

FABIAN SOCIETY



VANSITTART'S GIFT FOR GOEBBELS

A German Exile's Answer to
BLACK RECORD

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June 1941

'Nothing that has occurred arising out of the war policy of Germany has minimised our determination to maintain the great spirit of unity among working people, which will always transcend racial division and sectionalism.

'The masses of the German people are suffering now, and that suffering will be prolonged by every day that they allow their Nazi masters to carry on this struggle. Those who have been their victims and have seen the armies of the tyrant march from one end of Europe to the other, will again soon be free to pursue their own lives in their own way in a world of liberty.

'Take heart then, comrades, resist the enemy wherever you can. Remember that victory for you and us means victory for the whole of humanity, and together the free peoples will be able to join in the task of building a better civilisation.'

ERNEST BEVIN in his *Mayday Broadcast to the German workers*

'On behalf of all American workers I wish to extend greetings on this Labour holiday to the workers of Germany whom we regard as prisoners of Hitler in their own land . . .

'We ask the workers of Germany to maintain their faith in Trade Unionism even if they must do so secretly, for the day is coming when those forces which are attempting to stop the world's progress and stifle the highest instincts of humanity, will meet their inevitable and disastrous end.'

WILLIAM GREEN (*American Federation of Labour*)

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By

HEINRICH FRAENKEL

(Author of *The German People versus Hitler*,
Help us Germans to Beat the Nazis, etc.)

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VANSITTART'S GIFT FOR GOEBBELS

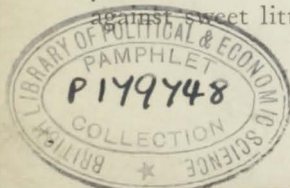
Much more significant (and important) than Sir Robert Vansittart's publication on the *Black Record* of Germans, past and present, is the amazing volume of public controversy caused by those seven broadcasts. For me, a German exile, to add to that ocean of newsprint would seem presumptuous as well as futile, but for the fact that all of us (and particularly we anti-Nazi Germans, at home and abroad) are most vitally concerned with the conclusions derived from the booklet as well as from the controversy caused by it.

It's the outlook that matters; it's this I am trying to deal with, not the booklet's 'historical' thesis. For indeed, to consider it in the light of a dispassionate historical essay would seem to be an insult to so brilliant a writer, so astute a politician, so learned a historian as Sir Robert Vansittart undoubtedly is.

A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE

Surely he knows as well as any of his critics that the 'butcher-bird's near-war' of 1905 was a gesture against French aspirations in Morocco; that in 1911 (another 'narrow squeak') the French marched to Fez; that Britain financed Frederick's rape of Silesia not merely on account of that king's charm as a flautist; that in the nineteen-twenties the U S A and Britain financed re-budding German Imperialism not merely for charity or out of deference to old Hindenburg's bushy mustachio; that the first six years of the Third Reich enjoyed even greater outside support not merely on account of Hitler's charming manners; that, to say that 'German barbarism first crushed Latin civilisation in 378 at the battle of Adrianople' is a somewhat inadequate account of the Roman Empire's decay and its historical consequences; that Tacitus gave more praise than blame to the subjects of his *Germania*, to say nothing of the fact that present-day Britons have at least a 50% share in the ancestry of those ancient Cimbrians and Teutons whose bellicose spirit and objectionable manners were recorded by Tacitus in good time to serve as Sir Robert's 'Exhibit A' for his judgment of the Germans' 'Black Record' through the ages.

I have quoted at random from that brilliantly written and most entertaining attempt to present the history of two thousand years on the lines of the story of the Big Bad Wolf for ever up against sweet little Red Riding Hood and her dear old granny.



BP161511

It is not, of course, an original idea. Indeed, by the same simple expedient of elimination-*cum*-over-accentuation, it would be quite as easy to write a 'Black Record' of the British, the French, the Americans, or any nation for that matter. It's been done, over and over again, long before one Joseph Goebbels was ever heard of; he, of course, used the old recipe prodigiously, though he's never been very scrupulous about his facts.

