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Headline: Thoughts about the Catholic Congress

Text: Every German surely felt his heart beat faster on Sunday as all the waving flags, all the exemplary earthy men passed by as they processed from the King’s Plaza (Königsplatz). Greeted by loud hailing cheers, a piece of the dance-, song-, and drink-cheered Middle Ages went through the streets of Munich. Halbardiers, scythes, sutlers, old-time hats, colorful costumes from all Catholic regions.

And in view of this variegated yet closely related crowd, I must reflect on something else: on the Luther- and Reformation-Congress in northern Germany. In old Lübeck, members of the German *Volk* also processed through the city in similar celebrations. People from Silesia, Holstein, Frisia, in their splendid costumes. I cannot help asking myself whether it shouldn’t be possible sometime – yet this is really a lark of a dream – to unite these North Germans and South Germans sometime in a combined German Christian celebration. They once stood shoulder to shoulder, year after year in damp trenches; service to the Fatherland brought them together on aircraft and battleships: an idea emerged and became a deed, which could have encompassed both Catholic and Protestant religious life.

Today if you placed a man from Dithmarschen (in northern Germany by the North Sea) alongside a man from Bolzano (in southern Tyrol, a German speaking part of Austria that became a part of Italy), they would sometimes not completely understand each other as a matter of dialect, they would discover marked differences in character; and in the same way their inclinations toward forms of religion would be different. And yet they would feel a unity going beyond that: their German *Volk*-ness, at the end of the day their sharing in the same destiny.

In view of many a high level consistorial speech and in view of many a speech at the Catholic Congresses, one sees that only the Volkish worldview is capable of realizing the goals of the best Germans. It borders on the tragic to see how single-mindedly these hundred thousand recently stood together at the King’s Plaza and listened to words that to some extent were worthy and sublime, but to some extent were apt to define the cleft between German and German as permanent, but to establish the connection with non-Germans, insofar as they were Catholics, as heart’s desire and doctrine.

Twice Cardinal Faulhaber summoned “Catholics of pure-racial type” (a remarkable word), but he expressly added, among other things, that this is to be taken in no event as “German-Catholic.”

Fundamentally, the rigid emphasis on denomination is exactly the same as emphasis on class. While Marxism is also a doctrine with sad results, there are unfortunately many thousands of Germans who are attached to it with a directly religious sentiment. They believe themselves to be more closely related to the “oppressed and exploited” among other peoples than to German people of other classes. Their class-consciousness cuts deeply and destructively into the living body of German *Volk*-ness.

It is exactly the same when church membership is placed before this *Volk*-ness. Believers among Germans seldom are really clear about how distinctively different a character, from a *Volkish* perspective, has been taken on by Catholicism in Italy, Spain and the colonies. Perhaps they really don’t know that their saints are Christian-renamed old-time Germanic gods, that their whole faith at the end of the day is really not dogmatic, but rather *Volkish*, if they understand how not to miss the forest for the trees (one compares the *Volkish* currents in the Middle Ages). In just this way the Protestant forms are *Volkishly* determined: here the more artistic, multiform German South is encountered by the more brooding North German. If one does not recognize these sources that cannot be further explained, then the bridges will be stricken that are so completely essential to us, then the opposite recognition of the justification of another sentiment will penetrate more deeply; but then it will also be possible to finally build a wall against the attempts to use one denomination against the part of the *Volk* that belongs to another denomination.

The signs of the time are unmistakable. Both Christian denominations would have every reason to study them, because they will be carried out whether they want it or not. Previously our lot was often a struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism. Neither Catholics nor Protestants are following this approach any longer today. Whoever pursues denominational power games today must do it under a cloak such as humanity, common Christian love of neighbor, or whatever. New organisms are being formed as a result, in place of Catholic brother advances the Frenchman; in place of the Protestant – the Swede or Englishman; in place of the Jewish denomination, the foreign Jewish race.

The great task of all the German churches would be this, to meet halfway with this new spiritual turning point. To rely on traditions would never accomplish anything interiorly fruitful and would only summon up catastrophies. The *Volkish* worldview, which recognizes that many dialects, many customs, many philosophical and artistically expressed differences of the North and South, together with the shadings of religious sentiment, arise out of one and the same *Volk*-soul, the Germanic *Volk*-soul that we all share in common, whether it was as in the time of Wolfram von Eschenbach, predominantly Catholic, or as in the time of Goethe, predominantly Protestant.

The time of class- and denominational-politics is going toward its end. A perspective is arising of joint membership, based on the *Volkish* worldview. But the new form arises only through a demarcation . . .

That the *Volkish* concept will one day be realized is just as certain as the fact that there is a German *Volk*. That alone will bring the salvation of our future. A.R. (Alfred Rosenberg)