

UNIVERSITY OF READING

NAZI DOMESTIC PROPAGANDA AND POPULAR RESPONSE, 1943-45

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a study of the effects of totalitarian propaganda in a period of unrelenting crisis. Its importance as a totalitarian state and the vast amount of documentary material available make National Socialist Germany of 1943-45 an ideal subject for such a study. As long as Germany was confronted with a generally favourable military situation, as was the case in the years 1939-42, the work of Nazi propagandists was a comparatively easy one. The Stalingrad debacle in the winter of 1942-3, however, marked a turn not only in Germany's military fortune, but also in domestic morale and response to propaganda. Nazi propagandists, now deprived of the favourable context, faced their first real test and were compelled to create a substitute for the increasingly unwelcome real world. It is shown that the German people's recognition of the growing rift between this propaganda ersatz "world" and the reality of the military situation resulted in a fall in Nazi propaganda's reputation for truth and trustworthiness, as well as an increasing dependence on alternative, even forbidden, unofficial information sources (e.g. rumours, foreign radio stations, the accounts of soldiers at the front).

The thesis deals with those factors determining propaganda policy, the popular response to this propaganda and the reaction of the propagandists to this response. Within the context of this two-way process of interaction between propagandists and propaganda audience particular attention is paid to six themes.

(a) What was the comparative importance of fear and consolation as components of Nazi propaganda policy? How successful were propagandists in strengthening the German people's will to resist the enemy by pointing out the dire consequences of defeat, and, at the same time, in providing adequate "positive" arguments to convince their audience of the feasibility of "final victory"?

(b) How effective was constant repetition of the propaganda message?

(c) How "total" was, in fact, Nazi propaganda? Was the propaganda audience identical with the German people?

(d) What was the effect of military events and bombing on the popular attitude to both Nazi propaganda and the unofficial information sources, mentioned above?

(e) How crucial were class and regional factors in determining morale and response to propaganda?

(f) What effects did military setback and bombing have on popular attitudes to the future and the growing likelihood of defeat? Did the German people accept the basic propaganda argument that defeat would constitute their own destruction?

The study is principally concerned with the Nazi press and radio, as well as some aspects of Party propaganda. Chapters 2-7 each contain a basic research subject for an examination of one or more of the questions listed above. The subjects chosen are the Battle of Stalingrad, the subsequent "Total War" campaign, the anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic propaganda campaigns in the first half of 1943, the Allied bombing offensive against the Reich, retaliation (Vergeltung) propaganda, and, finally, the catastrophic chain of events in the final nine months of the Second World War. Chapter 8 presents some general conclusions.

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Gerald A. Kirwin

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PREFACE

This thesis relies very heavily on German documentary sources. Translating documents is a rather disheartening task and never completely satisfactory. Especially in the case of National Socialist Germany, it is so difficult to retain that underlying mood and bombastic style that characterised so many Nazi writings and utterances. The question of how freely one should translate poses a considerable problem. In every case, I have endeavoured to keep to the original German as far as possible, even if this, at times, means a stylistically clumsy English. Of course, words such as Volksgenosse and Vergeltung are virtually impossible to translate satisfactorily, and I trust that the recurrence of a few German words will not vex the reader. Considerable use has been made of the Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts of the BBC Monitoring Service. These transcripts which had to be drawn up in considerable hurry contain several grammatical and stylistic imperfections. When quoted in the text, no attempt has been made to correct them.

In the long period of research and writing up this text many people have provided me with invaluable help and advice. For their kind cooperation I would first like to thank the staffs of the Wiener Library and the Imperial War Museum in London, as well as the archivists and Beamten of the Bundesarchiv, Koblenz, the Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden and the Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Munich. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Mommsen, President of the Bundesarchiv, who provided me with advice and support during my stay in Koblenz. My sincere thanks go to the Anglo-German Group of Historians who, by granting me a scholarship, made my research in Germany possible. Warm thanks are also due to Geoffery Warner, now Professor of History at the University of Leicester, who was my first

supervisor, for starting me off and putting me on the right course. Finally, I would like to mention my supervisor, Professor Peter Campbell, to whom I am most indebted. During the last few years he has provided me with constant encouragement and support.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Ab. - Abschnitt (district)
- Abt. - Abteilung (department)
- BA - Bundesarchiv, Koblenz
- BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation
- DAF - Deutsche Arbeitsfront (German Labour Front)
- DNB - Deutsches Nachrichtenbüro (German News Agency)
- FDJ - Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth, German Democratic Republic)
- GSta - Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich
- HJ - Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth)
- HSta - Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden
- IMT - International Military Tribunal
- IWM - Imperial War Museum, London
- KPD - Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)
- MGFA - Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, Freiburg
- NA - National Archives, Washington
- NSDAP - Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
- OKW - Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (High Command of the Armed Forces)
- RAF - Royal Air Force
- RJM - Reichsjustizministerium (Ministry of Justice)
- RPA(Ä) - Reichspropagandaamt(-ämter) (Local propaganda offices)
- RPL - Reichspropagandaleitung (Propaganda Office of the Party)
- RPM - Reichspropagandaministerium (Ministry of Propaganda)
- RRG - Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft (Reich Radio Company)
- RSHA - Reichssicherheitshauptamt (Head Office of the Reich Security Service)

- SD - Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service)
- SED - Sozialistische Einheitspartei (Party of Socialist Unity, German Democratic Republic)
- Slg. - Sammlung (Collection)
- SPD - Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party)
- SS - Schutzstaffel
- USAF - United States Air Force
- USSBS - United States Strategic Bombing Survey
- VB - Völkischer Beobachter
- V.I. - Vertrauliche Information (Confidential Information)
- WPr. - Wehrmachtpropaganda (Propaganda of the German Armed Forces)
- * - An asterisk denotes that the corresponding footnote contains additional information or quotes.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE SCOPE AND SOURCES OF THE STUDY

A. THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The word "propaganda" still has an unsavoury taste for most people. It is usually associated with an all-powerful, irresistible instrument which, in the hands of a few determined and unscrupulous men, is able to act at will on the unsuspecting individual. Particularly in a dictatorship, whether right or left-wing, the population is seen as a pitiful passive mass - a mindless entity - at the mercy of the controllers of public opinion. Nazi propaganda is considered to be a prime example of how effective the most devilish form of totalitarian propaganda can be and how an entire people can be enslaved "of their own free will" by a power-crazy dictator. It was only in the Second World War that political scientists, sociologists, and psychologists were made fully conscious of the limitations of propaganda as well as the folly in assuming an automatic receptivity on the part of a population to a propaganda message. In "informed circles" the phenomenon "propaganda" was less the monster in 1945 than it had been only six years before.

Hitler himself shared the belief in the irresistibility of a skilfully organised, all-prevailing and all-pervading propaganda system and acted on it. Indeed, he interpreted the "success" of Allied atrocity propaganda in the First World War as an important factor in determining German defeat. The setting up of the Ministry of Propaganda and Popular Enlightenment in the very first days of the Third Reich - at a time when there were still many democratic vestiges to be dealt with - demonstrates the supreme importance the Nazi leader attached to the "spiritual leadership" of his people. Hitler's ideas

as to what constituted "good" propaganda rested on his far from exalted view of the masses. He wrote in Mein Kampf:

"The receptive powers of the masses are very restricted, and their understanding is feeble. On the other hand, they quickly forget. Such being the case, all effective propaganda must be confined to a few bare essentials and those must be expressed as far as possible in stereotyped formulas. These slogans should be persistently repeated until the last individual has come to grasp the idea that has been put forward. If this principle be forgotten and if an attempt be made to be abstract and general, the propaganda will turn out ineffective; for the public will not be able to digest or retain what is offered to them in this way. Therefore, the greater the scope of the message that has to be presented, the more necessary it is for the propaganda to discover that plan of action which is psychologically the most efficient." ¹

An effective propaganda was "systematically one-sided", only presenting "that aspect of the truth which is favourable to its own side".² Moreover, there was no room for rational argument or compromise:

"Whoever wishes to win over the masses must know the key that will open the door to their hearts. It is not objectivity, which is a feckless attitude, but a determined will, backed up by force, when necessary." ³

Hitler never budged from these basic principles. They constituted the operational basis of Nazi propaganda practice.

The first essential aim of Goebbels as Minister of Propaganda was to broaden the basis of support and loyalty for the new Nazi state. The 44% of the votes won by the Nazis in March 1933 had vividly demonstrated the inner division of the German Volk. A true Volksgemeinschaft demanded a convincing consensus of support and it was for this that Nazi propagandists worked and strove in the first years of the Third Reich. Then the "1 or 2%" who stubbornly refused to learn the lessons of the past could be dismissed as outsiders who did not deserve to belong to the People's Community; they became "state enemies" and "traitors". The fundamental purpose of National Socialist propagandists in the years 1933-9 was to gain such an adequate measure of popular backing that they could convince themselves, the German people and other states that there was absolutely no division or difference between German and National Socialist. In other words, there was no longer such a thing as a non-Nazi German. It would appear - at any rate on the surface - that they succeeded. Both the Summer Olympics in Berlin in 1936 and the celebrations to mark Hitler's 50th birthday in 1939 provided the German people and the world with a persuasive spectre of German unity. Of course, this may well have been a very superficial phenomenon but in those pre-war days there was virtually no way of judging how deeply National Socialism was rooted in the hearts of the German people. Certainly foreign statemen let themselves be taken in and were more often than not convinced of a truth and reality underlying Nazi propaganda spectacles. This would perhaps help to explain the fact that in the heyday of appeasement the considerable minority inside Germany attempting to resist the sweeping tide which threatened to engulf them hardly found a worthy place in the considerations of British diplomats and politicians. Shortly before Munich the German "resistance" was hindered rather than encouraged

by the "appeasers" in London.

In September 1939 the Nazi leadership and propagandists believed that not only the military but also the morale prerequisites for war had been supplied and that they could embark on armed combat without expecting trouble from "within". In fact, the German victories of 1939-42 served to strengthen the outward cohesion of the German people. The spectacular military successes of 1940, in particular, swept along many people who had hitherto remained sceptical and had resisted the encroachment of the regime on their lives and beliefs. But as yet there was no way of knowing whether this enthusiasm was proof of the existence of an identity of the German people with the Nazi Weltanschauung or merely an expression of national pride in German military triumph. Certainly Nazi leaders preferred to believe it was the former. Perhaps the state propagandists were tempted to see it as the successful culmination of all their efforts since 1933. They had quite an easy time of it in these first three years of the war. It was none too difficult a task to maintain unity and morale and to keep the people in good spirits. They could afford to take a back seat. Events spoke for themselves and were the very best propaganda. The mass media could often afford to restrict their role to that of ringside commentator, endeavouring to make the best possible use of already favourable news. Nevertheless, spoilt by military victories, the German people came to take them for granted. The human being seems incapable of attaining a state of complete satisfaction. Once the prime question of existence and fear of the future is out of the way, then he turns his attention to smaller discomforts previously forgotten or ignored. Even in the Germany of 1940 comparatively small things smacking of discomfort or temporary setback were sufficient to depress morale quite considerably - a

reduction in food rations, difficulties in coal supply, light RAF raids and subsequent loss of sleep, inflation and wage "freeze". First, news of the launching of the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941 and, above all, the winter retreat of 1941-2 led to considerable uncertainty and a marked fall in morale. Even the resumption of the German offensive and the advance into the Caucasus the following summer were unable to restore the same degree of confidence that had characterised German civilian morale in the days after the fall of France back in 1940. This did not mean that the German people had become defeatist or now feared defeat. It was the anxiety lest the war go on for years that lay behind the more sober appraisal of events. In the summer of 1940 the overwhelming majority of the German people had expected victory and peace to be a few days off. Thereafter every further prolongation of the conflict and of the accompanying uncertainties and discomforts had a most depressing effect on the popular mood. It is, however, interesting to note that it was not a military event that caused the lowest recorded point in morale in the period up to the autumn of 1942 but the cut in food rations announced in March 1942.⁴

The Battle of Stalingrad marked the turn of the tide not only in the military field but also in domestic morale. It ushered in a period of unrelenting setback and it is this period that has been chosen for a study in propaganda behaviour and effect in a totalitarian state at a time of almost uninterrupted crisis and threat to its existence. Suddenly in the winter of 1942-3 both the German propagandists and the German people were presented with a war of quite different quality and dimension. Henceforward, military events would not only be a cause of temporary discomfort but would pose a threat to the very survival of the nation and the fate of the individual.

The unmitigated background of defeat, the picture of unrelieved deterioration, provides this period with its unity. Not only was the German Wehrmacht thrown back onto the defensive but so also were Goebbels and his propagandists. Although the fundamental task of the latter remained the same as heretofore - to convince the German people of the certainty of final victory - they were deprived of a favourable reality, of the very foundations on which they had previously built. Events no longer supplied the same solid basis for the credibility of the propaganda message. In fact, Nazi propagandists now faced their great test. The time for an artistically created and well thought-out propaganda had come. The degree to which the German people could recognise the consequent cleavage and inherent contradiction between the real world and the interpretative picture of Nazi propaganda would to a great extent determine the success or failure of the entire propaganda effort. It is therefore with this recognition of a basic change in the entire war-time situation that the period of study begins.

The basic subject of examination is propaganda behaviour, popular response to propaganda, and the reaction of the propagandists to this response. But since, ideally, Nazi propaganda aimed at securing a constantly high level of morale and low morale might thus be viewed as proof of general propaganda failure, attention must be paid to the wider aspects of morale and not just to the response to any one particular propaganda theme or campaign. Within the framework of this two-way process of interaction between propaganda and response/morale, particular attention will be given to these eight aspects and factors:

1. the comparative importance of fear and consolation,
2. the effect of repetition of the propaganda message,
3. the availability of the propaganda audience,
4. the attitude of the German people to official propaganda,
5. the significance of other sources of information,
6. class and social factors.

7. regional differences, and, finally,
8. attitudes to a possible defeat situation.

1. The Comparative Importance of Fear and Consolation

In a time of prolonged crisis, such as Germany underwent in the years 1943-5, it is possible to divide practically the entire propaganda output into a propaganda of fear and a propaganda of consolation. Both are complementary. After bringing his audience into a nervous and anxious state, the propagandist has to provide the arguments for an alleviation of the unbearable tension he has aroused. In the wartime Germany of 1943-5 this meant that it was not enough to warn the population of the perils of defeat but that credible arguments had to be supplied as to how the ultimate danger might be avoided, the threat removed and the war won. The more the military crisis worsened and the propagandists' room to manoeuvre was reduced the more interesting Nazi propaganda became, a propaganda, it must be remembered, that could not as much as hint at the prospect of likely defeat.

2. The Effect of Repetition of the Propaganda Message

As has been explained above, Hitler never wavered in his belief that an effective propaganda had to restrict itself to the repetition - albeit with variation - of a few clear-cut arguments which even fools could understand. The more often the same thing was said, the greater the effect on the recipient would be. This was to become the basic operating principle of Nazi propaganda in the twelve years of the Third Reich. The question will have to be examined whether the truth of this assertion was, in fact, confirmed in German experience in the second half of the Second World War, a time when the role of Nazi domestic propaganda was assuming a new importance.

3. The Availability of the Propaganda Audience

The basic prerequisite for the effectiveness of Nazi propaganda was, of course, the availability and the size of the propaganda

audience. We are, perhaps, all too ready to assume the automatic presence of a vast audience for receipt of a propaganda message in a totalitarian state. An attempt must be made to find out to what degree the German people actually constituted an audience and let themselves be "manipulated". This means not merely a study of listening and reading habits but also a consideration of the extent to which the German people was reached by radio and the press. In short, how far was the propaganda audience identical with the German Volk?

4. The Attitude of the German People to Official Propaganda

What effect, if any, did the deteriorating military situation and the intensification in enemy air raids, as well as the propaganda response to these developments, have on people's attitude to (i.e. belief in the credibility of) National Socialist propaganda, a propaganda that once had promised swift victory?

5. The Significance of Other Sources of Information

The question to be examined here is how far Nazi propaganda really enjoyed a monopoly position in the formation of public opinion in war-time Germany. It is to be expected that dissatisfaction with official propaganda would be reflected in a tendency to lend an ear to "private" information sources - the enemy radio, rumours, pamphlets, the accounts of soldiers and other "experts". Considerable attention will be given to these news sources that lay outside official control, for the extent to which they were used and believed also throws light on the overall influence and effectiveness of Nazi propaganda itself.

6. Class and Social Factors

Mention has been made above of the outward picture of accord and national unity back in the summer of 1940. Nazi propagandists portrayed this as the visible expression of a deeply rooted Volksgemeinschaft and as tangible proof that the

days of social and political division and "class struggle" were gone for ever. How deep this sense of identity with the national community really went and how strong the fabric of the German Volksgemeinschaft really was will become apparent in this study of the crisis years 1943-5. Did military setback mean that the German people, in anticipation of what was to come, found their way back to earlier or more immediate loyalties? In Russia and Germany in the First World War, for instance, the initial demonstration of unity gave way to inter-class strife and enmity in the later part of the conflict when victory no longer appeared possible. With the possibility of there being some degree of resurgence or strengthening of class feeling in the Germany of 1943-5, it will certainly be worth while to look at the role of class as a factor determining attitude and response to the Nazi propaganda message.

7. Regional Differences

The political unity of the German Reich was a comparatively recent phenomenon. Regional traditions, ties and identities were all still strong in 1943 and could justifiably be expected to exert a very important influence on the response to propaganda principally manufactured in Berlin. As far as reflections on the present and future were concerned, the danger perceived naturally varied from region to region.

8. Attitudes to a Possible Defeat Situation

Closely linked with points 6 and 7 is the preoccupation with a possible future defeat which would be expected to assume a growing importance as Germany's military position worsened. Of course, any seriously-held belief in the possibility of an acceptable way of life in a defeated Germany - a non-Nazi Germany - would automatically negate all Nazi propaganda goals. The final success of Nazi propagandists depended on their being able to persuade the German people that there was really no

alternative but to hold out and that defeat would mean the end of the German state and the destruction of the entire German people. This assumption - a propaganda "truth" - was the very foundation on which National Socialist propagandists had to build. It also meant convincing the German people of the inseparability of Germany and National Socialism. Immediately people came to direct their thoughts and hopes at "another" Germany of the future with a quite different political set-up and saw a chance for themselves in this Germany, then the most strenuous efforts of the propagandists would be predestined to fail. National Socialism would then be associated in the popular mind with a dying regime, a regime that was dispensable. Thus, views concerning possible defeat and post-war Germany which were current in the last two years of the Third Reich will form a central theme in this study.

This study, however, is not intended to provide a complete factual account of all aspects of National Socialist propaganda and effect in the years 1943-5. The sheer vastness of the material available precludes this - that is, if the work is to be kept to a reasonable length. Firstly, the account mainly concentrates on an examination of the behaviour of and the response to the German press and radio, as well as some important aspects of Party propaganda; very little attention, for example, is given to the Nazi cinema, although this indubitably constituted one of the most effective propaganda channels of the time. Secondly, although the various themes appear in a basically chronological framework, a certain amount of overlapping in time and material is unavoidable; the chapters on bombing and retaliation, for instance, scan the whole period under examination. Thirdly, the intricacies of National Socialist propaganda organisation lie outside the scope of this study and are only mentioned or alluded to in as far as it is

deemed necessary for a full appreciation of propaganda behaviour at a particular time. Finally, several crucial military and political events and developments are given very little or only cursory treatment, e.g. the Allied invasion of Italy, the fall of the Duce, D Day, the war in the Far East, the attempted putsch by German officers on 20 July 1944.

Chapters 2-7 each contain a basic research theme and constitute a kind of case-study for an examination of one or more of the factors listed above.

Chapter 2 - Stalingrad and the New Situation

This chapter serves principally to acquaint the reader with the new situation in which both the German people and the German propagandists suddenly found themselves in the winter of 1942-3. The problems and difficulties arising in this first really serious confrontation with military defeat could be expected to become constant features and determinants of propaganda response and morale in the subsequent two-year period.

Chapter 3 - "Total War"

In the aftermath of the Stalingrad debacle, an attempt was made at putting the whole German economy on a war footing by mobilising large sections of the population for war work and by closing down inessential businesses. This naturally had a noticeable effect on the life of most Germans, particularly the middle class which was hit most. An ideal opportunity thus presents itself for deducing the importance of class and class consciousness as a factor in determining popular response. Similarly, this reaction would permit the drawing of conclusions regarding the reality of the much vaunted Volkgemeinschaft.

Chapter 4 - Anti-Bolshevism and Anti-Semitism

Both anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism were essentially ideological themes which lay at the very core of National Socialist

teaching. In the months after Stalingrad they were used to prepare the population for harsher times ahead. By instilling fear and hatred of Germany's enemies, Nazi propagandists strove to convince their audience that there was absolutely no alternative but to grin and bear all misfortune. At the same time, acceptance of the Nazi image of the Soviets and the Jews was essential for an acceptance of the idea of National Socialism as the only possible German Weltanschauung. The degree to which the German people would oblige their propagandists in this respect would determine the overall success of Nazi crisis propaganda.

Chapter 5 - The Bombing of the German Civilian Population

By its very nature, the Allied bombing of Germany provides an ideal subject for a study of the interaction of propaganda message and response. The RAF raids meant that an increasing number of Germans came into direct contact with the full weight of Allied might for the first time. For the inhabitants of the blitzed towns the war now truly became a matter of survival. This unwelcome manifestation of enemy superiority in the air naturally restricted the room for propaganda manoeuvre. The attempts of Nazi propagandists at countering the effects of this awesome reality as well as the outcome of these attempts form the basic theme of the chapter. Perhaps the most crucial and decisive question that will have to be examined is whether Nazi propaganda succeeded in turning the pent-up antagonism and aggressive feelings unleashed by heavy bombing in a direction favourable to the leadership - i.e. towards the enemy - thereby fortifying the resistance will of the suffering German population.

Chapter 6 - Retaliation 1943-5

The promise of all-out retribution against Britain at some

time in the future constituted a deliberate attempt at diverting attention away from the hardships of the gloomy present by a propaganda of hope that did not require any immediate confirmation in fact. Its success of course depended on the readiness of the German people to let themselves be taken in - even drugged - by promises of new weapons that would force a second and final turn of the tide, this time in Germany's favour. What was the effect of a propaganda of optimism and promises, promises that could never be adequately fulfilled? The confident tones of Vergeltung propaganda formed a complement to the purely negative propaganda of fear endemic in the anti-Semitic and anti-Soviet themes.

7. Chapter 7 - The last Months (October 1944-May 1945)

After September 1944 the enemy was not only imperilling the safety of the Germans from the sky. He had set foot in the Reich itself. The ultimate danger, military invasion, provides the background to this chapter. The enemy advance inside Germany - at first slow - gathered momentum in the new year and by April 1945 the Greater German Reich had been reduced to a very slender belt of unoccupied territory. The effects which this supreme threat to the existence of the Reich had on propaganda behaviour and popular response form the basic theme of this chapter. The increasingly desperate straits of propagandists who were determined to carry on as long as possible at a time when the very edifice they depended on was falling down around them provide the fascinating material for a study of the ultimate crisis of a totalitarian propaganda machine. In this very final confrontation between nightmare reality and the "make-believe" propaganda contrast world, how great was the readiness of the people to accept the latter? Could a totalitarian propaganda, in fact, hope to succeed, if only temporarily, in offsetting the visible manifestations of enemy might which all seemed to point to German defeat?

B. PROPAGANDA AND MORALE

In order to appreciate the full importance of the interaction of propaganda message and popular response, it is first necessary to look at Goebbels' own views on propaganda, his audience and the phenomenon he was endeavouring to control so keenly - morale. Like his master, the Propaganda Minister had no idealistic view of the masses. After a wartime visit to his mother, whom he maintained "to me always represents the voice of the people", he remarked that "the rank and file are usually much more primitive than we imagine".

"Propaganda must therefore always be essentially simple and repetitive. In the long run results in influencing public opinion will be achieved only by the man who is able to reduce problems to the simplest terms and who has the courage to keep forever repeating them in this simplified form, despite the objections of the intellectuals."⁵

The masses were also slow in learning:

"Only when the intelligent person says, 'For God's sake stop it, I can't bear to hear it any more', the moment has come for the little lumber-jack of Bad Aibling to say 'Well, I never! That's the first time that I have heard about that. Let's find out right away what it's all about'."⁶

Goebbels certainly possessed to an extraordinary degree the gift of simplifying even the most complex matters.⁷ In a stark revelation of his working principles to one of his subordinates, he stressed that it was not the task of a propagandist to be objective:

"I try to draw the attention of the Volk to the

essential news material at hand. The average citizen cannot find his way among the jumble of daily political reports. He cannot distinguish the false from the correct, the important from the petty, the purposive from the factual reports. Much less can he recognise with certainty what is important and also correct for the Volk. Here lies the task of the propagandist....I must therefore simplify reality, omit something here, add something there. There develops an artistic picture which can deviate considerably from the objective truth. As is the case with an artist's perception, it's only important that the political line is genuine and true in my eyes and it is useful for our Volksgemeinschaft....True is therefore what is useful to my Volk. Please do not misunderstand me. This principle ought to be no charter for the distortion of facts or the violation of truth. It signifies rather: to be truthful as necessary but to omit what you consider to be necessary for your Volk." ⁸

In war-time, moreover, the instructional aspect of news was more important than the purely informative. It was Goebbels's opinion:

"Not every item of news should be published; rather should those who control news policies endeavour to make every item of news serve a certain purpose." ⁹

From these working principles of Nazi propaganda it might seem that Goebbels viewed his audience as essentially passive, i.e. its morale should be merely the end-product of his efforts at mass-persuasion. This, perhaps, was the ideal. But there can

be no doubt that the minister regarded the various Stimmungsberichte (reports on morale), which were compiled in wartime Germany, as a means of learning how best his message could reach the population. They were considered fundamentally as an aid in determining propaganda tactics, but not the inherent goal of the propaganda. However, when German propagandists were forced on to the defensive in the second half of the war, the goal itself was frequently determined by morale considerations. Owing to the virtually constant need to turn a negative into a positive mood, short-term aims were increasingly allowed to override long-term ones. With the goal being more and more one of sheer self-preservation, it could no longer be a question of deepening National Socialism in the hearts of the German people but simply of maintaining the status quo. This was to prove difficult enough. W.A.Boelcke sees Goebbels' interest in the morale reports as a prerequisite of his propaganda "success":

"Without a knowledge of the popular mood, he would never have been able to parry any deterioration by a corresponding propaganda measure or, what is more, to have strengthened trust in the leadership....If a propagandist is to be successful, he must first inform himself of the opinions, ideas, hopes and feelings of those he is seeking to influence. Only then is it possible for the propaganda to address them or, should the need arise, to mislead or delude them. Goebbels had his finger on the pulse of the nation's mood."

Finally, Boelcke sees Hitler's goals and popular morale as the two determinants of Goebbels' propaganda policy.¹⁰

There can be no doubt that the Propaganda Minister was particularly sensitive to and conscious of the potential consequences to morale of all kinds of actions and developments. Nor did he

hesitate to involve himself in the most technical or apparently most trivial matters when a negative public response had occurred or was expected to occur. His propaganda policies were naturally also geared to maximising the positive and minimising the negative effect of situational developments on morale. The war-time American propaganda analysts were quite aware of this sensitivity of the Nazi propaganda machine in reacting to the situation it was trying to control and summarised the typical progression of techniques employed by Goebbels in dealing with perceived morale problems:

(i) On first observing negative attitudes among the population, Goebbels would provide arguments against them without, at the same time, specifying what they were.

(ii) If this proved inadequate, the negative attitude would be revealed in morale-building propaganda but, at the same time, minimised by a) describing it in euphemistic terms, thus permitting a discussion without, however, admitting its full seriousness, or b) by associating it with a minority which could thereby be isolated or discredited.

(iii) Often Goebbels would give the correct attitude Germans should take and from this it was easy to conclude what the incorrect attitude was.

(iv) If all the techniques described in (i) - (iii) proved insufficient and were followed by an open admission of the negative attitude, it meant that Goebbels was acting on information that the undesired view had persisted or even spread. Its very mention showed that there was no risk of the propagandist spreading knowledge of it yet further.

(v) With still more serious morale problems, denunciations of those holding the "dangerous" views followed, denunciations often tinged with threats. Here propaganda was becoming the herald of direct repression.

(vi) Lastly, with the public announcement of the penalties inflicted on those guilty of the wrong attitudes or wrong activities (e.g. rumour-mongering, listening to enemy radio stations, defeatism), it was clear that an even graver situation had arisen.¹¹

It thus becomes evident that in the same way as Nazi propaganda set out on its task of forming public opinion, it was, in turn, itself often a response to that which it was trying to control. This was even more the case in a time of crisis when morale considerations, on which every leadership is in the last resort dependent, came more to the fore. Nevertheless, Goebbels would have been loath to admit this dependence on public opinion. The Stimmungsberichte ought to be the confirmation of his success. Since the population was regarded as hardly capable of having an independent opinion, a reported negative response to propaganda was frequently traced back to the influence of subversive elements or enemy propaganda. Similarly, rumours, instead of being put down to an unsatisfied need for information, were wrongly interpreted as expressions of political opposition.¹² To Goebbels, of course, the truth could often be very unpleasant and as the scales of war turned more and more against Germany he displayed a diminishing readiness to face facts that were unpleasant. In the last months of the war, the control mechanism for his propaganda was also weakened, since he preferred to believe the obsequious reports of his own propaganda offices rather than the more candid accounts of the Security Service. Perhaps even more fateful, he often placed an extraordinary amount of trust in his own intuition and the letters of flatterers.¹³ *

The phenomenon "morale" forms a constant background in any study of propaganda behaviour and popular response. But what is "morale"? This question has baffled many students of the

Second World War. T.Harrisson has demonstrated so clearly how in Great Britain during the war a "Morale Committee", set up by the government to ascertain drifts in popular mood, was faced with the vexing problem of not really knowing what it was supposed to be measuring.¹⁴ "Morale" is a very nebulous concept indeed. The Nazi leadership tried to overcome the problem of definition by differentiating between Stimmung (mood) and Haltung (bearing or behaviour). The former represents the more immediate and superficial reaction to events and the latter a basic attitude based on education, tradition and experience.¹⁵ It would, for instance, be possible to have a bad mood and view the future pessimistically, yet, at the same time, to behave as one had always done, i.e. to work for German victory. In 1943, when owing to Allied bombing the question of "morale" assumed a new importance, Goebbels explained the difference as follows:

"Under bearing we do not understand the noisy jingoism when the nation or certain parts of the people are subjugated to particularly heavy stresses. It cannot be demanded or expected that a town, which has just suffered a massive attack by enemy bombers, should display the rosiest of moods because of that very fact. To depict such a deep-reaching event in the colours of a patriotic outburst of enthusiasm must be reserved to the queer world of imagination of pub-strategists....After such a disaster it is not important that the population should be in a good mood but that it should preserve its bearing."¹⁶

The drawing of this contrast between Stimmung and Haltung was to become an increasingly important ingredient in the official interpretation of domestic morale with the changed military situation after Stalingrad and with intensified

enemy raiding. This distinction, however, became rather too automatic and stereotyped and at times degenerated into one of sheer convenience. The Stimmung could be used as a framework for a frank style of reporting. The compensation lay in ascribing it only limited importance and by declaring Haltung alone decisive for morale. In short, this meant that candour in descriptions of the Stimmung had to be qualified by an affirmation of the impeccable Haltung. But such an arbitrary distinction was hardly a valid one and it would be very misleading to assume a complete independence of the two phenomena.^{17*} As the Stimmungsberichte themselves at times admitted, a "low" in the Stimmung did not always remain without effect on the Haltung.

Within this context a satisfactory definition of "propaganda success" would seem difficult. Can a success only be recorded when the response to the propaganda message takes the form of the recommended action, manifested in a person's behaviour? Or is it a propaganda success merely to remove an individual's doubts and fears, without at the same time ensuring an increased contribution to the war effort, i.e. simply to improve his Stimmung? But it would be wrong to become trapped, as were the Nazis themselves, in a terminology designed primarily as an aid in understanding the complex phenomenon of morale. In the following chapters it is the response of the German people which is evident in a critical appraisal of morale reports that is mainly used to observe and record propaganda success or failure.

C. THE PROBLEM OF THE "MORALE" SOURCES

As this study relies so heavily on contemporary observations of German domestic morale and response to propaganda, it is important to deal with the reliability of the sources used. These are of German and "foreign" origin. It should be stressed

that all the morale sources listed below - however much they vary in accuracy - describe only the perceived state of morale, i.e. not necessarily how it really was.

1. Sicherheitsdienst (SD)

It was the responsibility of SD-Inland, which in September 1939 became Department IIIC4 of the new Reichssicherheitshauptamt,¹⁸ under its chief Otto Ohlendorf to report on the morale of the German people. Through a net of around 10,000 agents,¹⁹ it was able to give a qualitative account of the opinions, fears and hopes of the civilian population at any one time.

"The reports are limited, however, in that the Germans did not avail themselves of modern scientific techniques for the study of popular thought and feeling. Quantitative controls, sampling methods, and research design were completely lacking in the collection and interpretation of the material for those reports. Hence the German intelligence reports cannot be used to obtain estimates of the degree and extent of weak and strong points in morale with any precision. They show the problems of maintaining war morale in a totalitarian state and give illustrations of the qualitative aspects of these problems, but they do not indicate in any quantitative manner the relative extent or depth of the various elements of morale."^{20*}

The SD's agents (Vertrauensmänner), recruited from party and non-party circles,^{21*} were required to pass on all they saw or heard. Their field of operations was public transport, shops, newspaper kiosks, hairdressers, as well as the circle of their family, friends and work colleagues.²² Every individual observation made was part of a huge mosaic which, when put together, became a picture of the people's mood. Objectivity was demanded.^{23*}

The reports submitted by SD offices should "describe the mood of the population frankly without any colouring or propaganda window dressing, i.e. factually, clearly, reliably and responsibly, and as it was, not as it could or ought to be".²⁴ None the less, from a comparison of the local SD reports with their final compilation in the Meldungen aus dem Reich and the later SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, which gave a survey of morale developments in the whole Reich, it would seem that a certain watering down of the originally reported observations occurred. There were limits to Ohlendorf's fanaticism for the truth. Even he was loath to admit the failure of National Socialism as an ideology and as a political system. It would be safe to assume that the final picture that developed in these national surveys was often somewhat more positive than the facts warranted.²⁵

Despite these qualifications the SD Stimmungsberichte still proved too outspoken for the Nazi leadership, which could hardly be expected to accept the fact of the failure of its handiwork. The more critical Germany's military position became and the more these reports mirrored the consequent crisis in civilian morale, the greater did official opposition become. Goebbels, to whom the very idea of a body of opinion independent and uninfluenced by his own propaganda was anathema, was particularly incensed by reports of the critical reception to his call for "total war" in the Berlin Sportpalast on 18th February 1943.²⁶ Henceforth he was to become the foremost proponent of a drastic reduction in the number of those receiving the reports. In the wrong hands they could become the spreaders of defeatism.²⁷ The SD had in addition to face the full fury of the opposition of the Party organisation which was especially outraged by frequent reports of the NSDAP's loss in prestige and popularity among the masses. Party officials also had the uncomfortable

feeling of being watched and sensed competition. A change in the form of the reports in the summer of 1943, when the Meldungen aus dem Reich were replaced by the rather less comprehensive SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, did not appease the opposition for long.^{28*} The real crisis came in the summer of 1944, when Bormann forbade all members of the NSDAP and Ley all members of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront to cooperate with the SD.²⁹ The result was the demise of the national morale surveys. Nevertheless, the SD managed to continue its work and compiled reports at a local level right up to the end of the war and even beyond.³⁰ From a warning of Ohlendorf to his subordinates in October 1944 it does not seem that SD reporting had, in fact, become much less frank and outspoken than before. He admonished the organisation for being too anecdotal and for overvaluing individual remarks or occurrences, thereby losing sight of the whole. SD officials must remember that they were National Socialists and that they were obliged to view developments from a National Socialist standpoint.³¹ That Bormann still found time, however, to complain of an SD report at the very end of the war³² would seem to suggest that Ohlendorf's colleagues had learnt little of the art of tact.

The very fact that these SD Stimmungsberichte caused so much bad blood speaks in their favour when used as a source material. Despite their understandable caution when dealing with such highly-charged themes as the attitude of the German people to the Party and to the political leadership, the SD morale reports remain by far the most convincing German source about the real state of morale.

2. National Socialist Party

Each Kreis of the NSDAP was required on the basis of information received from the smaller Ortsgruppen to furnish its respective Gauleitung with fortnightly - or, should the situation demand,

with weekly - reports. At Gau level they were put together in a general monthly survey which was dispatched to the Parteikanzlei in Munich. These reports were mainly concerned with those sectors of life in which the Party was active, e.g. the success of a local propaganda campaign and the influence of the churches on German youth vis a vis that of the Party. At the same time, however, they commented on the local mood and response to the propaganda of the mass media.^{33*}

But this source material has to be viewed with a particularly critical eye. The Party's work was reported in a most favourable light and, if shortcomings were admitted, extenuating circumstances were almost always given. A.L.Unger in his examination of this material remarks:

"Local party functionaries evidently regarded it as their task not merely to report popular reaction, but also to pass on their own opinions and judgments, although they often phrased their comments in such a way as to imply that they reflected the views of the public."³⁴

On the very first day of war, Hitler had made every Party official down to the lowest level of Blockleiter responsible for the morale in his area, and it naturally followed that their accounts were often very coloured, concealing anything that could be traced back to their own shortcomings. This propensity to gloss over any unfavourable development became more and more evident as Germany's military situation deteriorated. The fact that in two reports for Aachen-Land for December 1942 and January 1943 not a single mention was made of Stalingrad demonstrates how local Party chiefs sought to evade uncomfortable subjects.³⁵ It is also safe to assume a certain watering down of negative observations as these reports were passed on to the

top level of the Party hierarchy. It was quite easy for a Gauleiter to select more favourable items and to ignore the negative ones when compiling a summary of the reports sent to him from subordinates. Finally, the circle of Party officialdom was much too restricted to build up sufficiently extensive contacts with the population. The citizen would also naturally be wary of expressing his true opinions - if these were other than optimistic - to a representative of the Party.³⁶

This source, however, has at times proved very useful in support of other material and for times when SD material is somewhat sparse, as is the case after the summer of 1944. Although there is indeed no adequate corrective, these reports do show up regional contrasts pretty well. Moreover, Party reports could afford to be rather more critical when dealing with the public response to the mass media which were not under the direct control of the Party.

3. Reich Propaganda Ministry (RPM)

The 43 regional Reichspropagandaämter (RPÄ) throughout Germany with their 1,332 officials³⁷ informed Goebbels at regular intervals on the population's reaction to propaganda. With the ending of the SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen in summer 1944, the Tätigkeitsberichte of the RPM, based on these local reports, become an indispensable source. Unfortunately, there is one great drawback. Their compilers were Party power holders and thus cut off from informal contact with the masses. As Gaupropagandaleiter they came under the dominance of the local Gauleiter who was much nearer than their other chief, the Propaganda Minister in Berlin. A harmonious relationship with their Gauleiter was a prerequisite for their work and they could hardly be expected to report in a way that might prove damaging to the reputation of the Gau or its chief.³⁸ Caution was, of course, also necessary when criticising the handiwork of the

powerful minister, Goebbels.

In spite of these qualifications, they do mirror the worsening morale situation and the attempts of Nazi propaganda to counter it. It should be noted that Goebbels increasingly based his decisions on this material to the exclusion of the SD reports.³⁹ This narrowing of his horizon was an expression of his own fear. As Germany's position became hopeless, he probably wished to avoid unnecessary demoralisation and no longer wished to look beyond a distortedly mirrored reality.

4. Other State Offices

Use has also been made of the quarterly reports drawn up by the local Oberlandesgerichtspräsidenten and Generalstaatsanwälte for the Ministry of Justice in Berlin. Although they were principally concerned with judicial matters, observations were also made regarding the mood of the local population as it appeared from trials and the testimony of witnesses. These highly subjective reports vary from being wholly sycophantic to the Party and the public authorities to being models of frankness. The fact that they were drawn up at three-monthly intervals permits a general view of long-term trends and the factors governing them. They are frequently of particular value in providing an introduction to the more detailed SD and Party reports, which cover much shorter periods. This is also true of the monthly reports of the Reichsregierungspräsidenten which almost without fail contain comments on the state of local morale. These, however, remain only for the Land Bavaria.

5. Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW)

At the end of the war the general respect of the German people for the armed forces^{40*} found official recognition when soldiers were used to bolster morale in a Mundpropagandaaktion (propaganda by word of mouth) as well as for gathering information on civilian morale. In July 1944 a trial operation was

conducted in Vienna. Goebbels, who seems at first to have known nothing of the action, appears to have been pleased with the results and soon gave it his full backing. In the following months he was to enjoy decisive control through his RPÄ, which had a determining voice in the choice of reliable soldiers, and, in addition, supplied their working material. The conviction of having found a more "reliable" reporting system may well have contributed to his acquiescence in the ending of the SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen. Furthermore, these reports were sent to the RPÄ, so that the basis for the Tätigkeitsberichte of his own ministry was widened.⁴¹

The soldier reporters, of course, lacked the long experience of SD and Party workers and their hastily prepared reports seem in their description of individual observations to have lost sight of the course of developments as a whole.⁴² Nevertheless, when used in conjunction with other sources they do help to fill the gap left by the SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen.

6. U.S. Content Analysis Reports

During the war the United States Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service and later the Office of War Information drew up weekly analyses of German propaganda. These reports attempted on the basis of the content of Nazi propaganda and by means of qualitative content analysis procedures⁴³ to make inferences as to German policy intentions, expectations and the state of German domestic morale at any one time. The validity of these propaganda analysis procedures rests on the assumption of the "purposeful and deliberative" nature of a propaganda communication.⁴⁴ A.L. George, who was engaged in this work during the Second World War, could claim:

"In the two month sample period (March-April 1943), 85% of the 119 inferences for which some verific-

ation decision was made were scored as having been correct on the basis of available historical evidence."⁴⁵

In the specific field of home morale 100% of the inferences were scored as positive.⁴⁶ In the use made of the material in this study it has often proved quite striking how these accounts, drawn up in a faraway enemy land, repeat the very same observations and conclusions as official German Stimmungsberichte.

7. Other Sources

The observations made by neutral travellers and journalists in the German Reich which appeared in the Swiss and German press are at times of considerable interest, although they are, of course, very subjective in nature. It should finally be pointed out that the whole interaction process between propaganda and morale meant that the propaganda directives and the propaganda content were themselves often a testimony of current morale trends and the response of the German people to previous propaganda lines.

CHAPTER 2

' STALINGRAD AND THE NEW SITUATION

On February 2, 1943, the guns fell silent in Stalingrad. The Greater German Reich entered a three day period of official mourning. To the Allies the news came as a much needed confirmation that victory was possible, indeed probable, even if many heavy battles still lay ahead. The myth of German invincibility had been destroyed for ever. Despite the Reich Propaganda Ministry's attempt to interpret the disaster as a glorious saga which would go down in the pages of German history, the real significance of the surrender of the Sixth Army was not lost on the German people. A people who had shown great impatience even during "the good times" of almost unbroken German victory was now faced by the apparently impossible - the spectre of the virtual annihilation of an entire German army. All the hopes that had been built up by the German advances in the summer of 1942 were suddenly dashed. Admittedly, Stalingrad lay far from the frontiers of the Reich and Germany itself was not in mortal danger, yet the long awaited last battle which would secure final victory now seemed further off than ever before.

A. THE TIMES OF SILENCE

On 23 November 1942, four days after the launching of the Soviet winter offensive, the world heard the news that the German Sixth Army had been surrounded. Only the governments of the Axis remained silent, hoping for a turn for the better. Any hint as to the real situation in and around Stalingrad was expressly forbidden, and in the following weeks Stalingrad virtually disappeared from the German press and radio, apart from a special radio hook-up on Christmas Eve. In fact, the propaganda treatment of events on the Eastern Front as a whole became extremely vague

and unclear. No maps of the Front were printed and only successful resistance to localised Russian thrusts was reported. A much more melancholic and serious tone came to characterise propaganda output. The propaganda's sensitivity to military developments is illustrated in a directive given the press on 5 January, in which it was stated that articles "over climatic conditions in the arctic zones and the ostensibly great dangers of this climate" were undesirable.¹

Such a sudden and total silence could hardly but arouse the curiosity of the German people, especially as they had been told only a short time before that Stalingrad's capture was merely a matter of time. The very fact of its absence from the news turned attention on Stalingrad more than ever before.

"The only anxiety exists in regard to the troops fighting in the Stalingrad area, all the more as Stalingrad was no longer mentioned in the last Military Communiqués. It is rumoured in many parts of the Reich that about 80,000 to 100,000 soldiers are completely encircled in the Stalingrad area, and this has given rise to fears that Stalingrad could become a second Verdun."²

Such astonishingly accurate news could only have come from the accounts of soldiers on leave or from the enemy radio. The official silence had thus achieved very little. The population was determined to find out the truth one way or another. In fact, by such an ill-conceived policy, the leadership ran the risk of losing all control and influence over the formation of public opinion. The German people were turning elsewhere for information and forming their own independent picture of events. If this tendency were left unchecked, the work of many years of Nazi propaganda would most certainly be destroyed, for its

success naturally depended on the population's total dependence on it.

Goebbels had most to lose from the enforced silence. Both in Germany and abroad he was quite wrongly held responsible for all aspects of news policy and all material emanating from the Nazi mass media. In fact, he was far from being free to do as he wished on the propaganda front and he was bound to the decisions of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, which jealously defended its right of military censorship and of compiling the military communiqué (OKW-Bericht). It is all too easy to overlook this fact. In the case of the handling of the Battle of Stalingrad, the news black out can be traced back to a decision of the Führer himself.³

Faced with the reality of Soviet success, a radical revision of all estimations of the enemy followed. On 17th December 1942 the SD reported:

"The persistent heavy Russian employment of men and matériel, which is shown particularly in the high number of tanks reported destroyed, has strengthened the opinion among the population that Soviet Russia still has inexhaustible reserves which are being supplemented by American supplies. Because of this, it is often not believed that Soviet Russia has almost reached the end of her military strength, especially as the view prevails that the Russian industrial war production in the Urals is in full swing."⁴

Since the nightmare of inexhaustible Russian supplies and matériel starkly contradicted the former propaganda portrayal of a "colossus with feet of clay", it was quite natural that the Germans should have become completely uncertain in their judge-

ment of the enemy, particularly in their assessment of his military strength.⁵ Even the propaganda argument pointing out the advantage given to Germany by the high Russian losses only boomeranged in the end, as the conclusion was then drawn that the Soviets must have an immense potential strength at their disposal. It showed, moreover, that their industry remained intact.⁶

The German people entered the new year with a sense of foreboding. Their war had become cloudier, much less certain. In the belief that the fronts were secure, their grievances had been directed hitherto at hardships at home. Now, all of a sudden, all their previous anxieties were dwarfed by the new and threatening danger lurking in the east. In the festive speeches of Nazi leaders, as well as the Führer's Order to the Armed Forces, at the turn of the year, it was the lack of clues and pointers as to the future development of the war which struck the German population, a population wanting to know how and when this war could be won. The question "how" was more and more to replace the question "when". The immediate prospects looked very bleak indeed. Not to mention the situation in Stalingrad, which, despite the official silence, had already become common knowledge, it was now also doubted whether the Wehrmacht could withstand the enemy onslaught in Africa, and with the loss of North Africa an attack on Italy was feared. 1943 also brought the certainty of a resumption of British air raids, much heavier than those of the year before. Nor did the changed tone of the radio and press go unnoticed. Both had lost their boundless optimism and carefully avoided making any predictions for 1943. Only the harshness of war was stressed. That it would be a long and hard war was now clear to all.⁷ The pessimism occasioned by the rumours of a Stalingrad disaster was now extended to the judgement of the military situation in the east as a whole.

The worst was feared. Rumours of encirclement found an all too ready ear. Many reckoned with the Russians cutting off the German units in the Caucasus and in the Leningrad area.⁸

Many people now turned elsewhere for encouragement and, helped by the propaganda, found some ground for hope in the U-boats which were now reaching the height of their success in the Battle of the Atlantic.

"More and more the view prevails among the population that the sea war must decide the outcome of the war."⁹

But such good news, although very welcome, could provide no adequate compensation. What is more, there was the very real fear that any good that might be done would sooner or later be neutralised by the immense American ship-building capacity.¹⁰

Indeed, the United States remained the unknown factor. There was an uncomfortable feeling that the West was being allowed to build up its strength and positions quite undisturbed, while the Reich was exhausting itself on the endless plains of Russia.¹¹

In this critical situation, the official news reporting was seen as hopelessly inadequate. Its lack of clarity, together with its indirect announcement of unfavourable developments, led to a certain "reading between the lines". Nevertheless, it was impossible to make a clear picture of events without resorting to other sources of information.

"The majority of the population form their picture of the situation in the east from their own reflections and conclusions. Whilst paying attention to the news of the press and radio, they attempt at the same time to fill in the gaps of the official reporting (lack of place-names and indications as to the whereabouts of

the front-line)."

Although an increase in listening to forbidden overseas stations was recorded,

"The strongest influence at the moment comes from letters from the Front and from the reports of front-line soldiers on leave." ¹²

There could be no better evidence of the failure of propaganda policy - or more aptly propaganda silence - than this admission that the unofficial information sources were having a greater influence in the forming of public opinion than the official Nazi mass-media.

B. THE FALL OF STALINGRAD

When there was no longer the slightest hope of rescuing the Sixth Army, German propaganda began preparing the German people for the bad news to come. The first official indication that Stalingrad was surrounded, an indirect one at that, was made in the OKW-Bericht of 16 January:

"In the Stalingrad area our troops, who have been engaged for weeks in a heroic defensive struggle against an enemy attacking from all sides, yesterday again beat off strong attacks by enemy infantry and armoured formations with great Bolshevik losses. The command and troops again provided a shining example of the heroic German military spirit."¹³

The press was now permitted to give prominence to the Stalingrad sector without, at the same time, diverging from the formulations of the OKW-Bericht.¹⁴ Some attempt was made to point out the positive side of the long and bloody battle now nearing its end. In his weekly radio survey of military events, Lieutenant-General Dittmar could claim that, owing to the tenacity of the Stalingrad fighters, a catastrophe had been avoided:

"....be the outcome of this unequal struggle as it may, the operational value of this heroic resistance is already evident today. It is no exaggeration to say that the firm stand of Paulus' army through the weeks has had the most decisive influence upon the development of operations on the southern sector of the Eastern Front."

If Stalingrad had been given up,

"The lines of communication leading to the west and south-west via Stalingrad would have been opened to the Soviets. The superiority of their forces pressing in the same direction would have been overwhelming."¹⁵

It was not, however, the strategic value of the sacrifice that the propaganda chose to stress, but instead the exemplary heroism of the Stalingrad fighters themselves, a heroism which, it was hoped, would unite the German people in accepting the new burdens placed upon them. In a secret conference with his propagandists on 27 January, Goebbels fervently expressed the view:

"This unique event in German history - for German soldiers have never before been in such a hopeless fight - must be used for a psychological strengthening of our people."

The press was to remember that "every word over the heroic struggle will go down in history". In particular, the OKW-Bericht should be so formulated that "it will stir the soul in the centuries to come".¹⁶ A historic saga was in the making. In a speech on the tenth anniversary of the Nazi assumption of power in Germany, Göring maintained:

"One day this will be regarded as the greatest and most heroic battle that was ever fought in our history....Such a battle is being waged there today, that every German, even in a thousand years time, will pronounce the word, 'Stalingrad', with holy awe and will remember that it was there that Germany set the seal for final victory. For a people who can fight like that must win."

He, moreover, expressed the conviction that it was the Soviets 'last fling'.¹⁷

The news of the surrender of Paulus' army was made known three days later by means of a Special Announcement, hitherto only the bringer of good tidings. The assignment of the press was clear:

"The heroic battle of Stalingrad will now become the great epic song in German history. The German press is now placed before its greatest journalistic task.....In the undying bravery of the men of Stalingrad is displayed the spirit and strength of the German people more strongly than ever before, which will secure them the victory they are now more fanatically determined than ever to obtain."¹⁸

Any unwelcome details likely to disturb this grandiose picture of valour and heroism were left out. No mention, for example, was made of the capture of Field-Marshal Paulus.¹⁹ The myth was rigorously protected. The sense of mystery and awe should not be lost through too frequent use. The very word, "Stalingrad", was to be saved for great occasions.²⁰

The official admission that the situation in Stalingrad was

hopeless occasioned extraordinary depression, even among those who had known the truth for weeks. There was a continued tendency to extend this pessimism to other fronts. Now, with the evacuation of Tripoli, many believed the loss of North Africa to be inevitable.²¹ Nothing was able to bring the people out of their pessimism. Even the U-boat successes, to which an increasing importance had been ascribed in the weeks before, now aroused little interest:

"With the Special Announcement (Sondermeldung) on the success of the U-boats, a general disappointment was noticeable when the England-Fanfare sounded." ²²

The growing manifestation of Soviet strength now appeared as a veritable nightmare and the Stalingrad debacle showed only too clearly its consequences. It was quite natural that with the defeat of the Sixth Army:

"The fear is increasing among many sections of the population as to whether we can see this mighty struggle through." ²³

Few could share Göring's "conviction" that the Soviets were sending their last reserves into battle, as "the Russians have already given us too many surprises for us to hope that this will really be their last effort".²⁴

In spite of the fact that the propaganda had been preparing the German population for bad news for days, the final announcement on 3 February still came as a shock. Many had still hoped against hope.

"Although the fate awaiting the Sixth Army had had to be reckoned with for weeks, people had nevertheless still hoped right up to the very last moment for a turn for the better." ²⁵

Perhaps, it is not necessarily contradictory when people, at the same time as doubting everything the propaganda tells them, never give up all hope that it might be right after all.

The explanations as to the sense of the sacrifice and its interpretation in the form of a heroic saga did not stop the German population asking the question why it had all been necessary.

"The inevitable development and the necessity of the huge sacrifice is being discussed among all sections of the population. In particular, the population asks why the threat to Stalingrad was not recognised in time. Surely, the air reconnaissance must have noticed the deployment of the Russian army against Stalingrad. The question is also being asked why the city was not evacuated when there was still enough time. It is, above all, pointed out that the opponent's strength must have been underestimated, as otherwise the risk in trying to hold Stalingrad after it had been surrounded would never have been taken. The people cannot understand why the relief of Stalingrad was not possible. At present, they do not appreciate the strategic importance of the battle that has taken place there, because they lack detailed knowledge of overall developments on the southern sector of the Eastern Front. It is to some extent doubted whether the defenders of Stalingrad did really succeed in tying up strong enemy forces right up to the very end." 26

There could be no better testimony of the bitterness occasioned by the disaster, a bitterness felt all the more deeply as it was

thought that it all might have been avoided. In contrast to the propaganda, many ascribed little practical value to the stand of the Sixth Army. In short, it had been an unnecessary massacre. The glowing portrayal of the sufferings which the Stalingrad soldiers had been forced to undergo, instead of contributing to a new historical myth, simply backfired and only managed to depress the families of the fallen and missing still further.²⁷ What interested them most was not the role of Stalingrad in German history but the much more pressing question whether their sons and husbands were still alive and had, after all, been taken prisoner. Although German propaganda never as much as hinted at the possibility of there being survivors, many continued to hold on to the belief that one day many German troops would return to the homeland from Soviet imprisonment.²⁸ The whole propaganda treatment of this serious defeat was characterised by a very dangerous lack of reality and a failure to appreciate the most basic human feelings. Von Studnitz, an official in the Press and Information office of the Foreign Ministry, was fully aware of the danger and on 2 February noted in his diary:

"This secrecy as regards the details about Stalingrad will inevitably drive the population into the arms of foreign propaganda sources. What the relatives of some quarter of a million German soldiers want to know is what has happened to their sons, their fathers and their brothers. Not everyone will be able to resist the temptation to try and get news by listening to enemy broadcasts. Those at the top seem to have overlooked the fact that publication of the figures given by the Russians would have allayed anxiety. In the eyes of the simple masses,

'taken prisoner' is very different from 'killed', no matter how many times they are told the Russians murder all prisoners taken." ²⁹

These fears were soon borne out by facts. Many tried to satisfy their news hunger in a matter of such direct concern to the family by tuning in to forbidden stations. The SD reports leave no doubt as to the considerable increase in "black-listening" at this time. ³⁰ And what might have initially been the result of a momentary weakness might later - and here lay the danger - prove habit-forming. In fact, by its silence regarding a question which was uppermost in the minds of so many Germans, Nazi propaganda was only managing to create new and, perhaps, even greater problems for itself.

What importance did the German people then ascribe to Stalingrad for the course of the war as a whole?

"They are generally convinced that Stalingrad constitutes a turning point of the war. Whilst the more militant elements perceive Stalingrad as a moral obligation to employ all their energy on the home and fighting fronts, hoping thereby to secure victory, the weaker ones tend to see it as the beginning of the end." ³¹

The January report of the Regierungspräsident of Munich was even more blunt:

"The mood is very depressed among all parts of the population. The number of Volksgenossen who believe that a German defeat is quite possible or who already consider the war as already lost is increasing." ³²

Even in official circles, morale was far from being satisfactory:

"Many, who occupy responsible posts which give them a greater insight into the position in one particular sector, speak freely of difficulties and, by making anxious remarks, infect others with their pessimism. It is reported from different parts of the Reich that Volksgenossen, who have been in Berlin on business during the last few days, have, in some cases, noticed a pronouncedly dejected mood among the authorities and state offices there." 33

The belief that this war might indeed be lost was a real danger sign which, left unchecked, would most certainly prove fatal to the entire propaganda effort. Even more perilous from the point of view of Nazi propagandists was the growing pre-occupation with the probable consequences of defeat. The SD pointed out this trend in a report of 28 January:

02/28/41
"Afraid that an unfavourable end to the war has moved into the range of possibility, the Volksgenossen are now seriously contemplating the results of a defeat. The overwhelming majority is convinced that the loss of the war would mean total ruin, although here and there it is stated that it would be 'only half so bad'. If, on the other hand, this alarming awareness strengthens the will to hold out, it also leads to considerations of a possible way out should it come to the worst and to talk of the last bullet which remains ready if everything is at an end." 34

Without hope of ultimate success in the common effort, propaganda could naturally achieve but little. Most dangerous

was the idea, which was gaining ground, that the German nation could survive a defeat and the end of National Socialism. Not everyone seems to have accepted the official view that Germany and National Socialism were now one and the same, that the fate of the one determined the fate of the other. In Bavaria, for example, many were certain that there existed an alternative to Nazism and there was even some talk of a South German State "under French protection".³⁵ Church-goers in the Gmünd area were reported as expressing the firm conviction

"that a German defeat would not have such unfavourable consequences for Bavaria since the enemy's hate is directed exclusively at Prussian Germany and not against Bavaria."³⁶

It was to be expected that Stalingrad should become the starting point for an attack on the whole propaganda organisation, which, so it was thought, had been guilty of misleading the German people, especially in regard to Soviet strength. But much more serious was the reported criticism of both the political and military leadership. An implicit confidence on the part of a population in its leaders is, of course, a prerequisite for the unity of a nation at war and therefore for its morale. And in the aftermath of Stalingrad, such fundamental criticism was reported not only from out-and-out opponents but also from those hitherto favourably disposed to National Socialism.³⁷ That Hitler had promised to hold Stalingrad at all costs was now recalled with wounding bitterness. It was stated quite openly that Halder had warned the Führer of the imminent threat of an enemy attack aimed at cutting off Stalingrad and the Caucasus. Gau Westfalen-Süd reported:

"In a train the Führer was described as the mass-murderer of Stalingrad, without anyone immediately arresting the culprit or at least

giving him a good thrashing. Similarly, statements are reported which ascribe responsibility for the war and the horror it has caused to the Führer and the Party. Other remarks, which must have originated from officer circles, can also be heard, namely that last winter Brauchitsch had to go, but this time the Führer is alone responsible. So who will have to go now? Unfortunately, such base talk is not immediately encountering any strong reply, a sign how bourgeois and weak-kneed a large part of the Party membership is." ³⁸

Faced with this very bad "mood", the compilers of the morale reports sought a compensation factor. Thus, the extremely pessimistic report quoted above ends by stressing the unshaken "bearing" (Haltung) of the civilian population. In the dark months that followed this distinction between Haltung and Stimmung was to become increasingly routine. However bad the "mood" might be, the "inner strength" of the German population remained unimpeachable. But the SD was, in fact, following the lead given by Goebbels himself who, as will be shown in a later chapter, was to find such a distinction useful since it provided him with greater flexibility when portraying civilian morale.

C. THE PROPAGANDA DILEMMA

With the "turn of fate" Nazi propaganda faced its great crisis. It has been shown above that, with the bad news arriving from the Eastern Front, the Nazi leaders chose to keep silent. It was the easiest solution even if it meant no more than a postponement of the inevitable and amounted to an open invitation to the German people to seek the news elsewhere they sought.

Sooner or later they would have to be told the bitter facts. In fact, it is difficult to appreciate what the regime was hoping to achieve by holding on to this silence for so long. It must have known that an information vacuum would be created which the German people would do their best to fill. Suddenly, the number one issue in people's minds, Stalingrad, had vanished into obscurity and it was quite inevitable that a great number of those civilians who felt directly affected should make every effort to get their hands on any news about what was really happening out in the east. Time was soon to show how little official propaganda had to gain from such a negative policy.

"People indeed realise that military reporting should not give the leadership of the enemy army any information they could use in coming operations. Recently, however, they have often been dissatisfied, because, even in cases where no such danger existed, adverse news was reported only in a very veiled way. The population is far from being prone to falling into deep pessimism on receiving unfavourable news and sees its intelligence being underrated and in these veiled reports a source of uncontrollable rumours." ³⁹

This lack of confidence in official propaganda became so pronounced that Hans Fritzsche, appointed political controller of German broadcasting in November 1942, felt obliged to defend the reliability of the Großdeutscher Rundfunk on 23 January:

"We have not only clearly named the places where fighting took place; nay, with all the German Armed Forces which are fighting, there are hundreds of reporters, who, soldiers themselves,

report on details apart from the general situation and on the men waging the fight. No war reporting can possibly be more candid and reliable. Moreover, unlike every one of our enemies, we have no reason for underestimating the fierceness of the struggle and the extent of the danger threatening us, for glossing it over or belittling it; for it was against us, the Germans, that this war had been prepared for a long time by a few men on the other side, who were merely the puppets of the two manifestations of International Jewry - Plutocracy and Bolshevism. We have never had reason or opportunity to minimise the extent of the tasks and the dangers of this war." ⁴⁰

Together with the army of the German Reich, German propaganda was now pushed onto the defensive. The greater significance and difficulty of its fundamental task to maintain morale at a critical time meant both a greater sensitivity to as well as a growing dependence on the reaction of the population to the propaganda message - a reaction, of course largely determined by its morale. The interaction of propaganda content and propaganda response was to become a constant feature in the period between the German defeat in the Battle of Stalingrad and the final collapse of the Third Reich. Before the old year 1942 was out, a serious attempt was made to bring the tone of the propaganda into line with the seriousness of the military situation and the mood of the population. It was now necessary to prepare the German people for the harder times that lay ahead. The boundless optimism that had marked almost all Nazi propaganda in the first three years of the war was no longer appropriate. Although the propaganda content did not become any more truthful, as the silence over Stalingrad shows, the news itself was

presented in a more factual, sober manner which must have led many to think that the mass media had become more candid and frank. Without this really being the case, the German reader and listener was given the impression that news reporting had become more informative. It should be added, moreover, that in the military reporting German units no longer automatically won every engagement. But a pessimistic candour regarding details could also be used to conceal much more fateful developments, and in the first two weeks of the new year German propaganda continued to ignore developments in the Stalingrad area. The significance as well as the intention of this new tone was not lost on the German civilian population. According to an SD report of 25 January:

"The overwhelming majority are proving themselves strong enough for a blunt style of reporting. Most people reckon on further reports of hard blows in the coming weeks. They base this belief on the fact that the news services have never chosen such serious expressions and have never described the situation in such clear terms as at the present moment."

It then went on to stress the fact

"that the population would rather hear the truth, despite all the dejection caused by unfavourable reports, than be uncertain of what is happening or to hear the news presented more favourably than the facts warrant." 41

Although the change was thus generally welcomed, the reputation of German propaganda, which had always claimed to have told the truth, was to a certain extent being undermined

and compromised at the same time. The sudden change made very many people aware of the propaganda purpose and intensified the feeling of being manipulated. The move could almost be interpreted as an admission that hitherto the propaganda had been deliberately misleading them. Naturally, the first question now asked was why this change in style and tone had first come at that moment. Had not German propaganda always boasted of being factual and frank?

"One remembers many announcements of the previous year, which had been less cautious and had been made in a very optimistic tone, certain of victory." ⁴²

In short, the propagandists' recognition of the changed situation had come rather late.

Once the announcement of the end in Stalingrad had been made, the tone of Nazi propaganda became even more harsh and pessimistic, perhaps even more pessimistic than the facts at this time really warranted. But this pessimism was now to become much more than it had been up to then - an official response to the negative reaction of the German people to their mass media. It was now used as a tool of propaganda policy itself. Pessimism became the means of persuading the German nation of the necessity of a more total war effort, of making them accept the harsh measures that now lay in store. In their enthusiasm for the new official pessimism, many propagandists made the same mistake they had made in the old days of official optimism - of going too far. The danger of overdoing it was pointed out in a Party report at the end of January.

"If one wishes to make the people hard, then one must not deprive them of all hope, for by doing so one is taking away their faith. Moreover, one must not give the relatives and

friends too clear a picture of the terrible torments the Stalingrad fighters had to bear, because this only succeeds in engendering a feeling of horror and despair." ⁴³

The dilemma of a centrally directed propaganda at a time of military setback is here clearly demonstrated. When the information media choose to ignore the seriousness of the situation and remain confident and over-optimistic, they are reproached for trying to conceal the truth. When their pronouncements suddenly become more factual and realistic, they destroy hopes and confirm existing fears. With the change in policy, the "propaganda" nature of all official information becomes apparent to everyone, and the consequent consciousness of being the object of manipulation lessens the effectiveness of the propaganda message. The pessimists among the population, long suspicious of their mass media, became even more suspicious and concluded that the general situation was, in fact, much more serious than it was currently being portrayed - perhaps hopeless. And, as the military position became increasingly unfavourable to the Reich, German propaganda became increasingly trapped in this vicious circle. Whatever propaganda policy might be, the German people became more and more aware of the existence of a propaganda policy and that they were meant to be its victims. The result was a growing impatience and dissatisfaction with the propaganda, which was now often regarded as just that, "propaganda", with the same undertones as in democratic lands. The SD Linz, for instance, qualified its description of the overall "success" of Goebbels' New Year's Eve speech with the following words:

"The effect of his statements of course suffered in the sense that people see in Goebbels too much of the propagandist, whose statements,

although indeed extremely skilfully put together and rhetorically perfect, nevertheless lack that inner warmth which accompanies the Führer's words." 44

Particularly among the more educated part of the population, the view was expressed that, however beautifully Goebbels could speak, it was nonetheless only "propaganda". Moreover, the fact that Goebbels should make two speeches in one week, in addition to having his weekly Das Reich articles read twice over the air, was seen as evidence of his "excessive craving for admiration" (Geltungsbedürfnis). 45

The changed military situation remained, of course, the most crucial factor in making the population view all that they were told with an ultra-sceptical eye:

"At this time when the emotional burden is so great, the population tends to regard all propaganda broadcasts particularly critically." 46

This very pronounced tendency is clearly illustrated in the reception to the once popular political surveys of Hans Fritzsche.

"Especially at this time, the population is less ready to hear polemical discussions about the enemy. They are, for example, little interested in the anxieties caused in England by the absence of extra Christmas rations and are quite indifferent as to whether there are ten or fifteen million unemployed in the U.S.A." 47

What had in good days made the Germans gloat now only irritated them. At a time when the last defenders of Stalingrad were making their last stand, there was little interest in propaganda

attacks on the enemy leadership.

"Almost everything that could be said over the character and conduct of our enemies and over the mendacious leadership clique in England and the U.S.A. has already been said during the last few years. All that is still written and said about them is considered by most of the population to be nothing new and of secondary importance when compared with the main questions at present." 48

Particularly disliked were articles and talks which dismissed the enemy successes as unimportant and Germany's opponents as "disunited, weak and ridiculous".⁴⁹ Germany's military setbacks spoke a much stronger language than the propaganda gloss.

"Among the population no one believes that Churchill and Roosevelt are so stupid and divided as they appear in the press. The population believes without exception that the meeting in Casablanca was not fruitless as the commentaries maintained." 50.

D. CONCLUSION

With Stalingrad Germany entered a period of almost unmitigated setback. With one blow the eyes of all Germans had been opened to the seriousness and the realities of the war.⁵¹ For Goebbels the fundamental question now was whether he could offset the inevitably negative effect on the nation's morale of so grim a situation. The glamour and splendour of the great German victories of 1939-42 had dimmed and he now had to struggle hard to maintain that degree of popular support the government needed. The results of his attempt to counter the Stalingrad debacle did not look very promising for the future. Disguising its real

significance by building up a heroic "myth" deceived few. For a people long spoilt by a chain of virtually uninterrupted victories, nothing could now remove the sour taste of defeat. Defeat remained defeat! The propagandists were themselves to realize that absolutely no capital was to be made out of Stalingrad. The very word conjured up memories, not of exemplary valiant self-sacrifice, but of defeat and ignominious surrender. The "eternal myth" was therefore allowed to die. Soon the very mention of there once having been a Battle of Stalingrad was expressly forbidden.^{52*}

In fact, by tackling the news from the Eastern Front in the way it did, the leadership only managed to create a much more serious problem for itself. By its initial silence, it threw the civilian population on to alternative sources of information which, moreover, they could do practically nothing to control. The increase in "black-listening" was dramatic. The subsequently more realistic style of German propaganda, as well as the swift change in propaganda policy at the beginning of February, in which an admission of the seriousness of the military situation was no longer anathema, only substantiated information previously heard from unofficial sources. Although many appreciated this new "frankness", for others the sudden swing in the propaganda pendulum compromised the trustworthiness of official propaganda and helped to boost the prestige of enemy radio. Most dangerous of all, an increasing number began trying to form their own independent picture of events.

The basic question in the months to come was whether the Reichspropagandaministerium would be able to win back lost ground and to improve its somewhat battered image. Would Nazi propaganda succeed in eliminating the threat posed by its unwelcome competitors? Moreover, could a totalitarian propaganda be successful in a period of prolonged setback?

CHAPTER 3

"TOTAL WAR"

A. INTRODUCTION

Goebbels was one of the few German leaders to recognize the changed nature of the war. Victory could no longer be regarded as a matter of certainty, a question of time - it could now only be achieved by the total sacrifice of every German man and woman at home to the war effort. At a policy conference in his ministry at the beginning of the new year, he took issue with those who held the view that Germany could never lose the war. Of course she could lose the war if she did not mobilise all her potential strength and resources in one gigantic common effort.¹ The setbacks in the East gave Goebbels the chance to put through his plans for a really total war. On 24 January, before the end in Stalingrad, the mobilisation of all men between 16 and 65 and women without children between 17 and 45 for war work was decreed. Stalingrad now became the example for those at home. No longer could there be an excuse for continuing with an almost peace-time existence whilst the soldiers at the front were fighting a life and death struggle. Nevertheless Goebbels did not get what he wanted, absolute powers to coordinate the totalisation of the war on the Home Front, and he had to be content with a merely supervisory role. Instead, the coveted prize went to a triumvirate consisting of Lammers, Keitel and Bormann.²

As the totalisation was an action directly influencing the everyday life and even financial interests of the population, an extreme sensitivity in the reception of the propaganda and the measures it was backing would naturally be expected. Here was

not just another propaganda theme or a propaganda portrayal of events on a faraway battlefield, but something concrete, visible. The "total war" would be followed with an extremely watchful eye. In fact, the eye of every German left at home would be able to ascertain whether the propaganda really mirrored the reality. A constant comparison between what one saw in the street, in the factory, at the office, and what one heard on the radio and read in the press was here possible and inevitable. This was the vital factor determining acceptance of the new measures, for every Volksgenosse would regard himself as qualified to judge, on the basis of his own observations, whether "total war" was or was not a fact. This, of course, made the task of the propagandist doubly difficult and drastically limited his freedom of manoeuvre.

Only ten years before, a large majority of the German working class had voted Social Democrat or Communist. It might well be that many would see in the new measures an opportunity to give vent to their animosity against the more well-off, who had hitherto been spared the rigours of the war effort. Such a consequence would expose National Socialist theory of a national community without inter-class strife and friction as without substance, indeed a fraud. So Goebbels, apparently without realising it at the time, was about to test the reality of the kernel of National Socialism, the existence of a true Volksgemeinschaft. From the first moment, it was clear that everyone would make it his business to ascertain that all citizens were equally affected and that the burden was fairly shared by everybody, independent of family and class. Would, for example, the hitherto privileged daughter or wife of the Oberstudiendirektor be treated leniently and given a pleasant job in an office? In this chapter the question to what extent the German worker had remained true to his belief in the class-

war cannot be overlooked. This factor would most certainly play a substantial role in determining his reaction to "total war" propaganda. Goebbels would have to proceed with the uttermost skill if he wished to attain his goal. One false step could unleash an avalanche of bitter recriminations, undermining the very fabric of the "social state".

B. THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN

There can be little doubt that the measures were particularly welcomed by the working class, that is by those already fully engaged in the war effort. On the other hand, there was little enthusiasm to the announcement by those most directly affected, the middle and upper classes.³ Thus from the very beginning there was a potentially dangerous polarisation of the classes. The promise of equal treatment of their social "betters" was, however, viewed with suspicion by the working class, since it simply seemed too good to be true.

"According to the reports at hand, the scepticism is fairly great. It is believed that the 'better class' people - among whom in a small town the wives of the Bürgermeister and the solicitor are included - will somehow attempt to dodge the measures. The doctors will certainly be pestered by women requesting certificates to confirm that they are unfit to work. At the most, the women who are being considered for mobilisation will report to the Red Cross, which could hardly be regarded as fully valid war service. A large part of the population regards a really total enforcement of the measures as a criterion for testing the existence of a real people's community (Volksgemeinschaft) and for judging

the leadership's determination to distribute the burden fairly and equally." ⁴

Some working-class people were even reported as "already having taken down the addresses of the so-called 'better class' women in their area so as to see whether and in what way these women would be mobilised for work". ⁵ A report of the Regierungspräsident of Munich echoes the widespread class suspicion within the Volksgemeinschaft:

"The question whether distinctions will be made according to class and whether the wives of civil servants and other employees of the state and the party will be given the same treatment is being watched with a particularly sharp eye." ⁶

It is thus not surprising that an SD report of 4 February warned:

"a too mild implementation of the measures would affect the trust of the people ⁷in the leadership ₇quite considerably." ⁷

Goebbels attempted to allay these anxieties in a speech marking the tenth anniversary of the Nazi accession to power:

"The total war effort demands abandonment of all comfortable bourgeois habits, and a complete devotion to its tasks fills the whole of our people; it will not be tolerated that even a single person should try to shirk... We shall proceed with the hardest punishment against saboteurs of our conduct of the war, but there is hardly need to stigmatise them publicly since their number is so small that it carries no weight with the people." ⁸

Goebbels realised the importance of the visual aspect, what he called the Optik, of the "total war". A series of measures was principally designed to convince the working class that the government had no intention of protecting the better-off, even if the nature of the restrictions was to pose no threat at all to the financial interests of the upper classes. Horse-riding, for instance, was forbidden in the Grönewald and Berlin Tiergarten⁹ and a number of luxury restaurants were closed.¹⁰ The sensitivity of the propaganda machine is illustrated in a directive to the press forbidding any mention of long evening dress exhibits at the Berlin fashion show.¹¹ The willingness of Nazi propaganda to consider mass opinion is shown in the treatment of sport. On 20 January, SD Stuttgart recommended:

"Outside broadcasts of sport ought not to be broadcast too often, as the workers are here very sensitive and frequently attack winter sports in a quite incomprehensible way."¹²

Winter sports were generally regarded as a pastime of the idle rich and, as if in answer to this popular attitude, the German press was told a few days later not to take any notice of such sports as golf and tennis.¹³ Here, Goebbels really seemed to be pandering to the wishes of the masses. It is interesting to note that throughout the dark months that lay ahead German mass media continued to give considerable attention to such a popular sport as soccer.

Goebbels certainly gave the impression, at least at first, that he was seriously contemplating exploiting class feelings to gain support of the new measures by using them as a whip for bringing the reluctant middle and upper classes into line. Von Hassel was convinced that this was the case and was appalled by the minister's "filthy rhetoric against the upper class".¹⁴

This aristocratic opponent of the regime later claimed to have detected a more profound and far-reaching purpose than the more ephemeral one dictated by the needs of "total war". The following November he confided in his diary:

"The higher-ups, through Goebbels' megaphone, are deliberately inciting hatred against the upper class as a skilful and effective means of diverting the hatred that would ordinarily be directed against the party."¹⁵

This was certainly a misleading oversimplification and misinterpretation of long-term propaganda aims and perhaps mirrors the deep contempt felt by many old Prussian families for the Nazi "upstarts". But it does show how easily the use of class feelings as a propaganda lever in promoting "total war" could get out of hand, be misunderstood and misfire. The propaganda Minister naturally denied wishing to arouse class animosities. It is, however, true that he did find some very kind words for the lower classes. In a speech to Berlin armament workers at the beginning of February, he stated:

"Particularly in such times as at present, the broad masses of our people - the workers and farmers - form the foundation of our state."

He expressed the view that it was high time that everybody, without exception, was drawn into the total war effort.

"On the Home Front no one can any longer be allowed to remain inactive or to take it easy."¹⁶

This association with the less well-to-do was not without its inherent hazards. It might be falsely interpreted as a cue, officially blessed, to give vent to those long pent-up anti-capitalistic feelings. And here lay the danger. Goebbels could

not afford to alienate those on whom the regime principally depended to finance its war effort. This was an extremely delicate instrument to play and, as will be demonstrated later, Goebbels seems at first to have given the matter far too little thought.

The first obstacle which would have to be removed before the propaganda and the programme it was supporting could succeed was the doubt in its seriousness. The population was becoming impatient. They wanted to see "total war", not just to read about it in the newspapers. They wanted to know that the measures were in fact being implemented.¹⁷ It was to set the public's mind at rest as well as to show the rest of the leadership that "total war" was an absolute necessity that Goebbels made his notorious address in the Berlin Sportpalast on 18 February. The measures were portrayed as the leadership's response to the popular will:

"The broad working masses of our people do not blame the Government for acting too ruthlessly but rather for being too considerate."

He promised that the few women trying to flout the measures would not be allowed to get away with it:

"Doctor's certificates will not be accepted in place of the called-up worker. Also an 'alibi-job' a woman might get with her husband, her brother-in-law, or a friend, in order to continue to shirk work unsupervised, will be answered by us with competent counter-measures. The few who hatch such plans will only finish themselves off in the eyes of the public. We forget

nothing; after the war we will remember.
The people will treat them with the
greatest contempt."

This speech, although delivered in an aggressive form, is an excellent illustration of the defensive nature of much of the "total war" propaganda. The working class, for whom the war had long been a "total" one, was encouraged in its hopes of really radical change. At the same time, the middle class which had most to lose was appeased with the words:

"I take the strongest exception to the allegation that our measures in any way aim at the closing down of businesses of the middle classes or a monopolisation of our economic system. After the war, the middle classes will at once be reconstituted on the largest possible scale, economically and socially. The present measures are exclusively emergency measures designed to meet war purposes and war requirements. They do not aim at a structural alteration of the economic system, but are only focused on the objective of total victory."

This address ended with the notorious ten questions with which the minister whipped up his audience into an uncontrollable frenzy of ^{approval for} government policy and unconditional obedience to the demands of "total war". Those present in the Sportpalast, who were meant to represent a true cross-section of the German people, were asked if they were prepared to follow Hitler through thick and thin until the time of "final victory", to work much harder, if necessary 16 hours a day, and to support the most radical measures against shirkers and war-profiteers. The emotions

unleashed by this series of questions and answers reached a pitch with the final question, "Do you want the total war?".¹⁸ For anyone present who was still capable of detaching himself from his raving environment, the whole Sportpalast must have appeared a veritable madhouse.

In general, the speech seems to have been effective in the sense that it managed, if only temporarily, to reduce anxiety lest this be just another propaganda campaign. Goebbels had shown quite clearly how serious the situation had become and a strengthening of confidence and trust in the leadership was recorded by the SD. The reaction to the ten questions, however, was a very mixed one:

"The last part of the speech met with a very mixed response. Although the impact of the 10 questions is stressed, Volksgenossen and Parteigenossen from all social groups nevertheless expressed the view that the listeners and readers were made all too conscious of the propagandist purpose of these questions and answers." ¹⁹

The reports of the NSDAP give a similar picture. Although the speech was said to have found a generally positive reception,

"The 10 questions to the audience at the end of the speech are criticised by almost all Gauleitungen."

In Gau Westfalen-Nord, for example,

"The questions are described in certain circles as superfluous, as theatre, designed to impress other nations."

In the Catholic Kreis, Paderborn-Büren, the response was even

more negative:

"That was the last cry of the Nazis. One must now reckon with the loss of the war. During his speech Dr. Goebbels had found it necessary to scream in order to hide his nervousness." ²⁰

The Oberlandesgerichtspräsident of Bamberg also reported that the closing part of the address had been "rejected by almost everyone".²¹ This shows quite clearly that existing attitudes towards National Socialism were a crucial factor in determining propaganda success. Devout Catholics had been shocked by the closing down of their schools as well as the secret euthanasia programme and were strongly influenced by these measures when judging something quite different - the propaganda of "total war". Besides, the purpose behind Goebbels' moving words had been all too evident, and propaganda success naturally depended in large measure on its not being viewed as propaganda.

Goebbels found it expedient again and again to return to the same issue, giving the very same promises and reassurances. He was doubtless aware that the classes most directly affected had not as yet discovered any great patriotic enthusiasm for the new government measures. At the end of February he changed his line of approach somewhat. Instead of trying to coerce the support of middle and upper-class women by threats of penalties for disobedience, he now attempted to win them over by gentle persuasion. They were assured that the factories were no longer the dark, dirty and degrading places they had been a quarter of a century before. They were light, clean, orderly and friendly places. In addition, the burden of work would be shared fairly and equally.²²

The Minister of Propaganda was at pains to portray the

"total war" measures as a pure expression of the new "German Socialism", of the newly found unity of leadership and people. Any reluctance to support the new laws might be effectively countered by showing that they were firmly anchored in popular demand. Few people would wish to stand alone. In fact, the compulsion of the mass might prove more efficacious than the regulations themselves in securing support. In his speech of 30 January Goebbels had exclaimed:

"A cry for the most total waging of war is reaching the leadership in countless letters from every strata of the population. Millions of unexploited or not entirely exploited energies stand prepared to be included in the gigantic war scheme of our civilian life. To mobilise them is the compulsion of the times." ²³

The government in Berlin was depicted as a "popular" government in constant touch with the mass of the population. On 12 February Goebbels wrote in Das Reich:

"The measures taken so far are not too severe for our people; rather they are not severe enough....We have never, not even in the war, been surrounded by a Chinese Wall. We have always lived and worked in the midst of the people. Our desk stood and stands so to speak on the Wilhelmplatz and everyone has the right to look over our shoulder and give good advice. We knew and know exactly what the people want, what they think and feel, what they are able and willing to give and do, and what call is needed to spur them to

the utmost effort....But we must over and over again point out that all Government measures would disappear like water in sand if they were not immediately taken up and converted into deeds by the people. We cannot and do not want to place a policeman behind every citizen to watch him." ²⁴

Goebbels subordinated all other propaganda considerations to the needs of the "total war" campaign. All other themes were either played down or, as in the case of anti-Bolshevik propaganda (which is the theme of the next chapter), used in such a way as to implement the effect of the campaign. At the very beginning, the setbacks in the East and the resulting military threat to the Reich provided a very "welcome" background. In fact, Goebbels often deliberately painted the situation darker than the facts really warranted in order to attain the desired effect. The press was even instructed on 22 February that "favourable news over the situation on the Eastern Front should in no case be published".²⁵ This policy was not too difficult a one to follow in the days immediately following the end in Stalingrad. But the fronts soon became stabilised and the German Army even managed to score some local successes. Moreover, at the beginning of March, some of the territory lost only shortly before was recaptured. But, although hoping the Red Army would eventually be rolled back, Goebbels was not prepared to sit back and see the general improvement in the military situation jeopardize the implementation of the new measures by arousing a spirit of uncontrollable euphoria. Instead of victory fanfares being sounded, the treatment of the military situation continued to be characterised by a note of official pessimism. "Good" news was put aside or subordinated to the supreme task of mobilising the nation. On 15 March, for

instance, the German press was told:

"The capture of Kharkov is to be given no special journalistic treatment. Commentaries and the headings for the OKW-Berichte should rather continue to stress the sustained hardness of the fighting on the Eastern Front and the need for a further determined effort on the Home Front." ²⁶

Many people were quick in perceiving the purpose behind this propaganda strategy, even before the recapture of Kharkov. According to an SD report of 22 February:

"Here and there it is remarked that Goebbels has painted the situation blacker than it really is in order to make his total-war measures more effective." ²⁷

Forced onto the defensive, Goebbels was forced to deny doing any such thing although, in fact, he went on doing exactly the same thing in the weeks that followed. In an article in Das Reich on 12 March he asserted:

"It would be fundamentally wrong and a proof of superficial self-deception if one were to assume that we have intentionally painted the situation in the East during the last few weeks blacker than it actually was: that we have in other words been practising a sort of practical pessimism in order - as our enemies assert - to sell our 'total war' to the people more easily. It is not necessary to raise ghosts to frighten our people."

After providing this demonstration of propaganda reaction to

popular response, he went on to warn:

"We are not yet over the hill. We are still facing it. An enormous stretch, including the most difficult part, has still to be conquered....Whatever the promises of spring and the lure of summer, we must only think of the winter which is to follow and which we must conquer without considerable loss. We do not know where enemy resources end." 28

C. THE RESPONSE TO THE CAMPAIGN - THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
CLASS FACTOR

Many responded to this propaganda in exactly the way least desired by Goebbels - by giving vent to their class feelings. Well-dressed ladies were insulted in the street and in the Berlin underground. One such case is described by Von Hassel:

"The wife of Minister Thomsen steps out of the subway. A man in uniform, heavy with braid - she thinks it was a police officer - storms up to her, snatches an ordinary, much worn kid-glove off her hand, and bellows: 'Haven't you heard Goebbels has forbidden the wearing of kid-gloves?' A peroxide blonde passing by chimed in 'Quite right!' Incidentally, Goebbels had not said anything against kid-gloves; he said that in such times as these one couldn't handle them /shirkers/ with kid gloves. But the stirring up of animosities and hatreds is getting worse and what makes it worse is that it originates in 'high places'." 29

What was more, the newcomers to the factories were often mocked and made to feel anything but welcome.³⁰ Goebbels' "total war"

propaganda had succeeded in bringing to the surface those class-antagonisms which to a large extent had lain dormant since 1933. The fabric of the new "social state" now appeared very thin indeed. An SD report of 25 February went as far as to remark:

"Envy, suspicion and prejudice have perhaps never been so evident as they are today." 31

This was precisely what Goebbels had wished to prevent and he saw in this orgy of class hatred a real danger to the unity of the nation at war. In a propaganda conference of 12 March:

"The Minister showed his concern over reports describing the molesting of well-dressed ladies by certain people who had completely misunderstood the demands of waging total war. The sharpest measures must be taken against any attempt of the mob to throw its weight around." 32

The press was now called upon to make it quite clear to its readers that

"it is no infringement of war discipline when, for example, a woman dresses nicely and makes herself look pretty with the things she possesses. Not outward appearance, but bearing and achievement are alone important." 33

The seriousness which the Propaganda Minister attached to this becomes quite clear in the very direct words he used in his Das Reich article of 26 March:

"Nobody should believe that he is rendering particular service to the total war effort

if in a tram or in an underground carriage he bursts into vulgar abuse against a woman who happens to be nicely and neatly dressed....In so far, indeed, as the war entails a certain amount of levelling, this is not by reason of a principle - let alone envy or class instinct - but by a compelling practical necessity....Where life in wartime still leaves room for the expansion of individual personality, it is open to anyone to make use of the opportunity. Total War is a very serious affair. And we should do the greatest harm to it and ourselves, too, if we were to tolerate its degradation into the scene of mass instincts let loose." ³⁴

Those here addressed do not seem to have been very impressed, because exactly one week later Goebbels found it necessary to resort to the last weapon in his armoury - the threat:

"That a few hotheads should try to exploit the favourable opportunity of giving rein to their undigested class instincts is thoroughly unsatisfactory, but will be overcome by exercising some patience and - if necessary, - severity." ³⁵

Thus, by the end of March, members of the working class had taken the place of middle-class malingerers as the target of official criticism.

It has been emphasized above that it was the middle classes that had to bear the brunt of the burden. As the class most affected by the shutting of small shops and businesses and by the mobilisation decrees, it was also the class that showed

the least enthusiasm for participating in the common effort. Many saw in "total war" a threat to their livelihood, a process of rapid proletarianisation of society. Those who had only a short time before been the most stalwart supporters of National Socialism now felt betrayed. This mood was echoed in an SD report of 8 March:

"Since the beginning of the action of closing down businesses, statements that National Socialism is getting like Bolshevism in its methods have been increasingly reported. In those middle-class circles directly hit by the closing-down of certain branches of the economy, the destruction of the middle class in favour of a state-capitalistic concentration of the economy is being predicted. From this only a small leading group would profit." ³⁶

All this was the very opposite to the expectations with which this class had greeted the Nazis only ten years before.

Goebbels did his very best to soothe these doubts of the regime's hitherto most faithful followers. But despite his reassurances in his Sportpalast speech of 18th February that no systematic political purpose lay behind the measures, such fears only grew in the months that followed. The propagandists did all they could to halt this grave development. On 7 March, for example, an article in the Hamburger Fremdenblatt warned that it would be "completely wrong to view the decreed rationalisation of the economy as a final or even desirable situation". It would, moreover, be a great error to think that the days of the entrepreneur were over. Although he was a servant of the state and could not be allowed to do as he wished, he was nevertheless an indispensable element of the economic system. ³⁷

But all these soothing words did little to allay middle-class anxieties. As late as May, Gau Thüringen pointed to the very widespread mood of disappointment and bitterness:

"In spite of the propaganda carried out by the Party to the effect that the closing-down action is merely a war measure, the idea that the middle class is to be systematically wiped out is gaining more and more ground." ³⁸

The effect of the propaganda backing the closing-down action as well as other business restrictions was severely undermined by the very unequal implementation in the various Gaus. The local party boss, disinclined to curry unpopularity and frequently himself a member of the class that was to bear the brunt of the burden, interpreted the decrees as he saw fit. This was a source of constant concern to Goebbels, who could exert very little influence over the independent will of the Gauleiters. On 13 March he wrote in his diary:

"It simply won't do that total war is interpreted in one Gau laxly and in another Gau strictly. This has already led to the situation that in certain Gaus the dyeing and waving of women's hair is forbidden whilst in others it is permitted, with the result that the better-off ladies go from one Gau to another in order to have their hair done. That is, of course, not the sense of total war." ³⁹

Many were asking what had happened to the great "storm" of which Goebbels had spoken only shortly before. Even small differences in the interpretation of the measures in the different Gaus

sufficed to confirm suspicions that the entire "total war" programme had been drastically watered down. There was also the sneaking suspicion that Party members were not being hit to the same extent as other citizens. Finally, what one saw with one's own eyes provided the most damning evidence:

"People were saying that little has changed, even from the outside and the enthusiasm which at first gripped the population has subsided and has again given way to indifference and scepticism." ⁴⁰

Soon Goebbels was to see that there was little to be gained by denying that there had been formidable difficulties. The contradiction between the reality and the too perfect picture painted by the propaganda had become so stark that the Minister was compelled to find some scapegoat. He tried to put some of the blame on the lower ranks of the state bureaucracy. In an outburst of calculated candour on 2 April he ridiculed the numerous questionnaires which "continue to be issued, filled-in, stamped and even buried in great filing cabinets, from which they never see the light of day again". He then went on to strike a more personal note in his attack:

"Somebody proves with disarming thoroughness that Copernicus should be written with a 'K' and gives the impression of having won a battle in the struggle of continents. Another devotes industry worthy of a better cause to the stringing together of the first syllables of technical expressions, creating new monstrosities of words and befouling our beautiful German language." ⁴¹

The function of this criticism was immediately recognized by

American content analysts:

"In order to escape the public's growing resentment against the state apparatus, Nazi propaganda now tends to place the blame for the personal inconvenience of the war on the lower bureaucracy, speaking as if the latter were not part of the state apparatus." 42

Ever since Hitler had criticised German civil servants in his Reichstag speech of 26 April 1942, the German Beamter had had the uncomfortable feeling of being under attack from above as well as from below. Now it appeared Goebbels was preparing to reopen the attack. According to an SD report compiled three days after the publication of the article:

"The civil service (Beamtenschaft) is worried about the contempt being shown for it by the population which is becoming more and more marked, and it feels insufficiently protected against this by the leadership." 43

This attack really amounted to a cheap attempt to capitalise on the animosity felt by citizens of all states against the state bureaucracy. But it was just as sensitive a plant to handle as inter-class strife, and could prove just as perilous. Such criticism from official quarters meant undermining the working morale of a group on whom the regime had to rely and who had hitherto behaved quite loyally. It is therefore hardly surprising that a halt was soon called to this attack on the class of German Beamten. Such an admission that the state authorities were inefficient and ineffective was in itself very damning and would most certainly never have succeeded in enhancing the reputation of the political leadership. Had the attacks continued, the opposite would doubtless have been the

case.

Naturally the "total war" needed time to take effect but at the end of the year 1943 the German people felt themselves entitled to draw their own conclusions as to whether the measures had, in fact, been an overall success. An SD report, drawn up on 13 December, which examined the response to the measures in the preceding months, was not at all flattering to the regime and most damning in its description of public judgement of the results of the once so loudly proclaimed "total war".

"It is being asserted that the proclamation of total war has not, in practice, been followed up with the energetic and drastic measures expected by most Volksgenossen. The call to total war has in part remained just a slogan. Many of the possibilities of a truly total effort have remained unexploited."

The German people had quite definite ideas as to what a "total war" should really be like:

"According to popular opinion, a total war effort must have the following objectives:

1. the greatest possible increase in arms production capacity
2. the constant replenishing and strengthening of front-line units with fresh able-bodied soldiers
3. the defence of the Home-Front from air-raids
4. the securing of the supply of food and other essential consumer goods to the population.

Apart from these there must not be any other tasks or objectives, because they would only weaken the potentiality of total war. It was in this sense that the statements of Reichsminister Dr. Goebbels in the Sportpalast at the beginning of the year had been understood.

Those Volksgenossen in war service, however, frequently observe how certain parts of the population have not been mobilised for total war and how there are still today numerous establishments whose work is only of marginal importance or even completely unimportant for the conduct of the war.

The Volksgenossen believe these to be the reasons for the setbacks that we have suffered on all fronts."

The many exemptions from military service, particularly the fact that many healthy young men were left at home for "essential work", was said to be the cause of bitter reproach and criticism. One worker was reported as remarking:

"At the front our soldiers are fighting an enemy superior in numbers, and potential reserves are hanging around doing little at home simply because the firms want to maintain a nucleus of personnel to enable them to lay the necessary basis for making their post-war profits. This is fundamentally wrong."

The deep suspicion that Party leaders and state-employees would somehow be spared the rigours of the measures prescribed and given preferential treatment had in no way abated and, in fact,

appeared confirmed by the course of events.

"The view is often being expressed that the authorities, public corporations and many corporate institutions, as well as the NSDAP and some of its organisations, have been combed very superficially indeed. The disappointment is occasionally expressed in the assertion that whoever has a position with the authorities or the NSDAP need not fear being called up, even if he has been officially declared fit for military service."

Nor had the actual implementation of the measures been able to remove the nagging doubts that social and political position would prove more powerful than the principle of fairness and equality.

"On the basis of their own observations, the Volksgenossen have the impression that the number of those who have not been called up is incredibly high. But it would not be fair to condemn the shirking of these Volksgenossinnen too hard as long as many of the leaders, who are naturally obliged to give an example to others, ostensibly used their influence to protect their wives and daughters from the claws of the Labour Exchange (Arbeitsamt)."

The lower classes were also disappointed by the incomplete implementation of the decision to close down businesses unnecessary for the war effort.

"What is more, the population believes that the action to close down businesses has brought no satisfactory results. In general,

only a few businesses - mainly perfumeries, confectioners and jewellers - have been shut. The population cannot find any great public benefit in the result of the closing-down action and consider it a failure. This attitude is accompanied by a certain sympathy for the 'little guy' who is normally the first to suffer whilst the 'big folks' remain unmolested and always know how to protect themselves. Above all, people point to the purpose of the total war measures - to save manpower - and remark that little has, in this respect, been attained by shutting down smaller businesses."

Finally, a certain respect was expressed for the more thorough-going methods of the Bolsheviks:

"Among almost all parts of the population the opinion is being uttered that the Soviets are superior to us when it comes to a thorough implementation of total war. The Soviets have realized how to develop really total methods in a quite exemplary way." ⁴⁴

In short, the German people saw far too little evidence of a really radical transformation in wartime life. No one was more conscious of the general failure of the campaign than Goebbels himself who most certainly shared the sentiments discussed in the report quoted above. He had had to stand by quite powerless and see how the policies he himself had formulated and proclaimed were softened up and diluted by a bureaucracy he had no way of controlling. He put the main blame for the flop, however, on the intrigues of Bormann. Von Oven recorded the scathing judgement of Goebbels on the success of "total war" in a diary entry of

July 1944:

"Not a single practical measure was implemented. Everything got bogged down in the sand of ministerial bureaucracy. No department was prepared to subject itself to voluntary restrictions and the gentlemen of the triumvirate were not the kind of men who could insist on getting their way." ⁴⁵

Hence, all that remained of the "great storm" proclaimed with such élan at the beginning of 1943 was a very damp squib.

D. CONCLUSION

The propaganda campaign backing "total war" fell far short of the desired effect. Despite some individual successes of a rather temporary nature, Nazi propaganda was unable to convince the average German citizen who considered himself to be in a good position to judge whether the measures proclaimed were, firstly, being enforced and, secondly, sufficient to pave the way to victory. This was particularly true of the working class who observed everything with a highly watchful and wary eye. But it must be stressed that the propagandists hardly had a chance when the "total war" measures fell far short of Goebbels' hopes and expectations and were constantly being watered down. They could do precious little when up against those elements in the Party who simply did not want to recognise the gravity of the situation. So it is scarcely surprising that the propaganda backing "total war" was not very effective when the "total war" itself was far from being total. Goebbels was hardly to blame for this, for he had desired the most radical changes. He was without the necessary authority to prevent the measures from being watered down at the national level by the triumvirate and

at the local level by the obstruction of the Gauleiters, who did not wish to forego any of the popularity they might enjoy or to harm their own financial interests by supporting an attack on the class which they themselves represented. Sectional interests within the Party still posed too formidable an obstacle for the strong will of the Reichspropagandaminister. This absence of enthusiasm, let alone good will, by leading representatives of the NSDAP was the most important factor in checking a propaganda campaign designed to promote the ideal. Thus, such a contradiction between propaganda claims and the reality arose that even the most willing citizen could not fail to notice.

The second factor minimising the propaganda's success is not far divorced from the first one: the measures were aimed at those people who, forming the basis of NSDAP support, naturally hoped to be the main beneficiaries of National Socialism - the lower middle class. No amount of propaganda could persuade those affected that the closing down of their businesses would not have any far-reaching effect on their future livelihood. All the reassurances made by the government only served to make these once so loyal supporters of the "New Germany" ask themselves whether the war had really been necessary and - what is more - what the results of a military defeat might be. And a class seeing itself faced with economic ruin would be irritated rather than encouraged by all the kind words of the propagandists, who never ceased to emphasize that victory was the prerequisite for the restoration of the middle-class.

In addition, the sudden manifestation from below of those animosities associated with the idea of Klassenkampf must have considerably added to the fears of the petit bourgeois and created the impression that the Nazis were now aiming at the bolshevisation of Germany. But this unfortunate situation was difficult to avoid for, as has been explained, the total war

measures affected people according to class and it was the better-off part of the population that up to this time had barely been touched by war. Hence, a dangerous polarisation of classes existed from the very beginning. The class factor was inextricably bound up with the reaction to the new war measures. From the very first moment Goebbels had been forced to perform a balancing trick. At the same time as wishing to show the middle and upper classes the need for their cooperation, he did not wish to stress those privileges they had hitherto enjoyed, thereby unleashing an avalanche of recriminations and class hatred. The less well-off had observed their "social betters" very closely and had waited to see how serious the "socialism" in National Socialism was. Goebbels must have known at the start that his propaganda would stir up this class consciousness, which he was certainly not naive enough to believe had vanished without leaving a trace since the Nazis seized power. Perhaps he had even hoped to harness it in order to frighten less enthusiastic members of the upper and middle classes into acquiescence to the new measures. But here he was only deceiving himself. The Propaganda Minister had seriously underestimated the strength of these class feelings which would not allow themselves to be neatly fitted into his propaganda repertoire, there to do his bidding. Very soon he drew back in fright on seeing what a powerful monster he had evoked and concentrated his efforts on repairing the damage done. But it was too late. Many a middle and upper-class German citizen must have shared the belief of the simple worker that this reemergence of the class-war was just what Goebbels had intended. This comes out clearly in the observations made by v. Hassel in November 1943, quoted above. In short, it had been all too easy to reawaken old class feelings but impossible for the propaganda then to control them, even less to call them to a halt. Thus class was a very formidable factor in determining reaction to both the measures

and the propaganda backing them. The latter could never hope to succeed in persuading a class to recognise the necessity of acting against its own interests.

Propaganda could, in fact, do precious little to remove the existing doubts, scepticism and class prejudice. The first consideration would always remain the question how far the measures would affect the financial existence and everyday life of the individual. Those most directly hit were therefore the least enthusiastic. No amount of propaganda could persuade them that factory work was really quite pleasant, and the mere repetition of this theme only served to underline the ineffectiveness of Nazi propaganda in overcoming existing attitudes and prejudices.

The idea of a really "total" war was naturally welcome to those already fully engaged in the war effort - the traditional working class. Here, however, existing attitudes towards the Party and the government were a much more important factor than all the promises made via the mass media in determining propaganda response. The picture painted by the radio and press seemed too good to be true. This class regarded the party bosses, the Bonzen, with intense distrust and assumed that they would pull enough strings to be able to go on avoiding the rigours of war. Rumours that Party officials were being exempted from front-line duty were rife.⁴⁶ The unequal enforcement of the measures in the various Gaus must have done much to confirm suspicions that the Bonzen did not wish to relinquish any of their peace-time comforts. The mere rumour of privileges enjoyed by these political leaders or of exemptions from military service was sufficient to undermine the trust in the sincerity of the state leadership. And the rumour did not have to be true. Mere suspicion was enough. Any apparent confirmation of the existing attitude was immediately seized and used as evidence. Propaganda

proved to be a very ineffective instrument for removing the resulting doubts. What people themselves saw was the only acceptable proof and they saw too little. A constant visual confirmation was demanded that "total war" was a fact, not just another propaganda theme, and the propaganda itself was judged in terms of to what extent this visual confirmation, in fact, existed.

Here was no purely ideological theme. Action, not words, was demanded. Too pointed a propaganda theme would only succeed in arousing the suspicion that here was yet another in a long series of propaganda campaigns, and at the time of Stalingrad the average citizen had learnt a lot in the art of reading between the lines and discovering the typical manipulative techniques of the propaganda machine. Few would now fail to recognise the real reason for the picturesque portrayal of a modern factory, for instance. As soon as the propaganda purpose was discovered, the reader or listener was put on his guard and the propaganda message was unable to attain the intended goal. This would account for the far from favourable effect of Goebbels' ten questions. Many of those listening were indeed in the first moment swept along by the emotions deliberately aroused, but once the audience was away from the suggestive atmosphere and again immersed in the drudgery of everyday wartime life the propaganda purpose would become quite clear. So one has here to distinguish between the immediate and the long-term effects. An initial enthusiasm might even work to the disadvantage of the propagandists, for with the inevitable confrontation with the sober reality the individual might feel himself duped. The morale reports confirm this impression and point, for example, to the very ephemeral effect of party rallies and speeches, even those of the Führer himself.

In conclusion, it may be said that in the case of the "total war" campaign factors outside the influence and control

of Nazi propaganda were decisive in determining opinion - the degree to which the measures were enforced, the closing-down policy, class consciousness and roles, attitudes to the authorities and to the Nazi Party. Here the contradiction between what one heard and read and what one witnessed with one's own eyes was simply too great. It would therefore seem that propaganda is only able to induce the desired belief or opinion in a situation in which the facts perceived correspond to the claims of the propaganda message. In fact, propaganda itself can play only a subsidiary role in securing acceptance of government measures. It can contribute by providing skilful interpretation and the assurance that they will be implemented equally and fairly, by gentle persuasion and in the last resort by open threats. But propaganda is doomed when the situation it is portraying does not exist and everyone can see that it does not exist. Its strength depends on its being the sole reporter, the sole interpreter in a field without competitors. In describing events on a faraway front - in the Far East, for instance - it is much freer than in a situation much nearer home in which every individual considers himself an expert, fit to judge success or failure and to draw his own conclusions independently of the official media.

CHAPTER 4

ANTI-BOLSHEVISM AND ANTI-SEMITISM

A. INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of Stalingrad, Goebbels believed that the best means of arousing a spirit of determination to weather all storms and carry on at all costs was to return to the very rudiments of National Socialist teaching - anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism. The German civilian and soldier should be given a sense of purpose, the feeling of fighting a good and just cause, and should, moreover, learn to hate his enemies. Before the final capitulation of Stalingrad, virtually all Nazi propaganda was being given an anti-Bolshevist slant. In fact, anti-Bolshevism was now to become the motor of the total-war campaign. It enabled the German propagandist not only to demonstrate the necessity of the measures being taken but also to depict in the most vivid colours the terrible peril facing the Reich and the supreme need to hang on and continue the struggle to the bitter end. By pointing out the danger to "European civilisation" and the entire western way of life, it was also intended to sow discord in the enemy camp. The conservative and traditionally-thinking British were considered to be particularly susceptible to this kind of propaganda.

In the early summer of 1943, anti-Bolshevism gave way to the even more strident tones of radical anti-Semitic propaganda. The same arguments that had been heard since the early days of the party were brought to the fore in a true orgy of hate. From the point of view of Nazi propaganda, anti-Semitism seemed much more promising than anti-Red diatribes. Whereas in stressing the brutality and terror of the Soviet system there was a considerable risk of compelling more pessimistic German subjects

to seek consolation elsewhere and to place their hopes on Anglo-American humanity, anti-Semitism provided German propagandists with a unified and all-comprising target of attack. It was possible to show the danger threatening in the west as well as in the east, for according to a maxim of National Socialist theory the Jew was the force behind both Bolshevism and Plutocracy. If the German people were becoming weary of the hardship and deprivations of war, then they knew who was to blame for everything - that race which, so it was said time and time again, had sworn to destroy the German nation!

Both these themes were essentially ideological in substance and lacked any real visible form of confirmation. To a great extent, their political aspect was abstract and a matter of blind belief in the Nazi credo. Only in as far as Bolshevism was represented by a military power with which Germany was locked in combat was the danger visible. Both campaigns came in the aftermath of severe military defeats - the capitulation of Paulus' Sixth Army in Stalingrad and the surrender of Rommel's Afrika Korps respectively. They also came at a time of widespread war-weariness which obliged Nazi propagandists to stress enemy war guilt and the fact that the German government had neither wanted nor planned a war. It is certain that the Nazis wished to prevent the understandable feelings of frustration and resentment which arose after almost four years of war being directed at themselves and instead to convert them into hostility towards the foe. It was thus hoped that a strong dose of anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism would prove to be an effective antidote to the increasing war-weariness and disappointment with the course of the war which was being recorded at this time.

Both campaigns represented a deliberate attempt to right a potentially dangerous deterioration of morale by a return to a repetitive and intensive hammering of the few fundamentals of

Nazi teaching, presented in a form that everyone could understand. In this chapter it will be of particular interest to judge whether such methods were fit to secure acceptance of the propaganda message and the overall success of the campaigns.

B. ANTI-BOLSHEVISM

The anti-Bolshevik theme dominated the entire Nazi propaganda output in the first months of 1943. From the very beginning, it was clear that this was no easy theme to tackle. By stressing the threat of Communism to the western way of life, German propaganda was running the risk of demonstrating Soviet military strength rather too effectively. Although the overall military threat presented by Soviet Russia became the very essence of all arguments concerning the Red peril, Nazi propaganda would have to take great care not to destroy the delicate balance by arousing a spirit of hopelessness, the fear that nothing could be done against such a mighty foe. Anti-Bolshevik propaganda was designed to eliminate defeatism, not to encourage it.

(i) T h e P r o b l e m s P o s e d b y t h e A n t i - B o l s h e v i k C a m p a i g n

A study of the campaign will perhaps permit conclusions to be drawn as to how far the German people were prepared to fight Communism and the Red Army - which were not necessarily the same - and to what extent they thought successful resistance and with it a favourable termination of the war were possible. This investigation may answer four questions.

First, how successful was German propaganda as a whole? Anti-Bolshevism had always belonged to the fundamental tenets of National Socialism. With the exception of the years of the Soviet-German pact, 1939-41, the Nazis had never ceased hammering into people's minds that Russia was the arch-enemy of the German Reich. After June 1941 Germany was portrayed as the crusader against Bolshevism and thus the champion of western civilisation

against "uneuropean" ideas. It was not only fighting in the name of its own people but on behalf of every "good European". In this chapter it will be of interest to find out whether German propaganda had recovered from the severe setback of the winter 1942-3 and whether it had succeeded in overcoming or at least checking the growing lack of trust in its credibility, recorded at the time of Stalingrad. Those sources of information outside the control sphere of the authorities would play a vital role here, since they could be expected to constitute a decisive intervening factor between propaganda aim and effect. Moreover, the significance of the Germans' own picture of the Soviet political system as well as the Russian people as an intervening factor must also be examined.

Second, how important was the volume of propaganda in determining the effect of propaganda? Was Goebbels justified in assuming that "only the most intense and frequent repetition of our anti-Bolshevik theses can have a lasting success"?¹

Third, how responsive were the German people to the propaganda that defeat would mean the destruction of Germany? How far were the German people willing to come to terms with the likelihood of defeat and to what extent were they convinced of the possibility of an acceptable form of life in a Germany under foreign occupation? Linked with this is a consideration of attitude to the Party and the willingness to relinquish National Socialism as the price of peace and survival.

Fourth, how far had the German workers remained faithful to Marxist beliefs? Had ten years of Nazi rule destroyed all remnants of the old class thinking, as well as the once widespread admiration of the German working class for the Soviet social and political model? Did Nazi propaganda convince German workers that the victory of Socialist Russia would also constitute the destruction of the German proletariat?

(ii) The Course of the Campaign

In explaining the purpose of the campaign to his subordinates in the Propaganda Ministry, Goebbels listed the following "misconceptions", against which the battle was to be fought, namely that

1. Bolshevism had become more liberal and humane, a view supposedly held in intellectual circles;
2. the English and Americans would see to it that Germany was not bolshevised;
3. that Bolshevism did not endanger the life of the ordinary working man who would simply have to go on working as he had always done; and
4. the Bolsheviks would merely get rid of the Nazis and would not harm the simple German citizen.²

All these ideas were inherently defeatist in nature and would have to be nipped in the bud. The widespread longing for peace must have also played a substantial role in Goebbels' decision to give the German people a strong dose of the Bolshevik bogey. The propaganda campaign was thus much more than the motor of "total war". It was the determined attempt to counter adverse developments in morale before it was too late. That Goebbels was none too sure of his audience and, in particular, of how deep National Socialism was anchored in the German working-class population, becomes clear in his express instructions that all reminders of the old international Marxist slogans were to be avoided:

"In our description of the Bolshevik system, we do not speak of the struggle of the proletariat but only of terror, murder, the mass deportation of workers, etc. Similarly, we do not wish to speak of the Red Army but always only of the Bolsheviks and Soviets."³

On February 18, Goebbels used the Berlin Sportpalast as his platform for launching the really intensive part of the campaign. His invited audience, as well as those at home who had tuned in to the live radio broadcast, were told:

"The onslaught of the Steppe against our venerable continent broke loose this winter with a vehemence which surpasses all human and historical conceptions. The German Armed Forces, together with their Allies, constitute the only conceivable protecting rampart against it." ⁴

The tremendous importance attached to this campaign meant that all other issues, apart from "total war", were allotted a subordinate place. Already on 12 February, the representatives of the media had been informed:

"As the greatest and crucial propaganda thesis, our fight against Bolshevism must dominate all instruments of propaganda. This demands that smaller and routine questions of everyday life be given much less attention....From now on, every radio talk, every report, every speech and every slogan must end with the stereotyped message that the struggle against Bolshevism is our most important task." ⁵

The success of anti-Bolshevik propaganda was to a great extent dependent on acceptance of the seriousness of the military situation on the Eastern Front. At the beginning of 1943, the danger had been apparent to all. But, as mentioned in the previous chapter, in March 1943, after the front had once again been stabilised, the German Wehrmacht was able to recapture some of the territory lost only shortly before, including Kharkov, the fourth largest city of the USSR. These successes were all

too readily interpreted by some as an indication that the military crisis had been completely surmounted. A third summer offensive was now being considered not only possible but probable.⁶ Such optimism was not officially encouraged, as the absence or failure of the expected offensive would then lead inevitably to a propaganda debacle more far-reaching and disastrous in its consequences than that of Stalingrad. Goebbels noted with a certain disdain in his diary on 19 March:

"It is uncanny how there are certain people who go to pieces with the first misfortune, but who with the first success see everything only from the rosy side. I consider it best if the German people behave in a completely realistic way and do not allow themselves to be over-influenced by the events of the day, be they favourable or unfavourable."⁷

Hence, the rather more favourable military developments in the East did not fit into his propaganda concept. The radio and press were told to play down these localised battle successes. In his diary entry of 5 March Goebbels admits using such manipulative tactics:

"We can record some extraordinary offensive successes. However, we are not giving them the great attention they deserve, as we do not want to upset our anti-Bolshevik propaganda."⁸

Throughout the early months of 1943 the campaign ran relentlessly and formed the basis of the entire propaganda effort.

(iii) T h e R e s p o n s e t o t h e C a m p a i g n

A marked lack in popular interest characterised the response to the campaign. The propaganda itself was either ignored entirely or heard extremely reluctantly, mainly because the

arguments being used were already familiar to everyone and were the very same as those that had been used for years. An SD report of 18 February pointed out:

"The population does not wish to have Bolshevism and no longer needs to have the danger pointed out to them." ⁹

The Regierungspräsident of Augsburg testified to the failure of the campaign in his April report:

"The appeal of the rousing propaganda under the slogan, 'Victory or Bolshevism', has, so it is reported, not been very great." ¹⁰

The desire to arouse a real spirit of confidence and determination to hold out had been at the root of all propaganda endeavours, but after the campaign had been running for a good two months, the general mood was characterised less by enthusiasm than by the sheer lack of it. From Augsburg "an increased pessimism regarding how the war is going to end" was also reported, as well as "a slackening in general enthusiasm and in willingness to show the flag on special Nazi celebration days, etc." and in attending Party meetings". ¹¹ The campaign would therefore appear to have had no effect at all on behaviour and to have done very little in halting the downward trend in morale. Instead, apathy was spreading and was even beginning to infect Party circles. Fewer were now wearing their Party membership badges and the Heil Hitler was frequently being given in a very half-hearted fashion. The papers found it necessary to remind their readers:

"The greeting Heil Hitler has nothing in common with a sound which is barely articulated between the lips, nothing with a loosely executed lifting of the right arm, at best reaching the level of the chest." ¹²

The "pessimists" were reported as having gained the upper hand in all discussions on the future course of the war and the more optimistic Volksgenossen had a hard time making themselves heard. When the latter tried to counter the arguments of less confident citizens by a simple expression of faith in the certainty of final victory, they only ran the risk of being regarded as ridiculous and incorrigible fools.¹³

By painting the perils of Bolshevism in such vivid colours, it was clearly intended to destroy all those hopes in the possibility of a post-war German state without the Nazis. Germany and National Socialism were portrayed as synonymous. They were inseparable from one another, the survival of one depending on the survival of the other. By accepting this fundamental truth, it was hoped that every German would redouble his efforts to avoid the personal destruction that would result from proving too weak in the face of such a threat. Thus, the very necessity of waging the war lay at the basis of this campaign. Moreover the success of anti-Bolshevik propaganda would depend on the success in extinguishing those "illusions" of a post-war non-Nazi political system, observed at the time of Stalingrad. In this regard, the propaganda campaign was a flop. Numerous morale reports at this time indicate a growing, not a declining, preoccupation with an eventual defeat, as well as a tendency to see chances for oneself in an occupied Germany - despite all the utterances of the anti-Bolshevik propaganda. The population of Münsterland, for instance, "met any mention of the Bolshevik danger with the answer that it would not be so bad, since Münsterland would be part of the English occupation zone".¹⁴ Furthermore, at the time when anti-Bolshevik propaganda was in full swing, the Meldungen aus dem Reich, although describing the overall success of the propaganda in rather vague terms, pay considerable attention to a "minority"

of Volksgenossen who look forward without fear to a future non-Nazi Germany.

"It is reported from western and southern parts of the Reich that parts of the population there representing every class, but especially Catholic and business groups - and in the Alpengauen (Austria) monarchists - argue that these areas would belong to the Anglo-American sphere."

(15 February 1943)¹⁵

"The tendency, already reported, to place hopes on a division of Germany into a Soviet and an Anglo-American sphere of influence should the war be lost is, according to the reports at hand from the southern parts of the Reich, spreading. In the Alpengauen even people not belonging to monarchist circles are speaking of a new empire under Anglo-American protection."

(8 March 1943)¹⁶

"The Catholic West and the Ostmark (Austria) will belong to the Anglo-American area of influence."

(12 April 1943)¹⁷

This "minority" seems to have been big enough to have merited the constant attention of the Nazi propagandist and to have unnerved the political leadership. These reports show quite clearly that a considerable part of the population of west and south Germany as well as former Austria found the anti-Bolshevik diatribes quite irrelevant when considering future developments. They could envisage an acceptable alternative to a Nazi and Bolshevik Germany. It is interesting to note that no such hopes were mentioned in reports from the eastern parts

of Germany. Here, it was obvious that defeat would mean Russian occupation. Other means would have to be found to make such a prospect more palatable. This will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Just as interesting as these regional differences is a consideration of class as a factor determining response and particularly the question whether the campaign managed to instill a fear of Communism in those who had been ardent followers of the two socialist parties in the days of Weimar. In April the SD was still reporting the prevalence of the view that the "Reds are not so bad" and that only the Nazis would suffer,¹⁸ ideas which Goebbels had hoped to extirpate with his anti-Bolshevik propaganda drive. How little had actually been achieved in this respect is further borne out in a report of the Oberlandesgerichtspräsident of Naumberg at the end of June:

"More disquieting than the fading of confidence in victory, which had previously prevailed everywhere, is the view, spreading among the industrial working class, that Communism is not really so bad as it has always been depicted and that the working population (the industrial proletariat) need not fear any fundamental change in their living conditions."¹⁹

Goebbels certainly erred in assuming that the opinion, "the Bolsheviks are not so bad", was one held principally by "intellectuals".²⁰ This was far from being the case. The Regierungspräsident of Regensburg associated such views more with farmers and workers.²¹ An SD report of 15 February was even more explicit:

"The statement is often heard among the working class that for them life would not be so much

worse under Bolshevism than it is now. Older workers who had formerly supported the red parties state that under the Kaiser, during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich they had had to work hard. And under Bolshevik rule, too, they had nothing worse to fear than much work and little pay." 22

It must be remembered that the Nazi Party had been trying to win the German workers for years. The much publicised Kraft durch Freude voyages of the pre-war years certainly do not seem to have left behind any lasting impression. The anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaign does not seem to have left any greater impression, because otherwise a Party report would never have claimed at the end of May that only "about a half" of the population of the Steiermark still believed in a favourable end to the war. 23

Goebbels was soon to realise that there was little point in carrying on the campaign and perhaps a certain admission of failure may be detected in his instruction to the press to close the campaign at the end of March:

"The press may now drop the anti-Soviet theme. Enough has been written and the longer it continues to be dealt with, the greater the danger becomes that the [newspaper] headings, in particular, will lack any psychological effect. The matter is generally somewhat difficult psychologically, as the desired effect cannot always be guaranteed." 24

(iv) The Factors Intervening
between Propaganda Message and
Response

The anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaign certainly fell far short of the desired success and left behind little or no lasting impression. In explaining this very negative result, it will be necessary to examine those factors which had intervened between propaganda message and response. A distinction must be made here between attitude to official propaganda and to the accessible unofficial sources of information which had proven to be so important in forming public opinion the winter before. Since Soviet brutality played such a central role in the campaign, considerable attention will also have to be paid to the popular image of the Russian enemy and the question how far it corresponded to propaganda portrayals. Two important factors can be discerned.

First, there are the weaknesses of official Nazi propaganda. In Chapter 2 it was shown how Nazi propaganda's prestige fell after the encirclement of Stalingrad, and crucial to the examination of response to anti-Bolshevik propaganda in the early months of 1943 is the question whether the official German mass media had succeeded in overcoming this crisis of confidence. The damage inflicted to the image of Nazi propaganda during the previous winter naturally handicapped the campaign from the very beginning. People felt bitter at having been manipulated, led astray and even cheated. Thus, in the weeks following the capitulation of the Sixth Army, the German population could be expected to follow state propaganda with a particularly cautious and watchful eye. Perhaps, Goebbels was expecting too much from his new propaganda drive. This widespread feeling of being manipulated, fatal for any propaganda message, was difficult to remove or even weaken with such a tendentious theme as anti-Bolshevism. Here, the intention was clear to everyone and, as already underlined in the last two chapters, what was seen as "propaganda" was rejected outright. Indeed, public attitude does not seem to have changed at all in the first days of the campaign. An SD report of 20

February, for example, explained the declining popularity of the daily radio magazine, Zeitspiegel ("Mirror of the Times"), by pointing out that people felt it was being "used too much for propaganda", whereas before it had limited itself to informing listeners of matters of topical interest.²⁵ In short, listeners had learnt to be more critical and wary. The official silence of the media over Stalingrad had acted as an eye-opener and many were determined not to let themselves be misled a second time. Past experience became the basis for forming attitude to the trustworthiness of all official propaganda, anti-Bolshevism not excepted. The monotonous uniformity of the German press was hardly appropriate to halt this loss of image and, if anything, could only deepen it and add to the uncomfortable feeling of being the victim of a deliberate attempt at manipulation. According to the SD:

"It is not only the recurrence of the same factual content in every newspaper and the all-pervading interpretation of every event as seen through the eyes of the National Socialist leadership, but the extensive similarity of the material itself in the commentary and in the style used by every German newspaper to address every Volksgenosse....The uniformity of the press, which is indirectly influenced by the DNB (German News Agency), is further reinforced by the immediate and extensive steering measures on the part of the leadership of the political press, with the result that time and time again the reader hits on the idea that the newspapers can only publish what Berlin permits and prescribes." ²⁶

The widespread boredom with propaganda content is echoed in a SD report of 29 March:

"A number of people are quoted in the reports who believe that the press is no longer able to capture the interest of the reader to any great extent, either by its external presentation or lay-out or by its content. Day after day, the papers are merely skimmed through by many Volksgenossen, because they are rather monotonous in appearance and repeat the same old themes, such as the Bolshevik danger, the post-war plans of our enemies, the disunity within the enemy camp, etc., without adding any really new arguments and with virtually the same words. This has led to a certain oversaturation, since people feel sufficiently well-informed over these questions which have been dealt with time and time again."²⁷

Another factor determining the success chances of a propaganda theme would naturally be its ability to answer those questions foremost in people's minds, thereby showing the way to victory. Mood at this time was marked by a growing longing for peace, but, at the same time, the population was becoming more and more uncertain as to how a favourable peace could be achieved. Did the propaganda convince them that the efforts and sacrifices they were being called upon to make would one day be rewarded? The acceptance of the possibility of German victory was the prerequisite for accepting all other arguments of Nazi propaganda. It was all too well to warn of the awesome consequences of defeat but the German people wanted to know how such a defeat could still be avoided. This was regarded as a question of existence which would decide the fate of every individual citizen, his property and future. The intensified treatment of the theme, "the war was forced upon us", at this time, according to which the Führer had left no stone unturned to save the peace, leaves no doubt

that an increasing number of Germans were asking the dangerous question as to the sense of the war and whether it had all been really necessary. American content-analysis experts concluded in April:

"The popular attitudes which this propaganda is to influence are apparently so widespread that the Nazis need not fear putting ideas in unreflective minds by overt refutations." ²⁸

The fact that the mass media had stopped giving too many predictions for the near future was generally welcomed, but people were unhappy about being given no clues whatsoever as to future developments and at being left to their own devices in trying to surmise the path to final victory. Goebbels touched on this delicate point in his diary:

"Morale is changing constantly. All sorts of things are criticised, but what depresses most is the fact that they [the German people] no longer have any general picture of what is happening. No one can picture just how the war is to end and how we are to win the victory." ²⁹

It is true that great hopes were being placed on the coming German summer offensive in the East. But even if substantial military successes were attained as in the previous two summers, the winter would surely follow - and therein lay the great element of uncertainty. How could a final decision ever be reached with this eternal swing of the pendulum between summer victory and winter defeat? Meanwhile, the western powers would be free to build up their strength quite undisturbed and confidently await the most favourable moment to strike. ³⁰

Here, Nazi propaganda was caught up in a terrible predicament. It could not predict future developments without running the risk of compromising itself later. It had lost so

much credit the winter before by doing precisely that. On the other hand, a very pronounced propaganda of fear - and that is what anti-Bolshevism really amounted to - was totally inadequate to convince the German people of the necessity of carrying on. Even the basic reality - the military situation itself - was soon no longer favourable for a propaganda of fear. The stabilisation of the Eastern Front and the subsequent three-month lull took the heart out of the campaign. The propaganda drive was deprived of its solid basis. Perhaps, the peril had always appeared somewhat unreal. Few people could envisage an Eastern Front on Germany's frontier, let alone a Russian advance into the Reich. It was true that the Russians had captured a small part of East Prussia in 1914-5, but the front of 1943 was still over a thousand kilometres from Berlin. Von Studnitz points out this phenomenon in his diary:

"As soon as things at the front become quiet, the East reverts to being that vague concept, exemplified by Goethe's words, 'peoples somewhere beyond Turkey who are always fighting each other'." ³¹

Finally, the playing down of the military successes in the Kharkov area was soon recognised as yet another propaganda trick, and the suspicion grew that the anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaign depended on a deliberate pessimism (Zweckpessimismus) at growing variance with the facts of the situation. ³² And, once again, people are less susceptible to propaganda which is seen to be "propaganda". Moreover, in the spring of 1943, other dangers were facing the German nation, which seemed even more pressing and threatening than the "remote" Eastern Front - the Allied advance in North Africa and, above all, the enemy air blitz on the cities of the German Ruhr. Abstract anti-Bolshevik propaganda was no longer viewed as being in line with the reality of the situation and this undoubtedly played a part in Goebbels

calling a halt to the campaign.

The second factor affecting the response to the official propaganda was the availability of unofficial sources of information. The morale reports at this time leave little doubt that the influence of such sources increased considerably in the months following Stalingrad, and this development is of supreme importance in any assessment of the effects of the anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaign. It even appeared that for many people these unofficial news sources were becoming more important in the forming of opinions than the official media themselves. It would, however, be wrong to assume an automatic relation between value estimation of the reliability of official propaganda and the willingness to lend an ear to unofficial information sources in every case. It is important to remember that even at this crucial stage of the war a large part of the German population remained almost untouched by mass media, as an SD report of 18 March was at pains to stress. This was said to be particularly true in rural areas where newspapers were scarcely read and the farming population either did not possess a radio set or, if they did, had no time to listen. Consequently country people, in particular, were susceptible to information and opinions passed on by person-to-person contact.

"Rumours, field-post letters and the remarks of individuals are for many almost the sole source of information." ³³

In spite of this important qualification, there can be little doubt that the attempt to inform oneself from other sources was a conscious and deliberate one and rested on a value estimation of official propaganda. This was especially true of illegal "black listening", as every "culprit" would naturally be aware of the risk he was running. Many people were convinced that their own mass media were withholding vital facts from them

which could be learnt from enemy radio stations. A Party report of May 1943 remarked:

"It is very often the case that those Volksgenossen who have been informed by enemy propaganda or who trust the rumours circulating have a much better impression of the real situation than those relying solely on the official statements of the various ministries." ³⁴

Any enhancement in the reputation of enemy radio was, of course, accompanied by a decline in the reputation of the German information media for reliability and accuracy. An SD report of 15 March 1943 leaves no doubt that "black listening" was on the increase and that this was very much tied up with the tarnished image of Nazi propaganda.

"The population is saying that at present enemy stations are being heard to a greater extent than ever before. No one, indeed, wishes to admit to having heard enemy stations himself or can name anyone who does so. Many Volksgenossen explained, however, that enemy stations satisfy the news hunger of the population better than German stations, because they broadcast less propaganda and polemics and more concrete news." ³⁵

During the period under study, the most burning question for a large and growing part of the population concerned the fate of relatives reported "missing" in Russia. Were they still alive? Nazi propaganda did not encourage people to think that they were. Although the matter was never directly mentioned, there is little doubt that it was expected that every citizen would conclude from the anti-Bolshevik propaganda that the life

of no German prisoner-of-war would be spared by the cruel Soviet foe. "Missing" should be interpreted as meaning "dead".³⁶ To ask the families concerned to accept this was asking too much. They wanted to know that their relatives were alive and belief in Soviet brutality and acceptance of anti-Soviet propaganda was tantamount to believing they were dead. Disbelief in the claims of Nazi propaganda was not enough - they had to be proven wrong. And this would only be possible by turning to other information sources. This terrible uncertainty in a matter of such direct concern to so many German families turned out to be an important bonus for Soviet propagandists, as a great part of their audience not only wished to believe them but had to believe them. Moscow Radio knew how best to exploit this anxiety and went about providing its listeners with the information they wanted to hear. It gave the names of German prisoners captured in broadcasts neatly trimmed with propaganda and many Germans listened regularly, knowing full well they were putting their own lives at stake.³⁷ As a result, the natural conclusion was drawn that death was not preferable to Soviet imprisonment, a conclusion at variance with official thinking. Well-meaning listeners often passed on the news heard on the Moscow wavelength. The wife of a soldier reported missing in Stalingrad, for instance, heard the voice of her husband on Radio Moscow one evening. Next morning, her letter-box was full of anonymous letters informing her of the good news that her husband was alive and well.³⁸ A further case was reported from Frankfurt-on-Main:

"A woman has received over 100 anonymous letters informing her that, according to a report broadcast on the Soviet radio, her son has been taken prisoner. A short time ago, it was normal to notice about 5 letters in such a case."³⁹

Despite this somewhat crude working with statistics, this report

shows quite clearly how massive the increase was in the number of "black listeners". Many were even prepared to justify listening to Radio Moscow as long as their own government went on withholding information concerning the whereabouts of their missing friends and relatives.⁴⁰ The SD remarked rather pitifully that "a sharp criticism of this punishable deed is hard to find".⁴¹

It is therefore hardly surprising that of all the foreign stations Radio Moscow exerted the most "dangerous" influence at this time, although it must be added that the BBC continued to be heard a lot.⁴² The growing dependency on these "illegal" radio stations did not remain without effect on Nazi propaganda. Its reputation fell still further:

"Listening to enemy radio stations has led to a great breach in German propaganda's reputation for truth and honesty which is being increasingly questioned."⁴³

The danger was immediately recognized and counter-measures taken. Party speakers were given the job of pointing out at meetings how ridiculous and unreliable Soviet propaganda was - a none too easy task after Stalingrad.⁴⁴

Acceptance of anti-Bolshevik theses would, of course, also be determined by the image of the Russian foe. Were the peoples of the Soviet Union really the downtrodden slaves of a savage Jewish-Bolshevik regime they were said to be in the portrayals of Nazi propaganda? Attitude to the official propaganda image would naturally play a crucial role when drawing conclusions as to the fate of "missing" German soldiers in the East and the likely treatment of the inhabitants of a defeated Germany. Here, almost everybody was in a position to form some judgement of other, either on the basis of accounts given by soldiers on leave or in letters from the front and from the impression gained from the many Russian and Ukrainian workers brought to Germany as forced-labour.

According to an SD report of August 1942, German soldiers were frequently amazed at the intelligence of the ordinary Russian, especially by his ability in many cases to speak German. This opinion was said to be particularly typical of the simple German soldier who had only been to a Volkschule (elementary school) and had never learnt a foreign language. On the basis of this experience he would then probably conclude that Bolshevism was not so primitive or lacking in culture as depicted by official propaganda.⁴⁵ These impressions would then be passed on to friends and relatives and would be valued much more highly than those impressions emanating from Nazi mass media. German propagandists were forced on to the defensive when combatting the strong impressions left behind by direct person-to-person contact. Party propaganda did endeavour, for instance, to explain the apparent success of the Soviet education system - albeit in a very typical way.

"For the Soviets the teaching of a language is to be seen in exactly the same way as instruction in how to operate a tractor or a plane. It is all part of the plan to bolshevise the world. German is taught to enable the Bolsheviks to communicate with the German people in the event they should ever enter the Reich as victors. They would then be able to shower us with their Jewish-Bolshevik agitation and would then have the chance to register every hostile remark immediately. In short, for the Soviets, learning the German language is just one of the prerequisites for implementing their reign of terror and the enslavement of the entire German people."⁴⁶

Since June 1941 Nazi propaganda had never ceased stressing the racial inferiority of the people of Eastern Europe, in particular

of the Soviet Union. German soldiers were thus astounded on meeting the blond and blue-eyed Muschiks, who seemed to correspond to the "Arian" norm to a greater extent than the German people did. They also found the population of the Ukraine healthy, hard-working and good-natured. Furthermore, they were often greatly impressed by the great modern industrial works they came across in the course of their military advance into the heart of Russia. Animal instinct and fear of the commissar also appeared inadequate to explain the bravery of the Soviet soldier. Many older German soldiers noticed a considerable difference between the tenacity of the Russian enemy of 1941-1943 and of 1914-7. Could this really mean that many Russians, especially the younger generation, really believed Stalin to be a great leader? Was there perhaps a genuine patriotic feeling for the new Soviet state?⁴⁷

Within the frontiers of the Reich many German civilians met the ordinary Russian worker face-to-face.

"It is precisely the working-class people who notice that the Russians are often intelligent, skilful and quick in grasping complicated machine procedures. Many have learnt German very quickly and have apparently been educated at school not at all badly. This impression has blurred the former picture people had of the people of the East."⁴⁸

Moreover, the family ties of the Russians working in Germany were very strong and the impression was gained that they had, in fact, been quite content with their lot at home in the USSR. The indisputable accomplishments of Soviet industry also showed that the Russians were not so stupid as was once thought. The view was also being expressed that Nazi propaganda's attack on the Soviet persecution of the Church was very hypocritical, for the

National Socialist state had hardly turned out to be a champion of religious liberty.⁴⁹ Some Germans even showed a certain, albeit reluctant, admiration of Stalin and held him responsible for the Soviet military successes.⁵⁰ Therefore, the Russian worker, firstly on the basis of personal observation and secondly of Soviet military achievement, came to be regarded with a certain respect.

In the country, the Ostarbeiter engaged in farm work appears to have played an even greater role in determining attitudes to the Soviet state and population for, as already pointed out, the influence of the official news media was here much more limited than in the towns. Regular reading of the newspaper seems to have been the exception rather than the rule among a great part of the German rural inhabitants. Thus opinions were formed almost exclusively on the basis of personal observation and person-to-person contact. The good nature of the Russian farm worker provided the much needed confirmation that the Soviets were "not so bad as they are made out to be".⁵¹ In the more eastern parts of the Reich this was the only source of comfort when contemplating the possible consequences of a future defeat.

When pointing out this very marked contrast between propaganda image of the Russian and the impression given by the industrious Ostarbeiter, one Party report referred to the unfortunate German propensity of going from one extreme to the other:

"It is just those people who originally wanted a brutal extermination through hunger and disease who are now full of praise of their [the Soviets'] accomplishments." ⁵²

This really amounted to an admission that unofficial information sources had already replaced official propaganda as the most

important factors determining image of the Soviet enemy. The significance of this must be stressed, for in a theme basic to the entire Durchhaltepropaganda (literally translated: a propaganda of 'holding out') and to Nazi ideology as a whole the influence being exerted by the most determined efforts of the state propaganda machine was proving to be much weaker than that exerted by information sources outside official control. Fear of the enemy and the belief that there was truly no alternative but to hold out was the very basis of the campaign. The campaign, however, was accompanied by a growing belief that there was an alternative. Almost four months after the close of the anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaign, an SD report admitted:

"....the propaganda is finding it more and more difficult to get through to its listeners with sound and convincing arguments - especially to the working class - and to show that Bolshevism really is the danger it has always been depictedAbove all, the idea is beginning to spread, a result also of enemy propaganda, that Bolshevism has nothing against the ordinary Volksgenossen who has nothing to lose, but that only those at the top are threatened."⁵³

Far from instilling fear into the population, the slogans of anti-Bolshevik propaganda had only managed to urge it to find consolation elsewhere and to find a chance for itself in the case of defeat, a defeat which seemed to be becoming more and more likely. Particularly in east Germany, the Soviet forced-labourer provided the urgently needed proof that Nazi propaganda was wrong.

An essential argument of the anti-Bolshevik theme was that Germany was championing the European idea and the values of western civilisation against the barbaric "Asiatic" foe. The assumption was that the German Reich was not standing alone in

this struggle but was supported voluntarily by the lands it had overrun shortly before. The fascist parties in the occupied territories were portrayed as popular, phoenix-like movements of revival. German soldiers stationed in Western Europe soon corrected this propaganda picture in their accounts to their families and friends at home. Their reports left no doubt that the attitude of the population of the occupied areas towards the Reich was, in fact, becoming more and more hostile. In addition, the large number of foreign workers in Germany could in no way be interpreted as evidence of European cooperation, since it was a well-known fact that they had come under pressure.⁵⁴

Much of the information received from these unofficial sources was passed on in the form of rumours. It would be wrong, however, to ascribe all rumours to this source. Many were merely the expression of a hope; the hope, for example, that "missing" relatives and friends were still alive. According to one rumour, the Turkish Red Crescent organisation was compiling lists of German prisoners-of-war in the Soviet Union and on a single day in one German city 350 letters were posted to Ankara. Another widespread rumour claimed to know:

"Under pressure from the Vatican, Moscow has promised to publish lists of prisoners in the near future." ⁵⁵

Dröge has clearly illustrated the role of the rumour in relieving fear of the Soviet enemy, a function that became particularly significant as Germany's military position was seen to deteriorate. The contradiction between positive views of the enemy and official propaganda conceptions could be removed by believing the information passed on by the rumour. Similarly, the great gap between the fact of having heard nothing from one's relatives and the belief they were still alive was bridged by the rumour. No contradiction now existed because the official

propaganda portrayal was simply ignored. As the months went by and defeat seemed more and more likely, despite the fact that the Red Army had not yet crossed the Reich's frontiers, the need to survive became the uppermost consideration and with it the necessity of coming to terms with the idea of an enemy occupation. In those parts of the Reich not able to place future hopes on the Anglo-Americans, a removal of fears could only be achieved, as Dröge has shown, by a mellowing of the stereotyped image of the enemy. In this process a substantial role was performed by the rumour and impressions gained from person-to-person contact were strengthened.⁵⁶

Combatting rumours was none too easy task for the Nazi propagandist. By contradicting them he only ran the risk of arousing even greater interest in their content, the idea being that there is no smoke without fire. Instead of giving them unwanted publicity in the press, each Gauleitung was instructed to counter all rumours by using the strong-arm methods of the Kampfzeit (the "time of struggle" before 1933). All Party members were reminded of their duty to report all rumour-mongers, even if they should be friends, relatives or Party comrades. The population was to be admonished:

"all those Volksgenossen, who in wartime listen to the voice of the enemy, weaken our power of defence and resistance and must be prosecuted and punished mercilessly....The principle must be that no exemptions will be made. If everywhere an example is made of such people, this will very soon have a deterrent effect. The Party has all the experience necessary from the Kampfzeit how to make such an example and how to use it with the right propaganda effect."⁵⁷

Party members were to pay particular attention to what were

regarded as the most dangerous rumours. Rumours, for example, that the Anglo-Americans would occupy western Germany were to be countered by the argument that the Western Powers could never hope to check a Soviet advance, and talk of a possible compromise peace settlement by arguing that there was only one alternative - victory or Bolshevism.⁵⁸ These were basically the very same arguments about Germany being the sole bulwark against the Soviet attempt at world domination that had been heard incessantly for almost two years, and they were predestined to meet the same fate.

(v) K a t y n

In spring 1943 the discovery of the mass-graves of several thousand Polish officers, probably murdered by the Russians in the summer of 1940, provided Nazi propagandists with a solid basis for a theme which had always run the risk of appearing too abstract and theoretical. This was the much-needed and very welcome visible confirmation of Soviet brutality and intentions. For Goebbels it was a unique opportunity to achieve those goals he had failed to achieve during the anti-Bolshevik campaign of February and March. No time was wasted in reviving the apparently exhausted anti-Bolshevik theme. Katyn was an example of what would happen to the whole German people should it prove too weak. Here was a chance to enlighten all those who still stubbornly believed in the enemy's humanity. On 18th April the Propaganda Minister wrote in his diary:

"Here and there certain groups of Germans, especially the intellectuals, express the idea that Bolshevism isn't as bad as the Nazis represent it to be. That is owing to the fact that our consideration for the families of the men missing in action in the East has been such

that we have not described the atrocities of Bolshevism as they actually happened. The Katyn case now offers a welcome opportunity to catch up on this. The families of our missing men in the East must simply accept this sacrifice so that the German people won't some day have to face a greater one, perhaps even that of their national existence." ⁵⁹

After first consulting the Führer, Goebbels gave orders that the greatest possible use was to be made of the Katyn material. He believed:

"It will keep us going for a couple of weeks."⁶⁰

Semmler, however, describes Goebbels' disappointment and dismay at the rather matter-of-fact treatment in the press following the first announcement of the discovery of the graves. He demanded greater political understanding and intuition from his journalists. They simply could not be allowed to get away with such a superficial and factual treatment of such a highly explosive theme:

"Goebbels is furious at what he calls the lack of news sense of our editors, who cannot see what tremendous opportunities the material gave them. Their writers, he says, ought to be thankful that they had been given such hard facts. It should have been presented from every possible angle; to publish the official communiqué was not nearly enough. It was now up to the writing staffs to show that they were not only good journalists but also good propagandists. The present slack and uneventful period could not be better used than in rousing a whirlwind of interest and indignation about Katyn. Finally, Goebbels ordered every

German newspaper to cover the Katyn story at least two or three times a week, in news, comment, leading articles and pictures....The story must be so hammered into the public mind that the mention of the word Katyn sends a cold shudder down the back of the stupidest man." 61

The question that has now to be answered is whether this apparent substantiation of all the arguments used during the February-March campaign did actually manage to persuade the German people to place their faith unconditionally in the national leadership and its portrayal of the situation. Were all the hopes in the mercy and humanity of the foe now relinquished or did the factors described above continue to intervene between propaganda message and effect?

The first accounts given by the SD seemed quite promising. On 19 April it reported:

"The feelings of hate and fear of Bolshevism, which had become weaker among quite a few Volksgenossen recently as a result of such ideas as 'the Soviets are not so bad as they are made out to be', have been given new life. The fate of 12,000 Poles is regarded as an example of what would happen to large sections of the German people should the Russians be victorious....The discovery of the corpses has certainly made all parts of the population think once again about the actions of Bolshevism and Jewry and many Volksgenossen showed their disgust at these terror methods which, at the same time, give our struggle a convincing meaning and justification."

However, the fear evoked by this propaganda did not have a

particularly great morale-boosting effect on the families of the missing who now had to fear that their sons and fathers would undergo the same terrible fate as the Polish officers. The propaganda treatment itself was also not without its critics even at this early stage of the campaign. Many were astonished at the sudden sympathy expressed for the Poles and described it as "hypocritical". Had not these very same people been guilty of massacring "60,000 Volksgenossen" back in 1939? A much more serious criticism, being levelled primarily in intellectual and church-going circles, was:

"We have no right to get excited over this Soviet measure, for the Germans have liquidated Poles and Jews in far greater numbers."

Opponents of the regime dismissed it as "a diversionary manoeuvre for the reverse in North Africa". The capitulation of Rommel's Afrika Korps had already become imminent in April 1943. Moreover, these "hostile elements" were of the opinion:

"The discovery of the bodies has certainly been known for a long time. Its utilisation has been saved up for a time when the German people had to be served with something in order to hide an unfavourable development elsewhere."⁶²

Another SD report from Frankfurt-on-Main referred to the comparisons being drawn between Katyn and the National Socialist elimination of Polish intellectuals and Jews by certain members of the German "intellegentsia".⁶³

The morale reports leave little doubt that the Katyn propaganda did at first lead to an intensification in fear of the Russian enemy. But this arousing of fear did not necessarily mean that the desired conclusions were drawn or the desired behaviour followed. Four weeks after the launching of

the campaign, the Regierungspräsident of Augsburg reported:

"It has been reported that since the announcement of the Katyn atrocities many farmers have begun treating the Russian and Polish workers better than their own countrymen." ⁶⁴

Thus, fear alone could not be relied upon to evoke the determination to hold out at all costs which was being demanded. In fact, fear could lead to clearly defeatist behaviour - protecting one's individual interests should the worst come to the worst. It might even lead many to conclude that defeat was probable and it was now up to everyone to save what he could. Fear alone could never manage to convince the German people of the certainty of final victory and might result in the very opposite of the intended effect. It was naturally very difficult for the propagandist to estimate the right dose of fear and pessimism necessary for his purpose, and the amount required varied from person to person.