Yet, suppose you take any of Goebbels' numerous 'Black Record' versions on, say, the British; you eliminate all downright lies and distortions; you retain no item on which you could not produce chapter and verse from any history book; in other words, you clean the thing so carefully that even a historian of, say, Sir R. Vansittart's integrity could put his name to it—well, even if you did all this to one of the Goebbels' versions of English history, it would still look pretty grim: after all, you were rather naughty to Joan of Arc, Boadicea was scarcely a lady, and as for the Opium Wars, Amritsar and the Black and Tans, they are no joking matter.

Enough of this. It's a truism that the life of nations (just like that of individuals) consists of a few pitch-black and a few snow-white facets, with innumerable shades of grey in between. To balance all of them fairly and in proper perspective to their causes and background, is the historian's task; to pick out the pitch-black or snow-white only (as the case may be), is the job of the propagandist.

As to the *Black Record*, we have seen that to consider it as an essay on history would be an insult to a historian of Sir Robert's eminence. It was written in the heat of the moment. In undertaking it, no doubt, he was guided by the loftiest of motives: to do a service to his compatriots.

In trying to assess that job of propaganda from the other side of the fence—and by this I do *not* mean Hitler's side—we must look at it from two angles. We must first think out the logical conclusions and analyse the practical consequences for the future of Europe, if Sir Robert should have his way. We must then consider the actual effect of his widely publicised booklet on the 'propaganda front' of the present war. This latter consideration we might conveniently leave to the very end.

YOUR POLICEMEN ARE MARVELLOUS

What then would it mean, if Sir Robert's ideas were pursued, once the war had been prosecuted to a victorious end? The answer, of course, very much depends on the manner in which that

victory was and could be achieved. But let that pass for a moment; let us, for argument's sake, assume a victory achieved by exclusively military means. In that case the realisation of Sir Robert's ideas would obviously amount to a sort of Super-Versailles—call it Super-Brest-Litovsk, if you prefer.

Practically speaking, that would mean the policing of Germany (or her variously split-up components) for a period of decades. Sir Robert does not rule out the possibility that the German people—he calls it the 'Brazen Horde'—might be educated. Yet he estimates that it would take at least a generation, possibly a hundred years before such education (or self-education) would take appreciable effect.

That is a long time to keep half a Continent and eighty million people policed; moreover, the police-baton is not a very suitable means of education, nor has the British people much taste for that kind of a police job. But let that pass; let us simply ask if it is at all practicable.

The answer may well seem to be that it is. For haven't the Nazis themselves developed a highly modern technique of keeping entire nations permanently subdued? I have to query the word 'permanently'; yet, for some time now, they have maintained their sway over the Austrians, the Czechs, the Poles, the Danes, the Norwegians, the Belgians, the Dutch, the French, the Hungarians, the Bulgarians, the Serbians, the Greeks, and, to a very large extent, the Germans. Sir Robert would contest this, but let it pass for the moment.

The answer then is that, by using the Nazi method, you can indeed keep a nation subdued for a considerable time; but it can be done by Nazi methods only. It has been said that one can do a great many things with bayonets, except sit on them. Well, the Nazis have tried even that, and for eight years now they have managed to do it. But they couldn't do it for any length of time; nor could you; (nor would you even try).

HITLER AND THE HIGH-UPS

We must now revert to the last point passed over, the one which, no doubt, Sir Robert would contest. I said that, to a very large extent, the Germans are included among those kept subdued by the Nazis. Sir Robert could not help contesting this point; for, obviously, his entire theory stands or falls on the assumption that (excepting a few well-meaning but utterly impotent individuals) Hitler has the entire German people, body and soul, behind him. Sir Robert does not attempt to prove this assumption.

He does not argue it. He does not even mention it. He simply takes it for granted.

Yet the very opposite can be proved, has been proved over and over again. We needn't waste much space on it. You can find the evidence in scores of books and documents. But you needn't bother to plough through them all. Just use your own common sense in considering a few incontestable facts and figures and, first of all, the background of Hitler's rise to power.

Seven months before he got there he polled his legitimate maximum of 13,745,781 votes, just over one-third of those recorded. Four months later, in the last constitutional Reichstag election, he lost over two million votes. That was in November 1932. The huge Nazi Party was rapidly declining; it had been overblown with millions of mere malcontents, victims of the slump, lured in by desperation rather than Hitler's glib tongue and splendid showmanship. Yet, after the landslide of the November elections, the Party was broke to the wide and in what looked like hopeless dissolution. Hitler moodily (not for the first time nor for the last) threatened suicide. A few weeks later he was in power.

