"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, Chalmer Whits' War Bond

O VE your enemies. Fight your en-
emies; shoot them, starve them, kill
them, destroy their cities, bomb their
factories and gardens—but love them?
That may make sense to the Tues-
day Swinging Society Club but not to me.

The Christian imperatives and ideals are
the noblest expression of man’s highest
aspirations. They are a code of love that
is impossible to love the German, but we
must not hate them. That is worse than
double-talk; it is worse than nonsense. Eight
hundred thousand Germans are preparing
to kill Germans to be killed, or they do not.

All the young Americans are agreed that they do, since most Amer-

icans 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 feel-
ings supposed to be during the unpleasant
operations? Are we expected to proceed
with the bloody task in an emotional
vacuum? Or is a state of benign (though
murderous) detachment?

Not a pretty picture, that would be;
not adherence to a Christian ideal, but
assumption of a friend and foe dignity,
unparation of the prerogatives of God
Himself, which, I submit, in the light of
current events, would be somewhat im-
portant.

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 a moral wrong,
and to kill them with an assumption of the attributes of God is inadmissible.
As fairly
desireable 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
counter-revolutionary, 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.

T HERE are as many kinds of hate as there are kinds of love. There are people who hate evil, that’s how they put it. There are people who hate labor, those who hate capital, those who hate President Roosevelt or many little children or Mr. McCormick of Chicago. The hate I am talking about is a feeling toward the Germans of deep and implacable resent-
ment for their savage attack upon the
rights and dignity of man, of loathing for their ruthless assault on the person and prop-
erty of innocent and well-meaning peo-
ple, of contempt for their arrogant and in-
solent doctrines of race and German might.

If any one, agreeing with all that,
want to pick another word for it, I can’t
stop him; but, having consulted the dic-
tionary, I call it hate. I see nothing ad-
mirable 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, I am
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
1915, when a visiting British lec-
turer made biting remarks about the
Germans, I arose and left the gathering
because I thought he was inconsiderate
and unfair. He wasn’t. As I discovered later,
I was grossly ignorant. The trouble was
that the British hated the Germans not
wistfully but too little.

A DOLF HItLER is nothing to be sur-
prised 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 affecting the German
people. The adoration of force as the only
arbiter, and subjugation as the supreme
technique, in human affairs, which is the
essence of Nazism, was fully expounded
by Clausewitz over a century ago. When
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 des-
cert. 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 be-
tore 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 audi-
ence assembled for a memorial perform-
ance of Beethoven’s symphonies. He
shouted, “To the meaningless French ideal-
isms, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, we
oppose the German realities, Infantry,
Cavalry and Artillery!” And the chug of
Germans, gathered to honor Beethoven,
applauded madly. Sieg hell!

By word, and by deed. After the last
year there were well-meaning souls who
tried to persuade us that the Germans had
committed no atrocities. They will not
find it as 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, 1938, at Torun in Western
Poland, a window in a German barracks
was broken at night by a stone. Twelve
boys of from 11 to 15 years of age were
taken into custody and immediately
shot. The bodies of the victims re-
mained 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, 1943, at Tyu, a town in
Czechoslovakia.

J osef Podel, a mill-owner, was given
1000 marks for grilling German soldiers. He
removed a parcel 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.

T his 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 search by fours,
while another ordered us to form by threes.
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—you, 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 per-
forming it. It is merely another trick
with words. (Continued on Page 29)
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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 weeded and dressed their children, fed them, and sent them to sit on their school benches facing that deadly denial of the very foundation of civilized society. Because the Germans are the master race! Phoney! 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 gassed inside these gates will 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, irreconcilable 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 antitoxin. 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.

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'Hate Is Moral Poison'

Professor Bowie repudiates the thesis of Rex Stout, that we must hate the Germans or we shall fail to make a lasting peace.

An article by Rex Stout, entitled "We Shall Hate, or We Shall Fail," published in THE TIMES Magazine of Jan. 17, has provoked sharp controversy and brought a number of letters to the editor, several of which have been printed. Here is an answer to Mr. Stout's article.

By Walter Russell Bowie
Professor of Practical Theology
Union Theological Seminary

It was of the African Congo that Vachel Lindsay was thinking when he wrote his wild, exciting lines:

Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song
And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pen gang.

But nowadays it is not so much in Africa as here in America that the blood-lust song is beginning to echo, and that the "skull-faced, lean witch doctors" are finding a contemporary chorus.

"We Shall Hate, or We Shall Fail" - that is the title of an article by Rex Stout, chairman of the Writers' War Board, in THE NEW YORK TIMES Magazine of Jan. 17. Then the subtitle goes on to say, "If we do not hate the Germans now, we shall fall in our effort to establish a lasting peace."

That is meant for patriotic fervor. Actually it is moral poison. If those words were listened to, they would twist this war away from any hope of a decent result, and turn it into a kind of frenzied dervish dance, or a voodoo incantation of the instincts of the jungle.

Mr. Stout ostensibly defines his terms. He says that by "hate" he means 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 peoples, of contempt for their arrogant and insistent doctrine of the German master race.

What those words seem to mean is a deep and implacable resentment against what Germany under its Nazi masters believes in and has done. In that judgment there appears to be discrimination, and therefore moral dignity. But Mr. Stout's argument runs to an indiscriminate frenzy. "I hate Germans and I am ashamed of it," he declares; and he will not be content until all the middle-aged gentlemen in their clubs and ladies at their knitting try to see how hard they can hate, "which means, make no mistake, hating those who do or tolerate the evil."

