

Empire and National Character:
British Imperialism in Books from the “Third Reich”

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Abstract

This thesis examines the variety of representations and rhetorical deployments of the theme of British Imperialism within books published in the “Third Reich”. The thesis considers these books not only as vehicles for particular ideas and arguments but also as consumer objects and therefore as the product of a series of compromises between the needs of a host of actors, both official and commercial. It further traces the origins of the component parts of these texts via the history of reuse of images and extracts and by identifying earlier examples of particular tropes of “Englishness” and the British Empire.

British imperial history was a rich source of material for National Socialist writers and educators to draw on and lent itself to a wide variety of arguments. Britain could be, in turns, a symbol of “Nordic” strength, a civilisation in decline, a natural ally and protector of Germany, or a weak, corrupt, outdated entity, controlled by Germany’s supposed enemies. Drawing on a long tradition of comparing European colonial records, the British Empire was also used as a benchmark for Germany’s former imperial achievements, particularly in moral arguments regarding the treatment of indigenous populations.

Through its focus on books, which were less ephemeral than media such as newspaper and magazine articles, radio broadcasts or newsreels, the thesis demonstrates how newer writings sought to recontextualise older material in the light of changing circumstances. Through managing the context in which earlier British and Anglophile material was read, doubt could be cast on the integrity of such views and on the trustworthiness of what was styled as the “English national character”. This demonisation of Britain through her imperial record became a key focus of Anglophobic books published in Germany during the Second World War.

