

NYTimes Book Burn

Article

w/List

The Book Burn

NAZI BOOK-BURNING FAILS TO STIR BERLIN

40,000 Watch Students Fire
Volumes in a Drizzle, but
Show Little Enthusiasm.

SOME 'FETES' POSTPONED

But 'Un-German' Literature Is
Consigned to the Flames in
Most University Towns.

By FREDERICK T. BIRCHALL.

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BERLIN, May 10.—In most of the German university towns tonight the enthusiastic studenthoods are ceremoniously burning "the un-German spirit" as exemplified in literature, pamphlet, correspondence and record. It is all being done to the accompaniment of torchlight parades, martial music and much patriotic speechifying—the British Guy Fawkes Day intensified a thousandfold.

There are some thirty universities in Germany, at least one to each State. Each was to have had its bonfire, but the celebrations in Cologne, Heidelberg and other places were postponed until next week.

The celebrations held varied somewhat, but more in degree than in kind. Berlin naturally had the largest and what happened here was more or less typical of the celebrations elsewhere.

Probably 40,000 persons assembled in the great square between the opera house and the university and stood in a drizzle to watch the show. Perhaps as many more gathered along the five miles of streets through which the torch-bearing parade of students escorted the borrowed trucks and private cars containing the books and pamphlets to be burned. But to the uninspired observer it savored strongly of the childish.

5,000 Students in Parade.

Five thousand students, young men and young women together, marched in the parade. All the student corps were represented—red caps and green caps, purple and blue, with a chosen band of officers of the dueling corps in plush tam o' shanters, white breeches, blue tunics and high boots—with spurs. Bearing banners and singing Nazi songs and college melodies, they arrived.

It was toward midnight when they reached the great square.

Continued on Page Twelve.

BERLIN LUKEWARM TO BOOK-BURNING

By FREDERICK T. BIRCHALL.
Continued from Page One.

There on a granite block of pavement protected by a thick covering of sand had been built up a funeral pyre of crossed logs, some twelve feet square and five feet high. Until the parade appeared a Nazi band had striven to keep up enthusiasm. Finally the head of the procession arrived. It passed the piled logs and formed within the great space reserved for it.

As they passed, the paraders tossed upon the logs the stumps of lighted torches that they had carried, until from end to end the mass was aflame.

Then came the books and pamphlets. The cars carrying them stopped at a distance and each group of students brought an armful and tossed it into the fire. A draft caught up the embers, bearing them far and wide. First the crowds cheered each new contribution, but they soon tired.

Then the students' president, Gutjahr, in a Nazi uniform, made a speech. He and his fellows had gathered, he said, to consign to the flames "un-German" books and documents that threatened to disintegrate the national movement. They took joy in it. Henceforth there must be purity in German literature.

Crowd Seems Disappointed.

It was a boy's speech and it was received with boyish enthusiasm—by the students. The crowd seemed disappointed. To work up enthusiasm when fresh consignments reached the fire a student barker began to name the authors:

"Sigmund Freud—for falsifying our history and degrading its great figures!"

The crowd cheered.
"Emil Ludwig—burned for literary rascality and high treason against Germany!"

Loud cheers!
Then Erich Maria Remarque—"for degrading the German language and the highest patriotic ideal"; Alfred Kerr, late Kramerer critic of the Tageblatt, denounced as "a dishonest literary adventurer"; Theodor Wolff, former editor of the Tageblatt, pilloried as "anti-German"; and Georg Bernhard, former editor of the Vossische Zeitung. For these last there were available for burning only a few copies of their respective newspapers and a few magazine articles.

So it went until there appeared, amid Nazi salutes and protected by uniformed satellites, the attraction of the evening, Dr. Paul J. Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, himself. Mounted on a tiny swastika-draped rostrum, he spoke. "Jewish intellectualism is dead," he declared. "National socialism has hewn the way. The German folk soul can again express itself."

"These flames do not only illuminate the final end of the old era, they also light up the new. Never before have the young men had so good a right to clean up the debris of the past. If the old men do not understand what is going on, let them grasp that we young men have gone and done it."

"The old goes up in flames, the new shall be fashioned from the flame in our hearts."

Much more, but all like that. Then the song "The Nation to Arms" and the Ebers-Wessel song. More literature on the fire. And more student singing. But the crowd disintegrating until it be-

came a dreary duty to burn what literature was left.

It was not so large in quantity, because today a paper mill offered a small price for all it could get and the offer was accepted on condition that the student representatives should supervise the actual destruction. The proceeds will pay for the torches and the bands.

Original List Reduced.