Reports describing the reaction to the Katyn propaganda show quite clearly that all those intervening factors listed in the analysis of the late winter campaign continued to operate. In particular, the Ostarbeiter continued to be a valuable reminder that not every Russian was a Bolshevik or a mass-murderer. That they were hard-working and "good fellows" provided the desired proof that not all Russians were bad. ⁶⁵

The Katyn propaganda is remarkable for its intensive repetition of the very same detail and conclusions. It is, of course, true that repetition is a characteristic of all Nazi - indeed almost all totalitarian - propaganda. However, in most cases the propagandist uses an assortment of stories and a variation in argumentation as a vehicle for reaching the same conclusion. But in the case of Katyn, there was absolutely no variation and, of course, only one story. Goebbels agreed

with Hitler that simple repetition enforces the propaganda effect. The various morale reports dealing with the response to this campaign, however, give the impression that the opposite was true. Instead of an intensification of the fear initially aroused, the effect was blunted rather than strengthened through constant repetition, because the propaganda purpose became clear to everyone. The population soon became weary of the theme. Although few doubted the truthfulness of the news of the atrocities, it was now thought that "enough has already been written and said about it".⁶⁶ This growing lack of interest in the subject is demonstrated in the reaction to a midday talk on Katyn by Fritzsche on 6th May:

"The fact that Fritzsche spoke for the first time after the 12.30 news aroused a certain amount of interest as something special was expected, but the mere mention of the word 'Katyn' was sufficient to make all interest fade."⁶⁷

One Nazi Gauleiter, Brandt, recognised the inherent danger in this type of intensive propaganda campaign:

"Why do our leading organisations deal with every issue so long on the radio and saturate the press with it until no one can bear to hear anything more said about it?"⁶⁸

According to the SD Linz:

"The continued reporting of Katyn has only been followed by a small minority of politically interested readers, whilst the majority of readers doesn't want to hear anything more about anything that has to do with Katyn and with boredom skip over any article dealing with it."⁶⁹

It would, nevertheless, be wrong to link all this indifference

to Katyn propaganda alone, for the months following Stalingrad were characterised by declining interest in all official propaganda. People were no longer prepared to waste their precious time reading or listening to these reports which were "becoming more and more boring".⁷⁰ This would help to explain the continued lack of interest in all sorts of political diatribe and the outright rejection of the rhetoric of such political commentators as Hans Fritzsche:

"Because of the long duration of the war and the effects this has had, an indifference regarding all events of political life is to be observed. This is, above all, expressed in a general lack of interest and even rejection of every kind of propaganda. At present, more than ever before, Fritzsche's talks are being regarded by the population as just propaganda."

On the other hand, the more factual talks by such military "experts" as Lutzow, Quade and Dittmar continued to enjoy considerable popularity.⁷¹ It therefore comes as no surprise that virtually no interest was shown in the discovery of another mass grave at Winniza a few weeks later. Its portrayal as "the poor man's Katyn" fell on deaf ears.⁷²

It must be pointed out that Katyn came at an unfavourable time of year for the propagandists. In the countryside, the farmers made the most of the long evenings and had almost no time to spare for things which seemed to be of no immediate concern to them. SD Linz reported at the beginning of May, that is two weeks after the first news of the Katyn discoveries, that it was surprising how many people had still heard nothing of Katyn!⁷³ Even in the towns and cities much less radio was being heard during the light early summer evenings, as a report from Stuttgart shows.⁷⁴

(vi) C o n c l u s i o n

It has often been claimed that Goebbels successfully offset the negative effects of Stalingrad on morale. Tremendous significance, for instance, has been ascribed to his speech in the Berlin Sportpalast on 18 February 1943.⁷⁵ It may be true that this address gave some encouragement of a temporary nature, but the sources examined in this study of the anti-Bolshevik and Katyn campaigns give us little reason to believe in a general halting of the downward trend in morale, let alone in a convincing propaganda success. Undoubtably, the German people continued to work hard and German war production was able to reach a new record in 1943. But how far was this really due to propaganda? The winter military crisis had led to a new crisis of confidence in the official news media and had enhanced the prestige of enemy propaganda for accuracy and veracity. The morale reports in the early months of 1943, as the anti-Bolshevik campaign was in full swing, point to a further decline in popular confidence and trust in the official information sources. On the other hand, it might be misleading to assume a complete rejection of this source. A very subjective distinction was drawn between "factual" information and propaganda. It was hardly realised that the very same propaganda purpose also lay behind the still popular situation reports by such military "experts" as General Dittmar. It was the blatant propaganda techniques which accelerated these doubts, a development which reached a peak in the propaganda exploitation of the Katyn massacre. Even the most gullible Volksgenosse was capable of spotting this attempt at manipulation.

Other factors, of course, also contributed to the failure of the campaign. It depicted the dangers only too well without, at the same time, pointing to a convincing solution.⁴ What was needed was a sign of German strength. The intensification in the

bombing of German cities in the spring of 1943 pointed to enemy strength. Finally, with the stabilisation of the Eastern Front in March, the propaganda theme lost its factual basis even if the improvement of the military situation in Russia did not seem to bring peace or victory any nearer. The defeat in North Africa showed, in fact, that little had changed. It cannot be denied that the news of Katyn initially achieved the desired result. The subsequent constant repetition, however, not only led to boredom and apathy, but more important to a closer consideration of its importance for Germany - that is, it forced attention on to a possible defeat situation. Here, the neutralising effect of the unofficial sources mentioned above, with their humanizing effect on the image of the Soviet foe, immediately came into operation. These provided the much needed confirmation that survival was possible, even if the survival of Nazism was not. Hence, the rather matter-of-fact treatment initially given to the Katyn news, and on account of which Goebbels scolded the German press, would appear to have been more effective than all the subsequent "propaganda" on which the Minister placed such high hopes.

But this does not necessarily mean that defeat was now being regarded as desirable, but it does mean the beginning of a process in which war events came to be interpreted more in terms of the personal fate and survival chances of the individual - a development in stark contradiction to the Fascist idea of Volksgemeinschaft. The survival of National Socialism as a political system played virtually no role at all in these considerations. It is thus quite clear that the growing harshness of the war and the recognition of future dangers led to a declining interest in purely political and theoretical aspects of the conflict. National Socialist teachings and policies became less important when appraising the National Socialist movement and the National Socialist government than

the success such a leadership had in mastering the crisis and securing peace. Even the Party's most fundamental theories no longer appeared relevant - even basic anti-Communist teachings. For the average German citizen in 1943 the war was primarily a struggle between nations and only secondly between political systems.

Although there was still no general wish to accept peace at the cost of total defeat, there was, nevertheless, a growing preoccupation with the possibility of future defeat, as well as a growing tendency not to regard it as the end to all hopes for the continuation of an acceptable way of life in the post-war world. It was here, perhaps, that many German workers recalled the teachings of the old KPD. The Communist Party had fought to improve the lot of the German proletariat during the crisis-ridden years of the Weimar Republic and had upheld the Soviet Union as the model of its aspirations. The myth of the new society in the "first workers' state" had gained many adherers in the twenties. Such recollections possibly provided the much-needed confirmation that the ordinary man had little to fear should the worst come to the worst. Contact with Russian soldiers and forced-labourers would then serve to back up such hopes. Only the Nazis would have to bear the consequences of the lost war. This would help to explain the typically "class" views of the workers mentioned in morale reports cited in this chapter. It is difficult to know how far these feelings of affinity with the political aims of the KPD and SPD had actually remained alive since 1933 or whether the recalling of these old class ideas merely represented the personal solution to the pressing problem of finding one's way into an unclear future and thereby a convenient way of knowing that survival was certain, even after a defeat. It would be very wrong to equate this automatically with even passive resistance to the regime by the

working class. The German workers continued to work hard for a victory they believed in less and less. Not only did the vast majority wish to keep out of trouble with the police and the Party, but they wanted to keep their jobs and somehow continue to live. In short, ideas of survival after a defeat took on the form of a personal assurance in an eventuality.

Repetition led in no way to the desired intensification of effect. In fact, the morale reports give the impression that the opposite was true - that it led to a decrease in response. The propaganda intention was all too clear with such a theme as Katyn. Increasing lack of interest had characterised response to propaganda for many months, but there can be little doubt that the Katyn propaganda only accelerated this trend. But was the repetitive propaganda rejected on account of a negative evaluation of the message? It would seem that downright boredom with the theme and growing apathy in regard to propaganda as a whole were here the dominant factors. Of course, the increasing dependency on other sources of information played an important part in determining this virtual indifference to the official media, since it made them, in part, superfluous in the forming of opinion.

C. ANTI-SEMITISM

As if it had learnt nothing from the failure of the two anti-Communist campaigns, the Ministry of Propaganda embarked on yet another doctrinal offensive in the early summer of 1943. At a critical phase of the war following the loss of North Africa, Goebbels found it necessary to concentrate the entire propaganda effort and direct the hate and aggression of the German people on just one target - the Jews. In the ideological world of Nazi propaganda the Jews were the essential link between Soviet Communism and Anglo-American Capitalism. Perhaps there was a very practical reason for launching such a campaign in the wake of

the Katyn propaganda offensive. Intensive anti-Bolshevik propaganda had only added to the tendency of differentiating between the western and eastern enemies of the Reich. The new anti-Jewish campaign would help to enlighten those naive Volksgenossen who professed to have no fear of a future Anglo-American occupation regime.⁷⁶

(i) T h e C o u r s e o f t h e C a m p a i g n

In May Hitler agreed with Goebbels that it was time for an all-out anti-Semitic propaganda offensive:

"We ought, so the Führer believes, in no way be deterred by intellectual objections to the treatment of the Jewish question. The Jewish criminals must be denounced ruthlessly for otherwise people will not understand what we mean and intend."⁷⁷

In his diary Goebbels drew a direct comparison between the debacles in Tunisia and in Stalingrad. The latter had been the occasion for launching the anti-Bolshevik campaign and now the end in North Africa would be followed by a full-scale attack on the Jews.⁷⁸ There thus seems little doubt that the new campaign was designed as an integral part of the Durchhaltepropaganda intended to offset any signs of defeatism in the wake of military setback.

Anti-Semitism was now to become the constant theme of the press and to form the core of all comments and articles. Each day the press would receive a theme pertaining to the "Jewish question" which should act as a stimulant for its anti-Jewish attacks. Editors and journalists were reminded that Jewry was to be depicted as bearing the entire guilt for the world war.

"What is more, even those news reports, which do

not at first appear to fit into the anti-Semitic propaganda, must be presented in such a way as to serve its purpose. The following is an example. When after a raid on a German town in which 20 planes were lost, the Jewish papers write in a truly Jewish way that the defences of this town were weak, it can be stated that it is the Jews who are writing this and that they themselves are not sitting in the cockpits of the bombers....There is really no column in a newspaper where such an approach is not possible." ⁷⁹

Even specialist periodicals and trade journals were called upon to participate in the campaign.

"This does not mean that periodicals ought to contain articles irrelevant to their information sphere, but that they should denounce all that is Jewish. Example: if a trade journal deals with a research committee's examination of the 'Rise in Production of Synthetic Caoutchouc in the USA' and says 'The committee consists of the financier, Bernhard Baruch...', then this is the wrong way to go about it. It must be stressed and made clear from the very start that he is a Jew." ⁸⁰

The campaign, however, should in no way divulge to the German people what the government really had in store for the European Jews :

"When handling the Jewish question in public, no mention must be made of a future total solution. It may, however, be said that the Jews are being recruited for appropriate work." ⁸¹

Goebbels set the ball rolling in his weekly article in Das Reich, broadcast on 7 May:

"This war is a racial war. It was started by the Jewish people and pursued in their interest and their plan has no other aim than the destruction and liquidation of our people."

He warned that the Jews "will be overtaken by that punishment which they are already suffering in Germany".⁸² A few weeks later in the Sportspalast he was claiming:

"The complete elimination of the Jews from Europe is not a moral question, but one of the security of states. The Jew will always act in accordance with his character and racial instincts. He cannot help himself. Just as the potato blight destroys potato crops and cannot but destroy them, so the Jew destroys states and all nations. There is only one remedy for this: radical elimination of the danger..."⁸³

In the same way as anti-Bolshevik propaganda had endeavoured to urge those who hoped for fair treatment from the Soviets to give up their dangerous illusions, anti-Semitic propaganda emphasized the fact that no German, even the "few" non-Nazis, would be spared by the Jews.

"No German is in a position to escape by saying: 'In my heart I always was a democrat and I always hated the Nazis; I was only prevented from demonstrating my true feelings'. In the eyes of international Jewry, every German will be guilty." ⁸⁴

This crucial point was underlined even more emphatically in the special anti-Jewish May edition of Deutscher Wochendienst, an official publication consisting of propaganda material for use in periodicals.

-Emphasize: If we should lose this war, we should

not fall into the hands of some other nation; but all nations will be destroyed by world Jewry. The Jews are resolved to eradicate all Germans. International law and national custom will give no protection from the Jews' desire to destroy everything. Thus we must under all circumstances by victorious and weather our reverses....

Emphasize: Every single Jew, wherever he is and whatever he is doing, shares the guilt. There is no such thing as a 'good Jew', but only degrees of skill and camouflage. The Jew is a notorious criminal." ⁸⁵

(ii) T h e R e s p o n s e t o t h e C a m p a i g n

At first sight the reaction of the German population to this new large-scale propaganda drive seems very similar to that at the time of the Katyn campaign. The continual repetition of the same arguments led to a decreasing interest in propaganda content. According to an SD report from Stuttgart of the 5 June, even those people who accepted the truth of everything told them about the Jews could no longer bear to hear the stereotyped argument that the Jews were to blame for everything.⁸⁶ SD Frankfurt also referred to the unpleasant feeling of over-saturation caused by a too intensive bombardment with anti-Jewish propaganda.⁸⁷ The radio commentator, Scharping, even admitted on the air that the campaign was not always having the desired effect and alluded to the boredom felt by the listener in the typically Nazi propaganda understatement:

"Our listeners may have occasionally inclined to the view that the German radio was speaking too frequently about Jews." ⁸⁸

Many were shocked and alienated by the very vehemence and violence

of the anti-Semitic attacks. Primitive racialist diatribes in a speech by Robert Ley marking the tenth anniversary of the setting up of the DAF met with a particularly negative response. First, the same old arguments were used as had been appearing in Der Stürmer for years⁸⁹ and, secondly, the "uneducated language in a raucous voice" angered not only "intellectuals" but also blue and white-collar workers.⁹⁰ According to SD Linz, the nonsensical, incoherent and repetitive anti-Jewish venom had even shocked the most radical anti-Semite.⁹¹ Nor does the attempt to give an anti-Semitic slant to those items of news having little or nothing to do with "the Jewish question" seem to have borne fruit. Nazi propaganda, for instance, had tried to construe the RAF raid on the Möhne and Edertal dams on the night of 16-17 May as a Jewish-inspired operation. A Party report from Gau Halle-Merseburg noted:

"This kind of propaganda interpretation is generally rejected. People say that these dams are certainly very important for the war economy and that this is the reason why they were destroyed."⁹²

Considerably more dangerous than indifference to anti-Semitic propaganda was a certain boomerang effect it was having, not unlike that observed during the anti-Bolshevik crusade a short time before. Some people were of the opinion that, if what the Nazis said about Jewish plans to destroy Germany was correct, the violence of the present anti-Semitic propaganda would only manage to strengthen the hate and desire for revenge in the hearts of the Jewish people. Once again, the simple German would be the one to suffer in the long run. Mixed with this fear of future retaliation was a vague sense of guilt. A report of the Oberlandesgerichtspräsident of Brunswick shows this quite clearly:

"There are, of course, also people who blame the

Party for the bombing terror on the grounds that it had provoked it by its treatment of the Jews, e.g. the destruction of their temples."⁹³

This impression is confirmed in letters written to the Propaganda Ministry in the summer of 1943 which "emphasise that what we /the German people/ are suffering now is the price for our extremist attitude towards the Jews, which has made the whole world our enemy". Semmler concluded from this evidence reaching him:

"Anti-Semitism is as unpopular as ever among the mass of the people and causes distrust or definite opposition."⁹⁴

For an understanding of the factors which determined this thoroughly negative reaction to the campaign it is necessary to examine the general attitude to the Nazis' anti-Jewish policies. In doing so, it is naturally impossible to avoid the oft-asked question how far the German people really knew about the fate of the "resettled" Jews in the East. Although the SD recorded a generally positive reaction to the decree of 1 September 1941 obliging every Jew to wear the Star of David,⁹⁵ lack of opposition and indifference seemed to characterise the attitude of the average German at this time. In towns like Frankfurt-on-Main, where there was a comparatively large Jewish community, a marked anti-Semitic feeling did exist, especially among the lower-middle class. In country areas with a Catholic population, however, there was practically no contact with Jews and anti-Semitism appears to have been regarded as little more than just one of many propaganda slogans.⁹⁶ Steinert is probably right in thinking:

"Anti-Semitism hardly played the same central role in the response of the German people to Hitler and his ideology as it undoubtedly played in Hitler's

ideology itself."⁹⁷

What was more, theoretical anti-Semitic propaganda seemed less important for the German population as the burden of war grew heavier and heavier. Indeed, it might prove very irritating and give the impression that the government was trying to turn public attention away from the alarming military reality of the summer of 1943. In a summary of opinions expressed in letters sent to the Ministry of Propaganda, drawn up for his master, Goebbels, Semmler makes it quite clear that quite a few Germans were very much conscious of the political function of anti-Semitism:

"Here and there the suggestion is made that whenever things go wrong with us there is a search for a scapegoat and the Jews come in handy. A few writers say that the present hate campaign against the Jews proves once again that the leaders are trying to distract people's attention from difficulties they cannot master."⁹⁸

Another intervening factor which presented a formidable obstacle for the propagandist was the sympathy which some Germans had for the savage fate that had befallen the Jews. This was often the case in the towns where the neighbour or the owner of the corner shop might have been Jewish. Once again personal experience impeded propaganda success. One preferred to believe what one saw with one's own eyes. Nor could it be forgotten so easily that many Jews had died defending the Reich only 25 years before. Needless to say, such individual impressions and observations scarcely corresponded to the propaganda picture of the barbaric Jewish Bolshevik or the wealthy and unscrupulous Jewish plutocrat. Although it would be extremely difficult to estimate the extent of such sympathy, it would seem that it was widespread enough to worry the apologists of the regime, who

frequently found it necessary to warn against any foolhardy compassion for the persecuted minority. But Nazi propagandists were hampered in their work yet again by the neutralising effect of the rumour. One such rumour is mentioned in an article in a Party publication intended for internal use:

"A German soldier from the Rhineland, after having been taken prisoner, is brought to Canada. The doctor who treats him there is a Jew from his own home town. He recognises him, treats him well and secures him a privileged position."⁹⁹

Here, the rumour was playing a similar role as in the case of anti-Bolshevik propaganda. The need to reconcile oneself with the growing likelihood of enemy victory meant that, if one was to believe in survival, one had also to believe in the humanity of Germany's enemies.

The SD reports appear to contradict the widely held view that while the war was on only a handful of Germans knew about the true fate awaiting the Jews in the East. It is obvious that mass shootings and executions carried out on such a great scale could not have escaped the notice of all Wehrmacht soldiers and that not all kept their thoughts to themselves. As SD report from Frankfurt-on-Main of 17 April 1943 illustrates that information was being passed on among the German civilians at this time and how astonishingly accurate it was.

"Occasionally, reference is made to the fate of the Jews in the East, who, so it is said, have been shot in their thousands by the SS."¹⁰⁰

Widespread knowledge of the extermination policy as well as the crucial role played by the soldier as information source, become evident in a further SD report of 26 July, which dealt with popular response to the discovery of a mass grave of

peasants, presumably murdered by the Communists in the Ukrainian village of Winniza:

"The opinion is frequently heard that we also have ruthlessly wiped out all hostile elements in the East, particularly the Jews. Here, the accounts of soldiers and other people working in the East play a big role."¹⁰¹

This view is striking for the direct parallel it draws between an example of enemy barbarity and the gruesome treatment of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis. Such awesome information acquired about the terrible deeds perpetrated by representatives of the Third Reich was often interpreted in terms of its likely personal effect on the individual German, his family, etc.

"There exists a fear in many parts of the population that the soldiers taken prisoner [at Stalingrad] could be killed in retaliation for the alleged mass shooting of Jews in the East by the Germans."¹⁰²

If, as Marlis Steinert maintains, only a few Germans really knew the full truth about the Nazis' liquidation programme,¹⁰³ these reports nevertheless show that the fate of the Jews was more widely known than has often been assumed in post-war Germany. The following qualification, however, has to be made. Rumours might have been heard about the extermination of Jews in the East, but for many Germans they must have sounded incredible. Who could really believe that his father, son or friend was a mass-murderer? Such an idea lay far beyond people's imaginative faculties. Many must have thought that such rumours had been started by the enemy, remembering how the British had turned atrocity propaganda into such a fine art during the First World War that it had been believed by half the world.

(iii) C o n c l u s i o n

The anti-Semitic propaganda campaign in the summer of 1943 may therefore be seen as another attempt to pull the nation together after a military shock. The Nazis had hoped thereby to arouse the required determination to fight on by returning to the basics of their political creed. They hoped to offset any tendency to seek salvation in the West, and the anti-Jewish theme enabled them to attack all enemies of the Reich at one stroke. There can be no doubt, however, that the campaign proved no more successful than the two previous anti-Bolshevik ones and that the results fell far short of Nazi expectations. That it had had no overwhelming effect was to be indirectly admitted early the following year when the press found it expedient to warn its readers against the "fools who regard reports concerning the Jewish plans for revenge as mere propaganda and our warnings as a means of incitement".¹⁰⁴ The Rheinische Zeitung was still complaining on 8 February 1944 about the fact that there were still people about who thought "the Jews are human-beings too".¹⁰⁵

The same factors had intervened between propaganda message and effect as at the time of the anti-Bolshevik propaganda drive. Once again, the very repetition designed to heighten the effect led to indifference and made the recipients even more conscious of being manipulated in a most deliberate fashion. Personal experience, the reports of soldiers and rumours all contributed to a neutralisation of the propaganda message. It would seem, too, that quite a few people had an excellent understanding of the workings of the propaganda machinery and fully recognised the intention that lay concealed behind the racialist tirades. The attempt to divert feelings of resentment, frustration and aggression on to the enemy certainly failed here. Nor does the primitive appeal to the fear of the consequences of defeat seem to have worked. The tendency to place one's hopes on those most "infested" with "Jewish ideas", the Anglo-Americans, continued

and became more and more pronounced as Germany's military position deteriorated. In fact, this sort of propaganda only invited the question why the Jews so hated Germany. The answer was not hard to find. The use of ostensible Jewish plans of revenge by Nazi propagandists proved to be double-edged, as many believed that mounting such fierce tirades was just the right way to incite the Jews to step up their plans and exact an even more radical and fearful retribution. This demonstrates how subjectively the whole issue was considered. Eventual effects on oneself remained at the centre of all reflection. Mixed with this was a certain guilt feeling, illustrated in the parallels being drawn between German and enemy atrocities. It is interesting to note that the most negative reaction recorded was to the most primitive and brutal form of propaganda attack. The almost total rejection of Ley's speech would suggest that propaganda could not overcome indifference to a particular theme by relying on irrational arguments and emotional and violent language. The masses were not so primitive as Hitler and his entourage assumed.

It is very important to remember that the anti-Semitic campaign cannot be seen in isolation - the reaction to this propaganda would be determined by the overall position in which the average German found himself. What was the actual relationship between theoretical anti-Semitism and the disquieting facts of Germany's position in the summer of 1943? At a time of crisis on the Eastern Front and in Italy and of constant threat from the sky, at a time when defeat was staring people in the face, the very irrelevance of this kind of propaganda could only irritate the hard-trying civilian population. There were far more important things to worry about. As with the two anti-Communist campaigns shortly before the main reason why this campaign failed was that it was unable to answer those questions

most plaguing people's minds. As far as the propaganda was considered at all, it was seen in terms of individual existence and survival. How did it affect one's own chances of surviving the war and its aftermath. This would explain the anxiety lest the campaign incite the enemy to mount even heavier bombing raids. By the summer of 1943, the air raids had, in fact, assumed such a dominant role in the thinking of every German that they had become the criterion for judging everything else.

CHAPTER 5

THE BOMBING OF THE GERMAN CIVILIAN POPULATION

A. INTRODUCTION

The "total war" proclaimed so ostentatiously by Goebbels in the Berlin Sportpalast on 18 February, 1943 was soon to become reality for every German citizen. But it was not to be the "total war" envisaged by the Minister of Propaganda, but instead something quite different - the all-out campaign of the Anglo-American air forces to break the morale of the German civilian population by the systematic destruction of its cities. The city street now became the battlefield on which the German citizen fought a nightly struggle for survival. No other chapter of the Second World War has, perhaps, led to such different conclusions regarding effects and results. There is one thing, however, that cannot be denied: by no stretch of the imagination can the high hopes placed on it by the Commander in Chief of Bomber Command, Harris, be said to have been fulfilled. He is credited, for instance, with having told Churchill:

"We can wreck Berlin from end to end if the U.S.A.F. will come in on it. It will cost us between 400-500 aircraft. It will cost Germany the war."¹

An indiscriminate bombing offensive against German cities might even render an armed invasion of mainland Europe unnecessary for "he was convinced that it could be the prelude not to an invasion but to an occupation".²

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, which was drawn up after the war and dealt with the effect of bombing on morale, gives the impression that bombing was an essential factor in

ensuring victory.

"War weariness, willingness to surrender, loss of hope for German victory, distrust of leaders, feelings of disunity and demoralizing defeat were all more common among bombed than unbombed people. By the beginning of 1944 three-fourths of all Germans regarded the war as lost."

Although the conclusion was drawn that bombing "was less important than other military developments in producing defeatists", the compilers of these reports asserted that it "aided greatly in convincing civilians of Allied superiority both through the severity of the raids and through the unchecked passage overhead of fleets of Allied aircraft". On the other hand, "the apathy resulting from the heaviest bombing made people more susceptible to the controls of the regime".³ An interesting conclusion drawn in this mammoth work is that:

"The popular notion that bombing stiffens the resistance of a people finds little confirmation in the facts of German experience."⁴

What is more, it is claimed that the feelings of anger and hate aroused by heavy bombing were not directed against the enemy but against the Nazi regime itself.⁵

Janis explains these results of American research by referring to the simple fact that these reports were compiled during the military occupation of Germany, that is at a time when the German population would be little inclined to express any animosity - even when relating to an earlier period - towards their conquerers.⁶ He believes it wrong to come to a hurried conclusion that the target of anger was either the enemy or the German leadership, for it would be wrong to apply rational reasoning to the irrational behaviour and attitudes

arising from the emotions of hate and anger. It would seem that these aggressive feelings were directed at all authority - their own and the foe's.⁷ The populace felt the need to give vent to their pent-up feelings and did not spend much time considering whether their attacks were fully justified or their targets really deserved to be the object of their rage.

Rumpf comes to quite the opposite conclusion to that drawn in the American bombing survey and views the increasingly ruthless bombing as "a factor which welded the people together to the end. The suffering caused by the devastation of Germany's towns was the cement which not only held them together but held them to a state for which they no longer felt any enthusiasm."⁸ What is more, he not only agrees that war-time Nazi propaganda was "the most effective and successful ever", but that "it contributed very considerably to the steadfastness of the German civilian population under the blows of the bombing campaign". This effect was enhanced by the growing intensity of the enemy air attack, for it provided tangible evidence of the Allied aims of destruction.⁹ Rumpf admits, however, that towards the end of the war the population was no longer taken in by the propaganda, but "they had no alternative so they closed their minds".¹⁰

In her account of German civilian morale during the Second World War Steinert has attempted to draw more specific and less generalised conclusions as to the effect of bombing. She believes that the intensification in Allied bombing in 1943 "stimulated and strengthened the will to fight of the population which had hitherto been rather half-hearted and deepened the weakly developed hate of the British".¹¹ Moreover, she maintains that the Allied bombing campaign had serious re-percussions on political developments that were occurring inside the Reich. The Stalingrad debacle had led to a serious crisis of morale and an increase in criticism of the Party and the state leadership,

for

"former opponents, both left-wing and right-wing, joined up with the disappointed at the middle of the political spectrum to form a potentially broad opposition to the regime. This front of dissatisfaction, however, broke up once again as a result of the growing air-terror and the lack of any alternative to the path dictated by the government - the struggle for the survival of the nation. Apathy and resignation were the result."¹²

Nevertheless, in her appraisal of the effects of bombing on German morale, Steinert makes a very important distinction between two phases of the war:

"Whereas during 1943 and the first half of 1944 the increasing bombing terror contributed to a strengthening of war morale by activating the hatred of the external enemy, thereby providing the fermenting discontent at home with an outlet, the continuous and uninterrupted wearing down of morale gradually made itself felt. The air war dominated life on the Home Front more and more and came to be Topic No.1. Nervousness and fear increased from day to day and in most towns it was no longer possible to get a normal night's sleep. Life became makeshift. People lived for the moment and closed their eyes to the future."

The government's inability to put a stop to the deadly attacks meant that by the autumn of 1944 the government had also fallen into discredit.¹³

These rather contradictory conclusions as to the effects of bombing should be borne in mind in the following examination

which is principally concerned with the attempt of German propagandists to offset the negative effects of Allied raiding on morale and with the popular response to that attempt and to the bombing itself. In an assessment of the success or failure of this bombing propaganda, particular attention will be paid to the relationship between bombing experience and attitude to official propaganda as well as dependency on unofficial information sources. In addition, an attempt will be undertaken to answer the apparently unresolved question whether the aggression arising from bombing was directed at the foe or at the Nazi leadership. Did the regime, as Rumpf maintains, successfully exploit the raids as irrefutable proof of enemy ruthlessness and barbarity and thereby become the sole beneficiary? The answer to this difficult question would determine to a very large extent the success or failure of the entire anti-raid propaganda effort. The air war on the domestic front cannot, of course, be treated in isolation from the war situation as a whole when appraising the phenomenon of civilian morale. It will therefore be necessary to attempt a comparison of the relative significance of firstly, bombing, and secondly, other military developments, as factors determining the overall morale picture. In the last two years of the war, the picture coming from the fighting front was a very bleak one indeed. After the loss of Tunis and the fall of Mussolini in the summer of 1943, the military situation was characterised by an almost uninterrupted retreat on the Eastern Front, as well as by the preparations to meet the expected Anglo-American invasion in the West.

This chapter spans the period from January 1943 until the end of the war. Bombing, however, was nothing new for the German civilian. The RAF had been raiding German towns ever since the early summer of 1940, but it was only in 1943 that

the Allied bombing really began to trouble the Nazi leadership. Whereas early in the war, the propagandist could console the stricken population with a cheerful account of events at the front, this was no longer possible. All indications that victory would soon be won and the raids consequently cease now vanished. At the beginning of 1943, the attention of the RAF was mainly directed at the cities of the industrial Ruhr. This was followed by a series of murderous blows against Hamburg in late July and early August 1943. The year 1943 also saw the beginning of "round the clock" bombing with the RAF attacking at night and the USAF by day. Although the Battle of Berlin was in the foreground in the winter of 1943-4, a number of savage attacks were carried out against provincial cities as well. After a brief respite in the summer of 1944 when all available aircraft were needed on the Invasion front, the air war returned to Germany in an even more intense form, reaching its dreadful climax in the massacre of Dresden in February 1945. During these last months of the war, no town, no village, no farm was safe. The Allies' complete domination of German air space was now demonstrated in the hour-long day-time attacks of low flying aircraft on the German countryside.

B. PROPAGANDA TREATMENT OF ALLIED BOMBING AND MORALE, 1940-5

(i) P r o p a g a n d a R e t i c e n c e : T h e
T r e a t m e n t o f R a i d s t o M a y 1943

Allied air raids on Berlin and other German cities had been a source of constant irritation to German propagandists ever since the summer of 1940. Even in 1940-1, at a time when RAF raids were mere pin pricks, bombing had become a significant factor in influencing civilian morale.^{13a} Propaganda policy, at first, proved to be a very vacillating one. Confronted with these first light, but nevertheless embarrassing raids, the propagandists chose almost to ignore them. Extreme caution

was exercised. Nothing should be allowed to disturb the picture of German invincibility and imminent victory. In October 1940, for instance, the press was warned against publishing any material describing the effects of British raids, and three weeks later it was instructed to restrict itself to printing reports passed by OKW.¹⁴ But, at this early stage of the British bombing offensive, Goebbels was already quite aware of the danger of remaining silent over incidents of such immediate concern to all German citizens, for it simply meant forcing them onto another and very hazardous information source - the rumour. In September 1941, the Propaganda Minister ordered a more realistic treatment of enemy raids,¹⁵ but with the devastating attacks on Lübeck and Rostock in April 1942, which marked a sudden intensification in the weight and accuracy of attack, he again opted for a policy of silence.¹⁶ As it became clear that Allied bombing had, in fact, entered a new and more dangerous phase, Goebbels realised the necessity of soothing the pain of the afflicted by giving them an honourable mention in his propaganda. In August 1942, the press was informed:

"In future, the heroic bearing of the population of our bombed towns, in particular, will be given a worthy mention. It would be completely wrong to describe the extent of the destruction or to publish reports fit only to cause tears. The population ought not to be pitied but its heroism ought to be marvelled at."^{17*}

Party speakers, too, were told to refrain from underlining the damage inflicted by the enemy and instead to stress "the courageous and heroic bearing" of the population.¹⁸

In his praise of the morale of the inhabitants of the west German towns Goebbels found it increasingly necessary to draw a somewhat artificial division between bearing (Haltung) and

mood (Stimmung):

"He no longer wishes the word mood to be used for it is impossible to speak of mood when our houses are being burnt down and towns devastated. He wishes that only good bearing be still mentioned."¹⁹

Such a distinction suited propaganda purposes very well, for all unfavourable effects of bombing on morale could simply be put down to the less important phenomenon, "mood", whilst the rather intangible concept, "bearing", could be depicted as positive, without going into details. It was obviously very convenient for the propagandists to forget there was any link between the one and the other. In fact, bad mood could only have a deleterious effect on behaviour as time went by and the raids did not stop. But, as was so often the case, the Nazi propagandists became slave to their own propaganda concepts. In the next two years it became an unwritten law of the Party and its propagandists that however bad "mood" might be, the "bearing" of the population was impeccable and unassailable.

The actual purpose of the air-raid propaganda is summed up in a press directive of March 1943:

"The systematic terror raids on German towns, which are aimed at wearing down the morale of the German people must be countered by the [German] press with the aim to strengthen the feeling of solidarity of the German people and to double their hatred of their enemies....The community of mutual aid - all for one and one for all - is the answer of the German population."²⁰

The press was instructed to stress the enemy's savagery:

"The press is to pay great attention to the barbarity of the British terror raids which,

unique in world history, are clearly aimed at the most densely populated residential areas of German towns, as well as the most valuable cultural centres of Europe."²¹

Otherwise, the propagandist limited himself to publishing a communiqué in which the size of the attacking force was never mentioned and no details of damage, except to churches, hospitals and cultural monuments, was given.²² A more generous treatment, however, was awarded to air raid news in the papers of the vicinity hit. It was thus possible "to satisfy the demand for attention on the part of those who have suffered without worrying those who have lived hitherto in safer areas".²³ The provincial press, for example, was requested not to take over reports appearing in the local Berlin papers which dealt with an attack on the capital in the night of 16-17 January 1943.²⁴

In its handling of the Allies' bombing raids the Nazi propaganda was being forced to perform a balancing act similar to that observed during the anti-Bolshevik campaign. Satisfying the thirst for news by a policy of frankness might only encourage the enemy to continue his attacks and would only depress the morale of the population of "safe" areas unnecessarily, while a policy of restraint would only antagonize the population of the raided west, who would see in it undeniable proof of governmental indifference. This explains the vicissitudes in propaganda policy. This was demonstrated yet again in March 1943 when Goebbels criticised press reports of raids for being "too frank and honest". They were still giving too many unnecessary and undesirable details and exercising insufficient restraint.²⁵

As if to underline the fortitude of the civilian population under the rain of bombs, a direct parallel was drawn between the inhabitants of the bombarded towns and the soldiers at the

front. A vocabulary hitherto reserved for the latter now came to characterise descriptions of the "Battle of the Home Front". In doing so, it was hoped to exploit that sense of purpose engendered when a population is compelled by circumstances to fight its own struggle for survival. Victims of the enemy blitz were to be handled in the same way as soldiers killed in action. In recognition of the valour of the inhabitants of the raided towns, Hitler personally ordered:

"Decorations for wounds and injuries resulting from enemy air raids can be awarded to all German men, women and children along the same lines as to soldiers employed in the actual zone of combat."²⁶

Not only were bombed cities compared to divisions on the battlefield,²⁷ but the raid victims themselves were described as "fallen"²⁸ and obituaries appeared in the press decorated with the Iron Cross.²⁹

The initial helplessness of the propagandists is further shown in the sphere of radio entertainment. The German wireless was in the awkward position of having to address an unbombed and a bombed population at the very same time. Frivolous entertainment was likely only to antagonise and exasperate the citizens of a town which had been visited by the RAF only a couple of hours before. The population of the Ruhr and Rhineland was in a veritable rage when, after having gone through yet another fearful attack, they turned on their radio sets to hear about what had just happened but were unexpectedly presented with the cheerful melodies of such popular contemporary hits as "For A Night of Bliss" and "Dancing With You Into Heaven"! Goebbels was at rather a loss as to what to do to prevent this unfortunate state of affairs.³⁰ The somewhat half-hearted counter-measures —taken do, however, demonstrate Nazi propaganda's sensitivity to

the response of its audience:

"Fewer texts should be broadcast between 22.00 and 24.00, so that there is no opportunity for a comparison to be drawn between words broadcast and the respective situation prevailing during these hours."³¹

The generally sensitive and cautious approach of the propagandist to his audience is further echoed in a ban on any mention of a visit the Italian King and Queen paid to the bombed districts of Rome in July 1943, "lest our own people ask why no leading representative of the state has been to Cologne."³² This is most certainly a veiled reference to Hitler's repeated refusal to visit raided towns. Despite all Goebbels' prompting, the German Führer chose to shut his eyes to this unnerving aspect of his war, fearing perhaps that his habitual optimism and confidence would be shaken.

(ii) The Response to Raid Propa-
ganda in Spring 1943

The sudden intensification of the enemy air onslaught in the first few months of 1943 certainly seems to have unnerved the German leaders. This nervousness is echoed in the vacillating propaganda policy described above. Goebbels himself feared serious repercussions for morale after the first heavy raid on Essen:

"If the English continue the air war on this scale, then we will be confronted with extraordinarily great difficulties."³³

As early as March 1943, it was feared that the fatalism arising from the enemy blitz might eventually prove a considerable threat to the bearing (Haltung) of the west Germans.³⁴ Goebbels,

thinking that they were beginning to lose heart, lamented:

"They know that we are weaker than the enemy, that our retaliatory blows against England hardly merit a mention. What is more, they are being forced to see how the U-boat campaign, which is strategically our weapon for hitting back, has been a failure this month."³⁵

SD reports confirm that very little importance was attached to these Luftwaffe raids on England, which appeared very meagre indeed when compared with RAF raids on the Reich.³⁶

The spirit of discontent, now so widespread in the Ruhr and Rhineland, was expressed in a craving for official recognition of the ordeal they were having to undergo. With the renewal of the enemy blitz in January 1943 there was great bitterness when the raids were officially described as mere "nuisance raids on the west German region". The annoyance abated, however, as soon as Essen was mentioned in the OKW-Report.³⁷ This understandable need for an appreciation of their plight by both the government and the more fortunate citizens dwelling in "safer" parts was to become a constant factor of morale. Exactly one year later there was considerable resentment in Gau Düsseldorf as it was believed that raids on Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, Remscheid and Krefeld were not being given the same attention as those on other towns. The inhabitants demanded that "the damage caused and the suffering endured" should be acknowledged and that "the extent and concentration of the destruction" should be given adequate treatment by press and radio.³⁸ When, in July 1944, a heavy attack on Saarbrücken was not even mentioned in the OKW-Report, its citizens were said to be in a real rage.³⁹

That the rest of the Reich remained almost untouched by the RAF in the early months of 1943 made the bombing particularly

difficult to bear for the population of west Germany. Nothing aroused more ill-feeling than the realization that other regions were continuing to enjoy what was almost a peace-time way of life, preferring to ignore the regrettable happenings further west. The US Bombing Survey stresses quite rightly the significance of group unity - the feeling that all parts of the community are bearing their share of the burden - as an essential factor in wartime civilian morale.⁴⁰ It remarks that the Germans living in the heavily bombed areas "resented the good fortune of their countrymen who had not been bombed. Many people in the Rhineland, for example, were pleased when the bombs began to fall on Berlin."⁴¹ The morale reports confirm that this was very often the case. After a raid on the German capital in January 1943, there was satisfaction in the west "that the loud-mouthed Berliners have at last got it again".

"The satisfaction derives from the feeling that the Berliners are said to have shown little understanding thus far for the suffering of the population in the Rhineland....Frequently, it could be heard that it would be fine if the British flew more frequently to Berlin so that the inhabitants there would get a taste of how we in the west are feeling."⁴²

In the same way, an NSDAP report refers to the "undisguised joy" felt in the west on hearing of the raids on the German capital.⁴³ There was also a general dislike of the prominence given to the few raids on Berlin at this time in radio and newspaper coverage. Party speakers were told to explain that this was due to Berlin being the decision centre of Europe.⁴⁴ Even the light retaliatory attacks launched at London were not always greeted but were themselves regarded as additional proof that the government was indifferent to the suffering of the west

German population. According to one report:

"There was veritable indignation that after one light attack on Berlin, retaliation raids were immediately launched against England, while after raids that destroyed at least parts of such cities as Cologne, Duisburg, Düsseldorf and Mainz, allegedly not one plane was made free from the Eastern Front for such a retaliatory attack."⁴⁵

The idea was gaining ground in the west that "the whole Rhineland has already been written off" by the government in Berlin.⁴⁶ In southern Germany "a growing anti-Prussian mood" was detected.⁴⁷ The popular interpretation of the air offensive as the enemy answer to the proclamation of "total war" only added to the animosity towards the faraway capital whose inhabitants had, so it was thought, all shouted "Ja" to Goebbels' hysterical questions in the Sportpalast.^{48*}

The propaganda did its very best to remove these dangerous signs of internal discord within the Volksgemeinschaft. At the beginning of March 1943, the press was instructed not to pay any more attention to raids on Berlin than to those on other towns, since this "would have a psychologically unfavourable effect on the towns of the west which have hitherto been forced to bear the brunt of the attack".⁴⁹ Indeed, the propagandists were very conscious of the danger of the Reich splitting into two parts - the bombed and the unbombed areas - and attempted to check this development before it was too late. Goebbels assured his listeners and readers in the raid-stricken west that the entire country was sharing its anguish and pain:

"The war which inflicts on them special suffering is not their war only, but that of our whole nation. We are trying to distribute its burdens as justly and as fairly as possible."

He had, however, to admit that parts of the Reich

"still-maintain an incomparably higher living standard than the air-war zones. Nobody is envious of that; no one, however, will seriously object if it has to be partially cut to help the raided areas. The community spirit alone demands this."

After upholding the population of the west as a model for all Germans to follow, he pleaded for an appreciation of the trial it was having to undergo:

"The sufferings of the air war are easier to bear if the stricken population feels that the rest of the Reich are aware of them."⁵⁰

American analysts of wartime German propaganda were quick to see in this propaganda response an attempt "to satisfy the craving for recognition peculiar to those who feel that their sacrifices should not go unnoticed by their fellow humans."⁵¹ Yet again, an excellent illustration is given here of the two-way process, propaganda - morale - propaganda response.

(iii) A New Policy of Frankness,
June - August 1943

On 30 May 1943 the RAF stepped up the intensity of attack once again with a devastating fire-raid on Wuppertal-Barmen. Goebbels now decided that, faced with raids on such a scale, a fundamental change in propaganda tactics was necessary. The official blessing was consequently given to a new campaign of frankness. Goebbels hoped that, by vividly depicting the effects of enemy bombing, the population of the affected areas would appreciate the government's concern for their plight. Secondly, a policy of unmitigated candour was designed to arouse a bitter

hatred of the common foe, thus forcing the aggressive feelings stirred up by bombing in a direction beneficial to the National Socialist government. Goebbels realised that Churchill's policy of "blood, sweat and tears" had done much to raise the morale of the British in the dark days of 1940-1. Perhaps he could accomplish the same in Germany. There was, of course, one great difference. The scale as well as the period of the RAF attack on Germany was much greater than that of the earlier Luftwaffe offensive which had taken place in the nine months from September 1940 to May 1941.

Goebbels opened his new frankness campaign on 18 June in Wuppertal with a fiery speech to commemorate the victims of the enemy raid on the city. He assured the survivors that they had not been forgotten:

"....the people of these provinces are carrying on their hard struggle neither alone nor in vain. The whole German nation stands by their side and embraces them with love and loyalty."⁵²

One day later in a radio broadcast Fritzsche implied that the propaganda had created so much ill-feeling by its reticence and had permitted so much indifference elsewhere in the Reich that it had now been compelled by popular demand to change its policy quite radically:

"The public honouring of the fallen of Wuppertal, which took place before the ears of the nation, nay, the ears of the world, has lifted a ban which heretofore has applied to the suffering of the men, women and children who are exposed to the constant enemy attacks from the air on the civilian population....Thus it happened that one part of the German people had only a very limited notion of what the

other part, in the areas most heavily threatened from the air, had to endure. Thus it also happened that Germans in the most heavily bombed cities felt that they had been deserted or that they had been forgotten and had in any case not been understood. They had seen too few proofs of understanding and active help in the areas not yet affected."⁵³

The press was to stress the help that was being given to the bombed regions by the rest of the Reich.⁵⁴ But in the educational task of teaching the hitherto unaffected to appreciate the phenomenon of saturation bombing, the press was only of secondary importance. Radio was an instrument better suited to the propaganda task of portraying the full horror of what was happening nightly in the west. In the weeks that followed Goebbels' Wuppertal speech, radio reporters were dispatched to the stricken areas, because "it was no longer tolerable to conceal from the public the frightening results of the bombing terror".⁵⁵ Most of the reports broadcast contained two basic themes: firstly, the suffering and devastation inflicted by the enemy "air gangsters" and, secondly, the barbarism of the foe in destroying cultural monuments. In the week 20-26 June, for instance, 15% of the time given to news and commentary on the German Home Service was devoted to these two topics.⁵⁶ The full horror of a bombed city was painted in unmitigated detail. Even the daily broadcast, "Front Reports", hitherto the reserve of reports from the front, gave considerable attention to enemy air raids. The German listener was presented with a horrific picture of roads full of craters, uprooted trees and treks of exhausted people leaving the burning towns.

"At noon on the day after the raid, volunteers and ARP organisations and soldiers from all units of the Forces are still fighting against the violently

raging fires. It is a picture of horror and destruction. Whole quarters of the town are only smouldering ruins."⁵⁷

This realistic reporting reached a crescendo at the end of July with on-the-spot accounts from burning Hamburg.

"It is 8 a.m., five hours after the all-clear has sounded; it is still impossible to comprehend the scale of destruction. Everywhere in Hamburg fires are burning, flames crackle and the house-fronts crumble with a roar and fall across the streets, and there is the sound of time-bomb detonations. The rain has stopped. Smoke lies over the town like an enormous thunder cloud through which the sun is like a red disc. It is nearly dark, as in the middle of the night."⁵⁸

In upholding the bombed cities as an example for the whole Reich, Goebbels used their martyrdom to condemn and ridicule the pettiness of grumblers and grouzers:

"He who, elsewhere, thinks he must complain of one or another by-product of war should look to Essen, Dortmund, Bochum, Wuppertal, or other towns of the air war areas and blush with shame that he dares to compare his worries and discomforts caused by the war with the suffering of the population there. If anyone had the right to complain, it is our population in the west and north-west. But it does not complain. It is fighting with admirable spiritual strength and fanatical stubbornness against fire and desolation."⁵⁹

German propagandists did not object to employing class animosity as a lever for bringing across the message more forcefully - just as they had done during the "total war" campaign a few months earlier. A correspondent of the daily topical radio magazine, Zeitspiegel, remarked:

"Often one thinks it would be good to bring every German to this district for a day or for an hour. I think that a large number would then not look with such a carefree mind on five or six-roomed flats with their precious furniture which they want to preserve by keeping these flats exclusively for themselves; they would realize that elsewhere first childhood impressions are connected with ruins instead of beautiful pictures."⁶⁰

A rather contradictory picture arises from a study of the effect of this new propaganda policy. The SD Schwerin detected general satisfaction that "the hinterland finally sees how bad it really is in the west" and noted that, as a result, there was greater trust in the political leadership.⁶¹ Semmler explained the cordial reception accorded to Goebbels in Cologne in the aftermath of a heavy raid by remarking:

"These suffering men and women feel that at least one of them is interested in their fate."⁶²

This is certainly an allusion to Hitler's repeated refusal to visit blitzed towns. It would appear, however, that the propagandists were not always very successful in removing the lurking suspicion that the government in Berlin had written off the Rhineland. After heavy attacks on Cologne and Aachen in July 1943, the old complaint reappeared, namely that the radio and press "were leaving the population in the rest of

the Reich in the dark about the real situation in west Germany".⁶³ This may be seen as an important warning not to overestimate propaganda success when a population is fighting a long struggle for survival. Even when morale reports point to a positive response to the propagandists' message, it would be wrong to conclude that the desired response proved to be of lasting effect. As soon as the enemy bombers returned, old doubts would return, too. Words against bombs would always be a very uneven contest.

Goebbels' newly discovered candour only confronted his propaganda team with new problems. By stressing the full horror of enemy attack, he was in truth admitting the inability of the German leadership to prevent what was happening. Although the new tone in propaganda treatment of the air war was generally greeted, there was, nevertheless, some criticism. In Stuttgart, for instance, many found it terribly depressing "that these reports manifest our defencelessness more and more openly".⁶⁴ Even Goebbels' aggressive tones at Wuppertal were not always received so kindly, for many considered it "cheap consolation" and found a hate tirade at a funeral profoundly repugnant.⁶⁵ What is more, by the early summer of 1943 many had become surprisingly adroit in spotting the purpose underlying the changes in propaganda policy. Nor did the sudden resort to shock methods always meet with the expected success. Some reports even lead to the conclusion that Goebbels had, in fact, overstepped the mark. After a vivid radio account on the destruction wrought by British bombers on defenceless civilians by Dr. Karl Holzamer, SD Stuttgart reported:

"It is probable that those directly affected were depressed quite unnecessarily. To some extent it is also to be feared that such descriptions only increase the fear of raids which

are to be expected in the future, particularly when so many things, both true and untrue, about the damage in the west German towns are being discussed."⁶⁶

Some four weeks later, the same representatives of the Sicherheitsdienst pointed to the shattering effect a report from a fire-brigade truck rushing through the burning streets of Aachen had on listeners in their area. One woman was reported as saying:

"I can no longer bear to listen to these reports from the air war areas. They make me terribly nervous. When you have to face the prospect every night that exactly the same will happen to you, then such reports are regarded quite differently from how they are regarded in those areas which are not at all endangered by air raids. It may be very good for the Ostmarker [Austrians] to learn something about the terrible fate of the west German population but for us here in Württemberg the effect is hair-raising."⁶⁷

This is an excellent demonstration of the dilemma confronting every propagandist when compelled to address simultaneously two parts of the German people whose attitude was determined by the degree to which they considered themselves endangered or had already actually been affected by enemy raiding. Too little realism was interpreted as evidence that Berlin was taking too little interest in the plight of the stricken, too much as an unbearable additional strain on the already hard-strained listener. The German propaganda organisation had long ceased to be absolute master of its own decision making. It was now no longer a question of interpreting and exploiting events to the full but of making them as palatable as possible to

consumers with very different tastes.

(iv) The Shock of the Raids on
Hamburg, July - August, 1943

In the week 24 July - 3 August 1943 Hamburg was the target of four devastating RAF raids, the first ever to produce the fire-storm. Not only was the greater part of Germany's second city destroyed but over 40,000 of its citizens lost their lives.⁶⁸ This holocaust could not have come at a worse moment for the Nazi leadership. After the loss of North Africa in May and the fall of the Italian Duce on July 25, civilian morale had reached an all-time low. The destruction of Hamburg was simply the visual confirmation that the course of the war had irreparably changed to Germany's disadvantage. Many regarded the overall situation as "catastrophic" and as the "beginning of the end". Only a few citizens could now be found who were still able to persuade themselves that "final victory" was a certainty.⁶⁹ The very idea that the war might soon be over was said, however, to gladden the hearts of some Germans, particularly the women in the severely bombed areas.⁷⁰

The attack on Hamburg came as a terrible shock for the whole nation. What is more, the 900,000 evacuees from the ravaged city passed on news of the catastrophe all over the Reich to all who were prepared to listen. The result was that a mood of panic spread like a forest fire. Every German city and town was now faced with the grave prospect of having to endure a similar avalanche of fire in the near future. There could, indeed, have been no better propagandists for the Allied cause than these refugees from the Hansa city.⁷¹ Rumours wildly exaggerated the effects of these raids, putting the number of dead at over 100,000 and comparing the mood of the Hamburg population with that of the Germany of November 1918.⁷² These

rumours proved so convincing that they failed to succumb to even the most determined efforts of the propagandists at curbing them. Even those regions hitherto untouched by raiding now came to learn the meaning of fear, and belief in the possibility of an effective defence against the enemy bomber vanished overnight. Few doubted that the Allied air flotillas could now pick on any German town at will.⁷³ The morale reports speak of an "air raid psychosis" which was getting hold of the population.⁷⁴ SD Mecklenburg registered the lowest level of morale hitherto and compared it to the mood prevailing at a time of defeat (Untergangsstimmung).⁷⁵ What was more dangerous, some began to think of possible future alternatives:

"The number of those, who, although outwardly doing everything demanded of them, are quietly seeking a back-door out of a general catastrophe, is at the moment increasing."⁷⁶

"Well-meaning Volksgenossen" complained they had no factual arguments to counter these defeatists with and were consequently compelled to rely on their simple but firm faith in the Führer and "final victory".⁷⁷

Nowhere was the fear greater than in the capital itself, whose population was convinced that it was now to be their turn.

"Rumour has it that the attack will take place on August 8, the second anniversary of the beginning of our raids on London (sic). People go to bed early, sleep uneasily, glance at the clock every time they wake up and are relieved when dawn at last comes and the danger, for the time being at least, is past."^{78*}

Some citizens interpreted the evacuation of some public offices from Berlin as clear evidence that the government itself was

contemplating abandoning the capital.⁷⁹ The "panic" mood reached its peak when women and children were advised to leave the threatened city forthwith. A veritable chaos was the result. Immediately the railway stations were stormed by thousands of desperate and bewildered citizens.⁸⁰ But once the initial shock had subsided and the expected attack did not materialise, the Berliners soon calmed down once again⁸¹ and within a very short time the flood of evacuees returning to the capital was to become a big headache for the city authorities.⁸² When the RAF finally did turn its main attention to Berlin in the last week of November 1943, the inhabitants found their courage again and "took" the raids just as bravely and stoically as the Londoners had done three years before. In fact, the experience of German towns during the Second World War would seem to confirm Speer's testimony at Nuremberg. Although the overall tendency was for the weight of attack to increase gradually which enabled the Germans to get accustomed to the raids,

"In every case in which the RAF suddenly increased the weight of attacks, as for example the first attack on Cologne and Hamburg and the attacks on Dresden, the effect not only upon the population of the town attacked but upon the rest of the Reich was terrifying, even if only temporarily so."⁸³

Now that the air war had entered this new and more perilous stage, there was a feeling at the top that the propaganda had gone too far in portraying the nightly orgies of destruction. Goebbels may have embarked on his "frankness" adventure in the conviction that all-out retaliation was imminent. But thanks to a successful attack on the experimental sites in Peenemünde on 17 August 1943, this was not to be the case. Painting too vivid a picture of enemy ravages would certainly do no good if not followed up by a heavy and prolonged attack on the British

motherland. As this was not possible, all that propaganda would succeed in doing would be to underline German military weakness and the leadership's inability to prevent the raids, if the policy of the previous weeks were not dropped immediately. Everyday reality had now become so horrible that it would now be preferable to play it down, even if this meant risking an even greater lack of confidence in the leadership, than to depict what was actually happening in all its savage detail, thereby only deepening pessimism and defeatism. A much more cautious line was therefore struck by German propaganda in August. The press was instructed to restrict itself to "the most necessary points". Although it would still be necessary to tackle the air war theme,

"It is, in general, nevertheless desired that, in the future, press treatment of this matter fades away."⁸⁴

The time had come to give up the defensive position adopted during the frankness campaign and to concentrate more on "the positive aspects of our general war position in Europe".

"The papers ought now to express once again the fighting spirit, as well as the will to win both at the front and at home, which is based on the consciousness of our strength and military position."⁸⁵

In as far as air war topics were still dealt with, the stress was now placed on the high losses sustained by the enemy air force, as well as on its growing inability to reach the target of its choice. A more offensive tone now characterised propaganda output. The propagandists attempted to give their audience tangible evidence that something was really being done to break the enemy onslaught. It was not so much the defence will of the population that was now emphasised but the actual

defence successes claimed.⁸⁶

(v) The Effect of Bombing on Morale
in the Last Months of the War

After the attacks on Hamburg in the summer of 1943 the catastrophe expected by almost everyone did not materialise. Although German cities continued to be blasted and the Reich's capital itself became the focus of Allied interest, morale held and even recovered from the "low" of July and August 1943. But after the Allied landings in France in June 1944 and the subsequent retreat of German troops to the Reich frontiers which, in addition, meant the loss of the air defence's "early warning system", the strain on the civilian population began to show. Military developments themselves now constituted an additional threat to the very existence of every German, and this fatal combination of military defeat and continued heavy bombing became a burden too heavy to bear for long. Apathy and a longing for peace, whatever the political consequences, were the result.^{87*} In the last three months of 1944, a total of 163,000 tons of bombs was dropped, a greater amount than was recorded for the whole of 1943.⁸⁸ The indiscriminate raid on Dresden on 13-14 February 1945 with its terrible toll in human life (put at 60-13,000) had a shattering effect on morale.⁸⁹ The very limit of endurance had now been reached. Belief that the tide would turn once more vanished for ever. Nowhere did the civilian population feel secure from the bombs - even in the strongly fortified bunkers which became death-traps in the event of a fire-storm.⁹⁰ After a heavy raid on Mannheim on 1 March 1945, one SD reporter spoke of a "mood of catastrophe" among the entire population".

"The belief in victory has, as a result, suffered yet further damage."⁹¹

The increase, too, in low-level attacks of single planes now meant that even the rural population was gripped by the awesome feeling that they were safe nowhere nor at any time.⁹² The psychological effect of these low-flying air-craft was said in one report to be worse than that of concentrated "terror raids because, whereas the latter meant having to seek shelter for a definite period",

"The hour-long circling of the fighter-bomber at low altitude makes whole districts nervous and rebellious."⁹³

The sight of hundreds of enemy fighters cruising undisturbed across the skies of Germany had a devastating effect on home morale and played a decisive part in determining attitude to the war as a whole. It was viewed as indisputable evidence of enemy might and superiority. The result was disillusionment and resignation among soldiers and civilians alike. There were now very few people indeed who still believed in the possibility of breaking Allied domination of German air space, of which "every Volksgenosse is able to convince himself with his own eyes".⁹⁴ The result was complete demoralisation or what the compilers of the morale reports so aptly described as "Untergangsstimmung".⁹⁵

There was, nevertheless, a widespread willingness to cling onto any hope the leadership might still be able to provide. Thus the brief reappearance of the Luftwaffe in force in the West at the turn of the year 1944-5 was a fillip to morale and at once led to hopes that the Allied air offensive would now be finally and decisively checked.⁹⁶ The reported destruction of 600 enemy planes in an attack on enemy air bases on New Year's Day came as a welcome tonic to morale⁹⁷ but, when the "success" was not followed up and the raids continued as if nothing had happened, hopes faded completely.

Nor was the civilian population ignorant of the grave effect Allied precision attacks on German transport and industry were having. Few could see how the war could be carried on without an industry or a communications system to rely on.

"The very reality shatters time and time again any hope that may arise that we will ever again seize the initiative in air warfare."⁹⁸

During the final months of this war, many nurtured a heart-felt longing for an end to hostilities, for this would constitute, above all, an end to the ceaseless air attacks and air raid alarms. The writing was clearly on the wall and the quicker the war was over the better.⁹⁹ The political and military terms the enemy could be expected to impose on a defeated Reich were considered to be of secondary importance in the west and north of Germany. Thoughts hardly stretched beyond the day the sirens would at last be silent. This was recognised by no one less than the Propaganda Minister himself. He blamed the constant air bombardment for the poorer show of morale in the west than in the east.¹⁰⁰ After having been reproached that there had not been a single symbol of resistance in the west like Breslau or Königsberg in the east, one of Goebbels' aides responsible for propaganda work in the so-called Westmark explained to the minister that "the western population has been worn down by months and years of enemy air raids to such an extent that they would prefer a horrific end to endless horror".¹⁰¹

This would very much seem to corroborate the claims made in the US Bombing Survey. But, on closer examination, the conclusions drawn by the American researchers appear too general and not specific enough. Although it is most certainly true that heavy bombing did finally make many Germans ready to accept defeat as the only escape from the fear created by

bombing, this became a typical characteristic of civilian morale only in the autumn of 1944. In spite of the over-pessimistic conclusions drawn on all sides following the all-out attack on Hamburg in the summer of 1943, German morale did not crack and work discipline hardly suffered. It was the combination of unrelieved military disaster, culminating in the enemy crossing the Reich frontiers, with the threat posed by the ubiquitous USAF and RAF after September 1944 that provided the death blow to German morale and created widespread willingness to surrender. Here, once again, the image of the enemy proved equally decisive. Whereas in the west it was generally favourable, in the east an end to the war was popularly interpreted as meaning an even worse fate than that associated with a prolongation of the fighting.

C. COMPENSATION THEMES

If morale were not to crack under the weight of enemy bombs, Nazi propaganda could not afford just to divert public attention away from the air war; it would also have to show that, however great the burden of bombing was and the suffering it involved, it was of absolutely no importance as far as the final outcome of the war was concerned. The civilian population would be reconciled to the inescapability of wounds inflicted by enemy raids only if they were helped to maintain their belief in victory. In the highly personalised view of the war which arose among the victims of bombing the most effective compensation theme would, of course, be retaliatory attacks on the British Isles which had now become one gigantic aircraft-carrier. But, in 1943, the Luftwaffe forces were tied up elsewhere and were hardly able to deliver more than the occasional "tip and run" raid against England. What would most certainly have been the most powerful compensatory propaganda

was therefore not possible. The next best thing would be to promise an awful knock-out blow sometime in the future, and in the period under study this was to be done time and time again. Retaliation promises, as well as the later "secret weapon" attack on England, will be the subject of the next chapter. But between January 1943 and June 1944 promises as to events in the uncertain future were insufficient. Raids were taking place nightly over the Reich and immediately convincing compensatory arguments were required.

(i) U - B o a t S u c c e s s e s

In the spring of 1943 it was very easy for Goebbels to point to the disastrous effects German submarine successes were having on the British armaments potential, as well as on the entire island economy:

"The results of air warfare are immediately obvious to everyone, whereas the results of our U-boat warfare against the British Empire are only noticed by the broad masses of the British population after a certain lapse of time. However, by then they have, to a considerable extent, already become irremediable....With air warfare Britain has grasped our wrist, but with U-boat warfare we have seized Britain by the throat."¹⁰²

Goebbels seems to have hit on the right key, for, at a time when morale was otherwise bad, great hopes continued to be attached to Doenitz' submarines.¹⁰³ But the final turn in the Battle of the Atlantic in April-May 1943 robbed him of one of the best arguments in his propaganda armoury. He had developed his U-boat propaganda on the presumption that submarine successes would continue indefinitely. The result was intense

disappointment among the German civilian population. One can imagine that this disappointment was nowhere greater than in the cities of the Ruhr. It certainly did not take people long to grasp the significance of the sudden absence of Sondermeldungen announcing U-boat successes on the wireless. It was now to be recalled bitterly that only shortly before Goebbels had proudly observed that, whilst the enemy could do absolutely nothing against the German submarines, there were effective means of dealing with British raiders.

"Now it has turned out that the enemy has been much quicker in developing his means of defence against U-boats than we have been in developing weapons to combat enemy air raids."¹⁰⁴

For the rest of the war Goebbels remained deprived of what had been, if only for a short time, a very powerful and promising propaganda argument.

(ii) D e f e n c e S u c c e s s e s a g a i n s t
E n e m y B o m b e r s

As explained above, a more aggressive note came to characterise Nazi air-war propaganda in the late summer of 1943. The argument that the raids were exacting a prohibitive toll on enemy planes and crews now gained prominence. According to Goebbels:

"The air war is, in many respects, a race between the state of technical development on both sides and at the moment ours is notably quickening its pace. In future ever-increasing enormous losses in personnel and material will be inflicted on the enemy. The moment will then eventually arrive when the success no longer corresponds to the resources in men and material employed. The

so-called Flying Fortresses will then become Flying Coffins."¹⁰⁵

As late as October 1944, Goebbels prophesied "that in the not too distant future we will catch up with the enemy air superiority bit for bit".¹⁰⁶ Actual defence successes were naturally welcomed by everyone and the German fighter pilots enjoyed the same heroic reputation as RAF pilots had done in Britain in 1940. There was, however, a nagging suspicion that the new stress on defence successes was somehow an attempt to distract attention away from the catastrophic effects the raids were believed to be having. In fact, most Germans regarded the RAF raids as being more effective than was normally the case. Even publication of the large number of British and American planes shot down did not always secure the effect intended. Instead, it was not only seen as proof of the failure of the German submarine fleet but as evidence that the enemy supply in aircraft was inexhaustible. This made the German people even more aware of the fact that, whereas the enemy could go on producing without any disturbance, German armaments potential, and with it the hope for a change of fortune, was being constantly weakened by heavy bombardment.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, an alleged increase in the number of enemy aircraft shot down was simply interpreted as further proof that the raids were becoming heavier.¹⁰⁸ There was dissatisfaction that, whilst the press was constantly stressing losses sustained by the enemy air-force, not the slightest clue was given as to the ratio between planes engaged and actual losses.¹⁰⁹ An even more central danger to Nazi propaganda claims was that many doubted the veracity of the official figures of enemy planes destroyed. Working-class people, in particular, were said to be harbouring such doubts.¹¹⁰ What the average German saw and experienced himself made it impossible to swallow Goebbels' claim the enemy

was being worn down in fatal fashion by his own attacks:

"One cannot believe in the truth of this view when very often one is oneself witness to the mighty armadas and afterwards compares them to the number shot down."¹¹¹

Finally, it was no good talking of defence successes when during the enemy "debacle" one had lost property and perhaps relatives and friends.

(iii) G e r m a n I n d u s t r y n o t i n D a n g e r

Throughout the period under study Goebbels assured the German people repeatedly that, however grievous the raids might be, they were having no effect whatsoever on arms production and therefore on Germany's chances in the future.¹¹²

Although the same assurance was given by the armaments expert, Speer,¹¹³ many found this impossible to believe and preferred to base their opinion on personal knowledge of destroyed factories.¹¹⁴ In Frankfurt-on-Main, for instance, the citizens saw with their own eyes that many factories and works were not functioning for a considerable time after the raids on the city.¹¹⁵

The claim that armament production in the industrial Ruhr had risen, although indeed true, also met with scepticism.¹¹⁶ Here is a good example of a negative mood leading to an over-pessimistic evaluation of the situation. Goebbels' emphasis on the failure of Anglo-American bombing was further disliked, for it was viewed as an open invitation to the enemy to launch new and more devastating blows.¹¹⁷ In short, propaganda claims were judged and evaluated solely on the ground of personal experience.

(iv) A S i g n o f E n e m y W e a k n e s s

Reports purporting to show that the enemy air raids were,

in fact, a sign of weakness and proof that the enemy lacked both the courage and the ability to launch a successful land attack on German occupied areas were rejected by the vast majority.¹¹⁸ In the same way, articles stressing the difficulties of American industry and the low level of education of US soldiers and airmen were greeted sceptically, for "the success of American arms is demonstrated in such a terrible way in the air war".¹¹⁹ After the Allied landing in Normandy, the argument was discarded, as the enemy now proved that it was possible to win victory after victory on land and, at the same time, step up the scale of bombing.

(v) P r o m i n e n c e t o R a i d s o n G e r m a n
O c c u p i e d E u r o p e

In order to show the Germans that they were not the only ones suffering from Allied bombing, great prominence was frequently given to attacks on targets in German occupied countries. In the first months of 1943, for example, raids on such cities as Paris, Antwerp and Rotterdam were described in considerably greater detail than those which were being carried out at the same time on Reich territory.¹²⁰ This was to become the focus of considerable criticism. According to an SD report of 12 April 1943, it was particularly regretted that, whereas the press never published casualty figures following raids on German cities, this was almost always done after attacks outside the Reich. This led to the unwelcome habit of using the latter to deduce probable casualty figures for raided German towns.¹²¹

(vi) R e b u i l d i n g P r o m i s e s

By the early summer of 1943, it seemed increasingly likely that by the time the war ended most of Germany's towns would be razed to the ground by enemy bombers. The process of destruction was occurring at a really frightening tempo.

Hardly a day passed without the OKW-Bericht announcing the latest devastating attack of the RAF on a civilian target inside the Reich. The countless victims of these raids must have considered "final victory" very poor consolation indeed for loss of relatives, friends and, of course, property. By June a new propaganda theme had emerged - the promise once the war was over to rebuild German towns so that they would be more attractive than ever before.¹²² Goebbels painted a very optimistic picture of this post-war Germany:

"And after the war it will be a duty and honour for the whole people, in gratitude for the heroism displayed today, to rebuild their towns more beautifully than ever. New life will then blossom out of the ruins and in the most remote future our children and children's children will talk about the courageous endurance of their fathers and mothers who through their heroism have bound a wreath of immortal glory round the armour of their proud cities."¹²³

Goebbels repeated this promise to the bombed-out on the occasion of the remembrance ceremony for the victims of the raid on Wuppertal:

"If the enemy is transforming their houses and flats into ruins, they can rest assured that after victory has been attained the entire German people will put its huge material strength together so that the destroyed villages and towns of these provinces can arise again more beautiful than ever before."¹²⁴

In a speech held in November, Hitler even set a time limit to the work of reconstruction.

"In a bare three years, all the dwellings will without exception be restored, however many they [the enemy] may destroy."

The bombed-out were reminded by their Führer that they, above all, had a vested interest in a German victory:

"The man, in particular, who has lost his own property, can have but one desire - that the war should never be lost - because only a victorious war will be able to give him back what he has lost."¹²⁵

As early as September 1943, Party speakers had been called on to stress the fact that German victory was the prerequisite for the realisation of the government's reconstruction plans.¹²⁶ In the meantime, however, the authorities were not inactive, Goebbels assured his listeners.

"There is hardly a town in the Reich stricken by the enemy air terror, whose authorities are not even now making the most comprehensive preparations to solve the housing problem after the war."

When the time came to begin the enormous task, "our great wartime experience in rationalising production" would prove to be of great benefit.¹²⁷

This new emphasis on rebuilding plans seems to have irritated rather than to have comforted the population, for it was thought that first priority should be given to the job of defeating the "air gangsters".¹²⁸ The claims repeatedly made that the work of reconstruction would not take more than 3-5 years were met with scepticism and were "so obviously a plaster on the wounds of the bombed-out".¹²⁹ The inhabitants of Frankfurt-on-Main had very grave doubts as to whether such an

ambitious rebuilding scheme could be carried out so rapidly.¹³⁰ Most annoying for those citizens who had seen their town and all they possessed go up in smoke in one single night was the argument that there was a positive side to the raids, since they provided the unique opportunity for constructing new, larger, healthier and more splendid buildings.¹³¹ This was most certainly an architect's dream but not a particularly welcome prospect to the average citizen, who would have preferred there to have been no war and his familiar surroundings to have remained as they were.

(vii) T h e S t r e n g t h e n i n g o f t h e G e r m a n P e o p l e ' s G o m m u n i t y

Just as the British Information Ministry had earlier portrayed the Luftwaffe raids on Great Britain as an almost welcome morale-booster, Goebbels now attempted to show that Allied raids were only succeeding in forging the German people together in their bitter determination to resist the enemy at all costs. Far from weakening morale as they were intended to do, they were strengthening it. Indeed, the Germans did show that they were no less strong in taking blows than the British had been in 1940-1. Goebbels even used the moral strength of the British at that critical time as an example to steel the rugged will of his own people and called on all Berliners to take the brave Londoners as their model:

"What the English stuck out in the autumn of 1940 and for which a few of us admired them, that we have to stick out now. I reject indignantly the enemy allegation that the Berliners have weaker nerves than the Londoners. This is out of the question. Just as for the British a turn for the better has come in the field of air warfare since 1940, so things will

also turn round for us. The English needed two years for this; our waiting period will be a much shorter one than the English one."¹³²

Yet again it was necessary to distinguish between "mood" and "bearing". Frau Scholtz-Klinck, the leader of the Party's women's organisation, maintained:

"the harder this terror becomes, all the firmer, more energetic and more determined the bearing becomes with every raid, even if for a few minutes and hours the 'mood' might be bad here and there."¹³³

Any negative feature in morale was now repeatedly dismissed as belonging to "mood" and no danger at all for the unity of purpose of the German people.

