

Thomas Mann: Deutsche Hörer! : Radiosendungen nach Deutschland aus d. Jahren 1940 - 1945

Listen, Germany!: Twenty-five radio transmissions to the German people over BBC, 1940 - 1942, Knopf 1943

The English language publication of the first 25 transmissions was undoubtedly translated by Thomas Mann himself as they are literal translations with few concessions made to normal English sentence patterns. Moreover, no credit for a translator is indicated on the title page or elsewhere in the book.

The German edition is more complete than the edition of translations into English and includes all 59 addresses, that is 34 more than with the original English language publication.

Thomas Mann and Erich Kuby had much in common. In 1933 Mann was forced into exile, living first in Switzerland, then in the United States. Kuby, after 1933, younger and not at all famous like Mann, made several attempts at leaving Germany and establishing himself in Switzerland, Italy, and Yugoslavia, but his parents wouldn't or couldn't support him financially, and he wasn't able or willing to work, so he came back home in 1935 and, in 1939, joined the Wehrmacht before he was drafted. This gave him a choice of military branch and specialty he would be assigned to, and provided him with the only environment in which he could have survived in Nazi Germany. As a communications technician he was spared some, but only some of the worst dangers of the immediate front lines, and his time as an infantry man (after his release from military prison) was short. How he managed that while spending only 9 months in relatively safe confinement for constructive insubordination and Wehrkraftzersetzung (which removed him from his unit which then ended up in Stalingrad) makes for quite a good story. He tells this story in his main work *Mein Krieg* ([My War](#)).

Thomas Mann, from his "lofty" position, and Kuby, from his "lowly" position, were inveterate observers and critics of their society. Both eventually arrived at the same conclusion: Germany bore a collective guilt and responsibility for the rise of Nazism and its attempt to subjugate Europe. To this day, many Germans can not forgive Mann or Kuby for espousing this point of view. As they both matured, they became socialists independent of any party. Both spent their final years in exile – Mann in Switzerland and Kuby in Italy.

I will be eventually present here translations by me of all of the 28 broadcasts from Mann's complete collection *Deutsche Hörer!* not included in the 1943 English language publication, that is, the ones broadcast after August 1942. If you are interested in all of the first 25 addresses, then get a copy of "Listen, Germany!" through Amazon or inter-library loan. To whet your appetite I will include here Thomas Mann's translation of his preface to the first edition, and the first address of October 1940 because it sets the tone. I couldn't help but include also the letter from November 1941 because it *really* sets the tone.

In addition, I offer here my own translations of key passages from the first 25 letters (I didn't yet have the original version to work from). To compliment Thomas Mann's letters from outside the Reich, I plan to add some quotes by Dr. phil. Serenus Zeitblom, the narrator from

Thomas Mann's 1947 novel *Doktor Faustus*. With this character Mann transposes himself into the personage of a quiet dissident living within Nazi-Germany in the “innere Immigration.” Eventually I will write an essay comparing and contrasting the two crusading outsiders and expert observers of human nature.

From “Listen, Germany!” [Thomas Mann's own translation]

FOREWORD

IN THE AUTUMN of 1940 the British Broadcasting Corporation approached me with a request to broadcast regularly short messages over their system to my compatriots, commenting on the events of the war, with the purpose of endeavouring to influence the German public in the direction of the convictions that I have often uttered.

I believed that I should not miss the opportunity of making contact, however loose and precarious, with the German people and also with the inhabitants of the subjugated territories, behind the back of the Nazi Government, which had deprived me of all means of exerting intellectual influence in Germany as soon as it had the power to do so. The suggestion was particularly attractive because my words were not to be broadcast from America by short wave, but from London by long or medium wave, and thus could be heard on the only type of radio the German people were per-

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mitted to have. It was also enticing to write German once again in the knowledge that the written words would be allowed to fulfill their purpose in the form in which they were conceived – in German. I agreed to send monthly messages, and after a few trials I asked for a prolongation of my speaking-time from five to

eight minutes.

The broadcasts at first were transmitted in this way:

I cabled my texts to London, where they were read by a German-speaking employee of the BBC. At my suggestion, a more complicated but more direct and therefore more attractive method was soon adopted. Whatever I have to say is now recorded by the Recording Department of the NBC in Los Angeles; the record is sent to New York by air mail, and is then transferred by telephone to another record in London, where it is played before the microphone. In this way not only my words but my own voice is heard by those over there who dare to listen.

More people listen than one might expect, not only in Switzerland and in Sweden, but also in Holland, in the Czech " Protectorate," and in Germany proper, as has been frequently proved by the most strangely coded replies from these countries. By roundabout ways such replies, indeed, come even from Germany. Evidently there are people in this occupied territory whose hunger and thirst for free speech are so great that they brave the dangers connected with listening to

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foreign broadcasts. The most striking proof that this is so – a proof which is amusing and disgusting at the same time – is provided by the fact that my allocutions have been referred to, in an unmistakable fashion, by my Führer himself, in a beer-hall speech in Munich, in the course of which he mentioned me as one of those who attempt to incite the German people against him and his system. But these rabble-rousers, he roared, were greatly mistaken: the German people were not that way, and to the extent that they were that

way, they were, thank God, behind lock and key. – So much filth has come out of this mouth that it causes me slight feelings of nausea to hear my name come from it. Yet the utterance is valuable to me though its lack of logic is evident. Often the Führer has expressed his contempt for the German people and his conviction of the cowardice, submissiveness, and stupidity of those people, of their infinite ability to swallow lies; he forgot, though, each time to add an explanation of how he succeeds simultaneously in seeing the Germans as a master race destined to world domination. How can a nation spiritually incapable of ever revolting *even against him* be a master race? I beg the hero to examine this question some day between planning one battle and the next.

Perhaps he is right in his confidence that the German nation "is not that way" – he has always been most revolting when he was right. Moreover, to call a

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people to revolt does not yet mean to believe, deep down in one's heart, in their ability to revolt. What I believe unshakably is that Hitler cannot win his war – this is a belief based much more on metaphysical and moral reasons than on military ones, and wherever I express it in the following pages it is completely sincere. But far be it from me to wish to fortify thereby the dangerous conception that the victory of the United Nations is self-evident and assured, and that in view of this self-evidence and this certainty one can afford not only every mistake, but also every division of the will, every halfheartedness, every "political" reservation concerning one's allies and the kind of peace to be gained. One can afford *nothing*, nothing at all any

longer after all that has been omitted and committed in the past. After all, this war could have been prevented, and the fact itself that it had to come is a heavy moral mortgage on our side. The war has sinister antecedents, whose determining motives are by no means dead, but continue to work underground, endangering the peace and with it the victory. We shall lose the war if we wage a wrong war and not the right one, which is a war of the peoples for their liberty.

September 15, 1942

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[from *Listen, Germany!*, Thomas Mann's own translation]

October 1940

GERMAN LISTENERS:

A GERMAN writer speaks to you whose work and person have been outlawed by your rulers, and whose books, even if they deal with the most German matters, with Goethe, for example, can only speak to foreign, free nations, in their language, while for you they must remain silent and unknown. Some day my work will return to you, I know that, even if I myself cannot return. As long as I live, however, and even as a citizen of the New World, I shall suffer by the fate of Germany and all the moral and physical misdeeds which Germany has inflicted upon the world for seven years, led by the will of criminal men of violence. The unshakable conviction that this cannot come to a good end has inspired me again and again during these years to utter warnings, some of which, I believe, have

penetrated to you. In war-time there is no way left for the written word to pierce the wall which the tyrants

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have erected around you. Therefore I am glad to take the opportunity which the English radio service has offered me to report to you from time to time about all that I see here in America, the great and free country in which I have found a homestead.

