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Spark Without Flame: The German Library of Information A Nazi Propaganda Agency in the United States, 1936-1941

Craig S. Olson

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Spark Without Flame:

The German Library of Information

A Nazi Propaganda Agency in the United States,

1936-1941

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Minnesota, 1988

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

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This thesis submitted by Craig Olson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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This thesis meets the standard for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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DEDICATION

For her patience, help and understanding this thesis is dedicated to my wife, Mary Drummer.

ABSTRACT

Most studies of Nazi propaganda have focused on events inside Germany. This thesis proposes to examine German efforts in the United States in the years before American entry into the Second World War. This will be done by examining one Nazi agency: the German Library of Information which operated out of New York City from 1936 to 1941.

The first chapter explores the formation of the German Library of Information and its goals. The question of whether it was controlled by the Foreign Office or the Propaganda Ministry is also discussed.

The second chapter covers the association between the German Library of Information and George Sylvester Viereck. This relationship was an important part of the expansion of the organization after the outbreak of World War II. Viereck provided the German Library of Information with most of its editorial guidance.

The third chapter delves into the German Library of Information's publication of propaganda pamphlets. Each of the major pamphlets is examined in detail. These works attempted to blame Britain for the outbreak, continuation and expansion of World War II. The publications also stressed

the economic and military strength of Germany and urged the United States to stay out of the war.

Chapter four focuses on the German Library of Information's weekly magazine *Facts in Review*. The magazine was set up to provide Americans with the German point of view on world events. *Facts in Review* continued the theme of British responsibility for the war. Germany's policies in Europe were explained in its pages as similar to American policies in Latin America. *Facts in Review* tried to convince its readers that they had the most to gain by working with, not against, the Third Reich.

Chapter Five discusses the Dies Committee investigation into the German Library of Information's activities. In addition to covering the demise of the German Library of Information, this chapter also discusses the fate of its American editor George Viereck.

Chapter One

The Origins of the German Library of Information

In August 1934 an Attache at the Washington Embassy, Richard Sallet, sent a telegram to his superiors at the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin. He urged Berlin to consider setting up an official organization to explain Germany's view of current events. This would take the form of an official information library to counter anti-German propaganda in the United States. His letter read in part: "[it is] urgently necessary . . . to start a library of information in the near future. The population of the middle size and small towns desire positive information about Germany and it would be a sin of omission which it would be difficult to repair if we were to cede this ground too to the unceasing propaganda of our enemies."¹ For two years, however, this advice was not acted upon. It was not until May 1936 that an information library was set up in New York City along the lines of a traditional information/cultural center.² As tension

¹ *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series C* Volume III, June 14, 1934 - March 31, 1935 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1959), 1111-1115. Hereafter cited as DGFP. Letter from Sallet to Berlin, August 3, 1934.

² For the founding of the German Library see Office of United States Chief of Counsel For Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington: United States Government Printing

increased in Europe, the Library gradually became involved in outright propaganda activities. This expanded role was defined in a memorandum written by the German Charge Affairs in Washington D.C., Dr. Hans Thomsen, on September 18, 1939.³ In this dispatch he despaired that Germany was falling behind in the propaganda contest in the United States. He felt that Americans needed to be given access to the German point of view in those turbulent times. The German Library of Information was clearly the best vehicle available to spread this information. Specifically, he recommended that the Library operate under seven guidelines.⁴

First, he believed that the organization should stay clear of openly associating with the Roosevelt administration's domestic opposition. The Library should distance itself from the embassy and consulates, and from groups and individuals that sought similar goals in order to avoid the possibility of German affiliation sullyng these groups' reputations. This would obviously have precluded any appeal to the substantial German-American population of the

Office, 1947), 557. This document was the interrogation of Heribert von Stempel, First secretary at the Washington Embassy and it gave his version of how the Library came into being. Stempel's recollection put the founding of the Library in 1937. Since he was not yet with the Embassy at the time it was founded, and because the United States Government investigation of the German Library put the date of its founding in May 1936, the latter date has been chosen.

³ DGFP Series D, Volume VIII, 89-91 and 127-129. The infamous Kristallnacht of November 9, 1938 had provoked the United States to withdraw its ambassador to Germany. Germany retaliated and this left the Charge (Thomsen) in control.

⁴ Ibid., 127.

United States. Second, he cautioned against optimism for more than limited objectives in America as he believed that anti-German feeling was prevalent among the American people. Third, he felt that the Library should seek to invoke U.S. history and the experience of World War I to convince Americans that their interests would not be served by entering into another European conflict. This, Thomsen contended, would best be accomplished by focusing on the heavy casualty rate of World War I, the failure of America to recover its loans from its allies, and Britain's duplicitous dealings. Next he recommended that not only should the Library shy away from openly attacking Roosevelt, it should stay out of American politics altogether. This was certainly advocated with an eye to the embarrassment the Germans had felt over the exposure of the clear linkage between German Embassy officials and the Friends of the New Germany (as the German-American Bund was then known). Such blatant association should not be repeated in the case of the German Library.⁵ Fifth, he urged against false optimism in Berlin over such legislation as the Neutrality Acts, pointing out that these acts, although better than active American intervention, still favored Britain and France. Sixth, he suggested that the most effective tool for propaganda was to

⁵ *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, 552-3, has a discussion of some of the discomfort caused by the confrontation between Washington and Berlin over the ties between the German Embassy and the Bund. The Germans would be more cautious in the future.

stress Germany's support for the Monroe Doctrine and to assert that Nazi actions in Europe represented a German version of the doctrine. Finally, he warned against using too crude an approach in propaganda and recommended that American domestic sources be used whenever possible, i.e., books and pamphlets actually written and published by Americans.

This appeal for increased German propaganda did not include active collaboration with the pro-Nazi political groups in America such as the Friends of the New Germany, later known as the German-American Bund. Thomsen expressly warned his superiors in Berlin that to link the German government too closely with such groups would be counter-productive. Certainly, any trip by the leaders of the Library, as Fritz Kuhn (the leader of the Bund) had taken to visit Hitler, would scuttle any attempts to present the Library as an "objective" organization. Thomsen also contended that the propaganda campaign should avoid openly supporting the American isolationist movement. German support, it was feared, would give the American opponents of isolation the ammunition necessary to repeal the Neutrality Acts or to enact legislation blatantly pro-British, such as the later Lend-Lease Act.

Thus, in addition to Hitler's general ideas on propaganda, Thomsen added specific considerations for the

German Library. These two sets of guidelines did not conflict with one another. Hitler's idea of the simple theme constantly repeated might seem to contradict Thomsen's fear of too crude an approach in America. Yet, as will be shown these potential ideological conflicts were resolved without apparent tension.

Tension on a more basic level, however, existed between the Foreign Office under Ribbentrop's control and the Propaganda Ministry under Joseph Goebbels. The Third Reich was notorious for the competition between Hitler's underlings in their quest for individual power. This was certainly true in the case of foreign propaganda. An excellent example of the conflict that often occurred between the factions was given by a veteran member of the Washington Embassy, Dr. Heribert von Stempel:

German foreign policy was emerging on two parallel roads—the Foreign Office and the foreign section of the Party. As long as they remained parallel, the Foreign Office did not take special action . . . Our policy [at the Foreign Office] was not to interfere with affairs in America which might have caused a breach of diplomatic relations. The activities of Mr. Kuhn [leader of the German-American Bund] and the foreign section of the Party were considered a burden on German-American relations, so Mr. Dieckhoff [the German ambassador to America] recommended that they be stopped.⁶

As far as the German Library was concerned, the relationship was clearer, but still somewhat murky. Von

⁶ Ibid., 553.

Strempel tried to clarify the matter during interrogation by Captain Sam Harris:

Strempel: From 1939 on, the Library was controlled and financed by both the Ministry of Propaganda and the Department of Information in the Foreign Office. You see, in 1939, Hitler issued an order that from that time on, foreign propaganda would be handled by the Foreign Office.

Sam Harris: That would seem to indicate that the Foreign Office superseded the Propaganda Ministry in the German Library of Information?

Strempel: Well, not completely, the Library was under the control of Dr. Hans Borchers . . . and . . . Professor Mathias [sic] Schmitz . . . [both] of the Foreign Office. Actually Schmitz was paid a salary by both the Foreign Office and the Propaganda Ministry, but accepted only the salary from the Foreign Office.⁷

This exchange is a convincing answer to the question of whether the Propaganda Ministry or the Foreign Ministry controlled the German Library of Information. Given the tone of its writings (except for Hitler's speeches the diatribe against the Jews never appears) and the frequent quoting of Ribbentrop (but never Goebbels), along with Strempel's statement, it is clear that by the later period of its existence (1939-1941) the Library was controlled by the Foreign Ministry.

Although the Library avoided domestic opposition groups, it was involved with other German front organizations in the

⁷ Ibid., 557-8.