Goebbels even claimed in December 1943 that the enemy raids were actually achieving what the Nazi regime had not quite managed to achieve:

"In the conflagrations which after the severe terror raids flare up in the residential quarters of the attacked towns, a strength wells up in our nation which is unconquerable. Out of the ruins and gutted remnants of our houses, hospitals, schools, theatres and churches, there emerges majestically like a phoenix from the cinders, marked by suffering but steeled by pain, the socialist community of our people, that which we have searched for in anxious quest for more than 1,000 years and which we could never quite achieve, the unity of all Germans which will outlast time and generationsWe shall come out of this conflict as a

nation united for ever, the political steadfastness of which, tried in war, will form the basis of its historical future."¹³⁴

Goebbels developed his theory still further in his Christmas Eve address two weeks later:

"Today we march with a light pack, There are many of us who no longer have much to lose. They feel the loss of their personal possessions to be a kind of advance payment on the great national profit which we want to gain by this war. The loss of their possessions has mainly served to make them harder and more determined for war."¹³⁵

The morale reports themselves tell quite another story. Far from "welcoming" the raids as "constructive",

"The conviction of being without any defence and at the mercy of the Anglo-American bombing terror and the feeling of helplessness coupled with the fear of a possible future gas attack all make the present situation seem, in the long run, unbearable."¹³⁶

The stress on the steadfastness of the west German population was so obviously propagandistic in nature that many were led to conclude that the morale of the people there was "fairly worn-down" and had to be "pepped up".¹³⁷ Particularly disliked were the many articles claiming that the raids were, in fact, having a beneficial effect by intensifying and deepening the defence will of the population.¹³⁸ Although the need to hold out was generally accepted, such clichés as "every blow only makes us harder" were rejected outright.¹³⁹ The propaganda emphasis on "the strength of the heart" against the destructive will of

the foe was met with the sarcastic comment:

"If we have nothing else than our courageous heart to set against the bombing terror, then we can start burying all our hopes."¹⁴⁰

Similarly, the hard-trying citizens of Frankfurt-on-Main pointed out that "pitting hearts against bombs was a very unprofitable way indeed of fighting a war".¹⁴¹ Some were even led to drawing the sarcastic conclusion that the much promised retaliation against England was being postponed on purpose to let more people have a chance to be bombed out and consequently to improve their morale!¹⁴² The propagandists were not blind and knew all too well that this kind of reaction would negate all their efforts if allowed to go unchecked. In May 1944, the German press was warned against using too bombastic language in its descriptions of bombed towns, because this could only have a negative effect on "mood".¹⁴³ Nevertheless, the occasional propaganda excess in the treatment of bombing was still to be observed. At the very end of the war, Robert Ley claimed that "the destruction of Dresden has been greeted with a sigh of relief, for we have lost our last cultural town". It must be added that Ley had acted without the knowledge of the Propaganda Ministry. In fact, Goebbels was in a rage at this ridiculous remark and pertinently noted in his diary that, if it were really, as Ley asserted, beneficial to march with a "lighter pack", then one could take this argument to its logical conclusion and maintain "it would be better to abandon the Reich completely to the enemy because then we wouldn't have even the lightest pack to drag along"! Perhaps Goebbels had forgotten that he had himself used a very similar argument fifteen months before.¹⁴⁴

Some morale reports, however, seem to have echoed the

official propaganda line, observing what they thought their superiors would desire to see rather than the real state of affairs. This is to be traced back to the wish to curry favour or the attempt to demonstrate the success of their own political work in their local area. The following excerpt from the report of the Generalstaatsanwalt of Darmstadt, although purporting to be a factual observation of morale, sounds more like a rally speech worthy of one of the lesser known Party stalwarts. It is particularly worth quoting as a warning to examine all so-called morale reports with an extremely critical eye.

"The people have undergone an important development as a result of the bombing raids and the heroic surmounting of the terror. One may say that the bourgeoisie is dead or at least in its death-throes. Pettiness, shabbiness, the clinging on to property, the mental horizon which stretches no further than the rim of a soup plate, the selfishness of the nest, the forcing back of one's own spiritual strength, the mixture of constant fear and dim hope, the total wretchedness that characterises the bourgeois and the philistine - it is as if all these things have been swept away. Both in inward and outward bearing most people are now showing themselves in a light that would have been considered impossible only a short time ago. The German people is about to become a true national community (Volksgemeinschaft.) In the same way as this national community stands together after every bombing raid in a clear feeling of unity, it is equally determined to carry on the struggle until victory.

This new state of mind will not be the smallest fruit of this war and it constitutes, at the same time, a guarantee for the rapid and successful task of reconstruction."¹⁴⁵

Although the picture painted here surely belongs to the realms of pure fantasy, there are many indications that bombing did, in fact, play an important part in bringing German citizens closer together. This, however, should not be interpreted as proof of the success of Nazi propaganda or the existence of a Volksgemeinschaft. Much more important than propaganda was the very force of the situation itself and the common threat to all. According to one witness of the bombing terror who was later to become the President of the Bundestag in post-war Germany:

"It was just this kind of destructive bombing that made it easier for an unscrupulous state-leadership to persuade the German people that it only had one alternative - to stick it out with the leaders of the Third Reich or to perish."¹⁴⁶

But this assertion must also be qualified. This may well have been true up to about the autumn of 1944. Afterwards, however, an increasing number of people, especially in the west, were very aware of there being a second alternative - surrender and survival. What is true is that Goebbels was all too ready to seize upon the raids as irrefutable proof of the enemy's destructive will. For those not taken in by this there remained the argument that if thousands were now being killed by enemy bombs, under Jewish domination it would be millions!¹⁴⁷ The diary entry of an anti-Nazi living in Berlin during the heavy raids on the city in the winter of 1943-4 appears to provide further evidence that Allied bombing was having quite the opposite to the desired effect:

"The catastrophe which hits Nazis and anti-Nazis alike is welding the people togetherif the English believe they can thus undermine morale, then they are deceiving themselves."¹⁴⁸

This coming together, particularly in the bombed cities, should naturally not be confused with the official Nazi picture of a new-found national unity. Later, the community spirit would, especially in west-German towns and villages, be directed against the Nazis themselves and manifest itself in a common effort to shorten the war by refusing to offer resistance and, in some cases, by sabotaging the defence plans of one's own army. The German Volksgemeinschaft remained theory and was only a reality in the heads of some of the Party's ideologists.

But to add credence to his own pet theory, Goebbels attempted to prove that class-struggle was a thing of the past. It was, he asserted, no longer class-consciousness but the fact of being German that determined people's thinking. Apparently to underline this "new" classless community Goebbels paid a visit to the blitzed working-class districts of Berlin, accompanied, of course, by the microphones of the Reichsrundfunk. He thereby used his own person as an instrument of propaganda to demonstrate the bond existing between the simple worker and the government at an individual level. His own steadfastness was meant to be the symbol of Berlin's determination to hold out at all costs. In the first weeks of the Berlin blitz, the ideas of the common man were conveyed by means of the radio microphone to the listener at home, thereby portraying the identity of interest between the leaders and the led. The worker, suitably trimmed by Nazi propaganda, became the ideal German -

the very same worker who had shown so little sympathy for the ideas of National Socialism in the years before 1933. One such workman, for instance, explained to a radio interviewer how he had turned up for work in spite of having lost his home in the raid the night before.¹⁴⁹ The propagandists now coined the phrase "socialism of the deed" which was enabling German city dwellers to overcome the horror of the raids.¹⁵⁰ At the end of the first terrible fortnight for Berliners, Goebbels described to his readers and listeners his visit to Wedding, a working-class district with a strongly "Red" tradition. He had had the opportunity of chatting to some typical Berlin workers. Although they had once belonged to the "Red Front",

"Now they were only Germans....It has never happened before that a country's workers, after such heavy blows, have met representatives of their political leaders without suspicion and embarrassment, slapped them on the back, spoken to them in a familiar way /duzen/ and called them by their christian names; that they have encouraged you when you have come to encourage them, that they have cursed the enemy with contempt and burning hatred, confining him to hell and have only one question: when shall we go for him?"¹⁵¹

There is no doubt that Goebbels was, in fact, given a resounding reception on the morrow of the raids.¹⁵² He himself appears to have been astounded by the popular acclaim in the working-class districts of Berlin.

"I should never have thought it possible that such a transformation of spirit and viewpoint could take place."¹⁵³

All this can be explained by the feeling shared by Berliners that there was someone in the government who was genuinely interested in their welfare. It should, however, be added that there was hardly any other Gauleiter in the Reich who went to such pains to gain the goodwill of the masses. Indeed, no one recognised the significance of popular support - even in a dictatorship like the Third Reich - more than the Gauleiter of Berlin did. It would certainly be difficult to deny that, by keeping Berliners in the propaganda limelight and by appearing to remain in constant touch with their everyday problems and anxieties during the Allied blitz, Goebbels contributed greatly to the high morale of the capital's inhabitants. Naturally, the extra rations - 50 grams of meat and ten cigarettes a week - also played their part.¹⁵⁴ But in Berlin, too, there was no lack of criticism. The stress on life carrying on as normal, as if the raids were not all that bad, was found to be particularly annoying. The press, radio and newsreels were making much of the fact that the cinemas and theatres were still open and cultural exhibitions still being held. Here the Berliners sensed a determined attempt by the political leadership to conceal the real effects of the raids from the rest of the nation.¹⁵⁵

Observations made in a number of morale reports appear to contradict Goebbels' assertions concerning class unity quite drastically. Although he might have temporarily impressed the proletarian population of his own Gau, the general attitude and outlook of the German working class continued to be "tainted" by traditional class thinking. After the heavy attack on Frankfurt on 29 January 1944, for instance, ordinary working people felt bitter that the radio and press should show so little concern for the working-class districts of the city which had borne the brunt of the raid and sustained the heaviest

casualties and the severest damage. The view was being expressed:

"If the West End - the district in which the former upper class lives - had been bombed, this would most certainly have been given more attention."¹⁵⁶

Although the Führer's promise of "final victory" was doubted by working and middle-class people alike in Frankfurt, the former, in particular, were said to regard the entire German press, as a result of the heavy bombing, as "falsehood and deceit".¹⁵⁷ A similar phenomenon was to be observed between the rural "upper" and "lower" classes in the question of providing lodgings for town evacuees. The small peasant farmers thought that they "were making great sacrifices whilst the large landowners (Herrschaften) were attempting to dodge doing their duty".¹⁵⁸

Without doubt the greatest contradiction to the propaganda image of one united "German People's Community" were the misunderstandings, tension and outright hostility arising between the evacuees from the towns and their country hosts. In fact, this town/country division split the nation right down the middle and proved even more threatening than the traditional class animosities described above. The Allied bombing brought two contrasting "worlds" into contact for the very first time. Difficulties were inevitable. The city inhabitants billeted on unwilling farmers found it impossible to adjust to a form of life they were not acquainted with. This was no purely German problem and similar difficulties arose in Great Britain too. In wartime Germany, friction seems to have been strongest between female evacuees and farmers' wives. The Regierungspräsident of Würzburg described the annoyance

and bitterness of the farming families in his area at the laziness and idleness of evacuees from the Rhineland:

"Only a few feel obliged to help the hard-trying farmers' wives at this time when there is so much to be done. The following is a typical day in the life of the evacuees - getting up late, spending the day doing nothing, going to the cinema, spending the evenings in the restaurants, turning the night into day and leading a loose life."¹⁵⁹

This tension, if unchecked, would do much to undo the Nazi propagandists' carefully constructed picture of national harmony and unity. Evacuees were repeatedly requested not to harp on about what they had gone through and to give a helping hand with housework. They should try to appreciate the predicament of their rural hosts:

"The day's work of many of these peasant women has been long and hard, and now unexpected guests are sent to them. It is not surprising that, in spite of all their sympathy, they look on this with misgiving."¹⁶⁰

At the same time, the radio pleaded with the hosts to understand their "guests" who had had to put up with nightly alerts for months on end. They should try to avoid this topic in their evening "sit-togethers".¹⁶¹

A great many of these town women seem to have found evacuee life so unbearable that they contemplated returning to their bomb shattered and raid threatened cities as a more agreeable prospect to living on the land.¹⁶² In fact, returning evacuees were soon to become a nuisance to town authorities. They were often refused ration-cards as a means of persuading

them to return to their country billets. In Witten, a small town near Dortmund, this resulted in what were for Nazi Germany almost unbelievable scenes. On 11 October 1943, 300 women demonstrated in front of the Town Hall.

"There were such shameful scenes that the town administration of Witten was forced to call in the police to restore order. They refused, however, to intervene, claiming that the women's demands were justified and that the order forbidding the issue of ration cards to returning Volksgenossen had no basis in law."¹⁶³

D. THE EFFECT OF BOMBING ON THE GERMAN POPULATION'S ATTITUDE TO THE ENEMY AND TO ITS OWN LEADERSHIP

If Goebbels' propaganda were to be successful, it was vital to direct the aggressive response of the German population to Allied bombing at the enemy himself. In no case, should bombing be allowed to damage the prestige of the political leadership. All bombing propaganda was therefore designed to arouse and deepen hatred of the foe by pointing to Anglo-American barbarity and depravity. The significance of the aggressive feelings unleashed by bombing has been stressed by Janis:

"If aggressive responses are directed toward community leaders or toward fellow citizens, there is likely to be a serious impairment in group morale. However, such aggression directed toward outsiders, notably the enemy, may improve group morale."¹⁶⁴

Before dealing with the impact of Goebbel's propaganda efforts in this respect, it is first necessary to mention yet again the rather vexing discussion on the effects of bombing on civilian morale. The US Bombing Survey found belief in the

leadership's interest in the plight of the civilian population less prevalent in lightly bombed than unbombed towns, but, on the other hand, greater in heavily bombed than more lightly bombed towns. Although resentment of the leadership was stimulated by light bombing, research seemed to show that apathy, preoccupation with personal matters, as well as a reduced interest in political questions, resulted as the raids were stepped up.¹⁶⁵ This appeared to suggest that "heavy bombing may raise morale, not by making people active and enthusiastic in their support of the war, but by making them apathetic and hence less active in their criticism of and opposition to the war effort". All thoughts now revolved around the immediate problem of survival.¹⁶⁶ The Bombing Survey makes much of the fact that the lower classes showed a "consistently lower morale",¹⁶⁷ whilst the true Nazis - i.e. those with a vested interest in German victory - had the best morale.¹⁶⁸ Good morale in 1943-5 naturally meant not only support of the National Socialist cause but also hatred of the nation's enemies, hate being the cement uniting the German people in its common purpose. According to the majority of French prisoners interviewed by American researchers after the war, Goebbels' "hate" propaganda was a great success, particularly when the raids grew heavier. They also thought that following severe bombing the population was more hostile to enemy fliers than to its own government.¹⁶⁹ Steinert, on the other hand, believes that, although it would be hazardous to exaggerate the significance of heated remarks uttered in the aftermath of enemy attack, there was, nevertheless, a link between bombing and the popularity of slogans ascribing Hitler and the NSDAP the guilt for all the unpleasant things that were happening.¹⁷⁰ Dröge, too, is of the opinion that the Allied raids led to a more critical appraisal of the leadership, as well as to an increase in resignation and war-weariness. He maintains, however,

that the raids could not completely break morale and that a mood of "desperate rage" arose which would explain the success of the retaliation propaganda.¹⁷¹

The fundamental wickedness and viciousness of the western enemies provided the pillars on which the entire bombing propaganda rested. Everything depended on trust in the strength of these pillars. The German people must learn to hate! The devastation of its dwellings and the desecration of its shrines was the visible proof of the enemy's destructive will and should serve as a warning to those souls faintly contemplating future collaboration with the foe in a defeated Germany. Nothing was allowed to disturb or even distract from this unified picture of enemy savagery. The press was expressly instructed not to print any criticism of the bombing campaign by such leading and respected British dignitaries as the Bishop of Chichester.¹⁷² The object of Goebbels' propaganda was immediately recognised by the staff of American propaganda content analysts:

"Once more Goebbels utilizes an unfavourable situation to direct feelings undesirable from the point of morale into channels useful for the war effort. Fear, dismay and despair are converted into hatred, spite and urge for action."¹⁷³

To infuse the right feeling of justified outrage and hatred into German hearts, it was essential to demonstrate that it was the British who had invented this dastardly and, moreover, cowardly form of warfare against defenceless women and children. According to Fritzsche:

"It is historic truth that the British, by their air-raids against the children of Hamburg and Freiburg in 1940, started methods, the consequences of which were for some months the subject of grave warnings by the Führer. When

six months had passed, England and her towns received the answer."¹⁷⁴

Listeners were also told that, whereas the Luftwaffe accurately bombed exclusively military targets, the enemy bombers raided indiscriminately and mainly hit residential areas.¹⁷⁵

The response was far from being satisfactory. As with the anti-Bolshevik campaign shortly before, there was very little interest indeed for such theoretical themes. Even those who were convinced of the veracity of propaganda claims believed that an attempt to unravel the guilt question could do absolutely nothing to stop the raids and was most certainly no replacement for the necessity of hitting back in force.¹⁷⁶ Many remained altogether deaf to the arguments of the propagandists. In May 1944, the enemy was reported to be having "a certain success" in persuading the German people that it was they who had begun the "terror bombing" and that the attacks on German cities were "an answer to our raids on London".¹⁷⁷ In fact, the conviction that the German leadership was responsible not only for starting bombing of civilian targets but for starting the war as a whole grew greater and greater the more intense the raids became. According to one report, the view was being expressed in many air-raid bunkers that "Germany was to a certain degree to blame for the outbreak of the war in 1939 and that the Reich itself was therefore to a large extent responsible for the trials and tribulations the war brought".¹⁷⁸ This view seems to have been sufficiently widespread to have merited a veiled mention in the Nazi press, thereby admitting the limitations of the propaganda. On 4 June 1944, for instance, Frankfurt's Rhein-Mainische Zeitung criticised those who "think they must preserve a dignified, noble, super-impartial reserve which may even go as far as to agree that, if the Germans had not replied to the first British attacks, the present state of affairs could have been avoided".¹⁷⁹

Finally, in Brunswick and Halle it was being said that it was the Nazi leadership that was to blame for the whole tragedy befalling Germany, as the raids were the enemy's answer to the Party's persecution of the Jews and "the destruction of their temples".¹⁸⁰

Goebbels attempted to demonstrate the fundamentally barbaric and philistine nature of the enemy by giving considerable coverage to the destruction of German cultural monuments. This reached a peak in the high summer of 1943 when the entire raid propaganda output was dominated for days by accounts of the damage inflicted by the enemy air-force to Cologne Cathedral. Radio reporters were sent at short notice to the Dom to describe in pitiful and tearful accounts the ravaging of one of Christendom's most magnificent edifices. Germany once again became the bastion of western and Christian values in a world otherwise characterised by brutal and ignorant materialism. The reaction to this propaganda spectacular was a very interesting one. The vast majority evidently rejected this propaganda excess, which was interpreted as a not so clever attempt to cover-up the military leadership's inability to hit the enemy back in kind.¹⁸¹ Many saw in it a deliberate move to distract attention away from the "loss of thousands of innocent civilians", as well as "the destruction of entire towns".¹⁸² In Cologne itself the citizens demanded that the rest of the Reich be informed of the actual suffering of the west both in word and picture". It was not enough just to show pictures of the damaged cathedral in the newsreel. The streets ought to be shown, too.¹⁸³ Here and there sheer amazement was expressed that "in spite of the negative attitude of National Socialism to the Catholic Church, such great attention was now being given to the damage to a cathedral". More pious citizens considered it to be "God's punishment for

the war".¹⁸⁴ The repetitious nature of these radio reports reminded many listeners of the excesses of the Katyn propaganda only shortly before. One Rhineland farm-labourer was heard to say:

"Now for the last fourteen days we have been hearing nothing except Cologne Cathedral on the radio. It's the same record as Katyn."¹⁸⁵

Propaganda stress on cultural losses continued to be a subject of annoyance in the months that followed. After a heavy raid on Frankfurt-on-Main early in 1944, for instance, the bombed-out felt indignant at being considered less important than the historical buildings of the city's Altstadt.¹⁸⁶

It should be stressed once again that the whole bombing propaganda had the main purpose of stirring up feelings which could be utilised in a controlled way as a unifying factor in improving group morale. Hate should forge an identity of purpose between government and governed. Success would naturally be determined by the extent the German leadership managed to deflect the aggressive response to bombing away from itself and onto the enemy. This question deserves close examination. Unfortunately, the observations of witnesses and official reports provide a rather confusing and, at times, rather contradictory picture.

From a study of citizens' letters written after a series of heavy attacks on Stuttgart in July 1944, Heinz Bardua concludes "that the resistance-will of the population was rather strengthened through fear of the ruthlessness and harshness of the enemy".¹⁸⁷ He even asserts that Nazi propaganda was able to assist in this "stiffening of the resistance-will".¹⁸⁸ A correspondent of a Swiss newspaper travelling through southern Germany in spring 1944 reported:

"Whereas previously the phantom of Bolshevism directed attention to Russia to a great extent, the intensified air offensive of the English and Americans has unleashed a wave of hate against these states such as is also being expressed in the German press. Sympathies for England, which still survived here and there, are disappearing rapidly."¹⁸⁹

But what was the exact meaning of hatred of the enemy? Did it mean hatred of the RAF, hatred of the British political leadership or hatred of the British people in its entirety? An SD report drawn up in February 1944 attempted to unravel this difficult question. After noting that there was still a tendency for some German citizens to be "objective" and fair to the opponent, it stated that it was only comparatively recently that a true feeling of hatred had arisen as a result of the air terror. This, moreover, varied according to class and area and was said to be strongest among those most directly affected. But, this hatred, which was being uttered so articulately, was to be viewed more as an expression of the belief and hope that the destruction of Great Britain was the only way of rescuing the Reich. The same report then tried to determine who exactly the target of this hatred was. It concluded that the very real emotional hate was principally directed at the "air gangsters" themselves and at the enemy leaders, although there were still some who held Churchill in esteem. Then came the telling remark:

"It is not possible to speak of a hatred of the British people as a whole."

The so-called "intelligentsia" was reported as harbouring hardly any rancour whatsoever. In addition, those who belonged to the older generation of German men and who had been British prisoners-of-war in the Great War spoke of British humanity

which automatically upset the propaganda image of a cruel and brutal foe. They were supported in their views by German soldiers just returning from enemy imprisonment as a result of the exchange scheme. Finally, the very important observation was made that the sense of outrage and abhorrence created by individual raids quickly faded and was "overlapped by a feeling of the inescapable and fateful necessity of this war which is causing unspeakable misery everywhere in the world".¹⁹⁰ In Berlin, too, few outbursts of heart-felt hatred of the British were recorded.¹⁹¹ This would seem to confirm the theory that heavy bombing leads to increasing apathy which rules out any lasting strongly-felt feelings. The war itself was simply to blame for all misfortune. The observations made here are supported by a correspondent of the Swiss St.Galler Tagblatt who had had the opportunity of speaking to several Germans. Although there was little hatred felt for the British people as a whole, there was a general desire for retaliation, not as a means of pure revenge and punishment, but as it was the only means remaining of knocking out England as an enemy air base for launching raids on the Reich.¹⁹² Naturally, this was also tied to hopes for a speedy end to the war. It is thus clear that the German population would measure the success of retaliation in terms of how far the immediate threat to their own lives was removed.

There would seem little doubt that in wartime emotions become blunted. The population is incapable of real hate. Initial fiery outbursts of wrath soon give way to apathy, to the feeling of being subject to the vagaries of fate. It should also be added that any explosion of hate was more often than not the product of the moment. Although many German citizens may have given vent to their feelings in primitive utterances of hate for the foe both during and immediately after the raids, it is

possible that they behaved quite differently twenty-four hours later when faced with the job of clearing up or seeking a new home. They would then find little time for detailed and considered thought.

Many reports indicate quite clearly that the Allied bombing had an overall deleterious effect on the population's attitude to the Party. As early as July 1943, American analysts detected a growing animosity towards the lower Nazi functionaries who were held responsible for inadequate provision of shelter and emergency accommodation.¹⁹³ The SD reported that the widespread apathy was often accompanied by a hostile attitude to the NSDAP in Düsseldorf and Wuppertal-Barmen which were both the target of heavy attack in the early summer of 1943. Although Haltung was said to be generally good, remarks against State, Party and leadership were recorded.

"Negative utterances are often made by Volks-
genossen who, as a result of the catastrophe, have lost their nerve and let themselves be drawn into making subversive remarks....Very striking is also the fact that the German Greeting /Heil Hitler/ is only seldom used in the towns hit whilst the greeting Guten Morgen is used quite ostentatiously. Of the 51 people a Party member greeted with Heil Hitler, for instance, on the day after the heavy attack on Barmen, only two replied with Heil Hitler."¹⁹⁴

Many of the bombed out in Cologne and Aachen were reported as having lost hope in a good end to the war. Although outright hostile statements against State and Party were said to be comparatively rare, they were, nevertheless, being made "in public without the least fear"¹⁹⁵ An open refusal of the Party leadership was reported in several districts of devastated

Hamburg. The population was enraged and embittered by the local Party organisation publishing pamphlets declaring that heavy retaliation raids against London were in progress. The inhabitants knew that not one word of this was true and detested being treated as gullible fools.¹⁹⁶ In Hamm hostile and defeatist remarks were so plentiful "that policemen on duty in public air-raid bunkers had to pretend not to hear what was being said if they wished to avoid having to make mass arrests".¹⁹⁷ Very often, however, such utterances seem to have been little more than spontaneous outbursts of anger, echoing the necessity for finding a target for pent-up aggression. For example, immediately after the raid on Berlin on 15 February 1944, complaints were made that "leading persons" were responsible for starting the war. By the morning, however, the SD reported that the population had become more "sensible".¹⁹⁸ Nevertheless, there remains little doubt that there was a very real connection between heavy bombing and hostility to the Nazi Party, particularly at a local level. A report from Halle written at the end of 1944 admitted:

"With every new air-raid, criticism of the leadership takes on a sharper form."¹⁹⁹

According to a report written by a Party official, von Kielpinski, towards the end of the war, the German people had felt watched since 1933 and had ventured to complain only to those they trusted.

"It was first the heavy air-raids which caused the anger that had been gathering up inside them to burst out in a rough and sometimes venomous form."²⁰⁰

Rumours were also in circulation in the raided towns which put the local Party leadership in a very unfavourable light.

For instance, as a security precaution an air-raid warning was supposed to have sounded when Goebbels visited the cities of the Rhineland. Such imaginative accounts were further exaggerated as they were passed on. The Gestapo was virtually powerless to prevent this happening "for these accounts are swallowed most readily in all groups of the population and are very rarely reported at once to the authorities".²⁰¹ Local political leaders were a favourite target and were said to seek safety from the endangered towns immediately dusk fell.

"Two special trains are at the ready on the Starnberger See every evening to bring the senior Munich Party bosses to safety should there be an alarm."²⁰²

Indeed, anti-Party remarks took on a very personal form in the last two years of the war. Gauleiter Sprenger of Frankfurt-on-Main was the object of repeated sarcastic criticism.²⁰³ After a devastating raid on Nuremberg at the beginning of 1945, the whole bitterness of the city's inhabitants was directed at its Gauleiter, Holz.²⁰⁴

Repeated attempts by the propaganda to counter this trend by showing how the representatives of the Party were making every sacrifice possible to alleviate hardship did not enjoy much success.²⁰⁵ An article in the Frankfurt press, entitled "In the Control Room of the Resistance-Will - the Emergency Measures of the Party to Relieve the Most Urgent Cases of Distress" was dismissed as "typically Party".²⁰⁶ The title alone was probably sufficient to evoke a highly critical appraisal of the content! Another article written by Gauleiter Sprenger himself a few weeks later with the flaunting title "Front-Line City Frankfurt Will Be Held" was the object of savage scorn. Not only was it seen as an open challenge to the enemy to launch new attacks on the city, but as an unparalleled

example of hypocrisy.

"The Gauleiter has already evacuated his wife to the country some time ago, his daughter is in Sweden and now he, too, has moved his residence outside the city, so it would be nice to know what he really wants to hold in Frankfurt."²⁰⁷

It thus comes as no surprise that another feature appearing in the Frankfurt press entitled "The Gauleiter, the First and Best Comrade of the Population" was rejected outright.²⁰⁸

E. BOMBING AND THE ATTITUDE TO THE OFFICIAL PROPAGANDA MEDIA

The enemy raids were themselves an information source. They provided direct evidence of enemy power and became the criterion for judging the authenticity of official propaganda claims. The people affected by these attacks were witnesses of what they considered to be important war developments and regarded themselves as "experts" when judging the course of the war as a whole. Their general attitude to the official news media was naturally determined to a very great extent by what they had experienced and seen with their very own eyes. There can be little doubt that the prestige of the Nazi press and radio suffered irreparable harm as a consequence of these nightly displays of Allied strength in the skies of Germany. A report of the Frankfurt SD written after the heavy raid of 29 January 1944, for instance, summarised the attitude of broad sections of the community to official propaganda in the words "falsehood and deceit".²⁰⁹ By giving such formidable, if unbeckoned, clues to enemy might, the raids made the task of the German propagandists doubly difficult. As a report of May 1944 emphasized:

"The actual effects of the air raids, with which the people of Berlin and other cities become

acquainted time and time again, have a much greater influence than all the comments of press and radio."²¹⁰

The raids also altered listening habits quite drastically. Although there was a growing tendency to keep the set on, there was a diminished interest in what was being broadcast. For many people the radio had become principally a "warning device". In Frankfurt, for example, the citizens kept their radio receivers tuned in "in order to make at once the necessary preparations for a possible air-raid alarm once the Reichssender Frankfurt had gone off the air".²¹¹

F. BOMBING AND THE ATTITUDE TO UNOFFICIAL INFORMATION SOURCES

For the bombed as well as those threatened by bombing there was a great thirst for information about anything that was even vaguely connected with the question that interested them most. News about the air-raids was regarded as touching on the matter of everyday survival. From observations described above it is clear that the official German mass-media, despite at times extensive treatment of the air war theme, were unable to satisfy, let alone saturate, this news hunger. So once again countless Germans turned elsewhere.

(i) "B l a c k L i s t e n i n g"

All over the Reich the Allied bombing offensive appears to have accelerated the trend of tuning in to forbidden foreign radio stations. The SD in Linz, for instance, squarely put the blame for the increase in "black listening" on the propagandists' insufficient treatment of the raids:

"People want to hear more than they are told in the Wehrmachtbericht, especially about the areas attacked. They cannot wait to hear details

about where the planes were, particularly in the case of attacks in their immediate vicinity. The insufficient reports are one of the prime reasons for the steady increase in listening to enemy stations."²¹²

SD Halle also pointed to this danger after the "dam-buster" raid of May 1943. The population found it incomprehensible why the press published no details when it was no problem to find out from the telephone or traffic stoppages which dams were affected. The report expressed the anxiety that

"Owing to the failure to publish information many Volksgenossen will be easily misled into listening into foreign stations."²¹³

(ii) R u m o u r s

The mood of uncertainty accompanying the Anglo-American raids certainly increased the number of rumours in circulation as well as the disposition to believe in their content. Dröge refers to the insecurity resulting from raids, expressed in exaggerated accounts of destruction and casualties, as early as 1940.²¹⁴ He traces these wartime rumours back to "the discrepancy between the need for news caused by the threat to vital interests and the news supplied".²¹⁵ He maintains that their significance and credibility rose as the enemy air offensive was intensified.

"Whereas, at the beginning, apparently extensive air-raid reporting was still able to reduce the number of rumours with a few substantial pieces of news - even when they were untrue - this was no longer possible from 1942 on. Now, the rumour regularly got the better of the press in the struggle for the reputation for

trustworthiness. There can be no doubt that the discovery of the latter's dishonesty influenced the recipient's attitude to other sectors of reporting."²¹⁶

The power of the rumour and its ability to affect behaviour is documented in the panic which gripped Berlin in the fortnight following the Hamburg catastrophe. Throughout this period rumours were constantly circulating that a certain town would be bombed on a certain day.²¹⁷ This, of course, made the population even more nervous. The sparse information over casualty figures resulted in wild exaggerations. The raid on the Ruhr dams in May 1943, for example, was said to have killed between ten and thirty thousand people. When official figures were finally released, these were more often than not mistrusted.²¹⁸ In fact, in April 1943, the SD drew attention to this regrettable tendency of preferring to trust the casualty figures contained in the rumours than the official ones.²¹⁹ Such rumours spread quickly and even unnerved south-west Germany which was still comparatively untouched by bombing in the summer of 1943.²²⁰ According to another report appearing at about the same time, inflated rumours on the effects of raids and the casualties sustained were carrying fear of the enemy bomber to the remotest village.²²¹

For the German press it was a question of prime urgency to warn against rumours which were often blowing up casualty totals into five figures.²²² The Strassburger Neueste Nachrichten, for example, warned that the figures given in rumours were "exaggerated manifold and, indeed, appear to rise rapidly with distance from the scene of the calamity."²²³

(iii) E v a c u e e s

The evacuees from the raided towns were a very important

source of information. In questions of bombing they were considered "experts" and as such they were sure to find a ready ear. Their individual accounts were generalised by the country hosts and passed on as being typical of the behaviour of entire towns under enemy bombardment.²²⁴ All sorts of depressing stories were passed on in this way causing alarm and despondency. Consequently, many lost heart and became convinced that the war could not be won. The fear that arose in the summer of 1943 that, once the west had been dealt with, it would be the turn of the rest of the Reich to be systematically destroyed, can in great measure be traced back to these bringers of bad tidings.²²⁵ Of course, the reputation of this information source was only enhanced by what was almost universally considered propaganda reticence in regard to the air war. A report from the small Rhineland country town, Simmern, lamented:

"These people often think themselves entitled to give a judgement on the political situation of the war and talk about matters which other Volkgenossen would never venture to talk about. Only a very few of them use or reply to the greeting Heil Hitler."²²⁶

The tales of these bomb-evacuees were said to be having a catastrophic effect on morale.²²⁷ Refugees from Hamburg billeted on the south German town of Würzburg spoke of a half a million dead in the Hansa city.²²⁸ In the Schwerin area of Mecklenburg evacuees were reported to be seriously worsening the morale of the rural population, whose belief in victory had up to then been unshakable. Now, as a result of what they heard, they, too, were beginning to harbour their first doubts as to the feasibility of a satisfactory end to the war.²²⁹ Nevertheless, it should be remembered that it would have been very easy for a local Party official to blame these outsiders for the bad

show of morale in his district.

These evacuees seem to have been instrumental in changing the attitude of the country population to the official mass media. In Franconia a contradiction was noted between the accounts of evacuees billeted in the region and those of the official propaganda.²³⁰ Similarly, it was reported from Bamberg:

"The often despairing mood of those immediately affected by bombing has little in common with the press accounts of the bearing of the population in the areas attacked."²³¹

In Swabia, too, the descriptions of the evacuees led to doubts being cast on the veracity of official reporting.

"It cannot be prevented that, once the idea gains ground that 'if one thing is not true, then the other can't be true either', even the objectivity of the Wehrmachtsbericht is doubted."²³²

In other words, attitude to official bombing propaganda was a vital factor in determining attitude to the official propaganda media as a whole.

The press and radio did their very best to check this menacing undermining of their authority. The population was warned not to accept "eye-witness" accounts of the bombing raids at face value, for the evacuees had themselves been victims of exaggerated rumours.

"Anyone who understands the psychological effect of great mental strain will understand that many people are inclined to believe things which they would consider absurd at any other time."²³³

Farmers' wives were requested to avoid the topic of bombing at all times:

"My dear farmer's wife, when you spend a cosy hour with your evacuee in the evening, don't let her tell you about her hardships before she left for the country. It is natural that she should tell them to get rid of them. But the more you talk about these things, the worse they seem to be and the less we can get away from them."²³⁴

G. THE COMPARATIVE IMPORTANCE OF BOMBING AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS AS FACTORS DETERMINING MORALE

In the two years 1943-5 the street itself became the principal battlefield for many German civilians. Faced with the task of survival, there was naturally little time to pay any great attention to the course of the war in general. Steinert, for example, claims that there was only minimal interest in events not directly relevant to the everyday life of the individual.

"The broad mass of the population, weighed down by the misery of everyday life and the growing fear for their own lives, was hardly conscious of anything that was happening outside the sphere of their immediate professional and family life. The target of their criticism was, above all, what they could observe with their own eyes and what they felt to be unjust or scandalous." [e.g. the life of the Party bigwigs]

This would once again help to explain why so few Germans gave any thought to the fate of the Jews, who had always been regarded as "outsiders".²³⁵ The observations made here regarding the thoughts and concerns of civilians under enemy bombardment are confirmed by the U.S. Bombing Survey:

"Under conditions of severe raids their thoughts centred on the immediate personal problems of fox-hole existence. They did not think about or concern themselves with the larger political problems of war aims, of the conduct of the war by their leaders or whether surrender should be conditional or unconditional."²³⁶

It was even noted that there was very little concern shown for raids on other towns or even, as in Berlin, on other parts of the same city.²³⁷ Nevertheless, according to evidence given the compilers of these reports by French P.O.W.s:

"As a demoralizing factor Allied strategic bombing appears to rank second to the dismal spectacle of retreats and losses on the Russian front since Stalingrad....The fear, then, of eventual Russian reprisal was also greater than the fear of continued bombing."²³⁸

This, at first sight, would appear to contradict the observations made above. It would therefore be worth examining in detail the comparative importance of Allied bombing and military setbacks as factors determining civilian morale in Germany from the beginning of 1943 up to the end of the war.

As early as March 1943, such favourable news as the recapture of Kharkov and the success of German U-boats in the Battle of the Atlantic was being impaired by the constant fear of air attack.²³⁹ Shortly after, a Swiss newspaper correspondent observed how the sudden surge in enemy air attack was overshadowing the German defeat in Tunisia.²⁴⁰ Even when Germany's military crisis reached a new height in the summer of 1943 with the complete loss of North Africa, the Allied landing in

southern Italy and the fall of the Duce, the "greater part" of the population tried to forget the frightening reality with a "flight into work".²⁴¹ Since the press and radio were unable to answer the question uppermost in people's minds - the future development of the war - official accounts of the military situation were as good as ignored. It was sufficient to inform oneself briefly of the day's events. There was, however, one significant exception:

"Only news reporting on the air war is able to arouse any really great interest. The question whether the raids have taken place at night or by day, which towns have been hit, whether the raids have been heavy or light and how many aircraft have been shot down, also occupies the minds of the women who otherwise, as a consequence of their everyday worries, show hardly any interest in the newspapers, radio talks and other accounts of political and military events."²⁴²

Even from Saxony, hitherto untouched by enemy raiding, it was reported in July 1943 that the OKW-Bericht was heard only for news of the latest bombing attacks. There was very little interest in events on the Eastern Front and, indeed, in military developments as a whole.²⁴³ In the Schwerin area, the terrible raids of July-August 1943 on Hamburg put into the background all the decisive military and political events occurring at the time.²⁴⁴ And in Hamburg itself, even news of Italy's "treason", which had such a devastating effect on morale elsewhere, was received with indifference. According to the Generalstaatsanwalt of the city:

"For the time being, the readiness, indeed the élan, necessary for an open interest and

criticism of the events of the day is still lacking."²⁴⁵

In Koblenz, not only were the raids said to overshadow everything else, but many people were heard to say:

"That is the beginning of a lost war."²⁴⁶

The following December, the SD reported that Berliners were showing little interest for anything not concerned with enemy bombing.²⁴⁷

This all-consuming preoccupation with air-raids was expressed in the irritation which accompanied any attempt to give prominence to events of clearly marginal importance for the outcome of the war. After making a great fuss about an exchange of telegrams between the Führer and the Duce in May 1944, the press was reprimanded for having made a blunder "which should have been avoided at all costs, because it demonstrates a kind of ivory-towered approach by the press to the real anxieties of the people".²⁴⁸

There was even a tendency to find a connection between enemy raids and purely local events. In Frankfurt-in-Main, for instance, the heavy bombing attack of 29 January 1944 was interpreted as being the British reply to the Gauleiter's much publicised announcement of a mass rally to be held on 30 January.²⁴⁹

It seems to have been less the tragic loss in human life and the damage caused that was responsible for depressing morale to such an extent "than the widespread belief that it was impossible to check the bombing terror effectively".²⁵⁰ Attitude to the air war was itself of prime importance in determining the view of the overall war situation. This is exemplified in an SD report written in October 1943 which dealt with popular

attitudes to the position on the Eastern Front:

"As far as the question whether the Dnieper Line can be held is concerned, the population of the areas hit by the latest air-raids is much more inclined to doubt than the Volksgenossen living in areas not endangered."²⁵¹

Similarly, in Siegen the launching of the Rundstedt offensive in December 1944 was welcomed much less enthusiastically than elsewhere, a direct consequence of the savage raids the city had had to bear a few days before. News of the German attack in the West was even viewed there as a cheap form of propaganda "with the purpose of raising morale"²⁵² - further proof of the highly subjective interpretation of war events so typical of the time. The evidence provided by these reports certainly seems to confirm the following conclusion drawn by American propaganda analysts:

"The widespread feeling of hopelessness caused by bombing seems accompanied by a tendency towards diffusing it to war prospects in general."²⁵³

At the time, this was deduced from German propaganda's stress on the fact that there was absolutely no connection between the air war and the rest of the war, which amounted, in fact, to a confession of the Reich's weakness as well as its obvious inability to reach a military decision on the field of battle. An SD report of August 1943 illustrates how the intensification of enemy raiding in the spring and summer of 1943 marked a watershed in the history of wartime German civilian morale:

"After Stalingrad it was still possible to move the stirred masses into accepting decisions for averting the disaster visible on the horizon

by making more energetic efforts. Their hearts were suddenly again made accessible to propaganda influence. However, since the air war began to threaten the urban population with immediate destruction, since every citizen and worker began to see himself faced with apparently insurmountable anxiety as to his livelihood as well as with the struggle for his property and for his bare life, a hitherto unknown need has been roused in everyone to think for himself about what is happening. This is expressed in the insistent asking of the question 'why' and, above all, in a thirst for political answers which are more than stirring words and slogans and which are fit to safeguard the threatened or already destroyed way of life anew and to assuage the spreading fear of life itself."²⁵⁴

Only when military events themselves appeared to constitute a direct threat to the individual's existence did they become as important or even more important than bombing as factors determining the state of civilian morale. The degree to which they affected the immediate life of the individual German and his family was the criterion which was used to measure the subjective significance of external events. The German people appears to have become more conscious of the importance of military developments in the spring of 1944. The SD office in Koblenz reported in April:

"The population views military events on the southern sector of the Eastern Front spell-bound and with considerable alarm. As a consequence of developments in this fighting zone, even the air terror has become less important in influencing mood."

Above all, it was feared that the loss of the Rumanian oil fields might prove fatal to the nation's war effort.²⁵⁵ As Germany's foes crossed the frontiers of the Reich, the danger posed by the military situation, of course, came to be felt much more acutely. In November, it was reported that the noise of battle in neighbouring Lorraine was unnerving the inhabitants of Mannheim even more than "the fear of enemy aircraft".²⁵⁶ The raids on Regensburg and Nuremberg at the beginning of 1945 were also said to be overshadowed by the inhabitants' anxieties regarding the speedy advance of the Red Army in the East and the crossing of the German frontiers.²⁵⁷ It would, however, be wrong to draw the conclusion that the raids were now of much less importance as a factor governing morale. The opposite was the case, as has been explained earlier in this chapter. Military developments and enemy air-raids were now seen as two sides of the same coin. A report from Berlin at the beginning of March stating that the capital's inhabitants were more concerned about the nightly mosquito attacks than the danger lurking only fifty miles away on the Oder²⁵⁸ need not be viewed as a contradiction to the observations described above. Both bombing and events at the front were integral parts of the very same picture of unmitigated defeat. The latter, although feared in eastern Germany, promised a quick end to the ubiquitous danger from the skies above; Goebbels certainly blamed bombing for the bad show of morale in the West. After having received an account on the crumbling of the morale of both soldiers and civilians from Gauleiter Wagner of Karlsruhe, the minister remarked in his diary on 1 April 1945:

"The people living left of the Rhine have shown a very poor political bearing indeed. They have been demoralized by the incessant enemy bombing raids and are now throwing themselves into the arms of the Americans, partly with enthusiasm but partly even without having a troubled conscience thereby."²⁵⁹

It would be a fair assessment of morale in Germany in 1945 to say that in those areas that had or thought they had to reckon with Russian conquest, German retreat in the East was often viewed as posing a greater threat than that of Anglo-American bombing, whereas in the West enemy advances normally depressed morale much less than the continual air bombardment. The advance of the American and British forces was even welcomed by many as it meant a speedy end to the sleepless nights. Hence, the image of the enemy largely determined the relative importance of bombing and military retreat as factors determining morale. Finally, the claim of the US Bombing Survey already described that bombing was of secondary significance compared with developments on the Eastern Front since Stalingrad must be viewed as insufficiently precise and too general. It was certainly true in large parts of eastern and central Germany after the summer of 1944. Bombing, however, was of prime importance in these areas in the year that preceded that fateful summer and in the western parts of Germany until the very end of the war.

H. CONCLUSION

The bombing of Germany demonstrates the complexities involved in any analysis of such ^a subjective emotional phenomenon as hatred. Both the Nazi leadership and many post-war scholars made the mistake of trying to explain something inherently irrational in rational terms. They also became slave to the fixed idea that hatred is directed against only one target at any one time, i.e. the enemy or the German leadership. The very concept, hatred of the foe, remained vague and few attempts were made to explain what was really meant. Savage and biting remarks, even rage, were often little more than an expression of the German people's bitterness sparked off by

the frightening awareness of being at the mercy of a foe bent on destroying them. This would, perhaps, account for the isolated cases of the lynching of captured Allied airmen. Research suggests, however, that the British and American peoples as a whole remained somehow distant despite the understandable wish to pay the enemy back in kind. The petit local bureaucrats, unable to cope with such a catastrophe, soon became the target of constant irritation, annoyance and even outright hostility. They provided, in contrast to the British people, a tangible object for the aggressive emotions sparked off by bombing. The stricken population had considerably less interest in the matter of guilt or blame than the question of securing its own survival, livelihood and existence. The objects of its aggression and animosity were not clearly defined and it was certainly not the either-or situation that Goebbels and many Allied morale experts presumed it to be. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that bombing did irreparable harm to the image of the Nazi Party. The negative attitude was expressed in the general indifference, even schadenfreude, at the fate of Parteigenossen in the last days of the Third Reich.

Although bombing led to an increasingly defeatist and pessimistic view of the war as a whole, it did not succeed in cracking morale by itself. The resistance will of the west German population was broken by the fateful combination of military setback - the war crossing the German frontiers - and intensified and virtually uninterrupted Allied bombing. Military events themselves were now viewed as promising a quick end to the nightmare struggle for survival. The writing was on the wall for Germany and the quicker it was all over the better. It would seem that the favourable image of the western enemies, as well as the hopes attached to Anglo-American occupation, were just as important as the bombing itself in

determining the morale of the west Germans at the end of the war. Naturally, for the vast majority of the region's population, an end to the war was primarily associated with an end to the air-raids. In east Germany the situation was very different. Bombing had become a really serious problem only in the last twelve months of the war, and, although it was characterised by some of the most savage blows of the entire war (e.g. Dresden, Chemnitz), the population had not been worn down to the same extent as in the west. In the Rhineland and Ruhr, as well as in north-western Germany, bombing had been a feature of everyday life ever since the early days of 1940, and in those last frightful months of the war the inhabitants of these areas had no peace at all, day or night. Whereas in the west the prospect of Anglo-American occupation was not unattractive, in the east peace and surrender meant less an end to the raids but more the uncertainties of occupation by an enemy that had shown its thirst for revenge in East Prussia, Silesia, and Pomerania. This danger overshadowed the threat posed by British or American bombs. The accounts of the refugees only served to strengthen the desire and will to hold out at all costs.

Bombing certainly welded the population of a raided town together. Everyone was in the same boat. But the community spirit that arose had little in common with Goebbels' Volksgemeinschaft and, indeed, manifested itself in a clearly anti-Nazi form at the end of the war when the west German population opposed and even sabotaged any attempt by the Party or the Wehrmacht to defend its towns and villages. There were countless examples of the inhabitants acting en masse and removing tank barriers, for example. This upsurge in community spirit was evident at a local, not at a national level, as the animosity of many Rhinelanders for Berlin and the

tension between the evacuees and the country population show. It would even appear that town or village patriotism increased as nationalism decreased. With bombing drawing attention to immediate local problems, people's vision hardly stretched beyond the immediate locality. This would explain the relative indifference to raids on other towns. They were worrying only in as far as they demonstrated an imminent threat to their own community. People were conscious of the menace to the surroundings they knew so well and felt united in the wish to preserve them from destruction. In "more normal" times they might have been fascinated by ideas of a Greater Germany or even Lebensraum but now their very own and dearly loved streets and town were in danger. At the same time, however, the raids seem to have sharpened class consciousness yet further. Increasingly, workers viewed the "socialism" in National Socialism as a swindle and became convinced that the regime was primarily interested in furthering and protecting the interests of the upper classes.

It would really seem that within this overall framework Nazi propaganda was confronted with insurmountable difficulties and was hardly in the position to influence, let alone, to maintain morale. Its effect was a largely neutral one. Even the most energetic attempts to check the effects of the raids were generally met with indifference and, at times, with hostility. The propagandists were faced with developments they could not control. It was a running battle against a danger which was visibly growing from day to day until it finally came to dominate the lives of almost all German urban and rural citizens. The clearly understandable appetite for news was accompanied by an intense dislike of anything looking like official evasion of the issue uppermost in people's minds. The bombs spoke a much louder message than all the microphones

of the Reichsrundfunk. Every attempt of the propagandists to overcome or at least neutralise the negative effects the bombs were having was doomed from the very beginning. The thirst for news was indeed unquenchable as experience showed. The propaganda "air terror" spectacular of summer 1943, for instance, was regarded as inadequate and, more seriously, as an official admission of German military weakness. The bombed towns and cities demanded attention, but when a good deal of attention was given, this was frequently interpreted as a pathetic confirmation of the crisis Germany was undergoing, as well as an insufferable additional strain on people's nerves! Goebbels moreover failed in his attempt to isolate the bombing raids from the rest of the war. The German civilian population was very quick to find a link between the raids and the course of the war as a whole. It was thought that the bombing attacks were having a decisive effect on Germany's vital war industries and communications system, a more decisive effect than the facts warranted. The visible impression of bombing proved so strong that it was often extended to other sectors of the war and became the essential factor when judging German victory chances.

Not only did the population become much more sensitive in its appraisal of the propaganda message but the propaganda itself, forced increasingly into a defensive position, became highly sensitive to popular mood and propaganda response. The smallest things were able to upset the listening public, even the wrong choice in broadcast music. German people were quick to see the purpose behind the entire compensatory propaganda. This was often regarded as a very poor attempt to distract their attention away from the daily horrors confronting them. Of course, the intense interest bombing aroused in any information concerning the air war made the population very

adept in spotting the purpose behind the propaganda message. Any assurance regarding such questions as rebuilding - at first appearance a subject that might be expected to interest them - was dismissed as irrelevant compared to the prime task of putting a stop to the enemy air offensive. The German people did not want to hear assurances that the raids were of no importance whatsoever in deciding the outcome of the war but clear indications that the raids could be checked. Again, it is interesting to note that bombing propaganda, particularly the day-long emphasis on the damage to Cologne Cathedral, demonstrates the invalidity of Hitler's and Goebbels' belief in the effectiveness of repetition of a propaganda message. In fact, it only made the propaganda audience more conscious of the manipulative practices of Nazi propaganda. As a result, readers and listeners were put on their guard and shielded themselves against the propagandists' handiwork. Attitude to the air-war propaganda appears to have been an - in 1943-4 the - essential factor in determining attitude to the whole propaganda output and to have further undermined the reputation of the official German mass media. This, in turn, was connected with the growing propensity to rely on unofficial information sources to satisfy the appetite for news.

The only really successful propaganda would have been a decisive military success in the air - the defeat of the RAF or, even better, an all-out retaliation which would destroy Britain or at least its capability to function as an aircraft-carrier for attacks on the European continent. The attempt to persuade the Germans that the latter was, indeed, possible is the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RETALIATION

A. INTRODUCTION

In the last chapter it was pointed out that the German people wanted concrete proof that their leaders possessed the means to halt the enemy air onslaught and, what was more, to hit the enemy back in kind. The compensatory arguments described in detail there were inadequate to convince the Germans of the "insignificance" of enemy raiding in determining the outcome of the war. They knew all too well the terrible effects it was having and demanded tangible evidence that the leadership was still capable of turning the scales in the air war. The German leaders themselves realised that there was no way around this problem. If they were unable to conceal their inability to strike an immediate blow at the heart of the foe, then all they could do was to promise all-out retaliation for some time in the future. They were encouraged by the development of new and revolutionary long-distance weapons at Peenemunde and supposed that these would be ready for employment by the end of 1943.

Predictions of retaliation (Vergeltung) were nothing new. They had been made in 1942 and although care was taken not to give any clues as to the date operations would begin, Goebbels informed his listeners in a speech in October that the defeat of the Soviet Union was the necessary precondition.¹ This was to be repeated by Göring on 30 January 1943.² Retaliation, however, was at this time to be understood as the resumption of conventional raiding in the style of the 1940-1 blitz. In the spring of 1943, the word, Vergeltung, took on a clearly different meaning. It now came to stand for something vague

and indeterminate, but nevertheless terrible and decisive in its effect. Soon its very mention sufficed to conjure up mystical and even apocalyptic visions of the future. These very hazy qualities were to enable the building up of such fantastic hopes in the months to come, that the point was soon reached when it was regarded as the very guarantee of final victory.

B. THE LONG MONTHS OF WAITING

(i) The First Promises in the Spring of 1943

As the British stepped up their blitz on Germany in the spring and early summer of 1943, retaliation was increasingly viewed by the German masses as a question of utmost urgency. Even if the Nazi propagandists would, at times, have preferred to have remained quiet, they were forced by circumstances they could not control to take up the theme time and time again. The promise of Vergeltung now became an essential, if not the essential component of Goebbels' propaganda repertoire. At times it must have appeared the only theme left fit to still the growing anxieties of the German people. German propagandists must certainly at first have found it the easiest theme to use, since, by directing popular attention to a future time, it did not require any immediate basis of fact. As early as April 1943 Goebbels assured his readers in Das Reich:

"By day and night we are working at the possibility of repaying the British terrorists in kind. We are certainly not looking on at the British air war with folded arms."³

In a speech in the Berlin Sportpalast two months later, the Minister assured his audience:

"One day the hour of retribution will come."⁴

The earlier condition concerning the prior defeat of the Soviet Union was quietly abandoned, presumably because the prospects of its fulfilment would not seem good enough to the population dispirited by Stalingrad and the general news from the Eastern Front.

It would certainly seem that during the spring of 1943 promises of retaliation did much to assuage the widespread anxiety and bitterness of the inhabitants of raided towns. Above all, they considered an all-out counter blow to be the most effective way of putting a stop to the enemy attacks.⁵ They were encouraged in their hopes by the many rumours circulating, according to which new revolutionary weapons, including rockets, were being tested at Peenemunde.⁶ But many drew the wrong conclusions from these official forecasts and thought that the blow was imminent. When it turned out that this was far from being the case, disappointment set in. All further promises made by the leadership managed only to irritate rather than encourage the downcast population.

At the end of May, the SD was already reporting the first doubts.⁷ Although most people continued to believe the blow would fall later that year,⁸ the constant repetition of a promise that had not as yet borne fruit became a source of great annoyance.

"All the talk about the coming retaliation is slowly becoming superfluous. The time has now come for action. This opinion is to be found among all parts of the population."⁹

At the end of June the Weimar SD reported:

"One no longer wishes to hear anything concerning Vergeltung from Dr. Goebbels."¹⁰

Sarcastic comments were heard in south-west Germany to the effect:

"We cannot prevent the enemy from continuing his destructive attacks with fair words and empty threats."¹¹

Nevertheless, despite growing impatience and nagging doubts, by the early summer of 1943 the promise of retaliation had become the most important favourable factor determining morale. Its rising significance was, without doubt, tied to the negative turn in Germany's military fortune.

"In regard to this question, the conviction is very often being expressed that, whereas there is no chance of developments in eastern and southern Europe ending successfully, only the destruction of the aircraft-carrier England can bring about a final decision in our favour."¹²

The German people was said to be divided in its opinion of Vergeltung. Whilst a smaller part of the population was reported as doubting whether the Reich was at all capable of launching a massive attack, the majority were apparently convinced that it would come by the beginning of autumn at the latest. The constant repetition of the same promise, although irritating and tiresome, led many to draw the conclusion that the leadership could in no case afford to run the risk of destroying its own credibility by making false predictions. All sorts of fantastic rumours were spreading across the land at lightning speed. There was talk of large guns capable of bombarding the British Isles, of missiles, rockets and even atom bombs. Many people allowed their fantasies to run wild and even thought that the blow could easily be followed up by a military invasion which, in turn, would mean "the early defeat of England".¹³

Such high hopes, accompanied by burning emotion, would

inevitably prove a great problem once it was realised that the attack was not imminent. This was indeed to be the case. The emotional cry for revenge increased with the surge in the intensity of Allied bombing. Vergeltung was rapidly becoming a question of individual survival. More and more it was regarded as the one effective way of putting a stop to the enemy raids.¹⁴ As German towns continued to be pounded without the announcement so many Germans were yearning for, doubt and scepticism grew still further. The fear was uttered that, by the time the blow fell, all the most important German towns would be razed to the ground.¹⁵ SD Schwerin reported the growing belief that, if retaliation did not start before August or September, it would be quite superfluous for by that time "the English will have decisively paralysed our armaments industry".¹⁶ After the heavy attacks on Hamburg at the end of July the fact that Vergeltung had not been mounted was reported to be "making many despondent despite all good will, as well as shaking their faith in final victory".¹⁷ The utmost importance that had come to be attached to retaliation by the summer of 1943 was expressed in the extremely dangerous view that an immediate blow was now the only means left of winning the war. Without it the war was utterly lost.¹⁸ Even the frank reporting of enemy bombing at this time only served to support this attitude by making the heart-felt cry for retribution even more voluble.¹⁹

(ii) T h e P o l i c y o f C a u t i o n - S u m m e r
1 9 4 3

By July the propaganda leadership had come to realise that they would have to go cautiously. Vergeltung had become such a burning issue that a serious "boomerang effect" was to be expected if policy did not radically change. A Party report had already warned at the beginning of the month that, unless

retaliation came that year, "trust in the leadership will reach zero point".²⁰ This view was underlined in an SD report from Schwerin at about the same time. The leaders would lose all credibility if operations did not begin soon.²¹ As the propagandists themselves had learned that operations could not begin for some considerable time, they now opted for a policy of cautious reserve. Although not wishing to relinquish the theme entirely, they certainly wished to avoid giving the impression that the blow was imminent and that Vergeltung itself was the only means left of winning the war. Retaliation propaganda proved to be just as delicate a plant to handle as the anti-Bolshevik theme. Far from improving morale, constant repetition would, in the long run, succeed only in doing irreparable harm by arousing hopes that could never be fulfilled, thereby undermining the bond between the leaders and the governed. On 6 July the retaliation theme became the prerogative of members of the government. The press was forbidden to discuss it unless it were mentioned in speeches of ministers.²²

Of course, it was too much to expect that such great hopes could be simply damped by a change in propaganda policy. The seed once sown would continue to grow. This was recognised in a Party directive of 1 July. It was admitted that people were becoming "impatient" and that they wished to know when retaliation would begin. Party speakers were instructed to give the following answer:

"Do you want a big or a small retaliation?

If you think a revenge blow, which would merely aim now at paying back the enemy for what he has done to us, is enough, then the weapons at present available would be sufficient for this purpose. If you want a revenge which

overshadows all that we are now having to go through and which would really constitute the punishment the enemy has rightly deserved for his vile attacks and if you want a revenge that is truly fantastic, then you will still have to wait."²³

This cautious line was to continue throughout the weeks that followed. Although the policy of almost complete silence had in the meantime been somewhat relaxed, Party representatives were reminded in September:

"It is wrong to name a date for the Vergeltung. There must be no unnecessary talk about details, extent and form of retaliation. It must be clearly pointed out to the population that it should avoid any unnecessary gossip about this or that retaliation measure, as well as any unnecessary gossip about new weapons etc., so that the enemy is not wantonly provided with valuable clues. The Volksgenosse must be content with the knowledge that retaliation will come."²⁴

(iii) T h e R a i d s o n B r i t a i n i n 1 9 4 3

As if in urgent need of an ersatz theme, the Nazi propagandists returned to an old stand-by, the Luftwaffe raids on Great Britain. The German newspapers were told to pay more attention to these "conventional" attacks on 18 August, "since the impression ought not be created that absolutely nothing was happening against England".²⁵ This was none too easy a task because, in fact, very little indeed was happening in the skies of England at this time. Throughout the whole of 1943 the German Luftwaffe dropped a mere 2,240 tons of bombs on the British Isles, whilst the RAF and USAF dropped over 200,000

tons on the Reich.²⁶ Nazi propagandists were careful, however, not to portray these pinprick raids as "retaliation", as directives issued to the press at the beginning of the year show.²⁷ They did not wish to arouse new hopes which would inevitably backfire on them once the German population realised that the attacks were of no more than nuisance value. But this did not rule out the fullest possible exploitation of Luftwaffe exploits. The British authorities were even accused of trying to disguise the damage and losses inflicted.

"They would very much like to depict the situation as if the sky were merely reserved for the British and Americans and as if both had only to drop sufficient bombs at random in order to overwhelm Europe. The drone of German engines over British ports and factories does not harmonise with this tune at all."²⁸

Although such reports had appeared intermittently since the beginning of 1943, they were to become more frequent that summer when the retaliation theme was being played down. The essentially manipulative purpose of these accounts had been detected by American analysts during a short lull in the RAF bombing offensive at the beginning of June:

"An empty sky over Germany delivers German propagandists from their irksome efforts to blow up feeble counter-raids against Great Britain. The immediate drop in attention to retaliatory raids proves better than anything else the propagandistic nature of previous raids and raid accounts."²⁹

As Allied planes returned in force and as the Vergeltung

theme became inopportune, the hard-trying German civilians were once again reminded of this "forgotten" theatre of war.

The response to these blown-up reports was not always a very positive one. Most Germans appear to have recognized them for what they were and to have reacted with impatient irritation.³⁰ The cautious wording, in particular, was a source of aggravation, as a report from Schwerin shows:

"Many speak of the frequent accounts of attacks on selected targets in the Greater London area in the OKW-Report only with bitterness."³¹

It was thus clear that this type of propaganda would always remain a very poor second best and would never succeed in diverting attention from that which had come to be the very embodiment of such deeply felt hopes and emotions - the retaliation.

(iv) The Resurgence of the Retaliation
ion Theme in the Autumn of
1943.

Throughout the dark summer of 1943 doubts about Vergeltung grew. The propaganda reticence did not go unnoticed. But the morale picture, and with it the attitude to retaliation, seemed to undergo a radical change with Hitler's radio address at the beginning of September. At one stroke lurking doubts gave way to a new-found confidence. It should, however, be added that the new trust in Vergeltung cannot be seen apart from the overall more positive view of developments that accompanied news of successful German counter-measures in Italy. In exploiting this "proof" of Germany's might, Hitler managed to create a mood of virtual exhilaration which, however, soon abated and gave way to a more realistic appraisal of the situation. Many

ascribed great importance to the fact that it was Hitler himself who promised retribution,

"People believe these words of the Führer unconditionally because they consider it quite impossible that in this darkest hour of the war the Führer would feed them with cheap hopes."³²

Many let their imaginations run wild and conjured up visions of England being destroyed within a space of a few hours.³³

It is interesting to note the persuasive power Hitler still possessed at this later stage of the war. The effect, however, proved to be only temporary and after a few days a decline in belief in Vergeltung was once again registered.³⁴ This phenomenon was to be observed again after the Führer's next address in November. Not only were all doubts reported as having suddenly disappeared, but many people were said to be believing - naturally quite wrongly - that the attack was imminent.³⁵ According to the SD:

"One promise from the mouth of the Führer weighs heavier than all the declarations made in the press, radio and party rallies."³⁶

Hitler's speech in September gave Goebbels and his propagandists the cue to take up the retaliation theme yet again. Perhaps they had fallen victim to the illusion that the day they longed for so much was not far off. On Harvest Thanksgiving Day (3 October), the Minister remarked:

"the English are under an exceedingly fatal delusion if they imagine they are faced with only a rhetorical or propagandist slogan with no reality behind it. England will one day make acquaintance with this reality. The British may then thank their government. I do

not wish to say more about this subject than is absolutely necessary, but nobody should believe my reserve to be a sign of weakness. English and American trees will not grow into the sky. Our German technicians, inventors, engineers and workmen will see to that."³⁷

Although not as effective as his master, Goebbels also seems to have been able to throw the doubters onto the defensive, if only temporarily so.³⁸ At the end of October, his rhetoric took on an even more confident tone:

"the day of radical retribution against Britain is drawing slowly but surely nearer".³⁹

The promise of Vergeltung had become a drug for so many Germans. Their attitude to it might be a very negative one but they were unable to dispense with it. This would help to explain the fact that, although repetitious promises were so often the source of intense irritation and exasperation, the German people somehow needed those words they so violently criticised. All speeches of Party dignitaries were scrutinised word for word in order to detect some direct or veiled reference, and there was great disappointment when little or nothing of relevance was found.⁴⁰

In the autumn of 1943 the attitude to retaliation swayed to and fro between outright pessimism and over-enthusiastic optimism. The reaction to Hitler's promises in September and November indicates quite clearly the willingness to believe. But the higher the hopes were raised, all the greater was the disappointment and deep feeling of depression that followed on realizing that Vergeltung was not imminent. Nevertheless, despite all outward pessimism which expressed itself in bitter attacks on the leadership, belief in the secret weapons was never given up completely. To have done so would have meant

for many giving up all hope of a favourable end to the war. Retaliation had become the very key to victory. Again and again the Nazi leaders succeeded in rekindling the flame of faith which had seemed to have been extinguished for ever. What was really nothing more than wishful thinking constituted the sole source of comfort in these dark days of wartime Germany. As the weeks and months drew on, visions of the coming blow became more and more fantastic until Vergeltung came to represent the panacea to all Germany's difficulties. An SD report of October 1943 commented on this dangerous trend and described the change in attitude that had taken place since the early months of that year:

"Initially, Vergeltung had been ascribed great, but not decisive, importance for the course of the war as a whole. But thoughts about Vergeltung have undergone an important change during the past few months. The entire development of the war since Stalingrad has meant that the feeling has got hold of the Volksgenossen that the enemy encirclement of Germany and the occupied areas is becoming tighter and tighter and that this development will inevitably lead to a crisis. A 'miracle' seems the only way out of this crisis. And this miracle, which constitutes the decisive turn of the tide, is expected from Vergeltung today by the majority of Volksgenossen - in the areas affected by the air war by almost the entire population. Especially in the case of those Volksgenossen, whose confidence in victory has a positive effect on others and fortifies the hearts of many who are faint-hearted and fickle, belief

in victory is principally based on the hopes attached to the future employment of new weapons and war instruments. These hopes extend far beyond the mere halting of the terror raids. This is the least people expect of Vergeltung. It is supposed that the counter blow will rather result in England being 'knocked out' of the war within the space of a few days or weeks. People imagine that the tremendous damage wrought on the larger English towns will secure the conditions necessary for the occupation of the island which will, in turn, lead to an armistice with England. It is then argued that America would then have no particular interest in carrying on the war. Our entire force could then at last be directed at Russia, the result being the early collapse of Soviet offensive power."

The same report went on to remark that the longer the delay the greater the expectations. It concluded by explaining that Vergeltung had come to stand for something much more than the bare word at first seems to imply. It was "the decisive chance to gain victory, without which one can no longer believe in a good end to the war"⁴¹. Talk of retaliation reached a new height during the first week of heavy bombing of Berlin at the end of November. The often very simple and credulous hope was described at the time as "an important element for the good bearing of the people"⁴². This was not without its inherent dangers and once again the SD pointed out that retaliation was a question of confidence in the government. Should the oft-repeated forecasts not materialise, such bitterness and disillusionment would result that all efforts of the leadership to remedy the situation would be bound to fail.⁴³

Although not as cautious as it had been the previous summer, German propaganda did try to damp any over-enthusiastic optimism. Newspaper readers were informed in October that, though their impatience was quite understandable, they had to appreciate the supreme importance of the need to prepare the blow thoroughly so that its effect would be decisive.⁴⁴ But, at the end of the year, the propagandists themselves seem to have been convinced that the time of Vergeltung was rapidly approaching. Their utterances were marked by a somewhat more confident tone. In the last days of November, Goebbels delivered a particularly fiery speech in bomb-shattered Berlin:

"In Germany there is no demand more passionate than to pay back the criminals on the Thames in full measure for what they have been doing and are still doing to us. The German people can rest assured. Day and night this retaliation is being prepared with feverish energy...."⁴⁵

Perhaps the best evidence that German propagandists were allowing this false illusion to guide them in their choice of words is a remarkable article by Schwarz van Berk published on 5 December. Although professing to mute fantastic conceptions of Vergeltung, he presented such a glowing picture of its effects that many concluded that the start could only be a few days off. At the same time as endeavouring to soothe the widespread impatience, he made some very hazardous statements:

"The question of the date of Vergeltung is no longer dependent on its technical completion but on the purpose it is intended to have. Vergeltung will be employed in an energetic form at the moment which is psychologically suitable so that it can influence the course

of this war. It would be a useless start merely to repay ruins with ruins. The purpose of the undertaking will be expressed in quite different and surprising effects - both psychological and political.....The Vergeltung is not to be stopped or hindered by any manoeuvre of the enemy or by any operation he might venture. The ball is rolling. For us Vergeltung is not just a question of a triumph of arms or merely of a chastisement which is being demanded by our people, but a question of putting a stop to the unrestrained mass-murder with one extremely drastic blow. For a peaceful observer it might seem that the time is not far off when mankind can blow up half of the world."⁴⁶

In the days preceding the Christmas holiday, the German press appears to have thrown all caution to the wind. The reader was informed that retaliation was not simply a matter of bringing about "only a breathing space but a turning-point". The aim was not merely to destroy a few British cities but to eliminate the "island" as "a jumping off point for all kinds of terror operations". No doubts were left as to its vital strategic significance:

"When considered together with other plans the Anglo-American General Staffs apparently intend carrying out from the island base, this view then appears of paramount importance for the course of the war."⁴⁷

Up to then the propagandists had never ventured to make such confident predictions. They certainly convinced many that the long-awaited blow would come in the form of a very welcome Christmas present.⁴⁸ Schwarz van Berk's article, in particular,

was reported to have created lively interest and to have increased speculation on the form and the effects of the new weapon. Above all, news of its launching was expected any day.⁴⁹ This conviction was demonstrated in the precautions many people were rumoured to be taking to meet an expected Allied counter-blow:

"It is being said that in west Germany the population has been instructed to furnish itself with requisites for a 60 hour stay in the air-raid shelter - this, namely, is the time the Vergeltung will last. When they leave the shelter, the war will be over."

An increasing tendency to tie retaliation to the end of the war was also noted. More cautious people were said to be expecting the attack in the spring and to believe that it could prove decisive only if accompanied by a German landing in England. It would be wrong, however, to suppose that all Germans shared this optimism in the last days of 1943.

"Quite a few Volksgenossen even doubt in Vergeltung completely. They regard it as nothing more than a splendid propaganda manoeuvre of the German leadership, the purpose of which is to frighten the population of England and to make the Anglo-American leadership carry out their incomplete invasion plans prematurely."

So-called "opponents" were reported as viewing the whole Vergeltung propaganda as a clever attempt by the leaders to maintain popular support and to secure the population's willingness to carry on a war that could no longer be won.⁵⁰

Of course, retaliation was not imminent in December 1943.

The high hopes that had been raised were dashed yet again. Already on Christmas Eve, many were very disappointed that Goebbels had not even mentioned it in his traditional radio address and interpreted it as a conscious attempt to damp any excessive optimism.⁵¹ The old doubts reemerged and, according to an SD report, it was just those people who shortly before had believed so ardently that the strike was imminent who were now being plagued with pessimism.⁵² There was a growing tendency to regard it all as one gigantic bluff. Less radical minds feared that it would either come too late or rendered impossible by Allied landings in northern Europe.⁵³

(v) T h e " B a b y B l i t z " o n L o n d o n -
J a n u a r y - M a r c h 1944

The propagandists, as well as the German leadership as a whole, realised that it would not be enough to return to a policy of enforced silence. Something would have to be done to prevent a crisis of confidence in the German leadership. It would be necessary to give the German people immediate visible proof of the Reich's ability to strike back at the enemy. As a means of bridging the gap to the beginning of all-out Vergeltung, it was decided to resume conventional bombing of the United Kingdom, in particular London, in force. All planes that could be spared were brought to northern France until the Luftwaffe commanded a front-line force of 150-200 bombers. In the months January-March London was once again the target of repeated attack which, however, never reached the intensity of the 1940-1 blitz. In these three months a total of 2,350 tons of bombs were dropped in 15 major attacks, 13 of which were aimed at the British capital.⁵⁴

Nazi propaganda portrayed the raids as by far the heaviest of the war and did not hesitate to exploit them to the full. Even the OKW-Bericht played its part in this propaganda drive.