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Introduction

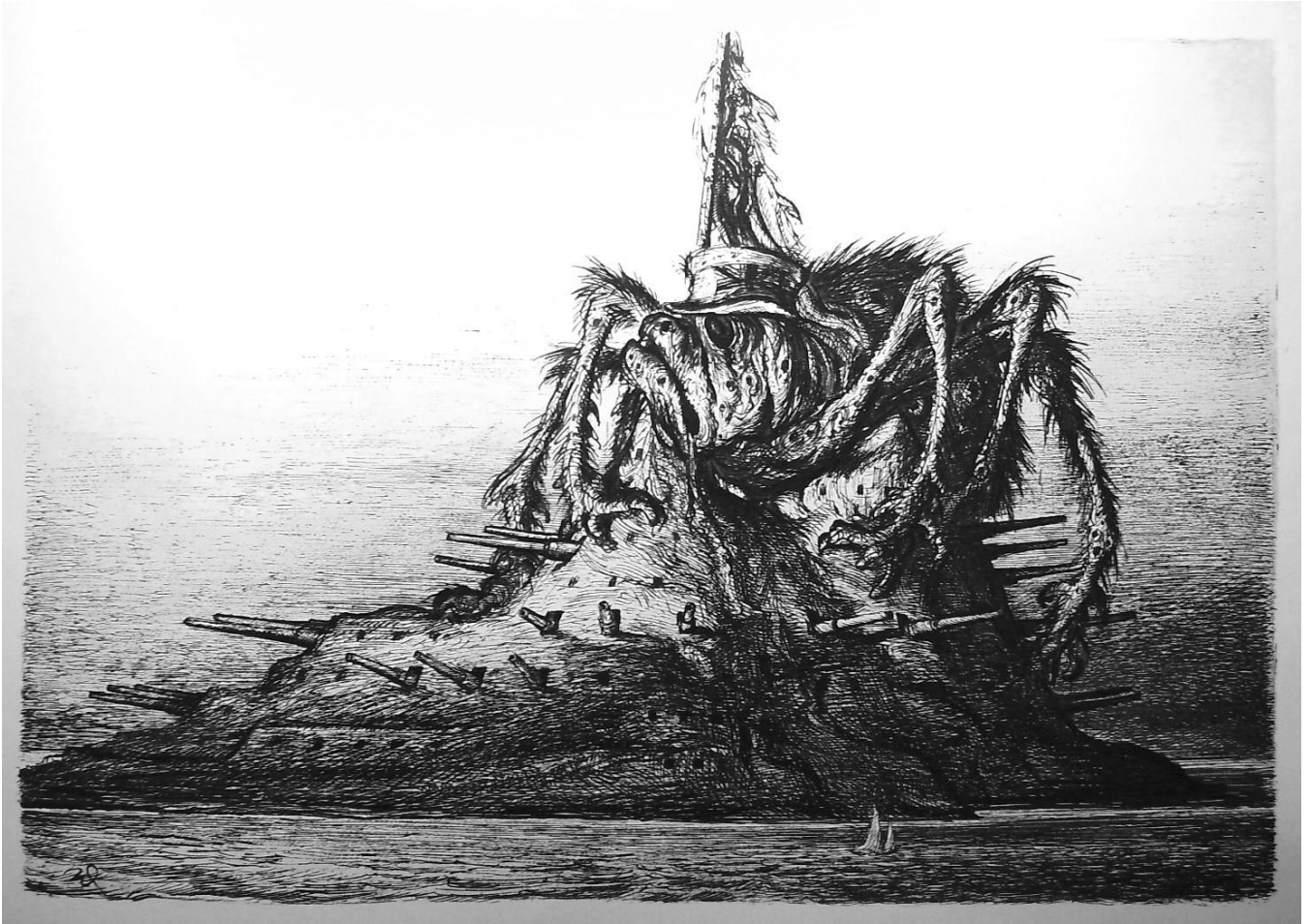


Figure 1: *Die Totengräber kleine Nationen* (1941), image 6.

The above image is from the set “Britische Bilder” by artist A. Paul Weber, which was printed as a book in 1941 under the title *Die Totengräber kleiner Nationen* (“The Gravediggers of Small Nations”). The accompanying text, which is unattributed but almost certainly not written by Weber, is printed in German, French and English. The caption for this picture, given the heading “Gibraltar” in German and French, and “The Monster of Gibraltar” in English, is worth quoting in full:

War against weaker nations has invariably constituted England’s master-stroke. In 1704 Spain was no longer the world power she had been in former days. England, on the other hand, already had her spoils in India, her interests in Africa, and her intentions in the Mediterranean. Gibraltar formed an essential part of those intentions. The British ambassador Richard Hill wrote to Admiral Rooke that Gibraltar was not worth less to England than was Scotland. The 1800 soldiers who conquered Gibraltar for England consisted mainly of a Dutch “auxiliary corps.” Immediately after the conquest the English proceeded to reconstruct the ancient fortress which they henceforth regarded as a “national property of the English.”

This claim was confirmed by the Peace of Utrecht in 1713. All the efforts made by Spain to recover this part of her territory have invariably failed, and England is in a position to announce at all times that she has the “key to the Mediterranean” in her pocket.

Image and text together draw on long-standing resentment within Europe against particular aspects of British foreign policy, seen as imperialist in nature. Yet the strength of revulsion conveyed by the image, and the detail in the text, point to a perceived need to remind the audience of this history.

The choice of a spider is a common one in anti-British illustrations from the Second World War and earlier conflicts. A solitary animal which preys on whatever passes by building disruptive webs, it is an apt symbol for the type of rapacious, unconstructive imperialism often attributed to Britain.¹ The fortress in Weber’s drawing is bristling with guns but is otherwise a featureless mound, devoid of any signs of human creativity or expertise, and ominously overshadows the small sailing boat passing beneath. The choice of spider also arises from and comments on features of British foreign policy, which relied on maintaining control over key transportation routes. The spider would usually be shown dominating a map or globe, merging geographical fact with propagandistic metaphor in a way which manipulates pre-existing knowledge and seeks to permanently alter the audience’s perception of those factual foundations.

In the six years of uneasy peace between Nazi Germany and Britain, the German public had access, through bookshops, libraries and school English lessons, to a range of material which purported to promote understanding between the two peoples, and especially to explain those features of the “English character” which had built and secured the British Empire. However, these were not works of uncritical admiration but also a vehicle for comparison between Britain and the “new” Germany, as well as for raising doubts about the sustainability of Britain’s system of imperial rule and her intentions towards Germany. The double-page maps of the British Empire found in many German books on the subject created a paradox in that they were simultaneously an inducement to emulation and a demonstration of its impossibility. To any armchair colonial enthusiast it would be clear that

¹ Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 2001) pp.27-30.

there was barely a zone of operation left on the globe which was not within the British sphere of influence. A change of perspective would be all that was needed to turn a relatively objective map of trade routes (such as the one in Figure 2, below) into a vast spider's web, jealously guarded from London.

