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"BRITAIN WILL WIN THIS WAR"

Eloquent Address by Dorothy Thompson

Readers of "The Listener" will remember the keen interest aroused a few weeks ago by a talk on the air given by the American writer, Dorothy Thompson. The other day Dorothy Thompson gave another talk through the BBC. Here it is, slightly abridged:

It is now several weeks since the British Broadcasting Corporation paid me the great honour of inviting me to address the people of the British Isles. Twice I set the date for this talk, and twice I postponed it at the last moment. Words have become so debased in the mouths of the Hitlers and Goebbels of this world that one sometimes despairs of restoring the word to its great function as the instrument of truth and light. Once the word "peace" was a holy word. Now, when it has become the very synonym of betrayal, of lying, of cynicism, it is hard to bring the word across one's lips. Peace has become the chief weapon in the verbal armoury of the Nazis, whose whole programme boils down to war and nothing but war. Never in history, I thought, has a regime so used the words that express the noblest and best instincts of men for the purpose of destroying those instincts. Nazi words are like Nazi Marks, they have whatever value the Nazis choose to attach to them at any moment, and they have a different value at home and abroad. The word "pacifism" in Germany carries a death sentence with it, but it is exported in handsome packages to other countries. The word "socialism" once represented in our minds the

struggle of men to found a more reasonable and just society, but the Nazis have made it the synonym for "slavery."

Words can be a Weapon

For seven years the world has been attacked—not only your world, but our world over here, and not with bombs, but with the barrage that preceeds the bombs, with the babble of stink words, sweet words, sly words, seduction words, lie words, treason words—all so debased that their leaders can't even utter them in a normal tone of voice, but have to shriek them out at the top of their lungs. But when I listen to your Winston Churchill I know that words can be made one of the greatest weapons in the battle for humanity. We all have read that "they who take the sword shall perish by the sword." But in this war, which is far more than a battle between nations, I have faith that not only will this prophecy come true but that another can be made of it. "They who take the word will perish by the word."

Poets on Your Side

One evening this summer there was a great concert in a small Massachusetts town. It was given by the Boston Symphony Orchestra to raise money to aid you. A few of us spoke, and among the speakers was one of our most gifted



ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

"... He said something very important"

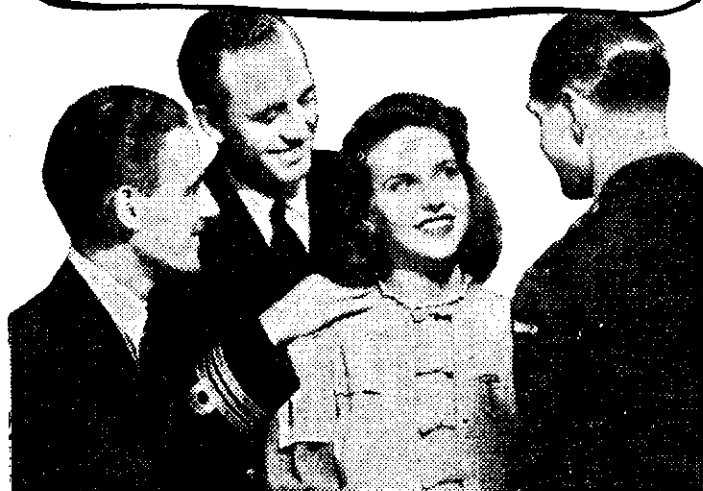
poets, Archibald MacLeish. In speaking to that very large audience he said something very true and very important. He called attention to the fact that all the poets of the world are lined up to-day on the side of Britain. Now, of course, practical men say that that is of no consequence, but if you study history you see that it is of consequence. Every great world movement that has ever made history and retained its hold on history has been heralded, not by propagandists, but by poets. Every great moment in history has claimed the firmest, strongest allegiance from the guardians of the word. When I speak of the poets, I do not mean only the maker of verses. The great poet is only that one among us who sees farther than others. He is the man or woman who still comprehends and appreciates the greatness of the past and sees farthest into the future. He sees deepest into the human soul, and he is able to express what is in all of us, striving for articulation. What the poet says when he says it greatly, is true not only for his own time but for all future time. Speeches of Abraham Lincoln have not lost their meaning because the crisis for which they were written is past. And they're not only speeches, but, because they were made out of a full heart and a great mind, they belong to the poetry of the world, and indeed, the crisis for which they were written will never be past as long as some men try to oppress other men on this earth.

And so I say to you—take it as one of the great good omens of your cause that the poets of the world are with you. The poets of the world have turned their faces against the Nazis. They were the first men of all to declare war on the Nazis, for they, the poets, are the champions of the human spirit, and they recognise their enemy immediately.

"Between Hitler and Me"

A little while ago I made a broadcast to Canada. It was re-broadcast in England and Australia, and as a result of it I received many remarkable letters for which I deeply thank the senders. They came from all sorts of people—from men and women of title, from clerks and workmen. Those letters were great writing. They told a story of fidelity, loyalty, courage, humour. One man said—I'm quoting him—"I am writing this

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