As to what went into the ceremonial bonfires tonight and will be included in the reconversion into raw material by the paper mills at the rate of one mark for 100 kilograms [currently about 27.5 cents for 220 pounds], the destruction is not quite so all-embracing as was at first threatened.

There is good reason to believe that the ripples of amusement that went through the outside world over the first rush of student enthusiasm had some effect on the older and wiser university heads.

German propaganda authorities themselves, who recently had seen the effect of making Germany ridiculous as well as censurable, may even have been heard from. At any rate, not everything under attack went into the discard.

For several days whole truckloads of books, both seized and voluntarily offered for incineration, have been arriving at the students' house in the Oranienburgerstrasse, but these have undergone a weed-ing-out process. Students have been busy night and day going through the piles to insure that especially valuable books or others not on the German index expurgatorius should escape. Such of these as were found are to be returned to the libraries.

Nevertheless, plenty has been left that elsewhere in the world would be deemed innocuous if not positively beneficial, or at worst capable of carrying its own condemnation. In the pink-faced, healthy student-hood between the ages of 18 and 22 is found boundless enthusiasm, but not overmuch discretion. In this instance the enthusiasm had virtually free rein.

How Books Were Chosen.

About such pictures and pamphlets as were gathered in from Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld's so-called Institute of Sexual Science the other day—which, with all the correspondence from outsiders who had taken the place seriously, went into the flames tonight—there could be little question. But there was so much more. Take this formula, laid down in one of the students' appeals for sacrificial material and note its comprehensiveness:

"Anything that works subversively on family life, married life or love or the ethics of our youth or our future or strikes at the roots of German thought, the German home and the driving forces in our people; any works of those who would subordinate the soul to the material, anything that serves the purpose of lies."

Almost anything could be understood by this student enthusiast to be covered by that. And so with the seeping poison that hides under the mantle of pacifism, to say nothing of the ban on all literature emanating from Jewish thinkers, all of which—although the works of Heine are strangely enough not among the sacrificed—are included in this comprehensive student anathema.

"The Jew, who is powerful in intellect, but weak in blood and without home and friends, remains without understanding in the presence of German thought, falls to

dignify it and, therefore, is bound to injure the German spirit."

Nobel Prize Winners Included.

Inevitably the bonfire piles became large. World distinction and world praise had not counted in assembling them. Nobel Prize winners and all went into the auto da fé.

There was, for example, one of the first pacifist novels ever written. Bertha von Suttner got the Nobel Prize for "Lay Down Your Arms" in 1905, but it has now become "un-German" and was burned.

The works of Thomas Mann, a later Nobel Prize winner, went into the flames en bloc. What saved Sinclair Lewis may never be revealed, but many other 3,000,000-volume sellers became sacrifices, beginning with Erich Maria Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front."

The victims even included Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, the Japanese-Viennese author, who dreams of Pan-Europa. He falls under the ban because it is not a Prussian Pan-Europa and, moreover, might be suspected of having a Socialist tint.

For Berlin the first list alone—supplemented later—comprised four long typewritten pages containing the names of 160 authors, many of them almost unheard of before. It almost seemed as if any German student browsing in a second-hand bookstore, encountering a volume that he privately regarded as spicy, had been privileged to name a candidate.

The American Victims.

Among the Americans, Helen Keller's "How I Became a Socialist" got into the fire. She had for company Upton Sinclair, Judge Ben Lindsey, Jack London and Morris Hillquit, among others. Judge Lindsey got there because he is regarded as assailing the marriage system. Robert Carr was burned in the shape of his "Wild-Blooming Youth," which might have been expected to be unknown to fame in Berlin but evidently isn't.

Socialist and Communist authors naturally figured largely. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Lassalle, Bebel, Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Bernstein and Wilerferding among the Germans and Austrians, Lenin, Stalin, Zinovieff, Lunacharsky and Bukharin among the Russians, and Henry Lichtenberger, French philosopher who wrote on Franco-German relations, all went up in smoke as "un-German."

In the domain of belles lettres Heinrich Mann is included with Thomas Mann and then comes a long list including Emil Ludwig, who writes about Germany for The New York Times; Lion Feuchtwanger, Arthur Schnitzler, Jakob Wassermann, Arnold and Stephan Zweig, Walther Rathenau, the German Foreign Minister who was assassinated by Nationalist gangsters; Hugo Preuss, who wrote the Weimar Constitution for the republic and spent the rest of his time expounding it, and a class others. The bonfires are still burning as this is being written and there is going up in their smoke more than college boy prejudice and enthusiasm. A lot of the old German liberalism—if any was left—was burned tonight.