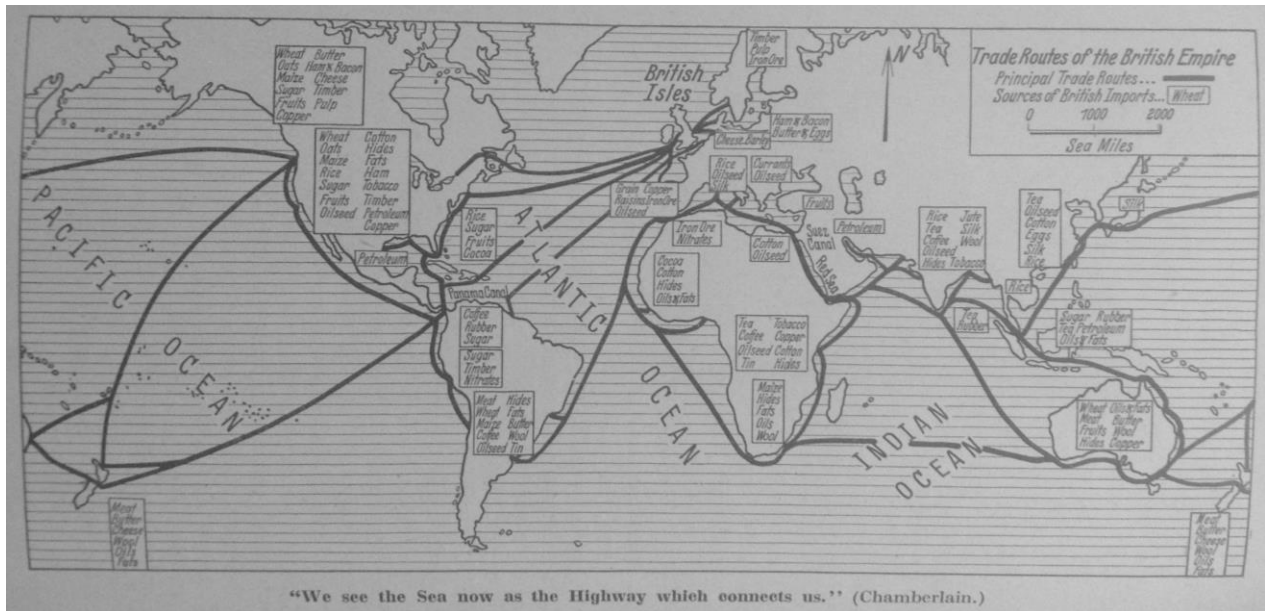


Figure 2: *Heralds of British Imperialism* (1938) p.22

The publication of Weber's anti-British works as a book also illustrates the complexity of the question of artistic and academic collaboration with the Nazi regime. Over the course of his long career, Weber directed his satirical cartoons against a wide range of targets, internal and external, during the Weimar, Nazi and post-war eras. His illustrations for Ernst Niekisch's 1931 pamphlet *Hitler: ein deutsches Verhängnis* and his depictions of the horror and destructiveness of conflict earned him a post-war reputation as a resistance figure. In this interpretation, even the works which earned him praise under National Socialism contained hidden warnings and criticism of the regime. However, this legacy has been called into question by studies which point to his nationalist politics and many anti-Semitic drawings.² The topic of British imperialism allowed for the deployment of

² Claire Aslangul, 'L'artiste Andreas Paul Weber entre national-bolchevisme, nazisme et antifascisme: Image, mémoire, histoire' in *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 99 (2008), pp. 160-187; Thomas Dörr, "Mühsam und so weiter, was waren das für Namen..." *Zeitgeist und Zynismus im nationalistisch-anti-semitischen Werk des Graphikers A. Paul Weber* (Bonn, 2000).