How had the miracle happened? Goebbels grandly calls it 'The National Socialist Revolution'; it was nothing of the kind. It was just a bargain with 'Big Business' and the 'Junkers'. Strong in money, power and influence, but with hardly any popular backing, these vested interests (with arch-intriguer v. Papen as their political representative) were worried by the Schleicher Government's threat to expose the worst of their graft; they were even more worried by the possibility of a swing to the Left through a coalition of Schleicher and the Trade Unions. That's why the Papen group, having cold-shouldered the slipping Nazi Party for some time, were now keen on an alliance capable of adding a mass movement to their own financial and industrial power. That's how Hitler got some much-needed cash for his Party and his own appointment as Chancellor in a new Coalition Government with the Nazis holding three only out of twelve Cabinet seats. Soon though, one by one, Hitler managed to squeeze his noble supporters out and to have his own henchmen muscle into all key positions, particularly in the Police. Then he was ready for his first big swoop against organised opposition (from the extreme Left to what you would call National Liberals). He did it by the simple expedient of burning the Reichstag, accusing his enemies of the crime, and murdering and gaoling thousands of opposition leaders for alleged complicity. By then the Gestapo's reign of terror was well under way, and organised opposition was driven under-

ground. As to Hitler's noble supporters, they had certainly got more than they had bargained for; they had fondly imagined they would boss the show themselves, and they were now being bossed in no uncertain manner. And yet they got their own back just over a year later, when Hitler was forced to decide between his new friends in the Reichswehr and his old henchmen in the Storm-troops. He had a thousand of these (including his old friend Röhm) bumped off; he sided with the Big Guns and Money-bags. A few weeks later he got his reward. Old Hindenburg died (ripe in years as well as broken words of honour). Hitler did not want another figure-head above him, never mind how senile; and since he had toed the line so obediently and could so safely be relied on for more and more re-armament, with plenty of promotion for the Reichswehr and plenty of profits for Big Business, both of these obligingly nodded assent when Goebbels arranged a little faking of old Hindenburg's 'last will and testament'. Thus Hitler became the Führer.

This is how Nazism established its hold on Germany. To recall these facts (and keep them in mind) is essential for those of you who (like Sir Robert) have unwittingly fallen prey to Goebbels' touching tales of how Hitler miraculously captured the soul of an entire nation fervently believing that he is leading them to a millenium of their own peculiar brand. Of course, there always were (and are) a great many fervent believers, and even more who cling to the régime for what they get out of it. It is not without reason that the Party Bureaucracy is more puffed up than ever; yet, even though there are millions in it, there are many times as many millions out of it. Unless you wish to believe in Goebbels' fairy-stories and his demonstrably faked 'election' results (always something round 99% pro-Nazi), you had better stick to the sober historical facts. These tell you that even after his rise to power and even with the additional votes (8% of the total) of his Tory Allies, Hitler barely commanded 50% of the electorate.¹

¹ These were the last semi-constitutional elections of March 5th 1933, five weeks after Hitler's appointment as Reich-Chancellor. There still was a semblance of democratic procedure, inasmuch as all the old parties were represented. But in point of fact, even those elections were a farce, considering that no Party except the Nazis was allowed any election campaign at all; as to the Social Democratic and Communist Parties, most of their candidates were arrested, and all their meetings, posters, and leaflets were suppressed, and even their newspapers banned, nor did the various Liberal Parties (including the very big Catholic 'Centre' Party) fare much better. The Nazis, on the other hand, now with unlimited finance and power, indulged in their most terrific propaganda campaign ever. All the more significant, of course, is the fact that more than half the electorate staunchly voted against the Nazis. Subsequent 'elections' were altogether farcical; Goebbels used to stage-manage them from time to time, with the faked result (generally round about 99%) always a foregone conclusion.

