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NAZI PROPAGANDA

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FOR DR. ALFRED WIENER

IV. THE CONSTANT THEMES: THE JEWS AND THE COMMUNISTS

OUTSIDE Germany, Hitler faced a situation much more delicate and complex than at home. Yet, on the whole, the contents of National Socialist propaganda remained the same whether it was intended for foreign or for domestic consumption. This situation was occasioned by a variety of factors: we have seen that Nazi ideology lacked in international appeal. The leadership of the party was short of men with any kind of experience of the foreign scene: among National Socialists, knowledge of international affairs was at a premium. And, as Hitler's government thought it necessary to make its foreign policy acceptable at home, an additional link was created between propaganda at home and abroad.

Indeed, in the political literature of National Socialism it is impossible to find a body of basic directives dealing with propaganda abroad even remotely resembling those contained in *Mein Kampf*, which concerned propaganda inside Germany. There exist only a few scattered references. In *Mein Kampf*, for instance, Hitler congratulated the Allies on their propaganda effort in the First World War: he was unaware, however, of the fact that the Allied propagandists had been equally impressed by Germany's efforts with regard to Russia.[1] Some time in 1933 Hitler intimated that he had learned from the Bolsheviks, alluding at the same time to Sir Roger Casement and to revolutions, and hoping that 'we shall have friends who will help us in all enemy countries'.[2] But he saw propaganda abroad primarily as an instrument for the achievement of power, just as

[1] Cf. Z. A. B. Zeman, *The Break-up of the Habsburg Empire*, page 184. Oxford University Press, 1961.
[2] H. Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, page 19. London, 1939.

he had seen propaganda at home before 1933. Discussing the nature of the future war, Hitler is reported to have said: 'The place of artillery preparation for frontal attack by the infantry in trench warfare will in future be taken by revolutionary propaganda, to break down the enemy psychologically before the armies begin to function at all.' And then he added: 'How to achieve the moral breakdown of the enemy before the war has started—that is the problem that interests me.'[3] Nevertheless, the 'moral breakdown of the enemy' was the remote, the ultimate object of propaganda: we shall see that it was achieved only in special political circumstances. For the more routine purposes—including 'projection' of the Nazi state and its ideology—the Ministry of Propaganda was in the main content to translate the key themes of home propaganda to the international plane.

It has been demonstrated that the high antisemitic charge contained in domestic propaganda did not play a decisive part in gaining adherents for the National Socialist movement.[4] Though antisemitism figured prominently in Nazi propaganda, it did not make a significant contribution to Nazi success. Its value lay mainly in the manner in which it was manipulated to satisfy the psychological needs of the Germans. The Jews could be used as scapegoats; antisemitism could be employed as a smoke-screen which served to divert public attention from genuine social and political problems.[5] Ultimately, it could be traced to the Führer's personal predilections: Hitler was an antisemite by conviction.

Although he could calculate and exploit the appeal of antisemitism in Germany, he miscalculated its value for propaganda abroad. He regarded it as a more than suitable article for export: indeed, he is reported to have said: 'Antisemitism is a useful revolutionary expedient. My Jews are a valuable hostage given to me by the democracies. Antisemitic propaganda in all countries is an almost indispensable medium for the extension of

[3] H. Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, page 19. Apart from indicating that these conversations with Hitler date from the period between the beginning of the year 1932 and the end of 1934, Rauschning does not give the precise date of the pronouncement. It is likely, however, that Hitler was more concerned with this kind of problem after, rather than before, January 1933.
[4] This problem has been exhaustively discussed by Dr. E. G. Reichmann in her study *Hostages of Civilisation*. London, 1949. Cf. page 234.
[5] ibid., pages 166–7 and 198.

our political campaign. You will see how little time we shall need in order to upset the ideas and the criteria of the whole world, simply by attacking Judaism. It is beyond question the most important weapon in my propaganda arsenal, and almost of deadly efficiency.'[6]

Hitler's estimate of the value of antisemitic propaganda was mistaken. On balance, the Nazi antisemitic drives abroad had more often a repulsive than an attractive effect. Even in Fascist Italy, there existed little understanding of this special type of Nazi racialism, and still less a desire to emulate it. In a report on the propaganda situation in Italy from October 1933, Scheffer, the *W.T.B* agency representative in Rome, had to inform the Foreign Ministry that Mussolini had personally received the Chief Rabbi of Milan and that 'Jewish propaganda' was being made, backstage, in Italy: Jewish business circles were, for instance, showing themselves unwilling to buy German goods. Nevertheless, Scheffer had a ready explanation for this state of affairs, an explanation which his masters in Berlin would understand. The Italian, he wrote, 'in whose veins there circulate racially different types of blood, cannot understand the Jewish question in Germany'.[7]

In the National Socialist view of the foreign scene, the Italians, though they were ideologically sound, were racially unrelated to the Germans, and therefore no sanity of views could be expected from them in matters of race. The Nazi view of the British, on the other hand, was the reverse of their image of the Italians: 'Englishmen'—this term usually embraced all the inhabitants of Great Britain—were racially related, although ideologically quite unsound. Hitler did not find in Britain the response to antisemitism he had hoped for. The national newspapers had reported on antisemitic outrages committed by the Nazis even before Hitler came to power: after January 1933 the treatment of the Jews was widely regarded as the testing ground for the intentions of the new government in Germany. The question then asked in many editorials was whether, carrying the new responsibilities of the government, the Chancellor could afford to continue his former policies.

[6] H. Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, page 233.
[7] Report from Rome to the *AA*, 10 October 1933, 8677H/E607177–92.

In the following years, even the dailies—such as *The Times*—that carried on the policy of establishing an understanding with Nazi Germany, continued to report on the treatment of Jews in Germany. Indeed, the reports on the pogroms of November 1938 marked the beginning of a strong revulsion, in this country, against Hitler's régime.[8] At the same time, direct antisemitic propaganda did not make an impact of any significance in Britain; it was, on occasions, harmful to the Nazi cause. Goebbels's Ministry never appeared much concerned with this aspect of antisemitic propaganda: the German diplomats in London, on the other hand, realized that it should not be given too much prominence. But they received no guidance from Berlin; they used their own discretion.

As late as 19 July 1939, Dirksen, the Ambassador to London, wrote: 'Having regard to the stolid, tolerant racial character of the British, every antisemitic impulse must be valued all the more highly, since opportunities for disseminating anti-Jewish ideas are very limited.'[9] Apart from Mosley's party, there existed only a few other, more or less antisemitic organizations: Dirksen referred to that of Captain Ramsay (the Tory M.P.), and Lady Hardinge's connexions with such societies. Antisemitic ideas were also expressed in certain right-wing periodicals: Dirksen singled out for mention the low-circulation weekly, *The New Pioneer*; a section of the Catholic press also attacked the Jews, but in an oblique way, in connexion with Bolshevism. Nevertheless, Dirksen wrote, 'antisemitic attitudes are revealed more clearly by conversations with the man in the street than by press-sources'. The rapid increase in Jewish immigration promoted, according to Dirksen, the spread of antisemitism: indeed, he went on to say that 'A further increase of anti-Jewish feeling in Britain can be expected'. There was advice implicit in Dirksen's dispatch to the propagandists that now—less than two months before the outbreak of the war—was the time to begin exploiting antisemitic mood in Britain.