many voices, German and foreign, modern and historical, whose stated opinions on other subjects were not in keeping with National Socialist messages. Weber's case is just one example of this. The explanatory text for Weber's drawing provides an example of how economically the triangular relationship between the British Empire, British policies towards Europe, and a posited "English national character" could be expressed. These three elements were at the heart of the German anti-British stereotype propagated during the Second World War and were easily conveyed through the narration of events from British imperial history. In this case, the description of Britain's acquisition of Gibraltar conveys the extent of Britain's imperial holdings at the time, the "divide and conquer" tactics of using one European country's troops against another in order to increase Britain's power in Europe, and the arrogance which drives the British to "announce at all times" that they now have control over the Mediterranean. Each of these three elements invoked a long history of European resentment against British "perfidy", and books such as *Britische Bilder* used British imperial history as a bountiful source of examples which "proved" the stereotype.

This triad of concepts within German books, the variety of sources and rhetorical strategies used to convey them, and the many, often contradictory uses to which they were put, form the basis of this thesis. The central questions are these: Firstly, how did British self-projection and National Socialist perceptions of the British interact within books on Britain and the British Empire which were available to readers in the Third Reich? Secondly, what techniques were employed by authors, publishers, reviewers and officials to incorporate pre-existing material into arguments which served immediate needs, particularly during the shift from appeasement to enmity? Finally, what do these interactions and manipulations suggest about the intersection of the aims of Third Reich "propagandists" and the concerns of their audiences, and ability of the subject of British imperialism to accommodate these?

In one sense, the meanings of "British Empire" and "British imperialism" in the "Third Reich" are easy to determine. In contrast to the vision of a contiguous pan-Germanic entity conjured by the

term German *Reich*, the British *Weltreich* (“world empire”) was a confusing collection of colonies, dominions, protectorates, outposts and zones of occupation, some with their own governments, others governed from London. British imperialism was, then, the combination of policies and tactics which lay behind the growth of the British Empire.³ However, as will be shown in this thesis, the complexity of British imperial history and the variety of Britain’s interests and entanglements across the globe meant that a wide range of political, economic and cultural practices could be characterised as imperialist. At the same time, this particular constellation of imperialist mentalities was seen as a cornerstone of the “English national character”, which in turn determined Britain’s interactions with other countries, particularly her European neighbours. Britain’s island location meant that in many ways the British Empire and British imperialism were for German observers studies in what Germany could have experienced, had she not been bordered on so many sides by hostile and fractious nations. Emulation could therefore only be achieved once Germany was secure within her own borders, directly linking colonial aspirations with pan-Germanism in Europe.

One context within which German attitudes to the British Empire and British colonialist practices can be set is the extensive historical literature on German colonialism and German attitudes to colonialism generally. Links between genocidal practices in Europe’s colonial past and in the Third Reich were drawn within a decade of the end of the Second World War, when Hannah Arendt’s *Origins of Totalitarianism* cast European colonialism as a 'laboratory' for Nazi genocide.⁴ Attempts to integrate the two fields of study - occupation and genocide in the East, and previous colonial projects outside of Europe - were largely side-lined for several decades, except where they could contribute to a post-colonial analysis of the effects of Western orientalism or Marxist theories of the usefulness of imperial projects to domestic politics.⁵ Where the idea has been taken up, particularly

³ An explanatory note in the school textbook *Herald of British Imperialism* is typical in that it traces the origins of British imperialism to the late Tudor period and a combination of state-sponsored trade and piracy with a Puritan belief that the English were “God’s own people”: Max Spatzier (ed.), *Heralds of British Imperialism* (Leipzig, 1938) p.57.

⁴ Hannah Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951).