On 2 February, for example, it claimed that on the nights of 21/22 and 29/30 January 900 Bombers had been dispatched against London, of which 750 had reached the target and dropped over 1,000 tons of high explosive and incendiary bombs.⁵⁵ According to British accounts, however, in the first raid only 27 enemy aircraft actually reached London and of the 161 planes sent in the second attack only 15 dropped their bombs within the capital's boundaries.⁵⁶ On the German radio on 21 February Semmler exulted in the "thousands of bombs" that were raining down on London:

"They are only a weak foretaste of what is to come. London and other cities will now pay for Cologne, Essen, Hamburg, Berlin and all the other towns delivered cynically to British terrorism."⁵⁷

About two weeks later, Goebbels was making the over-confident forecast "that very soon every Anglo-American raid on a German town will be paid back by a German raid on an English town".⁵⁸ It was a promise that could not be kept. German radio listeners were encouraged in the belief that the attacks on London were at least as heavy as the Allied attacks on German cities. American analysts saw this propaganda quite correctly as an attempt to give the population new confidence in Germany's aggressive potentialities in the critical pre-invasion period.⁵⁹ Unrestrained exaggeration and downright dishonesty were to become increasingly the typical characteristics of propaganda treatment of these attacks. Of course, the German public would be dissatisfied with any accounts that did not allow the conclusion to be drawn that the British civilian population was suffering at least as much as they were. Often, the reality contradicted propaganda claims quite dramatically. On 22 March, for instance, an article appeared in the Völkischer Beobachter

entitled "Hull Harbour is Burning". In the attack of 19-20 March, however, most of the German bombs had been dropped quite harmlessly on east Lincolnshire and north Norfolk and not a single bomb had landed on Hull.⁶⁰ Similarly, heavy and destructive attacks were claimed on Bristol on the nights of 27-28 March, 23-24 April and 14-15 May. In fact, the attacks were scattered and Bristol remained virtually unscathed.⁶¹ To make their assertions sound plausible, Nazi propagandists accused the British authorities of endeavouring to cover up the effects of the Luftwaffe raids by enforcing an unusually harsh censorship.⁶² So as to disguise the minimal effects the raids were, in fact, having, the press was forbidden to publish Reuter figures of British air-raid casualties for the month February.⁶³ In line with this policy, German papers were advised on 26 February:

"Care is to be taken when publishing enemy press statements on the effect of German air raids on England that no information is given that would allow the drawing of incorrect comparisons."⁶⁴

The Germans were thus to be deprived of any opportunity of comparing the Luftwaffe raids with those of the Allied air-forces. The sensitivity of the German propaganda treatment of the "Baby Blitz" is further demonstrated in the ban on any mention of the lack of good air-raid shelters in London⁶⁵ and the visits of Churchill and the King and Queen to the areas worst hit by the attacks.⁶⁶ Once again, it was feared, and quite rightly, that the civilian population would draw their own "inappropriate" parallels.

Despite the propagandists' relief at hearing the news of the resumption of raids on Great Britain, they were nevertheless in a quandary when depicting the importance of the event. They

naturally wished to make the most of the raids but they did not wish to give the impression that this was the real thing or a replacement for the real thing. They knew all too well that this would have caused great despondency. The decision was therefore taken that the press, though giving prominence to the attacks, should refrain from using the loaded word "Vergeltung".⁶⁷ It would suffice when the idea was conveyed that at last something was being done to answer the Allied pounding of German towns and that the air war had again become "a two-sided affair".⁶⁸

The reaction to this propaganda was a very mixed one. Although the renewed raiding of Britain was generally welcomed, there was a marked tendency to see it as the mere prelude to Vergeltung, as a kind of warming-up operation.⁶⁹ At the same time, quite a few people, especially the inhabitants of Germany's bomb-battered towns, feared that the enemy would retaliate by stepping up his attacks on the Reich still further and that they, in the long run, would be the ones to suffer most.⁷⁰ The RAF raid on Berlin on 15 February was, in fact, interpreted by many as the enemy's reply to the Luftwaffe bombing of London. Some people were of the opinion that it would be advisable to refrain from launching such attacks until the Reich was in a position to deliver one devastating blow at the heart of the enemy which would destroy for ever his capability of mounting raids on Germany.⁷¹ The direct effect on their own lives became the criterion for judging the wisdom or efficacy of bombing Britain. The raids do not seem to have had a very great influence on morale. Although they were naturally better than nothing, the Schwerin SD summed up the general disappointment in the words:

"People want to see something more...."⁷²

From Koblenz it was reported that few positive results were

expected from the raids.⁷³ As the Allied bombing offensive continued as if nothing had happened, the attitude to official treatment of the Luftwaffe raids became increasingly critical and by March it was becoming downright hostile. First suspicions that press and radio coverage was guilty of exaggeration were reported in an SD report of 22 February from Koblenz,⁷⁴ but four weeks later criticism was taking on a much harsher tone. SD Linz reported:

"The clumsy attempt by the press at playing up the frequent German raids on London, while dismissing the damage caused by enemy raids as insignificant, has a most provoking effect and is leading to a further diminution of trust in German news reporting."⁷⁵

Many people even professed to have unearthed the propaganda intention and dismissed the raids on London as "appeasement" tactics.⁷⁶

(vi) O n t h e E v e o f R e t a l i a t i o n

The renewal of the blitz on London was quite insufficient to distract people's attention from that theme that was uppermost in their minds and which for many had become the very incarnation of all their hopes. Despite a marked tendency by the more optimistically inclined to believe that Vergeltung would come with the launching of the Allied invasion,⁷⁷ the SD reports give a definite impression that the number of doubters was rapidly increasing in the first few months of 1944.

According to a report from Frankfurt-on-Main in February:

"large parts of the population no longer believe in Vergeltung but regard it as merely an invention of German propaganda."⁷⁸

In April SD Schwerin made the even more sweeping comment:

"In general, it can be observed that, for the most part, the population has lost its belief in Vergeltung which had once been so firmly anchored."⁷⁹

In fact, the mood appears to have been very depressed indeed at this time. Belief in retaliation seems to have reached an all-time low and to have become the object of bitter reproach expressed in the form of political jokes.⁸⁰ As summer arrived, attention was once again focused on the enemy invasion thought to be impending. Very many Germans were of the opinion that an enemy landing provided the Reich with its last chance to deliver the western enemies a decisive blow. Indeed, many were afraid that the worst that could happen would be that the foe would not risk an invasion!⁸¹ But there were those who firmly believed that the attack would not come, since the enemy propaganda was proving so successful in tying down considerable German forces in France, thereby weakening the Russian front, that an actual landing would be superfluous.⁸²

Never does doubt and pessimism regarding retaliation appear to have been greater than at that very moment when the launching sites in northern France were eagerly awaiting the order to commence operations. On 6 June the Frankfurt SD reported:

"The absence of retaliatory measures in the face of the present air terror is seen by many Volksgenossen as a tacit admission of our own inability ever to launch a Vergeltung. After all that the leadership has said, written, promised and failed to realize, it is possible, in view of the present course of the air-raids on the Reich, to speak of a crisis of confidence

among a broad section of the population."⁸³

It therefore seems that the long predicted crisis of confidence had begun. But, exactly one week later, the first two V1 missiles landed on the London area. For the propagandists it must have appeared that they had been saved at the very last moment.

C. THE V1 ATTACK, JUNE-SEPTEMBER 1944

Although the first couple of V1s were launched on June 13, the real attack began two days later. In the three months that followed, of the 8,000 missiles launched, about 2,400 reached the British capital, killing over 6,000 people. By the end of July, however, very few were getting through owing to a belt of anti-aircraft guns that had been built up along the south-east coast. In August the majority of the launching sites were captured, although V1s continued to be launched at England right up to March from Heinkel bombers based in north-west Germany and Denmark.⁸⁴

Goebbels greeted news of the attack with marked reserve and a "wait and see" attitude. The start of operations was reported in the OKW-Bericht in one terse sentence and the term Vergeltung was scrupulously avoided. Moreover, press and radio were expressly instructed not to use this word.⁸⁵ But Goebbels, of course, did not enjoy complete control of the German press. This he had to share with Reichspressechef Dietrich who, so it happened, decided on a quite different presentation of the "great" event. It was he who was responsible for the distinctly confident tone of the Tagesparole of 16 June, which was clearly designed to impress upon the minds of the German people that it was the long awaited Vergeltung that had just begun.⁸⁶ The newspapers were in an unenviable dilemma. To have obeyed one of their masters would automatically mean falling

foul of the other. The German newspaper reader himself became witness to the resulting confusion. Although Goebbels ordered:

"Greatest reserve, no word of Vergeltung, no arousing of exaggerated hopes as if a positive end to the war were in immediate reach",

the Berliner Nachtausgabe, preferring to follow Dietrich's line, began its leading story on 16 June with the words:

"The day, which 80 million Germans have been longing for, has come."⁸⁷

The Minister of Propaganda was in such a rage that he at once sent his right-hand man, Fritzsche to the studios of the Reichsrundfunk, of which Goebbels was undisputed boss, to undo the damage that had been done. But Fritzsche, although appealing to the reason of his listeners, left them in no doubt that it was, in fact, the Vergeltung that had just been announced and at a moment when so many had become sceptical:

"Many a man may have been glum or impatient in these long months of trial, but the German High Command has never allowed itself to be guided in its decisions by considerations of such displeasure or prestige."

He then went onto strike a more cautious note:

"Information about the further development of the strictly military operation is a matter for the High Command. Nor is it our task to make forecasts today about the effect of this or that kind of weapon. We who have waited for months will surely have time to wait and see the effect of the operation whose initial phase was reported today."⁸⁸

In a broadcast the following night Fritzsche was even more explicit:

"Fools alone believed a new weapon was of value only if it wiped out the enemy, as well as his own country, from the face of the earth in five minutes....What began the night before last was the first turn of the screw - a screw which will be tightened more and more."⁸⁹

Goebbels held on to this cautious line during the following days and warned the press not to give exaggerated accounts of the new weapon.⁹⁰

But what was to be interpreted as caution or reserve? Reports describing the destruction of whole districts of London would be interpreted as "cautious" by the optimists who believed that "final victory" was but a few days off. On the other hand, a portrayal of the bombardment along the lines of a conventional air-raid would be sure to sow a spirit of disappointment and despondency. Thus, in spite of the Minister's call for caution, it was almost impossible not to exaggerate, even if this meant risking a "boomerang" effect. Already on the very first day of VI reporting, the German Press Agency (DNB) was depicting the attack as "atonement for the death of the many innocent people murdered who are calling for revenge from their graves". The time had come at last when it was possible to exact "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth".⁹¹ At the very time when Nazi propaganda was officially subject to a policy of utmost reserve, extremely wild claims were, in fact, creeping into the propaganda content. Retaliation was given priority in both press and radio, even over news from the Invasion front in Normandy, which in itself was anything but an encouragement to the population to keep a cool head. On 18 June, the 8 p.m. radio

news boasted in its opening item:

"Our soldiers on the Channel coast constantly heard the organ-like fury of the explosive devices hurtling through the air and the thud of severe explosions. Yet these weapons represent only one of our new devices. That they were not used at the beginning of the invasion is a sign of our strength, which allowed us to await the most favourable moment for the opening fire on London. It appears from reports of German reconnaissance pilots that huge fires and severe damage have been observed in London and South England. The glare of fire is visible as far as the coast of North France."

Almost mystic tones were struck in the Front Report that followed this news bulletin:

"With the fall of evening, one can see from the whole Channel coast and also from higher areas further inland the terrible effect of this weapon....At first, there is a reddish condensation which seems to skip across a veil of clouds, and then, with the falling of night, wide conflagrations are mirrored dark red and glowing against them. These are continuously nourished by new fires in Southern England and London....During the last moments of the summer night, I thought the red light of dawn had already come, but from its direction it was still quite obviously the unextinguished fire at the heart of the island."⁹²

Similarly, a few days later, pilots returning from a

reconnaissance mission over London asserted that "they had never experienced such large area conflagrations, and that the effect of the new weapons must be indescribable".⁹³

The first news of the operation was received with unmitigated joy, although there were some "incurable" pessimists who at once expressed the fear that the enemy would reply with gas.⁹⁴ Trust in the leadership and victory was said to have been strengthened. The most fantastic rumours began to circulate describing the frightful effects of the new weapon. Much greater interest in radio news was now reported than even during the first days of the Allied Invasion, a good indicator of the high hopes that were being attached to VI.⁹⁵ The news even removed the scepticism that had taken root as a result of military developments in Normandy.⁹⁶ One SD report made the interesting comment:

"It is characteristic that exactly the same people, who had previously derided Vergeltung, now talk big and already consider the war as over."⁹⁷

The hopes were high and it was inevitable that it would not be long before they were bitterly dashed. In fact, it took but a very short time for the subsequent disappointment to set in. Even the glowing descriptions of the radio mentioned above had a frustrating effect, since it was generally supposed that the effect would have been much more spectacular and decisive.⁹⁸ Within two or three days, the "cautious" approach of the propaganda was being interpreted as proof that the effect of retaliation was considerably less than had at first been generally supposed.⁹⁹ Many Germans found it particularly hard to comprehend the fact that, despite VI, everyday life in London had apparently not broken down and that people were still going about their daily business.¹⁰⁰ Nazi propaganda, quite

unwittingly, added to the confusion when it quoted British politicians or the enemy press and radio, and many people asked themselves how it was at all possible that the Houses of Parliament continued to sit and the B.B.C. and Fleet Street to operate. From such quite incidental detail of Nazi propaganda content it was being concluded that "the effect is not particularly great".¹⁰¹ It was reported from south-west Germany:

"Those who have suffered from air-raids tend to the view that a heavy air-raid is more effective. Otherwise, London would have most certainly been razed to the ground after a two-week long heavy bombardment with VI."¹⁰²

By the end of July, criticism had become even more bitter, especially since no visible results had been noticed from retaliation. In Schwerin, for example, it was being said that, whereas Hamburg had been destroyed in a few days, life in London was still carrying on after five weeks of V-bombardment.

"As a result, quite a few Volksgenossen tend to the opinion that the V-weapons are just one great propaganda binge."¹⁰³

Just as depressing was the fact that the new weapon had not put a stop to the Allied raiding of German towns. This was a particularly bitter pill to swallow for the inhabitants of the numerous battered cities, who naturally judged the success or failure of the new weapon in terms of its immediate effect on their own lives.

"It had been expected that Vergeltung would bring immediate relief on the Home Front and these hopes are now seen to have been disappointed."

What is more, the raids on Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen in June

1944 were widely regarded as the enemy's answer to the VI.¹⁰⁴
It was not long before the Vergeltungswaffe Nr.1 was being
nicknamed Versager Nr.1!¹⁰⁵

Goebbels had endeavoured to prevent just this happening. Of course, he had been forced to play a dangerous balancing act from the very beginning. To have played down the VI attack would have created bitterness and resentment, because it would have brutally contradicted the picture of retaliation that had been built up ever since the spring of 1943. To have indulged in wild exaggeration would only have meant adding fuel to the flames of an optimism henceforth impossible to satisfy, not to mention a far-reaching crisis of confidence in the nation's leadership. The inherent problem was echoed in the vacillating and, at times, rather nervous propaganda behaviour from June to August. At the same time as broadcasting truly fantastic accounts of big fires in London, the propagandists admonished the German people not to place their hopes too high. The press had itself been instructed as early as 17 June:

"The reader must not be given the impression that the war will be finished in a very short time."¹⁰⁶

But this was not to prevent it indulging in the very blown-up style of reporting described above. Two days later the population was warned against paying more attention to the VI attack than to the "other fronts", although this was precisely what the official media had been doing.

"This war is a mighty struggle, in which individual events alone are not decisive. Only the total sum of bravery, preparedness and staying power of a people, only all our weapons together, will force the way to victory...."¹⁰⁷

In the weeks that followed, the emphasis came to be placed increasingly on the military and strategic nature of the new weapon. Its employment was an important element of German measures to counter the Allied invasion of Europe. In his lunchtime news commentary on 19 June Semmler clarified this point:

"From London orders are transmitted to the bridgehead in Normandy. Supplies to the Front are directed from London. In the present stage of the invasion nearly everything depends for the Anglo-Americans on the smooth running of the hinterland."

And, according to a Front Report that evening:

"Defensive enemy forces are tied down and from the point of morale are weighed down by the demoralizing prospect that this is only the beginning - only one of several /blows/ which strike at Britain and will continue to do so".

This was then followed up by a news commentary by Scharping who warned:

"even the best secret weapons cannot bring about the end of the war from one day to the other. Belief in miracles would be out of place in this context and might even become disastrous."¹⁰⁸

In the days that followed, the strategic argument was further developed:

"The VI-Front in the back of the invaders not only holds back considerable numbers of soldiers,

armaments workers and war material of all three British armed forces from other tasks, but, in addition, narrows down the strategic freedom of movement of the enemy leadership."¹⁰⁹

This stress on the military importance of the VI became all the less convincing the deeper the Allied armies pushed into France. This is shown in an SD report written on 29 June:

"Such newspaper headlines as 'VI Upsets Enemy Strategy' are received fairly sceptically by Volksgenossen as a result of enemy advances."¹¹⁰

At the beginning of July, as it was becoming clear that the VI was apparently having no serious effect on the enemy's war effort, German propagandists became much more cautious in their descriptions. On 8 July, for example, the press was told to avoid giving the impression that the situation was about to reach a dramatic point. Reports of large fires visible over a great distance, which had been a constant feature since the very first day, were no longer to be published.¹¹¹ A concerted attempt was made to call the German people back to "reason", although it was the official Nazi propaganda that had been mainly responsible for leading minds so astray during the preceding fifteen months. On 4 July people were reminded:

"The strongest of our secret weapons is and remains the German people's will of self-preservation...."¹¹²

The newspapers ridiculed those who had thought:

"three or four such things would completely wipe out Britain's capital and that with the help of some dozens of these miracle weapons the entire island could be destroyed. And because three days after the beginning of

the retribution attacks Mr. Churchill did not send peace negotiators to the Führer's headquarters, the matter is settled for them... they therefore regard it as - a flop."¹¹³

Such propaganda seems to have impressed some, for, according to an SD report of 13 July, many people had overcome their initial disappointment that "the retaliation weapon did not have an immediately decisive effect" and "more and more people are adopting the view that the VI needs time to take effect"¹¹⁴. The RPÄ also reported that the popular view of the weapon had become more realistic:

"The opinion which was frequently observed earlier, that the employment of retaliation weapons would alone suffice to end the war, is hardly heard at the moment. Consequently, the cautious treatment of the retaliation weapon is, practically without exception, thought to be the right policy [by the RPÄ]"¹¹⁵

Great interest in technical articles on the construction of the flying bomb was recorded. On the other hand, the accounts of the damage being wrought in London were found wanting.

"In general, people are dissatisfied at being informed only by way of quotes from the enemy and neutral press. They do not want to believe that the OKW is unable to give its own comment on the effect of the VI. Above all, there is a very strong wish for publication of aerial photographs by our air reconnaissance."¹¹⁶

This appears, at first sight, to contradict the evidence of a general spirit of bitter disappointment given above. But, perhaps, the contradiction is to be found in the minds of the

German people themselves. At the same time as being disappointed in their initial expectations, they wanted to believe the propagandists' arguments and were fascinated by any information concerning the weapon. The wish to cling on to those hopes which, at the same time, were being dashed, is described in a report of 24 July:

"To a great extent the Volk sways between hope and fear. The population wants to hope and seizes upon any semi-official or unofficial utterance in order to take heart and to receive new courage. All explanations that weapons are always only a means to an end and that no miracle can be expected of them are accepted - but with reluctance."¹¹⁷

In August, the German press and radio abandoned some of their caution. Perhaps they had been compelled to do so by force of circumstances. With the Allied breakthrough following the bloody battle of the Falaise "gap", there must have seemed little chance at all of pushing the enemy forces back in the foreseeable future. Moreover, the new Soviet offensive had brought the Red Army dangerously near the eastern frontiers of the Reich. Vergeltung was virtually the only theme left offering "positive" aspects. The essentially propagandistic nature of the VI now became evident. At a time when the VI had been defeated and very few of these missiles were getting through to London, the German mass media stepped up their coverage and even published the first pictures.¹¹⁸ There was an increasing tendency to quote or misquote enemy sources. Radio speakers, for instance, claimed to have "learned" that Croydon "has lost 75% of its houses through VI fire".¹¹⁹ Later, in October, Reuter would be "quoted" as evidence that "22,000 houses in Plymouth have been destroyed by VI or so heavily damaged

that they cannot be repaired".¹²⁰ Not a single V weapon had, in fact, landed on this city. As time went on, the discrepancy between facts and propaganda claims grew greater. In a Front Report broadcast of 22 August, for example, it was asserted that the damage caused by the VIs was four to five times greater than that caused by the Luftwaffe blitz of 1940. At the same time as the Allies were sweeping across the heart of France and Paris itself was about to be liberated, it was stated in this same radio programme:

"Nobody can conceal that this German long-range weapon is a military instrument which paralyses production, interferes with transport, dislocates supplies to the front in France and seeks and finds its military objectives because behind it are a live mind and will, not the blind chance that governs the terror raids."¹²¹

Naturally, the decisive events that were taking place in France proved to have a stronger effect on the German public than all the assurances of Nazi propagandists. That the new weapon had been totally incapable of holding up the Allied advance was considered the best proof of its strategic ineffectiveness. After having been encouraged to view the VI in the context of military developments in western Europe, the German people were now being forced to draw conclusions that had little in common with propaganda expectations. It was very difficult to imagine what, if any, visible results the weapon had really had.¹²² Many were dumbfounded when the VI ceased to be portrayed as decisive and detected a contradiction to the claims of the previous winter:

"First of all, we were told that we do not simply wish to pay back ruins with ruins, but to employ a weapon decisive for the outcome of the war."¹²³

Now, of course, it was being recognised that the much lauded Vergeltung had, in fact, only managed to answer ruins with ruins and absolutely nothing else. What is more, the marked inclination of German propagandists to link the VI with developments on the Invasion front had a quite unintended effect. People accepted the argument that there was, indeed, a link between the two but interpreted it in a negative way; the Allied advance, if continued, would prove fatal to all hopes of future Vergeltung. They asked:

"What will happen to the VI and future V-weapons when we are pushed further and further away from the English coast?"¹²⁴

Although the return to a more dramatic style of reporting in August, along with the publication of the first official pictures of the VI, was able to rekindle the faded hopes of some,¹²⁵ the general mood of late July and August can be described as one of tremendous disappointment. Few still believed in the decisive importance of the "doodle-bug" and many began to doubt the veracity of the reports being published. The entire propaganda effort was being dismissed by some Germans as "a sedative for the people".¹²⁶ Finally, many deduced quite correctly from the fact that the OKW-Bericht had failed to mention "VI fire on London" on two successive days in early September that the Allies had captured the launching sites.¹²⁷

Looking back on the whole Vergeltung propaganda of the preceding months, the Generalstaatsanwalt of Naumberg commented in his September report:

"The retaliation propaganda inevitably led to exaggerated expectations, which, in the long run, the VI itself was bound to disappoint."¹²⁸

Few Nazi state or Party officials would have ventured such a

true and damning general judgement of Goebbels' propaganda. Many criticised but restricted their criticism to details or individual occurrences.

D. THE V2 ATTACK, SEPTEMBER 1944 - MARCH 1945

By the end of July the VI had for most Germans come to represent a vanished hope. But, there were still many who earnestly hoped that new and more powerful weapons would accomplish what the VI had failed to accomplish. In fact, very soon after the beginning of VI operations hopes were beginning to centre on the V2, the employment of which was commonly thought to be imminent.¹²⁹ Quite fantastic rumours about its nature and capabilities were in circulation.¹³⁰ According to a report of 24 July, expectations about the coming V2 weapon were high:

"The greatest part of the population explains that a decisive turn in the war can really come only with the employment of new and splendid secret weapons and only if we are able to employ these weapons very soon."¹³¹

The very same division in public opinion was said to have emerged as in the months preceding the launching of the first VI. Once again, the German people was split right down the middle between the optimists who believed in the imminent appearance of new and awesome secret weapons and the pessimists who mockingly uttered that it would certainly take a year for preparations for the V2 to be completed.¹³²

Propagandists did not wish to burn their fingers a second time. Nevertheless, at the very same time as they were exalting the virtues of the VI back in late June, they had made triumphant forecasts as to the capabilities of further weapons that were to follow. Goebbels, in particular, who otherwise claimed to be pursuing a path of discrete caution, boasted in Das Reich on 23 June:

"We shall again employ new weapons of still more powerful affect at that moment we shall consider most suitable."¹³³

It was as if the "failure" of the VI, the advance of the Anglo-Americans in northern France and the start of a new Red Army offensive had all conspired to persuade Nazi propagandists that they would have to make the most of the V2 which as yet was not in operation. At the end of July Goebbels was gloating:

"A short time ago, I saw modern German weapons which did not make my heart beat more quickly, but rather made it stand still for a moment."

His readers were assured that only a "minority" were still in "the testing stage" and that "the majority are already in process of production".¹³⁴ Semmler displayed the same confidence:

"The relation of VI to V2, however, is about that of a Mosquito raid to a mass bombardment by 1000 four-engined bombers."¹³⁵

With such predictions being made, it is perhaps understandable why so many Germans fell victim to "miracle weapon" propaganda a second time.

During August a new propaganda argument came to the fore. The swift Anglo-American and Soviet advances were now depicted as a last desperate attempt by Germany's enemies to end the war before the Reich was ready to employ the dreaded new secret weapons.

"The enemy knows what to expect from these new weapons. He knows that there is no other means of rescue than to get the production factories and launching bases under his control. Every day gained and every square kilometre held

thanks to German resistance power means that the enemy has moved one step nearer his doom.We will defend this time gap needed for the completion of our new weapons with our teeth and claws....Never before were we so near victory as we are today."¹³⁶

This argument does not seem to have convinced many and morale in Germany at this time was dominated by the depressing spectre of "enemy superiority in all fields".¹³⁷

In September Goebbels decided on a round-about turn in policy. It was now realized that the V2 would prove to be of little more than nuisance value and it would therefore be utterly foolish, if not suicidal, to nourish fantastic hopes that could never be fulfilled. German propagandists now followed a path of silence. Talk of future secret weapons became taboo for the mass-media.¹³⁸ This policy was so total that news of the V2 attack on London, which commenced on 8 September, was held back for almost two months. It was very ironic indeed that, after having built up hopes that a new and more revolutionary weapon was on the way, Nazi leaders now thought it inexpedient to inform the German people of the start of operations. In their assessment of the state of morale at this time, they must have considered it preferable to put up with the pervading atmosphere of doubt and gloom than to risk a repetition of what had happened in June. When the OKW finally informed the German public in November, the newspapers were told not to give the matter too much prominence.¹³⁹

The weeks before the announcement were marked by a growing impatience, as had been the case in the months that preceded the launching of the first V1s.¹⁴⁰ This time, however, there was the remarkable situation that, at the same time as V2 rockets were falling almost daily on the British capital, doubts of the existence of the V2 and other new weapons were increasing and

there was a growing tendency to adopt the view that the whole matter was nothing more than propaganda bluff.¹⁴¹ A lowly Zellenleiter in Frankfurt reported on 30 September:

"The VI operation has now been shown to be useless. Consequently, the conclusion is already being drawn that future retaliation weapons will, in the same way, come too late. This realisation makes the population extremely anxious."

He then went on to draw a rather remarkable parallel between belief in eternal life and in retaliation.

"It can be seen quite clearly that belief in the leadership and its assurances is not so firmly anchored as the belief in God - who has never been seen - or, more exactly, the belief in the promises and threats by the Church regarding life after death."¹⁴²

The rather sudden change in official propaganda policy did not go unnoticed:

"Whilst the population had previously been annoyed that too much was being written and said about the new weapons, the present official silence has created complete disappointment."¹⁴³

Hence, the population still wanted to hear about the things in which it increasingly doubted.

The first news of the V2's employment naturally boosted hopes, "even if this is not so evident as at the beginning of VI operations." But the joy almost at once turned sour when it was learned that the V2 had been in operation for several weeks. This led to the conclusion being drawn that, if it had

been in use for such a long time without anyone noticing it, then its impact could not have been very great, to say the least.¹⁴⁴ As had been the case with the VI, the disappointment was partly attributable to the fact that the V2 had been expected to provide immediate relief to the hard-trying inhabitants of the blitzed German towns.

"After hearing the various predictions, people were convinced that the retaliation weapons, which are being used at present against London and other areas, would force the enemy to stop his attacks on German towns. As this hope has not been realised and, in fact, the bombardment of German towns and industrial plants has been stepped up, people are now also beginning to doubt the effectiveness of the new weapons promised for the future."¹⁴⁵

Although in the following weeks news of V2's employment against enemy front-line positions in Antwerp and Paris was generally welcomed, expectations never reached the height they had done in the case of VI.¹⁴⁶ The subsequent disappointment was hence much less pronounced. It really seems that the decision to delay news of the launching of V2 operations had paid off and had acted as a kind of inoculation against excessive optimism. In fact, the V2 remained for most Germans essentially of incidental interest, all the more so as the war drew near their frontiers.

But it is surprising how many people were prepared to make the same mistake a third time. Within a few days of the first official announcement of V2 operations, speculation of "V3" and further "wonder weapons" was rife. A large part of the German people found it difficult to live without the "drug". The Oberlandesgerichtspräsident of Bamberg reported:

"The launching of V2 aroused a certain feeling of satisfaction, but the Volk is waiting for more effective weapons which, above all, will roughly offset the enemy superiority in the air and in heavy ground weapons. Great hopes are also being placed on the employment of new kinds of fighter planes."¹⁴⁷

How strongly hope and pessimism were intertwined is demonstrated in a report of the Regierungspräsident of Regensburg, compiled on 11 December:

"Although the employment of the V2 was awaited anxiously and welcomed, it has not hitherto had any great effect on morale, because its effects have not been sufficiently evident. People have also become sceptical regarding the employment of further weapons but discuss the subject, however, in great detail. Rumours about their expected effect and construction are taken up eagerly and passed on. None the less, the fear is widespread that they could come too late."¹⁴⁸

The rather sober response to the V2 was encouraged by the rather hesitant propaganda treatment during the first few days after the announcement. The press derided the utopians who believed that death rays or a single bomb could destroy the whole of Britain at one blow.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, exaggerated accounts of the effects of V2, mainly from alleged neutral sources, did creep increasingly into propaganda content. The same phenomenon was now to be observed as in the case of treatment of VI. Once announced, it was virtually impossible to resist the temptation to publish accounts magnifying the

weapon's capabilities. There was sure to be a ready audience. Short-term effect was thus permitted to override long-term considerations yet again. As early as 11 November, Swedish "eye-witnesses" were quoted to the effect that about 600 houses were being damaged by each rocket.¹⁵⁰ In the weeks to come the claims were to become more and more fantastic. On Christmas Eve 1944, the newspaper reader was presented with the following description supposedly coming from the mouths of "eye-witnesses" who had left London for Lisbon:

"the devastation caused by the V2 is much greater than the destruction caused by the VI. The Houses of Parliament have been badly damaged. No building is still standing within a 500 metre radius of Leicester Square. Another even bigger square, Piccadilly Circus, is devastated."¹⁵¹

The propensity shown to ascribe such reports to neutral or even enemy information sources, as if wishing to underline the credibility of the claims, was to become increasingly marked in the following months. Perhaps it was itself an unconscious official recognition of the sceptical attitude of so many Volksgenossen to their own mass media. The picture of unmitigated disaster coming from the fronts that autumn and early winter probably acted as an additional driving force, pushing Nazi propagandists still further away from their initial caution. These German rockets provided the only glimmer of hope on an otherwise very bleak horizon. Moreover, propaganda "touches" would be less easily detectable for the masses than in reports from other theatres of war, where German soldiers were themselves witnessing the fatal developments taking place all around the borders of the Reich and even within them. The amount of V2 propaganda, however, never approached that of the VI propaganda

the previous summer. But the claims made were somewhat wilder.

In the first three months of the new year, Nazi propagandists inflated reports of the effects of V2 attack to such a degree that many must have concluded that life in the British capital had really become intolerable. What was more, the definite impression was given that the bombardment of England had been considerably stepped up. This was in stark contradiction to the truth. On 21 January, for example, listeners to the breakfast-time news bulletin were treated to a report ostensibly describing the experiences of a diplomat who had just arrived in Spain:

"During the last 80 days, the V bombardment of Southern England and London has been considerably intensified, and by the employment of the V2 its terrible effects have been increased. Hundreds of V missiles descend on London daily....When a V2 explodes, the whole of London quakes - the effects are similar to those caused by an earthquake."¹⁵²

In fact, in the winter of 1944-5, very few "doodlebugs" were getting through the defences and an average of only 1-2 V2s a day were falling on London. This was not to stop Goebbels promising a further strengthening of the V-bombardment, as well as its extension to other parts of the United Kingdom, as late as 28 February.¹⁵³ The German radio was audacious enough to inform its listeners that V-missiles were reaching Scotland and to cite the "British Information Service" as its source.¹⁵⁴ In March, "moral" values were attributed to Vergeltung:

"It is a question here of something more than retaliation - it is, at the same time, a European necessity. In the same way as someone with appendicitis can be helped most quickly and effectively by the correct surgical treatment,

the removal of the appendix, England, will mean Europe's recovery to health. It can no longer be tolerated that our continent is thrown into crises time and time again by England. In this respect, Germany is thus the executor of the European will to live. It is the doctor who removes the root of the disease."¹⁵⁵

One interesting feature of the V-propaganda in the early days of 1945 was the fleeting attempt at exploiting the class-factor. Salvage workers, for instance, were said to be stationed in "the most elegant districts of London" and to have been allotted "the task of guarding the property of the upper class, in as far as it has not already been destroyed by V bombs". The British police were also reported to be finding it impossible to contend with the mobs of criminals out looting in the devastated areas.¹⁵⁶

It is also worth mentioning the increasing resort to Mundpropaganda, a subject to be treated in detail in the next chapter. It represented the intentional planting of "white" rumours. Realising the power the common rumour was enjoying, Nazi propagandists decided to utilise it for their own morale-boosting purposes. The following is an extract from a Mundpropaganda directive dealing with the subject of Vergeltung, which was drawn up in December 1944:

"The strategic importance of the V2 has been underlined by its successful use against the British bomb depot in Burton-on-Trent. This underground depot, in which several thousand terror bombs were stored, was detonated by a V2. The German long-range weapon broke straight through its covering consisting of soil and concrete. The depot is situated in the Midlands,

but even this distance did not protect it from the range and accuracy of the V2."¹⁵⁷

The mention of "terror bombs" most probably represents a conscious attempt to demonstrate a connection between the V-bombardment and the burden the German people was finding most difficult to bear - the enemy bombing offensive. This type of propaganda seems to have enjoyed a certain success as a report of 19 December shows.¹⁵⁸

The official propaganda, however, met with growing pessimism, although there is reason to believe that the Ardennes offensive of December 1944 temporarily bolstered hopes in secret weapons, present and future. On 28 December, for instance, it was reported:

"As most people expect the employment of new revolutionary weapons, as well as a more marked military effect of the V-bombardment, a completely new perspective seems to be entering into people's picture of the war. All this is usually equated with certain final victory for Germany."¹⁵⁹

This probably, however, represented little more than an extension of the general euphoria at the news of the German counter-offensive to other aspects of the war. It is interesting to note that in January, when it was already obvious that the German attack had failed, talk of further secret weapons was being dismissed as "fairy tales".¹⁶⁰ Once again, the population had become more realistic in its appraisal of the situation:

"The bombardment of London is no longer so important with the Red menace standing on one's own doorstep - just in front of Germany's frontiers."¹⁶¹

As has been mentioned above, success was also judged in terms

of the effect the V2 had on the bombardment of German towns by the British and American air-forces. This had continued as if nothing had happened on the other side of the Channel and had even been stepped up quite viciously, as Dresden so painfully experienced. Interest in the V2 diminished and the weapon came to represent yet another lost hope. Nor does the German people appear to have been taken in by propaganda claims. In fact, the popular view of the weapon was much nearer the facts than the picture painted by the official propaganda. It was being said, and quite rightly, that "the enemy raids carried out in one night are more effective than all what the V-weapons succeed in accomplishing in England in one month".¹⁶² A report from Halle was even more scathing:

"What the enemy air force has destroyed in Magdeburg, Dresden and Chemnitz in a period of ten days is out of all proportion to the damage caused in London and southern England by V-weapons. One has the impression that it is no more than a kind of superfluous game designed to cover up the failure of the German Luftwaffe."¹⁶³

The German propagandists did do their very best to counter these doubts and criticism, but this was no easy task at a time when every German - civilian and soldier - had been called upon to defend his very home and family. In a radio talk of 8 January, Semmler expressed his understanding of the mood of great disappointment that had arisen:

"It is true that the enemy air terror during the last few weeks has shown anything but a reduction of intensity and that V1 and V2 have, therefore, not been able to induce the

enemy to stop his barbaric acts. It is, however, easier to bear a slap in the face if one can give one's assailant a powerful punch in reply."

Listeners were then assured that the two V-weapons in operation were far from being obsolete and that they were, in fact, depriving the fighting fronts of entire divisions and valuable fighter pilots. Finally, he maintained that life in London "is definitely exposed to greater dangers than in our bombed towns."¹⁶⁴

Despite such assurances, the readiness to believe in "wonder weapons" decreased rapidly in the first months of 1945. According to a report from Bamberg, dated 23 February 1945:

"Very little is now being said about the employment of new weapons, which had been the subject of numerous rumours and utterances over a long period in the recent past."¹⁶⁵

In April it was reported that "people can no longer believe in anything" the leadership said and were asking sarcastically:

"Where are the new weapons then, which, according to one of his articles in Das Reich, had made Dr. Goebbels' hair stand on end?"¹⁶⁶

But the belief in further miraculous secret weapons did survive here and there and was to remain a factor in German morale to the very end. It had come to stand for something very vague indeed and something very hard to describe - an irrational hope that something might come which would prevent the worst happening. Even many of those people, who were apparently resigned to the fateful course of developments, did not wish to give up this very last inkling of a hope that was harboured at the back of their minds.

E. CONCLUSION

The retaliation theme can naturally not be seen in isolation from war events as a whole. Military developments were not only important in determining the amount of attention Nazi propagandists gave to the subject but also in determining popular response both to the V-attack and the propaganda portrayal. It is often a difficult task to decide how far depression or optimism in regard to Vergeltung was influenced by the appraisal of the overall military situation or to what extent the appraisal of the military situation was influenced by attitude to Vergeltung. The extraction of one particular propaganda theme and the examination of the popular response to it is therefore not without its inherent dangers.

Above all, the question of retaliation propaganda cannot be isolated from the much wider question of the air war. Throughout the period under study in this chapter the vital link existing between Vergeltung and the Anglo-American bombing offensive against Germany as a factor determining response and attitude emerges to the surface. It was shown in the last chapter that all compensatory arguments, apart from retaliation, were virtually predestined to failure in the Germany of 1943-4, since it was an impossible task to convince the inhabitants of a city, that had just witnessed the frightful effect of a thousand-bomber raid, that enemy bombing was of no importance whatsoever in deciding the final outcome of the war. Only a theme that contained an inborn guarantee of an end to enemy raiding had any chance of success. And it is exactly this that bestowed the Vergeltung theme at first with such persuasive, if at the same time highly explosive, qualities. The examination of the retaliation theme in this chapter shows once again how closely war events were judged in terms of the expected effect on the life of the individual. The factors determining

propaganda response were of a highly personal nature. Of course, by the end of 1943 Vergeltung had come to represent for so many the very guarantee of victory or at least a favourable end to the war, but this at the same time was associated above all in people's minds with relief from the terrible burden of enemy bombing. The more intense the raiding became, all the more pronounced was the propensity to ascribe decisive importance to Vergeltung. It was the substitute for military success which in better days had been regarded as the fundamental guarantee of future victory.

From the point of view of the leadership, Vergeltung must have appeared a most promising theme, there being no need for an immediate confirmation of propaganda claims in facts. But this was to invite people to think for themselves. What they were not told about the weapon - and they were told precious little - they tried to ascertain by a fervent employment of their imaginations. The result has been described above. When the new weapon did not turn up within the short period expected, extreme optimism turned into outright dejection and despondency almost overnight. The essentially emotional nature of this hope in retaliation was the main factor responsible for this ambivalence. Spasmodic bursts of enthusiasm could be aroused by one mere mention in the speech of a political leader whilst the failure to repeat the same promise in another speech was sufficient to cast the listeners into a mood of deep depression, the like of which had never before been experienced. Such a theme in which something apparently incidental was enough to swing emotions from one extreme to the other could hardly be relied upon by the Nazi propagandists to retain its effect. Things would certainly not have been so bad if the German people had not been kept waiting for so long. The apparent advantage of this form of propaganda - concentrating

and directing attention to an event in the future - could only prove successful for a short time. Whereas the leadership measured the future in terms of months and even years, for the civilians it was a question of weeks and even days. Every day that went by without the fulfilment of the promise meant another night in which they had to fear for their lives.

The crucial importance that came to be ascribed to Vergeltung meant that the population became even more sensitive in its appraisal of propaganda content. Every written or spoken word was scrutinised in order to detect the propaganda intention or to find some clue as to the date of the great event. The many changes in propaganda treatment of retaliation did not go unnoticed. By promising Vergeltung, the leadership was, in fact, inviting the civilian population to examine closely every move of the propaganda organisation. This, in the long run would only make them more aware of being the target of manipulation. Once the secret workings of Nazi propaganda were exposed to view, Nazi propagandists would find it extremely difficult to reach the goals they set themselves. The case of Vergeltung propaganda shows once again quite clearly that one of the basic maxims of Nazi propaganda theory - the more often you say the same thing, the more likely you are to produce the desired effect - no longer held water. Repetition of the same old promise only served to exasperate the hard-trying population, to divulge the propaganda intention and to diminish trust in the leadership and its information apparatus. On the other hand, once Vergeltung had been promised, there was little the propagandists could do to prevent the issue getting out of hand. Silence was no alternative and had an even more devastating effect than a policy of repetition. Only retaliation in action and a retaliation that would fulfil all the high-flung hopes could provide the solution to the problem

and relieve the propagandists of their nightmare. But, in 1944 this was no longer possible!

The main strength of the Vergeltung propaganda was that it was concerned with something that lay in the realm of the unknown. This was quite the opposite to the case of conventional bombing. The German people's own bitter experience provided it with a measuring stick for judging the effectiveness of Luftwaffe raids. This became clear at the time of the "Baby Blitz" on London when the Germans refused to allow themselves to be electrified by the glowing and gloating accounts of their own mass media. It was not so much the realisation that the reporting was considerably exaggerated but more the simple fact "normal bombing" lay within the realm of the known. They knew all too well that the effects could be frightful but they were also aware that, however heavy the raids were, they were unable to change the course of the war. Only something quite new and different - the harbinger of a future and unknown world - could do it. Vergeltung came to be endowed with almost mystic qualities. It alone would do the trick.

The advent of the V1 was proof that Vergeltung did really exist, but for the German people its spectacular and revolutionary nature was very soon much less important than the concrete results that were expected of it. In those first two or three days of V1 attack, the readiness to believe, which had enabled the leadership in the preceding months to re-stimulate apparently lost hope time and time again, now manifested itself in virtual euphoria. But the leadership could only manage to conceal the truth for a few days. As soon as it was realised that nothing had changed or was likely to change in the near future, a wave of bitter disappointment swept the land which threatened to rupture any remaining faith in the mass media and leadership. Nevertheless, there were still many people who were

willing to let themselves be deceived a second time by promises of further V-weapons. But the fact that the V2 did not create the same bitter feeling of having been let down perhaps shows that many Germans had been put on their guard and, by spotting propaganda intentions, were protecting themselves from falling victim to the same "foul trick" a second time. Of course, it must not be forgotten that the propagandists themselves soon recognised their initial folly in promising new V-weapons and had drawn the right consequences by the beginning of September 1944. By deciding to connect both V1 and V2 to military developments on the Invasion front, they did much to take the "magic" out of the weapons. It was, at the same time, a great risk which did not pay off. Quite unwittingly, they provided the population with a new criterion for measuring the success of "retaliation". What was more, they were transferring V-weapons from an unknown to a known front. In London there were no "eyewitnesses" who could constitute an unofficial information source, but in France, on the other hand, German soldiers could provide their relatives at home with a first-hand account of events. The rout of the Wehrmacht was less easy to disguise than the declining bombardment of the British capital. From being the replacement for military fortune and the rectifier of military misfortune, Vergeltung was being debased and degraded into just another new-fangled military weapon for use at the front.

It would naturally be very tempting to exaggerate the significance of retaliation propaganda as a factor in maintaining civilian morale at such a critical time. It indubitably contributed a lot by distracting troubled minds away from the terrible reality. But other factors were just as important in preventing a collapse of morale - the fear of an uncertain future under Russian occupation (above all, in the east), the traditional respect for authority, the power of the

secret police, etc. But most of these other factors were of a purely negative nature. It was Vergeltung that, despite all changes of mood, enabled so many Germans to retain their hope that something somehow might turn up to change the whole face of the war. The disastrous developments on the military fronts did not go unnoticed but thanks to Vergeltung propaganda the hope of - as opposed to the firm belief in - victory managed to survive them. The main strength of this propaganda lay in its very vagueness which allowed people's fantasies to fill in the missing detail. In spite of all recurring doubts in the long period of waiting and the deep disappointment that was felt after the V1 finally appeared, some of these vague thoughts, which really represented no more than a tiny hope that something might turn up to prevent the worst happening, were to continue to influence German morale right up to April 1945. That extreme situations can cause a remarkable distortion of sound judgement is shown by the reaction of the German leaders and their entourage to the news of President Roosevelt's death. What can one expect of humbler folks who possessed only a fraction of the information at the disposal of the leadership and consequently had a much more fragmented picture of developments as a whole. This is not designed as an attempt to contradict the very real and widespread defeatism which was so characteristic of the German morale landscape at the end of the war, but an attempt to show how contradictory any two opinions of any one person at any one time can be in such an extraordinary situation as that of 1944-5. It serves as a warning not to judge emotions in what must have appeared an irrational world rationally. Finally, it must be remembered that the traditional respect for authority meant that many Germans just could not accept the fact that their leaders would lie and deliberately lead them astray at a time of such grave national

crisis. The higher the speaker's position in the political hierarchy, all the more pronounced was the tendency to take his prophetic utterance at its face value. This would also help to explain Hitler's ability to reawaken the almost vanished belief in Vergeltung with just a few words in September and November 1943.¹⁶⁷

CHAPTER 7

THE LAST MONTHS (OCTOBER 1944 - MAY 1945)

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with Nazi propaganda during the last eight months of the war. On the evening of September 8, 1944, the western frontier of the Reich was crossed for the first time by a patrol of American troops. The entire western front had collapsed in August. The liberation of Paris in August had been followed by a retreat even more rapid than the German advance in the early summer of 1940. Brussels fell on 3 September and Antwerp one day later. It now seemed certain that the war would be over by Christmas. But the Allies were soon to meet with an unexpectedly strong resistance on the German frontier and it took the Americans to 24 October to capture their first German city, Aachen, which fell only after a bloody battle.

The Nazis were now making an all-out attempt to rally Germany's strength. Goebbels announced a second "Total War" - more total than the first one of 1943. After having to wait 18 months, Goebbels had finally been appointed "Reich Plenipotentiary for Total War" on 25 July. He had promised Hitler an additional one million soldiers within three months and proceeded to free German industry and the state administration of all but really indispensable workers for the front. In a radio broadcast of 26 July he had pledged himself to carrying out a radical adaptation of the whole of public life to the needs of "total war"¹. The toughening in

German resistance three months later was a fruit of these measures, although more important perhaps was the fact that every soldier was now defending the soil of his fatherland. On 16 October 1944 the formation of the Volkssturm- a type of Home Guard - was decreed. Boys between 15 and 18 and men up to 60 years old were now called upon to defend the fatherland.

The Rundstedt Offensive in the Ardennes which began on 16 December showed that the Reich was still capable of providing surprises although incapable of inflicting grave wounds. Seven days later it was already clear that the offensive had failed in its aim of neutralising the military threat in the West.

Nor had the Soviets been inactive. The Russian offensive which had begun on 15 June 1944 had brought the Red Army to the borders of East Prussia. But after capturing the town of Goldap, it was pushed back by the 5th Panzer Division. The Soviets then thrust forward in the south. The occupation of Bulgaria in September was followed by a swift advance into Rumania and Hungary. Nor did the respite for East Prussia last long. On 12 January 1945 the Soviets launched an offensive of unparalleled severity. Not only was the land link between East Prussia and the Reich broken but the Red Army proceeded to advance into Silesia, calling a halt to their advance only on the banks of the Oder, an hour's train ride from Berlin. The Red Army had advanced 220 miles in a fortnight. Meanwhile the Allies in the West had crossed the Rhine in March and, after encircling Model's Army Group in the Ruhr, pushed forward across the North German Plains, reaching the Elbe on 11 April.

This period has been chosen for a study of propaganda effect because every German was now forced to face the whole might of the enemy onslaught. In the period October 1944 - May 1945 Germany became the battlefield and military events were of immediate concern to every individual German, whether

he lived in the raid-weary towns or the comparatively untouched countryside. The air war had already shown the difficulty the propagandists had in combatting the evidence the Allies gave of their strength by their nightly visits over the Reich. Now the existence of the homeland was at stake. If Nazi propaganda were now to be successful, it would not suffice to induce a spirit of fanatical resistance and to minimise enemy successes, but it would also have to show how victory or at least a favourable end to the war could be achieved. This strategy of inducing resistance through a propaganda of fear and the portrayal of Germany's chances in a propaganda of hope and consolation provides the basic theme of this chapter. The propagandists certainly now realised that in such a situation precious little could be done to improve the general mood of the population. They should try instead to procure the correct behaviour, characterised by the fanatical resistance which arises from the recognition of the fundamental need to carry on the fight.

Before the various propaganda themes are dealt with in detail, it is necessary to sketch the general picture of morale during these final months. The considerably high hopes that had been attached to the German defences in France and to the beginning of the V1 attacks were very soon dashed. The shock and astonishment at the speed of the Allied advance through northern France and Belgium led to a new low in morale. Steinert nevertheless maintains that morale was still higher than in the spring and summer of 1943,² but this contention would be very difficult to prove. There was certainly an improvement with the unexpected stiffening of German resistance on the Reich frontier, but morale remained at a comparatively low ebb. The formation of the Volkssturm appears to have had a very depressing effect. Many regarded it as "the last contingent"³ and as proof that the war was irretrievably lost.⁴ Despite the cautious

propaganda at the beginning of the Ardennes offensive, many Germans nurtured exaggerated hopes, believing a repetition of the events of 1940 was possible.⁵ Party members were once again proud of displaying their Party badges - whereas only shortly before they had been ashamed to wear them.⁶ The greater the hopes attached to the western offensive, all the greater was the subsequent disappointment. German propaganda had prepared the population for a new Soviet offensive but its very momentum took both the propagandists and their audience by surprise and started a fall in morale which could no longer be checked. In the weeks that followed, the morale reports point to a growing feeling of apathy and powerlessness in the face of events. Whatever one might do and however hard one might work, the inevitable could not be staved off. This feeling naturally intensified the further the Allies advanced into the Reich. For the first time morale reports spoke of a break in Haltung. This is the unfavourable background to the last desperate struggle of the Nazi propagandists.

B. PROPAGANDA THEMES

As Allied troops reached German territory, it was quite clear that Nazi propaganda would now have to concentrate on pointing out the terrible effects an enemy victory would have. The very survival of the nation was at stake. A propaganda of fear was meant to arouse a spirit of determination, but if enemy strength was portrayed in too vivid colours this could easily lead to a feeling of desperation and hopelessness. Nazi propaganda had therefore to point to the chances Germany still had. The efforts of state propagandists at this closing stage of the war are characterised by the attempt to find the right balance between a propaganda of fear and a propaganda of hope and consolation. The latter was certainly more difficult to contrive, because the Allied advances across the Reich were a

constant reminder of growing enemy strength.

(i) The Propaganda of Strength
Through Fear

Since Stalingrad Nazi propaganda had never ceased depicting the dire consequences of a German defeat. The very repetition of these warnings would seem to demonstrate their limited effectiveness. As the war situation deteriorated, the tendency to preoccupy oneself with a possible defeat situation and one's own survival chances - already recorded in the early months of 1943 - became more and more pronounced. At the time of the fall of the Duce in July 1943 more people than ever before were beginning to contemplate a future Anglo-American occupation. Some regarded such a prospect as not at all bad and even as an improvement on the situation then existing.⁷ In Austria and Bavaria some people were speculating about a future south German monarchy under "Otto I".⁸ As early as the fall of 1943, the thought that an end of the war would mean an end to the air-raids and the constant anxiety about one's family and friends was becoming uppermost in people's minds.⁹ Goebbels never tired of warning against harbouring such fantasies. Defeat, so he maintained, would not mean the end of the fighting but instead a new major conflict between the enemy powers in which Germany would have to provide the necessary cannon-fodder.¹⁰ This awesome possibility does not appear to have worried all Volksgenossen. In April 1944 the Reichsregierungspräsident in Munich reported a widespread opinion that defeat would not be so bad and would certainly not mean the destruction of the German people, for the Americans and British would protect it from the Russians and prevent the Soviet flood from inundating western Europe.¹¹ Indeed, according to a report written a few months later, many even believed that the Western Powers would join Germany in a common struggle against the Bolsheviks, once

the Nazis had been defeated. Although Germany would have to bear the main burden in this conflict, it would, in return, be rewarded with favourable peace terms.¹²

With the first capture of German territory such speculations of course grew and also the need to combat them. Russian atrocities in East Prussia provided Nazi propagandists with ideal material for demonstrating the enemy's lust for revenge. It was stressed that all Germans were threatened and could expect a like fate should they prove too weak. In its treatment of Soviet outrages the German press was to underline the fact that it "was simple German workers and farmers who were being butchered". Should the Russians advance into the Reich, it would not be just the rich landlords and industrialists who would be massacred but the very "substance of the people".

"A systematic and cruel massacre of every single German would occur and turn Germany into one huge graveyard."¹³

But, by exploiting these Russian atrocities in his propaganda, Goebbels ran the risk that the population would begin to see in the Western Powers the only effective protector against the Bolsheviks. Such a favourable disposition towards the West was widespread enough for the radio commentator, Semmler, to warn against those weaklings who believe "a US occupation would be easier to endure, nay, would be even worth striving for, compared with a Bolshevik occupation". He went on to attack the stupidity of those who had no fear of being occupied "because they have always treated their maid-servant from the East courteously and have made a present of three frocks and three pairs of shoes, or because their brother-in-law was a car-washer at the Ford Motor Company or a liftboy in a New York skyscraper".¹⁴

Such "illusions" could be prevented only by stressing that all Germany's enemies had the same diabolical plans of destruction. Here Morgenthau would come to Goebbels' aid. To make this propaganda message more credible, the press was instructed to play down the divisions inside the enemy camp.¹⁵ Newspaper editors were supplied with "archive material" to illustrate what the Allies had in store for a vanquished Reich. This propaganda of fear should become "a sort of continuous feature which will remind the reader daily of the dangers that threaten him unless he exerts all his energy against his enemies".¹⁶

There was a great danger that this kind of propaganda might lead to panic and a feeling of hopelessness. In its portrayal of the suffering of the east German population the press was told to avoid creating such a mood by emphasizing the heroism of the inhabitants rather than the gruesome fate of individuals.¹⁷ The anti-Bolshevik atrocity propaganda was not merely intended to arouse horror and outrage but also "a barbaric will to resist".¹⁸

So the German listeners and readers were now exposed to a prolonged propaganda campaign not unlike that at the time of the Katyn discoveries. That the western foes were not forgotten is shown by the following remark made in a radio broadcast dealing with alleged American "atrocities" in occupied areas:

"A wide gulf separates us from the Americans who make paper-knives out of the bones of killed Japanese and use their skulls as ashtrays."¹⁹

Reports of "Katyns" on German soil were used to back up the same arguments that had been used in anti-Bolshevik propaganda for years and which have been dealt with in Chapter 4. Great

attention was now paid to the visual aspect. Not only did the Wochenschau (cinema newsreel) present a vivid picture of Soviet barbarity but eye-witnesses - including raped women - were brought before the microphone of the Reichsrundfunk. In the West, the propagandists' task was naturally much more difficult. Evidence of enemy cruelty was not easy to find. Here, stories had to be invented in the interest of what Goebbels called "poetic truth". This was explained by Semmler:

"Wherever we only know a little about some event or plan or operation of the enemy then - so Goebbels says - we shall not be violating the truth if we add something to the story to fill the gaps. We should describe things as they might well have happened or as they probably did happen. To put it in Goebbels' own words: 'We are only helping the public when we call imagination to our aid in certain cases where the record of the facts is for some reason incomplete!'"²⁰

In west Germany the first priority of this "fear" propaganda was to counter any friendly disposition towards the Anglo-Americans. Despite the most intensive efforts of Nazi propagandists to inspire fear of the "plutocratic" powers, almost all morale reports at the time clearly point to a failure. The same remarks were still to be heard regarding an eventual enemy occupation. The reply, for instance, to the propaganda claim that the Germans would be enslaved was:

"And what have we got at present? It certainly couldn't be any worse. We wouldn't need to work any more than we do at present."²¹

Workers and tradesmen were heard to say that an Anglo-American

occupation would be quite bearable and certainly no worse than after the First World War.

"Americans are said to be interested in not destroying anything, for they want to do business."²²

In September 1944 it was reported that "bourgeois circles" were hoping that Germany would be occupied by the Western Powers because they "feared the arrival of the Americans less than the possible rule of the mob in the interim period",²³ an interesting allusion to class fears of a repetition of the attempted revolution of 1918-9. Some were heard to say that the Americans and the British "were also human beings". A typical remark was reported by the SD in Mannheim:

"I am not afraid of the enemy tanks. They have better things to do than to shoot an old woman."²⁴

The propaganda was therefore unable to influence the positive image of the western enemies. This failure to arouse fear of the British and Americans would account for the considerable difficulty the authorities had in persuading the population of the areas threatened by the Allied advance to leave their homes. They preferred to let the thunder of war "roll over them" than be evacuated to a "safe" area. A report of November 1944 summarised the factors determining this behaviour:

1. the great hopes the western population attached to the arrival of the British and Americans,
2. the influence of the clergy, and,
3. the unfavourable impression given by the German troops retreating from the west, often accompanied by French "camp followers".²⁵

The attitude of a great part of the west German population may thus be summed up in the words: "Peace, the sooner the better".

The work of the propagandists was further hampered by the return of exchanged prisoners-of-war early in 1945. Those returning were "full of praise of the treatment they had experienced in England".²⁶

This wish of the west Germans to stay at home and stick it out was accentuated by the circulation of certain rumours. According to rumours making the rounds in Westphalia, Rhinelanders had had nothing to fear after hoisting the white flag on the arrival of enemy troops. In March 1945, SD Münster reported the belief widely held among the population of the Ruhr:

"Submission without resistance seems here to be the only possibility of a way out of the dreadful strain of the present air war."²⁷

In the Rhineland itself the inhabitants of many towns and villages not only hoisted white flags but also removed anti-tank obstacles to prevent their streets becoming the scene of battle. In the Mayen area the local population sabotaged all orders given by the military and proceeded to burn "all articles which might point to their having belonged to the Party".²⁸ In Siegburg a large group of women marched on the army headquarters to demand the soldiers lay down their arms and capitulate.²⁹ In Frankfurt the American troops were received by friendly crowds.³⁰ Those evacuated from the west further inland would appear to have had a very low morale indeed. That they made no effort to conceal the fact that they were unwilling evacuees is shown by the intentionally ambiguous inscriptions on the trains arriving in Schwerte from the west in September 1944:

"We come from Cologne, Aachen and Trier
For that we thank you, Führer!"³¹

Fortification work proved equally unpopular among those who stayed behind.³² Why should the Allied advance be hindered in any way? Thus the people of the German Rhineland neither defended their homes like a fortress nor did they set "a shining example of courage and resolution", as Goebbels said they would.³³ The Minister put a large part of the blame on Wehrmacht troops fleeing from the West:

"It is hardly surprising if the population loses its nerve when it repeatedly sees retreating bands of soldiers who throw away their arms and no longer put up any resistance."³⁴

The attitude of the north Germans was not much different to that of the Rhinelanders. Although the situation in the north did not become acute until well into 1945, the inhabitants of Hamburg were reported as not fearing occupation by the British and Americans. In fact, many people quite welcomed the prospect as it would bring an end to the air-raids and, so they wrongfully thought, to the miserable food shortages.³⁵ It was being said:

"the continuation of the war is only a senseless slaughter of the civilian population" and
"Rather an end with horror than a horror without end".³⁶

This almost friendly disposition towards the future occupiers may also be partly explained by the phenomenon observed in the examination of the anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaign of 1943 - the need to humanise the enemy if one was to maintain the belief in one's own chances of survival after a lost war. This seems to be confirmed in the description of the attitude of Berliners made by a Swiss reporter in April 1945 when there still seemed a chance that the Americans would reach the German capital before the Soviets.

"A severe regime is expected, but not inhumanity and people prefer to hear hopeful promises, rather than read the papers' propaganda on US barbarity."³⁷

There is some evidence, however, of a latent fear of enemy revenge for Nazi atrocities, knowledge of which appears to have been more widespread than is often claimed. According to SD Stuttgart, the publicity being given to the atrocities perpetrated by the Red Army in the East Prussian village of Nemmersdorf was having far from the desired effect.

"Haven't we killed Jews in their thousands? Aren't soldiers always saying that the Jews had to dig their own graves?....But the Jews are also human beings. Thus we have shown to all our enemies what they should do to us if they win."³⁸

Similarly, a Swiss newspaper article claimed that most Germans believed the anti-Soviet atrocity propaganda, since these outrages were regarded as "retaliation for the horrid crimes of the Waffen-SS in Russia", news of which had reached them through soldiers coming home on leave.³⁹ This apparently extensive knowledge of what had happened in Eastern Europe would help to explain the remark made in a Party report from Detmold that the population was less afraid of the Anglo-Americans as such than "the revenge and the hate of the returning Jews".⁴⁰ A young German arriving in Switzerland early in 1945 mentioned the clever exploitation of this apprehension by Nazi propaganda. The Germans, so she maintained, were being whipped up into a spirit of resistance and perseverance through fear of punishment for the crimes of their own oppressors.⁴¹ Although this is clearly an exaggeration, it is interesting how German propagandists at this time invariably

stressed that the Jews would be the "slave-drivers" in a vanquished Germany.⁴²

Hence, seen as a whole, anti-western atrocity propaganda was largely without effect and enthusiasm for the advancing western Allies was only impaired by vague fears of Jewish revenge. This was not true of anti-Bolshevik atrocity propaganda. Although this was usually believed, the effect it had was often the contrary to the one the propagandists desired - a strengthening of the determination to fight on to "final victory". Reports reaching Goebbels had warned that the anti-Soviet propaganda should in no case be allowed to lead to a general mood of panic which would only facilitate the Red Army's advance.⁴³ But this is just what happened. In February the Gaupropagandaleiter of Halle complained to the Ministry of Propaganda that the refugees were hampering military operations, thereby aiding the Soviet advance. In short, he disliked the atrocity campaign since it created the desire to flee.⁴⁴ Even local Party officials did not remain immune to this panic fear. The consequence was that "many villages and towns were being abandoned by their able-bodied population without a struggle and they fell undefended into the hands of the enemy".⁴⁵

Furthermore, the claim that Goebbels' anti-Bolshevik propaganda was a factor in making the west German population welcome the western armies⁴⁶ is substantiated by several morale reports. A report from Würzburg of March 1945, for example, stated that the citizens were pondering the question "whether it would not be better if the Anglo-Americans came; they should even be let in before the Bolsheviks, who were to be feared more, arrived".⁴⁷ An opinion prevalent in Münsterland at the same time was "that the Americans should be let in as far as possible before the Soviets brought yet further parts of the Reich under their control".⁴⁸ Gauleiter Wagner of Karlsruhe also reported

the popular belief the British and Americans would protect the local population from the Russians.⁴⁹ In Berlin at the end of March there was even joy over news of American advances and there was talk of Germany laying down her arms and then marching side by side with the Anglo-American armies against the USSR.⁵⁰ By their vivid portrayal of Soviet barbarity the Nazis had therefore managed only to raise hopes of western generosity. Where the population was certain that it would be occupied by the British or Americans and not by the dreaded Russians, anti-Russian atrocity propaganda was usually ignored or met with comparative indifference.

A very dangerous "boomerang" effect of this atrocity campaign was reported by a Nazi functionary at the end of March:

"Even the portrayal of the abominable Soviet behaviour in the German territory they occupy, besides invoking fear, has simply led to a muffled resentment that our war leadership has exposed German people to the Soviet terror."⁵¹

At about the same time, Goebbels noted with alarm a growing criticism of "the person of the Führer" in letters sent to him.⁵² Thus, the Nazis rather than the enemy became the focus of bitterness - a phenomenon not unlike the reaction to Anglo-American bombing.

Perhaps even more dangerous was the fact that the many atrocity stories were making the propaganda audience more aware of their powerlessness to do anything that might alter the situation they were in. It was for this reason that SD Konstanz warned against repeating these accounts too often. Women listeners were said to be particularly depressed by reports of Soviet cruelty.⁵³ SD Villingen also pointed to the dangerous "mood of desperation" arising from this propaganda.⁵⁴ This

unwanted side-effect is further demonstrated by the fact that in Berchtesgaden some farmers' wives were getting their Russian workers to issue them with certificates of good conduct which they could show to the Red Army!⁵⁵ In fact, the "hard-working" Ostarbeiter was becoming less a source of hope - as at the time of the Katyn propaganda campaign - than a source of fear of enemy revenge. Those "cowardly Volksgenossen, who for the sake of their future safety, try to become friendly with their foreign 'guests'" were the target of attack in the local German press. A particularly bitter attack, for example, was made against those "crying women" (Tränenweiber) "who feed their Polish harvest helpers with special ham sandwiches just to get a seat in the German Soviet paradise".^{56*}

No better evidence could be given that this fear propaganda was not having the desired effect than that supplied by the propaganda content itself. An article appearing early in 1945 in the SS newspaper, Das Schwarze Korps, shows quite clearly how, in anticipation of what was coming, more and more Germans were drawing away from the Party and National Socialism.

"Death awaits all survivors of a lost war - the men, the women and the unborn, the workers, the farmers, the town dwellers, the soldiers, the Nazis and those who would pretend never to have been Nazis, Prussians and Austrians, the population of Bavaria and Westphalia, Protestants and Catholics in the same way as the simple believers in God."⁵⁷

Belief in the possibility of living in a defeated Reich inevitably implied a very subjective distinction being made between Nazi and non-Nazi. This was what the leadership had always feared. Hence this warning that all Germans would suffer without exception.

At the end of March, Goebbels was to admit the failure of all his efforts hitherto to instil a hate of the British and Americans. He claimed that these western enemies were more dangerous than the Soviets "because the naive and the credulous easily indulge in foolish illusions regarding them and their intentions from which they mostly only awake when it is too late".⁵⁸ He even thought that the lack of a truly radical anti-West propaganda had played its part in the catastrophic deterioration in the morale of the west German population.⁵⁹ But this demonstrates one of Goebbels' fundamental faults - to interpret all developments in morale as the result of the action or inaction of his own propaganda machinery, thereby playing down the importance of factors outside his control sphere. It was perhaps vanity which created this overestimation of his own capabilities. Rather too late, he decided to repeat the "success" of atrocity propaganda in the East with intensive atrocity propaganda in the West. In the first days of April 1945, the Minister was busy preparing a directive prescribing an invigorated anti-western propaganda campaign.

"It is the main task of press and radio to make it clear to the German people that the western enemy powers have the same infamous goals and the very same devilish plans of destruction up their sleeve as the eastern foe, and that they only employ what seem to be more civilised methods in order to deceive the German people and to lure fools into taking the bait."⁶⁰

Despite subsequent instructions to the press, the sudden, more aggressive note came too late to do any good. As late as 13 April when Anglo-American troops had reached the very heart of the Reich, the newspapers still remaining under Nazi control were ordered to stress the outrages allegedly perpetrated by

Negro troops in the Franconian town of Iphoven.⁶¹

In these very last weeks of the war, the propaganda content itself was to provide the final evidence of Goebbels' failure to rectify the morale situation in the West. After stating that the slogan "they are not half so bad as they are made out to be" was no longer to be heard in the East, a radio commentator summed up the attitude of many people in the West in a broadcast of 11 April in the words:

"If it has to be, let's rather have the British and Americans than the Russians."⁶²

By the end of April Nazi broadcasters had become even franker about the failure of their efforts. It was practically admitted that the following was a typical reaction to anti-Bolshevik atrocity propaganda:

"To us will come the Americans, the British, the French, the peace-loving civilised powers! Surely, they will not allow the centre of Europe to be left to the Russians."⁶³

How great the contradiction between this - albeit reluctant - realisation of reality and the ideal of a united and determined German nation that lay at the basis of all Nazi propaganda only shortly before!

In the last months of the war the Nazis resorted to some interesting methods to secure acceptance of the propaganda line. One example was the increasing reliance on well-known soldiers and respected military spokesmen for delivering the propaganda message. The popular "hero", Rehmer, who had been largely responsible for putting down the putsch in Berlin on 20 July 1944, broadcast on the Reichsrundfunk at the beginning of March a very gruesome eye-witness account of Bolshevik atrocities.⁶⁴ The immediate response was so positive that within a couple of

days there were calls from Party leaders for a continued employment of soldiers in radio propaganda. According to a report of the SD office in Rastatt, many Volksgenossen were less aware of a National Socialist bias in talks by soldiers than in those given by Party representatives⁶⁵ - an interesting admission of popular suspicion of both the Party and official propaganda. SD Konstanz also reported the greater success of atrocity propaganda coming from the mouths of military spokesmen, but, at the same time, warned that such accounts would only prove effective in the long run if the Party refrained from repeating them too often.⁶⁶ Dittmar, too, whose almost factual way of discussing military developments had been very much appreciated by listeners - including those otherwise highly critical of Nazi propaganda - was given an overtly propagandistic function in the final stage of the war. On 6 February, for instance, he warned his listeners that "the war is not prolonged by those people who call for resistance to the utmost" but by those believing "the peace of the graveyard reigning over Germany is the peace they want".⁶⁷ In this resort to "experts" the propagandists were, in fact, tacitly admitting that the most conventional propaganda forms had proved insufficient and, at the same time, demonstrating the Party's faltering prestige.

In the West even more drastic measures were used to back up the fear propaganda. Realising that a visual confirmation of the propaganda message would provide the best effect, the Reichspropagandaleiter (propaganda chiefs of the Party) decided to have the Wehrmacht march captured prisoners-of-war through the west German towns. In order to show how uncivilised and barbaric the foe was, the prisoners were not to be allowed to wash and shave for days and they were to be forced-marched a great distance beforehand. If possible, coloured enemy troops were to be used. The exercise was also designed to demonstrate

the "high" losses sustained by the enemy.⁶⁸

Such methods, however, were unable to prevent a growing preoccupation with the inevitability of defeat and the urgent need to believe in the possibility of an acceptable way of life in a defeated Reich. With the enemy armies advancing rapidly across German territory, fewer and fewer people wished to believe that there was no alternative to death, should Germany lose the war. Belief in anti-West propaganda would have meant depriving oneself of the one hope still left. As far as "final victory" was concerned, who still thought it possible?

In an assessment of the effect of this propaganda of fear, it would be wrong to make any such generalised conclusions as Baird has done. He claims that the strengthening of the Wehrmacht's resistance both in the East and the West in 1945 was "due in good measure to Goebbels' propaganda apparatus" and that "the combination of propaganda and terror succeeded in the darkest days of the Third Reich in tying plian the German people voluntarily to Hitler".⁶⁹ The longing of a great part of the west German people for the arrival of the British and Americans and with it an end to the war would certainly seem to contradict this assertion. The behaviour of many Volksgenossen at this time was characterised by a timely anticipation of a new post-war world. This would explain the relative indifference shown by many on hearing the news of Hitler's death.⁷⁰

The effect of this fear propaganda was largely determined by the relationship existing between reality and propaganda portrayal. Where the latter was based upon fact - as was undoubtedly often the case with Russian excesses - the propaganda content was largely believed. Furthermore, susceptibility to anti-Bolshevik propaganda would depend on the degree one thought oneself threatened by the Soviets, i.e. where

one lived and the social and political position one held. If, on the other hand, propaganda was at variance with the recognised reality or in stark contradiction to the popular image of the enemy - as was the case with anti-American atrocity reports - then the effect would be minimal. It must, however, be emphasized that belief in anti-Bolshevik propaganda was not identical with acceptance of the need for the prescribed behaviour. In fact, as has been pointed out above, the propagandists often succeeded in inducing quite the opposite behaviour to the kind intended. To a certain point, fear might aid the propagandists considerably but the same factor would also lie behind the wish to be occupied by the British or Americans.

Finally, there was a difference between response to anti-Bolshevik propaganda in the last months of the war and the response to the intensive anti-Bolshevik propaganda campaign described in Chapter 4. To most Germans - even to those living in the East - Russian occupation was a very remote prospect indeed in 1943. Even the increasing pessimism as to the final outcome of the war does not appear to have led at once to a corresponding increase in fear. People clung to the positive reports they heard from soldiers on leave as a kind of reassurance that, even if things should turn out for the worse, Russian rule would be tolerable. The rumour, as explained in Chapter 4, became the vehicle for humanising the enemy. The shock on hearing of Soviet barbarity in East Prussia and Pomerania, not only over the radio but also from eye-witnesses - the refugees flocking into central Germany - formed a timely revision of these hopes. Also the "experts" - the soldiers - who had once spoken admiringly of Soviet achievements now told of the outrages they had seen. It was this which led to a concentration of all hopes on the western powers. The rumour

now served to remove the contradiction between the popular image of the Anglo-Americans and the negative propaganda portrayal. Hence, the mass flight to the west!