That is to say, not only what Germany now represents but "old Nazi Germans" must be hated. To "hate injustice, cruelty and barbarism" is not enough. Everybody who has been connected with those must be hated too. To hate the wrongs and "not hate our fellow-beings," says Mr. Stout, "would be a remarkable stunt and an extremely convenient one, if there were any person alive capable of performing it."

But to suggest that there is any person alive capable of doing that would be "merely another trick with words."

That would be important, if true. But it is not true. What it says is that there is no possibility of fighting evil unless you fight vindictively. What it says is that a nation cannot espouse a great cause and carry it through victoriously unless the tom-toms of primitive passion keep beating louder and louder. That is as unsound in fact as it is atavistic in morals.

What has a man been accustomed to who argues like that? Has he never happened to see a policeman - the actual everyday policeman who will pit his life at a moment's notice against crime and savagery, but who has never had it enter his head that in order to do that he must first work up an indiscriminate rage against every human being who has been a criminal and against all criminals' families besides? Has nobody ever suggested that there is such a thing as modern panology, and that the reason why its civilized process is different from the senseless rage of savages is precisely that civilized persons - judges, policemen, prison officials - do every day what Mr. Stout asserts that nobody is capable of doing? They do hate crime without losing the controlled intelligence which can discriminate among those who are classed as criminals.

But what has all this to do with war against the Nazis? It might be demanded. What is this but "another trick with words"? Well, it is not a trick with words; and it leads on directly to the question of war, and this particular war against Nazi Germany, and against Japan too, for that matter. Do men fight better by getting all frothed at the mouth with fury?

Look at England. Did the almost incredible courage of the little ordinary people of bombed London need to be kept up by harangues from hate-mongers? Most of them did not bother their heads about hating: they have sense enough and humor enough to keep their wits, and coolly to get on with the job. Now and then, it is true, some excited military leader in England and America does urge the inculcation of hate. An American general here at home exclaimed, "We must hate with every fiber of our being. We must lust for battles." At one of the training centers in England there was a so-called hate room, with elaborate equipment to whip up the passions of men. When the news of that came out the Moderator of the Church of Scotland immediately protested and General B. C. T. Paget officially replied:

"Such an attack (Continued on Page 31)"
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At this point in the argument, the notion of hate is expanded to include a broader range of emotions and behaviors, suggesting that hate is not just an individual feeling but a collective and societal phenomenon.

According to the New York Times article, hate is compared to a poison that spreads and causes harm, both to the individual and to society as a whole. The article cites examples of hate crimes and the destructive power of hate speech and hate-filled actions, emphasizing the importance of addressing and combating hate.

The article concludes with a call to action, urging readers to consider the impact of their words and actions and to work towards promoting a more inclusive and compassionate society. It emphasizes the need for education and understanding to help individuals overcome their biases and prejudices.

The article is written in a style that is clear and direct, using examples and analogies to make the concept of hate more accessible to the reader. The language is straightforward and avoids overly technical terms, making it accessible to a wide audience.

The article is a powerful reminder of the importance of understanding and addressing hate in all its forms. It highlights the ways in which hate can be a destructive force, both for individuals and for society as a whole, and calls for action to combat this powerful emotion.
Comment on Dr. Bowie’s Article

The question whether we must hate the Germans if we are to win the war and win a lasting peace was raised by Rex Stout in THE NEW YORK TIMES Magazine on Jun. 17. Mr. Stout took the affirmative view. In last Sunday’s Magazine Professor Walter Russell Bowie of Union Theological Seminary defended the opposing position. Both articles provoked many readers to write the editor. A selection of the replies to Mr. Stout has already been published. From the letters stimulated by Professor Bowie’s views a selection is printed below.

Mr. Stout Replies

To THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

In THE NEW YORK TIMES Magazine for Jan. 31 Professor Walter Russell Bowie, replying to my recent article about hating Germans, fails to reply at all. Instead, he constructs a straw man of hideous form and repugnant feature, furiously tears it to bits, and seems to be under the impression that he has answered something.

That’s true of the entire article; I give one example. He admits that I defined my terms, which I did as follows: “A feeling toward the Germans of eg 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 peoples, of contempt for their arrogant doctrine of the German master race.” Then Professor Bowie goes on to denounce vindictiveness, blood lust, ferocity, primitive passion and months frothing with fury. All of which has nothing to do with me or the piece I wrote.

Indeed, the very title of Professor Bowie’s “reply” is a dead give-away: “Hate Is Moral Poison.” I wonder what John Brown, William Lloyd Garrison, Oliver Cromwell, Martin Luther would think of that? Those men, and numerous other powerful and effective haters, knew quite well that hate is not only not a moral poison: it may be and sometimes is a moral necessity. It is merely silly for Professor Bowie to argue that all hate is alike regardless of its motivation and its target, and that all hate is ugly and poisonous. There was nothing ugly about the fierce light that blazed in the eyes of Joan of Arc and she called the emotion behind it by its right name. She called it hate.

There are various other curiosities in Professor Bowie’s article. The plain implication of his nineteenth and twentieth paragraphs is that the Germans, as they are today, are no worse than the people of our Southern States at the time of the Civil War. Since that is plainly implied, I suppose Professor Bowie believes it. That is why he, and people like him, represent a real peril to the attainment of our objectives in this war. We cannot win what we are fighting for, a world fit to live in, unless after the military victory we handle the German problem realistically and competently; and we cannot do that unless we are aware of the utter hatefulness of Germany and the Germans.

Rex Stout.

New York, Feb. 1, 1943.