⁵ Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Bismarck und der Imperialismus* (Cologne, 1969); W.J. Mommsen, *Theories of Imperialism* (Chicago, 1982).

in more philosophical works, discussion has been very much detached from the mechanisms by which such attitudes – the imperialist tradition itself – may have been transferred. For example, Aimé Césaire's *Discourses on Colonialism* talks of European society being 'poisoned' by its acceptance of colonial brutality, brutality which comes to take its revenge in the figure of Hitler; in this way all colonisers shared some responsibility for the existence of Nazism, due to the elements of it which they had tolerated when it suited them:

People are surprised, they become indignant [...] they hide the truth from themselves [...] that it is Nazism, yes, but that before they were its victims, they were its accomplices; that they tolerated that Nazism before it was inflicted on them, that they absolved it, shut their eyes to it, legitimized it, because, until then, it had been applied only to non-European peoples.⁶

Establishing clearer lines of continuity from Germany's overseas empire to the Holocaust has been a key "point of orientation" for studies of German imperialism.⁷ Until relatively recently, Germany's colonial history had largely been treated as an exception to the European norm and restricted to studies of the short-lived German overseas empire.⁸ More recent work has shown the many ways in which racial politics in the occupied East displayed parallels with various colonial projects.⁹ Ongoing debates centre on the level of continuities and definitions of genocide, specific techniques as well as exterminationist rhetoric. There has also been a wealth of studies exploring Germans' encounters with and reactions to the wider world, outside of the bounds of formal

⁶ Aimé Césaire, *Discourses on Colonialism* (London, 1972), p.14.

⁷ Todd Weir 'Between Colonial Violence and Socialist Worldview: The Conversions of Ernst Däumig' in *German History* 28/2 (2010) pp.143-166, here p.149.

⁸ W.O. Henderson, *Studies in German Colonial History* (London, 1962); a comparative approach is provided by Prosser Gifford, W.M. Roger Louis and Alison Smith (eds.), *Britain and Germany in Africa: Imperial Rivalry and Colonial Rule* (London, 1967); For an overview of the main features of the German overseas empire and its political repercussions see Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History* (Cambridge, 2008); Matthew Jeffries, *Contesting the German Empire, 1871 – 1918* (Oxford, 2008).

⁹ Jürgen Zimmerer, 'The birth of the *Ostland* out of the spirit of colonialism: a postcolonial perspective on the Nazi policy of conquest and extermination' *Patterns of Prejudice* 39/2 (2005) pp.197-219; Zimmerer, 'Colonialism and the Holocaust' in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Genocide and Settler Society* (Oxford, 2004) pp.49-76; Pascal Grosse, 'What does German Colonialism have to do with National Socialism? A Conceptual Framework' in Eric Ames, Marcia Klotz and Lora Wildenthal (eds.), *Germany's Colonial Pasts* (Lincoln, 2005) pp.115-134; Birthe Kundrus, 'From the Herero to the Holocaust? Some Remarks on the Current Debate' *Africa Spectrum* 40/2 (2005), pp. 299-308; Marcia Klotz, 'Global Visions: From the Colonial to the National Socialist World' *The European Studies Journal* 16/2 (1999); Shelley Baranowski, *Nazi Empire: German Colonialism and Imperialism from Bismark to Hitler* (Cambridge, 2011); David Ciarlo, 'Globalising German Colonialism' in *German History* 26/2 (2008) pp.117-43; Isabell Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, 2005).

imperialism, and their contributions to academic and practical endeavours as part of national and international collaborations. Collectively these works have identified many of the ways in which knowledge and practices were, over several centuries, transported from Arendt's colonial "laboratory" back to Germany.¹⁰

A second strand of research on the German "imperial imagination" has been undermining the idea that the relative lack of formal, national empire-building meant that imperialism and knowledge of the wider world had any less of an impact on German culture.¹¹ Susanne Zantop, for example, has shown how the German reading public from the late seventeenth century onwards had a voracious appetite for travelogues and colonial fiction, which gave them an "illusion of participation" in world affairs. At the same time, this perceived lack of real involvement in the colonial crimes of other European states meant that Germans could position themselves morally as the ideal colonisers, as being capable of a more harmonious relationship with other races, taking on a more paternalistic role than other colonial peoples. Once a unified Germany acquired colonies of her own, the more direct colonial experiences were quickly incorporated into school curricula, popular culture, plans for the improvement of the nation's youth (through organisations in part modelled on Britain's Boy Scouts), and into commercial advertising.¹² Although news, experiences and material goods from