(ii) T h e P r o p a g a n d a o f H o p e a n d
C o n s o l a t i o n

Goebbels realised that fear alone was not enough to ensure the success of his propaganda efforts. The German people would also have to be shown how the war could still be won. Concrete evidence would have to be given. Military successes, however, small, would have to be exploited to the full. It was here that the principal danger lay. Unless managed with the uttermost skill, such a propaganda would immediately arouse hopes which would only be dashed later, thereby causing a further deterioration in morale. On the other hand, it would be terribly difficult to resist the temptation to exploit any favourable piece of news. The almost insuperable problem was to find just the right balance between arousing reasonable optimism and inspiring exaggerated hopes impossible to fulfil. The population would want to be told how Germany's misfortune could be turned but any use of predictions, however implicit, could prove disastrous and destroy any remaining trust in the assertions of the propagandists. People were impatient and would expect an immediate realisation of any prediction. The propagandist was in an increasingly unenviable position, for the war had now come to Germany and the German people would now judge the veracity of any reports of German "successes" in terms of their effect on the enemy's advance as well as on the Allied bombing assault. Indeed, more and more Germans were in a position to compare the propaganda picture with the reality of the situation witnessed. All this meant that the Nazi propagandist was in a terrible quandary. The population was

demanding positive news - something which he could provide only at the tremendous risk of a "boomerang" effect. The following section deals with the attempt to maintain belief in "final victory" in the first months of 1945.

Goebbels himself did not underestimate the enormity of the task of holding out hope in such a bleak military situation. In March 1945 he informed his subordinates in the Propaganda Ministry that "the great hour of German propaganda had come". In good times it was easy enough to make propaganda but now the leadership had "the chance to prove the moral and political strength it possessed". Secondly, now that the fighting had reached the territory of the Reich, it would no longer be possible to separate the Fighting Front from the Home Front. Now there was only one German Volk fighting a battle of survival. It was the task of the propagandist to help the ordinary citizen recognize Germany's real chances of victory. He was not to forget that he was "addressing people who were war-weary, anxious and often doubtful".⁷¹

The Minister could naturally not afford to ignore the great military blows Germany was experiencing and he tried to portray them as unfortunate but not fatal setbacks. In the first days of 1945, as it was becoming clear that the Ardennes offensive would never attain its objective, it was presented as a successful mission which had prevented the launching of a simultaneous enemy attack in the East and West. This line was still being followed after the Soviet offensive had begun.⁷² It was also claimed that the German army had forestalled an immediate threat to the Ruhr, Saar and Palatinate.⁷³ As the full weight of the Russian onslaught became evident, Nazi propaganda maintained that Soviet Russia was making one last desperate effort to decide the outcome of the war by throwing in the very last reserves of the Red Army.⁷⁴ This rather

pitiful attempt to find a positive aspect in the unmitigated bad news coming from the Eastern Front was often accompanied by a vague kind of prediction which avoided giving any clue as to how or when there would be a change of fortune.

"We have spoilt the enemy's plan in the West and we shall bleed him white in the East as well."⁷⁵

When the full extent of the Soviet breakthrough could no longer be concealed from the German people, the press was instructed to place less emphasis on a factual account of events and instead to stress "the determined national spirit of resistance of both the Home and Fighting Fronts against the Soviet storm".⁷⁶ The heroic spirit and unshaken confidence of the population was to become the leitmotiv in all reports from the East. At the same time, the press was absolutely forbidden to give any clues as to the date of any coming German counter-offensive.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, Goebbels realized that he could hardly avoid making promises if his propaganda was to sound plausible. The German people needed a straw to cling on to. In his guarded predictions of a coming German attack in the East, he went as far as he could to arouse a determination to carry on but, at the same time, refrained from giving any details. At the beginning of March, for example, after promising that the areas in east Germany occupied by the Russians would be regained, he made the rather cautious statement:

"The requisite preparations have already been initiated on a grand scale, but they need a certain time to take effect."⁷⁸

This very delay in launching the promised counter-attack was even interpreted by the propagandists as a positive factor, as it ensured that the attack was being so well prepared that it

would have an even better chance of success when it came!⁷⁹

The propaganda treatment of submarine successes at the end of the war illustrates the precariousness of working with predictions and also the difficulty Nazi propagandists had to resist making the most of any German success - however small - thereby arousing expectations that could not be met. The U-boat campaign did take a small turn for the better in January 1945, but the press was immediately warned against making any hasty forecasts or even giving the impression that a new all-out submarine offensive was in the offing.⁸⁰ As these isolated marine successes, however, became the only positive aspect in an otherwise unmitigated picture of disaster, the propagandists could scarcely afford not to use them. On the wireless Semmler was soon to claim that the U-boat feats had come at an extremely critical time for the enemy because "the tonnage situation of the Allies has never been so strained". They might prove "of decisive importance for military developments on our west front". The old argument used in the early months of 1943 at the time of the bombing of the Ruhr reappeared: "every tanker sunk reduces terror flights over the Reich".⁸¹ In a speech at the end of February, Goebbels stated that the enemy's shipping resources were stretched and very vulnerable. He predicted:

"The last vessels of the British Merchant Navy will by and by fall victim to our U-boats now putting to sea for new operations."⁸²

There could be no better example of self-professed caution being thrown to the winds when the military situation becomes desperate.

In dealing with this compensatory propaganda in 1945, further mention must be made of V2 propaganda, described in detail in the last chapter. The "last shots" of German

retaliation were used by the propagandists to demonstrate that the Reich was still capable of paying back the British in kind. In February Goebbels admitted that the enemy raids were becoming unbearable for the German people but reminded his listeners that the British were also finding the V-bombardment unbearable.⁸³ It is quite clear that the V-rocket had now become a propaganda weapon designed more to maintain morale in Germany than to break it in England. The Germans were led to believe that the employment of new V-weapons was impending. In his attack on the barbarism of the British in bombing Dresden in February, Semmler warned that such a crime could not go unpunished and that "the Reich still has means of exacting retribution".⁸⁴

Another argument used by Nazi propagandists to console their German audience was that the food situation and the general state of morale in Britain was as bad as or even worse than in Germany.⁸⁵ The downright misery of life in the United Kingdom was depicted in a broadcast by von Oven who claimed to be quoting the BBC - perhaps a "poetic truth".

"There was no longer any regular family life; families are torn apart. Some provinces were so overcrowded with evacuees that ten people were forced to live in one room. Of a total of 13 million houses, 4½ million had been destroyed; the housing scarcity was serious. The people are wearing old clothes and torn shoes; substitute fats were given instead of butter, dehydrated meat instead of joints, it was very rare to receive an egg, there were no cars, no musical instruments and no radio sets. In short, everybody was tired of the war....In some respects, their difficulties may not be

comparable with ours, but in many respects we should be glad to live in our country and not in the British Isles."⁸⁶

How did the German people respond to this propaganda attempt to persuade them that the situation was really not so bad as it first appeared? From a report written in February it would seem that the soothing words of the propagandists were insufficient to offset the negative effect of the Red Army's advance. The assurances now being given reminded many of those that had been given after the Allied landings in Normandy. They were based "on a false diagnosis when judging the enemy". The same report went on to mention the apparent contradiction between a general feeling of hopelessness and the desperate wish to believe "something might happen".

"The Volksgenossen indeed continue to do and endure everything demanded of them. The real conviction is, however, lacking that any further effort and sacrifice can still have a point and lead to a final success in our favour."

At the same time, vague hopes were being harboured that revolutionary new weapons might somehow bring about a change of fortune.⁸⁷ Despite this, there can be no doubt whatsoever that morale had now reached an unprecedented low. Only military success, not propaganda promises of military success, would lead to any improvement. According to the Gaupropagandaleiter of Halle, morale had already reached "zero point" in February and he placed the blame squarely on the failure of Göring's Luftwaffe and the non-appearance of the long-promised new weapons.⁸⁸ Many people saw in the accounts of V2 attacks a cheap cover-up operation for the debacle of the German air-force.⁸⁹ Even the Nazi press was forced to admit that people were becoming sceptical and asking when German skies would be cleared

of the enemy air-force and when the decisive weapons would be ready. A typical answer was given by one journalist: the German people need not fear for the future because its leaders had promised new weapons and these men had always spoken the truth!⁹⁰ Such reasoning was hardly likely to allay the increasing fear and despondency. The military setbacks had become so grave and their significance so obvious that even the most skilful propagandist would not have been able to neutralize their effect. Goebbels' assurance that "Germany still has all the political and military chances" in her hands was "rejected without exception by all classes as pure propaganda lacking any factual basis". People were saying that events had proved the truth of the slogan once coined by Reichsmarschall Göring:

"Whoever possesses air superiority has victory
in his pocket"⁹¹

As the enemy armies advanced further and further into the Reich, no one could imagine how the war could be continued without the industry of the Ruhr and Upper Silesia.⁹²

A Nazi official, von Kielpinski, was certainly right in asserting that after December 1944 public opinion in Germany had very little in common with the wishes of the leadership and its propagandists.⁹³ Even the most respected source of official information, the Wehrmachtsbericht, had now fallen further into disrepute through its attempt to disguise the extent of the enemy advance. Such expressions as "the enemy could make only a negligible advance" or "the enemy gained territory only after the heaviest loss of blood" were received with great scepticism. The abandoning of such cities as Cologne was hardly mentioned.

"This glossing over is destroying even the last remaining trust the Wehrmachtsbericht has until now enjoyed"⁹⁴.

At Goebbels' prompting, the OKW-Bericht made no mention of the loss of Kolberg in March. The Minister was afraid of undermining the effect of the Durchhaltefilm of the same name running in German cinemas at the time.⁹⁵

With the coming of spring few people were any longer prepared to believe the vague prophecies of Nazi propagandists. Berlin cinema audiences were reported to have burst into "derisive laughter" when the newsreel showed Goebbels on the Oder promising an offensive that would liberate all areas occupied by the foe.⁹⁶ The very last vestiges of optimism regarding a German counter-attack were probably to be traced back to the last desperate conviction of refugees from the eastern provinces, not to the efforts of the propagandists. For them a German defeat meant permanent separation from the only home they had known and loss of all they owned. They had a vested interest in clinging on to even the vaguest hopes offered them. They were perhaps the most effective propagandists, stimulating others with their confidence that, in the end, everything would turn out for the best. Somehow, they would see their homes and farms again. Whereas these refugees from the East often strengthened morale, those from the West, who had little fear of defeat, had the opposite effect.⁹⁷

Finally, few Germans were taken in by descriptions of the miserable living conditions said to be prevailing in enemy lands. Most realised the situation was much worse in the Reich.⁹⁸

As the military situation worsened, Goebbels took refuge more and more in the portrayal of a contrived metaphysical world governed by the forces of good and evil. Here, the vagaries of battle were of little importance. Good always triumphed over bad and Germany with its Führer represented the forces of good. In this theoretical world moral strength and unflinching determination were more powerful than the sword. There were few

risks involved in this type of propaganda. Goebbels spoke of "the enigmatic quality of war which grants every opportunity to every people in every situation". Purely geographical aspects were of secondary importance:

"The place where one stands and fights is not the only decisive factor in this issue. Once we stood on the Atlantic coast, outside Moscow and Leningrad, on the Volga, but the enemy did not surrender. Today he stands on the Rhine and the Oder. Why, then, should we do what the others refused to do....A people resolved to defend its life and to use every, even the most daring means, cannot be beaten."⁹⁹

These assurances became emptier and emptier. Whereas in February Goebbels claimed:

"So long as the war continues nothing is irreplaceable",¹⁰⁰

in his last Das Reich article broadcast on 20 April he maintained:

"Not to be beaten means for us to be victorious".¹⁰¹

There could be no better example of the bankruptcy of German propaganda than the answer given by a radio commentator at the beginning of April to the question: "How shall we achieve victory?"

"How is it possible, when in March and April storms and snow are still raging, that spring should come and the sun shine again? After all, there is no visible sign."¹⁰²

A peaceful and idyllic life was promised in the remote future:

"In a few years' time after this war Germany will flourish as she did before. In her destroyed regions and provinces will arise new and finer towns and villages where happy people will live. All Europe will take part in this progress. We shall again be friends with all nations of goodwill and shall together with them heal the serious wounds disfiguring the noble features of our continent."¹⁰³

This was perhaps the most accurate of all Goebbels' predictions made at the time! The better world of the future was described as if it were a certainty but factual explanations as to how it might be achieved were discreetly left out. The Propaganda Minister developed his own theory of "historical justice":

"History offers no instance in which the unbroken courage of a people could in the end be overcome by brute force. Always, at the decisive moment, there comes the timely intervention of the arm of Providence, inexplicable to man, which will not allow any tampering with the eternal laws of history."¹⁰⁴

A mystical, almost religious note characterised this propaganda. Providence was the ultimate weapon in the Nazi propaganda armoury. It was Providence that was said to have struck down Roosevelt and to have spared Hitler on 20 July 1944. This pseudo-mystical propaganda took on an almost biblical note in Goebbels' radio address on 19 April, the eve of Hitler's 56th birthday:

"Now as often before when Beelzebub stood within reach of having power over all peoples, God will cast him into the abyss, whence he came..."

Hitler would be his instrument.¹⁰⁵ In this preoccupation with the mystical, Hitler's person became an instrument of propaganda. He was the champion of Providence and hence the guarantee of "final victory". A nation with such a leader simply could not lose. The panegyric of Hitler's person culminated in an article of Goebbels in Das Reich in the very last days of 1944. The Minister told his readers that their Führer was "the greatest among the living" and that "he transcends everything ordinary and human in a way which makes us appear very small".¹⁰⁶

The morale reports show that few people were taken in by Goebbels' rhetoric. SD Stuttgart believed that no other single article of the Minister had been criticised so much as this one. There was an intense dislike of the mystical language which had the effect of turning Hitler into a "German God" or a "second Christ".¹⁰⁷ Most Germans kept their feet firmly on the ground when confronted hourly with the sombre reality. Their reaction to this kind of propaganda was based on a realistic estimation of the military situation. Mystical appeal was met with factual questions. Goebbels' attempt to prove enemy war guilt and to wipe Hitler clean of any responsibility for having started the war fell on deaf ears. Few could now accept the propaganda portrayal of the Führer as a lover of peace. Memories were not so short. Many people still remembered Chamberlain's visits to Germany in September 1938 and his great reluctance to go to war with Germany.¹⁰⁸ In fact, according to one report of January 1945, some citizens - especially "so-called intellectuals" and "intelligent workers" - were turning to Mein Kampf to show that the Nazis had started the war in September 1939,

"for one of the essential points in the Führer's policy had certainly been the expansion of the Reich in the East and, in addition, the union of all Germans in one united Reich".

This would only have been possible by going to war and it was clear that "the Führer had aimed at war from the very start".^{109*} The perverted interpretation of Germany fighting a just war against the forces of evil was thus neutralised by people's memories. What is more, many remained unconvinced that the war had been at all necessary. In the country areas around Stuttgart many people were heard to say that the war could very easily have been avoided, for everyone had enough Lebensraum and it was completely unnecessary to seek more in the East.¹¹⁰ Such a view was particularly dangerous for it not only meant a negation of all National Socialist propaganda theory and claims but also blaming one's own government for all the suffering borne in the sixth year of the war. The response to Goebbels' praise of Hitler's "sixth sense" was that, if the Führer was really the genius he was made out to be, then he would never have embarked on the war! Finally, on hearing the Minister's claim that Hitler could not be fooled, many pointed to the events of 20 July 1944 to prove the opposite was true.¹¹¹

Naturally, when examining the reaction to this praise of Hitler, an assessment of the German people's attitude to their leader at this time is of supreme importance. Did he still enjoy the respect of earlier and better days? There can be little doubt that at the very time propagandists were busy turning him into a German god and the guarantee of "final victory", the population was regarding him more and more as a mere mortal who had failed in his life's work. On the other hand, he continued to enjoy a certain respect and was not so unpopular as the Party itself. Many really believed it possible to distinguish between the organisation and the man who had brought it to power. This is not to deny the general feeling of bitter disillusionment in 1945. Unwittingly, propaganda laudations of the Führer only turned attention back

to promises made in the past. Many remembered the claim made by Hitler in October 1941 that the last battle-fit Soviet divisions had been destroyed.

"Who can take it ill if we no longer believe the words of the Führer."

Hitler's promise in his proclamation of 24 February that Germany would, despite all, still win was met with such ironic remarks as:

"The Führer is prophesying yet again"

"The Führer has never stopped promising us victory"

"Again and again it's the same old tune."

The Führer's avowed confidence was no longer enough to allay the general spirit of pessimism:

"They shouldn't always tell us we will win the war because we must win it, but they should show us for once how the other side can lose."

Such a negative view was also being uttered by "thoroughly calm and decent Volksgenossen."¹¹² That Hitler should continue to enjoy any respect at all in such a catastrophic situation may be seen as a limited success of Nazi propaganda. But his popular image had, of course, little in common with the superman the propagandists were making him out to be. For many Germans he was less the champion of Providence than the cruel victim of Fate. He had wanted the best but his failure was to be traced back to one fault - his unquestioning faith and trust in his fellow men! The idea was current that he had been misled by his entourage who had given him bad advice and had deliberately withheld the truth from him. This last remaining esteem was often tied to one last faint hope that something might still

happen. In spite of the general mood of hopelessness and dejection many managed somehow to hang on to the vague idea that Hitler "will still have something that will bring about the turn".¹¹³

Another feature of the consolation propaganda in the last months of the conflict was the growing resort to historical parallels. The message was always the same. Many states and nations had faced worse crises than the one Germany now found herself in but had, nonetheless, pulled through in the end. One of Goebbels' favourite comparisons was the desperate position of Frederick the Great's Prussia during the Seven Years' War.¹¹⁴ Another parallel popular among Nazi propagandists was the time of trials and tribulations experienced by the NSDAP before coming to power. At the turn of the year 1932-3 it had really seemed that the Party had reached the nadir of its fortunes, yet only a few weeks later Hitler was Chancellor.¹¹⁵ Goebbels even went back a couple of thousand years to prove his point. In an article appearing in Das Reich in November 1944 he wrote:

"The decisive struggle between Rome and Carthage lasted more than 18 years and brought Hannibal to the gates of Rome. Yet Rome won in the end and out of blood and tears there arose, as the proud result of this struggle, the Roman Empire - the most monumental achievement of the ancient world."¹¹⁶

Hitler found this comparison particularly appealing and in March 1945 instructed Goebbels to make even greater use of the Punic Wars in his propaganda.¹¹⁷ Parallels were even drawn with the American and Dutch Wars of Independence.¹¹⁸ Through all these comparisons runs a remarkable appeal to "the justice of history". This was a guarantee of final German victory.

"If this were not so, the Goddess of History would only be a money-whore, an ignominious priestess of the greater number, and History without higher morals."¹¹⁹

The Nazis were also not averse to pointing to the predicament of the British in 1940 and of the Russians in the autumn of 1941 in order to show their own people that no crisis, however grave, was insurmountable.¹²⁰

Most Germans were, however, entirely immune to this attempt to distract their attention away from the situation then prevailing. The frequent comparisons with the Seven Years' War, for example, were rejected outright. Conditions had been very different in the eighteenth century and there had been no such thing as air warfare!¹²¹ The Münster SD office, now evacuated to Bielefeld, feared that the continued use of these historical parallels was doing more harm than good, as it was leading to a fatal awareness of being manipulated by propaganda.¹²² Goebbels himself confessed - if only in his diary - that this kind of propaganda was not meeting with the expected success. Rather despairingly but nevertheless nearer the truth than he had been for a long time, he lamented:

"One has the gloomy feeling that even the best arguments do not get through to a people that is tired and battle-weary."¹²³

Far from relinquishing instructive historical parallels, rather typically he set about preparing an article in Das Reich which he hoped would convince his audience of their usefulness. He wrote at the end of March:

"The purpose of historical examples is to strengthen and raise our fighting morale and they are not cited because they agree in all their details with

the present fateful struggle of our people against a world of enemies."¹²⁴

It would really seem that, at this stage of the war, Goebbels was unable to find a replacement for a propaganda theme which he knew was proving to be ineffective, and these parallels continued to be drawn right up to the very end of the war.

Finding itself in a position it could do little to control, Nazi propaganda rapidly degenerated into a crude bombardment with slogans. Catchphrases like "Victory Will Be Ours" or "The Strength of the Believing Heart" appeared again and again in the headlines of the German press. The newspapers gave von Oven "the creeps":

"As they no longer have anything tangible to say to their readers, they try to outdo one another in empty pathos. Every day one can read all over the front page, 'Courage, Faith, Steadfastness!', 'Now More Than Ever', 'With the Führer to Final Victory', 'Faith and Combat'."¹²⁵

Such slogans were upheld as undoubtable truths which did not need to be proven. Secondly, the style of the propaganda articles and speeches was increasingly marked by an almost uncontrollable use of superlatives - a sort of ersatz enthusiasm. The speeches of Goebbels and even less important Nazi leaders were received, if one is to believe newspaper accounts, with an enthusiasm no less intense than the reaction to the German military triumphs of 1940-2. This tendency would vindicate Lasswell's assumption:

"In severe crises, whether revolutionary or interstate, anxiety may cumulate to the point of using all the available capacity of expression. The higher the level of utilised capacity, the less

margin is left, the more terse and repetitious the style. Hysterical speakers, for instance, may reach a plateau on which they shout as loud as they can, reiterating a limited repertory of more or less unintelligible cries.

Variations in style become impossible as the individual regresses to rather primitive forms of 'repetitive compulsiveness'.¹²⁶

This sounds like a very accurate account of the decline of Nazi propaganda. The phenomenon described above had been evident ever since Stalingrad. Despite the many warnings by the SD that repetition was having a negative rather than a positive effect, Nazi propaganda became increasingly dependent on the reiteration of a handful of arguments. This tendency became much more marked in the final months of the war when the propagandists often did not bother to provide a factual basis for the "truths" propagated. An air of resignation may perhaps be discerned in these empty slogans. Blind faith was demanded, a faith probably not held by many of the propagandists. The SD noted a widespread aversion to these hollow phrases and reported in March:

"The 'steadfastness of the believing heart' is now being spoken of sarcastically."¹²⁷

Instead of these hackneyed slogans, people demanded to hear a more sober and soldierly language.¹²⁸ The aptitude of Lasswell's assumptions on propaganda behaviour in a time of stress is borne out by the criticism made by an Austrian Party official in February:

"Ideas such as motherhood, sacrifice, bravery, devotion to higher values, etc. are already being repeated again and again by our immoderate propaganda in such a way that, even when someone

uses these ideals with a pure and heart-felt conviction, he runs the risk of being regarded as a bombastic gasbag. The propagandists have trampled down the meadows which God has given the poets."

According to the same report, the unbridled use of superlatives was making it impossible to heighten the intensity of the propaganda message. The very essence of the propaganda was being debased. The writer went on to explain that the word "enthusiasm" could certainly be used to describe Hitler's reception in Austria in 1938 but not the response to a speech of Ley in some obscure factory in the sixth year of war.¹²⁹

Goebbels was very aware of the perils involved in this degeneration of the propaganda content into a series of good-sounding but hollow slogans.¹³⁰ At the end of February he instructed his propagandists to be calm and more realistic and to avoid using empty phrases. They were to give the German people factual proof that the war could still be won.¹³¹ This was, of course, easier said than done. Bormann, too, warned Party officials

"Nothing would be more dangerous than to want to help the population endure these hard times through slogans, empty phrases and irresponsible predictions."

He, moreover, professed the belief that, if the German people were told the truth about the seriousness of Germany's position, it would be possible to arouse in them the most fanatical will to resist the enemy onslaught.¹³²

Goebbels' radio address on 28 February is to be seen as a conscious attempt to get away from a catchphrase propaganda and to pave the way for a propaganda of "substance". According to von Oven, the Minister worked extremely hard preparing the

speech which took an hour to deliver. The following day the German press was allotted an extra ration of paper so that it could print the speech in full. That the radio should repeat the speech twice demonstrates the importance attached to it.¹³³ Not only did Goebbels promise victory; he set out to prove that Germany still had a good chance of winning. He claimed that the supply of arms and food was such that the war could be continued for an indefinite period. Although referring to the recent success of the U-boats and V-weapons, the stress continued to be put on the determination and the will of the German people.¹³⁴

Realising the great effort that went into the planning of this speech and the hopes that were attached to it, a detailed examination of the response would most certainly prove rewarding. Von Oven had few kind words to say about it:

"This is the first speech [of Goebbels] which I have to describe as decidedly bad and as a crude propaganda failure."

He went on, however, to qualify this criticism:

"Our position certainly seems to be in such a tangle and so hopeless that even the best propaganda is doomed to fail."¹³⁵

This very negative impression is confirmed by several mood reports. SD Villingen described it as "a great disappointment".

"People railed at it in a frightful way. The government, they say, has really no idea how things really stand. They can no longer bear hearing the constantly reiterated statements about the moral strength of the heart. What's the use of bravery when no weapons and munitions are available."¹³⁶

Goebbels' assurances had apparently fallen on deaf ears. His comforting words were contradicted by what every German could see for himself. The same report went on to say that people were asking what had come of the "trump cards" the Führer had promised and the secret weapons that were supposed to come to Germany's rescue. Another report from SD Rastatt compiled a few days after the speech stated that "the minister is hated more than he is valued" and that "he is spurned as a teller of fairy-tales". A certain class animosity can be detected in the response to Goebbels' call: "Better to die than capitulate!"

"He can talk - he sits in safety and in a good shelter."

Even Party members were now heard to say that "it would have been better if we had not started the war, particularly with Russia and the United States",¹³⁷ thus showing that they disbelieved the basic propaganda argument that the enemy alone bore the responsibility. In Mannheim Parteigenossen were reported as saying after the speech:

"If the new weapons don't come, then this promise was the biggest swindle the nation has had to endure."

The heavy air-raid on the town on 1 March was interpreted by some of its citizens as the enemy's reply to Goebbels' defiance.¹³⁸ If this were not the case, then it was surely a timely reminder of the enemy's strength and omnipresence.

Thus Goebbels' "new-line" propaganda could do little or nothing to improve the mood already largely determined by factors outside the control of the propagandist. In fact, the "new line" soon fizzled out and it did not take long for the former state of affairs, which Goebbels had endeavoured to

change, to reappear. Even the best will could no longer check this inevitable decline and decay of German propaganda.

There were few people left in the German Reich who were still prepared to swallow promises. Nothing had come of the promises made before so how could one expect anything to come of those now being made at a time when Germany's military situation was visibly deteriorating from hour to hour? This was the very core of the propagandists' dilemma. In her account of Goebbels' weekly articles in Das Reich, Kessemeier has shown this insuperable obstacle then confronting German propagandists. After pointing out the success of his articles until 1944, she goes on to show how at the end of the war "the discrepancy between the reality which everyone could recognise and the propaganda portrayal" made it impossible to believe what he said. Although after December 1944 his articles not only appeared in Das Reich but also in the entire Gau press, thus reaching a much larger number of readers, Goebbels was powerless when faced with the growing war-weariness and the paralysing feeling that absolutely nothing Germany could do would change the course of events.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, one isolated SD report could claim as late as March that "the German broadcasts still give a certain comfort and can still contribute to an improvement in the mood".¹⁴⁰ This guarded optimism ought perhaps to be seen more as an attempt to comfort the hard-tried propagandists rather than as proof of propaganda success. Nearer the truth was certainly a report from SD Münster written a few days later:

"It must be described as an established fact that the state-controlled media, press and radio, are now exerting as good as no influence. From the intelligentsia down to the working class the German propaganda is mistrusted and rejected."¹⁴¹

In Halle a "reliable National Socialist" was reported to have remarked:

"We have been lied to and cheated. If a fraction of what has been told us since Stalingrad were true, then the present situation could never have come about."¹⁴²

Some Berliners even compared the propaganda to "a band on a 143
sinking ship which goes on playing with undiminished enthusiasm".

There can be little doubt that defeatism had come to characterise the general mood of the German people in the spring of 1945. In March morale in Munich had reached "zero point" and even those Volksgenossen who had always clung onto their heartfelt belief in "final victory" had now given up all hope. An occupation of the whole Reich was now anticipated. Most people were now longing for the end.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, the

Regierungspräsident of Augsburg noted in his March report that "many would quite like to see a swift advance of the enemy armies, that thereby the war would finally come to an end".¹⁴⁵

Few Germans, even Party members, were now prepared to contradict or scold those making distinctly defeatist remarks.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, the pathetic clinging on to a last vague hope, described above, persisted. In trying to grasp these apparently contradictory aspects in the morale of the same person - defeatism and faint hope - we must remember the very irrationality and ambivalence of human thought in a situation of such extraordinary strain. But this relative "optimism" was perhaps most typical of those who simply had to believe that the worst could somehow be averted. Many refugees from the East and those left behind in Königsberg went on hoping. For the latter the reality had become so incredible that many chose to ignore it. They just could not comprehend the fact that the Russians were in the suburbs of their town! Many tried to

interpret this dreadful reality as part of an ingenious and predetermined plan of the Führer to lure the enemy into a trap.¹⁴⁷ The sheer irrationality of human behaviour in such a situation in which accepting defeat is virtually synonymous with accepting one's own destruction is illustrated by the considerable effect that a militarily insignificant event associated with normality could have on morale. In beleaguered Königsberg the temporary reopening of the banks after the initial Russian thrust was welcomed with a reassuring feeling:

"The possibility of paying in money again and drawing it out again shows clearly enough that things can't be so bad after all."¹⁴⁸

Most Germans, however, had by March come to terms with the reality of impending defeat and apathy greeted the most determined efforts of Nazi propagandists to buck them up. After six years of war the German people was exhausted and incapable of sharing any strong emotions - even against those who were bombing its homes.¹⁴⁹ The attitude of Berliners at the end of March was summed up by an eye-witness:

"One lets the government, press and radio calmly carry on with its propaganda without responding to it. No one takes even the remotest interest in what is preached. Warnings, appeals, threats only ricochet like bullets when confronted with this war-weariness. The Germans are without exception more apathetic than they have ever been. They don't believe in anything at all."¹⁵⁰

This widespread apathy was accompanied by a growing pre-occupation with the immediate personal sphere of life and the question of survival in an uncertain future.

"The inner anguish and the feeling of despair,

the burden of everyday life, the work, the food situation and the anxiety regarding one's own existence and the well-being of relatives in other parts of Germany, at the front and at home, have turned the Volk into an apathetic human mass which has had enough and no longer has the strength to express its feelings and wishes."¹⁵¹

Naturally, most afraid of this phenomenon were the propagandists themselves. They admitted the existence of this paralysing fatalism and the longing for peace but, at the same time, reassured their audience that there was absolutely no danger of "a collapse of our resistance will".¹⁵² But such reassurances were, of course, worthless and without effect, for by the end of March 1945 German propaganda had become irrelevant for most Volksgenossen. The thoughts of most Germans were already centred on a world without National Socialism. Although those still lucky enough to possess a radio set in working order might still tune into the Reichsrundfunk, few any longer paid much attention to what was being said.

C. THE FACTORS IMPAIRING THE DESIRED PROPAGANDA RESPONSE

In order to explain further these very meagre results of Nazi propaganda in the last months of the war, consideration will now be given to the factors intervening between propaganda message and propaganda response. It was shown in earlier chapters how alternative - also "illegal" - information sources gained in prestige and importance as Germany's military position weakened and Allied air-raids intensified. At the same time, Nazi propaganda's reputation for truth and reliability took a severe pounding. The further development of these trends will

be traced in the following section of this chapter. The attitude of the German people to the National Socialist Party and the importance of class and social group and membership of the churches as factors determining outlook and response to propaganda will also be examined. First of all, however, it is necessary to tackle the question of the availability of the propaganda audience and the capability of Nazi propagandists of reaching this audience. It would be the greatest folly to take both these things for granted.

(i) T h e T e c h n i c a l P r o b l e m s a n d
G a p s i n P r o p a g a n d a D i s t r i b u t i o n

The loss of territory and the heavy air-raids naturally did not remain without effect on newspaper circulation and on radio transmission and reception. At the closing stage of the war, the fall in the potential propaganda audience was to become a particularly acute problem and the propagandists racked their brains to find the best way of ensuring propaganda distribution. In March 1945 Goebbels warned that technical difficulties in those areas threatened by air-raids or by the enemy advance should in no case be allowed to lead to a situation in which the inhabitants were left to their own devices. As a partial solution, he suggested greater use of pamphlets, officially inspired rumours (Mundpropaganda) and, above all, cable radio (Drahtfunk), which could not be heard by the enemy and "can therefore use a more candid language than is possible in the political broadcasts of the wireless".¹⁵³ Relaying the normal radio stations, Drahtfunk had already been installed in many German homes in pre-war days. Furthermore, it had been used for the public relay of speeches by Nazi leaders. The number of subscribers rose considerably during the war as it began to supply an additional service: warnings of enemy air activity

over the Reich. Operated at Gau level, it was even possible to inform the citizens of a city which districts had to expect immediate attack.

As early as September 1944, the press in areas endangered by the enemy advance had been instructed to go on publishing as long as it was technically possible - if necessary, independently of the Berlin Tagesparolen. In such an emergency the newspapers would receive their instructions from local Party leaders. In the event of "temporary" enemy occupation editors were absolutely forbidden to carry on publishing. The local population would then be supplied with official news by means of pamphlets.¹⁵⁴

The problems facing the German press at the end of the war were twofold: a) shortage of paper b) supply and distribution difficulties. As early as the spring of 1944 anxious voices had been raised regarding "gaps" in supply. Especially the evacuees from the bombed areas were without daily papers, because the paper shortage ruled out any increase in circulation in the reception areas.¹⁵⁵ It is not difficult to imagine how acute the situation became a few months later with the sudden influx of refugees from the East. To make matters worse Allied bombing caused repeated disruption of both printing and distribution.¹⁵⁶ Finally, in early 1945, owing to paper shortage, newspapers had to be reduced not only in size but also in circulation.¹⁵⁷

By the end of 1944, of a total of sixteen million licensed radio sets in Germany, three million were out of operation. There were fears that this could undermine the effectiveness of the entire radio propaganda. The idea was even put forward of bringing to Germany radio sets which had been confiscated in Holland and Norway.¹⁵⁸ It was a question not just of replacing sets smashed in raids but also of

procuring valves and other spare-parts.¹⁵⁹ In some parts of the Reich clear radio reception had become virtually impossible. In Saxony, for instance, it was reported in March 1945 that the Reichssender Leipzig was completely out of operation whilst the national programme, the Deutschlandsender, was not broadcasting in the mornings and was usually off the air for the rest of the day because of enemy air activity.¹⁶⁰ Therefore, even if one were willing and able to listen to official propaganda, it was not always possible to do so. What is more, radio listening was being hampered by frequent power-cuts. The enemy air-raids had also drastically changed listening habits and had in some cases led to total radio abstinence. After a sudden air attack without prior warning, most of the citizens of Freiburg, for instance, no longer risked switching on their sets for fear of not hearing approaching enemy planes. Those still listening did so with only "half an ear".¹⁶¹ Nor was the picture very different in other German towns. An eye-witness in Nuremburg wrote in March 1945:

"The Deutschlandsender indeed broadcasts the OKW-Bericht daily. But who can still hear it? For a long time now, most radio sets have either been smashed by bombs, sent out of the city or kept in the cellar. It is impossible to leave them in the flat, for every day the alarm sounds eight to ten times. And who is able to drag the radio set eight to ten times daily into the cellar?"

He went on to remark that, as a result, only a few still listened and already knew that Franconia had become the scene of military operations.¹⁶² After a severe raid the town of Mannheim was left without power and consequently without radio or press for three days. The result was a greater

susceptibility to reports emanating from another information channel, the rumour, which was not always so flattering to government and Party.¹⁶³

(ii) T h e S h o r t c o m i n g s o f
O f f i c i a l P r o p a g a n d a

Nazi propagandists had been unable to allay the feeling felt by so many people of being manipulated which has been described in earlier chapters. Nor had they been able to make good the damage done to their prestige during the setbacks of 1943, in particular Stalingrad and the embarrassingly long silence which followed the fall of the Duce. Even more than before, the press and radio had come to be regarded as "the willing tools of the 'propaganda'" and the very word "propaganda" was now associated in the popular mind with "deceit" or at least a "one-sided presentation for a certain purpose".¹⁶⁴ The almost inevitable resorting to slogans the more the military situation deteriorated could only heighten this uncomfortable awareness of being the "victim" of propaganda.

Credence in propaganda was dependent on the degree to which it could answer those questions uppermost in people's minds. And it was here that propagandists were presented with a terrible dilemma. The listener demanded honesty and objectivity but honesty and objectivity would have meant giving defeatism an official blessing. It must be kept in mind that propaganda was not only aimed at inducing belief in its message but also at securing certain behaviour. The two objectives were in no way compatible in 1944-5.

The shortcomings of German propaganda as well as the attitude of the average German to it at the end of the war are perhaps best summed up in the observations made by an Austrian

Party member in February 1945. He first condemned the propaganda emanating from Berlin for being too deliberate and clumsy. Moreover, in Austria it often seemed "foreign" and remained without effect or, even worse, it had the opposite effect to the one desired. The Volksgenosse was conscious of being deliberately manipulated:

"He feels that he has become too much the object of the propaganda and quite rightly feels angry about it."

After criticising the sledge-hammer methods of propaganda, he went on to point out the long memories of many people who, remembering what Goebbels had said two years before, did not hesitate to compare it with what he was saying in 1945. He believed the propagandists were underestimating the German people and made a devastating attack on the fantasy world the propagandists were living in:

"The consequences of the mistakes and shortcomings of our propaganda are that the Volk is living independently of it and that they are by no means affected by it to the extent the propagandists believe they are."

He concluded his report with the pertinent comment that if German propaganda were really so successful, then the population would not be tuning in so much to foreign radio stations and there would not be so many rumours in circulation.¹⁶⁵ Thus lack of trust in official propaganda was almost synonymous with trust in those unofficial news sources to be described in the next part of this chapter.

(iii) U n o f f i c i a l I n f o r m a t i o n
S o u r c e s

The alternative sources of information described in earlier chapters - rumours, foreign radio stations, accounts of soldiers and evacuees - continued to exert a crucial influence on the formation of opinion as the military situation became more and more desperate.

a) Foreign Radio Stations

Foreign radio was certainly the most dangerous of these unofficial sources for, even if only a minority of the German people were regular listeners, they would "infect" the rest by passing on what they heard. It is still unclear how many Germans actually did listen. According to the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 51% of all adult Germans listened at some time during the war.¹⁶⁶ Although the reliability of this figure has been disputed,¹⁶⁷ the growing severity of the punishments meted out to "radio criminals" would certainly point to an increase in audience as the war went on. In the years 1943-5 the German newspaper reader was repeatedly confronted with reports like the following:

"Oskar Übel, aged 47, of Vienna was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude by a Vienna Sondergericht for a radio crime. On a motion of the Reich Supreme Prosecutor, this sentence was annulled and the case was again referred to the Sondergericht. Übel had listened to foreign broadcasts in his flat on about forty occasions, together with several young men with whom he discussed anti-German news. He had, as it were, organised the listening and spreading of the news. The Sondergericht considered that this particularly serious case came under paragraph 2 of the Radio Decree and consequently pronounced the death sentence, which has already been carried out."¹⁶⁸

As Hagemann has pointed out, the artificial monopoly enjoyed by Nazi propaganda could only last as long as it was backed up by external military success but, as soon as it was faced with a setback and the myth of German invincibility was cracked, then the German listeners would begin playing around with the tuning-dials on their sets and seeking "a bridge with the world outside".¹⁶⁹

In the summer of 1943 American analysts concluded that "illegal" radio listening was on the increase from the simple fact that accounts of punishments inflicted on offenders were now being carried in the national press, whereas before they had been confined to local newspapers.¹⁷⁰ Driven by a hunger for news, the nagging wish to find out what was really going on, even those otherwise loyal to the ideas of National Socialism were now joining the ranks of "black listeners".¹⁷¹ Party officials seem to have had a hard time of it trying to dam the stream of "forbidden" news. SD Cologne even suggested that a rumour should be spread that a technical instrument existed which enabled the police to detect transgressors.¹⁷² Although some Party men claimed to have found the bulk of "black listeners" in upper and upper-middle class circles who felt "inhibited when forming their own free opinion by the one-sided German information",¹⁷³ class as such would seem much less important than the reception capabilities of the set one possessed. Of course, those owning four or five-valve "superhets" were usually better-off than the owners of simple Volksempfänger.

During the winter of 1943-4 a station calling itself Soldatensender Calais was giving Nazi propagandists a big headache. Although purporting to be a German programme broadcasting to Wehrmacht troops in western Europe, it was, in fact, an Allied propaganda station. Many people were

listening to it without realising that it was an enemy station. What is more, its attractive programmes - much lighter than those provided by either the Reichssender or Deutschlandsender - were making it dangerously popular.¹⁷⁴ Its transmitter was so powerful that it drowned the Reichssender Munich.¹⁷⁵ Its success proved so worrying that some local Party leaders decided to explain its true nature by means of Mundpropaganda.¹⁷⁶

But not only enemy stations were popular. Neutral stations, although forbidden, also found many appreciative listeners. Although the BBC tended to dominate the aether in northern Germany, the Swiss station, Beromunster, enjoyed a high reputation for objectivity in the south-west.¹⁷⁷

"Black-listening" increased dramatically in the late summer of 1944 as the failure to halt the Invasion became evident. Here again, the prestige of the enemy radio was enhanced when the truth of its reporting was later confirmed by events. Soon, an additional factor was to encourage others to tune in - the fear lest one hear of developments on the Eastern Front too late!¹⁷⁸ That the German radio, for instance, should have announced the fall of Budapest three days after it had been made known over the enemy radio did not go unnoticed and destroyed any remaining vestiges of trust in German news reporting.¹⁷⁹ The threat posed by enemy stations grew the further the enemy armies advanced, because loss of territory also meant the loss of the valuable jamming stations in the areas previously occupied. Jamming could be continued only at the expense of domestic radio stations. The danger was so grave that in October the Propaganda Ministry asked the Reichspropagandaämter whether they thought the time for such a sacrifice had now come.¹⁸⁰ The Berlin propagandists had to make a painful choice. Measures against the enemy radio would have meant depriving the German population of what was regarded as

the most efficient propaganda instrument. That would have been too great a sacrifice. Even if Nazi propaganda was having less and less influence on public opinion, the myth of its effectiveness had to be upheld! The proximity of the enemy lines meant that enemy stations could be received at ease. Especially at night-time these stations were interfering with the reception of German programmes.

"Thus the Volksgenossen, even when they only want to hear a German station, go searching and with deadly certainty stumble on to an enemy station."¹⁸¹

The capture of the powerful long-wave Luxembourg transmitter, the wavelength of which lay next to the Drahtfunk, must have constituted a terrible temptation for the German listener to turn the tuning-dial just a little! This meant that even those people who had continued to trust their own radio propaganda and had scrupulously avoided enemy wavelengths now, too, began to doubt.¹⁸² To make the situation even worse, the Allies made increasing use of German wavelengths so that it became virtually impossible to know whether a station was German or not. The news heard would then be spread without it being realised that it had come from an enemy source. This was all the more likely as the German stations went off the air without notice with the approach of hostile aircraft.¹⁸³

There is therefore no doubt that "black-listening" increased in the same measure that Germany's military situation worsened and the embarrassment of German propagandists became more evident.

b) German Soldiers

The great influence of soldiers' reports on the mood at home has been mentioned in Chapter 4. They were seen as "experts" and opinion leaders on war matters although their

accounts naturally tended to be generalisations of individual experience. Propagandists realised their importance in the forming of opinion and endeavoured to exploit the prestige of the front-fighter in their propaganda, as at the time of the Katyn discoveries. A Party report of April 1944 was very realistic in its assessment of the German soldier's influence:

"The front-line soldier from the Eastern Front enjoys more success in the village pub than a speaker in a meeting. What the simple soldier says is passed on, whereas, although people go to the Party meeting, they do not pass on what they have heard there."¹⁸⁴

The consequent limitations in the effect of official propaganda was also recognised by the SD:

"a single unfavourable letter from a soldier or the tale of a solitary soldier on leave can have more influence on the belief of many Volksgenossen in the stability of the Eastern Front than the press can make good in a whole week."¹⁸⁵

It is not difficult to imagine how this influence could be both a source of strength and danger for the propagandists. As long as everything at the front was going to plan, the soldiers' enthusiasm would prove a valuable support for official propaganda. But, as early as the winter retreat of 1941-2, the accounts of events passed on by the troops were giving propagandists cause for anxiety.¹⁸⁶ It would nevertheless seem that they continued to constitute a strengthening rather than a weakening factor as regards civilian morale until well into 1943, although their accounts might often be at variance with official reporting.¹⁸⁷ In fact, many soldiers were depressed by the pessimism and lack of enthusiasm they encountered among the

civilian population.¹⁸⁸ The persistent need to retreat in the East after summer 1943, as well as the growing unlikelihood of a new grand German offensive, had, however, a shattering effect on this confidence in the Reich's military strength. The accounts which soldiers now gave totally contradicted the propaganda picture of an orderly retreat "according to plan". They spoke of valuable equipment and huge stores being left behind, as well as the loss of entire German divisions.¹⁸⁹ The consequence was that the front-line reports broadcast on the radio began to be criticised for concealing the real state of things¹⁹⁰ and that even the once respected OKW-Bericht was increasingly viewed as propaganda since it made no mention of those forced withdrawals described in letters from the front.¹⁹¹

The soldiers on duty in the rear lines were reported as having a more depressing effect on home morale than those in the front lines. And it was the former "who make up the larger group of soldiers on leave". Moreover, "they can influence the mood of the population all the more, because the latter believes everything the soldier says and makes no distinction between soldiers fighting at the front and those stationed behind the lines".¹⁹² Certainly, it was these rear-line soldiers who caused some of the most morale-shattering moments of the war in the autumn of 1944. During the retreat from the West, the sight of these undisciplined soldiers accompanied by French "camp followers" and booty was sufficient to evoke a spirit of unconcealed dejection and even defeatism.¹⁹³ A report of May 1944 claimed it was possible to distinguish between the younger soldiers who were still relatively optimistic and the more pessimistic older generation that had just been called up.¹⁹⁴

In the final months of the war, nothing seems to have distressed the soldiers more than the terrible numbing feeling

of powerlessness when confronted with overwhelming enemy superiority in men and material. Early in 1945 soldiers wounded on the Eastern Front were said to be infecting the inhabitants of Middle Franconia with this depressing feeling when they reported that "the Russians were much better equipped than we, the Russian tanks were rolling fortifications against which nothing could be done, and every second Russian soldier possesses a submachine-gun".¹⁹⁵

It was, of course, practically impossible to interfere with, let alone control, this information channel. Attempts were made to appeal to the soldiers' and the civilians' sense of duty and to call on them to exercise self-discipline in their correspondence. In a forces broadcast the soldiers were warned that their petty grumbling will have "a far-reaching influence on our people". They should transform their letters into "a sharp weapon" by omitting their grievances. They were to "add in every letter a word of good cheer" in order to give "fresh courage" to the Home Front. Soldiers were also reminded that every letter was not only read by their families "ten times" but also "discussed at the place of work".¹⁹⁶ In the same way, those at home were reminded that soldiers were eye-witnesses of events on just one small section of the front and that they consequently had no oversight over developments as a whole.¹⁹⁷

c) Enemy Pamphlets

Although the German population was instructed to hand in unread all leaflets dropped by enemy planes to the nearest police station,¹⁹⁸ the growing anxiety expressed by the Party and the SD would indicate an increased interest in their content as Germany's war fortunes receded. It was frankly admitted that those lucky enough to find them now read them.¹⁹⁹ These leaflets, so it was reported, were proving particularly effective for they

played on those doubts nagging the minds of their readers. They were becoming so worrying to the authorities that Nazi propaganda found it necessary to take up the questions they raised, thereby running the risk of spreading knowledge of the arguments of enemy propaganda yet further. In a report of April 1944 SD Koblenz expressed the opinion that, whereas before this form of enemy agitation had had little permanent effect, it was now proving quite successful. Many people were venturing to utter the view that the statements made in the leaflets were probably correct for, whilst the predictions made by enemy statesmen had turned out to be right, this certainly could not be said of those made by their own leaders.²⁰⁰ This view is an indication of the success of Allied propaganda tactics of printing the promises made to the German people in better days and then leaving their readers to draw the appropriate conclusions.²⁰¹ The growing success of this information source is further confirmed in a report compiled in March 1945, according to which the dangerous idea that Anglo-American occupation would be quite bearable was to be traced back in large measure to enemy pamphlets.²⁰²

d) Evacuees

The negative effect of the evacuees from the bombed cities on the mood of their hosts has been described in detail in Chapter 5. In the final phase of the war their numbers were joined by the millions of east Germans fleeing in panic from the advancing Russians. None of the horrors they had suffered were left untold. Although many of them had not given up all hope of returning to their homes, their terrifying accounts certainly did much to depress the mood of the population in those areas less threatened by the Soviet advance and, indirectly, to arouse an even friendlier disposition towards the western foes.²⁰³

The authorities could do practically nothing to control these tales of gloom. They could do little more than warn the population in the reception areas that "fleeing civilians are unreliable reporters as they live from rumours and their power of judgment has been distorted by the deprivations and terrors they have undergone".²⁰⁴

e) The Churches

Finally, the churches, especially the Catholic Church with its long and universal tradition, had a great influence on opinion - in many rural areas an even greater influence than that of the NSDAP. This had always caused considerable anxiety to the Party, which, despite repeated efforts, had not succeeded in diminishing the hold of the Church on its members. With annoyance and a sense of powerlessness Party functionaries witnessed an increase in churchgoing in the second half of the war.²⁰⁵ As early as summer 1943, it was being reported that even Party members were finding their way back to the Church and attending Sunday service regularly.²⁰⁶ Whereas the Party's propaganda depended on success in this world, all the promises and hopes held out by the Church were directed at a time in the undefined future. They were eternal truths which did not need to be backed up by evidence of the present day. On the Führer's birthday in 1944, a Sunday, Party officials in some Catholic communities were forced to make the unpleasant observation that the churches were being better frequented than Party meetings.²⁰⁷ A report of a Party representative in a small town in the Taunus spoke of the malevolent agitation of "the Catholic Action" which was seriously undermining "the will to win".²⁰⁸ The Catholic Church, in particular, was said to be having an extremely negative influence on young people. In Kreis Oberlahn-Usingen the clergy's anti-Nazi "agitation" was held responsible for an incident in which some Hitler Youth tore up

and destroyed pictures of the Führer.²⁰⁹ What is more, the clergy were said to be exerting an "anti-racialist" influence on the population, thereby undermining the very essence of National Socialism.²¹⁰ According to one report, the attempt of the clerics to portray the misfortune that had befallen the Reich as a just punishment for having persecuted "God's chosen race" was falling on fertile ground. Moreover, these representatives of the spiritual power had managed to damage the public image of the Party and even the institutions of the state.²¹¹ The influence of the Church would appear to have been particularly strong in the summer months when, owing to the great burden of work, the country folk were hardly reached by Nazi propaganda. In short, the local church remained an essential part of everyday country life in wartime Germany and far more importance was attached to the words of the parish priest in the Sunday sermon than to the latest articles of the faraway Propaganda Minister.

(iv) T h e P r o b l e m s o f R u m o u r s a n d t h e U s e o f "M u n d p r o p a g a n d a"

The rumour, which was partly based on information supplied by the information sources described above, became perhaps the most important news channel at the end of the war. The Nazi mass media were leaving the German people in the dark about what was really happening and, needless to say, every Volksgenosse felt obliged to find out the truth, especially now that he was being directly threatened by the enemy advance. The mood reports leave no doubt that the number of rumours in circulation had risen dramatically since the summer of 1943. During the closing stages of the combat, the rumour was even determining behaviour. Exaggerated reports of enemy breakthroughs were leading to "a growing uneasiness among the population, the disruption of work, a fall in confidence and

even to an unjustifiable wish to flee".²¹²

The propagandists, powerless to prevent rumours arising, ridiculed those spreading them. The rumour-monger was compared to the local gossip who believes every depressing tit-bit of news she hears and passes it on enthusiastically.

"She thinks that Roosevelt is the successor of Al Capone and Stalin Archbishop of Moscow. She remembers only half of what she hears and skilfully fills in the gaps with her own flashes of genius."²¹³

Another method of trying to make these rumour-mongers unpopular was to portray them as "a small minority" which was encouraging the enemy in his hopes "that German morale would crack one day" and that the Reich could be defeated from the air. If the air terror were stepped up, then the responsibility could be ascribed to this "small group".²¹⁴ Party members were reminded of their duty to root out these people who "encourage the enemy in his will to attack" because "every uneasiness and disorder behind the front-lines only tempts the enemy to strengthen his attacks and exploit them to the full".²¹⁵

As early as July 1943, Goebbels suggested that it was up to every "decent" German to silence these "saboteurs" of the war effort:

"The rumour-monger must be regarded like the man who starts a panic in the field. There he is regarded as a coward trying to infect with his fear the Fighting Front, apt to disorganise a whole company and more if he is not stopped. At the front it is usual to make an end to this sort of thing at once, generally

through self-help. It should be done equally at home."²¹⁶

Such veiled threats were to become more and more explicit as the war went on. In March 1944, the Minister of Justice warned German radio listeners that the spreaders of rumours "are doing the work of the enemy and attack the fighting-front in the rear. There can be no mercy in such cases."²¹⁷ Soon the admonitions were to become harsher. In September 1944 rumour-mongers were described as "traitors" who had to be removed "for good and all". Extenuating circumstances would not be considered by the judges:

"The frivolous and irresponsible must also be reckoned among such traitors, because they paralyse will, belief and confidence. They spread doubt and endanger our spiritual powers of resistance. Whether they act out of stupidity or spite is immaterial. Since all warnings to these nefarious people have hitherto been in vain, the entire severity of the war law will in the future be applied to them. He who fails to report gossips and rumour-mongers is equally guilty. This should be remembered by all kinds of retailers, dairy owners, publicans, hairdressers, etc. who have hitherto tolerated or even favoured such gossiping in their shops for selfish business reasons or out of weakness."²¹⁸

The very violence of these threats underlines the powerlessness to check this unbridled trading in rumours. But those spreading "optimistic" rumours also found themselves the target of attack - the so-called "150% National Socialists".

"The boaster does not content himself with discussing probable hopes and the possibilities of victory. He does not say: we shall win this

war despite all adversities but he asserts with a serious and important face: you may rest assured, we shall be on the Volga again in October! Or he predicts with convincing certainty that all we have to do is to wait for V2 and then the war will soon be over, Britain will then capitulate in December at the latest."²¹⁹

SD Minster mentioned such dangerous creatures who give dates for the coming "wonder", only then to dash all hopes when their promises failed to materialise. The result was even greater doubt, resignation and fear.²²⁰

Newspaper warnings were, of course, not enough. Direct measures had to be taken. Not only was the whole Party membership exhorted to check this flow of rumours²²¹ but Wehrmacht officers were also reminded that it was their duty to report all recalcitrants when on leave.²²² Even members of the press were called on to do their utmost to work at a personal level against malicious anti-Party rumours; for example, that Party officials were abandoning their posts with the approach of the enemy army.²²³ Finally, the idea dawned on the Nazis of using schoolchildren in their campaign. If the latter could be influenced in the right way, it might be possible to dam the flood of rumours and dangerous tales reaching the ears of their parents. The mutual trust on which the bond between parents and children was based could thus be exploited for "positive" propaganda purposes.

"Fathers and mothers listen to what their children have to say and, as a result, a skilful propaganda can be carried out which, if the conditions are right, can have an excellent effect....Children go home from school or a Hitler Youth meeting

and are sure to pass on what they have heard.

In this way, it is possible to act against all kinds of ridiculous rumours and exaggerations."²²⁴

Such a measure was, in practice, rather difficult to implement. Not only did many teachers fear that dealing with rumours in class would serve to spread them rather than curb them, but they felt too overburdened to take on any additional time-consuming duty. There were, however, cases reported of schoolchildren eagerly watching out for any "enemy rumour" circulating in their "house community"^{224a}.

Despite such counter-measures, the Party and its propagandists were forced to face the unwelcome truth that they were fighting not merely a small and dangerous minority but a phenomenon that had come to influence the mood of the entire German population. Other means would have to be sought. If the "negative" rumour could not be extirpated by threats of draconian punishment, then it might perhaps be offset by the circulation of a "positive" rumour. The use of "propaganda by word of mouth" (Mundpropaganda) to spread morale-boosting propaganda, as well as to counter hostile rumours, was to become a constant feature of German propaganda in the closing stages of the war. It was naturally a means of overcoming the decreasing receivability of the media as paper became scarcer and radio stations became fewer and more liable to go off the air without warning during enemy raids. But the increasing resort to Mundpropaganda was also an admission that the old forms of propaganda were failing and, moreover, proof that the German mass media had lost all credibility. The effectiveness of the rumour as an information channel had long been realised and it was now decided to exploit it to the full in the interests of the Nazi state. The reliance on Mundpropaganda grew the more the military situation worsened and

faith in the German mass media receded. As early as the summer of 1943, it was being used to contradict rumours that the government was planning to confiscate all private bank savings²²⁵ or considering a further cut in meat and bread rations,²²⁶ subjects unfit for the press and radio. But, by the end of 1944, Mundpropaganda had developed into a veritable propaganda system. It ruled out any danger of giving added publicity to "negative" rumours in circulation, as would be the case if they were dealt with through the official channels of information. Furthermore, there would be no records and everyone would remain in the dark as to the provenance of the rumour, because it would be virtually impossible to distinguish an officially inspired rumour from one which had stemmed from "other" sources. Such thinking by the Party becomes clear in the recommendation of the Reichspropagandaämter for an intensification of Mundpropaganda in October 1944:

"The population is at the moment very susceptible to all rumours and therefore also to the message of the Mundpropaganda. It is thus possible to spread positive items of information without running the risk involved in leaving behind any written record."²²⁷

Reacting to this proposal, Goebbels at once ordered an intensification in the Mundpropaganda effort. To ensure maximum effectiveness he instructed his subordinates to report all rumours they had heard forthwith so that they could be countered without delay by a Mundpropagandaparole.²²⁸

Party officials were bound to secrecy. Not only was it absolutely forbidden to pass on Mundpropaganda "in an official form" i.e. at a formal meeting, but they were ordered to take care not to give any clue "which would enable the population²²⁹ to conclude: 'the news has come from the Party' of 'from above'".

The Mundpropagandaparolen (instructions) were to be spread as discreetly as possible and their main purpose was "to counter the negative slogans of the enemy by positive arguments".²³⁰ The relation of the content of these "white" rumours to factual truth was explained by the Party's propaganda section:

"As is the case with doctors, we as propagandists have the task to see the Volk through a crisis. A doctor, who at the same time as handing a patient some medicine, tells him that it is no good and only coloured water, is perhaps an honest fellow but not a good doctor. Only the person who has the best overall view and the best appreciation of the situation as a whole can determine which medicines should be given to the Volk at one particular time."²³¹

An excellent example of this propaganda "medicine" is given by a Mundpropagandaparole dealing with the V2 attacks on London. It was to be said that this rocket caused the mightiest explosion ever witnessed and made a crater 100 metres in diameter.

"During the experiments with this weapon a V2 landed 500 metres from an evacuated village. After the explosion the greater part of the village was destroyed."²³²

According to another Mundpropagandaparole of February 1945, of the 12,000 tanks the Russians had had at the beginning of their offensive on 12 January, 8,000 had been destroyed in the space of three weeks!²³³ At the end of March Goebbels was even playing with the idea of circulating in "anonymous and disguised propaganda", i.e. Mundpropaganda, the contents of horoscopes which prophesied "an alleviation in our military situation" in the second half of April and an end to the fighting in August.²³⁴

There was, however, one snag with this type of propaganda. There was no guaranteeing the desired effect, since like all rumours even officially-inspired ones were impossible to control once planted. The content of these "white" rumours would most probably be altered as they were passed on from mouth to mouth and thus "boomerang" in the end.

The reputation enjoyed by the soldiers as a reliable source of information was also exploited in the Mundpropaganda campaign towards the end of the war. To raise the morale of the raid-stricken city dwellers, small groups comprised of soldiers and Party men were formed to spread "positive" news among the population. They received their instructions from the propaganda offices of the Party and the Wehrmacht. The Mundpropagandaparolen issued by the latter had, however, to be approved by the NSDAP Gaupropagandaleitungen. Furthermore, the Party checked the political reliability of the soldiers participating in this Mundpropagandaaktion. Organised in squads of four, they were sent to those places where citizens congregated - public transport, squares, markets, railway stations, air-raid shelters, pubs, cinemas and shops.

"Usually two soldiers work together, one of them clad in civilian clothing. They either join in other people's conversation or begin their own. Whilst they are on duty, they do not let it be seen that they know one another."

They were also to carry out "terror-raid duty":

"After the sounding of the air-raid alarm, they have to leave the duty area they have been allocated that day and go to the parts of the town worst hit by the bombing terror."

Their reports were passed on to the Wehrmacht Propaganda Office

and then to the Gaupropagandaleitung for evaluation.²³⁵ The first such "special group" had been formed in Vienna at the end of 1943 and Berlin and Breslau followed in 1944. In the first months of 1945 the "action" was extended to many other German towns including Dresden, Leipzig, Munich, Hamburg and Nuremberg.²³⁶ At first, the reports of these groups were confidently optimistic, claiming that the campaign was proving very effective, but this was to change in the spring of 1945. By then even the propagandists had come to recognise the insufficiency of Mundpropaganda in tackling the general defeatism and spirit of apathy. Certainly, in March 1945 officially inspired rumours about new "wonder-weapons" and military "trump cards" were no longer proving so effective as a few months before.²³⁷

(v) A t t i t u d e s t o t h e P a r t y

The growing anticipation of defeat was accompanied by a conscious attempt to distance oneself from the National Socialist Party. The German propagandists found it more and more necessary to impress upon the minds of their audience that such a disassociation from the Party would be of no use whatsoever, for the foe was bent on destroying the whole German people. All Germans would be forced to bear the terrible suffering defeat would bring. There was no alternative but to fight on. But a similar drift was to be observed within the Party itself. The more lukewarm members or Mitläufer were beginning to separate themselves from the others. As early as summer 1943, when events were having a shattering effect on morale, some downhearted Parteigenossen were appearing in public without their membership badges or with them skilfully tucked under their lapels.²³⁸ In his report of July 1943 the Regierungspräsident of Munich made a clear distinction between those remaining faithful to National Socialist principles and those who interpreted events in Italy

"as an encouraging sign for the reintroduction of the so-called democratic freedom".²³⁹ It would seem that, spurred on by the military crisis, many were finding their way back to the political ideas they had held before 1933. Nazi successes had helped to blur their sound political thinking. The same report went on to remark that the internal crisis in Italy had forced Party leaders to accept the facts "that a part of the population has turned away from National Socialism, that another part of the population can now only be described as fellow-travellers (Mitläufer), and that it has now become clear in which groups of the population there are still genuine National Socialists".²⁴⁰ Here, no details were given. In fact, the Party was being held responsible for all misfortune. The Oberlandesgerichtspräsident of Brunswick saw in the increasing use of the third person in remarks about the political leadership proof that "numerous people" were disassociating themselves from the Nazi Party.²⁴¹

The campaign to activate the Party at the end of 1943 would appear to have been designed to boost morale in its own ranks as well as in the population as a whole. Although a certain success could be claimed and morale was generally better in spring 1944 than nine months before, the Party was nevertheless fighting a losing battle. It was not long before the Reich was facing new and more dangerous blows, and the degree of enthusiasm for the Party was linked irrevocably to the anticipation of victory or defeat. Most now realised that the latter was becoming more and more likely. This was true both outside and inside the Party. With the failure to stop the Allied invasion of Western Europe those tendencies recorded in the summer months of 1943 were to reappear in a more extreme form. After the first enemy troops had crossed the Reich frontiers, a Party report maintained that "80% of our 7-8 million enrolled Party members" were mere "driftwood" and were making timely

preparations for the day when power in Germany lay in "other" hands.²⁴² Many were no longer bothering to use the customary greeting, Heil Hitler.²⁴³ In Düren even Party leaders were now heard to say Guten Tag!²⁴⁴ It was the same picture in Villingen:

"Many Parteigenossen no longer even take the trouble to make an outward acknowledgment of their creed. The greeting Heil Hitler is being used less and less frequently. On the telephone, for example, it is being replaced almost intentionally by Aufwiederhören."²⁴⁵

Many Germans were now beginning to distinguish between the German Volk and the National Socialists.²⁴⁶ This was synonymous with accepting that defeat constituted no finality. They saw chances for themselves in a vanquished Germany. This was naturally a danger sign for Nazi propagandists who had never ceased stressing the absolute unity of the German people. In fact, their success depended on acceptance of this premise. This process of moving away from the Party became more marked the more threatening the military position became. Towards the end of the war, political functionaries were made very much aware of "the gulf separating them from the broad mass of the people". They could not appear on the street or travel on public transport without being made to sense the intense antagonism felt towards them.²⁴⁷

The attitude to the Nazi Party is of great significance in an examination of the response to official propaganda. There would naturally be little inclination on the part of many to accept the truth of those statements made by a propaganda service representing the interests of a group to which they no longer felt bound. The importance of the relationship between attitude to the Party and response to propaganda is illustrated

in an SD report of March 1945, describing the reaction to a speech of Goebbels in the front-line town Goerlitz as well as to Hitler's address on Heldengedenktag. Whereas "a handful of political believers" were said to have received new strength from these two speeches, "the majority dismissed them as trivial and devoid of substance".²⁴⁸ The conclusion can therefore be drawn that the disposition to and acceptance of the propaganda message largely depended on loyalty to the Nazi cause. This is underlined in a report of SD Schwerin, which expressed the view that Goebbels' Das Reich articles were having a positive effect only on supporters of the regime, whilst little could be done to influence doubters and sceptics who were all too ready to pull to pieces every word the Minister used.²⁴⁹ The few people still responding to the propaganda message were those who wanted - nay had - to believe and be persuaded and consoled. It must be emphasized, however, that they were no longer typical of the Party membership and, in fact, consisted of a shrinking minority of those in the Party cadres. The extremely negative attitude of the majority of Parteigenossen was interpreted by non-Party members "as proof of the inevitability of German defeat".²⁵⁰

Ever since the beginning of 1943 the Party had been on the defensive. Increasingly, it was being compelled to defend itself against the accusation that its officials were privileged and not being called up for military service. Instead, they were, so it was whispered, able to live a "safe" and comfortable life at home. The propagandists tried repeatedly but without much success to show that the opposite was true - that casualties in the ranks of the Party were much higher than among the rest of the population.²⁵¹ In the summer of 1944 the Party was encountering the dangerous accusation that the NSDAP and its leadership were guilty of beginning the

war.²⁵² This was to prove so menacing that later that year the Party organisation in Lüneberg made an urgent request that the matter be dealt with more intensively by the propaganda.²⁵³ There can be no doubt that the Party was now becoming the scapegoat for Germany's misfortunes. In the Catholic town of Paderborn, for instance, many people believed the continuation of the war to be "only the concern of madmen and irresponsible criminals".²⁵⁴ It is quite obvious which people were meant here.

The image of the Party was further eroded by the tales of refugees fleeing from the East. They spoke resentfully of the chaos of the "evacuation" and held the Party responsible for the lack of planning and the subsequent suffering of the trek.²⁵⁵ The punishment meted out to cowardly Party leaders in east Germany after the launching of the Soviet offensive in January 1945 would appear to have had the opposite of the desired effect. Gauleiter Eggeling of Halle-Merseburg considered the publicity given to the shortcomings of Party officials and their subsequent court-martialling to be an extremely risky business likely to do more harm than good.

"What is the population supposed to think when its trust in the leadership has already been badly shattered by military events and the failure of the prophecies and promises made by the propaganda to materialise."

Publication given to such isolated cases of dereliction of duty could in the long run only lead to a very negative generalisation regarding the Party's behaviour as a whole.²⁵⁶ The Gaupropagandaleiter of the same Gau reported to the Propaganda Ministry that the trials of Party officials for cowardice were not only undermining confidence in the political leaders but were being regarded as a confirmation of the rumours circulating at the time which pointed to a crisis in

the leadership.²⁵⁷ Many people were pointing to the statements of Nazi dignitaries to prove this assumption. Whereas Goebbels had stated in Das Reich that no one knew when and where the war would finish, Hitler had categorically promised "the historical turn" in 1945:

"It is concluded from this contradiction that the German leadership is itself no longer united and that one leader disavows what the other has said."²⁵⁸

Such talk, of course, did irreparable harm to the image of both the Party and government. The mere suspicion of division above - even if it were unfounded - would create the impression of a dissolution not only of political authority but also of the Nazi state. The most dangerous conclusion would then be that one no longer owed such a leadership any allegiance or loyalty. How could one respect a government that was itself in the process of falling apart? Nazi propaganda did its utmost to counter this threat by stressing the determination and unity of the leadership.

Belief in propaganda was possible only when people accepted the basic idea that there was absolutely no alternative but to fight on and when people agreed that defeat would constitute the end of all Germans. As soon as personal identification with the Party was replaced by a subjective distinction between Nazis and "other" Germans, the inference being that the latter had nothing to fear, then all the efforts of the Nazi propagandists would be of no avail. Belief not only in the possibility but also desirability of a post-war National Socialist Germany was a prerequisite of propaganda success. Vested interests were very important. Many of those remaining outwardly confident were those who saw no chance for themselves in a post-Nazi Germany. Respect for the Nazi

regime greatly depended on the "image" of the Party. As soon as it lost this respect and as soon as its raison d'être was questioned, then every attempt by Nazi propaganda to concentrate hope on a victorious post-war Nazi Germany was doomed to fail.

(vi) C l a s s a n d S o c i a l G r o u p

Nazi propaganda portrayed the Germans as a united and contented people. If there were grumblers and defeatists, then they were only a tiny minority. They were said to belong to those classes and groups of society which were commonly the object of class animosity. It is interesting to see that, at the same time as Goebbels stressed the unity of the German nation and the absence of class-warfare, he attempted to use the very animosities arising out of the class-struggle for the purposes of propaganda. This was the case at the time of the "total war" mobilisation after Stalingrad, described in Chapter 3. It was, nevertheless, a risky game and difficult to keep under control. In the two years that followed, the targets of attack were principally the intellectuals, "bourgeois", plutocrats and old-fashioned bureaucrats, whom it was said all took little interest in the course of the war and were interested only in ensuring their own personal comfort.²⁵⁹ These attacks were usually accompanied by praise of all working Germans.

In a style more suited to a propaganda speech, the compiler of a Party morale report from Frankfurt wrote in April 1944:

"Despite the great burden of work, the behaviour (Haltung) of the working population is still much better than that of a certain middle-class element which is so lacking in courage and principles that it even sees a certain chance

for itself in the event of defeat. Rumours, defeatist views, etc. are being sown by this group. Whereas in the pub or in the third class [compartments] people grumble quite rightly about some supposed or even actual injustice, those in good hotels and in the second class demonstrate their opposition or, what is more often the case, behave as if nothing were of concern to them."²⁶⁰

But, according to an SD report drawn up some months earlier, those wanting peace at any price were to be found not only among "intellectuals" and "business circles" but also among "workers and farmers who are badly off or who have strong religious ties".²⁶¹ The Nazis, however, were unwilling to give up their idealistic view of the German worker - despite all the evidence negating this picture. The praise of the German proletariat reached a climax in the radio propaganda coverage of the life of Berliners during the blitz, described in Chapter 5. Even the morale reports were full of compliments to the German worker, a fact which perhaps demonstrates less a realistic assessment of the facts than a reluctance to renounce the ideal of "German Socialism". There is, however, little reason to believe that the German worker's attitude to society had been transformed by the Nazis. This is borne out by the reaction to the "total war" measures of 1943. Intense class-consciousness is surely indicated by the following remark of a German worker reported to the Propaganda Ministry:

"We only need to be accused of doing something wrong and we are punished severely and without delay. But if it's the wife of a doctor or of a captain, the matter is drawn out so long until it is completely forgotten. Exactly the

same class differences exist today as before.

In this respect, nothing has changed."²⁶²

Steinert is certainly right in seeing here a criticism of the Nazis' failure to carry through any reform of the social system. Hitler's person was the only thing which still held many German workers to Hitler's state.²⁶³ As far as his party was concerned, very few felt any true sense of identity. The real attitude of a great number of German workers at the end of the war is implied in a report of October 1944 which warned of the strong activity of "hostile elements" among Hamburg workers which, if left unchecked, could lead to "a dangerous development".²⁶⁴ A report drawn up five months later was rather more "favourable", although it is interesting to note that the stress was put on the workers' outward behaviour - the fulfilment of their duty and the fact they did not complain. No attempt was made to examine their true attitude, although reference was made to their strong trust in the Führer and their "immunity" to all attempts at Communist sedition.²⁶⁵

Country people would appear to have been much less interested than townsfolk in the course of the war. This is easy to understand when it is remembered that they remained practically untouched by the war until the final months. It has already been pointed out that they were far from being the most ideal propaganda audience. Not only were they too busy to read the paper or listen to the radio,²⁶⁶ but they had never been very engaged politically and viewed with suspicion any attempt at politicizing them. Above all, they remained faithful to the known and long-practised customs of the Church and knew which side they would back in the event of a conflict between the temporal and spiritual power.²⁶⁷ Finally, many farmers and farm-labourers do not seem to have been particularly fearful of defeat for they regarded themselves as indispensable whoever was in power.²⁶⁸

To conclude, by the end of the war disillusionment had spread to all classes and social groups. The Nazi ideal of the German worker was a myth. Twelve years of Nazi rule had been unable to remove class-consciousness and suspicion. The Volksgemeinschaft was really no more than a facade. For a short time, most Germans had been unable to resist the nationalist enthusiasm and had, perhaps, even believed in the unity of the German nation, but, as soon as military success was replaced by military failure, their immediate interests became the paramount consideration. They felt less Volksgenossen and more workers with working-class interests and middle-class people with middle-class interests. The Party had ceased to represent the interests of any class or group - even those of the lower-middle class that had voted for it in 1933. As explained in Chapter 5, the very real community spirit - not to be confused with Volksgemeinschaft - engendered by bombing was of a local nature and was little more than the expression of mutual dependency caused by common misfortune. Furthermore, it expressed itself in a clearly anti-Nazi form at the end of the war and still existed in the first, harsh post-war years.

