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self into trouble with the pacifist critics of Churchill in the House of Commons.

The German-speaking news commentators of the B.B.C. of whom I was now one, had worked out a rota for themselves. Lindley Frazer, the fuzzy-haired Aberdeen professor who had been a contemporary of mine at Oxford, spoke one day, R. H. S. Crossman, the future Socialist M.P. the next, F. A. Voigt, the former Berlin correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* the day after that, and so on.

I was assigned the Friday evening pitch. And on my very first Friday—I had never spoken over the radio before, not even in English, let alone in German—I had the task of replying to Hitler himself. For Hitler had chosen my first Friday—Friday July the 19th, 1940—to make his triumphal Reichstag oration in celebration of his victory over France. More important still, he had chosen it as the occasion for his ‘final peace appeal’ to Britain.

“It almost causes me pain,” I heard him piously intone as I listened in on the radio in the B.B.C. studio, “to think that I should have been selected by Providence to deal the final blow to the edifice which these men have already set tottering . . . Mr. Churchill ought for once to believe me, when I prophesy that a great empire will be destroyed which it was never my intention to destroy or even to harm . . . In this hour I feel it my duty before my conscience to appeal once more to reason and common sense in Britain . . . I CAN SEE NO REASON WHY THIS WAR MUST GO ON!”

As it was to turn out he was not to be so far out with his prophecy about the destruction of the Empire. Our ‘anti-colonialist allies’ and our own ‘Little Englanders’—Tory and Socialist—were to see to that. But even if I had known this, it would have made no difference to me or any other Englishman at this moment.

Within an hour of Hitler having spoken I was on the air with my reply. And without a moment’s hesitation I turned his peace offer down. My colleagues at the B.B.C. had approved of what I meant to say. That was enough authority for me.

“Herr Hitler,” I said in my smoothest and most deferential German, “you have on occasion in the past consulted me as to

the mood of the British public. So permit me to render your excellency this little service once again tonight. Let me tell you what we here in Britain think of this appeal of yours to what you are pleased to call our reason and common sense. Herr Führer and Reichskanzler, we hurl it right back at you, right in your evil smelling teeth . . .”

It was not diplomatic language or very elegant. But I reckoned a little earthy vulgarity in answer to the Führer’s cant would be just the thing to shock my German listeners out of their complacency. Especially as I then followed it up with some orthodox moralising about British reason permitting no compromise with murder and aggression. I even ventured to make a prophecy. I told Hitler that though things might look quite bright for him at the moment, the tide would inevitably turn, and he, like the Kaiser before him would find that he had been ‘conquering himself to death’. It was a phrase I well remembered from my first-war school days in Berlin and it soon became a stock slogan of the second-war B.B.C.

My quick reply to Hitler had resonant reverberations. Everywhere in the non-Hitler world newspapers printed long excerpts from it right alongside Hitler’s speech. In Germany too it had its echo. William Shirer, the American radio reporter, who was in Berlin at the time, describes in his book, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*,* the consternation among the officials at the German radio when my broadcast came through.

“I drove directly to the Rundfunk to make a broadcast report of (Hitler’s) speech to the United States,” he says. “I had hardly arrived at Broadcasting House when I picked up a B.B.C. broadcast in German from London. It was giving the British answer to Hitler already—within the hour. It was a determined No!

“Junior Officers from the High Command and Officials from various ministries were sitting around with rapt attention. Their faces fell. They could not believe their ears. ‘Can you make it out?’ one of them shouted to me. He seemed dazed. ‘Can you understand those British fools?’ he continued to bellow. ‘To turn down peace now? They’re crazy!’”

Mussolini’s son-in-law Count Ciano was also in Berlin for

* Secker & Warburg, 1960.

Gestapo. This list—‘*Sonderfahndungsliste G.B.*’* was its official title—was among the many secret documents captured by the Allies in Germany in 1945. Number 33 on the list was a certain Sefton Delmer, Paris representative of the *Daily Express*. He was to be handed over, said the list, to Dept. IV B.4 of the Central Reich Security Office.

Maybe I would have been on that list in any case, for other well-known journalists were also included. But, as I have said, I like to think it was my maiden broadcast that put me there.

* The only copy of the list now in existence is in the possession of The Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, California, who most obligingly let me have a photostat of page 42 on which No. 33 appears.

refugees had been working. I learned what they had been manufacturing, and I also learned many of the new German war-time expressions. But above all I got the feel of life in Hitler's war-time Reich.