¹⁰ Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race and Scholarship* (Cambridge, 2009); Russel Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (Lincoln NE, 1998) and George Steinmetz, *The Devil's Handwriting: Precoloniality and the German Colonial State in Qingdao, Samoa and Southwest Africa* (Chicago, 2007); Willy Buschack, 'Deutsche und britische Gewerkschafter reisen 1926/27 durch Indien' *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* 22/1 (2011) pp.86-111; Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, *Liberal imperialism in Germany: expansionism and nationalism, 1848-1884* (New York, 2008); Kris Manjapra, *Age of Entanglement: German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire* (London, 2014); Christine Johnson, *The German Discovery of the World: Renaissance Encounters with the Strange and Marvelous* (Charlottesville, 2008).

¹¹ For an overview see the forum: 'The German Colonial Imagination' *German History* 26/2 (2008) pp.251-271; Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (London, 1997); Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox & Susanne Zantop, *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor, 1998); Birthe Kundrus, "Phantasiereiche". *Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003); Kamakshi P. Murti, 'Germany's "Orient": Discursive Alliances of the Philosopher, Historian, and Fiction Writer' in Rajan Balachandra & Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Imperialisms: Historical and Literary Investigations, 1500 – 1900* (Hampshire, 2004) pp.219 – 235; Azzedine Haddour, *Colonial Myths: History and Narrative* (Manchester, 2000).

¹² Jeff Bowersox, *Raising Germans in the Age of Empire: Youth and Colonial Culture, 1871-1914* (Oxford, 2013); David Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire: Race and Visual Culture in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge MA, 2010); Thaddeus Sunseri, 'Exploiting the Urwald: German Post-Colonial Forestry in Poland and Central Africa, 1900-1960' *Past and Present* 214/1 (2012) pp.305-342; Dorothea Siegle, "Trägerinnen echten Deutschtums" *Die Koloniale Frauenschule Rendsburg* (Neumünster, 2004).

Germany's colonies contributed to this explosion in imperial culture within Germany, the actual existence of an overseas empire was not a prerequisite and these educational, recreational and advertising practices continued into post-colonial Germany.¹³

This imagined experience as “good” colonists helped to fuel the feelings of disgrace and affront when Germany's colonies were confiscated after the First World War. The indignant reaction against the "colonial guilt lie" resonated throughout the inter-war period in a similar way to the "war guilt lie". At the same time, the “patriarchal race-gender model” which had been created in these pre-colonial sources was resurrected in the rose-tinted German histories of their short-lived colonial exploits which emerged post-Versailles:

...through the narration of excess committed by others they facilitated the so-called German 'colonial legend' (*Koloniallegende*) in the early twentieth century that rehabilitated the Germans as the better colonizers and became the centrepiece of colonial propaganda after 1919. These precolonial fantasies, in other words, had an enormous power over later German colonial practice, by creating a sense of moral superiority and a sense of speciality in the German colonizer and pre-scripted the colonial encounter as a cross-cultural, cross-racial, and cross-gender romance.¹⁴

These fantasies gave Germans a potential identity as past and future empire-builders, and as current victims of imperialism; all three elements were used as part of the National Socialist promise to undo the effects of the Treaty of Versailles and “return” Germany to an (ill-defined) golden age.¹⁵ The past vision, which served to identify Germany's future potential, could be invoked by medieval or pre-World War One images. The distance between this and Germany's current situation was a call to action. Britain's history, and that of other imperial nations, was scrutinised for relevant reasons for its success, as well as for strengths and weaknesses as rivals.

¹³ Volker M. Langbehn (ed.), *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory* (Abingdon, 2010).

¹⁴ Sabine Wilke, 'The Colonial Pedagogy of Imperial Germany: Self-Denial in the Interest of the Nation' in Balachandra and Sauer (eds.) *Imperialisms* pp.237 – 54.