THE FOURTH BATTLEFIELD

You might say that since his advent to power he could have gained most or all of the other half; you might add that (mainly due to British and French foreign policy) he did have an almost unbroken row of success, and that in the long run nothing succeeds as well as success. This is certainly true and no doubt Hitler has gained new adherents (particularly among the youngsters). But just as certainly a great many of his erstwhile followers have been bitterly disillusioned. After all, the German people has had nothing (except 'guns for butter') out of all those glittering successes; and by 'people' I mean the workers and the peasants as well as that considerable class of small craftsmen and shopkeepers who were among Hitler's staunchest supporters before his rise to power. They had been promised more than any class and they are more disillusioned than any, most of them having long been forced out of their vaunted independence and reduced to the status of factory workers with very long hours and little to show for it.

Look at some more facts. If Hitler really had the German people behind him, would he need concentration camps? He would not. But he does. At Buchenwald alone, just before the war, there were twelve thousand prisoners, and eight thousand at Dachau Camp, since enlarged. To say nothing of Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg, Lichtenburg (now a women's camp), Papenburg, Luckau and scores of others; and dozens more in Austria. At least two millions have passed in and out of camp in these eight years; hundreds of thousands are there now. Tens of thousands have been murdered, 'suicided,' 'shot while trying to escape' or 'legally' beheaded. Since the war there has been hardly a day without at least one death sentence, almost invariably for 'treason', i.e. distribution of leaflets, incitement to strike, ca'canny, etc. Heavy gaol sentences are inflicted daily for 'crimes', such as befriending prisoners, listening to foreign broadcasts etc. You can find the evidence for all this in almost any Nazi newspaper.

Do you want some more evidence that there always has been (and still is) a German opposition? You can find the most 'tangible' evidence in some of its actual work—'illegal literature': anything from a crudely multigraphed one-page leaflet to large editions (camouflaged by some harmless cover) of elaborate photostat miniature reproductions of big books published abroad and smuggled in. I have myself, at one time or another, seen some two thousand different items, and I know that this is a fraction only of the total output all these years. But you don't have to take my word for it. Take the Nazis'. (Trust them

not to exaggerate on a subject so painful to them.) They have a special Department for dealing with smuggled literature. In one single (average) year, that Department's frontier police effected 120,286 confiscations, and in 426 of these cases, according to the official report, 'firearms had to be used'. Eloquent statistics. They tell you (since only a small fraction was tracked down) not merely the extent but also the danger of such work. Thousands of brave men and women have willingly offered their lives (and are still doing so) in helping to spread the truth in their Nazi-infected country.

Do you still want more evidence of the Opposition's existence? Look at the immensity of the Nazi effort to combat it. Gestapo-Chief Heinrich Himmler has at all times needed hundreds of thousands of men for that job. Since the war he needs even more, picked brutes most of them. Listen to some official statements of his own, shortly before the war:

. . . We must have more concentration camps. The Führer has given me unrestricted power to arrest anyone I consider suspect. . . . In a future war we will have to deal not merely with the Army on land, the Navy at sea, and the *Luftwaffe* in the air; *we shall have a fourth battle-field (Kriegsschauplatz) to look after: Inner Germany!* . . . At the beginning of the war, mass arrests on an unprecedented scale will be necessary . . . many political prisoners will have to be shot out of hand. . . . No unit of the Death's-head divisions¹ is ever to be used in its home-district. Every unit is to be moved to another district every third week. None of them are to be wasted on ordinary police duties. No man is ever to patrol a street alone. . . . Once the emergency arises, utter ruthlessness is essential . . . we must have no illusions about the fact that any war in which we neglected the internal battle-field (*Kriegsschauplatz im Innern*) would lead to catastrophe . . .

THE OPPOSITION

You may well ask why, if the Opposition is so strong and numerous, the German people is still putting up with the Nazi régime.

To this question there are several answers. One has just been given. Think of that enormously powerful machinery specially designed and most efficiently trained to keep internal unrest at bay. Look at the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the French. Do you think *they* love their Nazi over-lords? And yet, they are being held down by the same machinery which the Nazis first tried, developed (and still use) on their own people.

¹ A skull-and-crossbones badge is (fittingly) worn on the caps of the special 'S.S.' squads detailed for these duties. When war began, there were thirty divisions of them, but there are many more now (some of them in the Occupied Territories).