When German troops invaded Holland five months ago, and tens of thousands of human beings were bombed to death in Rotterdam in the course of a few minutes,

the editor of the American magazine Life, an illustrated magazine which rarely takes sides in political questions, and which everybody reads, wrote: "This is the greatest challenge to America, the land of liberty, in eighty years. . . . Mighty and ruthless military nations have attacked the American way of life. . . . We do not know whether we will ever have to fight on England's side; but we do know that England's struggle is also our own." That's what was said then, after the 10th of May, and is still being said today. The workers think so, and the business men, the Republicans and the Democrats, the followers of Roosevelt and those of his opponent. There is little left of the old America which thought that it could live for itself without concern for the world across the ocean. Where does this deep transformation come from? You know quite well. In this country live 130,000,000 well-meaning and friendly people. They want to work and

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build in peace. They actively participate, according to their individual judgment, in the great questions which are their common concern. War, conquest of foreign

countries, alliances, Axis agreements, secret meetings, breaches of agreements seem superfluous and crazy to them. But, then, there are the newspapers and the radio reporters who tell them what is happening in Europe; how it is the same everywhere, in Norway, in Holland, Belgium, Poland, Bohemia, how German troops whom nobody has called have invaded these countries which have done them no harm, and are oppressing **and pillaging them**; and how those are executed as criminals who love their Fatherland and refuse to forge weapons for the foreign intruder. Naturally, an American is above all an American citizen: yet it is often true that he, or his father or grandfather, was born in Norway, in Holland, in Belgium, in protected Denmark, in the **Government General**, in the **Protectorate**, that he still has relatives in one of these countries, and fond memories of them. And even if this was not the case, even if, and especially if, his family comes from Germany, he must as a straight-thinking man be outraged by all the injustice, all the violence he is told about. No, I have found no difference between German-Americans, Anglo-Americans, and Italo-Americans. They all feel that this is not the right

[Poland]

[Czechoslovakia]

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way to unify Europe, and that so much crime must, sooner or later, receive its punishment.

Thus the American citizen has three great hopes today. One is America itself, its immense economic strength, its good and proved leaders. The second is England. It may be that in times past even the Americans looked upon the English with a bit of derision. They were thought to be tired and over-refined. But today, in view of the defence of London, there is noth-

ing but a chorus of admiration. England carries the banner of freedom. It speaks and fights for all the nations who suffer and who resist only in secret; that is why the wish to help England is so great here. The third hope, which, unfortunately, is not very strong any longer, still rests upon the German people. The question is asked here whether the Germans will not finally recognize that their victories are only steps in an endless quagmire; that when their soldiers invade three more countries, when their U-boats sink three more ships full of refugee children, when they drive still more people into misery, exile, and suicide, and heap the hatred of the world upon themselves, they are not one inch closer to the desired goal; that there are many better ways to the goal for which we all long: a just peace for all the world.

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From *Deutsche Hörer!*, Fischer, 1987 [my translations, except where indicated]

June 1941 (pg. 31)

Thus spoke President Roosevelt. Meanwhile, Hitler has declared war on Germany, so that, remarkably Germany has all three major powers aligned against it, namely England, Russia, and America. Good, another motorized horror is about to begin. They can speed up fate in a favorable sense – but more likely, unfortunately, is that they will prolong the war indefinitely, and thus postpone the establishment of a humane order by many years. That can't be quite what the German people in their hearts desire. However, the man [Hitler] covered in blood and atrocity, who embodies on earth *Bolshevism in the most obscene meaning of the word*, presents himself anew to the world as St. George who pierces the dragon and as protector of western civilization. The face that the world makes in response is familiar to me. I would like to see your faces, German listeners.

July 1941 (pg. 32)

There can be no peace made with this absolutely untrustworthy swindler who is so stupid that he understands nothing about loyalty and faith, justice and goodness, but rather knows only deceit and force. The world can't live with him, and he can't live with the world.

pg. 33

Just take a look at the gallery of [Nazi-Germany's] representatives. This Ribbentrop, Himmler, Ley, this Goebbels with the wide open liars muzzle, the evilly inspired Führer himself and his fat, preening Great-, Arch-, and Imperial Marshall of the Great-German, Greater German Reich! What a menagerie. They are supposed to win, remain, and last, and put its boot on the neck of the world?

Aug. 1941 (pg. 24)

I admit that that which is called National-Socialism has long roots in German culture. It is the virulent decadent form of ideas, which always carried the seed of murderous depravity and which was in no way alien to the good old Germany of culture and enlightenment.

pg. 36

For Germans, power-politics means dehumanization: Hitlerism, this ghastly leap from the [upper story] window demonstrates this.

October 1941 (pg. 42)

In truth, the entire Nazi-war carries the stamp of hopelessness. Force always conceals an element of despair – it is in fact the dominant element in it. Even the career of a Napoleon was basically *one* long struggle with despair. Where it would end was apparent to every informed observer and, in secret, even apparent to Napoleon from the very beginning. Does anyone among you listeners believe that the fate of the unfortunate creature which calls itself the Führer of Germany will be different from that of all tyrants in history?

November 1941 [from *Listen, Germany!*, Thomas Mann's translation]

GERMAN LISTENERS:

If I had the good fortune, in the course of my long life, to contribute my share to the cultural prestige of Germany, I am grateful for that, but I have no right to boast about it, for Providence, and not my intention, was responsible for it. No artist does his work in order to augment the glory of his country and his people. The source of this productivity is the individ-

ual conscience, and while the sympathy which the product arouses may benefit the nation upon whose language and tradition it is based, this benefit is mostly accidental, and I am therefore not entitled to your gratitude. You Germans would not be allowed to show gratitude for my work even if you wanted to. So be it ! It was not done for your sake, but out of innermost necessity. However, there is something which I have done for your sake, out of my social, not my private conscience, and my conviction grows daily that the time will come,

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and is already approaching, when you will be grateful for it and appreciate it more than my story-books: it is that I warned you, when there was still time, to beware of the vile powers in whose yoke you are helplessly harnessed today, and which lead you to unimaginable ruin by a thousand misdeeds. I knew these powers; I realized that nothing but catastrophe and misery for Germany and for Europe could emanate from their indescribably vicious nature, while the majority of you, victims of a delusion which already must be incomprehensible to you, expected from them order, beauty, and national honour. Must one not think of Goethe's words about the "devoted German nation, which only feels truly exalted when it has gambled away all that is dignified"? I, too, knew you, my good Germans, and your fallibility concerning your understanding of true honour and dignity. Therefore, in spite of my nature, I entered the political arena in October 1930 and in the Berlin Beethovensaal made the speech, in the face of raucous interruptions by Nazi rogues, which some of you may still remember. I called it "An Appeal to Reason," though it was an

appeal to all better Germany; and this speech gives deeper peace to my conscience today, futile as it was, than everything which I have accomplished in my happier efforts as an artist.