In this country, antisemitic propaganda either had only a marginal appeal, or it was entirely cancelled out by reports on

[8] See Lionel Kochan's *Pogrom, 10 November 1938*; London, 1957; especially the last chapter, 'The Reaction Abroad'.
[9] The dispatch was printed in the *Wiener Library Bulletin*, No. 1, 1962.

National Socialist measures against the Jews in Germany. Nevertheless, for a short time and in special circumstances, a heightened receptiveness to antisemitism accompanied, and aided, the breakdown of the established political order in central and eastern Europe. It had shallow roots: set up by the peace treaties on an entirely new basis it had, in 1933, a brief and unsettled existence behind it. In this part of Europe National Socialist propaganda was at its most effective: indeed, it corroded the foundations of the established régimes to such an extent that military conquest later appeared either welcome or easy. We shall have occasion to note that National Socialist propaganda was mainly aimed at the Germans, the *Volksdeutsche*, in this area: Hitler knew that their co-operation was sufficient to severely impair the working of the established order.

In addition the Jewish problem in eastern Europe could be exploited for the purposes of a second line of attack. Indigenous antisemitism, both organized and spontaneous, existed in Rumania and Poland: these two countries contained numerous Jewish minorities.[10] Most of these Jews lived in isolated communities, the progress of their emancipation was slow, and they retained their characteristic features, from religion to dress and mannerisms. The compact Jewish communities both stimulated the pogroms and made them easy to carry out; on a higher social level, the distinction the Jews achieved in commerce, industry, and in the free professions, created resentment among their gentile compatriots. In the nineteenth century, the emergent east-European nationalisms had often contained an antisemitic charge.

Indeed, antisemitism in eastern Europe anticipated, in many respects, the National Socialist attitudes to the Jews; after 1933, under the impact of Nazi propaganda and precept, antisemitism came to play an increasingly important role in the politics of this part of Europe. Early in 1936, for instance, a Jewish newspaper was banned in Poland for publishing insulting references to a National Socialist Minister; in October 1937, Colonel Kowalevski, one of the leaders of the government party,

[10] In Poland, there lived some 3,000,000 Jews; in Rumania, the number of Jews amounted to a figure between 500,000 and 750,000. Cf. Hugh Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars*, page 289. Cambridge, 1945.

told his interviewer from the *Völkischer Beobachter*, after mentioning the brotherly feelings between the Poles and the German minority: 'For us there exists only one difference in the evaluation of the people in Poland: Christian and non-Christian.'[11] From that year until the outbreak of the war, a number of anti-Jewish measures were taken by the government, and discussion of the Jewish problem was artificially stimulated.

In Rumania, the situation in regard to the local Jews developed on similar lines. At the end of 1937, the short-lived government of Octavian Goga and Professor Cuza pursued a pro-German policy combined with ruthless antisemitic measures. It lifted the ban on the import of Nazi propaganda books; Professor Cuza, in an interview with Julius Streicher's *Fränkische Tageszeitung*, demanded a common front of all 'awakened' nations against the Jews and therefore a German-Rumanian *rapprochement*.[12] For some time after the fall of the Goga government, and after the prosecution for treason of Corneliu Codreanu—the leader of the Fascist Iron Guard—the relations between Rumania and Germany deteriorated, while the position of the Jews improved. The antisemitic measures of the former government were not revoked; they remained, for the time being, unimplemented. Nevertheless, after the fall of France, Horia Sima—Codreanu's successor—summed up the situation in the following manner: 'Absolute adherence to the Axis Powers with no swerving from this fundamental principle even if the Axis should be unfair to Rumania, because the present war is really one between the two worlds of Aryans and of Jews.'[13]

Whereas in Poland and Rumania antisemitic propaganda found a ready and receptive audience, in Hungary and Czechoslovakia the situation was, from the National Socialist point of view, less favourable. Many of the 500,000 Hungarian Jews had achieved a high degree of emancipation before 1918; even the antisemitic restrictions imposed under the government of Gömbös, in the years 1933–36, made a clear distinction between the 'Hungarian' and the newly arrived Jews. Only after the autumn of 1938, when Hungary joined Germany in the assault

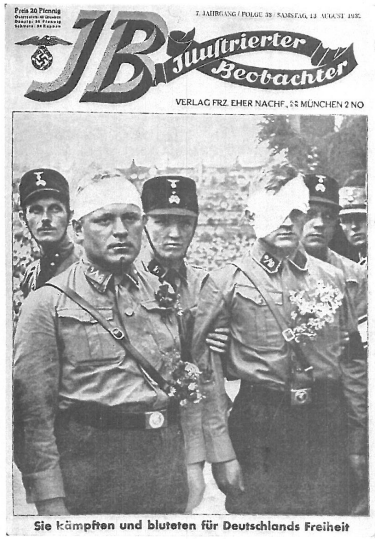
[11] *VB*, 5 October 1937; Cf. James B. Lunn, *Treachery and Antisemitism*, page 15. London, 1942.
[12] *Fränkische Tageszeitung*, 21 January 1938; James B. Lunn, op. cit., page 19.
[13] ibid., page 21.

on the territorial integrity of the Czechoslovak state, was a more ruthless antisemitic policy developed alongside Hungary's increasing dependence on Germany.

In Czechoslovakia, National Socialist antisemitic propaganda remained ineffective in the Czech areas until 1938. Here, the Jews were also better integrated than in Rumania or Poland; Masaryk, the first President, had fought incipient antisemitism under the Habsburg rule. The two Fascist groups—one of them was run by General Gajda, who had played a rather obscure role in the intervention against the Soviet government, and who declared himself, in March 1939, the Führer of the Czechs—commanded only a limited popular appeal. Even Konrad Henlein, the leader of the pro-Nazi Sudeten Germans in Czechoslovakia, thought it advisable to keep antisemitism, for some time, out of his party programme. Only after the Munich agreement in 1938, the growth of antisemitism accompanied, and contributed to, the general demoralization in public life. In Slovakia, an antisemitic party had existed before Munich: it was intensely nationalist and anti-Czech; it became the government party in the independent Slovak state under Hitler's patronage.

