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If the Kaiser Had Won

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Reading about Kaiser Wilhelm's secret plan to invade the United States back before World War I could make your hair stand on end if you started thinking about what this country would be like today if the Kaiser's plan had succeeded.

In the first place, the Government would be run by people with Germanic names, like Kissinger, Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Ziegler, Klein, Kleindienst and Shultz. Our streets would be filled with Volkswagens instead of Hupmobiles, Pierce-Arrows and La Salles, and one of the most popular American foods would be the frankfurter.

The great American drink would no longer be Chateau Haut-Brion '61 but beer, marketed under Teutonic brand names such as Schlitz, Budweiser, Miller and Pabst.

The German habit of cleanliness, which American soldiers and tourists so admired immediately after World War II, would now be such a passion with us that half the time on American television would probably be used to sell soap. The search for a detergent that could wash a shirt whiter than white would be a national obsession and any body that smelled human instead of chemical would be considered loathsome, if not dangerously disloyal to the Kaiser.

The depressing German efficiency, with which we are all familiar through hearsay, would now be an American characteristic, since the Kaiser's forces would surely have put efficiency ex-

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perts in charge of the nation's business. As a result, we would all be at the mercy of incredibly efficient computers, capable of instantly performing any task, from squeezing us for a pint of blood for the Internal Revenue Service to mailing us the bank statements of a complete stranger who lives seven states to the west.

And the fabled German tendency to overeat! By this time, some in America would be overweight, and most of our women would be dieting to fit Wagnerian hips and chests into dresses designed for boyish figures in France.

Imagine what our Government would be like. Would the Kaiser, for example, have permitted us to have an Attorney General? Possibly. If so, his name would be Johann Mitchell. He would have to wear a *pince-nez*, and he would be constantly defending the great principles of the Kaiser's Germany. The individual's right to privacy, he would say, must give way to the Kaiser's right to eavesdrop on your telephone so he can know who is calling up other people and saying. "The Kaiser is full of sauerkraut."

We can be thankful that the Kaiser's invasion plans never got off the drawing board. Just think! As a German territory, we might even be obliged to go to war with Russia to defend Berlin!

Of course, after sixty years of being Germanized in Kaiser Wilhelm style,

we would probably have become corrupted by the celebrated German taste for war and the building of war machines.

If the Kaiser had been entrenched in Washington by, say, 1910, we might by this time be spending billions of dollars yearly just to maintain armies and navies. These political and military consequences of a German conquest are too depressing to dwell upon.

Hardly less so are the industrial probabilities. A German conquest would almost certainly have resulted in construction of an elaborate and fantastically expensive system of *autobahns* to speed commerce and Volkswagens through places where quaint old American cities once stood.

The German zest for industrial competition, exercised on our relatively unspoiled continent, might even have left our lakes and rivers poisoned and made our air dense with industrial waste.

One shudders to contemplate all this. And yet, on the cheerful side, there are a few matters Teutonic on which we, Americans would surely have resisted the conquering Kaiser's most autocratic edicts. Kaiser or no Kaiser, we would still not submit to Wagnerian opera, pickled pigs feet, soccer or passenger trains.

In any case, we should all thank our lucky Stars and Stripes that the Kaiser's plan never came to reality. Let us ask President Nixon to lead us in another nationally televised chant of "*Gott mit uns*."