

'We Shall Hate, or We Shall Fail'

If we do not hate the Germans now, says Rex Stout, we shall fail in our effort to establish a lasting peace.

By Rex Stout

Author, Chairman Writers' War Board

LOVE your enemies. Fight your enemies, shoot them, starve them, kill them, destroy their cities, bomb their factories and gardens—but love them! That may make sense to the Tuesday Evening Culture Club but not to me.

The Christian imperatives and ideals are the noblest expression of man's highest aspirations, but when men shrink from the hard necessities imposed upon them by human defects and stupidities by hiding behind the skirts of those imperatives and ideals, there is nothing noble about that. There is one imperative: thou shalt not kill. There is another: love your enemies. They are equally essential parts of a moral and philosophic whole. If I obey both of them, I may, sadly enough, be a highly impractical man, but at least I am a saintly man and deserve respect. If I violate one of them but insist that the other be adhered to, I am manifestly guilty of sanctimonious double talk and deserve no respect from any one whatever.

Some say that they admit it is impossible to love the Germans, but we must not hate them. That is worse than double-talk, it is plain nonsense. Either the hundreds of thousands of Germans we are preparing to kill deserve to be killed, or they do not. Apparently most Americans are agreed that they do, since most Americans favor a vigorous prosecution of the war. If we are not to kill them while loving them, and not to kill them while hating them, precisely what are our feelings supposed to be during the unpleasant operation? Are we expected to proceed with the bloody task in an emotional vacuum? Or in a state of benign (though murderous) detachment?

Not a pretty picture, that would be; not adherence to a Christian ideal, but assumption of a frigid and phony divinity, usurpation of the prerogatives of God Himself, which, I submit, in the light of current events, would be somewhat impertinent.

Shall we hate Germans? Each of us must answer that question for himself. But to kill them while pretending to love them is dishonest, to kill them and remain emotionally indifferent is abhorrent, and to kill them with an assumption of the attributes of God is inadmissible. As fairly decent and responsible human beings, we cannot and must not kill them unless we do hate them.

Some will say, indeed have said, listen to him, the fiend, he is trying to fill our breasts with blind and vindictive passion. That is one of the oldest tricks of the controversial acrobat, to pretend that your adversary doesn't mean what he is saying, he means something else. "Blind" and "vindictive" and "passion." It isn't a very good trick.

THERE are as many kinds of hate as there are kinds of love. There are people who hate dill pickles; that's the way they put it. There are people who hate labor, those who hate capital, those who hate President Roosevelt or noisy little children or Mr. McCormick of Chicago. The hate I am talking about is a feeling toward the Germans of deep and implacable resentment for their savage attack upon the rights and dignity of man, of loathing for their ruthless assault on the persons and property of innocent and well-meaning people, of contempt for their arrogant and insolent doctrine of the German master race.

If any one, agreeing with all that, wants to pick another word for it, I can't stop him; but, having consulted my dictionary, I call it hate. I see nothing admirable in aiding and abetting the death

by violence of millions of fellow-beings but fleeing in repugnance from a four-letter word. I hate Germans, and am not ashamed of it. On the contrary, in view of what the Germans have done, and of what my countrymen are preparing to do to them, I would be profoundly ashamed of myself if I did not hate Germans.

I am not a born German-hater. In March, 1915, when a visiting British lecturer made biting remarks about the Germans, I arose and left the gathering because I thought he was intemperate and unfair. He wasn't. As I discovered later, I was grossly ignorant. The trouble was that the British hated the Germans not wisely but too little.

ADOLF HITLER is nothing to be surprised at. A close student of German history, if sufficiently acute, might in the year 1900 have predicted a Hitler as the culmination of the deep-rooted mental and nervous disease afflicting the German people. The adoration of force as the only arbiter, and skulduggery as the supreme technique, in human affairs, which is the essence of nazism, was fully expounded by Clausewitz over a century ago; and Clausewitz has been the political bible of four generations of German leaders. A people who dined on Clausewitz for 120

years was bound to have Hitler for desert. And Hitler was bound to say, as he has said, "You can be a German or a Christian. You cannot be both."

He might as well have said Hindu or Moslem, instead of Christian. For what he meant was "You can be a German, or you can accept a code of morality. You cannot do both." That was implicit in Clausewitz. It has been stated or implied in a thousand ways by ten thousand Germans. Long before there were any Nazis, a German said a treaty was only a scrap of paper. Before Adolf Hitler was born another German, von Bulow, made a speech to a great audience assembled for a memorial performance of Beethoven's symphonies. He shouted, "To the meaningless French idealisms, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, we oppose the German realities, Infantry, Cavalry and Artillery!" And the throng of Germans, gathered to honor Beethoven, applauded madly. Sieg hell!