Indeed, the exaggerated claim Hitler made for the propaganda value of antisemitism nearly held true in eastern Europe. Here, antisemitism proved a disintegrating and demoralizing force; it accompanied the corrosion of the political system that had been established by the peace treaties, and it accelerated this process. The politicians who were receptive to its appeal thought of antisemitism as of one of the cornerstones of a right-wing popular movement; they also wanted to exploit its value as a diversion of public attention from genuine social problems. In Poland and in Rumania, especially, antisemitism remained—as it had been described in nineteenth-century Russia—an 'idiot's socialism'. In addition, it appealed to those politicans who were either dissatisfied with the post-war settlement, or who were oversensitive to the stresses it had generated: this was particularly true of Slovakia. Antisemitic agitation was of course more effective when it had a corresponding antisemitic mood to exploit. In Hungary Nazi propaganda had to appeal to 'revisionism'—the dissatisfaction with the peace treaty—rather than to the underdeveloped local antisemitism. But whatever the degree of

V. 'Russia arms! . . . and Germany?' 1933



VI. 'They fought and bled for Germany's freedom.' 1932

development and the reasons for local antisemitism may have been, it always went hand in hand with a policy of understanding with Hitler's Germany, a policy which always presented an assault on the *status quo*.

Anti-Communism was the other article of home propaganda which was vigorously exported. In National Socialist ideology, there existed an organic connexion between the two themes; the conflict with Communism became the battle royal for the National Socialists. Their leaders often said that the movement had grown up in this struggle, in which they expected it to grow stronger and finally to triumph. Certainly, the Communists were, together with the Jews, the main target of Nazi violence and abuse. But whatever the intensity of the actual political engagement may have been, the National Socialists came to look upon it as a propaganda gold mine. The campaign had a wide and varied target. It was aimed, in Nazi terminology, at '*Gesamtmarxismus*,' that embraced all Marxist phenomena, from, say, a Communist cell in a Berlin working-class suburb to the Soviet Union.

On his own evidence, Hitler learned to detest working-class organizations in Vienna before the First World War. There exists no ground for doubting it. In Vienna, he descended far below the level that his lower-middle-class parents' house had provided for him. He looked at his fellow-workers' lives and politics from above: he was among them, but he never regarded himself as one of them. Their organizations were run on Marxist—for Hitler, this meant Jewish—lines; they professed to be international and they showed the young man the way back to his nation.[14] We can assume that Hitler was well on the way to an intense hatred of everything that was even remotely connected with Marxism before he entered politics.

And when he did so, revolution and counter-revolution were very much in the air. He looked on German Social Democracy, another aspect of *Gesamtmarxismus*, as having collaborated in bringing about the defeat and ignominy of the German nation; he witnessed the Communist bid for power in Bavaria. This, and the gradual establishment of Communist rule over Russia, broadened the target without altering, for Hitler, its nature. And Hitler's own views on the subject were doubtless

[14] *Mein Kampf*, page 48.

buttressed by the influence of men like Alfred Rosenberg and Max Scheubner-Richter, German refugees from the Baltic provinces. By 1921, anti-Communism was firmly established as one of the major themes of Nazi propaganda.[15] In the summer of that year posters appeared in Munich inviting its citizens to a public meeting:

'We German National Socialists demand that the Russian people be given help, not by supporting its present government, but by the elimination of its present corrupters. Those who today give for Russia do not give for the Russian worker but for his exploiter, the Jewish commissar. German fellow citizens, come on Thursday 4 August 1921, to the great public giant demonstration at the Zirkus Krone. Speaker: Herr Adolf Hitler, on the Dying Soviet Russia.'[16] The National Socialists were now ready to fight the 'Marxists': the rules of the conflict and its peculiar characteristics were developed before Hitler left Munich, at the end of 1923, to serve a term of imprisonment. In a clash of this kind, marked by physical violence from beginning to end, the Nazis never concerned themselves too much with the theories of Marxism. There is no reason to believe that either Hitler or his leading expert on Russia, Rosenberg, ever read a single book or article by Marx or Engels.

At first, the German Social Democracy occupied a leading position among the phenomena of *Gesamtmarxismus*: it was gradually replaced by Bolshevism. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler still treated them as of approximately the same importance; Bolshevism, however, was quite clearly becoming the threat of the future. In it, Hitler wrote, 'we ought to recognize the kind of attempt which is being made by the Jew in the twentieth century to secure dominion over the world'.[17] To this menace, Russia had already succumbed; it was now 'hanging steadily over Germany'.[18] Otherwise, apart from expressing his disgust with the

[15] Cf. Walter Laqueur, 'Hitler and Russia 1919–23', in *The Survey*, October 1962.
[16] It was one of the posters reprinted in the first edition of *Mein Kampf*. The poster appendix disappeared from the subsequent editions of the book; in 1939, in the jubilee edition of *Mein Kampf* which marked Hitler's fiftieth birthday, the appendix was again reproduced, with the exception of the poster quoted above. The first moves were then being made in the direction of German–Soviet understanding. See C. Caspar's article—'*Mein Kampf* a Best Seller'—in *Jewish Social Studies*. New York, January 1958.
[17] *Mein Kampf*, page 539.
[18] ibid., page 538.

'Bolshevization of art' ('If the creative spirit of the Periclean age be manifested in the Parthenon, then the Bolshevist era is manifested through its cubist grimace'),[19] Hitler did not have much to say on the subject.

His attitude towards the first victim of Bolshevism—Russia—was ambiguous. He wrote of 'a gang of Jewish literati and financial bandits' (i.e. the Bolsheviks) dominating 'a great people'.[20] But in another context, this great people was demoted to the status of an inferior race. Discussing Germany's eastern policy, Hitler wrote: 'But when we speak of a new territory in Europe today we must principally think of Russia and the border states subject to her. Destiny itself seems to wish to point out the way for us here. In delivering Russia over to Bolshevism, fate robbed the Russian people of that intellectual class which had once created the Russian State and was the guarantee of its existence. For the Russian State was not organized by the constructive political talent of the Slav element in Russia, but was more a marvellous exemplification of the capacity for State-building possessed by the Germanic element in a race of inferior worth. . . . For centuries Russia owed a source of its livelihood as a State to the Germanic nucleus of its governing class. But this nucleus is now almost wholly broken up and abolished. The Jew has taken its place.'[21]

Although Hitler's attitude towards Communism had been firmly established by the time of the 're-establishment' of the party in 1925, there still existed certain striking deviations inside the National Socialist organization. They usually occurred on the Strassers' side of the party: in this connexion, the development of Goebbels's ideas is of interest. While working for the Strassers, Goebbels was a socialist rather than a nationalist: he detested western capitalism more than Bolshevism. The Locarno pact was for him, a 'horrible blend of deceit, meanness, infamy and hypocrisy', which meant that the Germans would become 'the mercenaries against Russia on the battlefields of capitalism'; anyway, Goebbels went on, it was better to 'go down with Bolshevism than live in eternal capitalist servitude'.[22]

[19] *Mein Kampf*, page 221. [20] ibid., page 274. [21] ibid., page 533.
[22] H. Heiber (editor), *The Early Goebbels Diaries*, entry for 23 October 1925. London, 1962.