D. THE FINAL MONTH

(i) "W e r e w o l f" P r o p a g a n d a

The first day of April 1945 was marked by the launching of "Operation Werewolf". "Freedom fighters" were said to be in operation in those parts of Germany under Allied occupation and until the coming "liberation" they would make life hell for the enemy forces. Even sabotage "tips" were given. German women and girls, for example, were called upon to pour boiling water from their windows onto enemy troops!²⁶⁹ The campaign was essentially designed to give the occupied population the impression that not all was lost and to counter any willingness

to accept the new status quo by meting out savage punishment to collaborators. To secure the maximum propaganda effect the Werewolf "resistance" was said to be operating a radio station behind enemy lines. In fact, its transmitter was situated outside Berlin and broadcast on the former wavelength of the Deutschlandsender. The station received both its instructions and news items directly from the Propaganda Ministry. The broadcasts themselves "consisted of gay popular music interspersed with terse news of the exploits performed by the non-existent Werewolves."²⁷⁰

Goebbels attached great hopes to the campaign:

"Werewolf addresses itself quite consciously to a political minority of unflinching and unwavering supporters, who always form the unshakable elite of the people."²⁷¹

He estimated that this "minority" made up 10% of the population but was sure that

"These activists will, nonetheless, once they make their presence known, be able to enthuse the majority of the German Volk."²⁷²

This "Werewolf" propaganda may be interpreted as an attempt of the Nazis to fall back on the one tool they still had left - threats of punishment and revenge. At first appearance, however, the "Werewolf" programmes seemed much franker than those of the official stations but its "news" was almost without exception invented. Every day examples of valiant deeds perpetrated by these resistance fighters and other courageous Germans were read out over the air. "There were stories of children who cut telephone wires, stole arms and equipment; there were stories of women who poured sugar into American gasoline tanks, thereby spoiling the fuel."²⁷³ On

the other hand, it reprimanded the majority of the west German population for cowardice and lack of courage:

"Where would our enemy stand today had our towns in the west been made into fortresses of determined resistance."²⁷⁴

It warned that all cowards would be dealt with once the foe had been thrown out of the Reich. Wild assertions and predictions were blended into the propaganda of heroism and threats:

"We are near the turning point; even the presence of enemy tanks near Leipzig cannot hold it up."²⁷⁵

These promises became even more extravagant as the situation continued to deteriorate:

"The endless war, which the German people is determined to fight out if forced to, will one day - and that day is not too far distant - lead to the collapse of the perverted enemy coalition....There will be no peace in Europe until the German people is certain that it will keep its freedom. Before that the German people will not lay down its arms even if we have to fight at the North Pole....Even if more towns fall and more territories are lost, developments will still turn out in our favour."²⁷⁶

An interesting feature of these broadcasts was the "socialistic" tone of its pronouncements. Whereas the Soviets were scarcely mentioned, it concentrated on attacking the "gambling hyenas of the London and New York Stock Exchange". Moreover, the emphasis was placed more on "the German worker" than on "the German people".²⁷⁷ The Nazis may well have been trying here by means of pseudo-socialist appeal to utilise for their own ends those half-revolutionary sentiments and the

desire for social change which surface after several years of war.

But this primitive form of propaganda seems to have alienated the listener rather than to have instilled in him new hope. In Hamburg, for instance, it was condemned as an "act of madness".²⁷⁸ Many doubted the authenticity of the reports broadcast on the "Werewolf" station and only a few people believed it was really a "secret" station transmitting from enemy-controlled territory, as its signal was suspiciously strong.²⁷⁹ The population of west Germany had prepared itself for an Allied occupation long before it had become a fact and it is not difficult to imagine that these broadcasts, which were so out of touch with reality, were followed with little more than curiosity. Indeed, they stood in the way of the desired conciliation with the western powers. In short, "Werewolf" was the last trick of a propaganda serving a regime which represented the past, not the immediate future. And who, in April 1945, in occupied Cologne, Aachen and Frankfurt still believed or wished to believe in an imminent Nazi victory?

(ii) "S i n k i n g S h i p" P r o p a g a n d a

The propaganda of April 1945 is characterised by an increasing disregard for caution when dealing with the theme of Allied disunity. The propagandists had been very much aware that this theme could only serve to awake unjustified and exaggerated hopes and contented themselves with underlining the common purpose of all enemies to destroy the German people. But now, with Anglo-American troops sweeping across the North German plains and Soviet troops preparing to strike at Berlin, all caution was thrown to the wind and the propaganda audience was encouraged to believe that the disintegration of the Allied coalition was only a matter of time and would rescue the Reich at the very last moment.²⁸⁰

The inner struggle between the inevitability of having to exploit every "positive" item of news to the full and the realisation of the perils involved in arousing exaggerated hopes is clearly demonstrated in the propaganda treatment of Roosevelt's death on 12 April 1945. At first, the press was forbidden to draw parallels with the death of Empress Elizabeth of Russia in the Seven Years' War, but at the same time, it was instructed to impress upon the mind of the reader that such a loss would prove irreparable to the Allied cause and could not be made good.²⁸¹ When the war, nevertheless, continued as if nothing had happened, a somewhat more cautious note was struck. The news was now to be presented in a form that would give the impression that the new President, Truman, was not so dangerous as Roosevelt had been. But yet again, the inner contradiction and tangle in propaganda aims became evident in the instruction to the press not to destroy "the justified hopes of the German people" of a change in American policy by quoting the enemy press while, at the same time, not encouraging these hopes any further!²⁸²

The last extant Tagesparole of 19 April shows a growing nervousness and lacking farsightedness, as well as a going back on the principles of the entire Durchhaltepropaganda hitherto:

"In addition to a clear presentation of enemy hate and plans of destruction for the German people and Reich, a strong emphasis on the recently growing tension inside the Allied camp is particularly suitable for increasing both the defence will and the staying power of the German people and for strengthening it in the conviction that in the present military crisis only grim perseverance can hasten the unleashing of the political conflict among our enemies, thereby

bringing about a decisive turn in the entire war situation."

Moreover, the press was told to quote the Catholic Times - hardly a very representative newspaper of British public opinion - to show how many people in the West already feared a Third World War and the bolshevisation of the whole European continent.²⁸³ Living from hand to mouth, German propaganda was demonstrating a decreasing readiness to consider the long-term effect of its pronouncements. It almost seemed that, realising the Nazi ship was sinking, Nazi propagandists contented themselves with making sure that the band went on playing!

A peculiarity of the last month of Nazi radio was a resumption of religious broadcasting. This was perhaps a last desperate effort to convince those circles that had been the victim of Nazi attack that National Socialists were now the defenders of Christian civilisation against the evil forces of atheistic materialism. For the first time in years a church service was broadcast on 8 April from the "front-line town", Goerlitz.²⁸⁴ Two weeks later, while the Russians were fighting their way through the suburbs of Berlin, the Reichsrundfunk broadcast a service of Christian worship from a rural parish church outside Potsdam.²⁸⁵

During the last few weeks of the war, the clearest picture of the actual mood of the German people is provided by the utterances of the propagandists themselves. They could not afford to deny the current pessimism. To have done so would have been an invitation to criticise them for living in a dream world far away from reality. In an article in Das Reich broadcast on 6 April, Goebbels admitted that many hearts were beginning to falter. After assuring his readers and listeners that the enemy too was exhausted and could only sustain such a terrible strain "for a certain period", he went on to paint a

very sombre picture of morale in April 1945.

"There is a kind of lethargy among the lax and weak, there is weariness and apathy among those most sorely afflicted by the war, and there is doubt and hopelessness in hearts without faith eaten out by the sternness of our time. But we will not reproach them as long as they continue to fulfil their war duties and attempt to replace their lack of inner fortitude at least outwardly by a measure of daring."

Here, the strong and fanatical should come to the aid of the weak and ailing.²⁸⁶ There could be no better indication of the propagandists' plight than this virtual declaration of powerlessness. Realising that they could do absolutely nothing to alter the prevailing defeatist mood, they would now be satisfied if they ensured that the German population went on working, although few people might see the point in doing so. So much for Nazi propaganda expectations in April 1945!

In fact, many of these broadcast observations of the state of morale were no less candid than the descriptions of the morale reports themselves. A radio broadcaster admitted on 11 April that those people believing

"If things go on like this, we shall soon be finished"

were becoming a "ferment of disintegration". He attacked those "who have lost the Führer's picture in their heart and counsel others to take it down from the wall". The speaker, however, had only one remedy for halting this decay in morale:

"To those who consciously or unconsciously want to become traitors, we mention the gallows as a warning."²⁸⁷

The propagandist, unable to persuade his listeners that there was still ground for optimism, had to resort to the most primitive threats.

(iii) P r o p a g a n d a F a r e w e l l

German propaganda finally admitted - if only implicitly - the loss of the war on 30 April, the day of Hitler's suicide. At the same time, an attempt was made to justify the war and to argue that not all sacrifices had been in vain. All Germans were now called upon to maintain belief in the meaning of this war that was now approaching its end:

"To the distress of us all we have not succeeded as much as we hoped. Nevertheless, from our people's unparalleled feat of strength, to which even now we must contribute our share, we must carry with us the firm certainty that in the future also each of us will speak German, even though he may have to live temporarily under Bolshevik, US, or British occupation."²⁸⁸

This, of course, contradicted the basic assumption of the entire Durchhaltepropaganda since Stalingrad - namely, defeat constituted the destruction of the German Volk. The argument now underlying all Nazi propaganda was that National Socialism had bestowed upon the Germans the sense of belonging to the one united national community and that not even enemy domination could destroy "the nation".

The catastrophic military position did not prevent the Reichsrundfunk from carrying on as if nothing had happened. It was apparently a prisoner of its own routine. On 30 April it broadcast a programme on mathematics in ancient Babylonia, Egypt and China and a talk entitled "How can science ascertain paternity?"²⁸⁹ On the following day, until the announcement

of the Führer's death in the evening, the wireless broadcast a number of programmes celebrating May Day. One talk looked at "Strength through Joy" cruises to Madeira in better days.²⁹⁰

The political propaganda of the first days of May can be characterised by the motto: "It cannot all have been meaningless!" On May 1 listeners were told:

"The German people must never let anyone deprive it of these aims which have secured for it the privileged position in the vanguard of European social policy and national culture. Only a people that abandons its own character, and thus all essential features of its extensive contributions to the culture and welfare of mankind, can perish....Ours is a faith in the future and the unshakable determination to make it as great and beautiful as possible by using all the forces at our disposal."²⁹¹

The fairly sanguine tone of these broadcasts may indicate that the propagandists, too shared the popularly held view that the Americans and British would join Germany in the fight against the advancing Soviets and grant her generous peace terms. A report of 6 May, for instance, described the mood of the population of Flensburg, the seat of Doenitz' government, as follows:

"People view the present situation as a clearly transitional period and believe that the final stage of the war will be reached when the struggle against the Soviet Union is decided in our favour with or without foreign help. A great part of the population considers the backing of the Western Powers as fairly self-evident."²⁹²

This would help to explain the almost friendly welcome given to Anglo-American troops in Flensburg the following day. Rumours were even circulating that armed clashes had already occurred between the Russians and British.²⁹³ Here, the rumour had become the vehicle for confirming hopes that had hitherto remained unfulfilled. It must also be remembered when explaining this apparently optimistic political assessment of the position that the population was so preoccupied with its everyday problems that it had little or no time to realise the full extent of the disaster that had befallen it. This is corroborated in an official report of 7 May:

"The outward calm and the composure displayed is to be seen more as a sign that the extent of the catastrophe - because of the swiftness of its coming - has not yet been realised or understood."²⁹⁴

In the first days of May, German propaganda continued to operate in the tiny area still unoccupied. On 6 May the Flensburg propagandists were recommended to work on the following lines:

- 1) to provide a more extensive news service;
- 2) to encourage "the will to rebuild" by arousing a spirit of self-confidence;
- 3) to point to the "historical" significance of the war and to give the "fate" of both the individual and the Volk a meaning; and
- 4) to impress upon the population "the inner strength of the German character by means of music, literature, etc. and to present them as indestructable and insuperable, thereby addressing the soul of the population in a positive direction".²⁹⁵

But the declaration of acceptance of unconditional surrender

the next day came as a rude shock for both the inhabitants of Flensburg and their propagandists. The effect of the news was said to have been "shocking and crushing". Quite suddenly, after the people had been encouraged in their hopes that they might somehow avoid the consequences of a lost war, the awful realisation of being completely at the mercy of the victors finally dawned on them. The bitter feeling was echoed in a criticism of both Führer and Party for not having ended the war earlier and saving the lives of countless German soldiers and civilians.²⁹⁶ In this cruel confrontation with unrelieved defeat the propagandists were called upon to change their tactics:

"According to observations made during the last few days, general formulations about maintaining the national substance no longer suffice.

Propaganda must rather point out to people in a positive way the many possibilities they still have of seizing the initiative and of coming to one another's aid by means of various forms of self-help."²⁹⁷

In fact, this very last recorded recommendation to the propagandists of the Third Reich was the most honest and realistic one.

The propagandists also had now to give up any hopes they might have been nurturing of continuing to serve a German Reich government. The arrest of Doenitz and his ministers on 22 May was the final demonstration that not only the Russians but also the "western friends" had no intention of treating the German people in any other way than as a vanquished foe.

E. CONCLUSION

This chapter has clearly been a study in propaganda decline. A striking feature of Nazi propaganda in these last months of

hostilities was its almost schizophrenic behaviour. Victims of the prevailing bleak situation, the propagandists were being compelled to justify their raison d'être by seizing upon every positive or apparently positive item of news they could lay their hands on. As the crisis thickened, consideration of long-term consequences gave way to a simple consideration of short-term propaganda advantage. In short, the task was simply to show that the future post-war Germany would be a National Socialist one. But, in doing this, the propagandists ran the risk of exposing themselves to the criticism that they were endeavouring to distract their audience away from a reality which all could see without the intervention of propaganda. This would only heighten the awareness of being manipulated in a way and for a purpose that lay in stark contradiction to the hopes, needs and wishes of the majority of the German people. In fact, Nazi propagandists found themselves in an extremely unenviable position. To vindicate their existence, they had to show how the war might be won but to do so meant demonstrating the fact they had lost touch with reality! If they were to stress the seriousness of the military situation and the perils facing the nation, people would draw what appeared to them the necessary consequences and for the sake of expediency do nothing that was likely to hold up the inevitable - defeat and the end of National Socialism.

The reader can certainly appreciate the difficulty the propagandists had in trying to transform a deeply-rooted image of the enemy. This is borne out by the failure of anti-American atrocity propaganda. Nevertheless, the rather positive image of the Russians recorded in 1943 unquestionably underwent a drastic revision in the late summer of 1944. Nazi propaganda was then to make full use of eye-witness reports of Soviet cruelty and crimes against the civilian population. But it

would be wrong to describe this change in attitude as being principally the fruit of the propagandists' efforts. Much more important was the fact that the content of these reports was backed up in the accounts of friends and relatives on active duty in the East. In fact, it can be said that anti-Bolshevik propaganda was only successful when it was confirmed by the "expert" - here, representatives of the Wehrmacht.

It is also quite clear that belief in the truth of propaganda content did not necessarily mean that the recipient drew those conclusions and followed that behaviour pattern the propagandist intended he should. Indeed, the atrocity reports might be believed but the resulting panic and the wish to be occupied by the British and Americans certainly did not correspond to Nazi propaganda aims and expectations. The atrocity campaign against the Western Powers fell on deaf ears because it was not backed up by that respected expert, the front-line soldier. To have believed in these accounts would also have meant depriving oneself of the one sure hope and refuge of an acceptable way of life in a vanquished Germany. As early as 1944 the Western Powers were being viewed as the friends and Allies of the future.

It is interesting to note that the propagandists also became conscious of the increasing ineffectiveness of conventional propaganda forms and resorted more and more to utilising for their own ends the reputation of unofficial information channels - the soldier and the rumour. This must be construed as a very deliberate attempt to deceive the German civilian population. The preparation and organisation of the Mundpropagandaaktion gives abundant proof of this. It virtually amounted to a confession that manipulation alone - not information - was fit to secure loyalty to the National Socialist state. It was, moreover, a tacit admission of the "victory" of other information sources in the struggle for

German public opinion.

The very best confirmation of the failure of Nazi propaganda in its principle task of upholding belief in "final victory" are the gradual preparations taken by many Germans in anticipation of a future non-Nazi Germany. As was explained in Chapters 2 and 4, many people were contemplating life in "another" Germany as early as the first few months of 1943. The attitude of many, directed at this future horizon, was to regard the war as an unnecessary struggle for a lost cause. German lives were being thrown away and the whole rancour and bitterness was now directed at those who were standing in the way of transition to "new times". Hence, the Party was increasingly seen as the hated guardian of those interests responsible for the dreadful calamity that had befallen all Germans - Nazi and non-Nazi -, and which was still trying its utmost to block the path to the peace that was yearned for. The Americans and the British, on the other hand, were the guarantee that the peace would be acceptable. Of course, this was more typical of the attitude of the population in those areas of the Reich which appeared to lie out of the reach of the Red Army. Similarly, the increase in churchgoing, even among nominal Party members, in the last two years of the war, besides pointing to fear of enemy retribution, might be interpreted as further evidence of a widespread anticipation of a new post-war Germany. It was a safe demonstration of opposition to the principles of National Socialism. The Christian churches also provided the comfort of continuity in a world that was undergoing radical change and in a land that was about to undergo political upheaval. The idea of a "Thousand Year Reich" had turned out to be a myth and many now found their way back to a world they knew to be secure and impregnable.

The months October 1944 - May 1945 therefore witnessed a further and final decline in the effect of National Socialist propaganda. Faced with a task impossible to solve - the maintenance of belief in German victory - inspiring words and clever propaganda tricks proved insufficient to neutralise the penetrating message of enemy victory and advance.

CHAPTER 8

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In the various subjects examined in this thesis - the effect of the Stalingrad debacle, the "total war" campaign, the ideological campaigns, enemy bombing, retaliation and the catastrophic developments in the last nine months of the war - the same factors determining propaganda policy, the popular response to this policy and the propagandists' reaction to this response have cropped up again and again. These very same factors, which are now to be discussed for the last time, cannot be separated or seen in isolation from the all-pervading numbing atmosphere of decline. Individual phenomena or factors must be seen in this context if their significance is to be fully appreciated. For the sake of clarity, those points for discussion listed in the introductory chapter on pages 7-10 will be taken up and dealt with one by one in this final chapter. An attempt will be made to bring together those main strands of thought which became explicit in the conclusions to the individual chapters.

1. The Comparative Importance of Fear and Consolation

The complementary strategies of fear and consolation run like threads through the entire propaganda output of the period under study. In a way it was a sign of inherent weakness that Nazi propagandists had to resort increasingly to fear. The idea was, of course, that by means of an intensive pounding with anti-Bolshevik and anti-Semitic propaganda the German people should learn of the consequences of defeat and,

furthermore, be instilled with the exhilarating feeling of fighting a good cause against the powers of darkness. Hate itself should constitute the unifying force. In 1943 the danger perceived was still somehow too distant and remote to secure acceptance of the propaganda theses. Moreover, in as far as the Soviet Union was recognised as a growing threat and the possibility of defeat loomed on the horizon, the population preferred to believe in information that "humanised" the Bolshevik foe and made the prospect of possible future Russian rule more palatable. Here, as pointed out in Chapter 4, the rumour and other unofficial information sources were to come to the rescue. Very striking is the widespread willingness shown by the German people at the time to accept at face value the truth of any information that they wanted to hear and which pointed to the basic humanity of the Russians. Any Nazi propaganda of fear threatening to disturb this picture was ignored or rejected. But this form of "flight" was no longer possible after the summer of 1944, when the Soviets failed to come up to people's high expectations of them. The apparent confirmation of propaganda atrocity stories by reality did not, however, lead to propaganda success. The truth of the terrible stories spouting out of the Nazi media was not doubted, but the propagandists found out to their chagrin that securing the right behaviour was something much more difficult than securing acceptance of the propaganda message. A strong dose of fear did not result in a strengthened determination to resist but in mass flight to the west and the transference of hopes to the western foe. Fear had thus encouraged the Germans to seek their own consolation, at first in both the east and the west, and then only in the west.

This behaviour bore testimony to the failure of Nazi propagandists to supply adequate compensation. In fact, as the

war went on, they were providing much too much fear and much too little compensation. Of course, it became increasingly difficult to provide the latter. The answer of the propagandists to reverses was to stress the national unity and the invincible courage and determination of the German people. But such arguments were hopelessly inadequate when the enemies of the Reich continued to advance despite the intensified effort of German soldiers and workers. Nothing at all was achieved by the employment of theoretical propaganda or the use of historical parallels, as was seen in the last chapter. Anything smacking of distraction or escapism was rejected outright and one can appreciate the impatience and outright anger of many Germans when confronted with this kind of propaganda at the end of the war. The sheer gulf between the real danger perceived and propaganda exploits was simply too great. There was no longer any room in people's minds for philosophical perambulations and meanderings. What was more, the more contrived the compensatory arguments became - and the situation compelled the propagandists to resort to contrived arguments - the more vivid was the revelation of the purely manipulative elements in the German mass media. This also meant that, as the military situation worsened, the compensatory propaganda was less and less able to constitute the desired balance and complement to the propaganda of fear. The only themes that had any chance of success were those backed up by actual events or based on events thought to be imminent. This is demonstrated quite clearly by the favourable reaction to the propaganda dealing with U-boat successes and the Rundstedt offensive. But after May 1943 there were few submarine successes to record and the German offensive of December 1944 only brought successes of an ephemeral nature. For the rest of the time German propagandists were seldom able to resort to military reality in order to comfort their audience. But they could promise

something in the foreseeable future, something that would change the whole picture of the war - Vergeltung.

Very soon the retaliation theme cast all other compensatory themes into the shadows and assumed an importance even greater than the propagandists desired. It was to become the hinge on which everything hung. In Germany in the latter half of the war the retaliation idea was something more than the wish for reprisals that had been widespread in Britain - especially in unbombed areas^{1*} - in 1940-1. It stood for something more than the simple wish to pay back the enemy in kind; it was increasingly seen as the only way of winning the war and destroying the enemy's capability of launching raids on the Reich. Retaliation was the only theme holding out a chance of lasting success, since it directed attention away from the present to the future. Nevertheless, as was clearly demonstrated in the evidence used in Chapter 6, Vergeltung propaganda, too, was ultimately dependent on substantiation in fact. The success of this propaganda depended on the assumption that the blow was imminent, and, as this was not the case, the general attitude to Vergeltung was subject to sudden ups and downs in the long period of waiting. Despite the recurring doubts and disappointment when the blow failed to come, the very great impatience itself demonstrated the intensity of the feelings aroused by Nazi propaganda. It is striking how Nazi leaders managed time and time again to provide new hope, although the effect of their promises - even those of Hitler himself - only proved temporary. The fact was that the propagandists were saying those things the German people wanted them to say. Throughout the period 1943-5, the willingness to believe and the spirit of general disappointment and pessimism somehow coexisted. People themselves were scarcely aware of the inherent contradiction.

The retaliation theme shows the danger when a compensatory

theme is too "successful" at a time of national crisis. The message proved so effective that the propagandists themselves lost control over their own creation. Quite unwittingly, they were concentrating the nation's hopes on one thing to the exclusion of everything else. As a result, Vergeltung alone was considered decisive for the final outcome of the war. But as such, the "dream", too, in the long run needed corroboration in deeds. In fact, by the beginning of 1944 the German leadership had lost such control over the Vergeltung issue that it was allowing its decision making to be influenced by the response to the retaliation propaganda. The "baby blitz" on London in the first months of 1944 was more a propaganda than a military necessity. It was the only means left of quelling the tremendous impatience aroused by the predictions made in the preceding months. It must not be forgotten that the planes which bombed London were sorely needed elsewhere and could certainly have been put to a more effective military use.

As far as the post-war world was concerned, Nazi predictions and plans were vague. Apart from the promise to rebuild German towns within a few years of victory, surprisingly little was said about the social and economic policies of the future. There was no equivalent of the Beveridge Plan in wartime Germany. This probably in the long run worked out to the advantage of Nazi propagandists, for it left them with more elbow room and greater opportunity for propaganda manoeuvre. In Britain Beveridge proved such a "hit" that it obtained the aura of holy writ. No British politician, whatever his leanings and innermost convictions, could afford to oppose the plan and, instead, activists of all parties vied each other in demonstrating their support of it.² There is a certain similarity in the response to the Vergeltung theme in Germany and the Beveridge Plan in Great Britain in as far as

the political leadership was forced to follow public opinion rather than lead it, once the ideas had been propounded.

2. The Effect of Repetition of the Propaganda Message

There is no evidence to show that the growing resort to the staple idea of Nazi propaganda - the more often you say the same thing the more likely it is to stick - at the end of the war was very effective. In fact, the opposite appears to have been true. It is certainly no coincidence that the themes in which repetition played the dominant role and in which Goebbels' expectations as to its effectiveness were greatest (e.g. Katyn, anti-Semitism, the damage to Cologne Cathedral) were precisely those which were least effective. In the case of Katyn, a promising theme, apparently backed up by the facts, was undermined and soon forfeited any chance of success thanks to unbridled repetition of the very same arguments. The growing use of repetition in the last months of the war, which finally degenerated into the routine reiteration of a handful of propaganda slogans, not only created a spirit of boredom and indifference to propaganda utterances but made the audience much more conscious of the underlying propaganda purpose and the deliberate attempt at manipulation. And, once the workings of Nazi propaganda were revealed and recognised, the less was the likelihood that the propaganda recipients would respond in the desired manner.

Repetition is, of course, a characteristic of all totalitarian propaganda and is an unavoidable consequence of the outlawing of all political competition and free exchange of opinion. It was and is still used in Soviet Russia just as intemperately as it was in Nazi Germany. Nazi propagandists were, however, at a distinct disadvantage compared to their Soviet counterparts. They were confronted with a propaganda

audience much more sophisticated and media conscious than the peoples of the USSR.³ Although repetition was always a fundamental operating principle of Nazi propaganda, up to 1943 a number of ideas were repeated and in varied ways. Indeed, Goebbels devoted considerable thought and effort to providing an interesting framework for conveying a few basic ideas. This was to be much less the case towards the end of the war when the same ideas were hammered home quite indiscriminately and much less attention was paid to presentation and argumentation.

It is necessary, however, to distinguish between the conscious and unconscious resort to repetition. Propaganda behaviour in the final months of the war strongly suggests that there was a connection between the deterioration in the military situation and the debasement in the quality of the propaganda message. By April 1945, the propaganda content consisted merely of a few constantly reiterated and abstract slogans and catch-phrases. The hectic situation which arose in 1945 overtaxed the capabilities of Nazi propagandists, who were so overwhelmed by the crisis they were facing that they knew no other answer than to turn to known and hackneyed formulas. They were living from hand to mouth and had no time to think about the consequences of their decisions. Try as hard as they might, they were practically powerless to halt the downward trend. Being a propagandist in the Germany of 1945 was - to put it mildly - a very unrewarding job.

In his work, "Propagandes", Ellul has argued that minimal response to a propaganda theme could mean that the message has already been accepted and that its repetition is considered unnecessary. Apparent disinterest is not the same as rejection of the propaganda argument.

"In fact, he (the recipient) has now become insensitive to the objective and intellectual

content of the propaganda. He has now become indifferent to the propaganda theme, the idea, the argument and its development and illustration... He no longer needs to read the newspaper or to listen to a talk, because he already knows their ideological content beforehand, and they can do nothing at all to change his attitudes. It is thus true that after a certain time the individual becomes indifferent to the propaganda, but that is not to say that he has become insensitive, that he has turned away from it and been rendered immune. It means quite the opposite; he has totally accustomed himself to it, he is completely dominated and moulded by it. He no longer needs to see and read the poster; the colour itself is enough to awake in him the desired reflexes."⁴

The case of the Third Reich would seem to contradict this assumption. This study has shown how prevalent independent thought and outright rejection of propaganda arguments were in wartime Germany. Outward docility is to be traced back as much to apathy as it is to acceptance of the propaganda message. Popular response to totalitarian propaganda is not all that different in present day East Germany from what it was in the Germany of 1933-45. The slogans of the SED are omnipresent and constitute a familiar part of the street and factory scene, but they are hardly anchored in the hearts of the people themselves. In fact, the proliferation of political slogans, designed to demonstrate the indisputable unity of the citizens of "German Workers' and Peasants' State" and their political leadership, play a very minor part in the forming of public opinion. They remain something external, even esoteric. Even the East German youth, organised in the FDJ, maintains

an amazing degree of "independent" thought. More often than not their ideals and goals are "western" and "capitalistic". The same expressions and formulas are repeated in the same way as prayers are said in church by those who have never seriously considered the question of the existence of God. In the USSR, too, the stereotyped monotony of press editorials demonstrates how propaganda has degenerated into a set exercise, existing apart from reality. In all the lands of Eastern Europe the contrast between the way people really think and the world of "socialist reality", presented by their propagandists, is all too evident.

It would be safe to conclude that repetition does not heighten the responsiveness of the propaganda audience to propaganda and that it does not increase interest in the message but rather decreases it.

3. The Availability of the Propaganda Audience

It must be stressed that, owing to both behavioural and situational factors, National Socialist propaganda was far less "total" and ubiquitous than is frequently assumed. This becomes particularly clear in this study of the years 1943-5 when the free time at the disposal of both workers and farmers was severely limited. In the spare time left to them many Germans tried their best to forget the terrible tragedy that was befalling them. This would account for the continued popularity of the cinema, which mainly showed frivolous entertainment films depicting a world of bygone days. Only the fifteen-minute Wochenschau provided an unwelcome link with reality. It is really astounding how many people did not bother to listen to the radio or to read the newspaper, or, if they did so, devoted exclusive attention to news of enemy air raids. This does not appear to have been a purely German

phenomenon. In Britain, too, there was a marked recession of interest in general war news during the blitz. In May-June 1940, nine per-cent of the British were not following war news, but in February 1941 the number had increased to thirty-nine per cent.⁵ Although no such statistical surveys were made in wartime Germany, the growing disinterest in war news in 1943-4 can be traced back in good measure to the Allied air bombardment. In short, possession of a radio set or even subscription to a newspaper or magazine provided no guarantee that the citizen would acquaint himself with, let alone absorb, the propagandists' arguments. It must also be remembered that in many rural areas a wireless set was a rarity, so that a substantial part of the population was deprived of the most "effective" propaganda instrument.

Secondly, war developments themselves impaired the availability of the propaganda media at the end of the war and tore open the gaps in propaganda distribution. It was shown in Chapter 7 how bombing dislocated the printing and distribution of newspapers, destroyed or damaged radio sets, interrupted a town's electricity supply and hindered both wireless transmission and reception. On top of all this came an increasingly serious shortage of paper and radio valves. Finally, the upheaval caused by the Allied invasion of the Reich in 1945 and the trek of millions of Germans to an unknown destination meant that the Nazi propagandists could no longer be sure of reaching even a part of their audience. Crucial to any study of the effect of German domestic propaganda at this time is the awareness of the fact that the propaganda audience of 1945 was something quite different to the one of 1942.

4. The Attitude of the German People to Official Propaganda

The attitude of the German people to its propaganda was determined by the "image" of the latter and its reputation for trustworthiness, by the awareness of being the object of deliberate manipulation and by the military events themselves. All these three factors were closely interconnected. As early as the Battle of Stalingrad, millions of Germans were conscious of the fact that their mass media were not representing their interests and were therefore encouraged to consider the question of the purpose of propaganda. Many realised that the leadership would not hesitate to withhold information from them again in the future should it fear to lose face. The official silence and the propagandists' clumsy attempts at diverting people's attention elsewhere angered the Germans, who found such handling insulting and saw their intelligence being underrated. A great part of the German population now became amateur content analysts, turning reading between the lines into a fine art. After the winter of 1942-3 the attitude to the media was characterised by the will to find out more about propaganda intentions and the secret workings of the propaganda machinery. Goebbels knew all too well how much the power of his propaganda depended on its arcana.^{6*} The revelation and recognition of the "secrets" would render it, in the long run, ineffective.

Naturally, the crisis of Nazi propaganda was a crisis which all totalitarian propaganda systems would have faced in such a situation. The success of all totalitarian propaganda depends on its image of infallibility. As has already been explained in the introductory chapter, during the first two or three years of the war German invincibility was self-evident and propaganda success merely mirrored military success. But the sudden confrontation with military failure at the time of Stalingrad contradicted this former picture and the only

answer the Nazi leadership at first knew was silence. But this, in turn, could not stem people's appetite for news but only whet it. Nazi propagandists then tried rather cleverly to overcome the impasse by explaining that all the advantages gained in the first years of the war meant that the Reich possessed an invincible position with the beginning of real war. They endeavoured to show that up to then the war had been no "real war" at all. To prove their point they adopted a more sober tone. But the sudden resort to "frankness", so perfectly executed, only helped to underline the central organisation and regimentation of Nazi propaganda. This trick did not work, for apparent realism was frequently seen as official admission of the severity of the crisis and served to spread defeatism rather than to curb it. German leaders were at a distinct disadvantage compared to the British leadership back in 1940-1. In Germany military setback was much more difficult to bear after a prolonged period of virtually uninterrupted victory, and at the beginning of 1943 there was a fatal combination of military setback and war-weariness. Churchill's promise of "blood, sweat and tears" was exhilarating in the summer days of 1940 but Goebbels' similar promise in early 1943 met with a rather different reception from people who had been told repeatedly - and had believed - that victory was not far off. In Great Britain the hardest time had come at the beginning, although by 1942 there, too, the strain was beginning to show, particularly after the loss of Singapore and Tobruk. Certainly Churchill's popularity was waning and there was even talk of a "new man", perhaps Stafford Cripps. It is quite conceivable that, had the setbacks and retreats continued, a tricky political situation would have arisen which might even have led to the ousting of Churchill. Of course, in the Germany of 1943-5 there were no political

parties or a parliament to worry about, but the disappointment did manifest itself in growing criticism of the leadership, the Party and, of course, the propaganda.

In the subjects treated above it is striking to what degree events themselves constituted criteria in the judgement of propaganda "truth". The enemy victories were at the same time the best form of enemy propaganda and undermined the trust of the German people in their information media more than anything else. The propagandists could do no other than minimise the defeats inflicted on the German armed forces but, in doing so, they did more harm than good. The credibility gap between the real and the propaganda world became an unbridgeable chasm, obvious even to the most diehard supporters of the regime. The force of current events proved too strong and convincing to permit their being turned inside out by propaganda gloss. In short, the ersatz world of the propagandists could provide the German people with no satisfactory substitute for reality. The constant advance of the Red Army after the summer of 1943, for instance, contradicted the propaganda assertion that the Soviets were being bled to death by the Wehrmacht. But nowhere was the contradiction more apparent than in the case of Allied bombing.

The air raids on the German civilian population have played a central role in this study, for they were the most immediate proof of enemy strength and superiority and as such constituted a crucial factor in determining the popular attitude to Nazi propaganda. The study made in Chapter 5 into their effects and consequences for morale showed quite clearly that they provided much more powerful propaganda than all the contortions of Nazi propagandists. Their effect was visible and could not be ignored or thrust aside. The destruction wrought by enemy bombers showed clearly that the

promises made by the propagandists were lies and deceit. The impression left behind determined not only the outlook on war developments as a whole but also the reliability of all utterances made by German propaganda, whatever the subject. Only when the military threat became really acute and the territory of the Reich was directly threatened did military events become equally or, at times, more decisive in determining this attitude. For over a year reports on raids and promises of retaliation were the only propaganda capable of arousing any great interest, but they were also the themes that caused the greatest resentment. The thirst for news was insatiable and, try as hard as they might, the propagandists could not quench it. This situation gave rise to uncontrollable and exaggerated rumours, which only managed to make the rift between perceived truth and the propagandists' interpretative world still greater. The feeling felt by the inhabitants of a bombed town that the media were not giving enough attention to what they had endured further undermined the trust in the propaganda. They thought they were being left in the lurch by a leadership that did not care. A similar phenomenon was observed in Britain during the Luftwaffe raids of 1940-1. In Bristol the BBC news bulletins were thought to be doing insufficient credit to the town's sufferings.⁷ The Mancunians, too, were enraged by the wireless "underplaying" their plight,⁸ while the inhabitants of Hull were angered at repeated references to the bombing of their city as attacks on "a north-east town".⁹ But there was an apparent contradiction. Any post-raid morale-boosting propaganda in either Germany or Britain was frequently regarded as an open invitation to the enemy to repeat its attack. This shows how the raids were assuming such a dominant role in people's lives that everything - even local events - was seen in an international context. Just

as in January 1944 the citizens of Frankfurt believed a heavy raid on their city to be the enemy's answer to their Gauleiter's much publicised announcement of a Party rally,¹⁰ the inhabitants of Plymouth had seen in the visit of the Royal Couple to their city in April 1941 the reason for the return of the dreaded bombers.¹¹ In as much as the air war affected people at a personal level, it was viewed in an extremely subjective way.

Once the German population made its own contact with the real world of 1943-5, the efforts of propagandists at upholding belief in victory were doomed. The starts and fits in Nazi treatment of the raids only demonstrated the propagandists' helplessness. Anything that smacked of distraction (e.g. ideological themes or polemics) was rejected outright by the German people. Nazi propagandists were compelled to take up the subject which concerned the nation most, but, by doing so, they inevitably compromised themselves. In 1943-5 there could be no such thing as an adequate or "successful" raid propaganda.

In an examination of popular attitude to Nazi propaganda. the tendency of the German people to generalise is quite striking. For example, the pessimism in regard to Stalingrad was echoed in premature fears of the loss of North Africa. The Rundstedt offensive at the end of 1944 led to unbounded optimism regarding events on both the East and West Fronts and a marked rise in confidence in the future effect of the V-weapons. Here the significance of the emotional subjective "image" of the war becomes clear. Similarly, a heavily bombed population was much more likely to view contemporary military developments pessimistically than a lightly bombed or unbombed population.

The deep-reaching apathy of a large part of the German people towards the end of the war should not be underestimated. By the spring of 1945 the bad tidings were coming in at such terrifyingly short intervals that they could not be absorbed and they were hardly registered in the minds of the listener. This meant that both press and press were often ignored. Apathy was the outward sign of renunciation of "outside" events and of exclusive preoccupation with the immediate environment, i.e. the family and friends. It is practically impossible to unravel basic attitudes in such an extraordinary situation as that of 1945. They defy rational explanation.

The fundamental problem of totalitarian propaganda in a situation of acute crisis may be summed up as follows. The population demands objective information, but to give it is tantamount to an official admission of defeatism when the government possesses a monopoly of the media. Hence it is impossible to give the people what they want - realistic information as to how the war can be won. But people go on demanding to hear the truth. The truth, however, has to be favourable if it is to be propagandistically effective. In the last two years of the Third Reich, the very force of the situation facing the propagandists must be appreciated. They were compelled - on the basis of popular demand - to tackle delicate subjects they would have preferred to have left alone, to take risks and to follow dark and uncertain paths. But their reputation suffered still further as a result. By the end of the war, the Germans had, to a great extent, freed themselves from their dependence on official propaganda, a dependence of which they had once been barely conscious. With the aid of alternative sources of information they were putting together their own picture of the war.

5. The Significance of Other Sources of Information

At the time of Stalingrad a surge in "black-listening" was recorded. As this first great defeat of the Wehrmacht turned out to be but the first in a long line of setbacks, the alternative sources of information, which lay outside the sphere of official control, increased in significance until they finally became a sort of propaganda substitute. This did not mean that Nazi propaganda was rendered completely superfluous but it did mean that its reputation receded as that of alternative news sources was enhanced. In fact, many Germans showed an extraordinary knack in combining information from both official and unofficial sources of information in order to form their own independent picture of events. The value estimate of a news source was a vital factor here. The BBC, for example, was commonly thought to broadcast more news and less "propaganda", a view which also contained a value estimate of Nazi propaganda. Not only the fact that events confirmed unofficial information but that the Nazi radio and press frequently reported the same news two or three days later than the enemy radio all worked out to the disadvantage of German propaganda. The growing rift between the picture drawn by official propaganda and that based on unofficial sources only accelerated this trend. By the summer of 1943 the enemy radio, the accounts of soldiers and rumours had come together to form a primary information system.

Person-to-person contact was clearly more effective than the words of faraway propagandists, even when the information spread in this way was wrong, as was the case with many casualty rumours and descriptions of Soviet "humanity". In fact, the situation was such that many Germans tended to believe any wrong news contained in the rumour rather than any right news in official propaganda. An extraordinary gullibility, for instance, was to be observed in the aftermath of air raids. Blown-up figures of damage and casualties were

spread by means of rumours and a "raid psychosis" took hold of the population of areas hitherto untouched. Exaggerated rumours also circulated in Britain as a result of the German raids. After an attack on Liverpool in May 1941, for example, there was talk of 50,917 dead!¹² In Germany, as in Britain, there was a tendency to add a nought on hearing official casualty figures. The favourable disposition to any rumour was, of course, exploited by the Nazis in their Mundpropaganda campaign, particularly in the last months of the war. As explained in the preceding chapter, the role played by the soldier as expert and opinion leader also found official recognition in the growing use of members of the Wehrmacht as propaganda mouthpieces.

Nor should the importance of the Christian churches in wartime Germany be underestimated. Church-going was and is much more prevalent than it is, for instance, in the United Kingdom. Both the Catholic and Protestant Churches were the only official organisations that never succumbed fully to Nazism. Theirs was another set of values which gave their active members an alternative. Especially in rural areas, Christianity was more deeply ingrained than National Socialism. As a result many people did not find it too difficult to come to terms with the idea of the transience of Nazism and even of German military greatness. Catholics, in particular, were conscious of belonging to a universal church and this, perhaps, created a sense of identity with the Western World.

No study of the effect of Nazi propaganda in 1943-5 could therefore be complete without detailed consideration of these unofficial news sources, which were finally to play an equally or even more important role in the forming of German public opinion than Nazi propaganda itself. An interesting subject for further research would be the role played in wartime Britain by the very same unofficial sources which have been examined in

this thesis. The considerable popularity of "Lord Haw Haw" points to the possible potentialities of such a theme. During the blitz he became "the voice of authority" and was so omniscient that he was reputed to be able to read the time from provincial town clocks!¹³

6. Class and Social Factors

The military victories of 1940-1 undeniably gave the German people the feeling of belonging to one great national community. In fact, however, this feeling represented only the spirit of nationalistic enthusiasm, which so few Germans found possible to resist in those "happy days". The second half of the war demonstrated how superficial this Volksgemeinschaft really was. In as far as the turn of fortune forced people to contemplate the prospect of eventual defeat, there was a marked increase in preoccupation with immediate interests and a decrease in nationalistic fervour. After the bitter blow of the winter of 1942-3, the German people began to divide up again into its traditional class and social groups. This concentration on immediate interests meant an intensified sensitivity towards any perceived social difference or injustice, and any suspicion that the common burden was not being equally shared meant, in turn, growing inter-class antagonism. Even bombing did not, as Steinert is inclined to believe, restore a semblance of national unity and determination.¹⁴ There was undoubtedly a growth in the communal spirit at a local, not at a national, level. This neighbourliness was a consequence of the realisation of being in the same boat and is certainly not attributable to Nazi propaganda. Goebbels' claim that enemy raiding was forging a new national community was not only ridiculous but contradicted the assertion that Germany had been a Volksgemeinschaft since the first days of the Third Reich.

The resounding reception given to Goebbels in the working-class areas of Berlin, described in Chapter 5, should be seen less as evidence of identity with the Nazis and more as respect for the only leader who dared show himself in public and who was apparently concerned with the plight of the masses. Baird, too, overstates the role of nationalism at the very end of the war when he maintains that "the limited propaganda success" (sic) at this time is to be traced back to "the fact that traditional Nazi propaganda overlapped and merged with traditional German patriotism and the people's intuitive response to defend the Fatherland in danger"¹⁵. The disorderly retreat in the west, the hoisting of white flags in most west German towns and the flight of millions of east Germans to the west are not altogether compatible with this assertion.

The "total war" measures of 1943, examined in Chapter 3, affected people according to class but, at the same time as creating outwardly greater social equality, they increased class consciousness. The simple fact that middle-class women were being brought into the war effort for the first time only made the working class aware that it alone had borne the brunt of war sacrifices heretofore whilst the better-off had enjoyed an almost parasitic peace-time living style. In short, the working man would not benefit from his toils and only the rich would benefit from German victory. The middle class, on the other hand, saw in these war measures an attack on their class and a betrayal of National Socialist ideas. The readiness to believe the worst in regard to government intentions showed how sensitive German people were when official policy affected them financially, economically and socially. Goebbels seriously undermined the strength of these class feelings which were flaring up, when he thought he could use them propagandistically as a whip to secure acceptance of the mobilisation and closing-

down measures. In fact, if anything, he only made the situation worse, for the better-off saw this as proof that Goebbels was inciting the lower classes against them, whilst the working class remained unconvinced as to the honesty of the leadership's intentions, the fair implementation of the measures and the equality of sacrifice to the war effort. Thus, practically all classes came to regard government policy and government interests as running contrary to their own interests. No longer was there an identifiable unity of national and personal purpose and interests.

There is little evidence to suggest that the great majority of the German working class began to think ideologically in a clearly socialist, let alone Bolshevik, way. What was typical of these years was the loss of respect for political authority, which was echoed in a typically class form. There was certainly no marked upsurge in revolutionary fervour, as had been the case in 1918. There was a tendency, however, for the German proletariat to see little danger for itself with the arrival of the Red Army and to care little about what the enemy had in store for the Nazi Bonzen. It is perhaps here that many German workers, without being or wishing to be Communists or fellow-travellers, recalled what was convenient and comforting to recall - the fact that the USSR claimed to be a "workers' state". This is echoed in the slogan "the Reds are not so bad", which was falling on fertile soil as early as the spring of 1943. But this was no hymn of praise to Communism and was certainly not the same as "how wonderful Bolshevism is". In fact, although difficult to define in detail, the attitude of the German working class to the Soviets was a fundamentally passive one. Whilst not welcoming them, it did not necessarily regard them as the enemy of the working man. It must be remembered that the years of the Weimar republic were not far

off; still twelve years before, a considerable proportion of the German proletariat was faithful to the SPD and KPD. The common working-class attitude - at least, up to the summer of 1944 - can be summed up as follows: Bolshevik rule would be tolerable, no worse but no better than at present.

In Germany, as in Great Britain, the war was accompanied by a radicalisation of political thought. The recognition of social equality meant that radical social reform was demanded after victory. The German government paid less attention to this than the British government with its far-reaching post-war plans did. Nevertheless, the recurring use of the expressions "socialist community" and "socialism of the deed" shows that Nazi propaganda was playing lip service to what it recognised as a social and political undercurrent in the thinking of the masses.

This flaring up of class feeling was accompanied by a growing aggressiveness in the attitude to the Party which, in turn, provided further proof of the non-existence of the Volksgemeinschaft, of the rejection of central Nazi propaganda theses and of the recognition of the fact that the NSDAP no longer represented the interests of any one class - in particular, those of the "small man". As the burdens of war became harder to bear, the Party took on increasingly the function of a much-needed scapegoat. It is rather ironic that the more the Nazi Party utilised world Jewry as its scapegoat, the more the German people utilised the NSDAP as theirs. This should not, in general, be seen as a phenomenon peculiar to Nazi Germany. In Great Britain there was a marked antagonism towards local bureaucrats in 1940-1, particularly in bombed provincial cities. Fury at the ineptitude of local government on Merseyside, for example, was mirrored in rumours of white-flags, martial law, food riots and even "peace-demonstrations"

on the morrow of heavy bombing.¹⁶ In Frankfurt-on-Main heavy bombing led to greater class sensitivity in response to Party propaganda, and particularly the working class spurned any attempt to put the work of the Party in a good light.¹⁷ This readiness to think the worst of the Party or of local administrators was therefore accentuated by bombing.

At the end of the Third Reich, a further split in the "national community" became evident - between Party members and non-Party members of all classes. The more official propaganda reiterated the thesis of the inseparable bond between the German people and the National Socialist Party, the more pronounced did the tendency become for the German people to make precisely this distinction. For a great part of the German population the Nazi Party was becoming something external, even oppressive, by 1944-5; it was certainly no longer regarded as the representative and guarantor of German interests but an organisation following its own selfish interests. This inevitably had a far-reaching effect on the popular attitude to a propaganda claiming to represent the unity of a National Socialist Germany. The few believers left were more often than not those who had no alternative but to believe. Also ascertainable was the drift of the millions of lukewarm or opportunist members away from the NSDAP from the summer of 1943. The hard core left was a surprisingly small minority of the total membership. Both the Party leadership and Germany's enemies grossly overestimated the fanaticism of these representatives of the "New Order".

The friction caused by the evacuation schemes showed that there were, in fact, two quite different Germanies - urban and rural Germany. There was a confrontation between two "worlds" which hitherto had never taken place, two "worlds" that the Nazi Volksgemeinschaft had not managed to bring together. The

same misunderstandings and adjustment difficulties were to be observed in wartime Britain. There, too, many preferred to put up with the bombs rather than remain unwelcome guests of people with such strange ways.

7. Regional Differences

In the same way as the German Volksgemeinschaft divided up into its constituent parts with the prospect and preoccupation with military defeat, there was a marked tendency to nurture hopes of local particularism and generous treatment. This comes out particularly clearly in the source material used in Chapters 4 and 7. The Rhineland was quite confident that it would be occupied by the Western Powers, by states possessing a similar culture and "civilisation". The Austrians and Bavarians paid increasing attention to those traditions and customs which made them different to "other" Germans. Because of them they expected special treatment; perhaps they might even be treated as the "victims" of Prussian nationalism and militarism. Such hopes would to a great extent be fulfilled in Austria. After the war, few - even in the Allied camp - were to recall that back in the "good days" of 1938-42 the enthusiasm of the Austrians for the ideas of National Socialism was no less pronounced (perhaps more so) than in the "Old Reich". In the west of Germany people feared the impending defeat less than in the east, and this would help to explain the indifference to what was considered irrelevant anti-Bolshevik propaganda.

Up to about the summer of 1944 the enemy bombing offensive split the German Reich in two - the bombed areas of west and middle Germany and the unbombed east and rural areas. The latter continued as if the war were far away, almost untouched by the dangers and annoyances of wartime life. The awareness of the inhabitants of the blitzed towns of this disparity further undermined the national unity and the trust in the leadership.

Only with the extension of bombing to east Germany and the increase in low-flying attacks in rural areas in 1944-5 did this division vanish. Allied bombing also brought latent provincial antagonism towards the Reichshauptstadt to the surface. The schadenfreude of the inhabitants of the bombed Ruhr and Rhineland on hearing of the raids on Berlin in early 1943, described in Chapter 5, was, in fact, a demonstration of hurt pride that their sufferings had not been recognised by outsiders. There was a marked tendency for each bombed town to allot itself a special position in the series of enemy raids and even to regard itself as the victim of the worst attack yet.^{18*} Angus Calder has described a similar phenomenon during the blitz on London in September-October 1940:

"...in most parts of the country, the tendency was to pooh-pooh the stories of what was happening in London. If a town had been attacked, however lightly, the locals wanted to know why London had all the publicity."¹⁹

Bombing posed an insuperable problem for Nazi propagandists, who were compelled to address two quite different audiences at the same time; too little treatment of the raids would embitter the minority, the bombed urban population, too much would depress the country folks and the inhabitants of other towns who constituted the majority.

At the end of the war, Germany can be divided into two parts, the east and west, when examining the question of morale. If morale is to be measured in terms of confidence in victory and trust in the leadership, then it was much higher in the east than in the west. Naturally, until the summer of 1944, east Germans had scarcely any war scars to show. With the sudden advent of the Soviet invader, the mass flight westwards and the loss of their homes in the subsequent months, their

morale and naive trust in the worldly powers that be do not seem to have been broken. But theirs had been a much different kind of life and much less sophisticated than that characteristic in the more urbanised and cosmopolitan west. Maybe their simple trust in the political leadership was essentially an expression of the hope that only German victory could restore them the life and the things they had just lost. In the west, on the other hand, behaviour was often outwardly defeatist in 1945, even among those who had decided to stay put. Here, enemy victory was not associated with the loss but the preservation of everything one had. The image of the Anglo-Americans made defeat and political change palatable, even agreeable. Moreover, the resistance will had been pulverised by 1945 by the fatal combination of five years of constant aerial bombardment and two and a half years of uninterrupted military defeat. The strain was no longer bearable and the advent of bombless nights was reason enough to welcome the end of the "Thousand Year Reich".

8. Attitudes to a Possible Defeat Situation

Closely linked with a study of class and regional factors is an examination of German attitudes to possible German defeat and the post-war world. Nazi propagandists certainly underestimated the significance of immediately personal factors in determining the popular mood and thoughts of the future. In 1943 the Eastern Front was much more important in the popular mind in as much as it posed a threat to the lives of relatives and friends and much less important were the hopes of Lebensraum or purely ideological and racial aspects. This essentially apolitical basic attitude would explain why so many Germans found it not too difficult to come to terms with the idea of future defeat. Doubtless, most Germans still wanted to win the war in 1943, but, as this hope was dashed, the stress was increasingly placed on securing an acceptable way of life in a defeated Germany.

Already at the beginning of 1943, vague thoughts of a non-Nazi Germany had become a danger signal for Goebbels. There was a fatal connection between military setback and individual reflection on the future. In spite of all such morale-boosting themes as anti-Bolshevism which were meant to demonstrate the inseparability of Germany and National Socialism, preoccupation with thoughts of future defeat grew after Stalingrad in ratio to the deterioration in the Reich's military position. The very fact that the war came to be viewed in terms of its likely impact on the individual, his family and immediate circle of friends ran quite contrary to the spirit of the Volksgemeinschaft.

It is amazing to what extent popular views concerning the end of the war in the years 1943-5 were coloured by a timely anticipation of the post-war world and how great a role was being played in these views by those people who were, at the same time, bombing and killing their holders. By the winter of 1944-5, when all hopes in Soviet generosity had been thwarted, the Anglo-Americans constituted the consolatory factor par excellence. In Chapter 7 the evidence showed beyond doubt that the favourable image of the western foes proved much stronger than the propaganda argument that enemy victory would mean the end of the German people. Official atrocity propaganda which threatened to confuse the picture was simply ignored. There was a marked inclination to use one's own experience or rumours in order to find what one wished to find - proof of Anglo-American humanity. Any tit-bit of information was seized upon if it confirmed the favourable pre-formed opinion. This moral preparation for defeat went so far in the early months of 1945 that the majority of West Germans expected better treatment and a higher living standard than they were in fact to get in the first three years of enemy occupation. This growing identity

with the Western Powers - a total negation of all Nazi propaganda goals - was illustrated in the widespread illusions of a common struggle against the Bolsheviks, which even survived the death of the founder of the Nazi creed. This phenomenon at first appears to have been a belated and startling acceptance of Goebbels' thesis of a European "crusade" against Bolshevism. But it was really no such thing, for in 1945 it was prevalent in a Germany where National Socialism was rapidly becoming defunct. It might be seen rather as a sign of identity with the West and as an acceptance of the idea that Germany's future lay with the Western Powers. The Americans and the British became the very guarantee of a return to "normality", and in 1945 German military resistance was meeting with the active opposition of many west Germans, as it constituted an obstacle to that post-war world of popular fantasy.

Finally, German experience in the years 1943-5 shows how unimportant political ideas and ideology - even nationalism - are, when the life and the interests of the individual are threatened. It would even appear that many Germans were so convinced of future western generosity that they were prepared to accept as the price not only the end of National Socialism but also the end of the unity of the German state.

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Some of the factors determining German morale and response to propaganda in these last two years of the war seem to transcend national frontiers and political structures. It is tempting to see in the reaction of the German people at this time typical human behavioural patterns and response characteristics. The number of parallels between wartime Nazi Germany and wartime democratic Britain is quite astounding. They point the way for and show the potentialities of an examination of the very same

factors, which have been described in detail in this thesis, in wartime Britain or perhaps in other lands at other times. A.L.Unger has made a valuable contribution to "internationalising" basic political and social patterns in his examination of two totalitarian states, which are often viewed as two extremes of the political spectrum - Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany.²⁰ But, as implied above, totalitarianism does not need to be a prerequisite for a comparative study of two leaderships and two peoples in wartime.

It is certainly to be hoped that the factors touched on in this study of wartime Germany will also give students of the Third Reich food for thought and ideas for future research. Although the Nazi press and cinema have been the subject of a number of studies, it is remarkable how little has been written on wartime Nazi broadcasting. An authoritative account has yet to be written. The reports of the BBC Monitoring Service would provide here a wealth of information and a virtually untapped documentary source. Used in conjunction with the numerous SD reports on popular response to wireless programmes, they would most certainly supply a fascinating and rewarding basis for research into the content and effect of Nazi broadcasting. Attention might also be paid to the role of the apparently purely "entertainment" aspects in the world of Nazi radio.

It would be only right to end this account with a final word on the "mind" behind National Socialist propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, and the question of his overall "success". So much depended on the person of the Reich Minister of Propaganda, but it would, nevertheless, be wrong to hold him entirely responsible for the propaganda failures of 1943-45. As explained above, the external situation was such at this time that it posed an insurmountable problem. Even the ablest propagandist would have been at a loss to know what to do - and

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the "evil genius", Goebbels, was here no exception. The period between Stalingrad and the German surrender shows up the limits of propaganda very clearly indeed. At this time Goebbels rapidly became the victim of a situation he could do nothing to control. Many students of Nazi Germany, as well as many contemporaries of the Third Reich, have fallen victim to the temptation to exaggerate the effect of both propaganda in general and Nazi propaganda in particular, and have consequently grossly overestimated Goebbels' achievements. Hagemann believes, for example, that Goebbels enabled the German leadership to lengthen the war and that his propaganda rallied the German people to the regime right up to the bitter end.²² According to Werner Stephan, who served in the Propaganda Ministry for twelve years, Goebbels "kept the armament workers in the factories" and without him "the struggle could not have been continued" so long.²³ Such sweeping generalisations are highly misleading. This study has shown that the last two years of the war were marked by a losing struggle by Goebbels' propagandists to retain control of people's minds rather than by a series of propaganda "victories" and "successes". Boelcke is very near the truth when he points to the sheer impossibility of anyone - Goebbels included - of turning at will a "low" in morale into a "high".²⁴ Other factors played an equally or even more decisive part than propaganda in ensuring the continuation of German resistance until May 1945: apathy and the powerlessness to change "fate", political indifference, the respect for authority, the force of habit, the fear of punishment by the Gestapo or by the enemy, the lack of an immediate alternative (as opposed to long-term hopes of enemy mercy). Goebbels' work should thus be seen as one factor among many determining people's behaviour in the second half of the Second World War.

Nor should it be forgotten that during the war the Propaganda Minister was not the indisputable master of Nazi propaganda that he had been in the preceding years of peace. After September 1939, he had to share control with Reichspressechef Dietrich, Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, Rosenberg's Ostministerium, and, most important of all, the Propaganda Office of the Wehrmacht.²⁵ In military matters Goebbels' freedom was very restricted indeed and he, too, could only move within the limits laid down by the OKW. This meant, in turn, that he was quite unjustifiably blamed for all propaganda faux pas - also in matters he could do absolutely nothing to control. For Germans and foreigners alike, who were not versed in the intricacies of Nazi state and Party organisation, Goebbels' name was synonymous with Nazi propaganda. The over-optimistic and short-sighted military reporting from the Salerno bridgehead in September 1943 is a case in point. The Minister was truly grieved at being held responsible abroad for this propaganda debacle.^{26*}

In the field of morale, however, Goebbels had a relatively free hand. The greater the need to look after civilian morale became, the more important did his position become. By 1943 he had, in the eyes of the German masses, assumed a dominant place in the Nazi hierarchy, second only to the Führer. Few Germans were aware of the power of the graue eminenz, Bormann. The importance Goebbels ascribed to the interaction between propaganda and morale has already been pointed out. Nevertheless, the Minister's extreme vanity prevented him from making an unprejudiced and realistic assessment of morale and propaganda effect. More often than not, he preferred to see what he wanted to see and, by the end of the war, he was putting much more trust in his own intuitive interpretation of the real mood and feelings of the population than in the unanimous findings of the morale reports.

He ascribed more importance to one flattering letter arriving at his ministry than to ten "negative" SD intelligence reports. Such a man could not accept failure and the approaching confrontation with reality. For Goebbels suicide was the only possible flight from the recognition of failure.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. Trans. Murphy, Mein Kampf, p. 159.
2. Ibid., pp. 160-1.
3. Ibid., p. 283.
4. The fluctuations in German morale in the period 1939-42 can be followed in Boberach, Meldungen aus dem Reich.
5. Ed. Lochner, The Goebbels Diaries, p. 22, Entry for 29 Jan. 1942.
6. Riess, Joseph Goebbels, p. 242.
7. v. Oven, Mit Goebbels bis zum Ende, Vol. I, pp. 249-50, Entry for 26 April 1944.
8. Ibid., pp. 285-6, Entry for 6 June 1944.
9. Ed. Lochner, The Goebbels Diaries, p. 229, Entry for 14 March 1943.
10. Boelcke, Kriegspropaganda 1939-1941, pp. 46-7.
11. George, Propaganda Analysis, A Study of Inferences Made from Nazi Propaganda in World War Two, pp. 224-5.
12. See Dröge, Der zerredete Widerstand. Soziologie und Publizistik des Gerüchts im 2. Weltkrieg, p. 105f.
13. Goebbels ascribed great importance to the letters written to his Ministry. According to Semmler, The Man Next to Hitler, pp. 98-9, Entry for 16 Aug. 1943: "Every week the press officer has to prepare for Goebbels a report on the letters addressed to the Ministry from the public. It is a very useful piece of work. It keeps Goebbels in touch with the mood, opinions and rumours among the people. The weekly flow varies from 50 to 300. A third of them are anonymous and crude, in another third the writers approve with enthusiasm everything the leadership does; the last third contains letters in which writers discuss critically but constructively the affairs of the day. These are of course the most useful." These letters seem, however, to have given a much more favourable picture of morale than the SD reports. In the entry for 6 March 1943 (i.e. at a time when the SD reports were pointing to a "low" in morale) Goebbels wrote in his diary: "The latest survey of letters is very positive. Moreover, I have received hundreds of letters, which are for the most part very flattering. It is very gratifying that trust in me is growing everywhere." (Ed. Lochner, Goebbels

- Tagebücher, p.251)
14. Harrisson, Living Through the Blitz, pp.284-8.
 15. Steinert, Hitlers Krieg und die Deutschen, pp.23-4.
 16. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Mood and Bearing", 9 April 1943.
 17. The Reichsfrauenführerin Scholtz-Klinck claimed, however, that Stimmung and Haltung "are two things which are basically different from one another and do not have the least to do with one another". (Wiener Library Press Cuttings. German Telegraph Service, Oslo: "Aus einer von Reichsfrauenführerin Scholtz-Klinck in Trondheim gehaltenen Rede", 16 July 1943.)
 18. For background information on the setting up of the RSHA, see Höhne, Der Order unter dem Totenkopf, pp.134-9.
 19. Testimony of Dr. Hans Rössner, International Military Tribunal, Trial of the Major War Criminals, Proceedings, Vol. XX, p.240, 2 Aug. 1946.
 20. United States Strategic Bombing Survey, The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale, Vol. I, p.42; according to Steinert, op. cit., p.23: "They [SD reports] communicate typical, widely-held views but, in addition, give some information over the specific views of workers, farmers and intellectuals, and they show regional variations. They do not communicate, however, any percentual data. This may be valued as a serious disadvantage in our age of statistics."
 21. According to the testimony of Rössner at Nuremburg (same source as in footnote 19): "It was even desired to have as large a percentage of non-Party members among these agents of the SD, so as to get a complete and independent picture of the total situation within Germany through these agents.... the percentage of members of the SS among these agents was, according to my estimate, still less than that of Party members."; see also The Kersten Memoirs, p.213, Entry for 7 Sept. 1943.
 22. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart K750/38. SD Leitab. Stuttgart, Rundschreiben Nr.168, 12 Oct. 1940, quoted in Steinert, op. cit., p.44.
 23. Kersten reported Ohlendorf as saying: "The Security Service insists on the greater objectivity of its reports. It gives a picture which is photographically exact; it acts as the

- government's conscience, revealing the situation in every department of life and showing the effect of every enactment." (The Kersten Memoirs, p.212, Entry for 4 Sept. 1943)
24. Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart K750/38. SD Leitab. Stuttgart, Rundschreiben Nr.168, 12 Oct. 1940, quoted in Steinert, op.cit., p.40.
 25. See Steinert, op.cit., p.41.
 26. The Kersten Memoirs, p.210, Entry for 2 Sept. 1943.
 27. For Goebbels' criticism of the SD Stimmungsberichte, see Ed. Lochner, The Goebbels Diaries, pp.258-9, Entry for 17 April 1943; see also NA T84/Roll 263. Goebbels Tagebücher, p.20, 17 April 1943.
 28. In Ohlendorf's opinion this change in the SD reports was of considerable importance: "These 'Reports from the Reich' were the summaries of reports of all spheres of the SD which were sent to us by all Reich agencies, and in the administrative practice of the Reich were the only source of information of the departments about difficulties of the other departments. With this, the most important organ and the most important function of the SD were abolished and destroyed." Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuremburg Military Tribunal, Vol.IV, Case 9, U.S. v. Ohlendorf, p.237.
 29. The Kersten Memoirs, p.218, Entry for 14 June 1944.
 30. Ohlendorf's team put itself at the disposal of the Doenitz government in May 1945 and produced a number of reports on the morale of the population of Flensburg, see MGFA file OKW/112.
 31. BA R58/990. Speech by Ohlendorf, Amtschef RSHA to Gruppen- u. Abschnittsleiter, 31 Oct. 1944.
 32. BA R58/976. Bormann to Kaltenbrunner, 4 April 1945.
 33. In the spring of 1943, the Gauleiter of Hessen-Nassau expressly demanded regular reports on the population's reaction to military and political events "without any unnecessary beating about the bush". (HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5540. Gau Hessen-Nassau, Rundschreiben Nr.77/43, Betr:Wochenbericht, 21 May 1943)
 34. Unger, "The Public Opinion Reports of the Nazi Party" in The Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol.29, Winter 1965-6, p.569.
 35. Ibid., p.571.
 36. Ibid., pp.570-1; Dröge, op.cit., pp.47-8.
 37. Dröge, op.cit., p.62.

38. Ibid.,p.63.
39. Ibid.,p.64.
40. "The front-line soldier still enjoys the full trust of the people. What he says is believed as 'he must know what's happening'." MGFA OKW/1037. Betr: Richtlinien f. 'Sondereinsatz Berlin',c.5 Feb.1945.
41. Dröge,op.cit.,p.67; for a more detailed account of the operation,see Berghahn,Meinungsforschung im Dritten Reich. Die Mundpropaganda-Aktion der Wehrmacht im letzten Kriegshalbjahr in Militärgeschl. Mitt. - 1,1967,pp.83-121.
42. See Steinert,op.cit.,p.513.
43. For information about content analysis procedures which can be used in propaganda research,see George,op.cit.; Stone, Dunphy,Ogilvie,The General Enquirer,A Computer Approach to Content Analysis; North,Holsti,Zaninovich,Zinnes,Content Analysis,A Handbook with Applications for the Study of International Crisis.
44. George,op.cit.,p.20.
45. Ibid.,p.261.
46. Ibid.,p.265.

CHAPTER 2

1. BA ZSg.109/40. Slg.Oberheitmann,V.I.-Nr.5/43,5 Jan.1943.
2. BA R58/178. RSHA,Meldungen aus dem Reich,Nr.344,17 Dec.1942.
3. Baird,The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda,1939-1945,p.179.
4. Same source as in footnote 2.
5. BA R58/179. RSHA,Meldungen aus dem Reich,Nr.347,4 Jan.1943.
6. Ibid.,Nr.350,14 Jan.1943.
7. Ibid.,Nr.347,4 Jan.1943.
8. Ibid.,Nr.348,7 Jan.1943.
9. Ibid.
10. BA R58/179. RSHA,Meldungen aus dem Reich,Nr.350,14 Jan.1943.
11. Ibid.,Nr.349,11 Jan.1943.
12. Ibid.,Nr.351,18 Jan.1943.
13. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts,16 Jan.1943.
14. BA ZSg. 109/40. Slg.Oberheitmann,II-Nachtrag zur Tagesparole, 16 Jan.1943.

15. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 19.0 "An Interim Balance Sheet of the Winter Battle", 25 Jan. 1943.
16. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, p. 430, Conference of 27 Jan. 1943.
17. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 30 Jan. 1943.
18. BA ZSg. 109/40. Slg. Oberheitmann, V.I.-Tagesparole Nr. 31/43, 3 Feb. 1943.
19. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, pp. 434-5, Conference of 31 Jan./1 Feb. 1943.
20. BA ZSg. 102/42. Slg. Sanger, Aus der Pressekonferenz, 8 Feb. 1943, mittags.
21. BA R58/179. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 353, 25 Jan. 1943.
22. BA NS6/408. Parteikanzlei, SD Ab. Linz, Betr: Meldungen aus dem Reichsgau Oberdonau - Allgemeine Stimmung u. Lage, 30 Jan. 1943.
23. BA NS6/414. Parteikanzlei, Auszuge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 24.1. bis 30.1.43.
24. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 355, 1 Feb. 1943.
25. GSta Munchen MA 106 674. Regierungsprasident Regensburg, Betr: Monatsbericht, 10 Feb. 1943.
26. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 356, 4 Feb. 1943.
27. BA R58/958. RSHA, SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Rundfunkbericht fur die Zeit 2-4.2.43, 6 Feb. 1943.
28. Same source as in footnote 26.
29. von Studnitz, While Berlin Burns, p. 8, Entry for 2 Feb. 1943.
30. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 355, 1 Feb. 1943.
31. Ibid., Nr. 356, 4 Feb. 1943.
32. GSta Munchen MA 106 671. Betr: Monatsbericht des Regierungsprasidenten in Munchen, 8 Feb. 1943.
33. Same source as in footnote 31.
34. BA R58/179. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 354, 28 Jan. 1943.
35. GSta Munchen MA 106 674. Regierungsprasident Regensburg, Betr: Monatsbericht, 11 Jan. 1943.
36. GSta Munchen MA 106 671. Monatsbericht des Regierungsprasidenten in Munchen, 10 March 1943.
37. BA NS6/414. Parteikanzlei, Auszuge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 31.1.-13.2.43.
38. Ibid., Zeitraum 14-20.2.43.

39. BA R22/3376. RJM, Generalstaatsanwalt Leitmeritz, 25 Jan. 1943.
40. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, "Eastern Front Demands Total Effort from German Nation", 23 Jan. 1943.
41. BA R58/179. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 353, 25 Jan. 1943.
42. Ibid., Nr. 347, 4 Jan. 1943.
43. BA NS6/414. Parteikanzlei, Auszüge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 24.1.-30.1.43.
44. BA NS6/408. Parteikanzlei, SD Ab. Linz, Betr: Meldungen aus dem Reichsgau Oberdonau - Stimmung u. Lage, 4 Jan. 1943.
45. BA R58/959. RSHA, SD Ab. Stuttgart, 3 Jan. 1943.
46. Ibid., 27 Jan. 1943.
47. BA R55/531. RPM, Report on Radio, c. 26 Jan. 1943.
48. BA R58/179. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 351, 18 Jan. 1943.
49. Ibid., Nr. 354, 28 Jan. 1943.
50. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 355, 1 Feb. 1943.
51. Ibid., Nr. 359, 11 Feb. 1943.
52. Exactly one year later, the German press was informed that "it is advisable to refrain from printing articles commemorating the anniversary of Stalingrad". (BA ZSg. 109/48. Slg. Oberheitmann, V.I.-Nr. 29/44, 3 Feb. 1944.

CHAPTER 3

1. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, pp. 414-6, Conference of 4 Jan. 1943.
2. See Semmler, op.cit., pp. 67-8, Entry for 26 Jan. 1943.
3. NA T81, Roll 163. Parteikanzlei, Politische Lagebericht f. den Monat Januar 1943, Landkreis Aachen (available in Wiener Library).
4. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 356, 4 Feb. 1943.
5. Ibid., Betr: Erste Stimmen zur Verordnung über die Meldung v. Männern u. Frauen f. Aufgaben der Reichsverteidigung vom 27.1.43, 4 Feb. 1943.
6. GSta München MA 106 671. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in München, 8 April 1943.
7. Same source as in footnote 5.
8. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 30 Jan. 1943.
9. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, p. 439, Conference of 11 Feb. 1943.

