

IS THERE A NEW GERMANY COMING?

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Let me try to formulate some points about my own attitude to Germany, meaning by that both Germanies, but my experience is mainly with the Western part.

I came out of the war 14 years old, shocked like everybody else. My father had been in German concentration camp, my sisters, who had worked in the resistance movement, had barely managed to escape to Sweden - the family consisted for a couple of years of my mother and myself. Norway came out of the war without major scars but every family had stories similar to mine.

However, it would be entirely dishonest to say that I hated Germany. I guess that what later became the Johan Galtung I am known as, peace researcher, peace activist, pacifist had a basis in some kind of ability to make some kind of distinction between Germany and Nazi-Germany, Germans and Nazis. I can still vividly remember how shocked I was by the slogan "the only good German is a dead German". But I was also rather shocked by what my father reported one of the last days spring 1945 from the concentration camp when he was asking one of the guards, at that time rather demoralized, what would happen to Germany - and the answer was: "Nach dem Kriege werden wir uns systematisch beliebt machen". Must have been a rather bright one, that one.

I think I was one of the first Norwegians to really travel to Germany in 1949. I had been through by train the year before, had seen Hamburg in ruins, had verified that the "allies" had done a good job, had felt only remorse and shock. But in 1949 I managed to get the permission to hitch-hike around (my sister was working in the international refugee organization in Frankfurt), and talked with everybody, high and low. I had good luck: very close to Rudesheim by the Rhein I was trying to get a lift and a big bus filled with young people stopped.

These were Abiturienten out with their favourite teachers, celebrating that the Gymnasium was about to come to an end. They were simply stopping to get rid of some of the wine they had tested and tasted rather amply the night before (the uncle of one of them was the owner of a major wine cellar). But in the general commotion they got me into the bus, I spent three days with them, went to their home town, talked with their parents - not a small number of the fathers being directors of steel industry in that Ruhr district town.

What I heard shocked me profoundly. They saw the world so differently from how we saw it from the outside. The fathers saw themselves as the forerunners in the fight against communism, they had all participated actively one way or the other in Nazism. They were all rich, the Bolshevism inside and outside had been the threat and continued to be the threat, the only real threat. Hitler had made one mistake: to turn against the Jews, he should have been either more discrete or else have tried to make them his friends. One day the rest of the West would learn to appreciate what he had done and in the meantime they had to keep a low profile. ("Das hätte der Adolf bestimmt besser gemacht" was the comment at a somewhat skimpy July 4 fire works in Frankfurt, 1949).

The heaviness of the talk, the intensity of the voices, the somewhat puffy read faces I will never forget. Nor do I easily forget that when in other German cities I found people who had been on what to my mind was the right side, meaning the left side, they looked very much the same and talked very much in the same way - the manner that I later on have tried to describe in some detail as "Teutonic" (Struktur, Kultur und Intellektueller Stil, Freie Universität, Berlin 1982).

I think I can say that the experience made me sick and tired of Germany. In the period of 15 years between 1950 and 1965 I must have been dozens of times in Germany, but always travelling as quickly as possible, usually by night, making a minimum of stops. I just simply could not stand it when Germans came up to me with the usual "Sind Sie Norweger? Ein wunderbares Land, ich war dort während des Krieges, dort gab es wirklich schöne Mädchen!" I must have heard that also dozens of

times, and what annoyed me was of course not so much the memory of the past as the fact that in the present they did not understand that this was not quite the thing to say! That total "Antennenlosigkeit"!

I should add that the next 15 years I heard this decreasingly often, now almost down to zero, I guess not because the "Antennenlosigkeit" has diminished but basically because they are getting old and have retired socially and/or biologically.

However, I remember a couple of things from those first 15 years. Dachau, June 1955: I came on my motorbike, got out, trembling with emotion. Outside was a Mercedes, bulky Germans, the car radio on, playing "Three coins in the fountain". Somehow we started talking, I reported some of my feelings. "6 Millionen vergast? Das ist ziemlich überzogen, das ist eine Unmöglichkeit. Einige tausend vielleicht". Well, that people develop defense mechanisms against the most horrendous crime in history is not exactly surprising. But wasn't it easier simply to accept it - and draw the appropriate conclusions as many Germans did?

