

February 28, 1947

Marion J. Simon, Vice-President
Greenberg Publisher
201 East 57th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Simon:

The book, 22 Cells in Wuresberg, written by Douglas N. Kelley and published by you, undoubtedly affords quite interesting reading. It contains some new -- partly causing and partly revealing -- information on the personalities of the main Nazi criminals and reproduces a very characteristic treatise, "Life or Fate" by Robert Ley, especially written for Mr. Kelley.

However, we must admit that the portrayals of Nazi criminals are not always quite conclusive. In his characterizations the author dogmatically accepts and applies Freud's psychological patterns and labels. Yet, while quite successful in developing Breuer's conception and cure of "repression" phenomena and other traumas of emotional life, Freud's psychoanalysis proved to be much less fruitful in the explanation of human personalities as a whole. There it mostly operates with standardized generalizations like "Narcissism," "Oedipus-complex," etc., which convey only little knowledge. The author's frequent use of expressions like "mythic father," "father's substitute," "narcissistic structure of his personality" belongs to the same category.

Not very conclusive, either, is the manner in which the author puts the single criminals into five different groups: "The Policy Makers," "The Gunmen," "The Businessmen," etc. Rudolf Hess, the "childish individual" (p. 27), occupies first place among the "policy makers" Goering certainly belongs in this group. But does he, the creator of concentration camps, the leader of the Luftwaffe chiefly responsible for the destruction of Rotterdam, Coventry, Warsaw, and hundreds of other cities, the organizer of the blood purge of 1934 who said of himself: "I would rather shoot sometimes too short or too far, provided only that I shoot" (p. 63). -- does he not belong in the group of "gunmen" too? And does he, "one of the most powerful figures in German economic" (p. 53), not belong with much more right to the group of "businessmen" than the mass-murderer Hans Frank or the greatest slave-driver in human history, Fritz Sauckel? By the way, in the whole characterization of Frank and Sauckel there is not a single word which explains their acceptance into the "businessmen's" group, whereas all their actions and deeds clearly show that there was only one "business" they zealously and unrelentingly pursued -- the business of destruction on a stupendous scale.

Yet, all these weak points appear quite insignificant in comparison with another defect of the book, which attempts to solve sociological and historical problems from a purely individual psychological point of view. In both these fields -- sociology and history -- the book displays very little knowledge indeed. Take, for instance, the author's explanation of Hitler's rise to power: "Hitler found

a people previously conditioned to several explosive ideologies frustrated by defeat, hungry, seared by inflation — and homogeneous" (p. 6). Was not the same true of the French people after the war of 1870-71? Yet, just the contrary happened there — democracy was reasserted. Was it, perhaps, because there was no Hitler in France? But the author asserts that "neurotic individuals like Adolf Hitler, suffering from hysterical disorders and obsessive compulsions, can be found in any psychiatric clinic" (p. 238), and there were certainly enough psychiatric clinics in France at that time. Missing is the assertion that the German people were "homogeneous" (i.e., imbued with a sense of solidarity). The whole history of Germany is a continual refutation of this assertion. Goethe said once: "The Germans...believe only in themselves, each and every one of them tries to satisfy exclusively himself; he is not interested in what his neighbor is thinking or doing;" and Bismarck said on March 23, 1847 in the Prussian House of Lords: "It is an old and sad historical truth that the Germans enjoy nothing so much as a fight against their own countrymen." Paul Hatory, a well-known historian of German culture, condenses the history of his country into a few words: "City against city, knight against knight; cities united against knights, knights united against cities; knights and cities united against the most miserable of all, the peasants, or against abbots, bishops, dukes and kings." Germany was the last of all European countries to achieve unification — the greatest achievement of Bismarck's titanic personality; even on the very eve of the 1870-71 war against France Bismarck did not know whether Bavaria would fight with him against France or with France against him. And, finally, the last fact: When the Weimar Republic brought a short-lived period of political freedom to Germany, dozens of independent parties and groups violently fought one another for power. As Goerling describes the situation: "There were at that time about fifty organizations — call them parties — of World War Veterans in Germany" (p. 55). And the fact that, despite all this fragmentation and heterogeneity, Hitler and his gang were able largely to unite Germany by using as main tools the myths of the master race, world domination and rabid anti-Semitism, has several reasons deeply rooted in the whole culture and history of the German people. But the author of 22 Calls in Nuremberg is so little aware of the very existence of this problem that he boldly substitutes for it a meaningless label — "homogeneous" and his odd conviction that a man like Hitler "can be found in any psychiatric clinic."

