is their common sign.

Robert H.-D. GK-English Oktober 1999

The Wave from Morton Rhue

Morton Rhue was born 1950 in Long Island, New York. He is very public because he had lots of publications in the "New Yorker" and "Village Voice". He also has written lots of youthbooks. Since his book "the Wave" he is also public in Germany.

The Wave plays at "Gordon High School". There are many characters in the book. The main characters are: Ben Ross (history teacher), Laurie Sanders (best pupil in her class + main editor of this school magazine), David Collins (Laurie's boyfriend), Amy Smith (best friend of Laurie + editor

The play begin, when the class sees a film about the Nazi Regime. The pupils can not believe why the German people did not do anything against the Nazis. Ben Ross can not give an answer to this question. It must be something a person can only understand by being there or if possible by creating a similar situation. So Ben Ross begins to think of a classroom experiment which would give his students an insight into what life was like under Nazi Regime.

In the next history lesson Ben Ross wrote on the blackboard the words:

"strength through discipline". This was the first part of his experiment..

When he was talking about discipline he meant power and success. From that point the students become more interested. First they had to take a better sitting position and they had to walk through the classroom and sit down as fast as they could. At the beginning there was a lot of chatting and a big mess. For the next twenty minutes the class practised, after this, they were able to do it in half time. Ben Ross tells them three rules. Everybody must have pencils and notepapers for notetaking. When somebody asking or answering a question, he had to stand at the side of his seat. The first words, you say asking or answering a question, are "Mr. Ross".

On the next day the students were already sitting on their seats in their posture. Ben Ross adds to the words "strength through discipline" the word community. Their mottos were "strength through discipline" and "strength through community". The whole class stands up and repeat the mottos. Then

The pupils react enthusiastic, they speaks about new "group feeling" and everybody wants to know how it is going to go on. They love that "game". At the third day Ben Ross gives his class yellow membership cards. Some of the cards had a red "X" on the back page. These persons are like monitors. They have to denounce other students who do not obey to the rules of the way direct by Mr. Ross. Then they enlarge the motto by a third word "strength through action". From this day Ross wants that all are equal and there are no competings against each other. The Wave was no longer an idea or a game.

Ross draw on the blackboard a circle with the shape of a wave in it. This

It was a living moment in the students. It begins to get out of control. Laurie is the only one who feels strange about the Wave.

Then Laurie gets a letter from a younger. He reports that after a lesson a senior student asks him and some friends, if they want to join in "the Wave" and how great it is. His friends join in but he does not. So the senior tells him that he never will have friends because, they do not want pupils who are not in "the Wave" and if he does not join soon it will be too late. Because of this letter Laurie fells alarmed.

Now the game becomes extremer, Robert Billings want to be Ben Ross`s bodyguard because he think such a big leader needs a bodyguard. First Ben Ross has some doubts but he agrees because he sees it as a part of the experiment.

Laurie mobilizes some other opponent of the wave structure. They write an article about the wave and the power she has reached so far. They explain the wave as an dangerous and mindless movement. As it is published, lots of groupmembers are shoked. They say, all what is be witten is wrong and "the Wave" is change all social injustice.

After school Brian Ammen and David Collins wait for Laurie because David has to talk with her about the article in the school newspaper, but Laurie does not want to listen to him. As reaction David grabs her arm. He says that Laurie has not the right to disturb what is so good for nearly all students. When she shouts that she hates the Wave he throws her down on the grass. In the same moment David could not believe that he does such a stupid thing for the wave.

Laurie and David visit Ben Ross to tell him to break up the wave project. Ben Ross already know that he must stop it and has a plan but he can not tell it to Laurie and David, because the other student reconize that he wants to end the wave project they will learn nothing or they will begin to fight against Ben Ross idea of stopping the wave project.

Next day Ben Ross explains the students that there is a rally where all members should come because their leader will speak to them. He makes them believe that they are a part of a nationwide movement which wants to achieve a better American society.

At the rally they had guards who controlled the membership cards and were aware that only Wave members were at the rally. All the pupils are staring on a huge, blank movie screen. Then Ben Ross shouted "There is your leader!" and the film starts. All the wave members now see the same film about the nazi regime with Hitler they already have seen at the beginning. Ross added that they have made some good nazis and he pointed out to them that they willingly gave up their individual freedom for the dictates of order and discipline. Ben Ross's revelations come as a shock to the students. Stunned and numbed they leave the auditorium, discarding everything reminiscent of "the Wave" on the way.

They see that it could happen again and that they could have been the victims.

It is no question that everything what happened during the time of Adolf Hitler was horrible and wrong. But this book shows that it is not so easy to escape such political system. It is not easy to fight against it and show the other possibilitys of social life and the good things which happen there. The story shows that there must be the possibility and time to critic the social system and the society. It shows that a society who forbits critic is an ill society. But the difficulty to escape can not be reason to shut the mouth and keep smiling. It is not true that such thing can not happen again, but it is true that we all must do our best that such system does not come up and govern.