By word, and by deed. After the last war there were well-meaning souls who tried to persuade us that the Germans had committed no atrocities. They will not find it so easy a job this time; there are too many millions of eyewitnesses, and too many thousands of documents already collected. This is condensed from a sworn affidavit now on file in London:

On Nov. 11, 1939, at Torun in Western Poland, a window in a German barracks was broken at night by a stone. Twelve boys of from 11 to 16 years of age were taken into custody and immediately shot. The bodies of the victims remained where they fell for the whole of four days, in spite of pleas of relatives to remove them for burial.

This is from a German official report made in March, 1941, at Tyn, a town in Czechoslovakia:

Josef Flodek, a mill-owner, was given grain to grind for German use. He removed a panful of the flour and gave it to a neighbor. Since it was discovered that his wife was an accomplice in the crime, they were both hanged.

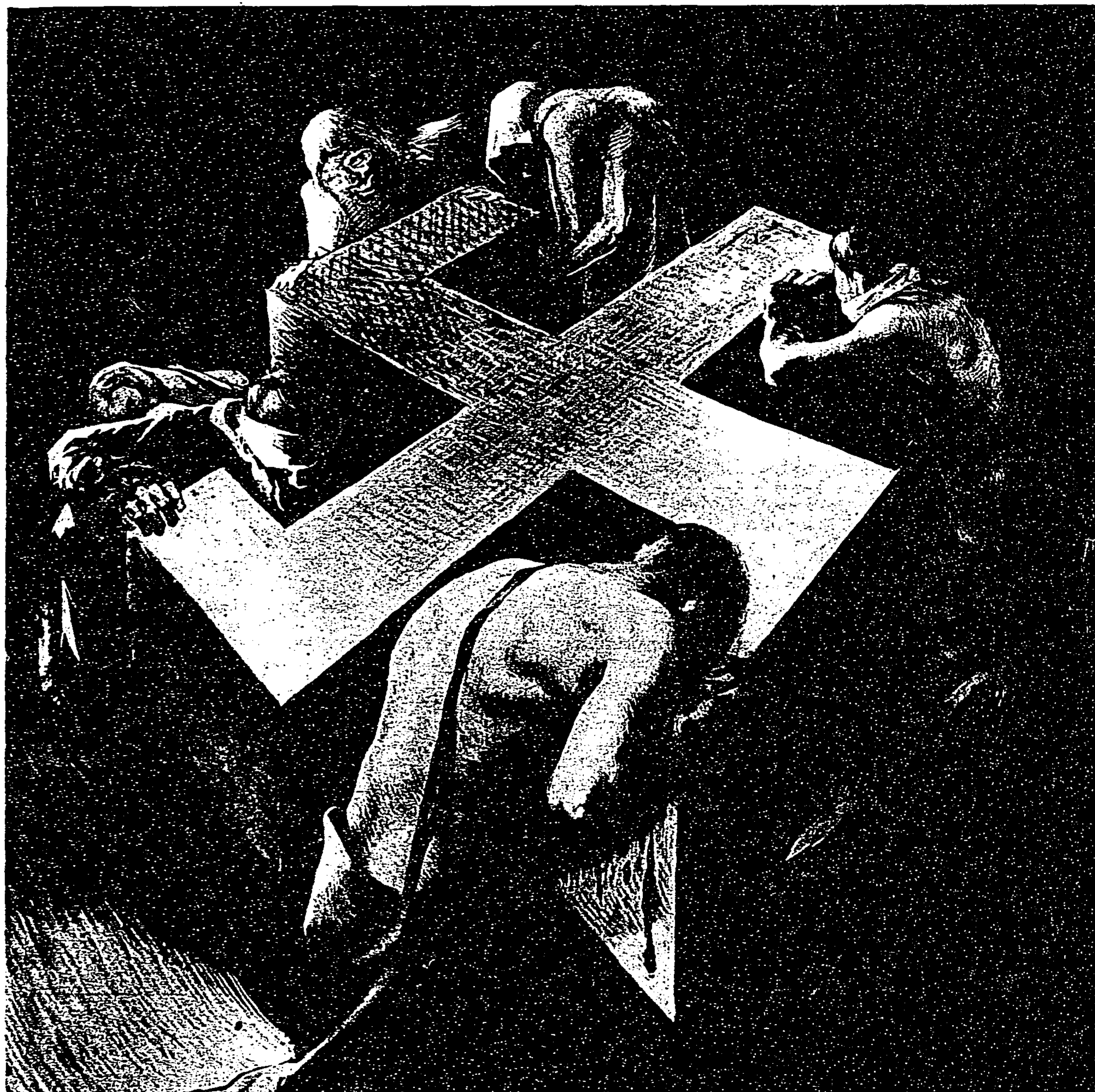
THIS is from an affidavit made by a Russian civilian who was captured by the Germans and later escaped:

Marching us to another prison camp, the Germans invented a game. One of them would order us to march by fours, while another ordered us to form by sixes. This naturally resulted in confusion, and then they would shout that we were disobeying orders and open fire on us. In this manner, on the day's march to Uman, sixty-four of us were killed.

Multiply those instances by a thousand, ten thousand—yes, it must be admitted, that is hateful. But can't we somehow squirm out of it?