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With my weak powers I tried to prevent what had to come and what has now been a reality for years: the war, the guilt for which your mendacious leaders place on Jews and Englishmen and Freemasons and God knows whom, while the war was a certainty for everyone who could see, from the moment those leaders came to power and began to build the machine with which they intended to crush freedom and justice. And what sort of war is it in whose fetters you writhe – an unlimited, devastating, hopeless adventure, a swamp of blood and crime in which Germany is about to drown? What does it look like in your country? Do you think that we, out here, do not know it as well as you do? Brutalization and misery are spreading. Without scruples, your male youth down to those eighteen and sixteen years of age is being sacrificed to the Moloch of war, hundreds of thousands of them, millions of them – there is no home in Germany which does not mourn a husband, son, or brother. The decay begins. In Russia there is lack of doctors, nurses, medicines. In German hospitals the seriously wounded are put to death together with the aged, infirm, and mentally deranged – two thousand out of three thousand in a single institution, as a German doctor told us. This is done by the same regime which screams protest when Roosevelt accuses it of the intention to destroy Christianity

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and all religion, and which pretends to lead a crusade

of Christian civilization against bolshevism, although in itself it is only an incomparably more vulgar variety of bolshevism.

The Christian counterparts to those mass executions with poison gas are the “ mating days” when soldiers on furlough are commanded to mate, like animals, with B.D.M. girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädchen*), in order to breed state bastards for the next war. Can a people, can any youth, sink any lower? Atrocity and blasphemy of humanity wherever you look. Once, in days past, a Herder lovingly collected the folk-songs of nations. That was Germany in its decency and greatness. Today it understands nothing but murder of peoples and races, moronic annihilation. Three hundred thousand Serbs have been assassinated by you Germans, not *during* the war, by any means, but after the war with that country, upon orders of those nefarious scoundrels who rule you. you know the unspeakable crimes which have been and are being committed in Russia, against the poles and the Jews, but you prefer not to know them because of your justified horror of the equally unspeakable, the gigantic hatred which some day must engulf you when the strength of your men and machines gives out. Indeed, horror of that day is well justified, and your leaders take advantage of it. They who have seduced you into

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committing all these crimes tell you: now you have committed them, now you are inextricably chained to us, now you must go on to the end; otherwise hell will come over you. Hell, Germans, came over you when those leaders came over you. To hell with them and all their accomplices! Then you can still obtain salvation, peace, and liberty.

Deutsche Hörer!

One would like to know what you, to yourselves, think about the behavior of those who act in your name in the world, the Jewish horrors in Europe, for example – how do you feel as humans, that is what one like to ask you. You continue to carry Hitler's war and bear the worst out of fear of what defeat will bring you, the fear of the revenge of the mistreated nations of Europe against everything that is German. But especially from the Jews no such revenge is to be expected. Of all of your victims, they are the most defenseless and tend the least toward violence and bloodletting. Even today they are not yet your enemy, only you are theirs. You can't succeed in making the hatred reciprocal. Jews are almost always German-friendly, and when things get really bad for you, as is likely – they, unemotional and wise with age as they are, will advise to not pay you back in kind – perhaps in the entire world they would be your only friends and advocates. They have been disempowered, deprived of their rights and property, humiliated in the dust – wasn't that enough? What kind of people are they, what kind of monsters who never tire of rape, to whom every misery they inflicted on the Jews only an incentive to shove them into an even deeper, even more pitiless misery? In the beginning there was, in the treatment of these remains of Antiquity who everywhere had settled into the national life of their host countries, still the appearance of moderation and reason. The Jews, it was said, excluded from official positions and influence, should live as tolerated guests, but

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be allowed without hindrance to devote themselves to their own religion and their own culture. For a long time that has not been the case. The torture compulsion didn't stop at any stage. Now one has arrived at extermination, the maniacal decision to completely stamp out European Jewry. “It is our goal,” Goebbels said in a radio speech, “to wipe out the Jews. Whether we win or are defeated, we must and will reach this goal. If the German armies are forced to retreat, on the way they will destroy the last Jews on earth.”

No reasonable being can put himself into the thought processes of this diseased brain. To what purpose, one asks oneself. Why? Who benefits from that? Will anyone have it better if the Jews are destroyed? Did the unfortunate arch liar convince himself in the end that the war had been maliciously initiated by “World Jewry, that is a Jew war conducted both for against the Jews? Does he really believe the Jews will be intimidated into calling off the war against the Jews when they learn that the downfall of the Nazis will mean the destruction of the last Jew in Europe? Gundolf's misbegotten student begins to entertain the possibility of defeat. But not only will the Nazis go to hell, they plan to take the Jews with them. They can't bear to be without Jews. It is a deeply felt community of destiny. However, I believe that the hastily retreating German armies will have other matters on their minds beside pogroms. But until they are defeated, they are deadly serious about the extermination of the Jews. The ghetto where 500,000 Jews from Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Germany are confined to two dozen streets which are a pit of hunger, disease, and death out of which rises the stench of corpses. In just one year, last year, 56,000 died there. According to the Polish exile

government, 700,000 Jews in all have already been murdered or tortured to death by the Gestapo, including the 70,000 from the Minsk region in Poland alone.

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Do you Germans know that? And what do you think about it? Recently 3600 Jews were taken from various concentration camps in France and shipped off to the East. Before the death train even got started, 300 people committed suicide. Only children 5 years old and older were allowed to remain with their parents; the smaller ones were left to their fate. That caused a lot of resentment and bad blood among the French population. And how does it stand with your blood, Germans?

Within a few days 16,000 Jews in Paris were rounded up, loaded onto cattle cars, and sent off. To where? The German train engineer, about whom they are talking in Switzerland, knows. He fled to Switzerland because he several time drove trains full of Jews which stopped in the middle of nowhere, the cars were hermetically closed and then pumped full of gas. The man couldn't bear it any longer. However, his experiences are in no way unusual. There is available an exact and authentic report about the killing of not less than 11,000 Polish Jews with poison gas. They were brought to special field of execution near Konin in the Warsaw district, put into airtight trucks, and within 15 minutes they were corpses. We have the detailed description of the entire process, with the screams and prayers of the victims and the good natured laughter of the SS-barbarians who organized the party. – And now you Germans are surprised, are even enraged, that the civilized world now debates how to educate and reform the German generations whose brains have been formed by National-Socialism, that is, turn utterly amoral and stunted killers into people

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Address to the Americans of German heritage

pp. 78-81 [entire letter]

German-Americans!

[15 October 1942]

I am grateful to the organizers of this hour that they give me the opportunity to direct some words at you, as we belong to the same community. For soon I will myself be an American citizen, an American of German origin like you.

It is not an easy situation, to be an American with German background and of German tradition – now that American is at war with Germany: namely with a Germany which, after 7 years of preparation, has attacked, subjugated, and enslaved its European neighbors. If it succeeds in solidifying its conquest, that is, is allowed to create from its misdeeds indisputable faits accomplis, then without fail America will also lose its freedom – the freedom which your forefathers sought when they left the old continent and became citizens of the United States.

This attempt.....

pp. 115-18 [entire letter]

Deutsche Hörer!

31 Dec. 1942

Our nation can't rid itself of a false, completely dubious, and unfortunate imitation of England. The mocking and disgusting name which the world today uses in connection with you Germans: "Herrenrasse" [Master Race], a name that is not only laughable by now, but also an expression of contempt, was from your side meant to be taken very seriously. You saw

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in the English a Master Race, and you wanted to be like that as well. You stood under the envious compulsion to copy England, to assume for yourselves the role that you ascribe to them; to supplant England, to put yourselves in their place, was your dream. You wanted to be not only *one* Herrenrasse, but rather *the* Herrenrasse and rip away England's sea supremacy, on which its existence depends, whereas your existence doesn't depend on it at all. That was the origin of the First World War.