Another answer is that, while there always has been oppositional activity and even more oppositional temper in many strata of the German people, we have never yet had anything like a united Opposition. If we had, Hitler could never have come to power; once we have, he is done for. In domestic as well as in foreign politics, Hitler always knew how to thrive on the differences between his enemies. Most of our various oppositional parties and groups, united only in their mutual hatred of Nazism, have been at loggerheads (and still are) on many other issues regarding our country's future. Fortunately, though, these differences have never been quite as violent at home as in exile. (Common suffering under the Gestapo's iron rod is a somewhat unifying tonic.) As to the German political exiles in this country, a hopeful token is the recent Union of the various Social-democratic Parties and groups. A very important step, though a first step only. We must yet go a good way further on the road to unity of all progressive forces. For with all the indomitable fortitude and energy shown by all oppositional parties and groups all these years, with all the sacrifice and suffering, devotedly offered and willingly borne, we have yet had little if any concerted and properly coordinated action.

Nor must you imagine (in trying to assess the various shades of anti-Nazi, pro-Nazi and indifferent opinion) that the number of Germans engaged in 'underground' activity runs into millions. It is very much smaller. But when you consider that those engaged in active opposition risk their lives every minute of every day and night, the miracle is that there are so many rather than so few. Next to that vanguard of heroes and martyrs comes a group of those who hate Nazism no less but are not prepared to risk their lives in active oppositional work, at least not so long as they cannot see an immediate chance of success. That group does run into millions; it contains the bulk of the politically-minded workers and peasants, and a good many intellectuals from all strata of the population.

KILLABLE—

At the other extreme end of the pole you find the genuine Nazis and the near-Nazis, the former including the fanatics (particularly among the youngsters), the latter mostly with their tongues in their cheeks and generally in the cushiest jobs, either in the Party hierarchy or in the Services.

—AND CURABLE

In between them and the oppositionally minded you find the numerically largest group, well over half the population; two

groups rather, the smaller of which consists of genuine (though by no means incurable) victims of Goebbels' propaganda, even though many of them are feeling uneasy about the future and all of them are annoyed (though too much afraid to grumble) about the constant personal sacrifices exacted from them. The other group, disbelieving most of the propaganda, keep on grumbling fiercely, so long as they are among friends; they wish to goodness it were all over, but they cannot see how it can be done, though they never give up hope that someone, some time, may do something about it.

With a rough idea of the German people's internal grouping in mind, you must consider a few aspects of the war situation. As to the active opposition's 'underground work', this has naturally been gravely handicapped through the war; contacts which it took years to build up were severed overnight through mobilisation and the general dislocation, to say nothing of even tighter frontier control, severer discipline, and harsher punishments. Indeed, so far as active oppositional work is concerned, the war's only blessing seems to be the blackout with its obvious opportunities for pasting up propaganda. These are being widely used.

A DOZEN DIVISIONS

One point generally overlooked in this country is the political rather than military significance of the fact that practically all the Reichswehr's victories have been achieved with a dozen Panzer Divisions plus a few tens of thousands members of *Luftwaffe* and U-boat crews, say three hundred thousand men, all told. Almost all of these are picked youngsters born and bred in the Nazi tradition.¹ They are not nearly as representative of the spirit of the masses as the more sedate (and much more numerous) men in the armies of occupation. A good many of these men have been politically organised, and most of them are ex-members of the smashed-up Trade Unions. Many of these men (particularly in Norway) have, for some time now, formed the most regular and reliable link between the active opposition at home and in exile, and a source supplying a steady trickle of useful 'inside information'. Of course, the Nazi authorities see to it that the armies of occupation are duly 'stiffened' (and checked up on) by

¹ It is often remarked that this whole generation will be spoiled for life and an intolerable burden on our Germany of the future. Such fear is exaggerated, to say the least. There is ample evidence that the Nazis with their usual knack of overdoing things have considerably overstrained their efforts at 'bending youth to the Führer's will'. Certain cracks in that part of the system have been evident. By no means all that generation need be considered lost.

picked thugs and trained spies from Himmler's special S.S. squads and the Gestapo. But there just don't seem to be quite enough of these to go round.