As late as February 1926, Goebbels was horrified by Hitler's views on Russia and Bolshevism, and on private property; in short, by his leader's 'reactionary' attitudes.[23] At the same time Goebbels was fighting hard the 'red rabble' in the streets and at Nazi meetings: the fight, as well as Hitler's offer of a high party office in Berlin, combined to secure his orthodoxy. But he had learned a lot from his adversaries. The posters for his first meeting in Berlin could hardly be distinguished from similar Communist productions.

As the post-war revolutionary tide began to ebb in central Europe, Hitler's interest in fighting the 'Bolshevik threat' increased. In the last years of the decade Nazi agitation against *Gesamtmarxismus*, and Communism in particular, was intensified, until in 1932 it culminated in the creation of an anti-Communist psychosis in Germany. The *Reichspropagandaleitung* started running 'anti-Marxist courses' under the direction of its expert, Paul Meier-Benneckenstein, who later rose, partly because of the importance of his subject, to the Presidency of the *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik*. The courses aimed at the 'achievement of a militant and systematic agitation and propaganda against the *SPD* and the *KPD*'.[24] The 'attack on the Marxist front' took place both before and after January 1933. Before that date, it had camouflaged Hitler's real aim—the achievement of political power—as well as helped him to achieve it; after January, it facilitated Hitler's claim for absolute power. The campaign was highly rewarding: in 1933 some sections of the German body politic, the *Deutschnational* party, the industrialists, and the military, handed power over to Hitler because they believed that he would save the country from Communism.[25]

Of necessity, this agitation had to exaggerate the gravity of the Communist threat. The Nazi propagandists succeeded in creating a pseudo-situation, in which a Communist revolution was imminent. They could not afford to take any note of the facts of the situation. At no elections between 1930 and 1932 did the *KPD*—the Communist Party of Germany—gain more than

[23] *The Early Goebbels Diaries*, entry for 15 February 1926.
[24] *Unser Wille und Weg*, January 1932. Paul Meier-Benneckenstein, *Unser Angriff auf die marxistische Front*.
[25] M. Domarus, op. cit., page 645.

17·6 per cent of the total poll; the party was incapable of waging a conclusive fight with the National Socialists, or indeed with anyone else. Stalin was preoccupied with internal Russian problems; it is probable that he disliked the idea of a united left-wing front in Germany, and that he regarded a nationalist government that would first concentrate on breaking the peace treaties as more suitable for his own ends.[26]

There of course existed some legitimate grounds for a sharp animosity between the Nazis and the Communists. They had fought each other in the streets of Germany for many years; the National Socialists found themselves, during the years of the economic crisis, in direct competition with the Communists for the favours of the industrial workers, who were then deserting the *SPD*. By grossly exaggerating the Communist threat, the Nazi propagandists forged an extremely effective political weapon. Hitler was described as the saviour of Germany from Communism; what he had done for Germany, he could easily do for Europe.

There existed the same continuity between the campaign against Communism in Germany and abroad as in the case of the drive against the Jews; there existed the same disinterest among the National Socialist leaders as to its precise international implications. In April 1933 Hitler's government turned its attention to the foreign scene; a secret circular was sent out by the Foreign Ministry to all its missions abroad, enquiring into the local propaganda situation.[27] A detailed reply from Moscow arrived in Berlin in August:[28] the Ministry of Propaganda took no notice of it. The report dealt with the possibilities of propaganda to the Soviet Union, and this was of no interest to Goebbels. His main pursuit—at any rate until July 1941[29] was propaganda about the Soviet Union and about Communism for the benefit of third parties. For them, the Communist threat was publicized and inflated.

A few months after the destruction of the German Communist Party in the spring of 1933, the *Antikomintern*—the Union of

[26] Cf. 'Moscow-Berlin 1933', *The Survey*, October 1962.
[27] 26 April 1933; *Presseabteilung*, 86774/E0069838–4.
[28] Report from Moscow to the *AA*, 22 August 1933, 8677H/E607140–161.
[29] See page 167.

German Anti-Communist Societies—was founded under the patronage of Goebbels. Its function was 'to combat the Communist International and its allies',[30] i.e. the Jews, and, as an afterthought, the Freemasons. It was a well-endowed society; soon after its foundation it acquired spacious headquarters in Berlin N W 40, In den Zelten 9[a]. It housed the Department Soviet Union—it was also referred to as the Institute for Scientific Research on the Soviet Union (*Institut zur wissenschaftlichen Erforschung der Sowjetunion*)—which was made up of specialists in Russian economy, history, etc., or on propaganda relating to Russia. The department also contained a well-stocked library, a press-cuttings section, and a service for monitoring Soviet broadcasts. In it, propaganda and research were inextricably mixed: but, most important, it was intended to generate propaganda about the Soviet Union, not *to* it. The *Antikomintern*'s second department—the press section—ran various publications, such as the news bulletin which appeared twice a month in German, English, and French, as well as the twice-weekly information sheet on the Soviet Union; the foreign department looked after connexions with similar organizations and private individuals abroad. And finally, there existed a large department for 'antisemitic action': anti-Communist propaganda was, for the National Socialists, unthinkable without its antisemitic concomitant.

Although Communism had been defeated in Germany, its usefulness as a target for Nazi propaganda had by no means ended. From now on, the *Antikomintern* was to serve as 'the most advanced position of the international anti-Bolshevik movement'.[31] The work of the *Antikomintern* was of course firmly based on the official propaganda policy: the organization performed, however, certain important auxiliary functions. It could supply details, whenever necessary, for the rough outlines sketched by the *Promi*; it could lend pseudo-scientific gravamen to the lightweight pronouncements of the propagandists; it could, if need be, appear to pursue a policy independent

[30] A letter from Dr. Klein of the *Antikomintern* to the *Reichssendeleitung*, dated 16 October 1935. *Reichsrundfunkkammer* (*RRK*) papers, file No. 11980, at the Allied Document Centre, Berlin.
[31] *Im Kampf gegen den Weltbolschewismus*, a publisher's report, page 2. Berlin, 1936.

of the party line. During the twenty months after August 1939, when the Stalin-Hitler Pact was operative, the *Antikomintern* still carried on its activities, if in a more subdued and modified manner. In this respect, the organization's independence of action was of course severely limited. The changes in the name and sub-heading of its house-magazine faithfully reflected the changing predilections of the Ministry of Propaganda. Until August 1939 it was called *Contra Komintern*, the 'Organ of the Anti-Bolshevik World Movement';[32] in the following month it became *Die Aktion*, with an eccentric sub-heading a 'Newspaper against Plutocracy and National Incitement',[33] which was altered, in December of the following year to 'Newspaper for a New Europe'. In September 1941 the circle was completed when this newspaper appeared together with a supplement called *Contra Komintern, Kampforgan der antibolschewistischen Weltbewegung*.