There are the metaphysicians, both amateur and professional. The people who say, yes, we must hate injustice and cruelty and barbarism, that's all right, but we must not hate our fellow-beings.

That would be a remarkable stunt, and an extremely convenient one, if there were any man or woman alive capable of performing it. It is merely another trick with words. (Continued on Page 29)



"The Germans have made a savage attack upon the rights and dignity of man." Poster by Xavier Gonzales.

The New York Times

Published: January 17, 1943

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What is "cruelty"? It is a word invented by men to describe a quality of a deed performed by a living creature upon another living creature. Any attempt to treat it as a thing in itself, to separate it in any way whatever, from the deed it was invented to describe, or from the person performing the deed, is tommyrot.

A man murders a child. You see him do it. You say you do not hate the man. Very well, then you have, to put it one way, an exceptionally developed power of detachment. But if you say you hate the "cruelty" but do not hate the man, what do you mean? You simply don't mean anything. You are talking drivel. If no one had ever invented any such word as "cruelty" (and for many thousands of years after man started to talk there were no abstract words), then what would you say? What did men say? Are we to assume that the mere invention of abstract words changed the structure of the human brain and men became miraculously capable of hating words instead of people?

No. A man who tells you he hates evil but not the doer of evil is kidding either you or himself, and in any case is gibbering.

IF we shall hate, shall we hate all Germans, everywhere? Shall we hate Mr. Schulz, who came to America thirty years ago at the age of 12, who now runs the grocery store at the corner of Sixth and Main and despises Adolf Hitler? To ask the foolish question is to answer it. No. Then if we are not to hate all Germans, everywhere, how do we go about the colossal job of picking and choosing?

I find no great difficulty. I hate all Nazi Germans. I hate all Germans who accept, either actively or passively, the doctrine of the German master race, the doctrine which permeated German thought long before Hitler was born, the doctrine by which the Germans justify their contempt of all other people and their domination of other countries by force. I hate all Germans who joined with the Nazis to bring that doctrine to its inevitable culmination of brutal disregard of the rights and dignities which distinguish a man from a beast. I hate all Germans who, reluctant to join the Nazis, nevertheless failed, through lack of courage or conviction, to prevent the Nazis from seizing power and plunging the world into this filthy swamp of destruction, misery and hatred.

THOSE are the Germans I hate from the bottom of my soul. Ninety-nine per cent of them are in Germany. As to what proportion they are of all Germans in Germany I do not know and have no way of finding out.

In 1934 the German Minister of Education issued an order which contained a list of slogans to be permanently displayed on the blackboard of every schoolroom in Germany. One of the slogans read, "The Ten Commandments are the deposit of the lowest human instincts." There is, I suppose, no argument as to our opinion of the German minister or of the government which gave him his job. But what of the parents, all of them, who sent their children, day after day and year after year, to those schoolrooms and made no effective protest?

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Who did not, by force if necessary, by stealth if courage was lacking, invade those schools and make the blackboards clean? They have shown no squeamishness about invading the schools and homes and factories of all the rest of Europe. But day after day, year after year, they washed and dressed their children, fed them, and sent them to sit on their school benches facing that brazen denial of the very foundation of civilized society. Because the Germans are the master race! Phooey! Have they earned my hate? They have; they've got it.

Are we, then, to go on hating Germans forever? I hope not. It is not unreasonable to suppose

that the disease of which the German nation is sick can in time be cured. It is likely, and perhaps regrettable, that the Poles and Greeks and Norwegians who have seen their loved ones murdered, tortured and goaded into suicide carry within them certain personal emotions of the kind that distort men's features and warp their minds. We have not had that experience. With us it is not a question of vengeance, vindictiveness, punishment, irremovable enmity. It is a question of facing realistically the ugly fact of the German doctrine—not the Hitler or the Nazi doctrine, the German doctrine—of the master race, and the resulting deep-

rooted German attitude toward all other nations and peoples.

If we do not face it, and hate it with every drop of our blood, the chance is slim that we shall do what must be done to eradicate it. It will remain through our lives and, after we die, a menace to our children and grandchildren, an impassable barrier to the organization of a decent and workable world.

It is not true that if we hate the Germans now we are helping to fill a reservoir of hate-poison that will infect the future beyond all hope of antiseptis. On the contrary. If we do not hate the Germans now, we shall inevitably fail in our purpose to establish

the world on a basis of peace. If we do not see the evil clearly enough to hate it as it deserves, which means, make no mistake, hating those who do or tolerate the evil, the temptation will be irresistible, at one point or another, to compromise with it instead of destroying it.

There never will be a world in which there is nothing and no one that is hateful. But it can be better than it is if we are sufficiently resolved to make it better. That resolution can be strong enough for its job only if it has emotional motivation and support in an uncompromising hatred for those evils with which there can be no truce, and for the people who are the champions of those evils, or the servants of the champions.

We shall hate, or we shall fail.