United States. The pamphlets and writings of the German Library of Information frequently appeared at other organization's meetings, including domestic groups such as the Bund. The German Library distributed its publications free of charge, but as far as can be determined none of its officials directly associated themselves with any of these meetings. The Trans-Ocean news service and the German Railroads Information Office cooperated with the Library, primarily providing assistance and cooperation in obtaining names for the Library's mailing list.⁸

The mailing practices of the Library would lead to trouble. Many of those who had applied for information about travel in Germany were surprised to find themselves regularly receiving German propaganda. Several individuals complained to their congressmen.⁹ This practice would eventually contribute to an investigation of the Library by the House Un-American Activities Committee. This, however was in the

⁸ The Trans-Ocean organization was a Propaganda Ministry news service. On several occasions it provided the Library with articles which it later published. The German Railroads Information Office is somewhat more obscure. It appears to have been under the control of both the Propaganda Ministry and the Foreign Ministry. For links between German Library and the Trans-Ocean News Service see U.S. House of Representatives. Special Committee to investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States, *Appendix*, part 2, 75th Congress, 2nd Session. For more on the German Railroads Information Office See O. John Rogge, *The Official German Report* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1961), 55-6. Rogge was the Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney General in charge of the Wartime Seditious Case. *The Official German Report* was his story of the investigation into Nazi activities in the United States.

⁹ U.S. House of Representatives. Special Committee to investigate Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States, *Appendix*, part 2, 75th Congress, 2nd Session, 1053. Hereafter cited as *Appendix*.

future. For the Library actions of greater importance were afoot. On September 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland. The Second World War had begun. The Foreign Ministry had plans to greatly expand the Library's efforts. For this to occur, the German Library needed strong leadership, which it would soon find in the person of George Sylvester Viereck.

Chapter Two

George Sylvester Viereck and the Library

The most important link between the Library and other Nazi front groups was the German-American propagandist George Sylvester Viereck. Viereck was born in Munich in 1884, and had been active in propaganda in America as early as the First World War. As a United States citizen, his activities during that period had included the publication of a magazine called the *Fatherland*. The colorful and clever German-American resumed his activities when the Hitler regime took power. The Library retained Viereck to assist with the publication and distribution of its pamphlets and the weekly magazine *Facts in Review*. His duties included editing as well as providing substantially to the Library's mailing lists. Heribert von Stempel later explained why Viereck had been chosen for the job: "Viereck was chosen for these anti-British propagandist activities because he was considered an experienced American author who could manage efficiently and rather independently this anti-British propaganda [the Library and Viereck's publishing house, Flanders Hall] *without interfering in the internal affairs of the United States.*"¹

¹ Emphasis added. *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, 561.

Viereck was also involved in other activities not directly related to the German Library. These included his publishing house -- Flanders Hall -- and numerous other commitments, all of which insured that he would receive a large income. From each book published by Flanders Hall Viereck earned from \$5,000 to \$10,000.² Clearly Viereck did not undertake his relationship with the Library out of financial necessity. Why, then, did George Viereck become involved with the Library?

In September 1939, when Viereck first began his activities on behalf of the Library, he made his intentions known when accepting the job in a letter to director Heinz Beller. He "would be glad to prepare . . . articles interpreting the German point of view based on data furnished by you."³ However, he made the limitations of this contract clear:

In the . . . remote contingency of a break between the United States and Germany, we are both automatically released from any obligation flowing from this agreement I shall not be asked to prepare or edit any matter derogatory to the United States, or to undertake any editorial assignment which could possibly conflict with American laws and my duties as an American citizen.⁴

² *The Official German Report*, 135-6. Viereck also drew a salary of \$500 a month from a German newspaper and an additional \$500 per month from the Library (although this latter amount would increase).

³ Reprinted in *Appendix*, 1050.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1051.

Certainly this closing of a private letter shows no un-American cynicism on the part of Viereck towards his German Library activities. Whatever else may be said about the man and his activities, he seems to have sincerely wished to avoid conflict between America and Germany. What is beyond question is that his talents greatly aided the German Library and especially *Facts in Review*. In the opinion of Ambassador Dieckhoff, Viereck "plays a decisive part in the publication of the Embassy Journal *Facts in Review*. He may be called the most valuable liaison agent of the Information Section [of the Foreign Office] in the United States."⁵

George Viereck, while not officially recognized as the editor of *Facts in Review*, did much to improve the little magazine. Certainly he felt that he did an excellent job. In fact he wrote to Matthias Schmitz, Beller's successor as director of the Library, asking for an increase in salary:

When I was first associated with *Facts in Review*, its circulation did not exceed a few thousand copies, and you did not print more than four pages a week. Today the circulation is nearly 100,000 and you print 16 pages every week, not to speak of occasional extra numbers. While undoubtedly the lion's share of this success is due to your own editorial guidance, I have some share in the success of the venture.⁶

Then Viereck got down to his real purpose,

⁵ Memorandum of German Foreign Office dated March 3, 1941, quoted in *Official German Report*, 132-3.

⁶ Letter Jan 25, 1941 G. S. Viereck to Matthias Schmitz. Reprinted in Michael Sayers and Albert Kahn, *Sabotage: The Secret War Against America* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1942), 172.

You asked me what would be equitable remuneration I reached the figure of \$2,500 per month . . . American magazines never pay me less than \$500 per article. . . . The work I do in revising and preparing material for Facts in Review is equal to at least four or five articles monthly. For the sum mentioned I shall continue my work for Facts in Review and act as your chief literary advisor on all books sponsored by the Library.⁷

It is interesting how Viereck chose to close his letter to Schmitz. "You [are] a man who, like myself, . . . considers no task more sublime than to break down with the battering ram of truth the barriers of hate and misunderstanding which [British] propaganda, abetted by malice and ignorance, attempts to rear between your country and my own, the United States."⁸

While the retention of Viereck was of help to the German Library, the association violated Thomsen's guidelines for German propaganda activity in the United States. Clearly it would be to Germany's benefit if domestic opposition to Roosevelt's increasing intervention in the war was seen to be independent of German "control". Certainly, the relationship with Viereck was not publicized. Rather, the Special Assistant to the U.S. Attorney General, O. John Rogge, discovered the link, and afterward used it to prosecute Viereck for sedition. Viereck was eventually convicted for

⁷ Ibid. See also Rogge, *The Official German Report*, 135 for total amounts Viereck received from the German Library . For 1940 he was paid \$31,552.43 and for 1941 (from January to June) \$32,294.09. His letter seems to have paid some dividends.

⁸ *Sabotage*, 172.

failing to register properly under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. However, he had escaped an earlier conviction in 1942 under this act when the Supreme Court overturned the case on a technicality. Rogge clearly feared the possibility that Viereck would again avoid conviction when he wrote his book *The Official German Report* (September 1946).

Among those who argued against Viereck's conviction had been North Dakota Senator William Langer. Viereck wrote to Langer requesting assistance.⁹ Langer supported Viereck: "Because of that wrongful conviction, Mr. Viereck has been put to a tremendous expense. . . . I shall submit a resolution to . . . [the Senate] to decide on a sum which . . . will compensate him for the time he spent in jail . . . Mr. Viereck will get such justice as Congress may be able to give him . . . to wipe out the wrong which has been done."¹⁰ In the Senate Langer did just that. He came out vigorously in support of those on trial along with Viereck for sedition: "Some of the outstanding lawyers in Washington are almost unanimous in their opposition of what they term a legal farce, or a perversion of justice."¹¹ Rogge, in order to counter the support given by the senator, accused Langer of

⁹ For the content of Viereck's plea, see below p. 64.

¹⁰ Rogge, *The Official German Report*, 440.

¹¹ Senator William Langer, address before the United States Senate, September 8, 1944. *Congressional Record* Volume 90, part 6 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1944), 7624.

"a checkered political career" for his activities in land dealings in Mexico and other supposedly shady dealings. He concluded, "In view of Viereck's record, and also [of] Senator Langer's, I submit that Senator Langer's support of Viereck's demand for clemency should carry no weight."¹² This was all in Viereck's future. In September 1939 if an individual such as Viereck was interested in Germany and chose to use the Library's materials (a possible explanation) that was his own business. After all, the reason for the Library was to give Americans access to the "other side".

¹² *The Official German Report*, 444. Viereck spent two and a half years in prison for failing to fully report his activities, see below p. 64. He was never convicted on the sedition charge. The case against Viereck and several others was dismissed after the war ended.

Chapter Three

Pamphlets

The German Library of Information's first publications were translations of official government documents. While the pamphlets as a general rule were basically reprints of official German "white books" originally published in Germany, the German Library supplied prefaces to these works, thereby fulfilling its mission to provide Americans with the German point of view on major issues.

The first pamphlet, published in 1939 under the title, *The Exchange of Communications Between the President of the United States and the Chancellor of the German Reich: April 1939*, was a reprint of Roosevelt's famous speech to Hitler, urging him to take a peaceful course in Europe, and Hitler's reply to this message, rejecting Roosevelt's request for a German guarantee of neutrality toward several small nations. Hitler brushed aside Roosevelt's fears, alleging that his concerns amounted to hysteria "which makes even the landing of Martians seem possible"¹ (this was a reference to Orson Welles' broadcast of the *War of the Worlds* in 1938 that had

¹ *Exchange of Communications Between the President of the United States and the Chancellor of the German Reich: April 1939*. (New York:

caused mass hysteria in the United States.) While this document is interesting to the student of history, it represented an early stage of the German Library's propaganda. As a simple reprint of a German document, this work tells little about the opinions of the Library. Of more interest was the open acknowledgement of the German Library as part of the Consulate in New York, although the Library would soon try to distance itself from the stigma of being an official German agency.