Before the big anti-Communist campaign that was launched at the 1936 *Parteitag*,[34] the newly founded society concerned itself mainly with publishing or sponsoring the publication of books. *Bewaffneter Aufstand!* (Armed Uprising!) was written by the *Antikomintern*'s, chairman, Dr. Adolf Ehrt. In 1933, it was the society's most highly prized propaganda asset: by the end of the year, the fourth edition of the book—the fourth set of 50,000 copies—had been published; in the following year, an additional 75,000 copies were printed in German, and 160,000 in English, French, Swedish, Dutch, and Spanish. The book's sub-title was 'Revelations about the Communist Attempt at a *Coup d'État* on the Eve of the National Revolution'; it was based on a passage from Hitler's proclamation on 1 September 1933: 'There were weeks, at the beginning of the year, when we passed by, within a hair's breadth, the abyss of Bolshevik revolution.' This form of National Socialist propaganda was more vicious and gruesome than any other. The enemy was contemptible, and it had to be battered to death by the blows of words; photographs of stores of weapons, of degutted houses, of dead stormtroopers were distributed throughout the book with morbid regularity. In this respect, the second of the *Antikomintern*'s much advertised

[32] *Kampforgan der antibolschewistischen Weltbewegung.*
[33] *Kampfblatt gegen Plutokratie und Volkerverhetzung.*
[34] See page 92.

publications by Ehrt and Max Roden, entitled '*Terror—A Bloody Chronicle of Marxism in Germany*' (Berlin 1934) sank even lower. It set a new standard in atrocities propaganda. Page after page of revolting, detailed photographs of the stormtroopers who perished in street-fights were printed to prove that Marxism is evil.

These publications were intended for export rather than for the home market; in the introduction to *Terror*, the joint authors expressed the opinion that 'The international view of the new Germany still suffers because of an unusual misunderstanding. Nourished from contaminated sources, even the well-disposed press of other nations is guilty of an enormous distortion of history, which is keenly supported by the enemies of National Socialism and by the opponents of national honour and freedom.' The historical error, it was said, consisted of regarding the period of the Weimar régime as a time of freedom, whereas the truth was now declared to be that, in these years, the Marxists conducted a campaign of 'uninterrupted bloody terror against the German nation'.

A few months before the launching of the international anti-Communist drive, the *Antikomintern*'s activities were intensified, and they began to receive more attention in the German press. The *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung*—the equivalent of the *Financial Times*—obviously commanded a readership susceptible to anti-Communist propaganda, and it usually brought the most detailed reports on the *Antikomintern*'s activities. On 10 November 1935, it published a characteristic declaration by the *Antikomintern*. Its opening paragraph read:

'On 7 November the Soviet state celebrated the eighteenth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. The cannon-fodder of the Communist world revolution were driven across the Red Square. Tanks and bomber-aircraft were paraded. The Internationale was sung. In a telegram to Stalin from the official opening meeting, the expansion of Communism over the whole world was again stated to be the target.' After the juxtaposition of the plight of the Russians under the Soviet system with the jubilant, healthy Nazi Germany, the declaration concluded: 'The Soviet propaganda everywhere is trying to undermine the foundations of states, and to gather strength for new advances by

employing the united-front slogans. As before, world revolution is the target. Today, the knowledge has started to dawn everywhere that Bolshevism is not a "Russian" affair, but that—because of its international character—it is resolved to interfere with the life of every nation. And everywhere, the forces of defence against the imperialist claims to power of the Third International are rallying. The struggle against the Comintern as the Bolshevik centre of subversion and murder has to summon all the forces that do not want to see their nations and states sold out to Communist chaos. The aim is a broad front against international Communism.'

At the same time, the *Antikomintern* began to extend its activities to broadcasting. On 16 October 1935, one of its chief executives, a Dr. Klein, wrote to Dr. Scheiner at the *Reichssendeleitung*, informing him of the activities of his organization up to date,[35] and adding: 'It is therefore essential that, apart from the press, exhibitions, lecture tours etc., broadcasting should be, before everything else, put at the service of this work.' Klein indicated that the *Antikomintern* should have, in November, some thirty topics ready for radio talks and plays; they included a play about mass deportations in the Soviet Union, a talk on the 'Kaganovich dynasty', another on 'race-pollution as a principle', and one on 'Trotsky, the eternal Jew'.

The *Reichssendeleitung* took up Klein's suggestion: in the following years the *Antikomintern* became the main supplier of this type of material to the German broadcasting system. It was constructed on the same lines as the *Antikomintern* publications; although it was of necessity repetitive it added a certain amount of colour to Nazi broadcasting. '*Bolschewismus*' was publicized as the main enemy of the human race, and the depths it had reached were contrasted with the achievements of National Socialism. Perhaps the best example of this type of broadcast was transmitted in the networked 'report on the week' on 31 July 1937. It was entitled 'At First They Were Seven!' (*Erst waren es Sieben!*—it referred to No. 7 party card carried by Hitler), the fourth *Antikomintern* broadcast in connexion with an exhibition, then touring German towns, called 'Bolshevism'. This is the beginning of the script:

[35] *RRK* papers at the Allied Document Centre, Berlin, File No. 11980

First voice: When you, dear listener, walk through the various rooms of '*Bolschewismus*'—

Second voice: —when you have seen the Italian section, and taken in the struggle of fascism against Bolshevism—

First: when in the Hungary room the rule of terror by one Bela Kun has come to life for you,

A female voice: when you have been through the days of horror of the Munich Soviet Republic—

First: . . . and the atrocity of the Spanish civil war . . .

Female: . . . and the abominable suffering of the Russian nation itself—

First: when you have seen all these horrors, this poverty, this frightful blood sacrifice of Bolshevik terror all over the world—

Second: . . . then you come to the end of your journey in a room that shows pictures of the Third Reich—

First: and the frightful nightmare lifts—as if you came out of a dark cellar again into the bright light and the sun—

Second: . . . and then you go on and remain standing for a while in front of a picture of the Führer—

In the following months, from the beginning of October 1937 until the end of the year, the *Antikomintern* scriptwriters were busy. The *Deutschlandsender* transmitted seven of their broadcasts; Breslau and Königsberg five each, Berlin and Hamburg two each, and Leipzig, Stuttgart, Munich and Cologne one each.[36]

Since the campaign against *Gesamtmarxismus* was never far from the centre of Nazi propaganda—it was consistently used, inside Germany, to reinforce the loyalty of the Germans to Hitler's régime—the services of an organization like the *Antikomintern* were indispensable; there were, however, times when the campaign was given a special prominence. The *Reichsparteitag* in September 1936 was devoted to it. The National Socialist régime was more confident than at any other point in its three years' existence: the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland had been successfully occupied and a vote of confidence in the Nazi government had been passed in the *Reichstag* elections in March; the spectacle of the Olympic Games in Berlin had been brought to its impres-

[36] Cf. Dr. R. Kommass, report of 24 January 1938, *RRK*, File No. 11980.

sive conclusion. The hostilities in Spain had just been opened; the anti-Bolshevik campaign was unfolded against the background of the first moves in the civil war.

