

# LITERARY DIGEST

FEBRUARY 4, 1933

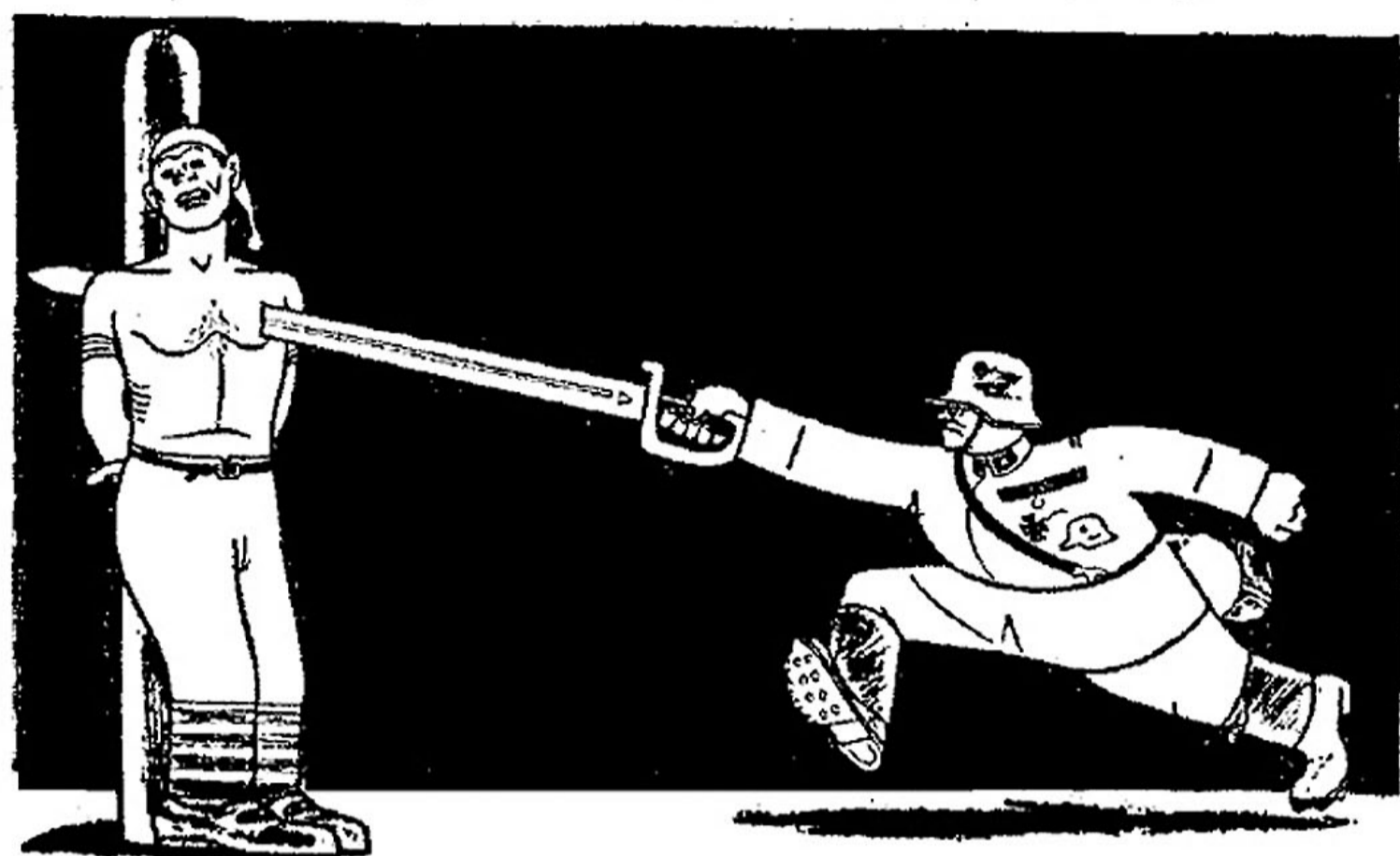
## Germany's New "War Spirit"

**T**HE SPARK OF OUR RESOLVE to take up arms in national defense must kindle our disunited, wearied people to the flame of nationhood."

That is the rallying cry of fevered German nationalists to-day, we are told.

At no time since the war—not even during the occupation of the Ruhr—it is said, has there been so much militarist and nationalist propaganda in Germany as there is now.

What the peace-loving Socialists think of this crusade may be



As German Socialists See Militarism

"The militarist will for defense must penetrate the whole German nation."  
—"Der Wahre Jakob" (Berlin).

gathered from the accompanying *Wahre Jakob* cartoon, which pictures the entire German nation as pierced with a sword if the militarists have their way.

