

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Dorothy Thompson Speaking...

Mann, Klaus

Nutzungsbedingungen

Bei zahlreichen Dokumenten auf monacensia-digital.de sind die Urheberrechte bereits abgelaufen. Sie sind gemeinfrei und dürfen ohne weitere Rücksprache mit der Monacensia weiterverwendet werden.

Bei den Dokumenten, bei denen noch Urheberrechte bestehen, müssen für eine Weiterverwendung stets die Rechteinhaber*innen angefragt werden sowie eine Publikationsgenehmigung der Monacensia eingeholt werden. Das Zitatrecht bleibt hiervon unberührt.

Zur Erteilung einer Publikationserlaubnis wenden Sie sich bitte an:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus
Literaturarchiv
Adresse: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

Terms of use

The copyrights for numerous documents on monacensia-digital.de have already expired. They are in the public domain and may be reused without further consultation with Monacensia. In the case of documents for which copyrights still exist, the copyright holders must always be contacted for further use and publication permission must be obtained from the Monacensia. The right to quote under copyright law remains unaffected by this. To obtain permission for publication, please contact:

Monacensia im Hildebrandhaus:
Literaturarchiv
Address: Maria-Theresia-Straße 23, 81675 München
E-Mail: monacensia.literaturarchiv@muenchen.de

DOROTHY THOMPSON SPEAKING...

Reviewed by K l e u s M a n n

Listen, Hans by Dorothy Thompson (Houghton Mifflin Comp., Boston \$ 2.50)

The German people want peace, according to Dorothy Thompson. "All the people of the earth want peace," she says. "The ability to frame principles for a peace acceptable to the rational mind and the yearnings of the human spirit is the greatest political weapon of this war and the one most calculated to blast down the Verduns in the German mind."

As for Dorothy Thompson's friend, Hans - "a not unrepresentative German, of a certain class and type," - there are no "Verduns" in his mind to be blasted. He is a German patriot but he is not a Nazi. Previous to the war, Dorothy Thompson and Hans agreed upon all basic issues in European and world affairs. So Hans, as an individual ("not unrepresentative of a certain class and type") is not an enemy to be conquered; on the contrary, he is a potential ally to be supplied with factual information and moral encouragement. And that is what he gets from his American friend - plenty of information, encouraging facts, irrefutable arguments.

Every Friday, between March and September, 1942, Miss Thompson addressed Hans, over the short-wave facilities of the Columbia Broadcasting System. The scripts of these speeches were passed by the Coordinator of Information, now the Office of War Information. "But," as the author points out, "they were not composed in collaboration with any government agency, being an individual and private effort, announced as such by the C. B. ~~W~~S. in every introduction."

It is to be hoped that not only Hans but thousands, millions of Germans may have listened in, when Dorothy Thompson instructed, comforted, warned them, from across the Atlantic. Of course, radio machines with

reviews
short-wave ~~facilities~~ are dangerous things to possess in the Hitler Reich. But Hans and his friends are perhaps as daring and ingenious in their search of truth as are their masters in the art of lying. Be this as it may, Miss Thompson's spirited appeals are stirring and important in themselves, quite apart from the question whether they may have reached the German addressees. These weekly harangues, now presented in book form, are apt to ~~elucidate the international situation~~ and strengthen the anti-Nazi morale, not only in Germany, but also in this country.

The most elaborate part of the book is a long theoretical introduction, "The Invasion of the German Mind." It opens with some penetrating remarks about psychological warfare in general and then tackles the complex issue of German psychology in particular. Miss Thompson prides herself on having spent more than twenty years of her life "trying to understand the mind of Germany and studying the mental and social shape of Europe." And, indeed, she commands considerable insights into the contradictions and entanglements of the Germanic soul. True, her resumé of German history is too condensed to be quite adequate; but it contains a great many original ideas and striking formulations. As a stylist, Miss Thompson excels in dramatizing abstract issues, without simplifying or distorting them. Succinct and sturdy, she defines and *elucidates* ~~evaluates~~ the rampant paradoxes inherent in the German mind - the alarming blend of scientific rationalism and emotional romanticism, of over-organization and chaotic anarchy. What she says about the unfortunate split between the spheres of culture and politics in Germany, is not excitingly new but truthful and relevant. "German intellectual culture," she writes, "has probably influenced the world more than it has influenced Germany." How true! And how brilliantly said!