Not all the Jewish refugees were ready to talk to the questioning British reporter and his assistants. Some were still so cowed, that they feared the Gestapo might catch up with them even here in Lisbon, if they talked. Others still thought of Germany and Austria as their Fatherland, and despite all that had happened and despite their emigration they still preserved a stubborn remnant of their old German national loyalty. Somehow I found these old Jewish men and women, with their unhappy love for Germany, even more tragic and pitiable than the others. In my work during the years to come I was to think back often to one old couple in particular. They remained for me always a supreme example of the almost mystic hold which the conquering-hero figure of Hitler had over Germans—even outcast Jews.

Dr. Bloch, a wizened and bent little man of seventy-one, had been a medical practitioner in Hitler's home town of Linz. And even now in the autumn of 1940, after all that had happened to him and his race at the hands of this Hitler, it was Dr. Bloch's great pride that he had been the Hitler family's physician and that little Adolf had sat on his knee and called him 'Uncle Doctor'.

Ernst had discovered the old man in one of the parties of emigrants and he took me along to meet Dr. Bloch and his wife in the sleazy back street boarding-house where they were staying. I was anxious to find out from the doctor among other things all that I could about the medical history of Hitler—for there had long been rumours that he suffered from a congenital disease. I plied the old man with questions. I thought he would be only too ready to reveal the secrets of his persecutor.

But Dr. Bloch was an oyster.

"I have never disclosed anything concerning the illness of the family Hitler," was his tantalising answer, "and I never shall!"

"Do you know, Herr Delmer," his wife chipped in, "Adolf Hitler had not forgotten my husband? When he drove through Linz in his Mercedes after his entry into Austria in 1938 at the

time of the Anschluss, he passed our house, and as he passed, he waved up at our window with a special smile."

The old doctor nodded confirmation. "That is to say, my dear, that is what they told us. You see," he turned to me, "as Jews we were not permitted to be at the window when the Führer passed."

"Did the Führer grant you any privileges for old times' sake, Herr Doktor? Preferential treatment as compared with other Jews in Linz, for instance?" I asked. The old man smiled wistfully.

"I had hoped that perhaps I would be permitted to continue to practise in Linz. I thought that perhaps the Führer would recall how I attended his mother in her last illness. But it was not to be. All that the authorities would concede was that I should be allowed to open a new practice in Vienna—an impossibility for me at my age. I was too well-known in Linz as a Jew, they said. It would compromise the Führer if I were allowed to go on being a doctor there. He could make no exceptions." But, added Dr. Bloch, he was allowed one privilege not accorded to other Jews. He was allowed to continue to use the telephone.

From the way he told me about this 'exceptional favour' I could see he felt that Adolf Hitler had done his best for his old Jewish family doctor, the man who had looked after him as a child, and who later when young Adolf was an untalented art student in Vienna, had bought some of his uncouth water-colours to encourage him and help him financially.*

Nor did Dr. Bloch have anything but friendly feelings for the people of Linz or bear them a grudge for what had been done to him at the end of his long life of service among them.

"Before my wife and I left," the old man said, "many of my friends and former patients came to see us despite the danger to themselves. They tried to dissuade us from leaving and making this long trip to join our son in New York. They were very kind."

He smiled a little to himself as though at a pleasant memory. "'Uncle Doctor' they said to me, 'how can you think of emigrating to the United States at your age? And Auntie too? Stay with us. Things will soon be different.' I think in Linz they really loved us. Don't you think so too, my dear?" he asked his wife.

But Frau Bloch could not answer. She had tears in her eyes.

* cf. Frantz Jetzinger, *Hitler's Youth*, page 106.

and he glared at me, a friendly little glare, as much as to say—'none of your continental ruthlessness here, my lad!' "No," he continued, "I have an idea that might do the trick." And he proceeded to outline it to me.

Valentine's war-winner was that we should print a counterfeit page of Hitler's official newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. It would be an exact replica of a genuine page taken from the most recent V.B. to come into our possession since Hess's arrival. Except for one item. This item—to be written by me in the best V.B. style—was to contain news that would upset Hess, and bring him over to us. The counterfeit page would then be inserted in the otherwise genuine V.B. and would be presented to Hess with his breakfast at the first opportunity.

"I suggest," said Valentine, "that you work out something on the lines that Frau Ilse Hess and her son have been shut up in a Concentration Camp."