Its origin was foolish envy. The origin of the Second World War, which Germany is also losing, is only a distorted escalation of that foolishness – as indeed Nazism is a so repulsive caricature of all of the weaknesses and follies of the German nature that its virtues risk being forgotten. In the Nazi minds, the idea of the Herrenrasse had lost any remaining decency and respect for human rights, any concept of responsibility, and any healthy understanding of what the world can and cannot tolerate. The concept was only blatant justification of theft and murder, of plunder, oppression, emasculation, and dishonor of other peoples. It was obvious from the beginning that the world's combined forces would put down this enterprise.

The Hitler-System, this travesty of power, as bloody as it is ridiculous, is about to be destroyed. Is Germany to be destroyed along with it? Apparently. And why? Because Germany again believes it must copy England – the seemingly unreasonable resistance of England in the year 1940 after France had fallen and America wasn't ready. When England, bombed out and lacking weapons, stood completely alone and seemed lost. Everyone expected England to surrender. But nevertheless, borne up by the force, steeled by tradition, of a highly courageous and combative nature, Churchill's, England did not give up, did not submit, but rather continued the war and now will win it. – Germany should now do the same, in the face of the abyss which England faced earlier. How can Germany possibly not live up to this standard – of toughness, of "stubbornness"

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as the English say, of persistence, and the ability to withstand suffering and defeat, in short: of heroism? Honor and the contest with England demands that the obviously lost war be continued to the bitter end – however what form this end may assume.

This is how many Germans think. Do they not see the difference? It is the difference between the just and the unjust cause. England did well to persist, even under desperate circumstances. England didn't stand only for itself, its honor and freedom, but also for the honor and freedom

of humanity. Its defeats had the splendor which even the victories of the unjust cause lack. At that moment it stood alone, but it could be certain that sooner or later the entire world would rise up against the violator of other nations' right to live. England's cause was the cause of hope and confidence, then on earth the good cause need not always triumph, but such a worthless, so completely unacceptable cause like that of Nazi-Germany can never triumph.

In Germany's case, everything is different and completely the opposite the situation in which England then found itself, and therefore the imitation is so senseless. Can Germany in its misfortune expect the support of the world? No, it can only expect the continued desertion of the hirelings which trusted in the luck of the thief. Germany can not catch up, as did England, whose way led from early defeats to victory. Germany's way goes from blinded beginning victories, which it owed to its head start in armaments, inexorably downwards toward destruction. Germany's "stubbornness," its so-called heroism, its endurance are hopeless and depraved, an absolute counterfeit of the courage of a just cause. It isn't only a crime against the world, which cannot and may not desist from this most dreadful struggle before the Nazi-regime has been destroyed. This false heroism is therefore at the same a crime against Germany itself, against the German people, and its cultural achievement, the world of German cities which descends into rubble, a crime against its will to live which belongs to

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humanity and the future and which may no longer pointlessly and senselessly bleed to death.

Where are you, those Germans who understand that German honor and courage are not subsumed in holding on to the bitter end, but rather in submission to the will of humanity?

pp. 120-23 [entire letter]

28 February 1944

Deutsche Hörer! [German listeners!]

The world is ashamed of itself. It reads a book which just appeared in Boston and has been adopted by the 'Book of the Month Club' (the great American readers' society) which assures

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it the sales of hundreds of thousands of copies. It is by Konrad Heiden, an emigrated German author who had already written earlier a very instructive history of National-Socialism with the title "Der Führer. Hitler's Rise to Power" based upon newly available sources. It is a vivid and life-sized portrait of the worst adventurer of the political history of the world and it a first fate document. It will remain and serve future generations of history scholars and moralists as a study of the unimaginable which was possible on earth in the second third of the twentieth century. Now the world is reading it and finds a description and analysis of its own experience, in English, Spanish, French, and German – and the world's cheeks flush with embarrassment.

It includes Germany in its shame, is ashamed in its soul for Germany, is ashamed – or so it would like to believe – along with Germany. How was it possible that Germany and the world allowed this bloodthirsty non-entity of a person, this intellectual and moral worthlessness, this darkened liars' soul, basically the soul of a tailor ["Schneider" is a pejorative term in German], this corrupter of the word, thought, and all human things, this

notoriously failed individual equipped only with some sort of unclean suggestive power, to become historical and to erect a monument to himself on a pedestal made out of insolently piled up crimes on which he appears grand at least to himself – today probably only to himself? [This is a typical Thomas Mann sentence. Some of them almost fill a page, but then only as parody.] While reading Heiden's book (no pleasure, but rather a penitence) one asks oneself repeatedly this question. Yes, it is a punishment and a pain to again read the story of this murderous fool and third-rate portrayer of greatness. To reread how National-Socialism, a back stairs Islam, took control of Germany in order to train it in lawlessness, to turn it in the instrument of its extreme and idiotic criminality.

What a disgrace it is to remember the mass sacrifices of human lives

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which have been offered and are still being offered to the miserable hero of this book! He was allowed to say: “I am prepared to pay with two million Germans for reaching my goal” – which goal after the rape of Germany and of the entire world through National-Socialism. Well, the number of two million has long been exceeded, even if only the German soldiers killed in battle are counted. But the bloody account of total war, which the world had to learn from the Germans, is a completely different and much higher number – and of course it is not just a German account. One must include the losses of Russia which are even higher. One must also consider the harvest which death has reaped and is still reaping in the raped nations of Europe, among Poles and Jews, Czechs, Greeks, Norwegians, Dutch, and Yugoslavians, the mass murders and the suicides. One must anticipate the terrible sacrifices which the Anglo-Saxon peoples will have to suffer in the final battles, they who themselves are condemned to deal out death and destruction because they wanted peace too long. And then one should add up the cost to the entire world caused by the disgusting troll. Will it be twenty, twenty-five million human lives? Probably more, many more if one considers all of the directly associated destruction. And to what purpose these rivers of blood? So that a hollow zero can bloat itself up like the belly of a spider.

Never will humanity forgive itself for allowing that to come which came and is still yet to come. There will an eternal shaking of the head over a Volk, the German nation, which fights on after all illusion and hope have been blown away. Fights on with a lion's courage, with senseless persistence until Europe will be only a smoking field of ruins inhabited by a few decayed survivors prowling like wolves – all of this only in order to prolong the lives of a handful of known scoundrels and power addicts whose rule is to themselves an intolerable burden, and which for the world is now and forever unacceptable.

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pp. 123-25 [entire letter]

28 March 1944

German listeners! [Deutsche Hörer!]

In the free countries there is total war, and the bombardment of German cities from the air, along with the resulting suffering to the civilian population, is a problem for the public's conscience. Neither in England nor in America is there a lack of voices which loudly and emphatically – and without interference – condemn this cruel way of waging war and bitterly complain that we are descending to the abominable level of our enemy and dishonors that

humanity which we pretend to defend. These protests are highly honorable, and the sentiment from which the spring are understood by every civilized person. What has happened in Cologne, Hamburg, Berlin, and elsewhere *is* horrifying, and it helps little to tell ourselves that one can only confront extreme brutality with extreme brutality, that here Nemesis [Greek goddess of retribution] is in control and that is hardly a matter of an *action*, but rather of a vengeful *happening* [shades of Felix Krull!]. To be sure, the cultural whining of the Nazis is contemptible, their propaganda against the “aerial Huns” is still born and morally powerless. However, it is a matter of the conscience of freedom, of the tragic necessity to do that which is foreign and unnatural to us, that which we, according to our own moral law, should not do but, as a result of the declaration of power on earth, are forced to do. The dilemma is heavy, disturbing, and burdensome.

