

RESEARCH PROJECT ON TOTALITARIAN COMMUNICATION

THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE
ORGANIZED UNDER THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

15 EAST 10 STREET · NEW YORK · ORCHARD 4-3370

DIRECTORS
ERNST KRIS
HANS SPEIER

May 29, 1941

3007
New School for Social Research
Totalitarianism Com. Studies

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Dear Mr. Marshall:

Please find enclosed two Memoranda I have sent off to Lasswell. I agreed to do this when I saw him last Sunday. The third memorandum on certain features of German news policy in relation to this country (the invasion of Britain and the United States) seems to be less topical than I thought, and I shall therefore postpone this matter.

The simplicity of the Memoranda is best explained by the fact that they are intended for "policy making".

Yours sincerely,

Ernst Kris.

Mr. John Marshall
The Rockefeller Foundation
49 West 49th Street
New York City

Enclosures

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May 28, 1941.

MEMORANDUM

Propaganda from the United States to Europe

(The Application of Lease-lend Principles)

The voice of the United States is of infinitely greater importance than any other single element of psychological warfare being waged at present. Should the United States Government or should private agencies working in contact with the United States Government undertake in the near future to broadcast to the peoples of Europe, the following points should be taken into consideration:

1). German broadcasts to the German people and to the occupied territories clearly show a concern lest totalitarian and subject peoples hear news from the outside world. In Germany a ban on listening to foreign broadcasts has been in existence since the first day of the war; in every one of the conquered territories the listening ban is introduced at an early stage of the occupation. At the same time, the German propaganda machine devotes itself to the denying, contradicting and debunking of that same broadcast propaganda to which it is illegal to listen. In spite of the military victories, the listening prohibitions are from time to time re-enforced; at these periods campaigns against listening are conducted regu-

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larly, concluding with the announcement of a series of penalties recently inflicted. Such re-enforcements appear when-
ever the outside world might convey something of importance.
The latest occasion of this was the flight of Hess.

2). Plans for the future will have to take into account that the audience of short wave broadcasts is limited. While short waves from the United States reach France, they do not reach a large portion of the German or Italian populations, the number of good short wave sets being in both countries smaller than in France.

This may be compared with the B.B.C. broadcasts on standard waves, which continue to have a large regular audience in Germany and a regular audience of undetermined scope in Italy. There is further a good deal of evidence that even short wave transmissions from London are infinitely more audible throughout Europe (viz., in Czecho-Slovakia) than short wave transmissions from this country.

I therefore suggest that the United States Government acquire for its own use, or for the use of such private bodies as may be active with the support of the Administration, transmitting facilities of its own in Britain. Such facilities might be acquired from the British Broadcasting Corporation in London on the basis of a lease-lend agreement. Further, the enterprise might be under the supervision of some United States agency in London. With such an arrangement, broadcasts emanating from this country, possibly from Station WRUL, Boston, could be re-broadcast both on short and medium waves to the European continent.

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Material available in this Research Project throws some light on problems of German counter-propaganda to broadcasts from democratic countries and on reactions to British broadcast propaganda to Europe. Research work conducted in connection with broadcasts from the United States to Europe could draw on this material.

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MEMORANDUM ON GERMAN PROPAGANDA AND ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

It seems appropriate at this time to draw attention to the potential danger which the impact of anti-American propaganda carried on by Germany in her broadcasts to Britain may have on the British people. German broadcasts total more than 24 hours a day to Britain in English. These transmissions started out even before the outbreak of the present war in broadcasts from Hamburg and Bremen; they are at present transmitted from various stations, including some in Belgium, Holland and France.

Their tendency from the beginning has been to incite internal conflict. William Joyce, the British fascist known as Lord Haw-Haw, is the protagonist of this chain. In addition to that, stations allegedly broadcasting from inside England, in reality, however, emanating from Germany, address British fascists, British workers, Scottish nationals and conscientious objectors.

A part of the German transmission to Britain is broadcast on medium and short waves. The short waves only are audible in this country.

The medium wave transmissions carry the full impact of anti-American propaganda to Britain. The main lines of this

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propaganda are the following:

1. The United States do not want Britain to win the war; they want only to prolong the conflict in order to weaken both belligerents.
2. What support is given, insignificant in itself, aims only at prolonging the conflict.
3. The real aim of Judeo-American hypocrisy is to grab the Empire; this is described not only in political terms - the West Indies having been "surrendered" to the United States -, but also in economic terms - Britain should be deprived of her markets.
4. A variety of slogans have been devised in support of these points, the most significant one being: "America will fight to the last inch."