The volume titled *Documents Concerning the Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis* is more revealing. Clearly its reasoning is based on one premise: the underlying responsibility of Britain for the war. This argument was based on the then-current idea that World War I had begun because of Germany's "Blank Check" to Austria-Hungary. This supposedly had encouraged the Habsburg nation to attack Serbia. The conflict rapidly escalated into a European-wide conflagration. The Library argued that Britain repeated this mistake in 1939 by supporting Poland. The pamphlet argued that, "Germany's demands [about the Polish Corridor] were so reasonable that no sane Polish Government would have dared to reject them. They certainly would have been accepted if England had advised moderation."² As Germany had failed to restrain its ally in 1914, so had Britain failed to convince

German Library of Information, 1939).

² *Documents Concerning the Last Phase of the German-Polish Crisis* (New York: German Library of Information, 1939) 6.

Poland to accede to German claims in 1939. The conclusion was obvious: America needed to realize that it was "England that forced the sword into his [Hitler's] hand."³ This pamphlet set one of the primary themes for German Library propaganda, namely that Britain, by its interference on the European continent, had made Germany's situation in Europe impossible.

The next Library work, *Polish Acts of Atrocity Against the German Minority in Poland*, published in 1940, repeated the theme. The body of this work was dedicated to describing in morbid detail the "systematic campaign of destruction, carried on not only by armed civilians, but by responsible officials of the Polish Government."⁴ What is interesting about this volume is the number of cases reported (250), each of them in nauseating detail.⁵ Significantly, none of these atrocities took place prior to September 1, 1939. The Nazi justification for invading Poland to protect German nationals fell flat even in the German Library publication. After claiming the existence of a long-standing Polish government plan to exterminate the German minority in Poland, the pamphlet pointed to the ultimate responsibility of Britain: "Nor is it possible to forgive or forget that the 'Blank

³ Ibid., 3.

⁴ *Polish Acts of Atrocity Against the German Minority in Poland* (New York: German Library of Information, 1940), 10

⁵ Some of the titles of the interviews comprising the report were "Slay the Germans: Eyes Gouged out with Bayonets", "All Germans must be Butchered", "Legs and Hands Broken; Tongues, Noses, Ears Cut Off."

Check' so hastily given to Poland by Mr. Chamberlain's Government and its failure to recommend the acceptance of Chancellor Hitler's generous terms were the signal for the slaughter of the German minority."⁶

The theme of British responsibility for the expanding war continued in *Britain's Designs on Norway*. It, like most of the German Library publications, consisted of a short introduction followed by various letters and other allegedly captured documents. In this work the German Library stated plainly its opinion of Britain's goals in the war:

Britain's strategy is always the same: adroit propaganda, a vast net of espionage, the creation of "fifth columns," and the attempt to inveigh into her web members of the government and the army of the State upon which she fastens her clutches. While engaged in this game she invariably hides her imperialistic schemes under the cloak of morality and wards off suspicion from herself by diverting it to others.⁷

Furthermore, *Britain's Designs on Norway* sought to remind Americans of Britain's abuse of neutral rights. Invoking the voice of Woodrow Wilson, the Library railed against Britain's resumption of the World War I practice of an "illegal and indefensible" blockade.⁸ In contrast to this the pamphlet claimed that Germany's "sole objective is to destroy the power of Great Britain to meddle in Continental affairs."⁹

⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁷ *Britain's Designs on Norway* (New York: German Library of Information, 1940), xi.

⁸ Ibid., xiii.

⁹ Ibid.

In *Allied Intrigue in the Low Countries*, even neutral nations were alleged to be working towards the "overthrow of the German Government and the perpetuation of the *intolerable condition existing on the Continent due to the incessant interferences of Great Britain.*"¹⁰ It was concluded that the Allies planned to use the Low Countries as a springboard for an invasion of Germany, and therefore the German invasion and occupation of these nations was justified.¹¹

The French Yellow Book: A Self Indictment extended the blame for the war to the Third Republic.¹² The work claimed that "all the Fuehrer's efforts for peace were doomed to failure because they collided with the war plans of England and France."¹³ The documents contained in this volume supposedly made clear the war plans of the Allies. According to the German Library of Information this policy was "sometimes referred to as the 'policy of firmness' and sometimes frankly and harshly as 'encirclement'."¹⁴

¹⁰ *Allied Intrigue in the Low Countries* (New York: German Library of Information 1940), vii.

¹¹ Planning between the Low Countries and the Allies did occur with good reason. The wisdom of this cooperation was shown by the well-known incident when early German invasion plans for the West (under the code name Case Yellow) fell into Belgian hands in January 1940. These plans made it clear that Germany intended to invade France via the Low Countries.

¹² Which, incidentally, did not appear until 1941, after France had been defeated and the Third Republic had ceased to exist.

¹³ Dr. Friedrich Grimm, *The French Yellow Book: A Self-Indictment* (New York: German Library of Information, 1941), 9-10. The various pamphlets issued by the German Library sometimes listed authors, sometimes not.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

The theme shifted back to the "evils of Britain" after the *French Yellow Book*. In the *Second Hunger Blockade* by Hermann Frisch, the words of President Woodrow Wilson regarding the illegality of a blockade were reiterated. Americans were reminded not only of the human suffering caused by naval blockades, but also of the opposition to the practice by many great American leaders. Regardless of the British attempts at blockade, the work sought to project an invulnerable Germany where "victory can no longer be endangered by a collapse of the home front."¹⁵

The Library believed Britain to be much nearer to defeat. *The War in Maps, 1939/40*, edited by Giselher Wirsing, was a pictorial history of "the practical expulsion of Great Britain from the European Continent, where she is an unwanted intruder."¹⁶ This work traced the progress of the war around the world until 1940. It is the best edited of all the pamphlets artistically, with good color maps. It sought to show England lusting for expansion and a France determined to humiliate Germany. Allied propaganda was dismissed as "a mask behind which hides, in England, the jingo lust for further enlargement of the Empire; and in France, the wish to . . . prevent German unity at any price whatever."¹⁷

¹⁵ Hermann Frisch, *The Second Hunger Blockade* (New York: German Library of Information, 1941), 22.

¹⁶ Giselher Wirsing, ed. *The War in Maps, 1939/40* (New York: The German Library of Information, 1941), i.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

The next Library booklet, *Werkstoffe: Miracles of German Chemistry*, by Karl Dorn, affirmed Germany's ability to weather a British blockade of raw materials by the invention of marvelous synthetic substitutes, defined as "a working [synthetic] material . . . chiefly for industrial purposes."¹⁸ This work reminded the Library's readers of Germany's successful innovations in nitrate experiments in World War I. It maintained that Germany had developed workable substitutes for rubber, gasoline and other vital raw materials. It was asserted that these innovations were not merely ersatz materials of sub-par quality, but genuine scientific advances that would aid the world after the war. It is interesting to note that *Werkstoffe* took pains to assure America that these innovations would be shared with all; they were not attempts by Germany to abandon world trade via economic autarchy.

Somewhat different in character was *Germany: Facts and Figures*.¹⁹ Here the German Library of Information attempted to present a picture of a pacifistic Germany. The booklet stressed Nazi achievements and the religious solidarity between Catholic and Protestant Germans, and also minimized the idea of class conflicts within the Reich, or the demise of alternative political parties. It maintained the

¹⁸ Karl Dorn, *Werkstoffe: Miracles of German Chemistry* (New York: German Library of Information, 1941), v.

¹⁹ *Germany: Facts and Figures* (New York: German Library of Information, 1941).

strength of the nation and its need for "living space" -- the infamous *Lebensraum*. Most of all it pictured a virile, growing Germany forced to take a military option only when others failed to disarm (as they were supposed to under the terms of the Versailles Treaty), preventing the peaceful settlement of Europe's problems.

A Nation Builds: Contemporary German Architecture continued the trend. This pamphlet painted a picture of a strong, vital peace-loving Reich, more interested in autobahns than aeroplanes. The change of life since the National Socialist regime was glorified: "The great building program which has been taking place in Germany during the last 6 years . . . may be interpreted as the symbol of the philosophy of life which animates the New Germany. Germany was building for peace."²⁰ It also stressed the idea of a national theme that dominated all aspects of life. "All of the building encompassed in the plan expresses a unifying idea. . . . the ideas of social equality and national unity which are the basic ideas of the New Germany."²¹ National Socialism was even given credit for truly uniting Germany. "[The autobahns] have performed a political and social mission as well. They have been an important factor in overcoming the sectional separateness, which has always been

²⁰ *A Nation Builds: Contemporary German Architecture* (New York: German Library of Information, 1941), 11.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

a major problem in the creation of a united German state."²² Thus, the pamphlet represented Germany as a strong peace-loving nation that was not threatening to Europe or America. Germany was the land of culture and could be dealt with and trusted.

Other works by the Library sought to show the artistic side of Germany that was all too frequently submerged by the aggressive activities of the Third Reich. A pamphlet was issued commemorating the romantic painter Casper David Friedrich. A book on German Christmas carols and toys was also published. These were a different approach by the Library, devoid of any stated political messages. No plea for American sympathy appeared. What was under the surface was plain: the Germany of Goethe, the artistic and peace-loving German, was still alive in the Third Reich. These efforts were more successful in eliciting understanding than dry discourses on *Lebensraum* or the German right to a readjustment of Versailles.

The last of the German Library pamphlets of concern here was a self-examination entitled *The German Library of Information*. Unlike the other pamphlets, *The German Library of Information* was a Library publication, not just a translation with an English preface. This work explained the details of the Library and its purpose.