I saw difficulties ahead of us. Did we have the right newspaper for the job, and the right type, and the right rotary press? However, who was I to worry about that? I had said my say. So I sat down, and there and then worked out two drafts for Valentine. Neither, I regret, was a masterpiece. But I like to think they were at least written in true German police reporter journalese.

"The Chief State Attorney announces," said the first, "that Frau Ilse Hess, after prolonged and thorough interrogation by himself and Kommissar Dr. Braschwitz of the Political Police has made a complete confession. Frau Hess confirms that she smuggled nerve drugs, believed to be of British origin, into her husband's food. These drugs made Party Comrade Hess subjective to the hypnotic influence of British-inspired German traitors and produced the mental fog in which he flew to England. (For the *Völkischer Beobachter* Scotland was part of England.) Frau Hess has been transferred to Munich for confrontation with the adjutants of Party Comrade Hess and other members of this sinister ring who are now in secure custody."

For good measure, I added a second item which I suggested might be inserted in the counterfeit of a local Munich newspaper, if we had one available for copying. The local paper's news item, tucked away in an insignificant corner, would report the arrest of two women and a man who had caused a street

disturbance on the evening of Sunday, May the 12th, by trying to interfere with the police, as they were arresting a woman and her small boy at a villa in Harlaching. Harlaching was the suburb of Munich where Hess resided with his wife and son.

Valentine was delighted. Alas, as I feared, when it came to printing the items, we suddenly discovered that the resources of the department were not equal to the job. Nor was the S.O.1 file of German personalities able to give me the name of a police official for the Munich district who would have been more suitable for the job of interviewing Frau Hess than my old Berlin antagonist, Dr. Braschwitz. I made a mental note of these deficiencies and determined to remedy them for the future at least as far as our 'black' work was concerned. For a register of personalities high and low and a fount of all the current German types as well as a supply of German-made paper were going to be essentials if we were to have any success in deceiving the Germans into accepting our products. And before many months had passed I had succeeded in laying the foundations for all these things.

But on this day of May the 16th, 1941 we had to confess defeat. Ultimately the item was printed in English in a London newspaper—Hess's English being quite up to reading English newspapers. Several hundred copies had to be rolled off the rotary press in a top-secret special edition in order to get the one copy wanted for Hess. The rest were destroyed—instantly!

In due course the newspaper was served up to Hess with his breakfast. The effect? Not what we had hoped. All that happened was that Hess accepted the bit about the British having drugs which made their victims subject to suggestion. From now on he refused to eat or drink anything unless he had seen someone else taste it first.

My first 'black' operation had backfired viciously.

In my view, to break Hess down, an indispensable preliminary would have been to flatter him by going through the motions of negotiating with him—preferably through a top level 'plenipotentiary'.

Churchill did indeed make one effort to play Hess along in this way. He sent a genuine cabinet minister to see him in the rambling Victorian country house near Aldershot called

I put up with this," he would be able to say to himself, "when those party swine can get out of it all?"

'Der Chef' told how party highups used their inside knowledge to secure privileges for themselves at the expense of Germany's war economy. But when doing so, he was always at great pains to reveal exactly how the Nazi big shot had done his foul deed, in the hope that listeners would follow his dastardly recipe themselves. This was what Leonard Ingrams called 'operational propaganda'—propaganda which made people do things. And sometimes it worked.

In one of his transmissions for instance, 'Der Chef' denounced by name the wives of a number of high party officials in the Schleswig-Holstein area who, he said, had rushed to the clothing stores (also named) and bought up all the woollen goods and textiles to which they were entitled by their clothing coupons. Why? Because these traitorous whores had learned from their obscenity husbands that the Fatherland's supplies of textiles were running out owing to the needs of the army in Russia, and that any folkcomrade who did not cash his clothing coupons now, would not be able to buy anything at all a little later.

Sure enough, about six weeks later when I was looking through a Kiel newspaper which had been published shortly after 'The Chief's' Philippic, there it was, the report of a run on the clothing stores. And to my great satisfaction the editor made things worse by reiterating 'The Chief's' most effective argument. "If everyone behaves like this," he wrote, "there will be nothing left for anyone, and the clothing coupons will be valueless."

We never attacked internationally known big shots like Göring, Goebbels, and Himmler. They were the routine targets of all enemy propaganda. To give ourselves greater authenticity as a German station we went for the lesser-known local dictators.