Anti-militarist newspapers, it appears, are afraid, in Berlin at least, to raise their voice in protest because of the continual and ruinous suspensions by the authorities.

But it is not only in the press that the wave of nationalistic feeling is swept into torrential force. The Berlin correspondent of the *Liberal Manchester Guardian* tells us that one film after another is produced to glorify the soldierly virtues, and he goes on:

"Most of such films are historical, the favorite subjects being the wars of Frederick the Great and the struggle against Napoleon. They are often produced with the assistance of the Reichswehr (the Regular Army) and of the youthful unemployed who are organized in the so-called 'volunteer camps.'

"Artistically all these films are worthless. Militarist propaganda is also insinuated into the news-reels. Items calculated to disparage the League of Nations, or sound-pictures of German politicians bemoaning the loss of colonies or demanding 'equality' in armaments, or of French artillery or British battle-ships at maneuvers (with captions pointing out Germany's defenseless state by way of comparison) appear amid 'shots' of football matches, mine disasters, and other news items.

"Broadcast programs are packed with military marches and with lectures on national defense, on *Wehrgeist* (the military spirit), *Wehrsport* (military sports), and so on.

"The tone of all this propaganda is one of whining, wheedling resentment, or of pompous moral indignation. Listeners are unspeakably bored by it—among the general public on whom it is inflicted it finds hardly any response at all."

A striking account of press propaganda methods of the militarist campaign is given by this Berlin informant, who says that the quantities of printed propaganda poured out each day would fill volumes.

## Germany's New "War Spirit"

But three examples must suffice to reveal its character, he says. The first shows the militarism of the Right Opposition, the second is a specimen of official propaganda, the third shows how militarism has invaded the Left. We read:

"1. From the Nazi *Angriff*: 'It will be one of our noblest tasks to educate the German people so that they may, of all Continental nations, be the best shots and take the greatest pleasure in shooting.'"

The second specimen offered in *The Guardian* is from an article contributed by General von Stülpnagel in the *Berliner Börsenzeitung*. The General is the director of the National Athletic Board, a governmental organization to promote *Wehrsport*, which includes military drill, field operations, signaling, map-reading, etc. The article was broadcast and is typical of official militarist propaganda, according to this correspondent, who proceeds:

"Articles and addresses of this kind are produced in great profusion. The style is so stilted, and the thought so confused, that whole passages defy translation into another language, and have to be paraphrased.

"The ultimate purpose of the Treaty of Versailles,' so General von Stülpnagel writes, 'is to arrest the evolution of Germany forever. Besides being oppressed politically, being humiliated economically, and being disarmed, the German people were, by the Treaty, to be rendered spiritually defenseless as well.

"A nation without the big idea of preparedness (*Wehrbereitschaft*) has no right to live. In the great periods of our history—in the Wars of Liberation, in the struggle for German unity—and in 1914—the word "war" had a kindling effect.

"To-day the spark of our resolve to take up arms in national defense must kindle our disunited, wearied people to the flame of nationhood. . . . Heroic thought ennobles a nation. . .

"History flows in an eternal stream; and there is nothing that stays. History decides in favor of the strong, of those who are worthy to live. The fate of nations is not determined by treaties, it is engendered by ethical forces, by the will to live, and by a soldierly devotion to the State. . . . To live is to fight, history and fighting are one, and to fight is the highest destiny of a nation."

**T**HE third exhibit, in this Berlin correspondent's report, is from *Das Reichsbanner*. The *Reichsbanner* people are hostile to the Nazis, equally hostile to the Communists, and support the military policy of General von Schleicher. A leading article from *Das Reichsbanner*, we are advised—

"Proclaims the principle of 'national defense' and offers General von Schleicher the assistance of the *Reichsbanner* if 'he will recognize that the cannon and the machine-gun are the ultimate argument' against the Nazis (who are referred to as 'Spartacists of the Right'—the Spartacists were the predecessors of the present-day Communists).

"The Nazis, so the article continues, would not start any strikes 'in impoverished municipalities' if they knew that they would 'beruthlessly stood up against a wall' and shot for doing so."

It seems depressing to *The Guardian's* Berlin correspondent, that anti-militarist expression is hardly to be found at all in the Berlin press, except in the courageous and extremely popular *Berliner Volkszeitung*.

But in the provinces there is a strong anti-militarist feeling, and he points out that—

"It is characteristic that those Rhineland papers which were boldest in their comments on the French occupation, and which were continually in conflict with the French military authorities, are now the boldest in opposing the neo-militarism of Germany."