And then, all of a sudden, it is no longer a dilemma. A single word, a piece of news from Naziland resolves the dilemma, silences every doubt, reminds us that there is a final and infernally insolent, incorrigible and unbearable infamy of deceit which is incompatible with human existence, and which cries out for the rain of sulfur, which can only be dealt by the rain of fire, to which there is only one possible answer: destruction, bombs.

I take in hand a newspaper and read: “In 17 languages the Nazi-controlled press of the continent announces a “*New socialistic Europe!*”

Two thousand aerial Huns daily over this swamp of lies – there is

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nothing else. This measureless malice, this revolting stomach-turning fraud, this filthy corruption of the word and the idea, this over-sized serial murder of truth must be destroyed, must be extinguished with all means and at any cost. The war against it is humanity's war, and we dare not ask whether we perhaps suffer damage in this battle.

Socialism! Hitler and his gang were kept in style and heaved into power by German and international finance capital. They lived from and want to keep on living from the bourgeois world's blind fear of socialism. Because their only hope is that “Munich” is not dead, that their secret friends in the allied countries keep on working, that in the end the west-east front falls apart and one will be forced to accept them as partners *against* socialism. The socialism of the fascist national swindlers – what a brazen farce! It began in Italy, where aristocracy and the middle class sold themselves to fascism and where the people were driven into war and misery. In Germany the worker's class is deprived of its rights and robbed of the wealth of its unions. The Third Reich has ruined the middle class. But the ones who now bloom and thrive there are the plutocrats and trust barons. One speaks about state capitalism. There is no such thing. There is, however, the capitalism of the state's big shots along with that of the money magnates from before the “revolution.” Hitler, as main shareholder of the Eher publishing house [published *Mein Kampf*] exceeds in personal puffed up wealth that of most American multimillionaires. Since the founding of his enterprise, Reichsmarschall Göring has probably become the wealthiest individual in the world, and especially since this enterprise became internationalized through force of arms. The workers' plunderer [Robert] Ley rules over 65 corporations. Gauleiter Sauckel has built up his own trust of armaments and munitions factories which has never published a balance sheet. After all, isn't the basic drive

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of all Nazism always envy, greed, the joy of plunder, the lecherous compulsion to wallow in power and money? To steal concepts and ideas is not the last desire of this scum. The word “socialism” is the booty of holdup murder like any other plunder. They have subjugated Europe, they planned to subjugate the world so that, out of the misery of the downtrodden peoples, the profits of German high finance grew. Monopoly and exploitation on a huge scale – they call that socialism. In the conquered countries, those that lend themselves as collaborators with and business partners of these “revolutionaries” are everywhere a corrupt upper class consisting of the reactionary newly wealthy, aristocratic drones, and addicted writers who draw their morphium from the SS. The desperation of the *people* then expresses itself in assassinations directed mostly at collaborators rather than at the “socialistic” occupation forces.

German listeners, Europe *will* become socialistic, as soon as it is free. *Social humanism* was the order of the day, it was the vision of the best in the moment that Fascism raised its cross-eyed mask over the world. It, the truly new, youthful, and revolutionary, will give Europe its external and internal shape, as soon the head of the lying snake has been crushed underfoot.

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pg. 129

[29 May 1944]

...Die deutsche Bevölkerung weiß im Grunde, daß Deutschland nur empfängt, was es ausgeteilt hat, und sie erinnert sich des Wortes, daß, wer da Wind sät, Sturm ernten wird....

...The German populace knows deep inside itself that Germany is only receiving what it had handed out, and it remembers the saying that, who sows the wind will reap the whirlwind...

pp. 130-32 [entire letter]

[1 Jan. 1945]

Deutsche Hörer!

I spoke to you – or tried to speak to you – when Hitler's armies rolled victoriously over Europe and advanced to the borders of Egypt, and pointed out that his victories were false, deceptive, and hopeless. I was silent as the tide began to turn against him, when he lost Rome, Paris, Brussels, and the Balkans, when Fortress Europe was reduced to Fortress Germany, and the end of Hitler and his cohorts seemed near. There is a logical reason why I now renew my short addresses to you, when Hitler or Himmler seem to be winning again, and the Wehrmacht pulls itself together for raging counter-offensive, thereby prolonging the Nazi-Regime's final agony. Will you believe me when I assure you that these so-called victories are just as hollow, senseless, and hopeless as the earlier ones? Anything like this is bloody nonsense, is annulled from its inception. These people live in the incomprehensible illusion that they can, even as they have lost world domination, wear down the allies by means of prolonged resistance and force them to accept a negotiated peace *with them*. A peace between Russia, America, and England, and Hitler and Himmler! A peace which would allow the

Nazi-Regime to continue to exist! Do you people believe in this? Especially, do you Germans living in the so far small occupation zone believe in this? For you the hermetic isolation of Germany from the world and its thinking and feelings has been broken a little, some outside air is blowing in. You hear the voice of the world and don't share any more the wretched ignorance of your brothers in Hitler's Reich. What do you believe? Or rather, what are you afraid of? Can you fear or even for a moment entertain the thought that at the end of this war which Hitler forced on us, be this end close or far away, that the Nazi-Regime will be still intact? No, no healthy intelligence can come to this conclusion. The world needs peace, it is a matter of life or death, and therefore National-Socialism, to which war is intrinsic, can't deal peace. At whatever cost of time and sacrifice, the world must free itself of the war, mankind must be saved from it. Those who fight for peace don't have the faces of ominous fanaticism which Germany has come to know from its masters, these bloodthirsty comedians. Do not be deceived by them! Fear nothing, or do not cling to false hopes if they seem admissible to you. They don't need the grimaces of terrible totality with which Hitler-Germany attempts to infect all of us with the horror. What must be, they cannot help but desire, and be certain, even with errors, mistakes, setbacks, and disappointments, they will complete the task. On the other hand is that gesture of extreme heroism which Nazi-Germany puts on display nothing but a mask – the countenance of terror of criminals which have already been judged, who have nothing to lose, can gain nothing from surrender, who refuse to capitulate, can never obtain peace and therefore try to convince the nation which bleeds for them and sinks ever deeper into misery and barbarism, that it can not have peace with a world whose declared and necessary goal really is peace and the constructive cooperation of all nations. [A typical Thomas Mann sentence. Some of them can fill a page – Translator]. Never has there been such a gulf as today between the interest of a nation and its rulers as

with you Germans. Here the German people who are the party of peace and reconstruction – there the power hungry thugs who are chained to the war and have no other hope but the war and therefore strangle with the slow noose anyone who wants to save Germany, anyone who, after suffering destruction beyond measure, wants to restore to Germany the right to peace and reconstruction. You Germans in the occupied zone already have the ability to express this thought [of hope]. In the young year of 1945 we want to continue pursuing this hope together.

pg. 132

14 January 1945

...You are utterly sick of the death, destruction, and chaos, however much you in your secret heart of hearts desired it from time to time....

[Compare this with the following quote from Kuby's *Mein Krieg*:

11 Feb. 43 (pg. 313). In the case of Stalingrad there is now no doubt why we must sympathize with a few hundred thousand men, or put another way, why they found themselves in a situation, if still alive, which provokes sympathy. Do you believe that, in this mass of soldiers there were more than, at the most, two thousand who wouldn't have found it marvelous to be victors at the Volga and to build their cottages there? In your letter it sounds as if you saw in them victims of fate. When was it, before or after the Munich Putsch,

that I with Uncle Robert [husband of the addressee] heard him [Hitler] speak and we told you about it? I can still hear your reaction. That was about 20 years ago. You didn't see Stalingrad in front of you, of course not, but nevertheless a hellish perspective. And you are, don't misunderstand me, a completely normal person with completely normal information. The same for me. That we weren't and aren't as blind as the others were doesn't give them a reason to go from door to door and excuse themselves, saying: I didn't know that, I didn't want that. That's what they are saying now, wherever I listen. That is the cheap text of a deeply mendacious comedy, about which I am supposed to believe that it is the Twilight of the Gods by Wagner.