10. v. Studnitz, op.cit., p.18, Entry for 8 Feb.1943.
11. BA ZSg.109/40. Slg. Oberheitmann, S.I.-Nr.1/43, Kulturpolitische Informationen, 9 Jan.1943.
12. BA R58/959. RSHA, SD Ab. Stuttgart, 20 Jan.1943.
13. Same source as in footnote 9.
14. The Von Hassel Diaries, p.257, Entry for 6 March 1943.
15. Ibid., Entry for 13 Nov.1943.
16. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Der Angriff, 4 Feb.1943.
17. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.359, 15 Feb.1943.
18. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 18 Feb.1943.
19. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.361, 22 Feb.1943.
20. BA NS6/414. Parteikanzlei, Auszüge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 21-27.2.43.
21. BA R22/3355. RJM, Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Bamberg, 29 March 1943.
22. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No.8, 5 March 1943.
23. Same source as in footnote 8.
24. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Our Will and Our Road", 12 Feb.1943.
25. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, p.447, Conference of 22 Feb.1943.
26. BA ZSg.109/41. Slg. Oberheitmann, V.I.-Tagesparole Nr.65/43, 15 March 1943; see also ibid., V.I.-Tagesparole Nr.63/43, 12 March 1943.
27. Same source as in footnote 19.
28. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Winter Crises and Total War", 12 March 1943.
29. The Von Hassel Diaries, p.257, Entry for 6 March 1943.
30. See Steinert, op.cit., pp.356-7.
31. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.362, 25 Feb.1943.
32. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, p.454, Conference of 12 March 1943.
33. Ibid., Conference of 16 March 1943.
34. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "On Injustices in Wartime", 26 March 1943.
35. Ibid., "Frank Words on Total War", 2 April 1943.
36. BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.365, 8 March 1943.

37. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Hamburger Fremdenblatt, 7 March 1943.
38. BA NS6/415. Parteikanzlei, Auszüge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 23-29.5.43.
39. Ed. Lochner, Goebbels Tagebücher, p.270, Entry for 13 March 1943.
40. BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.367, 15 March 1943.
41. Same source as in footnote 35.
42. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No.13, 9 April 1943.
43. BA R58/182. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.373, 5 April 1943.
44. BA R58/191. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Grundfragen der Stimmung u. Haltung des deutschen Volkes, hier: * Totaler Krieg, 13 Dec.1943.
45. v.Oven, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.90-1, Entry for 25 July 1944.
46. For an account of the hostility to the Party, see BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über Auflockerungserscheinungen in der Haltung der Bevölkerung, 8 July 1943.

CHAPTER 4

1. NA T84/Roll 263. Goebbels Tagebücher, p.24, 12 March 1943.
2. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, pp.444-5, Conference of 17 Feb.1943.
3. BA NS18/67. Parteikanzlei, RPL to Gauleiter, Gaupropagandaleiter u. Leiter der RPÄ, Betr: Propaganda-Parole Nr.50, 23 Feb.1943.
4. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 18 Feb.1943.
5. Boelcke, op.cit., pp.439-41, Conference of 12 Feb.1943.
6. See BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.367, 15 March 1943.
7. NA T84/Roll 263. Goebbels Tagebücher, pp.19-20, 19 March 1943.
8. Ibid., pp.10-11, 5 March 1943.
9. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.360, 18 Feb.1943.
10. GSta München MA 106 684. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in Augsburg, 10 May 1943; see also BA R58/958. RSHA, SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Rundfunkbericht f. die Zeit 6-8.4.43, 10 April 1943.

11. GSta München MA 106 684, ibid.
12. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No. 16, 30 April 1943.
13. BA R58/182. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 372, 1 April 1943.
14. BA R22/3367. RJM, Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Hamm (Westf.), 31 March 1943.
15. BA R58/180, Nr. 359.
16. BA R58/181, Nr. 365.
17. BA R58/182, Nr. 375.
18. Ibid., Nr. 375, 12 April 1943.
19. BA R22/3380. RJM, Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Naumberg (Saale) 30 June 1943.
20. Ed. Lochner, The Goebbels Diaries, p. 260, Entry for 18 April 1943.
21. GSta München MA 106 674. Regierungspräsident Regensburg, Betr: Monatsbericht, 11 Jan. 1943.
22. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 359, 15 Feb. 1943.
23. BA NS6/415. Parteikanzlei, Auszüge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 23-29.5.43.
24. BA ZSg. 102/43. Slg. Semmler, Aus der Pressekonferenz, 30.3.(43) abends.
25. BA R58/958. RSHA, SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Rundfunkbericht f. die Zeit 16-18.2.43, 20 Feb. 1943.
26. BA R58/183. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 381, 6 May 1943.
27. BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 371, 29 March 1943.
28. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No. 14, 16 April 1943.
29. Ed. Lochner, The Goebbels Diaries, p. 251, Entry for 11 April 1943.
30. BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 367, 15 March 1943.
31. v. Studnitz, op. cit., p. 41, Entry for 18 March 1943.
32. BA R58/180. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 362, 25 Feb. 1943.
33. BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 368, 18 March 1943.
34. BA NS6/415. Parteikanzlei, Auszüge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 16-21.5.43.
35. Same source as in footnote 30.
36. v. Kardorff, Berliner Aufzeichnungen aus den Jahren 1942-45, p. 163, Entry for 14 July 1943.

37. Ibid.; the popularity of Radio Moscow was explained in the same way by the SD in BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 367, 15 March 1943.
38. Staatsarchiv Koblenz 662,3/154. NSDAP, Kreisleitung Trier, Abt. Propaganda Koblenz to Kreispropagandaleitung Trier, Betr: Abhören ausländischer Sender, 22 June 1943.
39. BA R55/531. RSHA IIIC4 to RPM Ab. Rundfunk (Fritzsche), Betr: Stimmen zum Rundfunk, 5 Feb. 1943.
40. Der Chef der Sicherheitspolizei u. des SD an Abt. Rundfunk in RPM (Fritzsche), Betr: Stimmen zum Rundfunk, 17 April 1943, printed in Wulf, Presse und Funk im Dritten Reich, pp. 394-6 (Rororo Taschenbuch).
41. Same source as in footnote 30.
42. BA R55DC/vorl. 564. RPM, Erkundungsdienst, Betr: Die Sendungen des Gegners in deutscher Sprache über den legalen Rundfunk und über 'G'-Sender, 25 Feb. 1943.
43. BA R58/1159. RSHA, SD Ab. Köln, 8 April 1943.
44. BA NSD/12-1/6. RPL, Hauptamt Propaganda, Redner-Schnellinformation, Lieferung 59, 15 May 1943.
45. Staatsarchiv Koblenz Abt. 662,5/121. NSDAP Gaupropagandaleitung Koblenz, Rundschreiben Nr. 49/23, 6 March 1943.
46. Ibid.
47. BA R58/174. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 309, Betr: Das Rußlandbild in der Bevölkerung, 17 Aug. 1942.
48. Ibid.
49. BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Die Einstellung der Bevölkerung zur Propaganda über den Bolschewismus, 26 July 1943.
50. HSta Wiesbaden, Abt. 483/5737. SD Ab. Koblenz, Betr: Öffentliche Führungsmittel - Presse, 18 Jan. 1944.
51. See, for example, BA R55/600. RPM, RPA Ostpreussen, Betr: Mittelbewilligung zur gaeigenen anti-bolschewistischen Propagandaaktion, 19 May 1944.
52. Same source as in footnote 23.
53. Same source as in footnote 49.
54. Same source as in footnote 39.
55. BA NS18/28. Parteikanzlei, Article: "Gerüchte", published in Hoheitsträger, May 1943.

56. Dröge, op.cit., p.105f.
57. Wiener Library. Parteikanzlei, V.I.-Beitrag 142, Betr: Bekämpfung u. Widerlegung v. Gerüchten durch die Partei, 22 March 1943.
58. BA NSD12-1/6. RPL, Hauptamt Propaganda, Redner-Schnellinformation, Lieferung 53, 23 March 1943.
59. Ed. Lochner, The Goebbels Diaries, p.260, Entry for 18 April 1943.
60. Ibid., p.253, Entry for 14 April 1943.
61. Semmler, op.cit., p.83, Entry for 16 April 1943.
62. BA R58/182. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.377, 19 April 1943.
63. BA R58/958. RSHA, SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Rundfunkbericht f. die Zeit 13-15.4.43, 17 April 1943.
64. GSta München MA 106 684. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in Augsburg, 10 May 1943.
65. GSta München MA 106 674. Regierungspräsident Regensburg, Betr: Monatsbericht, 10 May 1943.
66. BA R58/183. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.381, 6 May 1943; see also BA R58/958. RSHA, SD Ab. Innsbruck, Betr: Stimmen zum Rundfunkprogramm, 8 May 1943.
67. BA R58/963. RSHA, SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Zu dem Vortrag Fritzsches am 6.5. im Bericht zur Lage, 8 May 1943.
68. BA NS6/415. Parteikanzlei, Auszüge aus Berichten der Gauleitungen u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 18.4-1.5.43.
69. BA NS6/409. SD Ab. Linz, Betr: Auswirkungen der Presse- und Rundfunklenkung in der Zeit 5-8.5.43, 14 May 1943.
70. Ibid., Betr: Auswirkungen der Presse- u. Rundfunklenkung in der Zeit 29.4-5.5.43.
71. BA R58/963. RSHA, SD Ab. Bayreuth, Betr: Zur Frage der Aufnahme der Rundfunkvorträge von Hans Fritzsche, 17 May 1943.
72. BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 26 July 1943.
73. Same source as in footnote 70.
74. BA R58/958. RSHA, SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Rundfunkbericht f. die Zeit 18-20.5.43, 22 May 1943.
75. For an examination of the speech and its effects, see Moltmann: "Goebbels Rede zum Totalen Krieg am 18. Februar 1943" in Vierteljahresheft f. Zeitgeschichte, Jan. 1964, pp.13-43.

76. See NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No. 18, 14 May 1943.
77. NA T84/Roll 264. Goebbels Tagebücher, p. 26, 13 May 1943.
78. Ibid., pp. 13-14, 14 May 1943.
79. BA ZSg. 109/42. V.I.-106/43, 29 April 1943.
80. MGFA OKW/829. RPA Berlin, Rundschreiben Nr. II/16/43, 1 June 1943.
81. BA NS6/vorl. 344. Parteikanzlei, Rundschreiben Nr. 33/43g, Betr: Behandlung der Judenfrage, 11 July 1943.
82. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "The War and the Jews", 7 May 1943.
83. Ibid., Goebbels' Speech, 5 June 1943.
84. An article appearing in the Rheinische Zeitung in March 1943, quoted by Kris: and Speier, German Radio Propaganda, Report on Home Broadcasts During the War, p. 201.
85. IMT Document NG-4716. Deutscher Wochendienst 211/80, 21 May 1943 (quoted in length in Bramsted, Goebbels and National Socialist Propaganda 1925-45, pp. 400-1); see also Wiener Library. Aufklärungs- und Rednerinformationsmaterial der Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP u. des Reichspropaganda-antes der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, May 1943.
86. BA R58/960. RSHA, SD Ab. Stuttgart, Betr: Stimmen zum Rundfunk, 5 June 1943.
87. BA R58/958. RSHA, SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Rundfunkbericht f. die Zeit von 25-27.5.43.
88. Same source as in footnote 76.
89. BA NS6/156. Reichsführer SS an den Leiter der Parteikanzlei (Bormann), Betr: Stimmen zu den Reden des Reichsorganisationsleiter Dr. Ley, 7 May 1943.
90. IWM Aus Deutschen Urkunden, p. 69. SD Hauptausstellenstelle Würzburg 6 May 1943.
91. Ibid., pp. 68-9. SD Leitstelle Wien, 5 May 1943.
92. Same source as in footnote 23.
93. BA R22/3357. RJM, Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Braunschweig, 30 Nov. 1943.
94. Semmler, op.cit., p. 98, Entry for 16 Aug. 1943.
95. BA R58/165. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, 9 Oct. 1941.

96. For a detailed account of the German people's attitude to anti-Jewish measures, see Steinert, op.cit., pp.236-63.
97. Ibid., p.263.
98. Same source as in footnote 94.
99. Same source as in footnote 55.
100. Same source as in footnote 63.
101. Same source as in footnote 72.
102. GSta München MA 106 684. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in Augsburg, 10 June 1943.
103. Steinert, op.cit., p.261.
104. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 2. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No.59, 24 Feb.1944 - quotes Der Allemanne of 2 Feb.1944.
105. Quoted in ibid.

CHAPTER 5

1. See Ed. Webster, Frankland, The Strategic Air Offensive Against Germany 1939-45, Vol.II, p.48.
2. Ibid., p.32.
3. USSBS, The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale, Vol.1, p.1.
4. Ibid., p.12.
5. Ibid., pp.1, 12.
6. Janis, Air War and Emotional Stress, p.131.
7. Ibid., pp.133-5.
8. Rumpf, The Bombing of Germany, p.205.
9. Ibid., p.198.
10. Ibid., pp.199-200.
11. Steinert, op.cit., p.434.
12. Ibid., p.599.
13. Ibid., p.531.
- 13a. See Baird, The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda 1939-1945, pp.101-2, 127-30.
14. W.Hagemann, Publizistik im Dritten Reich, p.445. Propagandaanweisung v. 12.10.40, 2.11.40.

15. Ibid., p.450.
16. Ibid., pp.451-2.
17. Ibid., p.452. Anweisung v. 13 Aug.1942; see also ibid., p.453. Anweisung v. 18 Sept.1942; also BA NS18/1434. RPM an alle Gauleiter, Gaupropagandaleiter u. Leiter der RPÄ, 24 Aug.1942: "In future after heavier English air attacks, we shall give prominence to the heroic deeds of individual Volksgenossen, which are appropriate for strengthening the whole population as well as for giving a picture of the courageous and difficult work involved to those Volksgenossen who are never or hardly ever affected by British terror raids."
18. Wiener Library. Partei-Kanzlei, Beitrag 188, Betr: Bericht-erstattung über feindliche Fliegerangriffe, 9 April 1943.
19. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, pp.452-3, Propaganda Conference of 10 March 1943; see also NA T84/Roll 263. Goebbels Tagebücher, p.29, 9 March 1943.
20. BA ZSg.109/41. Slg.Oberheitmann, Nr.57/43, Tagesparole, 5 March 1943.
21. Ibid., Nr.61/43, Tagesparole, 10 March 1943.
22. Kris. and Speier, op.cit., p.454.
23. NA NNR-71-550(704) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No.11, 26 March 1943.
24. BA ZSg.109/40. V.I.-Nr.16/43, 17 Jan.1943.
25. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, p.455, Propaganda Conference of 13 March 1943; see also Ed.Lochner, Goebbels Tagebücher, pp.269-70, Entry for 13 March 1943.
26. Wiener Library. Partei-Kanzlei, Beitrag 222, Betr: Verleihung des Verwundetenabzeichens bei Fliegerangriffen im Heimat-kriegsgebiet, 22 April 1943.
27. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Article by Wolfgang Höpfer: "Wir Großstädter" in Münchner Neueste Nachrichten, 22/23 April 1944.
28. BA ZSg.109/42. Slg.Oberheitmann, V.I.-Nr.116/43 (Ergänzung), 11 May 1943.
29. Staatsarchiv Koblenz Abt.442/15638(293). Luftgaukommando XII Wiesbaden, 21 May 1943.
30. BA NS18/26. RPL-Parteikanzlei, 24 March 1943; BA R55/696. Redaktionssitzung der RRG, Protokoll, 4 March 1943.

31. BA R55/696. Redaktionssitzung der RRG über Programmgestaltung, Protokoll, 21 Jan. 1943.
32. BA ZSg. 101/42, p. 48. Slg. Brammer, Vertraulich, nicht zum Ausdruck bestimmt, 20 July 1943; see also Ed. Lochner, The Goebbels Diaries, p. 320, Entry for 25 July 1943.
33. NA T84/Roll 263. Goebbels Tagebücher, pp. 13-4, 7 March 1943; see also ibid., pp. 16-7, 12 March 1943.
34. BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 366, 11 March 1943.
35. NA T84/Roll 264. Goebbels Tagebücher, pp. 6-7, 25 May 1943.
36. BA R58/959. RSHA, SD Ab. Stuttgart, 24 Feb. 1943; BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 369, 22 March 1943.
37. BA R58/179. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 351, 18 Jan. 1943.
38. BA R55/610. RPA Düsseldorf to RPM, 21 Feb. 1944.
39. BA R55/601. Leiter i. V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Betr: Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 17 July 1944.
40. USSBS. The Effects of Strategic Bombing on German Morale, Vol. 1, p. 12.
41. Ibid., p. 18.
42. Security Police Intelligence Report of 24 Jan. 1943, quoted in USSBS, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 18.
43. BA NSD-12-1/6. RPL, Hauptamt Propaganda, Redner-Schnellinformation, Lieferung 53, 23 March 1943; for a further confirmation of this phenomenon, see the eye-witness account given to a British reporter in Sweden in Daily Telegraph, 23 March 1943 (Wiener Library Press Cuttings).
44. Ibid. (BA NSD-12-1/6)
45. Same source as in footnote 42; see also BA R58/179. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 352, 21 Jan. 1943.
46. Same source as in footnote 42; see also NA T84/263. Goebbels Tagebücher, p. 26, 16 March 1943.
47. IWM Aus Deutschen Urkunden, p. 263. Report of SD Vertrauensmann to SD Cologne, 30 July 1943.
48. BA R58/183. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 381, 6 May 1943. This report also mentions a verse circulating in west Germany at the time:
"Lieber Tommy fliege weiter
wir sind alle Bergarbeiter
Fliege weiter nach Berlin
die haben alle 'ja' geschrien."

49. W. Hagemann, op.cit., pp. 453-4, Press Conference of 2 March 1943; see also BA ZSg. 109/41. Slg. Oberheitmann, Tagesparole Nr. 54/43, 2 March 1943.
50. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Air War Zone", 23 April 1943.
51. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No. 16, 30 April 1943.
52. Kris. and Speier, op.cit., p. 454.
53. Ibid., pp. 454-5.
54. BA ZSg. 109/43. Slg. Oberheitmann, V.I.-Nr. 163/43, 6 July 1943.
55. v. Oven, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 32, Entry for 28 June 1943.
56. USSBS, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 75.
57. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 29 June 1943; see also ibid., 24 and 26 June 1943.
58. Ibid., "Topics of the Day", 25 July 1943.
59. Ibid., Goebbels' speech in the Berlin Sportpalast, 5 June 1943.
60. Ibid., 15 June 1943.
61. BA NS6/407. SD Hauptausstellenstelle Schwerin, Betr: Aufnahme u. Auswirkung der Propagandalenkung in Presse u. Rundfunk, 29 June 1943.
62. Semmler, op.cit., p. 88, Entry for 10 July 1943.
63. BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über die Terrorangriffe auf Köln u. Aachen u. ihre stimmungsmäßige Auswirkungen, 22 July 1943.
64. BA R58/960. RSHA, SD Leit-Ab. Stuttgart, Betr: Stimmen zum Rundfunk, 6 July 1943.
65. BA NS6/406. SD Ab. Weimar to Partei-Kanzlei, Betr: Allgemeine Stimmung u. Haltung, 22 June 1943.
66. BA R58/960. RSHA, SD Leit-Ab. Stuttgart, Betr: Stimmen zum Rundfunk, 22 June 1943.
67. Ibid., 20 July 1943.
68. Frankland, The Bombing Offensive Against Germany, p. 71.
69. Same source as in footnote 47.
70. For a detailed account of the critical state of German morale at this time, see BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen zum Regierungswechsel in Italien, 29 July 1943; also BA R58/187. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Auswirkungen der Nachrichten zum Regierungs-umbildung in Italien, 2 Aug. 1943.

71. v.Kardorff,op.cit.,p.59,Entry for 30 July 1943.
72. BA R58/187. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen zu den Terrorangriffen auf Hamburg,2 Aug.1943.
73. Ibid.,Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung,5 Aug.1943; BA NS6/vorl.244. SD Hauptausenstelle Schwerin,7 Sept.1943.
74. BA R58/187. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 5 Aug.1943.
75. BA NS6/vorl.244. SD Hauptausenstelle Schwerin,3 Aug.1943.
76. BA R58/187. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 26 Aug.1943.
77. Ibid.,Betr: Aufnahme der Evakuierungspropaganda in der Berliner Bevölkerung,5 Aug.1943.
78. v.Studnitz,op.cit.,pp.93-4,Entry for 3 Aug.1943. The Luftwaffe attack on London began on 7 September 1940.
79. Same source as in footnote 77; see also Ed.Lochner,The Goebbels Diaries,p.335,Entry for 29 July 1943.
80. The resulting chaos is described in Menzel,Die Stadt ohne Tod, Berliner Tagebuch 1943-45,Entry for 11 Aug.1943.
81. v.Oven,op.cit.,Vol.I,p.89,Entry for 22 Aug.1943; v.Kardorff, op.cit.,p.65,Entry for 19 Aug.1943.
82. Ed.Lochner,The Goebbels Diaries,p.400,Entry for 2 Nov.1943.
83. Testimony of Speer of 18.7.45,quoted in Ed.Webster,Frankland, op.cit.,Vol.IV,pp.383-5.
84. BA ZSg.109/44. Slg.Oberheitmann,V.I.-Nr.201/43,19 Aug.1943.
85. Ibid.,V.I.-Tagesparole Nr.192/43,9 Aug.1943.
86. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service,Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda,No.35,9 Sept.1943.
87. See v.Studnitz,op.cit.,p.214,Entry for 20 Oct.1944: "The Zoo station is crammed with refugees and homeless who spend the night there,whether there is a raid or not. There are clear signs that the nerves of the people are cracking; inexpressible anxiety,horror,bitterness and fatalism are stamped on all their faces."
88. Frankland,op.cit.,p.103.

89. For a detailed account of the raid, see Irving, The Destruction of Dresden.
90. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Betr: Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 21 March 1945.
91. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Hauptausenstelle Mannheim, 9 March 1945.
92. BA R58/193. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 20 April 1944; BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 2 Oct. 1944.
93. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 21 Feb. 1945.
94. Ibid., 16 Oct. 1944; see also ibid., 2 Oct. 1944.
95. BA NS29/702. SD Hauptausenstelle Karlsruhe, 14 March 1945.
96. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 28 Dec. 1944.
97. MGFA OKW/1593. II/WPr., 13 Bericht über Sondereinsatz Berlin 1-7.1.45, 9 Jan. 1945.
98. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 11 Sept. 1944.
99. BA R55/976. Bormann to Kaltenbrunner, 4 April 1945; MGFA OKW/1593. II/WPr. Hamburg, Tätigkeitsbericht Nr.2 für 15-22.3.45, 22 March 1945.
100. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, pp.367-8, Entry for 24 March 1945.
101. Ibid., p.392, Entry for 27 March 1945.
102. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Mood and Bearing", 9 April 1943; see also ibid., "Air War Zone", 23 April 1943.
103. BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr.369, 22 March 1943.
104. BA NS6/407. SD Hauptausenstelle Schwerin, Betr: Allgemeine Stimmung u. Haltung, 29 June 1943.
105. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels' Harvest Thanksgiving Speech, 3 Oct. 1943.
106. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. German Telegraph Service (Home), Speech by Goebbels in a west German town, 4 Oct. 1944.
107. BA NS6/407. RSHA, SD Hauptausenstelle Schwerin, Betr: Allgemeine Stimmung u. Lage/Aufnahme der Propagandalenkung in Presse u. Funk, 2 June 1943.

108. BA R58/194. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 4 May 1944.
109. BA R58/193. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 16 March 1944; HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5737. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M.,Betr: Pressepropaganda,29 Feb.1944.
110. Ibid. (HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5737)
111. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5736. SD Ab.Koblenz,Betr: Allgemeine Stimmung u. Lage und Wirkung der öffentlichen Führungsmittel,25 April 1944.
112. Same source as in footnote 105.
113. See IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts,5 June 1943.
114. BA R58/185. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Stimmen aus der Bevölkerung zur Sportpalastkundgebung am 5.6.43, 10 June 1943.
115. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5535. DAF,Arbeits- u. Lagebericht, Betr: Stimmung in den Betrieben,Kreisverwaltung Hanau, 1 April 1944.
116. BA R58/187. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 19 Aug.1943.
117. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5738. SD Ab.Frankfurt/M.,Betr: Presse-Propaganda,11 Jan.1944.
118. Same source as in footnote 116.
119. BA R22/3379. RJM,Oberlandesgerichtspräsident München,3 Aug. 1943.
120. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service,Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda,Nr.13,9 April 1943.
121. BA R58/182. RSHA,Meldungen aus dem Reich,Nr.375,12 April 1943.
122. Kris. and Speier,op.cit.,p.459.
123. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts,Goebbels' speech in Berlin Sportpalast,5 June 1943.
124. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Hamburger Fremdenblatt, 20 June 1943.
125. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts,Hitler's speech in Munich,8 Nov.1943.

126. BA NSD-12-1/6. RPL, Hauptamt Propaganda, Redner-Schnell-information, Lieferung 67, Anfang Sept. 1943.
127. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "War and Technology", 9 June 1944.
128. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5738. SD Ab. Koblenz, Betr: Ergänzungsbericht (Presse) zum FS vom 18.1.44, 20 Jan. 1944.
129. BA R58/192. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 3 Jan. 1944.
130. BA R55/794. RPM, Ordner 516, Letter from Obergefreiter Fritz Kriegshammer to RPM, 17 Feb. 1944.
131. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5738. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Presse-Propaganda, 11 Jan. 1944.
132. Völkischer Beobachter, Berliner Ausgabe, 4 Aug. 1943.
133. Wiener Library Press Cuttings, "Aus einer v. Reichsfrauenführerin Scholtz-Klinck in Trondheim gehaltenen Rede", German Telegraph Service, Oslo, 20.00, 16 July 1943.
134. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "The Soap Bubble", 10 Dec. 1943.
135. Ibid., Goebbels' Radio Address, 24 Dec. 1943.
136. BA R58/183. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 387, 31 May 1943.
137. BA R58/182. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 376, 15 April 1943.
138. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5737. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Rundfunkbericht, 16 Feb. 1944.
139. BA R58/185. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 17 June 1943.
140. Same source as in footnote 77.
141. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5736. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Pressepropaganda, 6 April 1944.
142. Same source as in footnote 128.
143. BA ZSg. 109/49. V.I.-Nr. 84/44, 3 May 1944.
144. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, p. 179, Entry for 10 March 1945 and p. 163, Entry for 9 March 1945; for Goebbels' use of the same argument, see p. 170.
145. BA R22/3361. RJM, Generalstaatsanwalt Darmstadt, 23 Jan. 1944.
146. Dokumente deutscher Kriegsschäden, p. 64. "Ansprache des Bundestagspräsidenten Dr. Ehlers anlässlich die Enthüllung des Ehrenmals für die Hamburg Luftgefallenen am 16.8.52 auf dem Ohlendorfer Friedhof."

147. Same source as in footnote 126.
148. v.Kardorff,op.cit.,pp.119-20,Entry for 3 Feb.1944.
149. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts,18.30 Zeit-
spiegel,29 Nov.1943.
150. Völkischer Beobachter,Norddeutsche Ausgabe,Goebbels' speech
at the opening of the "Filmstunden der HJ" in Berlin,29 Nov.
1943.
151. Same source as in footnote 134.
152. See Semmler,op.cit.,p.110,Entry for 24 Nov.1943; Ed.Lochner,
The Goebbels Diaries,pp.435-6,Entry for 27 Nov.1943.
153. Ed.Lochner,The Goebbels Diaries,p.440,Entry for 29 Nov.1943;
see also ibid.,p.442,Entry for 30 Nov.1943.
154. Ed.Lochner,Goebbels Tagebücher,pp.492-3,Entry for 25 Nov.1943.
155. BA R58/191. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen
zur Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung,2 Dec.
1943.
156. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5741. SD Ab.Frankfurt/M.,Betr: Presse-
propaganda,1 Feb.1944.
157. Ibid.
158. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5736. SD Ab.Frankfurt/M.,Betr:
Umquartierungsaktion im Gau Hessen-Nassau,19 June 1944; for
a similar situation in Britain,see Calder,The People's War,
pp.471-2.
159. GSta München MA 106 696. Regierungspräsident Würzburg,Betr:
Monatsbericht f. April,5 May 1944; see also first source of
footnote 158.
160. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts,Talk for Women
at 19.00,10 Aug.1943.
161. Ibid.,14 Sept.1944.
162. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5736. SD Ab.Frankfurt/M.,Betr:
Umquartierungsaktion im Gau Hessen-Nassau,19 June 1944.
163. BA R58/190. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Das
Zeitgeschehen u. seine Auswirkungen auf die Stimmung u.
Haltung der Frauen,18 Nov.1943.
164. Janis,op.cit.,p.126.
165. USSBS,op.cit.,Vol.I,pp.22-26.
166. Ibid.,p.31.
167. Ibid.,p.37.

168. Ibid., p. 33.
169. USSBS, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 55-58.
170. Steinert, op. cit., p. 365.
171. Dröge, op. cit., pp. 132-3.
172. BA ZSg. 102/43. Slg. Sänger, p. 101, Aus der Pressekonferenz, 10.4.43, abends.
173. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No. 10, 19 March 1943.
174. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 30 March 1943; see also ibid., Talk by Air Force General Quade, 2 April 1943.
175. Ibid., Talk by Major Wulf Bley: "Air War Topics", 16 April 1943.
176. BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 15 July 1943; see also ibid., 22 July 1943.
177. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5535. NSDAP, Gau Hessen-Nassau, Kreisleitung Odenwald, Betr: Mittwochbericht. Feindliche Propaganda, 4 May 1944.
178. BA R55/603. Leiter RPA Berlin to RPM Abt. Pro., 2 June 1944.
179. Quoted from NA N71-1295. Office of War Information Bureau of Overseas Information, Survey of German Material, p. 6, 18 Aug. 1944.
180. BA NS6/406. RSHA, SD Ab. Halle to Gauleitung Saale, Betr: Allg. Presselenkung, 24 May 1943; BA R22/3357. RJM, Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Braunschweig, 30 Nov. 1943.
181. BA NS6/406. RSHA, SD Ab. Halle, Betr: Stimmung u. Haltung zur Lage, 6 July 1943.
182. BA NS6/411. RSHA to Partei-Kanzlei, München, Betr: Meldungen aus den SD (Leit-) Abschnittsbereichen, 22 July 1943; see also BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über die Terrorangriffe auf Köln u. Aachen und ihre stimmungsmäßige Auswirkungen, 22 July 1943.
183. BA R22/3374. RJM, Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Köln, 30 July 1943.
184. BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Stimmen zur Bombardierung des Kölner Doms, 8 July 1943.
185. BA NS6/406. SD Ab. Weimar to Partei-Kanzlei, Betr: Allgemeine Stimmung u. Lage, 6 July 1943.
186. Same source as in footnote 156.
187. Bardua, Stuttgart im Luftkrieg, p. 119.

188. Ibid., p. 155.
189. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Aaguer Tagblatt, Article: "Von einem süddeutschen Sonderkorrespondenten", 16 May 1944.
190. BA R58/192. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Grundfragen der Stimmung u. Haltung des deutschen Volkes; hier, Gefühlmäßige Einstellung der Bevölkerung gegenüber den Feinden, 7 Feb. 1944.
191. BA R58/191. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen zum Luftkrieg, 2 Dec. 1943.
192. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. St. Galler Tagblatt, Article: "Gespräche mit Deutschen", 8 Jan. 1944.
193. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No. 26, 8 July 1943.
194. BA R58/185. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen zu den letzten Terrorangriffen auf Westdeutschland, 17 June 1943.
195. Same source as in footnote 63.
196. BA NS6/vorl. 244. SD Hauptausstellenstelle Schwerin, 10 Aug. 1943.
197. BA R22/3366. RJM, Generalstaatsanwalt Hamm (Westf.), 27 May 1943.
198. BA NS6/vorl. 244. Chef der Sicherheitspolizei u. des SD an den Führer der Parteikanzlei (Bormann), 25 Feb. 1944.
199. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro. i. V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 19 Dec. 1944.
200. NA T77 Roll 873. Report of von Kielpinski written at the end of March 1945 (quoted in Steinert, op. cit., pp. 572-6)
201. Same source as in footnote 185.
202. Same source as in footnote 47.
203. See HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5736. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Pressepropaganda, 6 April 1944.
204. Nadler, Ich sah wie Nürnberg unterging, p. 42, Entry for 10 Jan. 1945.
205. For an account of this propaganda, see NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No. 30, 5 Aug. 1943.
206. Same source as in footnote 156.
207. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5736. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Pressepropaganda, 6 April 1944.

208. Ibid.
209. Same source as in footnote 156.
210. BA R58/194. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 25 May 1944.
211. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5737. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M.,Betr: Rundfunkbericht,16 Feb.1944.
212. BA NS6/vorl.243. SD Ab. Linz,21 March 1944.
213. BA NS6/406. RSHA,SD Ab. Halle to Gauleitung Saale,Betr: Allg. Presselenkung,24 May 1943.
214. Dröge,op.cit.,p.127.
215. Ibid.,p.131.
216. Ibid.,p.132.
217. BA R58/181. RSHA,Meldungen aus dem Reich,Nr.369,22 March 1943.
218. BA R58/183. RSHA,Meldungen aus dem Reich,Nr.385,24 May 1943.
219. BA R58/182. RSHA,Meldungen aus dem Reich,Nr.372,1 April 1943.
220. BA NS6/411. RSHA an die Parteikanzlei,Betr: Meldungen aus den SD (Leit-) Abschnittsbereichen,2 July 1943.
221. BA R58/185. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Meldungen zu den letzten Terrorangriffen auf Westdeutschland,17 June 1943.
222. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 2. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda,No.41, 22 Oct.1943.
223. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Strassburger Nachrichten, Article by Franz Moraller: "Man muß mal dazwischen fahren", 8 Aug.1943.
224. Dröge,op.cit.,p.131.
225. BA R58/185. RSHA,SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen,Betr: Auswirkungen des britisch-amerikanischen Luftterrors in Westdeutschland auf das übrige Reichsgebiet,28 June 1943.
226. BA NS29/vorl.515. Simmern to SD Unterab.Koblenz,30 July 1943.
227. Same source as in footnote 220.
228. USSBS,op.cit.,Vol.I,p.9.
229. BA NS6/vorl.244. SD Hauptaussonstelle Schwerin,24 Aug.1943.
230. BA NS6/411. RSHA an die Partei-Kanzlei,Betr: Meldungen aus den SD (Leit-) Abschnittsbereichen,9 July 1943.
231. R22/3355. RJM,Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Bamberg,2 Aug.1943.

232. BA NS6/411. RSHA an die Partei-Kanzlei, Betr: Meldungen aus den SD (Leit-) Abschnittsbereichen, 22 July 1943.
233. Quoted from a German newspaper article in NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No. 33, 26 Aug. 1943.
234. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 05.50, 14 Sept. 1943.
235. Steinert, op.cit., p. 595.
236. USSBS, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 31.
237. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 56.
238. Ibid., p. 53.
239. BA R58/181. RSHA, Meldungen aus dem Reich, Nr. 369, 22 March 1943.
240. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Daily Telegraph, 9 April 1943.
241. See same source as in footnote 193.
242. BA R58/185. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über Entwicklungen in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 24 June 1943.
243. Same source as in footnote 220.
244. BA NS6/vorl. 244. SD Hauptausstellenstelle Schwerin, 10 Aug. 1943.
245. BA R22/3366. RJM, Generalstaatsanwalt bei dem Hanseatischen Oberlandesgericht Hamburg, 30 Sept. 1943.
246. BA NS6/411. RSHA an die Partei-Kanzlei, Betr: Meldungen aus den SD (Leit-) Abschnittsbereichen, 15 July 1943.
247. BA R58/191. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen zur Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 2 Dec. 1943.
248. BA NS6/407. SD Ab. Schwerin, Betr: Stimmung u. Meinungsbildung, 30 May 1944.
249. Same source as in footnote 156.
250. NA T81/Roll 119 (140663). An den Kreispropagandaleiter Frankfurt/M., Betr: Stimmungsbericht, 12 Feb. 1944.
251. BA R58/189. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meinungsäußerungen aus der Bevölkerung zur Kriegslage, 14 Oct. 1943.
252. Ochse, Sechs Berichte an die Geheime Staatspolizei Siegen, Report of 14 Jan. 1945.
253. Same source as in footnote 193.
254. BA R58/187. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen zur Stimmung u. Haltung der Bevölkerung, 9 Aug. 1943.

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44. Ibid. Gaupropagandaleiter Halle, Weise, an Staatssekretär Naumann, Berlin, Fernschreiben Nr.13003 vom 11.2.45.
45. BA NS6/169. Parteikanzlei, Bormann to Gauleiter Henlein-Reichenberg, Betr: Sondereinsatz in frontnahen Gebieten, 15 March 1945.
46. Kronika, Der Untergang Berlins, pp.96-7, Entry for 8 April 1945.
47. Same source as in footnote 26.
48. Same source as in footnote 27.
49. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, p.482, Entry for 1 April 1945.
50. MGFA OKW/1593. II/WPr., 25 Bericht über den Sondereinsatz Berlin 30.3-7.4.45, 10 April 1945.
51. NA T77/Roll 873. Report of von Kilpinski written at the end of March 1945 (quoted in length in Steinert, op.cit., pp.572-6).
52. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, p.368, Entry for 24 March 1945.
53. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Aussenstelle Konstanz, 13 March 1945.
54. Ibid. SD Aussenstelle Villingen to SD Führer Baden-Elsaß, 7 March 1945.
55. GSta München MA 106 695. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in München, 7 April 1945.
56. Westfälische Neueste Nachrichten, 20 Sept.1944 - quoted in NA N71-1295. Office of War Information, Bureau of Overseas Intelligence, 6 Oct.1944; for further mention of "anxious people" befriending foreign workers "even if it is only the

- Ostarbeiter maid", see NA T81/Roll 119 (140625). Kreispropagandaleiter Frankfurt/M., Betr: Stimmungsbericht, 11 March 1944.
57. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Das Schwarze Korps, 1 Feb. 1945.
58. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "To Work and to Arms", 23 March 1945.
59. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, p.402, Entry for 28 March 1945.
60. Ibid., p.512, Entry for 4 April 1945.
61. BA ZSg.101/42. Slg. Brammer, p.122, Tagesparole, 13 April 1945.
62. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 14.00 Political Review by Heinz Leibscher, 11 April 1945.
63. Ibid., 22.10 Talk in S.W. German Home Service, 28 April 1945.
64. Ibid., 19.45, 6 March 1945.
65. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Aussenstelle Rastatt, 8 March 1945.
66. Ibid. SD Aussenstelle Konstanz, 13 March 1945.
67. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 6 Feb. 1945.
68. IWM Aus Deutschen Urkunden, pp.292-6. Protokoll der Tagung der Reichspropagandaleiter des Westen am 9. Okt. 1944 in Rengsdorf bei Neuwied, 13 Oct. 1944.
69. Baird, "La Campagne de Propagande Nazie en 1945" in Revue de l'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, July 1969, pp.91-2.
70. See, for example, v. Kardorff, op.cit., p.274, Entry for 2 May 1945.
71. BA Slg. Schumacher 367. Anweisung "die Goebbels in diesem Tage an die Gaupropagandaleiter gegeben hat", 6 March 1945.
72. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/6059. Propaganda-Parole Nr.19, 17 Jan. 1945.
73. BA ZSg.109/55. PK/Nr.298, Report of Press Conference, 29 Dec. 1944.
74. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/6059. Propagandaparole Nr.20, 24 Jan. 1945.
75. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 12.30 Political Review by Karl Liebhold, 20 Jan. 1945.
76. BA ZSg.109/53. V.I.-Nr.19/45, Tagesparole, 24 Jan. 1945.
77. BA ZSg.109/55. Slg. Oberheitmann, PK/Nr.24, Press Conference, 29 Jan. 1945.
78. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Eyes Unswervingly Fixed on the Helmsman", 2 March 1945.
79. Ibid., Talk by Dittmar, 23 Jan. 1945.
80. BA ZSg.109/53. V.I.-Nr.22/45, 'Informatisch wird mitgeteilt', 27 Jan. 1945.

81. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 12.35, 19 Feb. 1945.
82. Ibid., 19.00, 28 Feb. 1945.
83. Ibid.
84. Same source as in note 81.
85. The press was told to stress war-weariness and economic difficulties in Great Britain on 22 Feb. 1945 (BA ZSg.109/54. V.I.-Nr.43/45 Tagesparole).
86. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 12.30 Political Review, 8 Dec. 1944.
87. Same source as in footnote 43.
88. Same source as in footnote 44.
89. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 21 Feb. 1945.
90. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Stuttgarter NS-Kurier: "Verständliche Fragen aus dem Volke", 16 Feb. 1945.
91. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Aussenstelle Offenburg, 9 March 1945.
92. Same source as in footnote 51.
93. Ibid.
94. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Aussenstelle Konstanz, 13 March 1945.
95. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, p.304, 19 March 1945.
96. Same source as in footnote 50.
97. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Tätigkeitsbericht, 21 March 1945.
98. MGFA OKW/1593. II/WPr., 20 Bericht über den Sondereinsatz Berlin 21-27.2.45, 3 March 1945.
99. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Our Opportunity", 16 Feb. 1945.
100. Ibid.
101. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Resistance At All Costs", 20 April 1945.
102. Ibid., 19.45 Talk by Rudolf Pierot: "Germany's Fateful Struggle", 4 April 1945.
103. Ibid., 20.15 Goebbels' speech on eve of Hitler's birthday, 19 April 1945.
104. Ibid., Goebbels, Das Reich: "The Turning Point", 9 March 1945.
105. Same source as in footnote 103.
106. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "Der Führer", 29 Dec. 1944.
107. IWM Aus Deutschen Urkunden, pp.66-7. SD Leitab. Stuttgart, Betr: Führungsbericht, 12 Jan. 1945.

108. Ibid.
109. IWM Aus Deutschen Urkunden, pp.276-8. SD Leitab. Stuttgart, Betr: Propagandistische Deutungsversuche an Mein Kampf, 9 Jan.1945; the defensive pose of Nazi propaganda is shown in an article appearing in a Vienna newspaper in October 1944: "It cannot be denied that enemy propaganda carried on for many years has to a large extent succeeded in representing Germany as the aggressor." A few days later another newspaper, Freiheitskampf, denied that Hitler had been a troublemaker, who had caused war by provoking Germany's neighbours as, so it was asserted, the Kaiser had done before 1914. "It was equally mendacious to pretend that the Führer merely had wanted to deceive other nations by declaring his belief in peaceful cooperation." (NA N71/1295. Office of War Information, Bureau of Overseas Intelligence, 17 Nov.1944)
110. IWM Aus Deutschen Urkunden, pp.276-8. SD Leitab. Stuttgart, Betr: Propagandistische Deutungsversuche an Mein Kampf, 9 Jan.1945.
111. Same source as in footnote 107.
112. BA R55DC/vorl.464. Chef der Sicherheitspolizei u. des SD IIIC an SS-Obersturmbannführer v. Borcke, Berlin, Betr: Stellungnahme der Bevölkerung zur Führung, 28 March 1945.
113. Ibid. Gaupropagandaleiter in Halle, Weise, Betr: Tätigkeitsbericht zum 19.2.45.
114. The use of Frederician parallels is discussed in detail in Bramsted, op.cit., pp.444-9.
115. This argument had been used as early as autumn 1943 - see IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "National Duties in Wartime", 10 Sept.1943.
116. Ibid., "On Doing Our Daily Duty", 24 Nov.1944.
117. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, pp.69-70, Entry for 1 March 1945.
118. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 19.45 Talk by Scharping, 22 Jan.1945.
119. Ibid., Goebbels' Speech, 28 Feb.1945.
120. See ibid., Goebbels, Das Reich: "Our Purpose and Our Resolve", 8 Sept.1944.
121. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Aussenstelle Rastatt, 8 April 1945; see also same source as in footnote 43.
122. Same source as in footnote 27.
123. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, p.285, Entry for 17 March 1945.

124. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "History as Teacher", 30 March 1945.
125. v.Oven, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 249-50, 22 Feb. 1945.
126. Lasswell, Leites and associates, Language of Politics, p. 36.
127. Same source as in footnote 27.
128. Same source as in footnote 43.
129. BA Slg. Schumacher 366. Chef der Sicherheitspolizei u. des SD an Naumann in RPM, 18 Feb. 1945.
130. Same source as in footnote 125.
131. Same source as in footnote 71.
132. BA NS6/vorl. 353. NSDAP, Parteikanzlei, Rundschreiben 131/45, 8 March 1945.
133. v.Oven, op.cit., Vol. II, pp. 261-2, Entry for 3 March 1945.
134. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 28 Feb. 1945.
135. Same source as in footnote 133.
136. BA NS29/vorl. 702. SD Aussenstelle Villingen, 7 March 1945.
137. Ibid. SD Aussenstelle Rastatt, 8 March 1945.
138. Ibid. SD Hauptaussenstelle Mannheim, 9 March 1945.
139. Kessemeier, Der Leitartikler Goebbels, p. 271.
140. BA NS29/vorl. 702. SD Aussenstelle Tauberbischofsheim, 12 March 1945.
141. Same source as in footnote 27.
142. Same source as in footnote 113.
143. MGFA OKW/1593. II/WPr., 24 Bericht über den Sondereinsatz Berlin 23-29.3.45, 31 March 1945.
144. GSta München MA 106 695. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in München, 7 April 1945.
145. Ibid. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in Augsburg, 9 April 1945.
146. Bernhard, op.cit., p. 268, Entry for 7 March 1945.
147. v. Lehdorff, East Prussian Diary, p. 38.
148. Ibid.
149. v.Oven, op.cit., Vol. II, p. 273, Entry for 17 March 1945.
150. Kronika, op.cit., p. 76, Entry for 29 March 1945.
151. Bernhard, op.cit., Entry for 3 March 1945.
152. See Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Article by Seibert in Völkischer Beobachter, Norddeutsche Ausgabe: "Auf Weite Sicht", 21 Feb. 1945.
153. Same source as in footnote 71.
154. BA ZSg. 101/42. Slg. Brammer, pp. 114-5, Vertraulich, nicht zum Ausdruck bestimmt, 18 Sept. 1944.

155. BA R58/193. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Die Versorgung der Umquartierten mit Tageszeitungen, 20 March 1944.
156. See Nadler, op.cit., p.75, Entry for 29 March 1945; see also W.Hagemann, op.cit., pp.489-90.
157. NA N71/1295. Office of War Information, Bureau of Overseas Intelligence, 10 March 1945.
158. BA R55/561. Abteilung Rundfunk to Goebbels, 15 Dec.1944; see also Ed. Fischer, Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Rundfunks u. Fernsehens, p.44.
159. Same source as in footnote 155.
160. Scheel, Krieg über Ätherwellen, p.296 - Dokument Nr.54 (Deutsches Zentralarchiv Potsdam. RPM, Abt. Rundfunk, Nr.10, Bl.484).
161. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Aussenstelle Freiburg, Report of 2.2.45, 5 March 1945.
162. Nadler, op.cit., p.75, Entry for 29 March 1945.
163. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Hauptaussenstelle Mannheim, 9 March 1945.
164. BA NS6/vorl.243. SD Ab. Linz, 20 Aug.1943.
165. Same source as in footnote 129.
166. USSBS, op.cit., Vol.I, p.77.
167. See Wittek, Der britische Ätherkrieg gegen das Dritte Reich, pp.187-8.
168. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Völkischer Beobachter, Berliner Ausgabe, 13 April 1943; see also ibid., Pommerische Zeitung, Stettin, 3 May 1944.
169. W.Hagemann, op.cit., pp.302-3.
170. NA NNR-71-550(904) Roll 1. Records of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Central European Radio Analysis - A Weekly Report on Nazi Propaganda, No.29, 29 July 1943.
171. BA R58/187. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 12 Aug.1943; BA NS6/vorl.243. SD Ab. Linz, 20 Aug.1943.
172. BA R58/1159. SD Ab. Köln, 8 April 1943.
173. Ibid.
174. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/6518. DAF, Kreisleitung Hanau und Gelnhausen, Betr: Arbeits- u. Lagebericht, Monat Januar 1944; HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5738. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., IIIC4 Rundfunk, 11 Jan.1944.

175. GSta München MA 106 696. Regierungspräsident Regensburg, Monatsbericht, 8 March 1944.
176. NA T81/Roll 119 (140632). EAP 251a/23, Kreisleiter Wetzlar to Gauleitung Hessen-Nassau, 23 Feb. 1944.
177. BA NS6/411. RSHA, Betr: Meldungen aus den SD (Leit-) Abschnittsbereichen, 9 July 1943; Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Appenzeller Zeitung: "Die Lage in Süddeutschland", 18 April 1944.
178. BA R22/3372. RJM, Generalstaatsanwalt Kattowitz, 6 Oct. 1944.
179. MGFA OKW/1593. II/WPr., 19 Bericht über den Sondereinsatz Berlin 14-20.2.45, 23 Feb. 1945.
180. IWM Aus Deutschen Urkunden, p. 316. RPM, An die RPÄ, Betr: Klagen über Störungen des Rundfunks durch Feindsender, 10 Oct. 1944.
181. Same source as in footnote 140; see also GSta München MA 106 696. Regierungspräsident, Regensburg, 10 March 1945.
182. BA R70 Elsaß/59. SD Hauptausenstelle Mannheim, Betr: Stimmungsberichterstattung, 20 Nov. 1944.
183. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Tätigkeitsbericht, 21 March 1945.
184. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5535. Kreis Groß-Frankfurt, Betr: Stimmungs- u. Gerüchtefassung, 28 April 1944.
185. BA R58/192. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen; Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 27 Jan. 1944.
186. See NA T84/Roll 260. Goebbels Tagebücher, pp. 22-3, 25 Jan. 1942.
187. See BA NS6/414. Parteikanzlei, Auszüge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen 14-20.2.43.
188. BA NS6/406. SD Ab. Halle/S., Betr: Einstellung v. Frontsoldaten zur Stimmung u. Haltung der Heimat, 28 June 1943.
189. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5535. DAF, Kreisverwaltung Hanau, Arbeits- u. Lagebericht, 1 April 1944.
190. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5736. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Rundfunkpropaganda, 11 April 1944.
191. HSta Wiesbaden Abt. 483/5737. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Propagandistische Auswirkungen der Feldpostbriefe, 15 May 1944.
192. GSta München MA 106 674. Regierungspräsident Regensburg, Monatsbericht, 10 Nov. 1943.
193. Staatsarchiv Koblenz Abt. 662, 5 120. Kreispropagandaleiter Mayen to Gaupropagandaleiter Koblenz, Betr: Stimmungsbericht f. die Woche 20-26.8.44; also see same source as in footnote

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194. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5740. SD Ab. Koblenz, Betr: Allgemeine Stimmungs- u. Meinungsbildung, 23 May 1944.
195. GSta München MA 106 696. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in Ansbach f. Februar 1945, 15 March 1945.
196. NA N71-1295. Office of War Information, Bureau of Overseas Intelligence, 20 Oct. 1944.
197. BA ZSg.101/42. Slg. Brammer, Vertraulich, nicht zum Ausdruck bestimmt, 23 Sept. 1943; HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/6059. Frankfurt/M., Propagandaparole Nr.22, 7 Feb. 1945.
198. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. DNB-Presseschreibfunk (Inland), 11 March 1944.
199. See BA R58/186. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Meldungen über Auflockerungserscheinungen in der Haltung der Bevölkerung, 8 July 1943.
200. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5737. SD Ab. Koblenz, Betr: Öffentliche Führungsmittel - Presse, 4 April 1944.
201. This propaganda technique is discussed in Bramsted, op.cit., pp.297-300.
202. Same source as in footnote 183.
203. See GSta München MA 106 696. Regierungspräsident Regensburg, Monatsbericht, 10 March 1945; also see same source as in footnote 195.
204. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/6059. Frankfurt/M., Propagandaparole Nr.22, 7 Feb. 1945.
205. GSta München MA 106 696. Regierungspräsident Regensburg, 11 Dec. 1944; see also NA T81/Roll 119 (140748). EAP 251a/23, Ortsgruppe Lindheim, Betr: Stimmungsbericht, 20 Dec. 1943.
206. BA NS6/415. Parteikanzlei, Auszüge aus Berichten der Gaue u. a. Dienststellen, Zeitraum 6-12.6.43.
207. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5535. Kreisleitung der NSDAP Bad Schwalbach, Kreis Untertaunus, Anlage 1 zum Stimmungsbericht vom 25.4.44.
208. Ibid.
209. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5535. Kreisleitung Oberlahn-Usingen, Betr: Stimmung u. Haltung, 8 May 1944.
210. Same source as in footnote 25.
211. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5535. NSDAP, Gau Hessen-Nassau, Kreisleiter Schlüchtern, Betr: Stimmungsbericht - Verstärkte Tätigkeit der Pfaffen, 8 June 1944.

212. BA NS6/vorl.353. NSDAP, Rundschreiben 49/45, 1 Feb. 1945.
213. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Völkischer Beobachter, Wiener Ausgabe, "Nie das Gras wachsen lassen" by Hans Tappert, 5 March 1944.
214. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "On the Work of the Mind", 11 June 1943; see also ibid., "The Realities of War", 20 Aug. 1943.
215. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/6059. Frankfurt/M., Propagandaparole Nr.23, 14 Feb. 1945.
216. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "In the Shadow of the War of Weapons", 16 July 1943.
217. Ibid., 19.45 Dr Thierack: "Administration of Justice in Wartime", 25 March 1944.
218. Wiener Library Press Cuttings. Gauleiter Wächtler in Bayreuther Kurier, 12 Sept. 1944.
219. Ibid. Heimatblatt für die Kreise Wels u. Grieskirchen, 8 Sept. 1944.
220. Same source as in footnote 27.
221. Wiener Library. Partei-Kanzlei, V.I., Beitrag 142, Betr: "Bekämpfung u. Widerlegung v. Gerüchte durch die Partei, 22 March 1943; BA NS6/vorl.342. Partei-Kanzlei, Rundschreiben 133/43, Betr: Kriegseinsatz der Parteigenossen, 16 Sept. 1943.
222. Wiener Library. Partei-Kanzlei, Beitrag 255, "Brief an einen deutschen Offizier über die Gerüchteverbreiter, 7 May 1943.
223. BA ZSg.109/55. Slg. Oberheitmann, Pressekonferenz, 26 Jan. 1945.
224. NA T81/Roll 1 (108178). EAP 250a/1. Bormann to all Gauleiter, Gaupropagandaleiter, Leiter der RPÄ, Rundspruch Nr.71, 10 Aug. 1943.
- 224a. HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5738. SD Ab. Frankfurt/Main, Betr: Einsatz der Schulen gegen Gerüchte, 17 Jan. 1944.
225. Wiener Library. Parteikanzlei, V.I., Beitrag 309, 21 May 1943.
226. BA NSD12-1/7-1. Sonderdienst der RPL, Ausgabe A, Folge 3, 27 July 1943.
227. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 23 Oct. 1944.
228. BA R55/608. RPM to RPÄ, Rundspruch Nr.205, Betr: Parolen für Mundpropaganda, 24 Oct. 1944.
229. Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf RW 23-1479. Gaupropagandaamt Düsseldorf, Hauptstelle "Active Propaganda" an alle Kreispropagandaleiter, Betr: Mundpropagandaparolen, 14 Dec. 1944.

230. IWM Aus Deutschen Urkunden, pp.298-9. RPL, Rundschreiben an alle Gaupropagandaleiter, Betr: Mundpropagandaparolen, 17 Nov.1944.
231. Ibid.
232. BA R55/608. Chef des Propagandastabes, Mundpropagandaparole Nr.10, Betr: Wirkung der V2, 4 Dec.1944.
233. Ibid., Mundpropagandaweisung, Betr: Kriegslage, 17 Feb.1945.
234. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, p.459, Entry for 30 March 1945.
235. MGFA OKW/1593. Wpr., Durchführung der Mundpropagandaaktion, 27 March 1945.
236. This development can be followed in the file MGFA OKW/1593.
237. See Bernhard, op.cit., pp.301-2, Entry for 25 March 1945.
238. BA R22/3355. RJM, Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Bamberg, Betr: Berichte über die allgemeine Lage in den Bezirken, 2 Aug. 1943; BA R58/187. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Wie sieht das deutsche Volk die Kriegslage?, 16 Aug.1943; BA R22/3381. RJM, Generalstaatsanwalt Nürnberg, 30 Sept.1943.
239. GSta München MA 106 671. Monatsbericht des Regierungspräsidenten in München, 9 Aug.1943.
240. Ibid.
241. BA R22/3357. RJM, Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Braunschweig, 30 Nov.1943.
242. BA R55/621. Chef des Propagandastabes in RPM, Pg. Wächter, Betr: Vorschlag zur Aktivierung der Partei in Endkampf, 24 Oct.1944.
243. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 11 Sept.1944.
244. BA Slg.Schumacher 366. Himmler to Bormann, 26 Dec.1944.
245. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Aussenstelle Villingen, 7 March 1945.
246. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 30 Oct.1944.
247. Same source as in footnote 112.
248. Same source as in footnote 27.
249. BA NS29/vorl.244. SD Hauptaussenstelle Schwerin, 7 Sept.1944.
250. Same source as in footnote 27.
251. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, Goebbels, Das Reich: "The Party in Wartime", 12 May 1944.
252. BA R55/603. Leiter des RPA Berlin to RPM, 2 June 1944.
253. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 19 Dec.1944.

254. Same source as in footnote 27.
255. Same source as in footnote 112.
256. BA R55DC/vorl.464. Gauleiter Eggeling of Halle/Merseburg to Bormann, 10 Feb. 1945.
257. Ibid. Gaupropagandaleiter Halle, Weise, to Staatssekretär Naumann in RPM, Fernschreiben Nr. 13003, 11 Feb. 1945.
258. BA NS29/vorl.702. SD Aussenstelle Offenburg, 9 March 1945.
259. See Kris, and Speier, op.cit., pp. 193-6.
260. Same source as in footnote 184.
261. BA R58/190. RSHA, SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, Betr: Grundfragen der Stimmung u. Haltung des deutschen Volkes, hier: Totaler Sieg, Kompromißfrieden oder Frieden um jeden Preis, 22 Nov. 1943.
262. BA R55/620 - quoted in Steinert, op.cit., p. 556.
263. Steinert, op.cit., p. 556.
264. Same source as in footnote 246.
265. BA R55/601. Leiter Pro.i.V. u. Chef des Propagandastabes, Wöchentlicher Tätigkeitsbericht, 21 Feb. 1945.
266. GSta München MA 106 696. Regierungspräsident Würzburg, Betr: Monatsbericht f. August 1944, 11 Sept. 1944.
267. See, for example, report of footnote 209.
268. BA NS6/411. Chef der Sicherheitspolizei u. des SD IIIC4 to Parteikanzlei, Betr: Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung, 17 Aug. 1944.
269. See Kästner, Notabene '45, Entry for 3 April 1945.
270. Riess, Joseph Goebbels, p. 314.
271. Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945, p. 498, Entry for 2 April 1945.
272. Ibid., p. 508, Entry for 4 April 1945.
273. Riess, op.cit., p. 315.
274. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 19.00, 14 April 1945.
275. Ibid.
276. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts, 19.00, 22 April 1945.
277. Riess, op.cit., pp. 315-6.
278. MGFA OKW/1593. II/WPr. Hamburg, Tätigkeitsbericht Nr. 4, 29.3-5.4.45, 5 April 1945.
279. Ibid., 25 Bericht über den Sondereinsatz Berlin 30.3-7.4.45, 10 April 1945.
280. See BA ZSg.101/42. Slg. Brammer, p. 117, Tagesparole, 7 April 1945.

281. Ibid.,p.121. Tagesparole,13 April 1945.
282. Ibid.,p.124. Vertraulich,nicht zum Ausdruck bestimmt, 16 April 1945.
283. Ibid.,p.127. Tagesparole,19 April 1945.
284. IWM. BBC Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts,08.00,8 April 1945.
285. Ibid.,08.00,22 April 1945.
286. Ibid.,Goebbels,Das Reich: "Fighters for the Eternal Reich", 6 April 1945.
287. Ibid.,Talk by Felix Schmidt-Decker: "A Frank Talk",11 April 1945.
288. Ibid.,19.45 Dr.Scharping,30 April 1945.
289. Ibid.,07.30,19.45,30 April 1945.
290. Ibid.,19.00 Zeitspiegel,1 May 1945.
291. Ibid.,12.35 Political Review by Dr. Ettwards,1 May 1945.
292. MGFA OKW/112. Tagesmeldung Nr.1,Betr: Haltung u. Meinungsbildung der Bevölkerung,6 May 1945.
293. Ibid.,Tagesmeldung Nr.4,Betr: Haltung u. Meinungsbildung der Bevölkerung,7 May 1945.
294. Ibid.
295. Same source as in footnote 292.
296. MGFA OKW/112. Tagesmeldung Nr.7,Betr: Meinungsbildung u. Haltung der Bevölkerung,8 May 1945.
297. Ibid.

CHAPTER 8

1. According to Harrisson,op.cit.,pp.314-5: "Champions of reprisal.were conspicuously more numerous in the unblitzed places in the countryside,as well as among elderly males who had fought in the First World War. But one was repeatedly impressed by the paucity,sometimes the total absence,of such reactions among most blitz victims. The published versions greatly exaggerated the private mood." One of the reasons he gives for this was "the strongly felt probability that the more 'we' bombed 'them' the more they would bomb or in some way retaliate on us (even unto gas) - so why make it worse for everyone,ourselves included?" A similar attitude was observed in bombed German towns after the beginning of

- the 'Little Blitz' in January 1944 (see page 228) and after the launching of Vergeltung in June 1944 (see page 235); see also Calder, The People's War. Britain 1939-1945 (Panther Edition), pp.264-5.
2. For an account of the Beveridge Report, see Calder, op.cit., pp.607-19.
 3. For a comparison of the use of repetition in Nazi Germany and in the Soviet Union, see Unger, The Totalitarian Party. Party and People in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.
 4. Ellul, Propagandes, pp.204-5.
 5. Harrisson, op.cit., pp.281-2.
 6. When, for example, the illustrated magazine, Die Woche, carried a picture of the playing of the gramophone recording of the Sondermeldung fanfares, Goebbels threatened the editor responsible with imprisonment in a concentration camp. These victory announcements would lose their effect if the 'mystic' element were revealed. See Scheel, Krieg über Ätherwellen, p.146.
 7. Harrisson, op.cit., p.207.
 8. Ibid., p.245, p.247.
 9. Ibid., p.263.
 10. HSta Wiesbaden, Abt.483/5741. SD Ab. Frankfurt/M., Betr: Pressepropaganda, 1 Feb.1944.
 11. Harrisson, op.cit., p.217.
 12. Ibid., p.242; Calder, op.cit., p.246.
 13. Harrisson, op.cit., pp.316-7; Calder, op.cit., p.156; for a more detailed account of the effect of German broadcasts to wartime Britain, see Briggs, The War of Words (The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol.III), pp.140-59, 232-7, 306-8.
 14. See Steinert, op.cit., p.434.
 15. Baird, The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda 1939-1945, p.258.
 16. Harrisson, op.cit., pp.238, 240-1; Calder, op.cit., p.246.
 17. Same source as in footnote 10.
 18. In his account of the German blitz on the British provinces in 1940-1, Calder (op.cit., p.250) writes of "the jealousy with which the inhabitants of each blitzed town insisted on regarding it as the worst hit of all".
 19. Ibid., p.234.
 20. Unger, The Totalitarian Party. Party and People in Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

21. The title of a book on Goebbels by E. Ebermayer and H.O. Meissner.
22. W. Hagemann, Publizistik im Dritten Reich, p. 242, pp. 479-90.
23. Stephan, Joseph Goebbels - Dämon einer Diktatur, pp. 271-2, 310.
24. Boelcke, Wollt Ihr den Totalen Krieg, p. 19 (dtv paperback).
25. The consequent friction and disputes about competence are described in Baird, The Mystical World of Nazi War Propaganda 1939-1945, pp. 28-37.
26. On 18 September 1943 he wrote in his diary: "The military news sources under General Jodl have been writing about a Dunkirk and a Gallipoli, and now the whole pack of enemy propagandists attacks me and holds me responsible for this totally false news policy!.... It won't do for my good name to be dragged in the dirt by the world and then, when things go wrong, for those who are really responsible to fade away into the background, leaving me to take it on the chin...." Ed. Lochner, The Goebbels Diaries, p. 367.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. UNPUBLISHED SOURCE MATERIAL

1. M o r a l e S o u r c e s

a) Der Sicherheitsdienst (SD)

By far the most valuable source material for a study of German domestic morale and reaction to propaganda are the SD Meldungen aus dem Reich and the later SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen, which were both compiled at a national level. They are now kept at the Bundesarchiv and are catalogued BA R58/144-194. Also useful are the Meldungen aus den SD (Leit-) Abschnittsbereichen and the Meldungen über die Entwicklung in der öffentlichen Meinungsbildung (BA NS6/411), which were sent to the Parteikanzlei by the SD, as well as a number of reports emanating from local SD offices (BA NS6/35,406-9,vorl.243-4,NS29/vorl.515,563,vorl.657,vorl.681,vorl.702,R70 Elsaß/59). The files marked "vorl." are in the process of being transferred to the regional Staatsarchive of the Länder from which the documents originate. In addition, a number of fascinating SD reports provide detailed information about response to German domestic radio broadcasting (BA R58/957-60, 963,1159,1190 and BA R55/531). For my research the Bundesarchiv files R55DC/vorl.464,R58/976,990 and BA Slg. Schumacher 366 also proved useful. The Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Wiesbaden houses a very interesting collection of SD reports from the SD Abschnitte Frankfurt-on-Main and Koblenz (Abt.483/5736-42). The file K70/59 of the Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg contains reports on the reaction to the setting up of the Volkssturm. Finally, Aus Deutschen Urkunden, a printed but not published collection of reports from various SD Unterabschnitte and Aussenstellen in the possession of the Foreign Documents Centre of the Imperial War Museum, proved very useful.

b) NSDAP Party

The reports of Party functionaries from all parts of the Reich which were put together in the Auszüge aus Berichten der Gaue u.a. Dienststellen (BA NS6/414-5) constitute the most important series of Party morale reports. Unfortunately, they are only extant for the period January-July 1943. The Bundesarchiv files NS1/544,NS6/156,169,412,NS18/28,NS19/memo.1183,R55/620 and R55DC/vorl.464 were also interesting "finds". There are also a number

of reports from local Party offices. Of these the following proved most useful: (i) the files Abt.483/1236,5535,5540,6518 in the HSta Wiesbaden,(ii) the files 662,3/154 and 662,5/120 in the Staatsarchiv Koblenz,(iii) the files 251-a/146 and 228 in the Staatsarchiv Detmold,(iv) the file EAP-231c-38/3 in the Staatsarchiv Münster,and,finally,(v) the micro-films NA T81, Rolls 119 and 163.

c) Reichspropagandaministerium (RPM)

After the discontinuation of the SD Berichte zu Inlandsfragen in the summer of 1944,the summaries of the Tätigkeitsberichte of the regional RPÄ,compiled by the Leiter der Propaganda-abteilung in the RPM,become the most important documentary source for a study of morale and response to propaganda (BA R55/601). They are extant for March-April 1943 and July 1944-March 1945. Other useful files containing documents of the RPM are BA R55/531,561,600,602-4,610,612,614,625,794 and BA R55DC/vorl.564,vorl.464.

d) Reichsjustizministerium (RJM)

The quarterly reports of the local Oberlandesgerichtspräsidenten and the Generalstaatsanwälte (files BA R22/3355-89) frequently contain interesting observations on the state of civilian morale.

e) Regierungspräsidenten

In their monthly reports,the regional Regierungspräsidenten often made revealing remarks on morale. Unfortunately,they are only extant for the Land Bavaria. Apart from a few reports of the Regierungspräsident of Regensburg in the BA (NS19/246),all these reports are in the safe keeping of the Bayerisches Staatsarchiv,Abt.II(Geheimes Staatsarchiv) in Munich (MA 106 671,674,679,681,684,695-6).

f) Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW)

In the final phase of the war,reports were drawn up by soldiers employed for morale-boosting purposes in Berlin and Hamburg. These usually contain detailed information on current attitudes to war events and to Nazi propaganda (MGFA Freiburg OKW/1593). In May 1945 reports were compiled on the mood of the inhabitants of Flensburg,the seat of the Dönitz government,by a team headed by Ohlendorf under the auspices of the OKW (MGFA OKW/112).

g) U.S. Content Analysis Reports

The weekly analyses of Nazi propaganda drawn up by the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service from January 1943 to April 1944 and by the Office of War Information after May 1944 are available on micro-film from the National Archives in Washington (NA NNR-71-550(904) Rolls 1-2 and N71-1295). There are copies at Reading University Library.

h) Neutral Observers

The reports of neutral travellers and journalists visiting the German Reich sometimes provide an interesting glimpse into war-time German morale. Particularly useful are the press-cuttings, mainly from the Swiss press, in the Wiener Library, London (PC5/134).

2. P r o p a g a n d a P o l i c y

a) Press Directives and Conferences

The most important source of press directives is the Sammlung Oberheitmann. It consists of the Tagesparolen des Reichspressechefs and the Vertrauliche Informationen, which were given to the German press at the daily Press Conference in the Propaganda Ministry. Although they are the property of the Institut für Publizistik in Münster, they are kept in the Bundesarchiv, Koblenz. The period of my research is covered by the files BA ZSg.109/40-54. In addition, the file ZSg.109/55 contains notes taken down at press conferences held at the Propaganda Ministry in December 1944-January 1945. The Sammlung Brammer also contains a number of press directives ("Korrespondenz Brammer" BA ZSg.101/42,47). The Sammlung Sanger (BA ZSg.102/42-3) consists of notes jotted down by the journalists of the Frankfurter Zeitung attending the Press Conference in the RPM (only up to April 1943). Other directives issued to the German press can be found in the Staatsarchiv Koblenz, files Abt.442/15638,15640,Abt.662,5/28 and in the MGFA Freiburg, file OKW/829.

b) Other Propaganda Directives and Conferences of the RPM

The minutes of conferences discussing radio programming (BA R55/556,696) and the collection of Rundfunkparolen at the HSta Wiesbaden (Abt.483/3304) proved very useful. Other files originating from the RPM used in my research were BA R55/602-3,609,614,621 and 736. Finally, the Mundpropagandaparolen (BA R55/608) give a

truly fascinating glimpse into the more secret spheres of Nazi propaganda work.

c) Party Directives

Files BA NS6/vorl.340-354 contain a large number of Rundschreiben sent to Party organisations by the Party Chancellory. The Führungshinweise der Parteikanzlei (BA NS6/vorl.358) also illustrate different aspects of the Party's work. The micro-film NA T81/Roll 1 (available in the Wiener Library) includes a number of instructions issued by Bormann. The Wiener Library has a) Aufklärungs- und Redner-Informationsmaterial für die Reichsleitung der NSDAP und Reichspropagandaamtes der Deutschen Arbeitsfront (up to June 1943), and b) a number of Vertrauliche Informationen der Parteikanzlei. For a more complete run of the latter, see BA NSD 3/6. The information supplied to Party speakers (files BA NSD 12-1/6-9) and the directives of the Hauptamt Reichsring - Reichspropagandaleitung (Hoover Institution, Reel 16, available in the Wiener Library) show up the diverse propaganda work of the NSDAP. The Rüstzeug für die Propaganda in der Ortsgruppe (BA NSD 12-1/11) comprises propaganda material sent to the lower echelons of Party propagandists. The various Propagandaparolen (BA NS18/67,68,78 and HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/6059) also proved very useful. The file of Mundpropagandaparolen sent from the Düsseldorf Gaupropagandaamt to the local Kreispropagandaämter, now at the Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf (RW23-1479), was also used. Finally, the files BA NS6/169, NS18/26, 1434, Slg. Schumacher 367-9, HSta Wiesbaden Abt.483/5541 and Staatsarchiv Koblenz 662,3/154-5, 662,5/120-1 also demonstrate different problems Party propaganda had to cope with.

3. P r o p a g a n d a C o n t e n t

a) Radio

One of the most complete documentary sources of Nazi propaganda content are the wartime reports of the BBC Monitoring Service. The Daily Digest of Foreign Broadcasts (a document of 100-150,000 words) and the more concise Daily Monitoring Report (app.4,000 words) constitute a truly irreplaceable - and at the same time an almost untapped - source for a study of wartime radio propaganda in Nazi Germany.

b) Press

Apart from a number of copies of the Völkischer Beobachter in the Bundesarchiv, all the German newspaper material used in this thesis originates from the very extensive collection of press cuttings in the Wiener Library. The following boxes (PC5) of newspaper cuttings proved very valuable indeed:

- 104b - Radio Offences
- 113a - Durchhalten
- 113c - Civilian Sector and Invasion
- 132 - Press
- 133 - Radio
- 134 - Reports on Conditions in Germany
- 210a - Luftwaffe and Aviation - Air Raids
- 210b - Losses and Air Raid Damage
- 224 - Nazi Prophecies
- 225 - Lies.

4. G o e b b e l s' D i a r i e s

The micro-films NA T84/Rolls 260-7 (now available at Reading University Library) consist of scattered entries for 1942-3, many of which are complete, particularly in the months January-May 1942, December 1942, March-May, July, September and November-December 1943. The published editions, The Goebbels Diaries and Die Goebbels Tagebücher aus den Jahren 1942 bis 1943, edited by Louis P. Lochner, contain extracts of this very same material. The English edition, however, is an abridged edition of the German one. The publication of the Joseph Goebbels Tagebücher 1945 - Die letzten Aufzeichnungen in the autumn of 1977, the authenticity of which appears to be beyond dispute, came as a rather unexpected boon for students of Nazi Germany. It would seem that a hitherto undisclosed source is being tapped. The secrecy surrounding their provenance is naturally very vexing for historians. Further volumes of unpublished entries are promised for the future.

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