DUST AND ASHES

Another important aspect of the war situation is the question whether and to what extent constant military success (coupled with extremely clever propaganda and inordinately poor counter-propaganda) might have stiffened Hitler's hold on the German people. No doubt it has to a certain extent, though not nearly as much as you might think. The German people is used to victories in the field; they are very much taken for granted, and, after all, the majority of the grown-up population still has vivid memories of the last war: the same kind of deception ('a holy struggle to defend the encircled fatherland'); the same endless row of victories bought with endless sacrifice; and then, all of a sudden, the crack-up, with years of more sacrifice and misery to follow. Such thoughts, with all flag-waving and victory bells, are uppermost in the minds of millions of Germans. Moreover, the German people has had nothing yet (not even butter for conquered guns) out of all these victories. The joy-rides to the Champs Elysées are only for a pampered few in the inner circle (high and low) of the Party Hierarchy. For the masses there is nothing but long hours of hard work, and endless queuing for scanty food and clothes and coke.

DID YOU MEET THE MASSES, SIR ROBERT ?

It is rather significant that none of these important (nay, decisive) aspects of the situation are as much as mentioned by Sir Robert Vansittart. And here, with all due respect to a brilliant writer and great patriot, I must say that Sir Robert does not know the German people. I wonder if, on all his sojourns in Germany, he ever travelled on a bus, or in a tram-car, or a third-class railway compartment; if ever he spent some time in living with what you might call a lower-middle-class family; if ever he spent as much as a day and a night in a German worker's allotment or his crowded little flat in one of the huge tenement houses of a Berlin working-class district. I dare say Sir Robert has spent some weekends (probably not particularly pleasant ones) at some large German country estates. But has he ever lived a day with a German peasant's family, watching them till their acre or two (or less) of soil? (There are millions such families in Germany.) Sir Robert has some brilliantly amusing things to say on the hideous sousing

and duelling rules and the absurd 'code of honour' he encountered when first he came to Germany, in the fashionable student clubs and among the Officer-Corps. No wonder that an intelligent and sensitive young Englishman should have been disgusted by that sort of thing; but the majority of the German people has for ever been no less disgusted by it. Sir Robert could here say that surely and at all times there must have been millions of Germans who admired such nauseating customs, and who did not indulge, merely because they couldn't afford it. This is perfectly true. But in this country too (and everywhere else) you will find the middle classes cursed with a certain section of little snobs pathetically anxious in adulating and apeing the very worst traits of society. (Though I do grant Sir Robert that ours are the worst of all, and that even the most asinine type of Mayfair play-boy would appear to be a mental giant and positively enchanting when compared with the German *Korps-Student* of old or, worse, his modern, nazified edition.)

GENTLEMANLY GERMANS

I have had to deal with this at some length, because it leads up to the vital issue. In his healthy disgust with some of the more nauseating traits of his social equals in Germany, Sir Robert has put his finger on a decisively important point. This is what he says on p. 20 of his booklet :

Some people believed Neurath because he belonged to 'the old school'. That is why they should have disbelieved him. There is, as you will see, no fundamental difference between the Old School and the New. They think and act in the same way.

Of course they do. It is the precise purpose for which the old school has put the new one in the saddle. The alternative would have been to get out of that saddle for good.

Sir Robert has uttered a profound truth, but he has failed to draw the right conclusions. We will see about this later. But meanwhile it is all to the good that a voice as authoritative as Sir Robert's should tell the people of this country to beware of trusting Neurath. You still have (and in the highest councils of the nation too) far too many of those who still cling to fond dreams of a coming German 'Revolution from the Right'. Not necessarily one with Neurath or Schacht (or Hess, for that matter). But aren't there plenty of others, less compromised? Why, there are some of them right here: exiled princes, disgruntled Nazis, benevolent professors, charming journalists and officials of pre-Nazi days. Some of them used to be ever so busy carving up Germany this way or that in the ante-rooms of the *Quai d'Orsay*.

Since these are no more available, they are no less busy in the ante-rooms of Whitehall. Well-mannered gentlemen, all of them, with never an inconvenient demand for the formulation of war-aims, with never a word of criticism of the way you manage (or fail to manage) your German propaganda. Cultured gentlemen, all of them, always ready to oblige, and only too willing to have British bayonets pave their way to office in the Wilhelm Strasse.