Im Falle Stalingrad gibt es nun keinen Zweifel, warum wir Mitleid mit ein paar hunderttausend Menschen haben müssen, anders gesagt, weshalb sie sich in einer Lage befanden und, soweit noch am Leben, befinden, die Mitleid herausfordert. Glaubst Du, daß in dieser Masse mehr als, ich schätze hoch, zweitausend gewesen sind, die es nicht herrlich gefunden hätten, als Sieger an der Wolga zu sein und dort Hütten zu bauen? In Deinem Brief klingt es so, als sähest Du Opfer des Schicksals vor Dir: Wann war es, vor oder nach dem Münchner Putsch, daß ich mit Onkel Robert [Mann der Adressatin] ihn [gemeint: Hitler] reden hörte und wir Dir davon erzählten? Ich habe Deine Reaktion noch im Ohr. Das war also vor rund 20 Jahren. Du hast nicht Stalingrad vor Dir gesehen, natürlich nicht, aber doch eine Höllenperspektive. Und Du bist, versteh wie ich's meine, eine ganz gewöhnliche Person mit ganz gewöhnlichen Informationen. Ich dito. Daß wir so blind nicht waren und sind wie andere, hat keine Ursache, mit der irgend jemand hausieren gehen dürfte und sich entschuldigen: das habe ich nicht gewußt, das habe ich nicht gewollt. So heißt es jetzt, wo ich hinhöre, das ist der billige Text einer tief verlogenen Komödie, von der ich glauben soll, es sei die Götterdämmerung von Wagner.

Sympathy? When someone jumps from a bridge and expects to land in an easy chair below, it makes me uneasy. Nobody shoved anyone over the railing. Exactly this blue smoke is being blown by us afterward. I understand that a national community, if it has collectively bought itself Stalingrad, has no choice but to justify it as a collective act. Historical processes are determined by a chain of reasoning – the justifications invented after the fact for one's own behavior serve as the basis for the following acts which, again, require justification. Acts of absolute shamelessness. If your view of Stalingrad is clouded by sympathy, then mine is by shame – at the end: one nation, one empire (ein Volk, ein Reich).

Mitleid? Wer von der Brücke springt und glaubt, er lande unten in einem Polsterstuhl, beunruhigt mich. Niemand hat niemand über das Gelände gestoßen. Eben dieser blaue Dunst wird von uns après versprüht werden. Ich sehe ein, daß einer Volksgemeinschaft nichts anderes übrig bleibt, hat sie kollektiv sich z. B. Stalingrad eingehandelt, als das kollektive Handeln zu rechtfertigen. Die geschichtlichen Abläufe sind davon bestimmt, daß auf den zur nachträglichen Rechtfertigung eigener Handlungen erfundenen Motivationen die nächste Handlung aufgebaut wird, die dann wieder der Rechtfertigung bedarf. Lauter Akte der Schamlosigkeit. Wenn Dein Blick auf Stalingrad von Mitleid getrübt ist, so meiner von Scham – schließlich: ein Volk, ein Reich . . .

[Back to Listen, Germany]

pp. 132-34 [entire letter]

Deutsche Hörer!

14 January 1945

If only this war were over! If only that which must happen and someday will happen had already happened, regardless of how it looked at the beginning! If only the terrible people who have brought Germany to this point were already defeated, and one could begin to think about life anew, about clearing way the external (and internal) rubble, about gradual reconstruction, about a reasonable reconciliation and civilized co-existence with other peoples! – Is that what you wish? Am I herewith expressing your heartfelt desire? You are more than sick of death, destruction, and chaos, no matter how much you secretly longed for it, temporarily. You want life and order, a new form of life, no matter how gloomy and difficult it will seem in the coming years. That is courageous. It is even more courageous than

the misguided fanaticism with which your armed youth even now still believes it must defend the “holy” German land or rather, the land which has been so completely desecrated and sullied by lies and crime. But *one thing* is necessary for the new beginning. For the reconciliation with the world there is *one* precondition upon whose fulfillment any moral agreement with other nations is based. Without this fulfillment you Germans will never grasp what is happening to you. I mean with that the clear insight into the impossibility of atoning for what

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Germany, schooled under villainous masters of bestiality, did to humanity: it is the complete and unconditional recognition of shocking crimes, about which you in fact know very little, partially because you were cut off and forcibly locked into stupidity and indifference, and partially because you, out of the need for self-protection, kept the knowledge of this horror far from your consciences. However, it must penetrate your consciences, if you want to live and understand, and a powerful effort of enlightenment, which you may not dismiss as propaganda, will be necessary to turn you into informed people. That which an ignoble philosophy of the dirtiest arrogance empowered your rulers to do, what they did through your hands of your sons, through your hands, is unbelievable but true. Do you who is listening to me know about Maidanek near Lublin in Poland, Hitler's extermination camp? It wasn't a concentration camp, but rather an enormous institution of murder. There stands a large stone building with a factory chimney, the largest crematorium in the world. Your people would like to have destroyed it by the time the Russians came, but most of it is still *intact*, a monument, *the* monument of the Third Reich. There, more than a half million European people, men, women, and children were poisoned with chlorine in gas chambers and then burned, 1400 of them every day. The death factory ran day and night, the chimneys smoked continuously. An expansion was already under construction...The Swiss Refugee Relief knows more. Their representatives saw the camps in Auschwitz and Birkenau. They saw what no feeling human being is ready to believe without having seen it with his own eyes: the human bones, barrels of lime, chlorine gas tubes and the crematorium, along with the heaps of clothing and shoes taken from the victims, many small shoes, shoes of children, if you, German compatriot, you, German woman, want to listen. In just these two German facilities, from 15 April 1942 until 15 April 1944, one million and seven-hundred and fifteen-thousand Jews were murdered. Where does the number come from? But your people kept lists, with German

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sense of order. They found the death registers; moreover hundreds of thousands of passports and person identification cards from not less than 22 European nations. These insane people kept records of the bone powder, the artificial fertilizer produced from this operation. You see, the remains of the cremated were ground and pulverized, packed and sent back to be used to fertilize German fields – the holy ground which German armies believe they must and may defend against being defiled by the enemy!

I have proffered only a few examples of what you are about to learn for yourselves. The shooting of hostages, the murder of captives, the Gestapo torture chambers found throughout occupied Europe, the blood baths under the Russian civilian population, the infernal policy of

population removal in all countries so that the Master Race would always be in the majority, the planned and desired child mortality in France, Belgium, Holland, Greece, and especially in Poland: in a few minutes it is not possible to enumerate all of what Nazi-Germany did to people, to humanity. Germans, you should know about this. Only one hatred is necessary: the hatred toward the thugs who have before God and the entire world turned the German name into an abomination.

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pp. 134-36 [entire letter]

Deutsche Hörer!

16 January 1945

Twelve years of Hitler. The 30th of January 1933. Good, that too is a day of commemoration. It should be celebrated: certainly not with joy, and not with pride, even less in artificially propped up resentment, but also not with joyless despair and self contempt, **but rather with calm insight into a terrible error which was half culpable, half fate.** This in the hope, or rather the certainty that the end is drawing near, that the days of this most cruel and shameful episode

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of Germany history are counted, a nightmare will be dreamed to its end, which one would like to wish had been nothing but a dream.