²² Ibid., 117

The German Library of Information was founded several years ago to satisfy American demands for detailed knowledge of all phases of German life. . . . *The fundamental aim of the German Library of Information in New York is to facilitate an understanding of Germany, [emphasis added] her countryside, her people, her government and her cultural heritage. . . .* By promoting a greater knowledge of Germany, it furthers understanding and good-will between two great nations.²³

The German Library functioned "independent of the Consulate" and therefore was not an official government agency.²⁴

Presumably this would have made the Library's arguments more persuasive. The work hastened to remind Americans that the German Library of Information's goal (in reference to the weekly *Facts in Review* published by the German Library) was to show "the 'other Germany,' which hostile propaganda constantly endeavors to consign to the past, remains an essential part of the Reich of today."²⁵ A new era of cooperation, it claimed, would be the result of this new relationship: "By encouraging and enabling Americans to familiarize themselves with the German people and their heritage, the road to mutual understanding is opened. . . . American and German culture have long enriched each other. To the future belongs the task

²³ *The German Library of Information* (New York: German Library of Information, 1941), 5.

²⁴ This was a shift in the status of the Library. Recall that the German Library had earlier maintained that it was a part of the Consulate. *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

of still further increasing the understanding and collaboration between the two countries."²⁶

²⁶ Ibid., 27.

Chapter Four

Facts in Review

With the increasing international tensions and the threat of a war in Europe in 1939, the role of the German Library changed. As we have seen in the case of its pamphlets, the Library put out a rapidly increasing amount of propaganda. The most conspicuous evidence of this increase was the emergence of the weekly *Facts in Review*. Thomsen had written to Berlin in November 1939, informing his superiors that the "stiffening of German-American relations, which was being exploited by enemy propaganda, has made necessary since the beginning of the year a more active German propaganda in the United States. . . ." ¹ He also told Berlin that the Trans-Ocean Agency (which was controlled by the Propaganda Ministry) was recognized by Americans as obviously pro-Nazi. He noted that "American newspapers avoid regular printing of Trans-Ocean material." ² These circumstances encouraged an expanded role for the German Library of Information. Thomsen, in a report to Berlin explained the situation: "In order to get over this boycott wall of the American press, the weekly periodical *Facts in Review* was founded, which now regularly

¹ DGFP, Series D, Volume VII, 432-4

² *Ibid.*, 432.

reaches 20,000 especially interested persons; all materials of the Foreign Ministry, particularly political reports, are utilized for it."³ Thomsen also noted that "The German Information Library in New York was developed into an institute of propaganda."⁴

In response to its new role, the Library was officially separated from the New York Consulate and received separate and extensive funding. Just how much money the Library received from all sources is not clear. Heribert von Stempel, from the Embassy, estimated that the German Library was paid \$600,000 from embassy funds alone during the period from 1939 to 1941. As stated previously, (p. 11-12) the Library received funding from both the Foreign Ministry and the Propaganda Ministry, so it is possible that the German Library of Information received from \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 from all sources for the years 1939 to 1941.⁵

By far the most significant increase in the output of German Library of Information propaganda came when the weekly journal *Facts in Review* began publication. Thomsen noted in November 1939 that "the periodical is proving a success and

³ Ibid., 433.

⁴ Ibid. Since the German Library was set up as a propaganda agency before this time, two meanings of this sentence are possible. First, Berlin may not have been aware of the Library's existence. Possibly since the German Library had been a Propaganda Ministry organization when it was first set up, the Foreign Office may not have been aware of it, or it may have been an announcement that the Foreign office had won a struggle over control of the German Library .

⁵ See *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, 557-559.

is quoted and occasionally attacked by the American press."⁶ *Facts in Review* not only addressed major issues, as the pamphlets had done, but also provided information on German internal news such as employment levels, cultural information and a list of German-English language broadcasts and books. All of this was done in a neat and homey, if somewhat contrived fashion. But this format had the advantage of appearing less overtly political to the reader than translations of official documents.

Facts in Review was widely distributed, as the German Library had a mailing list of 70,000 names garnered by Viereck. The estimate of the journal's circulation varied from around 40,000 a week according to Stempel, to 70,000, as estimated by the House Un-American Affairs Committee, which investigated the Library. The number the Committee put forth seems a more reliable figure, since Congress possessed a physical copy of the list; Stempel's interrogation occurred five years after the Library ceased to exist.⁷

In addition, its funding rose to significant levels. The Library's expenses mushroomed quickly after the start of the war. From May 1936 to August 1939 the Library spent \$63,300. From September 1939 to March 1940, it spent \$89,000. Finally, from April 1940 to August 1940 it spent \$189,394.⁸ For *Facts*

⁶ Ibid., 433.

⁷ For the House records on the mailing list see *Appendix*, 1050. For Stempel's version, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, 558.

⁸ *Appendix*, 1045-1050.

in Review alone the Library received over \$13,000 per month. For the period from April 1940 to August 1940 the expenses for *Facts in Review* were \$66,378.96. These figures represented the expenses of producing the magazine when it averaged around ten pages in length. As the weekly continued it grew in size to over forty pages. No doubt the expenses for *Facts in Review* saw an increase as well. However, similar data for the later, more lavish, issues is not available. Nevertheless, the early figures provide an idea of the large amount of capital invested by the Library in *Facts in Review*.⁹

Facts in Review remained the most significant Library activity. While the Library had some leeway in the publication of its various pamphlets, it was limited in its ability to issue an independent opinion, because the pamphlets were usually reprints of government publications.¹⁰ In the publication of *Facts in Review*, the German Library of Information adhered closely to Dr. Thomsen's guidelines for German propaganda. Throughout the year and a half of its publication (the magazine first appeared in August 1939 and lasted until the consulate and Library were closed on Roosevelt's orders on June 16, 1941), *Facts in Review* continually espoused two of Thomsen's most important ideas. First, Americans were constantly reminded of the betrayal of

⁹ *Appendix*, 1048 for a break down of the production costs for *Facts in Review*.

¹⁰ The limitations were most severe in the case of the German *White Books* and would not have been nearly so much a problem in the case of other publications. See above p. 23.

Wilson's fourteen points and the denial of Germany's right to national self-determination. The second major theme of the periodical was that Germany's goals in Europe represented no more than a German Monroe Doctrine and that the U.S. should easily appreciate such a policy. Each of these points about Germany was contrasted to British behavior, in the first part by its support of Poland's refusal to honor the self-determination principle in Danzig and, in the second, by Britain's continuing imperialistic role in the World. *Facts in Review* also focused on presenting the "other" Germany of peace and culture. Another primary purpose of the journal was to explain to Americans Germany's point of view on current events.

The first issue of *Facts* appeared shortly before the outbreak of World War II, although its role was not explicitly proclaimed until 1940: "It is the function of this publication to preserve the mutually beneficial intellectual contact between Germany and the United States, which great Americans including Longfellow, Emerson, Burgess and others esteemed so highly."¹¹ It continued: "The wealth and variety of German life and development [are] mirrored in the pages of *Facts in Review* . . . the eternal values which enriched the Old Germany, are alive in the New [Germany]. The Third Reich, while preserving these values, has made new and notable

¹¹ *Facts in Review*, April 10, 1940, p. 160.

contributions to civilization, some of which are presented in these pages."¹²

Using the lists organized by Viereck, the issue was mailed out to various individuals and organizations.¹³ By late August 1939 it had become clear that some sort of conflict was near (how widespread it would be was not clear). Appropriately, the inaugural issue contained a detailed description of the German need for "living space" (Lebensraum). Two ideas that would resurface throughout the journal were featured prominently in this first issue. The first was the ultimate responsibility of Great Britain for the war and its spread. The second was that German actions in Europe "should be recognized throughout the world - as is the Monroe Doctrine."¹⁴ This explanation of Nazi ambitions as Germany's Monroe Doctrine for Europe, would continue throughout the journal's run. Together these two themes formed the backbone for the majority of the German Library's arguments.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Facts in Review* generally arrived about a week after its publication date. There is some evidence that some of the earliest issues may have been prepared earlier but not mailed until after the date listed. The copies of *Facts in Review* viewed by the author at the University of Minnesota had a date received stamp on them. This date was usually seven days after the publication date--a not unreasonable postal delivery time at magazine rate. The first issue for August 16, 1939 bears a stamp for Oct 12, 1939. The second issue did not arrive until January 1940. However issues three through seven arrived on October 12, 1939, before the second issue, at the same time as the first issue. It is not certain what the cause for the delay of the first two issues was, but it seems likely that the issues were hastily prepared, after their publication date.