This is not the way. Those who made the Nazis are even more dangerous than the Nazis themselves. They would, if given the slightest chance, produce a brand-new set of Nazis (or whatever they might call them). Sir Robert has diagnosed that danger quite correctly; he would be perfectly right in demanding that the power of the pernicious ruling class of Germany (Big Business and the Junkers) must be destroyed to the very roots. He does not say this. In fact, he draws the wrong conclusion from his right diagnosis. Since it so happens that the ruling class is all he knows of Germany, he implies that the whole of Germany (as a national entity) must be destroyed. This, as we have seen, is impracticable. Carthage could be destroyed. Germany cannot be. It happens to be too big. The vicious circle would start all over again.

This is the bitter lesson of that vicious circle: first to pamper the German rulers till they get so strong and cheeky that you have to crush them; then not to crush *them* but to humiliate the whole people, and thus give the rulers their chance of whipping it up for a new show of strength (the people's) and cheek (the rulers'); then to crush the people again, and so on with the circle which, if continued on the old vicious lines, would automatically breed yet another Hitler (or Wilhelm, or Bismarck), some time round about the nineteen-fifties, all ready to be pampered again for his big jump some time in the sixties.

What then is the right conclusion which Sir Robert failed to draw? It is, for once, to consider the German *people* rather than its old gang of—well, call them 'butcher birds', to use Sir Robert's own term. He says (speaking of the post-Versailles period):

The whining bully must be picked up and dusted down, and put on his feet again . . . and the strange thing was that his victims had contributed to put him there by all the means, including loans, in their charitable power.

Was that power really so 'charitable'? And who was the whining bully, anyway? It was Krupp, and Thyssen, and Ludendorff (with a young man called Hitler under his wing), and Hindenburg with his rapacious clique of country-squires. As for the German people, most of the 'pick-up' it got in the immediate

post-war period was spelled starvation and inflation, and the 'dusting down' came later, under Hitler.

WE WERE BOTH WEAK

I am not attempting to exculpate the German people of its responsibility for all this. Just as it must needs be the German people's job to put its house into durable order after this war, just as surely we fell down on the job last time. It was mainly our own fault, due to disunity and the resulting weakness of the first Republican Governments. Very soon the 'old gang' (momentarily subdued) could come back into their cocky stride even though not (not yet!) into the Government. But they knew very well what they were doing when (in the early twenties!) they began to put big money on a rank outsider called Adolf Hitler. Yes, it was mainly our fault to have let things slide until it was too late—and yet, had the Western Powers, as an act of grace, shown some of the weak and far from militant Republican Governments only one tithe of the indulgence subsequently shown the Third Reich under duress (or, at first, rather under the most transparent bluff and bluster in history), things would have taken a different turn. It is indeed that very indulgence which gave the oppositionally minded Germans some of the worst headaches; millions of them, all these years, were puzzled why the Hitler menace wasn't nipped in the bud so long as it could still be done with practically no bloodshed. On the other hand, deeds being always more eloquent than words, there was no single event that, for three long years, gave the opposition a better tonic than the Spanish people's heroic struggle against its oppressors. But there again millions of Germans were puzzled why, acting against their own vital interests (and for a more than shady cause too) the French and British Governments kept on playing the stooge in the farce of 'Non intervention', thus endangering the Pyrenees frontier and Gibraltar respectively. Came the war, and when the very same British and French leaders who had pandered to Hitler's every whim now got up and stated that they were out to crush Hitlerism only and meant no harm to the German people, the masses of that sorely tried audience were all the more puzzled (and worried) when such statements were interspersed with no less authoritative ones saying the exact opposite and threatening hell's damnation to the entire German people. Can you wonder at their being puzzled, the more so as Goebbels is no fool, and a pastmaster in the art of twisting even a gospel-clear issue, let alone one as complex as all that. You'll have to do something against it, and do it soon.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE ?