The campaign was launched a few days before the opening of the party rally. On 4 September the *Völkischer Beobachter* printed a front-page headline story, entitled: 'Soviet Officials as Railway Robbers'. The story was even slighter than its title: the Russians had placed the Japanese Olympic team, returning to Tokyo across Siberia, under strict supervision, and they impounded a portrait of Hitler and a *Hitlerjugend* dagger that had been presented, in Berlin, to one of the team's leaders. From then on the number of news items dealing with the Soviet Union increased; on 8 September, the first day of the party rally, an exhibition on the theme 'World Enemy No. 1—World Bolshevism' was opened in Nürnberg. In his address, the Deputy *Reichspropagandaleiter* set the tone for the anti-Soviet campaign: 'Today, Germany is the unshakable fortress of peace and order against Moscow'.[37]

The civil war in Spain provided Hitler with the peg for the anti-Communist campaign. In his proclamation—it was read to the rally, as usual, by *Gauleiter* Adolf Wagner—he described a situation in Spain that bore only a remote relation to reality. Franco, he declared, had not attempted a Fascist *coup* against the legal government; the Soviet Union had invaded the country.

'We see around us the signs of evil times. What we have preached about the greatest world danger of this second millenium of our Christian history . . . is becoming a frightful reality. Everywhere, the undermining activities of the Bolshevik string-pullers are beginning to take effect. At a time when bourgeois statesmen talk of non-interference, an international Jewish revolutionary centre in Moscow is attempting, through broadcasts and thousands of financial and agitation channels, to revolutionize this continent. Do not tell us that we, by continuously pointing out these facts, want to develop in Germany a psychosis of fear. Even today we are not afraid of a Bolshevik invasion of Germany, not because we do not believe in it, but because we are determined to make the nation so strong that it—as National Socialism has already done away with this world

[37] *VB*, 9 September 1936.

conspiracy internally—will defeat any attack from the outside with the most brutal determination.'[38]

In his speech on 10 September, Goebbels elaborated on Hitler's ideas in some detail. He laid special stress on the international aspects of the Bolshevik threat; its underlying thesis was that 'Bolshevism must be destroyed if Europe is to become sound again'.[39] He said at once that 'What we understand by ideals and *Weltanschauung* in general has nothing to do with what is usually referred to as Bolshevism. As far as that is concerned, it is a pathological, criminal nonsense, demonstrably thought up by the Jews and now, under Jewish leadership, it aims at the destruction of civilized European nations and the creation of an international Jewish world domination.'

Goebbels took pains to present Communist parties outside the Soviet Union as the 'foreign legions of the Comintern', and as the gravest threat to national life. They had—because Moscow was behind them—unlimited financial resources at their disposal; they used the same subtle propaganda techniques as Moscow. Indeed, countries that allowed strong Communist parties to operate on their territories were more or less 'under the dictate of Stalin'. The propaganda of these parties was international and aggressive; it was designed to mislead as to the true nature of Communism. It demanded 'maximal guarantees for peace' and yet, at the same time, the Soviet government indulged in an 'obviously imperialist arming'. It was impossible to come to an agreement with Bolshevism: although Goebbels said that National Socialism was not for export, only a country that adopted the 'social form of national organization' could fight Bolshevism successfully. Four days later, on 14 September, Hitler's concluding speech to the rally dealt with the Bolshevik threat again.

Indeed, the main aim of National Socialist propaganda at the time was to create an anti-Communist psychosis in Europe in the same way as it had created one inside Germany in the years 1932 and 1933. In 1936, the Nazi propagandists launched a powerful onslaught on the Soviet Union. It was designed to secure international support for Hitler, and it achieved some remarkable successes: it is likely that, without this preparatory move, the Nazi conquests of 1938 and 1939 would have been

[38] M. Domarus, op. cit., page 638.

[39] *V B*, 11 September 1936.

difficult, or perhaps impossible, to accomplish. Nevertheless, the close connexion of the anti-Soviet campaign with the civil war in Spain was its most serious flaw. The insinuation that the Soviet Union had somehow invaded Spain and that the Communists were trying to overthrow the established order did not sound very convincing to the supporters of the legal Spanish government.

The force of the campaign continued unabated throughout 1936: the German–Japanese Anti-Comintern Pact was presented as an instrument for combating world Communism. Although, in the following year, the colonial question started being given more prominence than before, it was complementary, from the propaganda point of view, to the anti-Communist drive. On the one hand the Nazi régime showed itself as reasonable, and prepared to negotiate, even though it regarded its demands as fully justified; on the other, it was presented as an uncompromising enemy of Bolshevism, the perpetrator of chaos and unreason. At one point, the two aspects of Nazi propaganda were brought together. In October 1937 the directives issued to speakers by the *Reichspropagandaleitung*[40] included one on the 'Bolshevization of the Colonial Empires'. It stated that Bolshevism, apart from aiming at independent countries, was hard at work for a breakthrough for its ideas in colonial territories. Under the slogan of the liberation of the natives from imperialist exploitation it had begun to revolutionize the natives of the colonial possessions. According to the directives for Nazi speakers, the dissembling promises and instigations of Communism fell, especially in these areas, on fertile soil.

In the years before the Hitler–Stalin Pact of 1939, the anti-Communist propaganda conducted by the National Socialists pushed the hard facts of the diplomatic relations between Germany and Russia into the background. Rather than attempting to explain foreign policy on its own merits, the Nazi propagandists adopted the technique of creating popular images of foreign countries: they were made additionally inflexible by the admixture of National Socialist ideology. The Soviet Union received a

[40] *Aufklärungs und Redner-Informationsmaterial der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP und des Propagandaamtes der Deutschen Arbeitsfront*, Lieferung 10 October 1937, Blatt 4/33.

great part of the propagandists' attention. Although this technique had the advantage of being easily intelligible, it was found lacking when sudden switches of foreign policy had to be publicized.