¹⁴ *Facts in Review*, August 16, 1939, p. 2

Great Britain led and directed the Allies; France was seen as only a minor player. In the August 24 issue of *Facts in Review*, the Library declared French participation as invalid. Instead, it claimed that "[France] gained considerable territory as the result of the World War."¹⁵ Furthermore, "The decision as to whether there will be war has been handed to Britain, who in turn, handed the authority to . . . Poland. . . . The French people . . . don't know why these risks have been taken."¹⁶

The early issue concentrated on the subject of the Danzig Corridor, the flash point for World War II. Frequently the Library used American opinion on the Versailles settlement. A speech to this effect by the German Consul General for New York, Dr. Hans Borchers, was reprinted by the Library. "I only want to quote the words of one of the most upright and honest of men . . . the late United States Senator William Edgar Borah. . . . 'The Polish Corridor must be rectified. The present peace in Europe is the peace of brutal force.'"¹⁷ In addition, Woodrow Wilson was held to have opposed the creation of the corridor and only supported the Corridor solution "at the insistence of others who sought personal gain [although just where Poland's access to the sea

¹⁵ *Facts in Review*, August 24, 1939, p. 2

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷ *Facts in Review*, February 5, 1940, p. 38.

mentioned in the Fourteen Points should have been, is not discussed]."¹⁸

Beyond the dictated peace of Versailles and the loss of German land were the alleged provocations of Poland. The Eastern European nation had become a "constant menace to order and progress in Europe."¹⁹ Further, the Poles, it claimed, had embarked on a "program of 'more cannons and fewer schools'."²⁰ Thus, the German Library claimed, Germany had to right the wrong of Versailles and halt the aggression of its eastern neighbor.

Vile as the Polish actions were portrayed to have been, the ultimate responsibility for such excesses lay with England. According to Thomsen: "Without England's interference and her anti-German encirclement policy . . . a reasonable German-Polish adjustment could certainly have been achieved long ago."²¹ Of England's leaders, Churchill drew the heaviest criticism. One issue reprinted an accusation that "his continuous battle-cry [was] 'Germania delenda est' (Germany must be destroyed). . . . Churchill is no blessing for the British people. They will regret . . . the man . . .

¹⁸ *Facts in Review*, September 2 1939, p. 1 After the article the following slogan appeared at the bottom of the page: "Germany fights for the reparation of an injustice, the others for its preservation."

¹⁹ *Facts in Review*, September 2, 1939, p. 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Facts in Review*, September 14, 1939, p. 7

whose unscrupulous lust for power is responsible to a large degree for the cataclysm in Europe.²²

Even though war had begun, the Library reminded Americans that Germany's aims remained moderate. All that was needed to restore peace was "a national frontier, which corresponds to our ethnic, historic and economic necessities . . . [and] the creation of a Polish rump-state which cannot again be abused by the Western Powers."²³ Americans were urged not to pre-judge Germany in this conflict. Instead they should be guided by "the legal principle . . . 'Audiatum et Altera Pars' (hear the other side, too) [which] corresponds . . . to the legal concept of the American people."²⁴

The Library also fought the notion of Germany as a totalitarian society. In a speech, Dr. Borchers reminded Americans that, "We Germans did not surrender our freedom under dictation, duress, or compulsion of any kind; of our own free will we became an integral part of an organism created under the guidance of . . . [Adolf Hitler]."²⁵ More convincingly, the idea of the Third Reich as more in tune with traditional American concerns was played upon. Slogans such as "Germany still upholds the freedom of seas"²⁶ were

²² *Facts in Review*, October 19, 1939, reprint of article by Dr. Giselher Wirsing, p. 6.

²³ *Facts in Review*, November 30, 1939, p. 1.

²⁴ *Facts in Review*, September 14, 1939, p. 8. Speech by Thomsen. Presumably his phrase concerning "the legal concept of the American people" refers to the practice of due process.

²⁵ *Facts in Review*, October 31, 1939, p. 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

calculated to reinforce this notion. In a speech by Foreign Minister Ribbentrop, quoted in *Facts in Review*, Americans were reminded that Germany had respected the Monroe Doctrine while Britain by her maintenance of colonies and interference in the Western Hemisphere had clearly violated it. Furthermore, the issue continued, Britain had failed to pay its Great War debt and was angling for similar loans in the new conflict (and would presumably not repay those loans either).

Similarly, the Germans sought to downplay the significance of Britain's democratic institutions. Headlines such as "Britain's Press is Free - Free to Distort" underscored this message. Presumably this was intended to plant doubts in American minds about how truly democratic England was. At the same time the level of control by the Nazis over the German press was minimized.

At the same time as it struggled to reduce the affinity between the two English-speaking nations, the German Library tried to minimize the danger posed to America by Hitler's Germany. This attempt was not always uniform, however. While *Facts in Review* sought to minimize the German threat to America, it also sought to play up the Nazi military advantage over Britain and France. The net result was a picture of the Reich that was one of vitality and strength, yet one that hoped America would not be concerned over any

possible threat that Germany's economic and military hegemony over Europe might pose to the New World. Thus, while the magazine called fears of the Third Reich's intentions toward the Western Hemisphere a "fable," it had no difficulty claiming later in the same issue that Eastern Europe was the concern of Germany alone. The Germans, it maintained, respected the right of the United States to maintain and enforce the Monroe Doctrine and merely expected that America would recognize Germany's right to self determination and its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe as its Monroe Doctrine.²⁷ What was not mentioned by Thomsen was whether Germany's new Monroe Doctrine would have its own version of the Roosevelt Corollary. If the Germans included such a corollary, with the right to intervene in those nations within its sphere in the case of "chronic wrongdoing," they would have the right to send troops whenever they felt it necessary -- as the United States had done in Latin America -- anywhere in Eastern Europe. With such assurances, the Library sought to convince Americans that they need not concern themselves with the fate of England or even of Europe as a whole.

The British Empire's abuses were also vilified in the pages of *Facts in Review*. No doubt playing on America's

²⁷ *Facts in Review*, September 14, 1939, Speech by Thomsen, pp. 7-8.

memory of her own Revolutionary War, the German Library took great pains to remind the United States of the paradox of a democratic state that systematically denied democracy to those under its colonial rule. The two most obvious examples for this attack were Ireland and India.

In an article entitled "India: A Case Study of British Democracy," the German Library claimed that Senator John J. Blaine of Wisconsin "some years ago" had condemned the British use of violence against India as "a violation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact and urged Britain to find a peaceful solution to India's independence."²⁸

Despite this (and other) earlier pleas for Indian independence, the nation had not been made independent and Gandhi continued his famous non-violent resistance to British rule. Indeed, his refusal to support Britain, even after Japan's entry into the war, led to his imprisonment in 1942. The Library exploited this conflict, hoping that British repression would anger the United States. Frequent stories of Indian tribulations abounded and Gandhi frequently quoted: "Gandi [sic] declared that despite statements to the contrary by Prime Minister Chamberlain, the old Imperialist spirit of Britain is not dead."²⁹ As a show of good will towards India it was announced that "Indians residing in Germany will not

²⁸ *Facts in Review*, January 6, 1941, p. 8.

²⁹ *Facts in Review*, December 15, 1939, p. 8.

be treated as enemy aliens. The Reich holds that India is at war with Germany only by compulsion and not of its free will."³⁰ The Library continued this course by reporting on Gandhi's progress. "Mohandas Ghandi [sic] . . . calls for volunteers to conduct . . . civil disobedience . . . against British rule. 'Non-violent action' he observes 'can mean the mobilization of world opinion in our favor, . . . men and women all over the world are sick of the war spirit and [are] longing for a way to peace. India can show that way if we are honestly non-violent.'"³¹ The Library certainly hoped he would succeed.

The problem of Northern Ireland had plagued Britain for decades. Memories of the rebellion of 1916 were still fresh in the minds of Irish-Americans. Certainly the refusal of Ireland to aid Britain during this critical time spoke volumes about the hard feelings between the neighboring islands. *Facts* made much of this hesitation, noting with glee: "Ireland, England's next-door neighbor . . . refuses to come to the aid of Great Britain. . . . In South Africa, advocates of war and advocates of neutrality are almost equally divided. In India passive resistance is the watchword It is obvious the Empire is disintegrating."³²

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *Facts in Review*, April 8, 1940, p. 134.

³² *Facts in Review*, May 26, 1941, p. 289.

Given the large Irish-American community in the United States, it is not surprising that Ireland also featured prominently in *Facts in Review*. The journal urged its readers not to assume all British colonial abuses were in the past: "Never let him forget that at the same time Britain . . . [was] pleading repentance in 1916, . . . she was murdering, robbing and flogging with all her old-time abandon."³³ Also, "Ireland has suffered under English domination more than any other nation -- and longer. Northern Ireland is still controlled by the British. British methods in Ireland are so notorious that they require no elucidation at this point."³⁴ Moreover, it was contended that Ireland was continuing to be held to ensure Britain's command of the sea. Therefore,

The freedom of the seas is essential to universal liberty. This freedom cannot be achieved while English Orders in Council can destroy any small neutral country and drive from the sea the commerce even of great neutral powers. The destruction of England's domination of the seas would leave England--as she deserves to be left--one of the Great Powers, but would prevent her from meddling in the affairs of all other countries This freedom they can never have while England dominates and controls Ireland. . . .³⁵

³³ *Facts in Review*, April 2, 1941, p. 154.

³⁴ *Facts in Review*, January 6, 1940, p. 8.

³⁵ *Facts in Review*, February 19, 1949, p. 54.

Facts in Review was convinced that the age of British Imperialism had not passed. Furthermore, it postulated that Churchill wanted to "invade or annex" Ireland because it refused to cooperate with the English. The German Library applauded Ireland's neutrality. "It has been able to stay out of the European holocaust into which other small states, pretending to be neutral . . . were drawn one by one. Are we soon to witness an attempt to 'restore' to the Irish people the benefits of the 'great, free and happy' Empire which they so dearly 'loved' in the past?"³⁶ In case anyone had failed to make the connection between America's revolution and the situation within the British domains, the Library pointed it out. "Great Britain has attempted to destroy every nation that dared to order its life independent of British despotism. Only the United States of America was able . . . to free itself successfully from the British yoke."³⁷ The German Library no doubt hoped that India and Ireland (including Northern Ireland) would follow the American example.

