

The Presence and the Absence: the Attitude of German Children Newspapers towards the Holocaust and the Issue of German Refugees (1945-

After the end of the Second World War, Germany had to face difficult issues. The inhabitants of the four occupation zones had to deal with hunger, lack of housing, high unemployment and the influx of around ten million German refugees from Eastern Europe. As German society tried to grapple with economic crisis, questions about the Nazi past were pressing. In 1946, Friedrich Meinecke wrote in his book *Die Deutsche Katastrophe* that the years of the Third Reich were the biggest disaster and the biggest shame in German history. In my research, I intend to juxtapose references to the Holocaust and the 'German Catastrophe'. I shall examine how German children newspapers addressed these issues and how they portrayed the current situation.

With the occupation of Germany by the allies in May 1945, all newspapers were closed down. The basis of this action was the idea that any newspaper which was printed during the period of the third Reich was compatible to the Nazi ideology. As an answer to this vacuum in the flow of information, the military government came with the idea to publish themselves newspapers for the Germans. Ten newspapers having the total print-run of 3,785,000 copies were published during the first few month of the occupation. This artificial answer could not provide a permanent solution to the shortage of German newspapers. As a solution a license system was introduced. This system allowed the Germans to publish their own newspapers under supervision of the military government in the different zones. The process of Denazification created a shortage in qualified writers; consequently the newspapers were edited by many unqualified journalists.

Clarity of topic and simplicity of plot is characteristic for children newspapers. It is thus relatively easy to delineate the message which writers and editors want to convey. As one of the main forms of media developing during the first years after the War, children newspapers were an important ingredient in the formation of the collective identity, which in turn created a base for education of children and youth. Newspapers reflect the social state of mind in a given period and present opinions of a relatively large number of writers brought together by the editor. Writers and editors utilize fiction, poetry, journalism, and caricatures as tools for moral education.

In my research, I juxtapose references to the Holocaust and the 'German Catastrophe'. I examine how German children newspapers addressed these issues and how they portrayed the current situation. The juxtaposition of the respective attitudes towards the Holocaust and the treatment of the German refugees enable us to analyze the way in which the German society, through its children newspapers, coped with material and moral difficulties after the Second World War. For this purpose I intend to examine children newspapers published from 1946 until 1952. In 1952, the 'equalizations of burdens' law (*Lastenausgleich*) was passed. The law placed the burden of dealing with German refugees, who had been expelled from the East, upon the entire Federal Republic of Germany. This law was the first step to facilitate the economic integration of millions of refugees who tried to find their place in the German economy and society. In the very same year was also signed the agreement regarding compensation payments between the Federal Republic and Israel, as the representative of the Jewish people.

The subject of my research are the newspapers addressed to children which were born between 1930 and 1935. This generation was raised on the Nazi ideology and when the War was over those children were about 10-15 years old. The older children in this generation could have been a part of the 'Hitlerjugend', Hitler's youth movement and some of them ended up in POW camps after they took part in the last stages of the fighting. I intend to analyze the newspapers from the four occupation zones into which Germany was divided after the War. This approach will allow to discuss not only the attitude to the current situation in Germany as a whole but also to notice the differences between East and West Germany in their respective ideologies and political points of view. In that sense, 1949 will be a dividing point in the research as the year in which the two Germanys were established. The research concentrates on newspapers which had a print-run of more than 100,000 copies, among them 'Ins Neue Leben' (British license), 'Liliput' and 'Pinguin' (American license), 'Start' and 'Die Schulpost' (Soviet license), 'Das Ziel' and 'Die Zukunft' (French license).

The first part of research focuses on the children newspapers attitude to the refugee issue through chronological division between 1945-1949 and 1949-1952. The second part deals with the attitude towards Jews in general and the Holocaust in particular. This part discussed the way German literature portrayed the Jews and the Holocaust during the first years after the war.

The wide range of literature about Germany after the Second World War rarely relates to the children newspapers in that time. The literature on the subject of children newspapers approaches the subject in general with no particular reference to the period immediately after the War; its methodology is pedagogic, sociological, or psychological. My research is the first attempt to bring together both the attitude towards the German refugees and the references to the Holocaust through the eyes of German children newspapers.