In 1939, Germany's relations with the Soviet Union strained the ingenuity of the *Promi*. Propaganda about the Soviet Union could no longer be regarded as a substitute for diplomacy: it had to follow closely diplomatic manœuvres. At the 18th Party Congress on 10 March 1939, Stalin made the first of the intricate moves that finally brought Germany and Russia together. Until late in May, Nazi propaganda with regard to the Soviet Union showed an unusual hesitation. On 12 May the *Reichspropagandaamt* asked the editors of German periodicals 'not to occupy themselves in any way—therefore not even in the form of quotations from the foreign press—with the foreign rumours of a *rapprochement* between Germany and Russia'.[41] Again, on 25 May, editors of German newspapers were advised that 'As long as the result of English–Russian negotiations is not known, a reserved attitude must prevail. Therefore no prophecies about their possible outcome! The press can, however, hint in the commentaries at the threat created by this alliance of England with Bolshevism.'[42]

By the end of May, the Germans appeared to be entirely exasperated with the Russians, and they made a determined effort to settle the issue one way or the other. They opened negotiations, with the Soviet Chargé d'Affaires in Berlin, on 30 May; at the same time, they instructed their agent in Moscow to resume discussions on economic matters.[43] On the same day, the *Reichspropagandaleitung* issued rather a pessimistic directive concerning the government's attitude towards the Soviet Union: 'For reasons already known the press controversy against the Soviet Union has recently been held back. This reserve can be—as soon as the situation is cleared up after the inclusion of the Soviet Union in the system of encirclement—again given up. Our supposition, that the Soviet Union wanted to gain as much as it could by its policy of procrastination, has been proved

[41] *RPA*, 12 May 1939.
[42] ibid., 25 May 1939.
[43] Cf. G. L. Weinberg, *Germany and the Soviet Union*, page 31. Leiden, 1954.

right. This directive does not, however, mean that a new campaign against Bolshevism should start in the German press in, so to speak, an apoplectic manner; it should be regarded as a basis for our attitude towards Soviet policy in the near future.'[44]

On the following day—31 May—the favourable Soviet reaction to the diplomatic initiative from Berlin removed the hesitant note from German propaganda. Newspaper editors were informed: 'It has already been announced that at the moment the time is not ripe for an anti-Soviet campaign. The press is therefore asked that, in connexion with reports on the "Condor Legion", animosity to Bolshevism, rather than to the Soviets, should be referred to: the ideological character of this fight should be stressed.'[45]

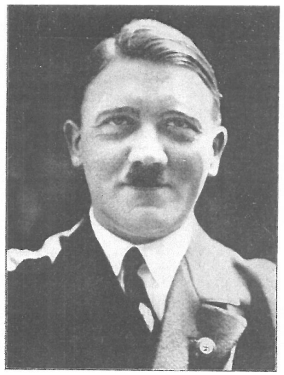
For more than ten weeks after the issue of this directive the Nazi propagandists had to maintain a reserved attitude towards the Soviet Union. In the meantime other pursuits began to occupy the propagandists. On 14 August, the first directive concerning German territorial demands on Poland was issued to the press. On the same day, negotiations were set in motion that finally led to the series of agreements concluded between Germany and Russia. In the evening of 23 August, the Non-Aggression Pact was signed in Moscow: the day before, the first of a number of detailed directives was released. Journalists were advised to comment on the significance of the Pact on the following lines: 'The news has acted like a bombshell all over the world. The decision represents a sensational turning point in the relations between the two countries, and it reaches back to the traditional community of German-Russian interests. The historical premises for such a formulation of policy have to be gone into deeply. . . . It can certainly be stressed that the announcement found a deep response in the nation. While the democracies talked, we and the Russians have acted.'[46] Further, the journalists were informed that the Pact was a natural outcome of the negotiations between the two countries on economic matters; while these were being discussed, the desire, on both sides, for an extension of the understanding to political affairs came to the foregound. The co-operation between the two states was also founded on their

[44] *RPA*, 30 May 1939.
[45] ibid., 31 May 1939.
[46] ibid., 22 August 1939.

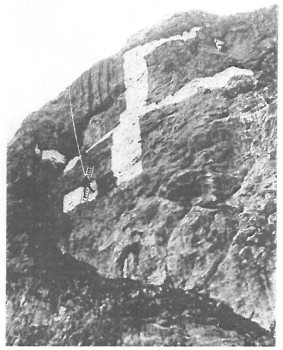
respective economic structures: agricultural Russia was complementary to the highly industrialized Germany. At this point, the journalists were reminded not to touch on the ideological differences between the two states. They were also forbidden to speculate on the changes in the international situation, or on the future of the Anglo–French military mission in Moscow. In the routine instructions on 24 August the editors were again reminded that any speculation on the effect of the Non-Aggression Pact on other countries and on the Anti-Comintern Pact were to be scrupulously avoided. No quotations on the subject from the foreign press were to be used; 'favourable comments from friendly and neutral countries, on the other hand, can be naturally passed on in detail'.[47] Approved pictures of Ribbentrop and Molotov were, at last, released.

On the same day, however, the *Reichspropagandaleitung* issued a more detailed set of instructions. The triumphant tone was kept up. The Non-Aggression Pact, it was said, would become the cornerstone of the relations between the two countries. The speed with which the negotiations were concluded was pointed at as having been especially impressive; it was also a proof of the earnestness and openness with which the contracting parties approached the various problems. There were to be no more diplomatic 'by-ways' for the two partners; their path lay straight and narrow before them. 'The hopes that were still nourished yesterday in the foreign press', the directive announced, 'that the German–Russian negotiations would be endlessly protracted, whereas the English–French–Russian military negotiations might achieve a surprising conclusion, were completely destroyed by last night's events. At this point newspapers can certainly let a quiet malice [*Schadenfreude*] ring through, but it should not form the basis of the commentaries.' German newspapers were further to point out that consultations between the two partners were foreseen in the Pact, and they were to stress that the document was to remain valid for ten years in the first instance, becoming operative at once. It followed from the Pact, the directive pointed out rather ominously, that Germany and Russia would settle between them the outstanding problems in their spheres of influence in eastern Europe:

[47] *RPA*, 24 August 1939.



VII*a*. Respectable Hitler. Forty-four years old, Germany's Chancellor. 1933



VII*b*. Austrian Nazis paint a *Hakenkreuz* on a rock face. 1934

VIII*a*. *SA* troopers and *Stürmer* posters. Party Rally, Nürnberg. 1935

VIII*b*. 'Jews are not wanted here.' 1935

the time was not, however, suitable for a deeper exploration, in the German press, of the various opportunities the situation offered. The deepening of the co-operation between Berlin and Moscow was to occasion an increasingly warmer tone in regard to the Soviet Union. The *DNB*—the official Nazi news agency—report that brought a quotation from *Pravda* concerning the ideological differences between the two régimes was not to be used by the journalists as the starting point for a polemic against the Russians.