September 1957: motorbike again, leaving West-Berlin, through East-Berlin on the way to the Sassnitz ferry we lost the road somewhere north of Sachsenhausen concentration camp (Oranienburg), looked at the map, were approached by a nice family on a motorcycle with a side-car. They were all working for the Handelsorganisation, all members of the SED, they invited us home. We stayed over night, discussing the whole night through. There was certainly no problem of rejection of Nazism, it was total, and absolutely genuine - they had rather good reasons. But the way in which they accepted the crimes on the other side! The inventiveness, the factual distortions in connection with Stalinism, the mysticism connected with the construction of their own mirage, the Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat! Till in the morning some grey light came, it was dawn, misty, and some cages with rabbits in them appeared in the garden outside the house. It turned out that they were collectively owned those rabbits, not only for the meat, but also for the wool and that somehow they had been able to spin a couple of solid and nice gloves out of that wool. The cooperative was very much

praised: "Das glauben wir ist die Lösung, nicht nur für Deutschland sondern für die ganze Welt!" I looked at the rabbits, the rabbits looked at me: We both saw the future in a somewhat dim light.

The next 15 years I experienced very closely the student revolt. I shared their view and was with them in several countries, in terms of what they were against, highly unimpressed with their efforts to be constructive. In 1968, May 6, Fumiko and I were marching with the students up the Champs Elysées in Paris, sitting down on the Place Etoile in one of the hundreds or thousands of discussion groups, trying to understand what was going on. I was professor at the University of Essex and participated actively in that connection. Some of my own writings were attacked and rightly so: I learnt a lot from it, much more than from many "colleagues".

But what shocked me in Germany was the way in which German groups inclining towards Marxism behaved in exactly the same way as the carriers of Nazi values had done. It was verticality and hierarchy, it was extreme fanaticism, dogmatism. It was those cold eyes, with no love for anything, only a very clear hatred directed against the system, without understanding how deeply they themselves were a part of the deep culture and had internalized its values. All my social science experience tends to convince me that it is at the level of deep structure and deep culture, collectively and individually, that the interesting things are located. My assumption was of course that of continuity: there was something basic underlying both German fascism, meaning Nazism, and German Marxism. In a sense I was not surprised when in 1972 I came to a relatively innocent political science meeting in Berlin and was met by K-Gruppen with big posters: "Galtung, Agent des amerikanischen Imperialismus, raus!" (I went up to them and said: "Du das ist ganz einfach nicht wahr. Ich gebe dir zwei Stunden, Beweismaterial zu finden und dann kommst du entweder damit oder du entschuldigst dich. Wenn es weder Beweise noch Entschuldigungen gibt ja dann bist du ganz einfach eine Laus." They preferred the characterization as a Laus After quite some "debate" they left, with their megaphones, I remained. My colleagues at the Freie Universität said that was the first time it had happened - but they also added it

was a little bit easier for me since I could after all leave Berlin the next day. True.)

In other words, I felt rather strongly that this so-called second Germany coming up was rather similar to the first and wrote my first article on the Teutonic style. The reaction was interesting: it was rejected by close to 10 journals and magazines, all of them saying the same thing: "Most interesting, but this is not exactly the moment to publish it". I became persona non grata on the left, being very explicitly not only not Marxist, but anti-Marxist, seeing it as I have always seen Marxism, as an absolutely brilliant analysis of capitalism, as a philosophy of history that for ever will place Marx on the very top of those who have tried to shed some light of the vaster dimensions of time and space, but as very empty when it comes to visions of alternative, and as a very poor guide, strategically speaking, for political action. Marx is one among many, an extremely rich source from which to pick, only very dangerous when he is made into the sole source of wisdom, and everything has to be accepted. And that was what I found.

I was Carl-von-Ossietzky-Professor in peace research, the first one, in Bonn 1973. Again a fascinating experience but not so much because of the many politicians I met who regardless of party were more or less of the same basically and profoundly German type, I remember a party I was invited to, mainly consisting of members of the foreign policy committee of the Bundestag, who wanted to hear my views on Ost-Politik, when one of them after three - four hours discussion asked me whether on the basis of the discussion I could guess who were from the CDU and who were from SPD and I made it all wrong, not knowing the names, with only 50% correct! No, it was not the politicians and the establishment, but the students who were interesting. Here something new was evidently coming, they were people who rejected not only the ideology of the establishment and their more external style of behaviour. They started rejecting the deeper ideology and they were changing to new ways of life. There were Wohngemeinschaften,

although the Hausordnungsregeln looked very much like the rules of some military barracks. But there were efforts to come to grips with something deeper. I do not think that they themselves were or still are for that matter, in any sense aware of how German that thing was against which they were fighting. It is certainly still not in any sense my experience that Germans are capable of recognizing their own German-ness. Just to the contrary: in DDR they still discuss Nazism as fascism, the last stage of capitalism in crisis thereby making it a universal phenomenon subject to some kind of natural law - just as in BRD they discuss Nazism in very general political terms, as a question of a parliamentary system that was too weak and illegal action by some people who simply were exactly that, "illegal". The German aspect of Nazism disappears in scharfsinnige Analysen. Most disturbing, for those who hoped for the agonizing reappraisal.

