

# Be Vigilant!

BY ERICH MARIA REMARQUE

On the anniversary of Hitler's death the world-famous author of 'All Quiet' passes a scorching judgment on his Fatherland

ADOLF HITLER died this day 11 years ago. His mystique did not: it still lives deep in the militant soul of Germany, feeding every resurgence of the Nazi mentality. The Man, dead, is still dangerous. TO PUBLICISE the danger and to demolish The Myth, Erich Maria Remarque has co-operated in the writing of a film which will shortly be seen in London. It is called "Ten Days To Die," and it is a relentlessly truthful documentary-dissection of Hitler's last wretched days in the Berlin bunker. REMARQUE here tells the urgent reasons behind the making of this film. He was an early victim of Nazism: lost German citizenship after his passionate denunciation of militarism in the famous book and film, "All Quiet On The Western Front." His is a voice that must be heeded.

**H**IS had burrowed more deeply into the earth than any other German — nearly 100ft. down.

There he dwelt with lick-spittle generals, vegetarian cooks, dogs, S.S. men, a girl friend, fits of rage, and his illusions, and he fought a ghostly war — with armies that had long since ceased to exist, against an adversary of whom he no longer knew anything except what his fancy pictured for him.

A COMMANDER who in five and a half years of war had never seen the front. . . .

AN EGOMANIAC who in order that he might live for another couple of weeks condemned the city about him with its women and children to annihilation, but who never once climbed up out of the safest dugout in the world to look around him to see what he had wrought (it would have upset his intuition). . . .

A PRIMA DONNA who reviled the people who were so meekly and obediently dying for him, crying that they were unworthy of him.

A LOVER OF CHILDREN who with tears of compassion held up Frau Goebbels as a model of womanhood and motherhood because she told him that she would have her four children killed because a life without the Fuehrer would hold no meaning for them. . . .

A SMALL MAN in smock, who while Germany was foundering could find nothing better to do than, in the style of the cheapest melodrama, to make an "honour woman" of the trivial girl with whom he had been living, through a last-minute "shot-gun" wedding, as a result of which a pair of honest soldiers who had to go and look for the Berlin registrar lost their lives. . . .

Finally, A MISERABLE PORTFOLIO who could not even do his rat's death alone but had to take the brand-new Frau Hitler with him. . . .

That is the man the film shows: no Attila, no Genghis Khan, no Napoleon. How then does his legend persist — as it does — in Germany?

## Slogan

**T**HE Nazis did not come from some strange planet to enslave Germany.

They grew up within Germany itself, and it was not only the economic crisis, the unemployment which drove the masses

into their arms and induced them to fight for them to the point of self-annihilation: there was something else as well.

That was the centuries-old inculcation of unconditional obedience which found in Germany particularly fertile soil.

The maxim "Orders are orders" was constantly preached as the first of the soldierly virtues and it was this maxim that had such dire consequences.

It was a comfortable slogan: there was no need to think or to take decisions for oneself — above all a man had no personal responsibility if he heeded this precept.

It was the slogan by which the murders in the concentration camps were justified; and to the dismayed astonishment of the entire world it was the precept by which even field marshals and generals sought at Nuremberg to justify their acts because they believed in all seriousness that it was enough to exonerate them from all responsibility for the shooting of hostages, offences against international law and the murder of civilians.

No one mentioned conscience. Conscience was dead — killed by this slogan, the slogan of all dictatorships.

How alive, how dangerous is THAT Germany today? — How does it show itself?

## Scandal

**B**EFORE me lies an appeal from the Anti-Nazi Association of Berlin-Charlottenburg.

It reports that in Western Germany more than a hundred organisations with openly Nazi aims are again in existence and that more than 40 Nazi periodicals are being published.

In 1945 the great work of rehabilitating victims of the Nazis was to begin. That seemed self-evident. But what did the Nationalzeitung of Bonn, a serious paper, have to say about this at the end of 1954 under the title "The Bonn Rehabilitation Scandal?"

• "About 85 per cent of the middle and upper dignitaries of the N.S.D.A.P. (the Nazi Party) and of the S.A. and S.S. who were already in office before 1933, are today receiving their full pension."

• "In approximately half of their cases the pension amounts to 1,000 marks a month."

• "Orphans of parents murdered by the Nazis, if they are lucky enough to have their cases investigated at all, get 100 marks. But this is forfeited if they earn more than 75 marks."

• "The founder and sometime chief of the Gestapo, Dirle, is



WHAT GOES UP... MUST COME DOWN

similarly receiving his full pension, as is also the widow of the arch-butcher Heydrich, while tens of thousands of dependants of murdered people are still not receiving a farthing."

Let us look at other cases. . . .

• In 1945 a colonel was sentenced to 15 years' penal servitude because a few days before the Americans occupied the little town of Penzberg he had the mayor and six inhabitants shot because they wished to save the mine near the town from being senselessly blown up by the Nazis.

The colonel appealed. In 1956 he was acquitted in Munich — he had only been carrying out orders. Acquittals of this kind are becoming more common.

• Hitler's hated Public Prosecutor who gave the order that the men of July 20 were not to be shot but hanged, and who watched the hangings, is living comfortably on his full pension.

• The city of Kiel, which in 1945 withdrew its freedom from

Admiral Raeder who has been condemned as a war criminal, offered him it back again in 1956. On their release war criminals are being feted as martyrs by the ringing of church bells and with bouquets and speeches.

• The commandant of the notorious concentration camp at Struthof was recently sentenced to a full five years' penal servitude for 150 murders. A simple calculation shows the scale of punishment: ten days penal servitude per murder.

What then is the outlook in Germany?

## Summing-up

**T**HE great part of the German people want peace and democracy and have had enough of Hitler and his associates; nonetheless, the forces of reaction are not dead. They are agitating and work-

ing and waiting their chance, and they do not consist solely of former Nazis, they also include those circles which helped the Nazis to power; which did nothing to check them when they could still have been stopped, which put false patriotism above the concept of personality and responsibility, and which worked hand in hand with the Nazis for their own ends.

Let us hope that God will never allow them to come back to power.

But simply hoping is not enough. Education in active democracy is more important. Twelve years of education in intolerance and a couple of hundred years of training in blind obedience cannot so easily be eradicated.

That is why this film was made.

That is why its last words are: Be Vigilant.