What then is to be done, what is the outlook? The first thing to be done, of course, is to resist (and possibly to beat) Hitler's Armed Forces wherever you have to meet them, and, above all, to preserve this island against devastating attack. Obviously, things being as they are, any kind of successfully prolonged resistance on this side has about the same moral weight as a dozen victorious sweeps on the other. Don't forget that when the crack-up came last time the Kaiser's armies still held about half of conquered Europe.

But just as important as 'winning the war' is the winning of the peace. Last time you won the former and lost the latter, with results now visible to all. This time it must not happen again. So you must prepare for winning the peace, while you are still up to the neck in fighting this war. Indeed, the one is supplemental to the other.

The first step is to realise that this is not (or at least should not be) an ordinary war, but largely an ideological one. So you have to see to it that your 'ideological front' stands as fast and indomitable as your military defence of the Channel. (They are both equally important.) More and more people are beginning to realise—and many who have no personal reason to welcome it are sensibly reconciling themselves to the fact—that at the end of this war there must needs be some initial form of social planning, probably Europe-wide, possibly world-wide; in other words, some really acceptable 'New Order', as against the one Hitler is trying to impose. While stopping him from doing it you must work out at least the rudiments of your own 'New Order'. Then tell the world. Tell, in particular, the German people.

GRIST TO GOEBBEL'S MILL

Your German propaganda, so far, has been anything but good¹; but it wouldn't be fair to blame the propagandists only. The trouble is that they haven't had yet anything really essential

¹ No space here to give this sore problem the attention it deserves. What is principally wrong with your German propaganda (apart from the fundamental fact that it has yet nothing essential to say) is lack of consistency, as well as failure to differentiate between Germans and Nazis. Take the (particularly bad) Austrian broadcast service: night after night it attempts—rather clumsily—to set the Austrians against the Germans; it implies that all Germans are Nazis and overlooks the essential fact that a great many Austrians desired the *Anschluss* if only it were not forced upon them by the Nazis. The same broadcaster when commenting on General Wavell's advance in Libya, committed the folly of sneering at Italian cowardice. (He actually used the word 'Katzelmacher', roughly the equivalent of 'Wops' and the favourite term of Hapsburg jingoists of old.) Such 'propaganda', defeating its own object, is worse than no propaganda at all. The proper line of course was to praise the Italian soldiers for their good sense in refusing to

to say. They will, once the rudiments of your (and our) New Order are in shape, once your Government is in a position to make a solemn announcement of appropriate war aims, or rather peace aims. This would, once and for all, deprive Hitler of the trump card in his hold of the German people: its gnawing fear as to what is to come after Nazism; what will be their future if, now that the war is on, they did upset the military apple-cart; what fate will a victorious Britain have in store for them, once they are forced to accept any conditions. You can imagine in what lurid terms ('we must now sink or swim together!') Goebbels presents such a future. It is up to you to see to it that this will not be so, and to convince the German people of it.

In this, no doubt, you will be gravely handicapped through publications such as Vansittart's *Black Record*, and similar opinions expressed by no less authoritative voices. All this, of course, is perfect grist for Goebbels' mill.¹ One more reason why your own German propaganda should do something about it. It's no use hushing this up; Goebbels is using it anyway for all it's worth (and it *is* worth a great deal to him). So you should answer speedily by broadcasting the simple truth; by telling the German people that indeed there are people in this country where every man is entitled to express his own opinion who share Sir Robert's view. Tell them honestly that his booklet is most successful, and that it is largely up to them to see to it that those who take the opposite view are strengthened by proofs that there is German resistance to Hitler and that when the opportunity comes the German people will cooperate in the overthrow of the Nazis and in the construction of a just and peaceful European order.

pull the Nazi (*and* the Fascist) chestnuts out of the fire. I don't know if the B B C Italian talks of these days stressed that obvious point. I hope they did. Though of course it would have made the Austrian Talk even more ludicrous for such Austrians who happened to listen to the Italian too. Or vice versa. Lack of coordination is, indeed, another major failing of your Foreign Propaganda.

¹ It is rather significant that on one of his blackest days (the Tuesday when Hess already reported crashed by the Nazi Radio was announced to be alive in Scotland), that on that day when Goebbels, more than ever, was up against it, he made a big splash of—I translate literally—'Mr. Menzies' bloodthirsty speeches demanding the extermination of the entire German people'.

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