

Schleife
18 Sep 1923

Dear Volksblatt,

We have become multi-millionaires and yet we are as poor as a church mouse. Germany has never seen as difficult a time as now. The devaluation of the mark is progressing so rapidly that printing of the same cannot keep pace. Two weeks ago a herring cost 20,000 Mark and today it does cost 1 ½ million Marks. Tomorrow it might cost 10,000,000 Marks. The emergencies are the greatest in the cities. I had been to Leipzig lately and saw a lot more misery there than here in the country. The people have to queue up in front of the grocery stores as everything is rationed. When the laborer receives his wages he will have just enough to live from day to day. He wants to buy clothing for his family but there are not enough funds. On the other hand you observe the profiteers who do not bend a finger who have lots of money and live very well. The mood of the people feels like a heavy thunder and lightning which might happen any moment. We have a new government which seems to make every effort to stop this chaos, but will they be successful? The French soldiers still occupy part of this land and don't seem ready to go home. The Czech troops are gathering at the borders on the east of Germany and the question is "Why". Poor Germans we don't know what will happen to us in the next few days, but yet we sing:

Deutschland, Deutschland über alles	Germany, Germany, above all
Und im Unglück nun erst recht.	And in bad luck even more so
Nur im Unglück kann die Liebe	Because only in bad luck can love show
Zeigen, ob sie stark und echt:	If it is strong and true
Und so soll es weiterklingen	And as such let it continue to sing
Von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht:	From generation to generation
Deutschland, Deutschland über alles	Germany, Germany, above all
Und im Unglück nun erst recht.	And in bad luck that much more.

The battle at the river Ruhr fought with heroic courage cannot reach its goal: freedom for Germany and a change to the Versailles Treaty. All heroism fails against the brutal power of the French and Belgian weapons and the weakness of the German finances. In this battle for Germany's freedom we have not found support from the other powers who could have helped us be successful. Our foreign policy has come to its own parting of the ways. We need to try to come to an understanding with France. I am reminded of the words the poet Johann G. Fichte (1762 to 1814) spoke to the German people:

Believe in Germany's future
The rising up of your people
Don't let anybody rob you of this belief
Despite all that has happened
And act in such a way
As if all actions depended on you
The fate of all German things
With the responsibility having been yours.

The conditions were similar then as they are today. Let us hope that our enemies will be willing to give us back our humanness and all of us can live in peace.

Regards from Germany, yours

Jahn
Hf

Translated by Margot Hendricks