there is not a single aspirant for an assistant's position."⁴ Ernst Kriek, the leading educational authority today, recommends⁵ escape from "this creeping paralysis," as he calls it, "this impossible, fruitless and mad situation," by suppressing about a third of the existing universities.

The German universities were not only institutions of higher learning; they were likewise research institutions, but research too is doomed to disappear or to go to the catacombs, that is, to adopt a language so dark and complicated that only a group of scholars understands it. National Socialism is distrustful of the scholarly attitude of mind. Dispassionate study leads to doubt and

¹ Decrees of October 28, 1933 (Z 29), April 1, 1935 (A 142).

² Federal Law for the Retirement and Transfer of University Professors, December 13, 1934.

³ Reichshabilitationsordnung of December 13, 1935 (A 12).

⁴ *Amtsblatt*, 1935, p. 12*.

⁵ *Westdeutscher Beobachter*, January 31, 1937.

criticism. Truth need not be sought, it has already been discovered by the leader. The party that found the all-embracing principle from which everything flows, believes it has led science from anarchy to order. On the occasion of the anniversary of the University of Heidelberg the Minister of Education proclaimed that Germany had freed herself from the false idea of objective science and stressed that man cannot free himself from community of blood. Professor Krieck added: "We perceive and acknowledge no truth for the sake of truth, no science for the sake of science."¹ "The epoch of pure reason, of objective and free science is ended."² The party office of supervision checks all publications and keeps the secret police informed. Professors are not allowed to give information to the press on their experiments and research. The discussion of some topics, the constitution, for instance, is not allowed; others, such as the history of National Socialism, need a special party permit. Publishers have fallen in line. Contracts concerning the publication of books are broken at the slightest suspicion of disgrace of the writer. Professors who are invited to deliver lectures in foreign countries or to attend international congresses must secure approval.

As yet it has not been possible to achieve full totalitarianism, because influences remaining from the old world of freedom could not be abolished at one stroke. Complete coordination has not been reached. The struggle continues with family and church. Only some of the teachers have been won over, very few in the universities. Only a small group of students is in harmony. Most of them are dissatisfied. Unappreciative of constant control, they cling desperately to the old teachers who escaped coordination and resent the terror exercised by a small group which even the Minister of Education tries to curb.

The longer National Socialism stays in power the more nearly will it reach the goal of the Russian and Italian dictatorships

¹ *News in Brief* (published by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, Berlin) July 31, 1936, pp. 190 ff.

² Ernst Krieck, *Nationalpolitische Erziehung* (Leipzig 1933) p. 1.

which have been its prototype in so many respects. In isolating youth from all other educational influences, in segregating the whole population from the outside world, the government inevitably impresses its pattern on the German people. It will bring up a generation molded exclusively according to its doctrine, a nation ignorant of the world, convinced that it has to fight it. It will be deeply inimical to freedom which it has never experienced and which it will be unable to distinguish from anarchy. It will be hostile to democracy, science and intellect. God will be replaced by the state. Men will be standardized, units in a herd, mentally ruthless, brutal, submissive, but egregiously conceited. The new type of woman has been described in an appeal to Hitler by women of the party.¹ They say, "We see our daughters growing up in stupid aimlessness, living only in the vague hope of perhaps getting a man and having children. If they do not succeed, their lives will be thwarted."² How much women's educational function is impaired appears in a complaint in the same appeal: "A son, even the youngest, today laughs in his mother's face. He regards his mother as his natural servant and women in general as merely the willing tools of his aims and wishes."³

What value does this new generation receive in exchange? Will they really have more honor, more courage, more heroism? No courage is necessary to fall in line and to march; cringing, not courage, has emerged in the selective process. Political reliability means suppression of one's views for the sake of a career. The outspoken child is stigmatized as politically unreliable and is denied secondary education; the student, the professor, face something more serious. To find heroism in Germany today means going to the concentration camps. With liberty lost as a moral force, with the suppression of individual development, with human minds stiffened into a single pattern, with human reason eliminated as a factor in education, the outcome will be an irre-

¹ *Deutsche Frauen an Adolf Hitler* (3rd ed. Leipzig 1934).

² Yella Erdmann, *ibid.*, p. 57.

³ Leonore Kühn, *ibid.*, p. 40.

sponsible, unquestioning mass without personal originality, and unadapted to a changing world. The nation kills its heroes and free spirits. Slavery never resulted in heroism. Thus the system undermines itself. Internal contradiction annihilates the aim for which it fights.

And yet, inspired by hatred against the western world, trained only for war through an excellent technique of drill and command, ready to fight where democracy tries to persuade, this great steamroller of collectivism threatens the western democracies with the concentrated power of a highly gifted nation. It is a terrific danger which nations still enjoying their liberty are not prepared to meet. Eternal vigilance is not vigilant enough.

Exiled scholars scattered throughout the world will fight to prevent the spread of the disaster. In silent community with those who could not leave the countries of dictatorship, in open community with those who gave them hospitality, they will continue to work to maintain mankind's eternal right to freedom.

(The Graduate Faculty)

EDUCATION IN SOVIET RUSSIA

BY GOODWIN WATSON

REPORTS of changes taking place in the Soviet Union have aroused lively discussion on the question, "Is Russia now in reaction toward a more old-fashioned social order?" The new constitution is hailed as very democratic; nationalism of a familiar type seems to have replaced the early internationalism; and the family is being safeguarded with zeal. This paper will not attempt to cover every important phase of change, but only what is happening in education.