The reasons for England's troubles were more than simply internal dissent within the Empire, according to the German Library. The British, by their actions throughout the world, had earned their problems. British attacks on the remnants of the French Navy at Dakar, in July 1940, provided proof of

³⁶ *Facts in Review*, November 18, 1939, p. 544.

³⁷ *Facts in Review*, May 13, 1940, p. 190.

Britain's continuing imperialism. In October 1940 *Facts in Review* gave its interpretation: "Even British ingenuity cannot find an excuse for the assault on Dakar led by a French traitor with the aid of the British Navy. . . . The incident was part of a systematic British campaign to rob her vanquished ally of her colonies."³⁸ This only confirmed in the eyes of the propagandists continuing abuses by Britannia. Neutrals could look forward to the treatment Norway had received in the Altmark incident (English ships had violated Norwegian neutrality to rescue seamen captured during the cruise of the Graf Spee). This incident was dramatized to Americans by comparing it to the Essex case of the War of 1812 (where the British had denied the idea of neutral trade via the so-called "broken voyage" and thereby decided what neutral trade was and more importantly, what it was not). The message of the German Library article was plain: Britain had no intention of respecting any nation's neutral rights.³⁹

The journal also went beyond these historical arguments to accuse England of still greater crimes. In a description of the cruise of the Graf Spee it accused the British of using mustard gas against the ship.⁴⁰ In addition airplanes

³⁸ *Facts in Review*, October 2, 1940, p. 489.

³⁹ *Facts in Review*, March 4, 1940, p. 76 Headline: "British Disregard for Neutrals Not New."

⁴⁰ *Facts in Review*, December 28, 1939, p. 2.

were reputed to have been dropping self-igniting cards throughout Germany to create terror.⁴¹

Morale in England was supposed to be a problem, according to the Library. In the case of the British "blank check" to Poland, it was maintained that "The British people are not permitted to know that . . . any help Britain might attempt to give [Poland] would arrive too late."⁴² Labor unrest in the United Kingdom was purported to be rampant: "According to the *Goteborgs Handels-Hach Sjöfartstidning*, a leading Swedish newspaper, more than a million British workers are clamoring for wage increases . . . [because of] the huge profits realized by the armament industry since the beginning of the war."⁴³ The underlying reason for the low morale in England was their reason for fighting: "The British Government is fighting for capitalist interests. . . . She desires to have Germany in a state of economic dependency."⁴⁴ Contrasted with this Germany's reasons were: "economically . . . a reasonable standard of living . . . strategically . . . protection against domination by some great maritime hegemony . . . diplomatically speaking. . . a 'good neighbor' policy."⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Facts in Review*, September 16, 1940, *Facts in Review* claimed that the true victims of these bomb-like weapons were "children and others who are deceived by their harmless appearance." p. 468.

⁴² *Facts in Review*, August 24, 1939, p. 3.

⁴³ *Facts in Review*, September 9, 1940, p 440. This issue also contained a story of a man jailed for predicting the victory of Hitler's forces.

⁴⁴ *Facts in Review*, February 19, 1940, p. 50

⁴⁵ *Facts in Review*, April 15, 1940, 146

The alleged antagonism of neutral nations towards Britain supported the Third Reich's claims. The German Library's attitudes towards the Versailles Treaty have already been noted. Less easy to explain were Germany's more contradictory acts, such as the relationship with the Soviet Union. The Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939 was in force during the entire run of *Facts in Review*, thereby sparing the journal the need to reverse its largely pro-Russian line. Accordingly the Library stressed the positive aspects of the relationship. German-Soviet economic agreements were frequently mentioned and it was emphasized that these agreements represented the "permanency of their mutual relationship."⁴⁶ The Library even alleged that Britain was at fault for prolonging the Winter War between Finland and Russia.⁴⁷

Far more important to the German Library of Information than justifying Germany's actions, was pointing out opposition to British goals and tactics towards other nations. In its campaign against the British abuse of the freedom of the seas, the journal used the outrage of Japan over British infringements on neutral trade rights. Indeed

⁴⁶ *Facts in Review*, April 8, 1940, p. 134.

⁴⁷ The Library based this accusation on Britain's alleged promises to Finland. This support, coupled with Finnish success in the Winter War prevented the Finns from compromising with Soviet demands. The U.S.S.R. could not withdraw without humiliation. "Propagandist exaggerations . . . by the British press . . . tend to transform the entire Russo-Finnish conflict into a question of prestige for the Soviet Union. It is this Propaganda [from Britain] which is the chief obstacle to peace." *Facts in Review*, January 22, 1940, p. 22.

the English were openly accused of sinking the Athena early in the war to arouse neutral sentiment (and especially American sentiment) in hopes of reviving the memory of the Lusitania sinking that had so outraged the United States.⁴⁸ Thus, *Facts in Review* showed the hostility of many neutrals to Britain's unilateral restrictions. "Japan will not hesitate to take retaliatory action if the British persist in their plan of disregarding neutral rights. . . . During the Napoleonic Wars, it will be recalled, the United States under Thomas Jefferson enacted and applied retaliatory embargo legislation against England's violation of American rights."⁴⁹ Russia too protested British actions. "The Russian press has shown considerable interest in the . . . German White Books. The new publications are hailed for their . . . expose of the Anglo-French policy of war extension. Particular attention is given to the fact that the erstwhile Allies sought to spread hostilities to every Russian border."⁵⁰ Presumably Americans were to infer that the current war posed a threat to their rights to trade freely and that they should heed the example of Japan and Russia, as well as the experience of their own past, and oppose the willful British.

⁴⁸ *Facts in Review*, September 9, 1939, p. 1. The Germans sank the Lusitania in 1915 with a torpedo. Over 100 Americans died in the incident, which created much animosity towards Germany. The Germans did not want to repeat the situation in 1939.

⁴⁹ *Facts in Review*, December 8, 1939, p.3.

⁵⁰ *Facts in Review*, July 29, 1940, p. 355.

While the English were being portrayed as the instigators of the war, they were also pictured as suffering from its effects to a much greater degree than Germany. In fact, the journal maintained an image of Nazi Germany hardly changed by the war, where life went on more or less as normal. Militarily, economically and scientifically, Germany was consistently shown to be vastly superior to the British. This campaign began during the so-called "phony war" of late 1939 to early 1940. The German "Strength through Joy" movement was said to be continuing its improvements in average people's lives and even expanding its activities to the soldiers at the front.⁵¹

On the scientific front, consumer advances gained the most notice. Innovations such as coal soap, synthetic tires and coal gasification all merited significant space in *Facts in Review*. Even the film industry of Germany was said to be "not only intact, but prosperous and progressive . . . in sharp contrast to the disastrous reversals suffered by the British and French."⁵² Economically two trends were visible. First, Germany's insulation from blockade (via trade with the U.S.S.R. and scientific advances) was proclaimed. More importantly, the desire of Germany to re-enter into trade with United States after the war was emphasized. Evidence of

⁵¹ *Facts in Review*, February 13, 1940, p. 47 The article features such front line niceties as a bookmobile that was used to help the soldiers keep up on their reading.

⁵² *Facts in Review*, October 28, 1940, 522.

the first trend has been shown. It is necessary to look briefly at the Library's attempts to reassure America that Germany would not look for markets to replace its trade with America in the long term.

Two quotes best exemplify this attitude. "Germany may easily become America's best post-war customer. Let us hope that it will be possible after the termination of the war to eliminate the frictions of the past . . . to the mutual benefit of both nations."⁵³ The journal was sure to press its claim for a European sphere of influence, but was quick to remind its readers that: "Neither the European Continent nor Germany desires to continue the self-sufficiency of wartime as the ideal economic relation for peacetime. . . . [The two countries should pursue] friendly competition in the interest of all states, without destructive and artificial economic barriers, discriminations and boycotts."⁵⁴ In another issue the magazine gave one example of hope for the post-war era: "The Volkswagen plant has been adapted to turning out military equipment. But with the coming of peace . . . the production of [the eventual VW beetle] will be taken up again Dr. Porsche's dream will at last come true."⁵⁵

Facts in Review also tried to minimize the conception of Germany as a ruthless totalitarian state. The claim of religious toleration was a major means of achieving this

⁵³ *Facts in Review*, June 17, 1940, p. 250.

⁵⁴ *Facts in Review*, January 13 1941, p. 10.

⁵⁵ *Facts in Review*, May 26, 1941, 313.

goal. Frequent notice was given throughout the journal's run of religious observations. Indeed, special issues were dedicated to the celebration of WhitSunday (Pentecost). The conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Germany was not a concern. "One of the most important elements of anti-German propaganda . . . is the assertion that the National Socialist regime persecutes the Catholic religion and endeavors to replace a Christian philosophy with a neo-pagan one. . . . [this is untrue]"⁵⁶ Yet the image of Germany as continuing its traditional religious toleration was refuted by other articles on religion. Pictures of church ceremonies featured Nazi honor guards and swastika flags around the altar. And, as Dr. Heckel of the German Evangelical Church said, "the new Reformation [National Socialism] has also created a wealth of new hymns and vigorous, happy songs. The German people have now recovered from the frightful wrongs and sufferings inflicted upon them after the World War. Their grief and sorrow and the materialistic moral decline have been washed away by new courage and new strength."⁵⁷

Pictures featured prominently in the journal. At first there were no photographs or drawings of any kind. Gradually small photographs began to appear in its pages. Later, photographs would consume, at times, half of the space in an issue. The photographs also had a propaganda message. Often

⁵⁶ *Facts in Review*, October 29, 1940, p. 514.