The passages dealing with the Reich as a mythic concept are instructive and significant, as long as they remain analytical. Miss

Thompson is very good at exposing Hitler's at once muddled and shrewd attempt "to synthesize in the Third Reich the ideas of the Holy Roman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Prussian caste-state, and the revolutionary concepts of 1848 and 1918." But I am afraid her own views are a trifle confused as regards the "German nation-state", so dear (in our author's opinion) to all German liberals and so indispensable to the world. I wonder if any historian can agree with Dorothy Thompson when she holds that the German movement toward national unity "has never been furthered by aristocratic, dynastic, reactionary, or caste interests, but by the deepest popular trends in the German masses - exactly as similar movements were inspired in France, Italy, and the United States, by the people, not by the classes."

It is impossible, in this context, to dwell on the obvious and fundamental differences between the concepts of "national unity" in France, England, and the United States, on the one hand, and in Germany, on the other. Even the Italian Risorgimento differs essentially (and favourably) from its Germanic pendant, which was indeed not an awakening or a renovation of the German genius but ^{its} ~~the~~ violation by Prussian militarism. The Reich means, simply and sadly, the hegemony of Prussia, first over the Southern and Western German country^{ies}; then over the German-speaking world at large (including Austria, Bohemia, Switzerland, and Alsace); finally over Europe. Nietzsche - truly clairvoyant in his morbid irritability - unmasked and arraigned the founder of the Reich, Bismarck, as the murderer of German culture. Was Bismarck, the Prussian Junker, free of reactionary or caste interests? His cursed creation, the Reich, enabled Wilhelm II to challenge and imperil the ~~universe~~ world. And from the Kaiser is only one step to the Führer.

Says Miss Thompson - and I disagree -: "If it should be our purpose to underline and support those things in German historical development which tend to bring Germany into the framework of a popularly founded,

democratically inspired European system, then we must support German unity." But was it not with the battlecry of "German unity" that Hitler invaded Austria and the Sudetenland? Is Dorothy Thompson in favour of the Anschluss? She is against Otto von Hapsburg. So am I. But if I had to choose between the revival of the Austrian monarchy and the survival of Greater Germany, I would prefer - an occupation army.

Maybe it is Miss Thompson's intention to spare the feelings of her listener overseas. Hans, as mentioned before, is not a Nazi but a patriot. He is not touchy as far as the Third Reich is concerned; but the ~~Third~~ Reich is taboo. His American friend does not need to mince her words and be gingerly, as long as she avoids this one precarious point.

"Listen, Hans!" she calls across the ocean, every Friday - passionately and patiently. "Hello you, over there! Cheer up! Your great Führer is through: I'll prove it to you." And she proves it to him, with an impressive display of facts and figures, emotional and scientific arguments. She is by turns grim and affectionate, flippant and apocalyptic. But the power of her persuasion is always derived from her unshakable faith which she summarizes in these simple and candid words: "I believe Western civilization to be rooted in Reason and Christian morality."

The German humanists of the great, classical period would have endorsed this credo. They might have demurred, however, to the insistence with which Miss Thompson confounds the idea of the Reich and the cultural mission of the German people. Goethe, for one, believed that the Germans give their best only as individuals, but become confused and dangerous when united ~~to~~ as a political body. The greatest German did not care for the greatness of Germany. Scattered over the world - he said - the Germans would live up to their finest potentialities.

Listen, Hans! Listen, Dorothy Thompson!