Unfortunately it was reality. Europe lies in ruins with it Germany. The destruction that National-Socialism carried out, both physical and moral, are incomparable. It can not be measured what its plunder and murder rage cost in blood and possessions, its infernal policy of depopulation; almost more reprehensible the psychic misery it caused with its terror, the violation and corruption, the human degradation and disruption by means of the coercion to lies and double life, the attacks on conscience. **After a thousand ignoble deeds inside Germany, it unleashed the war it bore within itself, with which it was identical from its very first day.** Guilt of the Germans who saw in the bloody clown their redeemer? We don't want to talk about guilt. It is not the right word for the fatal concatenation of consequences of an unfortunate history, and *if* is guilt, then it is intertwined with much guilt of the world. But responsibility is something other than guilt. **We are all responsible for what came out of the German nature and what Germany as an entity has historically perpetrated.** It is too much to demand of other nations that they clearly distinguish between Nazism and the German people. Does Germany exist, does the people exist as an historic form, as a collective personality with character and destiny. If so, then National-Socialism is only a form in which a nation, the German nation, inserted itself 12 years ago in order to undertake the boldest, with the most complete and deceitful means imaginable, attempt in human history to conquer and enslave the world – an attempt which by a hair almost succeeded. So the world must see it, even if broad masses of the peace-loving German people do not see it that way. Germany's opponents who all are suffering – also the huge and wealthy nation from which I am speaking, sacrifices and suffers greatly –, these opponents have had to deal with, from

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the first day of the war, the entire German intelligence, ingenuity, boldness, love for obedience, military skill, in short, with the power of entire German people which, as such, stands behind the regime and fights its battles – not with Hitler and Himmler, who would be nothing, if German manpower and blind allegiance didn't fight and die even today for these gangster with lion's courage.

You say, not for them, but rather for holy German territory? Friends, German territory has long been so defiled and desecrated by rulers to whom Germany should never have submitted that its defense has become senseless, born of stubborn defiance and not praiseworthy determination. The courage which continues to support that which is proven to be false, is in truth fear of the end and the new beginning, a cowardice which doesn't really suit the people of “die and become.” In Germany a young poet, in war, under the Nazis, dared to write these lines:

And our word, so long accustomed to lie,
is no longer suitable for holy song.

As with the German word, so it is with the German sword. To defend a Germany which is holy to all of us, it [the sword] has long been useless. Throw it away and put an end to the war, so that a new beginning and a new life are possible.

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pg. 137

[31. Januar 1945]

...aus dem er sechundzwanzig und eine halbe Milliarde Dollars an sogenannten Besetzungskosten und an unbezahlten Gütern gepreßt hat...

...from which it squeezed 26 and a half billion dollars for so-called occupation costs and unpaid for goods....

pg. 140

[16. Februar 1945]

...Nie haben diese Schurken an Euch, an Deutschland gedacht, sondern immer nur an sich, and die Macht...

These thugs never thought about you or about Germany, but rather only about themselves and power...

pp. 152-56 [entire letter]

[8 Nov. 1945]

Deutsche Hörer!

The BBC requested that I speak to you once again and tell you over the radio the reasons contained in my “Open Letter – why I may not think of returning to Germany.” I long hesitated to accept the request because I feel that the very minor subject, about which there

has been so much talk, in no way justifies the reprisal of my German broadcasts. Also, the unreasonable attacks directed from various people at my "Open Letter" won't make me change my mind. These attacks are all too clearly written as attempts to gain publicity, self-glorification, and in praise of the attackers' heroism, that they could closely touch me. I spoke truthfully and trustingly and can't prevent that cruelty and stupidity misuse and distort my words and present them as a document of egotism, self-pity, disloyalty and crass prejudice. I am all too convinced that it would be the biggest and also last mistake of my life if I did what some people in Germany declare to be my duty, that is, to throw my certificate of citizenship at the feet of America, to which I swore my oath,

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to in my old age discard way of life achieved through hard struggle, to abandon children and grandchildren, to give up my work, and to rush to the ruins of Germany. What for? In order to ruin myself, that is, to enjoy at first the joyous return as someone who has been proven right, which is not a comfortable role to play? To prop myself up as the standard bearer for a completely obscure New German spiritual movement, to enter into politics, to be sure enthusiastically, and in a very short time worn out and ground down, suspected by everyone, by Germans and occupation alike? For whom the fool's excuse: "I had after all the best of intentions," wouldn't keep me from ending up as a fool. I would rather not get to the bottom of the trickery hidden behind this pleasant sounding proposition.

To refuse the proposition, therein lies my egotism. I will answer for it before God, and posterity will approve of it. Egotism could just as well apply to those who stayed, as to those who left. I was far removed from the monumental indifference of a Richard Strauss, which he displayed in conversations with American journalists to the amusement of the entire world. The devil's filth called National Socialism taught me hatred. For the first time in my life the real, deep, ineradicable, deathly hatred, a hatred which I somehow believe was not entirely without influence on events. With my entire soul I worked at the downfall of this utterly destructive foolishness, from its very beginning. Not only with my radio broadcasts into Germany, which all together were one passionate demand to the German people to cast off their yoke. And what do think my purpose in all this was? Among other things, to prepare for my return home to Germany, that which has been proposed to me, now that it is too late.

For years as a guest in Switzerland I hoped and dreamed and clung to every sign

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that Germany had had enough of its degradation. How differently everything would have appeared if Germany had been able to free itself. If between 1933 and 1939 the saving revolution would have broken out among you, do you think I wouldn't have caught the very next train in order to return home? It wasn't to be and couldn't be. It was impossible. Every German says so, and so we have to believe it. We have to believe that it wasn't possible for an advanced society of 70 million to do anything but put up for 6 years with a regime of bloodthirsty thugs that it, in its deepest soul, completely despised. That it started a war which it recognized as absolute insanity, and for another 6 years did its very best, put all of its inventiveness, courage, intelligence, love of obedience, and military punctuality, in short, all of its strength into helping this regime to victory and thus to everlasting continuance.

It had to be that way, and appeals, like mine, were completely superfluous. The blind, said the

author Frank Thies, a exponent of “personal disengagement” (*innere Immigration*), weren't listening, and those in the know were to some extent already ahead of the game, at least toward the very end. That's the way it was in Germany, according to Frank Thies. In subjugated Europe and in the rest of the world, many a tortured soul found comfort in the useless palaver, and for their sake I don't regret it. But as senselessly wasted labor of love these addresses were, now some people want to oblige me to go back there. They say – You claimed to be the Germans' spiritual leader, so now come and live among them and share not only their sufferings, but mitigate them. Confront the strangers who afflict your people. *But where is Germany?* Where can it be found, at least geographically? How does one return to the fatherland which doesn't exist as a single entity? A fatherland ripped up into occupation zones which don't recognize each other? Should I go to the Russians, to the French, the British, to my new fellow countrymen, the Americans, and let them protect me with their bayonets against the anything

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but dead and buried National Socialists who are doing their best to corrupt our soldiers? In the face of such arrogance I am supposed to find the misery to be incomprehensibly encouraging? Protest against Germany's suffering, point out to the occupiers the mistakes they are making in dealing with and governing the country? No, that is exactly what I can't do. As a German, I was able to speak to Germans in order to warn them about the coming nemesis. **But as German who deeply feels that everything called German is included in the terrible collective national guilt, I can not allow myself to criticize the policies of the victors.** Such criticism would only be interpreted as egocentric patriotism and lack of sympathy for those peoples who for years had suffered under Germany's heel. He who has long feared the towering mountains of hate built up toward Germany, who in sleepless nights has imagined how terribly the inhuman behavior of the Nazis would come back to haunt Germany, he can now understand that what the Russians, the Poles, and the Czechs are doing to Germans is only the mechanical and unavoidable reaction to **crimes which a people as a whole have committed. This is not a matter of individual justice, not of the guilt or innocence of a single person.** Better to get involved here outside of Germany with help for Europe, with saving German children from starving, than to agitate within Germany for better treatment which might well be serving German National Socialism. Then, I am not a nationalist [Erich Kuby called himself a “negative nationalist”], whether you forgive me for this or not. But I have likewise suffered under the misery of the nations despoiled by Germany, as I have seen Germans and Germany suffer misfortune. As far as my remaining outside is concerned, the time in exile which my homeland imposed upon me has not only fostered in me resigned habituation, but also has taught me to genuinely welcome the hand which fate has dealt me. I was expecting to return home, but just now I came across a letter which I sent at the beginning of 1941 to a Hungarian friend.