Only this appalling lack of understanding of the real problem of Germany and Nazism can explain the most paradoxical and sensational conclusion the author draws from his book: "I am convinced that there is little in America today which could prevent the establishment of a Nazi-like state in America." Even if the author were right that Nazism was essentially the result of speeches which a flim-a-boom hysterical persons addressed to a weary, frustrated, emotionally unbalanced people, even then his application to America would be fundamentally wrong, since the Americans are an energetic, powerful, progressive, cheerful people, full of hope and eagerly looking forward to a still brighter future. Furthermore, the author knows full well the highest regard which even people like Goerling (a man "of excellent intelligence bordering on the highest level" p. 52) had for Hitler, or the unique influence Hitler had upon the German masses and almost all individuals he dealt with. Unquestionably, Hitler was a personality of the greatest historic significance and efficacy, a colossus of hatred and destruction, a man upon whom for years the destiny of every human being, indeed of every living thing on this earth, depended. And it is virtually incomprehensible that the author brushes off the "Hitler problem" with such trite phrases as "neurotic individual," "obsessive and hysterical type," liable to be found in any psychiatric clinic. It is true that most of Hitler's followers were average people and even nonentities, scrotes,

yet they were, according to an old saying, that long row of "sawes" which, the moment a real "figure" puts itself at the head of them, suddenly become a vast number.

In order to establish a Nazi-like state, many factors must be present and work together as a perfect team: social and political chaos, economic disorganization and inability to satisfy many essential needs, nervous strain and restless mood among larger masses of the population and, finally, diabolic shrewdness of a proverbs leadership. Not one of these fundamental factors can be found in America; rather, quite the contrary is the case. No wonder that every time a would-be totalitarian leader appears on the stage, he is liquidated in short order either physically (Huey Long) or politically (Lindbergh, Kilbo).

No one can deny that there exists in America an acute racial problem with clearly visible forms of discrimination against certain minorities frequently exploited by genuine Nazis. The only question is, how strong are these American Nazis? We all know that the bacilli of tuberculosis can be found in almost every human organism, yet only in weakened and exhausted organisms does this disease break out. Nazism is like scurvy — a healthy organism has nothing to fear from it. And America, with her old democratic tradition, with civil liberties deeply rooted in her social structure and ideological attitudes, with her comparatively great "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" — America has most powerful reserves with which to fight any form of totalitarian disease. One should bear in mind that even the most powerful would-be tyrant is helpless as long as he does not succeed in building up a strong following fanatically devoted to him and organized as an obedient instrument of terror and oppression. Hitler easily found in Germany millions of SA and SS, whom he openly and for many years drilled for their atrocious job. But De Roque in France and Hooley in England failed most pitifully and the leaders of the Ku Klux Klan or Gerald K. Smith have even smaller chances for success.

Douglas M. Kelley's application of his conception of Nazism to America is so basically wrong that we can hardly believe that any reasonable and even slightly informed person would accept it. But we are afraid that many an America Firster or Columbian will be very pleased to hear that his dreams of a Nazi-like state could so easily come true; he will "get ideas" and redouble his activities, which, to be sure, will not lead to an American "Third Reich," but may nevertheless cause some trouble. This, unfortunately, will be the most probable effect of Douglas M. Kelley's unfounded and unjustifiable assertions.

In the hope that these observations may be of use to you, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

Jacob Robinson
Director

JRC