It is difficult to assess whether or not German propaganda has had or is having any influence on the British people. The established facts are that after the Churchill-Labor Government came into power listening-in to German broadcasts, which had achieved a peak during the last months of the Chamberlain regime, dropped off completely. There is as yet no evidence whatsoever that listening-in has increased. It may, however, be said that some comments published by Charles Grey in Jane's All the World's Aircraft for 1941 are in spirit and in wording an exact repetition of German propaganda slogans. The reaction of public opinion in Britain to this escapade was very strong indeed; disapproval was general, Mr. Grey's previous allegiance

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to the Fascist creed was exposed, and these circumstances were fully discussed in the press of this country. I personally have no doubt that this is an isolated instance.

The reason why I feel that it is appropriate to draw the attention of the authorities to anti-American propaganda broadcasts from Germany to Britain is, however, of a more general kind. It concerns prophylactic action. Anti-American propaganda in the present broadcasts to England is almost identical with the anti-British propaganda broadcast by Germany to France in the early months of this war. So close is the resemblance that it was actually possible in June of 1940 to predict accurately slogans and details of this propaganda from the pattern used for the anti-British propaganda to France. It is obviously dangerous to simplify by analogies, but it is still worthwhile to keep in mind that of all the various propaganda ventures of the Nazis during this war, none has had an effect similar to the attempt to sow discord between the French and British. While it is true that the success of German propaganda even after the French surrender was only partial and has rather decreased since that time, one may still compare this partial success with the complete failure of Nazi propaganda in all conquered territories of Europe. The attempt to create the Ally as a scapegoat for hardships of all kinds fructifies a psychological mechanism which is of great power.

Though during the winter of 1939-1940 both British and French authorities were aware of the fact that the anti-British propaganda broadcasts from Germany to France were having some

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effect, they did not decide on counter-action. The scope of this memorandum is to emphasize that counter-action, both by exposing the German propaganda tendency and by reasserting the position of the United States to Britain, may be of immediate importance. It will also be of importance to keep a watchful eye on the various stratagems of the German propagandist, in order to detect in which way and to what extent they adapt their tactics to new events. Material accessible in this Research Project can confirm in detail the statements made here, and could be used for research work required for action to be taken by the authorities.

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Appendix attached.

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APPENDIX to MEMORANDUM ON GERMAN PROPAGANDA AND ANGLO-AMERICAN RELATIONS

In order to give one example of anti-American propaganda to Britain we have chosen part of a broadcast transmitted from Breslau on 315.8 meter wave length, in English, on January 19, 1941, at 19:30 p.m.:

"Comment on Stimson's Speech"

....."Stimson even went to the extent of saying that Britain had most solemnly pledged herself to place her fleet in American custody rather than allow it to fall into German hands. What the British people will think of these solemn guarantees, given without their knowledge and consent, I can only guess. But the main point is that Congress had to be told of this lien on the Royal Navy, because the punishment dealt out to the British Fleet in the Mediterranean had undoubtedly caused alarm in the United States, among those people who feel that shares and colonies are not enough to compensate for all that America is prepared to do for Britain in 12 months' time.

"Roosevelt's announcement that he was being empowered to buy the British Navy, if necessary, must have stirred up some queer emotions in the heart of every self-respecting Englishman. Buy the British Navy! Many a listener will share my vision of some great, grey warship ploughing the green and white of a winter sea, bearing the flag of England over the storm-tossed waters, beneath a leaden, sullen sky. That was once the symbol of England's majesty, but glory has departed. Mr. Roosevelt calmly considers buying the navy up. Could there be any more striking omen of England's predicament in these hours of woe? When the Americans examine solemn pledges to take these defenders of Britain into harbours across the Atlantic, it is surely time that the British people did not bank on American help but asked where in God's name Churchill has led them. The very people who are supposed to save Britain are soberly considering what is to be done with her fleet when she is finished."

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The fact that the broadcast is transmitted from the station of Breslau is due to the alteration in the German broadcasting schedule in the evening hours. This alteration attempts to deprive the R. A. F. of facilities for piloting.

Ernst Kris.