⁵⁷ *Facts in Review*, May 6, 1940, p. 178.

German youths were shown frolicking in meadows, or some such pastoral scene. A darker side was also evident. As the war progressed, battle photographs as well as pictures of Germany's military leaders became more evident. By the use of these images, *Facts in Review* sought to portray a peaceful Germany that had been thrust into war, willing and capable of doing whatever was necessary to win it.

As European nations fell under Nazi occupation, many people in the United States began to fear for the safety of the populations of these nations. *Facts in Review*, aware of this concern, made frequent mention of "progress" in Poland, France and elsewhere. Denmark had fallen to the Germans in April of 1940. Pictures of its King, Christian X, who chose to remain in the country, graced one issue while the accompanying article stated that "in Denmark there were no ravages of war to repair because its king refused to make his country a pawn of the Allies on the checker-board of diplomacy and war."⁵⁸ Also, plans for a tunnel to Sweden were said to be advancing, giving the impression that in certain parts of Europe at least, things were progressing well. The Jewish question was conspicuously absent from *Facts in Review*. In fact the verbal assault against the Jews only appears in translations of Hitler's speeches. Hitler's speeches, interestingly enough, appeared only infrequently in the pages of the journal.

⁵⁸ *Facts in Review*, June 7, 1940, p. 222.

The magazine sought to contradict the notion of a Europe in chains under Nazi domination and, above all, to convince its readers that Germany, even if victorious in Europe, constituted no threat to America. Hermann Goering's opinions on this issue were reprinted: "He stressed Germany's desire to preserve and uphold her political and economic ties with the United States [and he considered] *a healthy reconstruction of Europe and of the world is possible only in cooperation with the United States.*"⁵⁹ On the same issue Hitler is quoted concerning America's role in Europe. "The essence of the Monroe Doctrine was not only to prevent European states from interfering in American affairs (which England with her great political and territorial interests in America keeps doing incessantly); but quite as much to restrain the North American Union from meddling with European affairs."⁶⁰

Thus Americans were assured that they had nothing to fear, militarily and economically, from a victorious Germany. However, the United States also needed to recognize that while Germany would not interfere in the American sphere, Germany would tolerate no outside interference in its European sphere.

⁵⁹ *Facts in Review*, Aug 12, 1940, p. 378. Italicized in original.

⁶⁰ *Facts in Review*, July 1, 1940, p. 282.

Chapter Five

The Dies Committee and the Fate of the Library

The activities of the German Library did not escape the notice of the U.S. Government. As the Library expanded, it became more visible. In 1940 Representative Martin Dies from Texas and the Committee on Un-American Activities and Propaganda in the United States began to focus their attention on the German Library, as they had previously on the German-American Bund and communist groups.

The Committee clearly defined the difference between American and un-American activities:

Americanism is the recognition of the . . . inherent and fundamental rights of man . . . [derived] from God and not from governments. . . . Among these inalienable rights . . . are 1) Freedom of worship; 2) freedom of speech; 3) freedom of press; 4) freedom of assemblage. . . . The essence of Americanism is therefore class, religious, and racial tolerance. . . . The man who advocates class hatred is plainly un-American even if he professes racial and religious tolerance.¹

The ideas set out by the Committee conflicted with one another. Just how freedom of speech could be reconciled with the censure of unpopular views was unclear. Many Americans

¹ U.S. House of Representatives Report no. 2 *Investigation of Un-American Activities and Propaganda*. p. 10. 76th Congress 1st Session.

in this period of racial segregation and bigotry would hardly qualify as loyal Americans under the Committee's definition. Crystal clear, however, was the intent of the Committee to defend the United States from enemies abroad and within. Americans who used their freedom of speech to support either Communist or Fascist ideology were at risk of being labelled un-American and even being jailed for these views. The vile nature of the Nazi regime cannot be condoned. However, the throttling of freedom of speech before the outbreak of the war is also reprehensible. In a minority report of the Dies Committee Jerry Voorhis of California recognized the threat to free speech.

Once, however, the [Dies] committee undertakes to accuse people of un-American activities because they criticize certain features of our economy or say unkind things about finance, capitalism or because they come out for a greater degree of cooperation in our economic life, it is in danger of becoming an agency that arrogates to itself the right to censor people's ideas. That in itself is un-American. . . . The majority report is shot through with statements accusing people of being un-American not because they are Nazis, Fascists, or Communists, but because their political or economic beliefs or opinions are not orthodox as judged by the committee majority.²

Nevertheless, the records of the German Library of Information were subpoenaed by the Committee in August 1940 and its officials were required to present themselves for questioning. The director of the Library, Dr. Matthias

² 77th Congress 2nd session Report 2277 part 2. July 7, 1942, 4-5.

Schmitz, testified before the committee and was asked to explain the Library's relationship to the Consulate. Schmitz testified that the Library had been separate from the Consulate as of September 1939. The Library submitted a report to the Committee detailing the number of employees and their functions. These included a central or administrative section, research, archives, mailing, correspondence, book-keeping and editorial departments. There were 30 employees, all of whom were German nationals. Also included in the report was George Viereck and his relationship to the Library.³

The New York Times followed the proceedings of the Committee closely. It reprinted the accusation that the Library constituted a "local fifth column and Nazi spy headquarters" and, more truthfully, reporting the German Library as "one of the largest German agencies in this country for the dissemination of Nazi information."⁴ The Library was linked to the Trans-Ocean organization in this probe.⁵ The Dies report included several letters between the two organizations, which showed that Trans-Ocean served as a source of information and articles for the Library.⁶ This

³ *Appendix*, 1047-1049.

⁴ New York Times August 31, 1940 p. 4:3 "Reich Library Here Gets Dies Summons."

⁵ See above, page 29, for Thomsen's admission that Trans-Ocean was recognized as a Nazi agency.

⁶ *Appendix*, 1051-1052.

connection showed that the Library relied on Nazi agencies for some of its information, which obviously undermined the Library's claims of independence. While the Committee and its chairman were convinced by their investigation that such activities as those carried on by the German Library constituted a threat to the U.S., it was not until June of 1941 that action was taken to close the German Library of Information.

In the meantime, the Library had become involved in difficulties of a different sort. In connection with its mailing practices, it has been mentioned that several individuals had become upset at being placed on the German Library's mailing list. The Library found itself sued in New York Court by the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League for failing to register its activities properly. Because it had officially separated from the Consulate in September 1939 in order to appear a more objective source of information, the Library was considered a private organization. As such it was required to register with the City.⁷ The court case alleged that the Library failed to follow the law, and Schmitz was imprisoned. In order to secure his release, the Embassy in Washington was forced to come forth with proof that the German Library did not need the City certificate because it was an agency of the Nazi Government. The ruling of the judge

⁷ New York Times September 14, 1940 p. 5:2

was of interest: "However contemptible the defendant may be in other respects, [a] great disservice would be done to any government of laws if the defendant were to be punished otherwise than in accordance with the law."⁸

The Library also suffered another public image setback when an individual wrote to the Times to compare the German Library with the British Library of Information.⁹ The British organization was small; it permitted private citizens to see its mailing list of 4,000 names. The German Library of Information, by comparison, was secretive with its 70,000-name list. Also the comparison of the British Library's American staff with the German Library's all-German staff, did not support the Library's claim of objectivity.

The combination of the Dies investigation, the arrest of Schmitz, the Library's German staff, and ties to the Consulate and Embassy lost for it any sort of credibility it had built up as an objective organization. The directives originally established for the Library suggested staying away from indigenous American groups working towards the same ends, i.e., to keep the U.S. out of war. The maintenance of a German staff and its physical nearness to the consulate were strange oversights indeed for an organization designed to convince the American public that it was in their own

⁸ New York Times September 20, 1940 p. 9:30 "Nazi Agent Freed on Embassy Plea."

⁹ New York Times September 18, 1940 p. 22:6 letter from R.W. Rus. "On the Matter of Propaganda."

best interest to keep the U.S. out of a European war. For the time being, however, the Library was allowed to continue its activities.

The worsening relations between Washington and Berlin caused by a series of incidents, beginning in November 1938 with Kristallnacht, culminated in the closing of the German Library of Information. On June 16, 1941 the Under Secretary of State, Sumner Welles, presented a note to officials of the German Embassy in Washington requesting that the German Consulates throughout the country and organizations affiliated with them (such as the Library, Trans-Ocean and the German Railway and Tourist Agency) be closed. The reason given for this decision was as follows:

It has come to the knowledge of this Government that agencies of the German Reich in this country, including German consular establishments, have been engaged in activities wholly outside the scope of their legitimate duties. These activities have been of an improper and unwarranted character. They render the continued presence in the United States of those agencies and consular establishments inimical to the welfare of this country.¹⁰

Thomsen rejected this decision as "arbitrary and unfounded." Nevertheless, the Consulates and other organizations attached to them, including the German Library, had until July 10, 1941 to comply. The Library had ceased to exist.

¹⁰ Memorandum from Secretary of State to German Charge June 16, 1941. Reprinted in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, Volume II (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 629.