A supplementary set of instructions filled in some interesting detail. Although the journalists were again strongly requested to make the tone of their observations on the improvement of German–Russian relations 'a degree warmer and more sympathetic'; they were advised, at the same time, to bear in mind the 'attitude of the German reading public up to date'. The public was bound to be puzzled by a flood of jubilant articles celebrating the newly-found friendship: this was why the theme should be entrusted only to the ablest members of the editorial staff. The 'warming up of the tone' had to be achieved delicately. The impression that the friendship between Germany and Russia was merely a tactical manœuvre was to be avoided by every means; the survival of the idea of co-operation between the two countries over the past hundred years was to be regarded with satisfaction.

The campaign to make the Pact acceptable to the German public was regulated to the smallest detail. Photographs from Moscow had to be approved by the *Hauptreferat Bildpresse* of the Propaganda Ministry before they were used; pictures could be released more freely only when the public was 'psychologically prepared'. There had also been many enquiries, to the press department of the *Reichspropagandaamt*, as to whether the new Russian policy meant that the publication of reminiscences of the battle of Tannenberg, on the occasion of its anniversary, were undesirable. The answer was that they could be published, as 'the treatment of the military and strategic achievement of the German military leadership and the soldierly qualities of the army can never spoil the relations between two brave nations'. There were therefore no objections to the publication of articles on the Tannenberg engagement: they had to be, however,

tactful. No allusions were to be made to the basic causes of the conflict; terms like 'Cossack hordes' were entirely out of place.

The diplomatic negotiations with the Russians continued throughout the following month: on 28 September a treaty of friendship was signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov, who announced, on the same day, that the definitive settlement of the Polish question had created the basis for a lasting peace in eastern Europe.

By then Nazi propaganda had, however, changed gear. A few days before the German invasion of Poland on 1 September, the topic of German–Russian understanding was dropped, and the second-string campaign—it was concerned with Poland, Danzig and other related topics—began, at the end of August, to move into its place. Parts of Hitler's speech to the *Reichstag* on 1 September were still inspired by the sentiments of the Russian–German friendship campaign of the previous week; nevertheless, both the National Socialist leaders and the German public found it difficult to keep up such sentiments. The twenty months of friendship between the two countries formed a kind of propaganda interlude, without connecting links with the propaganda line before August 1939 or after June 1941. During this period the Russians annexed the Baltic States, marched into eastern Poland, and occupied Bessarabia and northern Bukovina: although they were acting in accordance with the agreements with Berlin, the public reactions in Germany to the Russian moves were highly unfavourable. Only the most careful direction of every means of political publicity kept these public attitudes under control.[48]

When this self-restraint was at last given up, a sigh of relief was clearly audible. It was sounded in the speech by Hitler on 22 June 1941, the day on which Germany invaded Russia; '. . . sentenced to a long silence lasting many months, the hour has at last come when I can speak openly. . . . You have all felt that this step' (i.e. the invasion of Russia) 'was a bitter and difficult one for me to take. The German nation has never harboured inimical feelings towards the peoples of Russia. The Jewish—Bolshevik rulers alone have endeavoured, from Moscow

[48] W. Hagemann, op. cit., page 272.

during the past two decades, to set on fire not only Germany, but the whole of Europe.'[49]

The all-clear signal had been given: later on the same day, the press was instructed, rather breathlessly, that 'One should remind the reader that the Pact with Russia was never for us a question of ideology. We have never admired Soviet institutions, and there can be no question of some internal vacillation. National Socialism has grown up in the struggle against Bolshevism. The agitation was stopped only during the period of truce, and now we are returning to our original precepts. Plutocracy and Bolshevism have a common Jewish origin, their ideas and aims are the same. One can reach back to the old programme of the Comintern, its role in 1918, its activity in Spain, etc. The true feelings of the German nation—which it had formerly entertained towards Bolshevism—must be once again set free. The methods used by Bolshevism today are the same as those [employed] against us in the internal political struggle. We must prove that the mean game played by Bolshevism has never altered, in regard to other nations as well, over the past twenty years. Formerly, we presented Bolshevism without its mask, and we can return to that [practice] today. Regardless of treachery, they wanted to deceive and betray us, there can be no doubt about that. Bolshevism has waited for its hour. We have proof that it would have stabbed us in the back.'[50]

Although no great enthusiasm for the war on Russia was evident—there existed a certain weariness and concern over the threat of war on two fronts—the hate campaign against the Soviet Union unleashed immediately after the invasion of Russia was quite unnecessary. The propaganda switch in the summer of 1941 was more acceptable to the German public than that performed some two years before.

The campaign against *Gesamtmarxismus* ran like a red thread through the texture of Nazi agitation. From humble beginnings —the back-street brawls in Munich in the early nineteen-twenties—it grew into the biggest operation mounted by the National Socialist propagandists. It became a drive mainly against Communism and the Soviet state; twice before the war it

[49] *V.B.*, 23 June 1941.
[50] W. Hagemann, op. cit., page 273.

was given a special prominence: on both occasions, the magnitude of the threat to Germany and to Europe was grossly exaggerated. The anti-Communist campaign brought returns, for the Nazis, beyond the dreams of avarice. In 1932, it helped Hitler to achieve power in Germany, and in the following year to establish and consolidate a National Socialist dictatorship. The campaign that was anti-Communist in theory, and as a propaganda effect, became anti-liberal in political practice. In 1933 it became a witch-hunt that aided the suppression of every kind of opposition to Hitler's rule and the establishment of a one-party state. It was used for diversionary purposes in a similar way as was the antisemitic campaign.

Indeed, the two propaganda themes were intended to reinforce each other: Hitler knew that it was necessary to focus the attention of the nation on a single enemy; it is possible that he thought of both the themes as equally effective. In practice, however, they had to be treated separately: the intensity of the antisemitic campaign could remain more even because its target was nebulous. The anti-Communist campaign, on the other hand, had to be suspended or modified according to the demands of the diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Outside Germany, the antisemitic campaign appears to have been less effective than the anti-Communist drive. The National Socialist propagandists did not possess sufficiently reliable information on the effectiveness of their propaganda abroad; anyway, they did not seem greatly concerned. They were content to export the themes of home propaganda, and they expected them to be just as effective abroad.

On the whole, the antisemitic drive disappointed the high claims Hitler had made for it. It was effective—but only in combination with a variety of other factors—in eastern Europe; elsewhere, it repelled rather than attracted. The international anti-Communist campaign, on the other hand, was more rewarding. It convinced many Europeans that Hitler's dictatorship was more acceptable than Stalin's and that Germany—'the bulwark against Bolshevism'—should be allowed to grow from strength to strength. Indeed, the same section of the European public came to see Continental politics exclusively in terms of a clash between Communism and National Socialism. The Nazis never

bothered, however, to understand either the intricacy or the appeal of Marxist doctrine. Their anti-Communist agitation in Germany was marked by abuse and exaggeration and underscored with physical violence. It was brutal and unsubtle, but it was never meant to be anything else. It was intended to warn off non-Communists, inside and outside Germany, rather than to destroy Communism in Russia.