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Lunau: THE GERMANS ON TRIAL

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THE GERMANS ON TRIAL. By *Heinz Lunau*. New York: Storm Publishers. 1948. Pp. 180. \$2.50.

This book is written by a man who received a legal education in pre-Hitler Germany, who left Germany in 1936 to spend several years as a refugee in western Europe, and who later came to the United States where he has become a citizen. Mr. Lunau casts himself in the role of public defender for the German people against the charge of responsibility for the warfare, aggression, and inhumanity which characterized the policies of the German government after Hitler's rise to power. His main theme is that the German people, in time of great economic and political unrest, were naturally susceptible to promises of prosperity and order and were understandably heedless of the political overtones of the Nazi program; that once the Nazis achieved power, the people were too much concerned with the normal problems of living to realize the encroachments of their government; and that when they did so realize, the Nazis were too firmly entrenched to be routed by popular opposition. As a further defense, he advances the rather startling proposition that the chief fault of the Germans was their extreme regard for law and order, which made revolution for them an almost unthinkable alternative, but that they might have been moved to such a step if the democracies had not acceded so readily to the first foreign aggressions of the Nazis. The author displays an amazing capacity for effective use of the English language; for instance, his frequent reference to the "Nazi New Deal" seems well calculated. The success of his plea may be doubted, however; it is particularly hard to accept his cynicism toward the role of an advanced and intelligent people in its government. Mr. Lunau further reveals his skill as a defense counsel by not only protesting the innocence of the German people, but also pointing the finger of guilt at "international law" as exemplified by the remedial and punitive treaties and agreements of the post-war period which are aimed at fixing responsibility for aggression. No one can doubt the soundness of the suggestion that international security lies in the development of an international body politic through economic

and social cooperation. But it is not so easy to agree that the victorious peoples should, by taking no precautionary measures, risk the failure of cooperation by the government of a nation which has so failed before.