

o - Arthur Miller  
wonders about the German  
by / or Josef Stroparski

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The main question about Germany's future in Arthur Miller's article <sup>concerns</sup> democracy. Will democracy persist there, will it exert a beneficial influence on German mind? In this respect it is advisable to remember, that in the early thirties Hitler and his Nazi movement came to power through democratic procedures. Therefore democracy by itself don't seem to be a sufficient safeguard against totalitarianism. One has to remember, that the basic principle of democracy - the rule of the majority - contains an innate danger. Everywhere the majority consists of the so called masses - of primitive and uneducated people. In times of economic crisis, of unemployment, of

hunger, they become restless and susceptible to demagoguery. The reverse of clerical democracy, founded on compromises — a strong and ruthless leadership, intolerant toward any kind of opposition, becomes a logical revolution. If, moreover this trend is fortified by a feeling of national frustration and xenophobia, the ground is prepared for the extremist ideology of "Blut und Boden". Recently Germany, the richest country of the Continent, seems safe from such eventuality, but we can with a similar phenomenon developing nowadays in Russia, (not mentioning the processes going on in many Third World, and specially Islamic countries). Therefore to count on democracy alone isn't enough.

The totalitarian regimes, together with their nationalistic components, lead directly

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to criminal abuses on a massive scale. It isn't necessary here to remind all the atrocities, committed by the Nazis during the war. Nor the (commercially) even larger repressions in Soviet Russia, together with the extermination and forcible resettlement of whole ethnic groups. The main point is, that both the regimes favored the criminal and sadistic elements of their societies, more numerous than one could expect. To think, that this situation is today done with once and for ever seems to be a mistake. The returning popularity of the swastika emblem (like in the case of Ziganarki), the existence of Neo-Nazi movements in Germany and Scandinavia, show that the virtual danger isn't yet over.

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True - most of those movements are confined to small, and politically unimportant minorities, but so was Hitler's movement in it's beginnings.

It is important to note what kind of audience responds to the totalitarian temptations. In the West it is mainly youth. Young people, who don't remember the part, who don't feel responsible for it, and who generally have difficulties to find a place for themselves in actual reality. In the east, and especially in Russia, those ideas are popular among middle aged and old citizens, who are disillusioned with the economic reforms, and are longing for a state of things, when only the state was

low level  
responsible for their limited, but  
stable wellbeing. They grew up accustomed  
to live without individual ambitions  
and commitments, without the need to  
have ~~individual~~ personal opinions.

In both cases the basic reasons seem  
to be economic, although the mental  
motivations may differ. What can be  
the remedy for it? The simplest an-  
swer is: education. But, at the same  
time it is one of the most complex  
problems. It involves not only practi-  
cal philosophy, but also a new, objecti-  
ve approach to history, to morality, to  
culture. What has been done in  
this respect? I am afraid, that  
the main task is still before us.