The employees of the Library returned to Germany. For George Sylvester Viereck, an American citizen, the solution was not so easy. Viereck, it will be recalled, had served the Library as editor of *Facts in Review*, as well as in other respects (none of his activities on behalf of the Library were public knowledge). For this work, as well as his affiliation with the publishing house of Flanders Hall and other activities, Viereck was indicted. This was a bizarre ending to the story of the man who most directly influenced the output of the German Library of Information.¹¹ He was convicted of failing to accurately report his activities under the Foreign Agents Registration Act and was sentenced to 8 months to 2 years on each count.¹² However, in March 1943 the Supreme Court threw out his conviction. He was retried in June 1943 and found guilty again. He was sentenced to 1-5 years. At the same time he was tried under the Sedition Act for allegedly promoting insubordination among the U.S. Armed Forces. He was never convicted of this crime, but due to the fact that the trial dragged on from April 1944 to the spring of 1947, Viereck was not granted parole on his Foreign Agent Act conviction until May of that year.¹³

¹¹ Matthias Schmitz, as Heinz Beller before him, had been the nominal head of the German Library. They were administrators, while Viereck did most of the actual work of editing.

¹² The information on the legal battles of Viereck can be found in Neil M. Johnson, *George Sylvester Viereck: German-American Propagandist*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 206-250.

¹³ Viereck wrote letters to the District Court in Washington in order to request parole. He also sent these letters to Senator Langer, requesting his assistance. The letters were unremarkable. For their

The conviction and harassment of Viereck confirmed the fears of the Dies Committee minority report quoted previously. George Viereck was guilty of supporting a vile regime that represented a dire threat to the world. However his support was within the Constitutional boundaries of freedom of speech and his activities had occurred prior to the outbreak of war. In his support and work with Nazi agencies, including the German Library, he was guilty only of associating with a foreign government. One author interpreted Viereck's actions. "The machinations of Viereck, along with those of the Native Fascists, presented a challenge of the first order to a government committed to freedom of speech and political activity, and yet obligated to protect itself against political danger."¹⁴ Viereck undertook his activities because he was convinced that Germany was being unjustly criticized. Unfortunately, he failed to withdraw his support after the truly heinous nature of the Third Reich became visible. While the actions of Viereck were distasteful, the repression of his unpopular viewpoint was the most regrettable feature of the story of the Library.¹⁵

contents see Orin G. Libby Manuscript Collection, Elwyn B. Robinson Department of Special Collections, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota. William Langer Papers, Box 128, Folder 25.

¹⁴ Morris Schonbach, *Native Fascism during the 1930's and 1940's: A Study of its Roots, its Growth, and its Decline* (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis: University of California, 1958), 358.

¹⁵ In addition, much of the evidence against Viereck was obtained without a search warrant. Johnson, p. 224.

Conclusion

Having looked at German policies in the instance of the German Library of Information, what can be said about Nazi propaganda in the United States? First, it seems clear that the Library (and as far as one can generalize, Germany itself) sought chiefly to keep the U.S. from actively involving itself in the war in Europe. The Nazis attempted to do this by issuing pamphlets and *Facts in Review*.

The pamphlets, published throughout the Library's existence, represented limited opportunities to express an opinion independent of Berlin. Independent expression generally was in the preface or conclusion to these works. Even so a clear propaganda line can be found: that Britain's interference on the Continent was responsible for the war. Furthermore, it claimed, England had prolonged the war and expanded it into previously neutral nations (Norway, etc.). All of these actions aimed to deny Germany its place in Europe. Coupled with this was a blind ambition to cripple Germany under the unfair terms of the Versailles Treaty. Along with the disreputable motives of Britain, the German Library of Information emphasized the economic,

military, and cultural strength of Germany. The reason for this two-fold approach is easy to explain. The German Library did not want America actively intervening in the war and sought to convince it not to do so by "exposing" Britain's aims and methods, thereby making alliance with England distasteful. Just as important, it also tried to present Germany as a modern colossus, immune from assault, even from America. Thus the German Library presented United States entry into the conflict as only serving Britain and possibly failing to defeat Germany in the bargain.

Facts in Review also followed that path. In this journal the Library was much freer to express its propagandist opinions than it had been in the translations of official German publications. The weekly, over the course of its run, grew from a sparse four pages in 1939 to almost 40 pages in 1941. Again, and in much greater detail than in the pamphlets, *Facts in Review* repeated the idea of the perfidy of Britain, but emphasized German actions as a new Monroe Doctrine more than the pamphlets had. Certainly the German Library of Information tried to reassure Americans of the non-threatening nature of Nazi Germany, while reminding its readers of the military prowess of the state. The picture presented by *Facts in Review* was similar to the one shown what in the Library's other publications; a presentation of a new Germany, strong in culture, economics and the military arts. This nation, moreover, was currently acting as other

nations had -- in its own interests -- but presented no threat to others, once its Lebensraum had been achieved. It preferred peace, of course, but was prepared to fight, and win, any war forced on it.

Did the German Library achieve the goals for its propaganda campaign? Certainly the Library followed Hitler's basic ideas of broad-based propaganda appeals constantly repeated that did not distinguish between degrees of guilt. In addition, Dr. Thomsen's recommendations were also employed, particularly the emphasis on the negative lessons of American intervention in World War I, and the parallel between Nazi actions in Europe and American actions under the Monroe Doctrine. It also sought to undermine American sympathy for Great Britain by reminding Americans of England's past and present abuses of neutral rights. Thus the Library presented the war to its American readers as an unnecessary event caused by Britain. The United States, by assisting England, would only compromise the application of national self-determination abroad. Moreover, the outcome of the war need not concern its readers, the Library reassured them, because a victorious Third Reich posed no threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere.

Can an assessment be made of how effective the German Library of Information was in its propaganda campaign? The U.S. remained neutral from September 1939 to December 1941, in the face of considerable pressure -- from the British and

increasingly Roosevelt himself -- to join the Allied cause. Roosevelt believed that despite his destroyer deal of 1940 and the Lend-Lease Act of 1941, he could not count absolutely on American public support for active intervention in Europe. Obviously it cannot be assumed that this was the result of Nazi propaganda, let alone that it was due to the influence of the German Library. In the end, Nazi aggression in Poland, France and throughout Europe convinced Americans to oppose Hitler.

The Gallup Polls of the time can provide some insight into the attitude of Americans to the Third Reich. In September 1939 82 percent of Americans polled believed that Germany was responsible for the outbreak of war, while only 3 percent believed that Britain and France were to blame.¹ The best gauge of increasing American animosity towards the Third Reich were the following questions. In October 1939, Americans were asked, "If it appears that Germany is defeating England and France, should the United States declare war on Germany and send our army and navy to Europe to fight?" 71 percent answered no to the question.² In the same month, however, 84 percent of Americans polled wanted the Allies to win the war. The German Library of Information sought to exploit this paradox. Thomsen had acknowledged that American public opinion was against Nazi Germany in 1939.

¹ Dr. George H. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1935-1971. Volume I* (New York: Random House, 1972), 179.

² *Ibid.* p. 186.

He was right. The Library was set up to help change American opinion. Did it succeed?

It is not possible to prove directly that the German Library of Information's propaganda campaign was successful or unsuccessful. The Gallup Polls offered mixed results. On one hand, 76 percent of Americans opposed active entry into the war.³ However, in response to the question, "Would you rather see Britain surrender to Germany than have the United States go into the war?", 62 percent answered no.⁴ While a majority of Americans still opposed U.S. entry into the conflict, a significant shift had occurred in those willing to go to war to save Britain.

What does all of this prove? While the statistics are not conclusive, American opinion of Germany worsened from 1939 to 1941. This cannot be said to have been the fault of the German Library of Information, but clearly Nazi propaganda in the United States failed to shift American public opinion to a more sympathetic view of the Third Reich.

Nazi propaganda and the German Library of Information utilized the ideas examined here in an attempt to reinforce isolationist notions, but it is by no means clear that German propaganda and the German Library of Information decisively aided the spread of this sentiment. The New York Times was clearly unmoved. In April 1941, it pointed out the

³ Ibid. 286.

⁴ Ibid. 282.

contradictions between the Library's appeals for peace and Germany's actions in the Balkans. The newspaper concluded: "The editors of *Facts in Review* are our guests, allowed by our national hospitality to sneer, to insult our friends, to belittle what we hold sacred. It is only fair to do what one can to enlarge the scope of their 'Facts'."⁵

German propaganda in World War II was generally of good quality and the Library was above average. It was somewhat more subdued in manner than most German propaganda; for example, aside from a few reprints of Hitler's speeches, the harangue of hatred against the Jews, so common in Nazi rhetoric, never appears.

The Library was justified in some of its views. The Versailles Treaty was harsh, the Polish Corridor was a denial of German national self-determination, and the British did violate Norwegian neutrality. To these examples can be added the British treatment of the people of its Empire (especially in India) and the similarity between of Germany's expansionist desires and the American use of the Monroe Doctrine. In its propoganda campaign the German Library struck many sparks. These sparks never burst into flame, as most Americans realized that no matter how polished the arguments, German propoganda, as represented by the German

⁵ New York Times April 27, 1941 Section 4, p 10 "'Facts' and Facts."

Library of Information, was based on half-truths and lies and only served as a facade for a vile repressive regime.

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