Our stories were peopled with Burgomasters, District leaders, Local Group leaders, and even Cell leaders, with whose goings on, both private and public 'Der Chef' showed an astonishingly intimate acquaintance. We spread over them a slime of obloquy as foul as that which they themselves had spread over the Jews. Not even the sexual extravagances of those who came

under 'The Chief's' microscope were safe from his detailed and truly evangelistic denunciation.

In fact, to equip our heroes and heroines with the appropriate fetishisms and perversions—beloved of German audiences—I had to do a considerable amount of research in the works of that great authority on sexual aberrations, Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld. Had he been able to hear 'The Chief', I believe Dr. Hirschfeld would have felt that the burning of his books by the Nazis had been avenged at least in part. And, of course, these outspoken and unabashed diatribes added enormously to the listener appeal of the station.

But Gustav Siegfried Eins was doing far more than that. With every broadcast a new legend was being drummed home: the Army is against the Party, the Army is against the SS, the Army is against the Gestapo . . . It was the legend that was to be our platform, the notional justification of most of our 'black' operations. And alas! in the years after the war it was to prove a most dangerous boomerang.

In the earliest weeks of Gustav Siegfried's activities the stories with which 'The Chief' spiced his homilies were entirely fictitious. For some of them the ideas and material came to us from the special Rumour Committee. This was a small body of experts from the various Services and the Ministry of Economic Warfare who met in conclave once a fortnight and compiled a short list of rumours which secret agents were to put around for German consumption in such centres as Lisbon, Zurich, Stockholm and Istanbul. Around the nucleus of one of the committee's rumours which I had selected from the list—the rumours were called 'sibs' from the Latin *sibillare* = to whisper—we built up a detailed and colourful story.

Most of our 'sibs' however, and the stories to go with them we concocted ourselves. And, unlike other writers of fiction, we took great pains that the dramatis personae figuring in them should whenever possible be genuine living persons, employed or residing at the addresses 'The Chief' gave them. Also that they should be persons who, as far as rank and calling went, fitted the role ascribed to them.

How did we get these names and addresses? Out of the German newspapers and magazines. Even before Max Braun

thing more than the remoteness of the radio's putative home in France from the dynamic doctor's central control. But even if they did, I calculated the station would still remain effective. Partly because it always spoke from a patriotic and 'national' German viewpoint, and this was bound to be more insidious and psychologically effective than a straight enemy broadcast, partly because listeners caught tuning in to us would welcome the excuse that they had only listened in the belief that Atlantik was German.

It was amazing however, how many Germans were genuinely taken in, and did in fact believe the station to be a German Forces Radio. Quite early on we received indisputable evidence from a prisoner that for several days on end the sergeant at the Wehrmacht equivalent of a NAAFI station in Tunis had piped the Atlantiksender into the recreation huts 'because the music was so marvellous—so *fabelhaft*'. Only when an officer reprimanded him did he realise he had been entertaining his comrades with a forbidden enemy station.

In the nine months that the Atlantiksender remained on its own, broadcasting exclusively on short waves, the team developed into a hard-working crew of perfectionists. Talks and news items would be rewritten again and again until we got them as I wanted them. Immense trouble was taken over small detail.

"Accuracy first," I used to tell the writers. "We must never lie by accident, or through slovenliness, only deliberately!"

And as we put out news bulletin after news bulletin and service programme after service programme an entire system of subversive campaigns developed. It was based on the campaigns we had originally created in the Gustav Siegfried days. But now they had been elaborated, and perfected as a result of Clifton Child's research and ingenuity. In item after item we gave examples of the 'inequality of sacrifice' between the common man and the 'privileged' party functionaries. And there was enough truth to them and enough fact to back them up to give our allegations complete plausibility and make them stick in the minds of our listeners. Germans wanted to believe ill of their Nazi Party overseers and we gave them the 'facts' with which to back up their suspicions.

were destroying the whole edifice of Himmler's security system. In almost every bulletin we illustrated these themes with news items, some true, some invented, but all of them plausible.

The news of the day however was our main concern. When Goebbels announced that he was distributing a special 'air raid bonus' of chocolate in the workshop canteens, in addition to other food—he did so in order to attract absentee workers back to their factories—we added in the blandest and most matter of fact style that this 'bomb chocolate' had been spiked with drugs like Pervitin to stimulate the bomb-fatigued workers to extra energy and extra productivity.

When we learned that families bombed out during the 'Terror Raids' on Hamburg were being evacuated to Eastern areas such as Poland, Slovakia and Ruthenia, we reported the epidemics of typhoid and cholera allegedly raging in those areas.