So, this is where I felt and feel that a real zweites Deutschland is coming. I am writing this right after the highly successful Nürnberger Tribunal gegen Erstschlag- und Massenvernichtungswaffen in Ost und West, 18th to 20th February 1983 organized by Die Grünen. I felt that the Germans I met in that room would be the type who would have stood up against Nazism. I am not at all convinced about many of the Marxist revolutionaries I found in the late sixties and early seventies. The deep culture of their thinking, and the deep structure of their behaviour, were so similar to Nazism that it would only have been a question of changing some rhetoric. But what impressed me about those people is not so much their concrete stand against nuclear weapons, whether nuclear armament is seen as an effort to obtain nuclear disarmament (plainly ridiculous) or as a preparation for a nuclear war that can be won (plainly criminal). What impressed me is the way they combine this with a number of other very concrete stands without becoming the victims of the all-too-German temptation to weave it together into a tightly spun pyramid of deductive thinking, with some mystical faith on the top. I have discussed it with many of them and they report that it is very tempting to put together such an ideology, and I would add, particularly "auf deutschem Boden". But somehow, at least so far, they see the tremendous value of trying to build a movement as a federation of single-issue movements, certainly with some kind of

common nucleus but perhaps one which is best left to the intuitive level and not raised to the level of basic dogma.

And then, the style of behaviour. May be it had to start with informal dress, with long hair, turning bourgeois styles of self-presentation upside down. May be it had to start with rejection, and may be it has to continue that way. But much more impressive is the relaxed mixture of organization and non-organization through which an enormous amount of things are done. I have seen it so often. Of course there is preparation behind it all. Of course there is quarrel, groups that make their views known in no uncertain way, of course sometimes it breaks up. But not so many places have I seen conferences where all the sessions are introduced with a little tune played on a flute or on a harp, soft instruments, where you can see the sense of tranquility, bordering on meditation (without the people knowing it themselves), coming over the faces in the crowd. Small and big conflicts are resolved gently, not pushed under the carpet. If these were the people who handled relations with the Soviet Union much of the East-West conflict might evaporate. And let me only add to that statement (which I am prepared to defend in detail, but on the assumption that Die Grünen are so realistic in their perception of the Soviet Union as they express in writing and in talking) that I am rather amazed by the ability to combine informality and friendliness with an efficiency even down to the trivia of reimbursing ticket expenses that I have never found when confronted with big organizations in Germany, be they blue or red, never able to hand out anything cash, to organize it when the person is there with all the papers present, all hiding behind big bureaucracy and big computers.

Of course these people are young, of course they have a surplus of education which they can invest in highly talented, well informed political action. Anybody who wants can compare a green political speech with a red and a blue, trying to boil off the rhetoric in all three places and then compare what remains: there is considerably more content in the green versions, considerably more rhetoric in the other two. So I have a feeling there is a new Germany coming, helped tremendously by that genius US pedagogical tool known as the TV series The Holocaust.

For all its weaknesses I think it did exactly what it should do: pitting the generations in Germany against each other. What remains is now, in my view, only one thing but that is a rather tall order: I think even this generation for all its positive aspects has to come to grips not with their own German-ness in the negative sense I have indicated, I think they have ridden themselves of much already, but with that of the others. "Auf deutschem Boden" also means "auf deutschem geistigen Boden"; and this is perhaps where foreigners can help them see what is German and what is not. Some of it should be challenged of its very roots.

The interesting point is to what extent the same process of not only "Entnazifizierung " but of something broader, let me call it "Entteutonisierung" takes place in DDR, with the usual lag that one would expect because of the general, center-periphery gradient running West-East in Europe on general and in Germany in particular. I remember very vividly my own experience in September 1968 - I was invited to a meeting of the CDU/DDR on solidarity with Vietnam, a field where I had also been quite active in addition to work for the recognition of DDR, against the Hallstein doctrine. There were testimonials, including from East Germans who had gotten letters from relatives in West Germany telling about unemployment - one had even been in the transit room of BRD airport and could report "a warlike atmosphere". I somehow got up to the rostrum and started talking, but my credentials came to nothing: as they could not predict the end of my talk (correct) they dragged me down before I came that far and the whole issue became quite ugly (the discussion in the car from Weimar to Schönefeld had sufficient drama to fill a play or two in it). So, one teutonism superseded by another: There is but one truth. And the language, the voice, all that anger that somehow is released - where does it come from? Those red, puffy faces?

But what I have seen of the DDR peace movement today is different not only in point of view, but in deep ideology and style of behaviour. I admire them. It must be tough. But that is where the hope lies. They will remain blue and red in their organization for some time, these Germans. But a greening of the German spirit may be on its way.