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In it I wrote: Exile has become something completely different from what it was in earlier times. It is not a condition of waiting which one turns off upon returning home, but which rather is directed at the dissolution of nations and unification of the world. Everything national has become provincial. Prison air – say those people who, because they didn't want

to open their mouths against the impending disaster, wanted to stay home in 1933. This is, however, an error. I felt at ease in foreign countries because I carried my German heritage with me. Also, I truly have not escaped any of the German misery of these last years, although I wasn't present when my home in Munich was broken up. One can permit me my German worldliness, which was already naturally part of my soul before I left my homeland, and not begrudge me the forward post of German culture which I hope to defend with decency in the years left to me.

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From the translator: Although I have translated uncounted thousands of pages into English from various languages, this is my first attempt at translating a text by Thomas man. Please let me know if you find it too clumsy.

Bob Redman at redmanrt at yahoo dot com.

Deutsche Hörer! Thomas Mann

Rezension für Amazon

Das Büchlein enthält die Manuskripte von 58 Radioansprachen, in denen Thomas Mann den Deutschen von Oktober 1940 bis November 1945 die Leviten las, über das "tausendjährige Reich", daß sie sich geschaffen hatten. In einem komplizierten Verfahren nahm Mann seine drei bis sechs Minuten langen Reden zunächst in Los Angeles (Thomas Mann hatte in Kalifornien sein Exil bezogen) auf Schallplatte auf, welche dann per Flugzeug nach New York gebracht wurden. Von dort wurden die Aufnahmen per Telefon nach London überspielt und erneut auf Platte gepreßt. Die BBC strahlte die Sendungen schließlich nach Deutschland und in die von Deutschen besetzten Gebieten aus. Der Autor der "Buddenbrooks" und von "Tod in Venedig" besaß das Gewicht und die moralische Autorität eines Schriftstellers von Weltrang, und man traute ihm zu, mit seinen von starker Klage gegen den Nationalsozialismus getragenen Reden den Widerstandsgeist im Deutschen Volk zu wecken. Die Miniaturen gehen im eigentlichen Oeuvre Thomas Manns ein wenig unter, was bedauerlich ist, dürften diese rhetorischen Meisterwerke doch zu dem Schärfsten und Ausgefeiltestem zählen, was gegen die Nazis je vorgebracht wurde. Gerade weil Thomas Mann kein politischer Kampfredner war, bei dem aggressive Agitationsrhetorik zum Tagesgeschäft gehörte, gewinnen seine Kommentare eine ätzende Schärfe. Freilich mutet er seinen Zuhörern einiges zu, wenn er am Jahrestag der Zerstörung Coventrys im April 1942 der Royal Air Force "guten Erfolg" wünscht bei ihren Vergeltungsmaßnahmen, und glaubt "Es wird mehr Lübecker geben, mehr Hamburger, Kölner und Düsseldorfer, die dagegen nichts einzuwenden haben, (...) wenn sie das Dröhnen der Royal Air Force über ihren Köpfen hören...". Das die in den Luftschutzbunkern zitternde Deutsche Bevölkerung die alliierten Bomber mit Freude erwartet hat, ist mehr als zweifelhaft. Thomas Mann hatte sich nach dem Ende der Hitlerherrschaft und des zweiten Weltkrieges bittere Klagen aus Deutschland anzuhören, er habe bequem aus dem sonnigen Kalifornien das große Wort führen können. Doch dieser Gang ins Exil war für Thomas Mann und seine Familie unvermeidbar. Und der Leser wie Hörer der Sendungen erkennt auch heute mit einer Art innerer Befriedigung, wie eine Geistesgröße ein verbrecherisches, krankes System verbal in Stücke reißt! (Dies ist eine Amazon.de an der Uni-Studentenrezension.)

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Rezension bezieht sich auf: [Deutsche Hörer!: BBC-Reden 1941 bis 1945 \(Audio CD\)](#)

Wer damals, als es gefährlich war, ausländische Sender hörte, der war etwas besser informiert als andere. Und wenn er genau hinhörte, alleine oder zusammen mit anderen, dann war er/sie überlegen und das kritische Gewissen peinigte sie/ihn bis zum wiederholbaren Zeitpunkt, wann immer diese Sendungen wiederholt wurden, bzw. neu gesendet.

Die Machthaber damals wußten das natürlich und sie hatten ihre eigenen Mittel, es zu versuchen zu verhindern.

Wir kennen das, ich meine das mit der Einschüchterung. Das passiert immer dann, wenn die Machthaber unsicher sind, zutiefst verunsichert sind, auch heute.

Es ist daher nicht überraschend, daß auf dieser CD, auf der Thomas Mann hauptsächlich spricht, von 1941 bis 1945 im Auslandsprogramm der BBC, daß auch auf dieser CD kleine Ausschnitte aus den offiziellen deutschen Programmen enthalten sind, so Himmler, Goebbels und ein Arthur Karl Greiser (Wartheland-Gauleiter) mit unglaublich hasserfüllten Äußerungen gegenüber Polen, sowie anfangs auch eine "Ansage" in eigener Sache ("Tran und Helle" alias Jupp Hussels und Ludwig Schmitz).

Aber auch lautmalerisch immer wieder ganz typische Musikfetzen aus der Zeit des dritten Reiches werden gebracht.

Da erinnert sich wohl noch mancher, wie auch ich persönlich, damals noch ein Kind von 4-6 Jahren, als mit den Mitteln der lautmalerischen und prahlenden Lüge eines siegesvermittelnden marschtriefenden täglichen Gepräges die große Unsicherheit und fast mit den Händen zu greifenden Ängste wegradiert werden sollten. Das alles war damals so unglaublich banal, daß es unbedingt heute den Hinterbliebenen, den vielleicht wieder hinschielenden Unbedarften vor Ohren (und Augen) gebracht werden darf (siehe auch den zur Zeit laufenden Hitlerfilm!).

Und somit schließt sich wohl fürs Erste der informierende Kreis, der Böses, immer wieder aufschimmernd in die Umgebung schleudert, doch die Menschen sind nun gewarnt, so meint man gutdenkend und wundert sich doch so manchesmal ob der Unverbesserlichkeiten bzw. des nicht vorhandenen Mutes, sich klar zu bekennen zu Dem und Dem.

Ein bewußtes Wiederholen des Banalen und Bösen wäre aber wirklich das Ende der Menschlichkeit, was sage ich, der Menschheit auf diesem schönen Planeten.