We did the same for the 'Kinderlandverschickungslager', the short and snappy title under which the special camps were known to which evacuee children were being sent. We did not, of course, put out the news of these epidemics in the KLV camps as a straightforward announcement. We dressed it up—often something like this:

"Dr. Conti, the Reichsführer for Physicians has congratulated the medical officers at the KLV camps in the Gau Wartheland for the selfless devotion with which they are fighting the diptheria epidemic among the children in their care. He has expressed his satisfaction at their success in overcoming the tragic lack of medicaments, and reducing deaths by an average of sixty a week."

We never gave up trying to make our Wehrmacht listeners worry about what was happening to their families at home. We even made them worry about what these evil men, the Party bosses, would do to their wives should they have the misfortune to lose their lives while fighting for Führer and Fatherland. Hitler himself was of the greatest help to us in this campaign. For he had an impulsive way of rushing out decrees which were intended to sustain and comfort his men, but which when twisted a little by us had just the opposite effect.

As, for instance, his decree about posthumous divorce. Hitler must have heard or read somewhere that it was a great scandal

I accepted their resignations and put in Karl Robson with a few men from MB. They soon got the output into the shape I required.

But it was an inauspicious start. For the editor whom Karl now succeeded was bitterly resentful of my 'arrogance'. And Walter Adams was upset at my lack of tact. I was sorry to have hurt my American colleague's feelings. The trouble, as I apologetically explained to him, was that though he was an excellent newsman himself he knew no German. He was unable to read what the team was producing. The only criterion by which he could judge their efficiency was the number of items transmitted. He could not understand my demand that each item must be an example of clear and concise writing, a model piece of journalism.

My second clash was with the 'Projection-of-Britain' school of propagandists from the Ministry of Information and the British Council. These men urged that we should devote our far from inexhaustible resources in manpower, materials, and public funds to telling the Germans what grand chaps the British really were in the hope that they would come to love, admire, and ape us. The Americans under General Bob McClure, they said, were going all out with the projection of America and the American way of life. We ought to follow their example and outdo them by 'plugging British Culture and British way of life'.

I disagreed. And as a consequence, I fell foul of the well-meaning British Council 'culture pluggers'. A feud started which later, after my return to Fleet Street, was to pursue me as far as Buenos Aires and Addis Ababa.

Here is what I said on the subject in my policy paper:

"The projection of Britain will be in the hands of the British occupying forces. What impression the Germans form of Britain will depend on the behaviour of our troops and of the British Military Government personnel. Newspaper articles and radio talks in praise of Parliamentary Government, Cricket, Fox Hunting, Steak and Kidney Pudding, and Anthony Trollope will do little to alter the picture of Britain conveyed by our khaki ambassadors. Nor will it make the Germans any readier to behave as we want them to behave."

Maybe that was a trifle brash. The truth, however, was that past experience in Germany had taught me that Anglomania of the kind encouraged by British Council propaganda was not desirable. For all too often it marches hand in hand with Anglo-phobia. The Anthony Eden hat and rolled umbrella affected by the would-be Mayfairite Joachim von Ribbentrop covered an inferiority complex towards Britain and a resulting hate which was as important in leading Germany into war with Britain in 1939 as the Kaiser's Anglomania and inferiority complex had been twenty-five years earlier.

What then did I want to do with the modest powers conferred on me in my august position as the 'Controller of the German-Austrian Division of the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office'?

My objectives had little to do with ideology, politics, or propaganda in the ordinary sense. But while strictly limited and practical they were highly ambitious. I aimed at bringing about nothing short of a journalistic revolution in Germany.

I wanted to set up new media of mass communication which—while helping the British Authorities in their administrative task—would by their example show the German press and radio how to free themselves from defects which in my opinion had helped to plunge a gullible German public into two world wars. They were defects which had impressed themselves on my mind when fresh from Fleet Street I had come to work as a correspondent in the Berlin of the Weimar Republic. And I had seen them increase in malignance as Hitler and Goebbels exploited and fostered them.

The first of these defects was that German newspapers were unreadable. They were so turgidly written and so indigestibly presented that the great mass of the German public was neither able nor willing to take in what they offered. Far fewer people read newspapers in Germany than in Britain. As a result the German public was badly informed on current affairs, and easily victimised by unscrupulous leaders.

Secondly, Germany lacked independent mass circulation newspapers on a national scale such as we have in Britain. The local and provincial newspapers which served the German public were most of them selling fewer than 10,000 copies an issue. They were far too poor to stand on their own legs. Long