¹⁵ Woodruff D. Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (Oxford, 1986); Britta Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany: Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford, 2014); Karsten Linne, *Deutschland jenseits des Äquators? Die NS-Kolonialplanungen für Afrika* (Berlin, 2008); Willeke Sandler, 'Here Too Lies Our Lebensraum: Colonial Space as German Space' in Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach (eds.), *Heimat, Region, and Empire: Spatial Identities Under National Socialism* (Houndmills, 2012) pp.148-165; Andrew J. Crozier, *Appeasement and Germany's Last Bid for Colonies* (London, 1988).

German stories about British colonial crimes could serve an obvious legitimatory purpose for the Nazi regime. However work by Claudia Koonz and others has shown that concepts of morality, virtue and justice were central to the appeal and functionality of National Socialism.¹⁶ In this context, the colonial records of other countries, particularly Britain and France, proved to be a rich source of criticism which could be used to deflect blame from outside with accusations of hypocrisy.¹⁷ Furthermore, by adopting the loosest possible definition of British imperialism and incorporating elements such as the deployment of non-European troops in Europe during the First World War and for the post-war occupation of Germany, Britain's history contributed to the casting of the Nazi project as a subaltern uprising against imperial oppression.¹⁸ In particular, the work of A. Dirk Moses, Alon Confino and Mark Mazower has shown that Jews became the most 'urgent' racial target for the Nazis because by viewing them as the fulcrum of a global anti-German conspiracy, they adopted the rhetorical position of an oppressed people, rising up against the illegitimate rule of a nebulous colonial power.¹⁹ By invoking Britain's history of imperial expansion at the expense of European rivals, supposedly achieved through a foreign policy which pitted countries against one another to maintain a "balance of power" in Europe, readers at home and abroad were shown a second face of imperial subjugation.

The history of Anglo-German relations in the first half of the 20th century has been one of a dual failure; a failure by Britain to correctly assess and neutralise a threat, and a failure by Germany -

¹⁶ Claudia Koonz, *The Nazi Conscience* (London, 2003); Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁷ Paul Moore, '“And What Concentration Camps Those Were!”: Foreign Concentration Camps in Nazi Propaganda, 1933-9' *Journal of Contemporary History* 45/3 (2010) pp.649-674.

¹⁸ Julia Roos, 'Nationalism, Racism and Propaganda in Early Weimar Germany: Contradictions in the Campaign against the 'Black Horror on the Rhine'' *German History* 31/1 (2012) pp.45-74; Sander Gilman, *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (Boston, 1982); Tina M. Campt, 'Converging Specters of an Other Within: Race and Gender in pre-1945 Afro-German History' in Patricia Mazón and Reinhild Steingröver (eds.) *Not so Plain as Black and White: Afro-German Culture and History 1890-2000* (Rochester NY, 2005) pp.82-106.

¹⁹ Alon Confino, 'A World Without Jews: Interpreting the Holocaust' *German History* 27/4 pp.531-59; A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York, 2008); Moses, 'The Fate of Blacks and Jews: A Response to Jeffrey Herf' *Journal of Genocide Research*, 10/2 (2008) pp. 276 – 281; Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London, 2009).

both *Kaiserreich* and Third Reich - to anticipate Britain's declaration of war or to defeat her. There has therefore been a natural tendency within the historiography to focus on aspects of those failures; on misunderstandings, mis-steps, miscalculations, and - in the case of Hitler and the Nazi regime - on the dogmatic wrong-headedness of their world view. Similarly, studies of the functioning of the Third Reich, in particular its mechanisms of control and indoctrination, have primarily sought to explain how this false view of the world could have taken such a hold over so many people and how the true situation could have been so effectively kept from them to ensure their continued cooperation.

Until the late 1980s, interest in Anglo-German relations during the Nazi period remained purely in the realm of diplomatic and political histories, which aimed to establish Britain's precise role in Hitler's foreign policy.²⁰ The cultural basis for the leader's assumptions about how Britain would react to his policies were not examined, even though it was acknowledged that his decisions were based at least partly on misplaced assumptions and "emotional" wish for an alliance. Instead, the schools of thought which emerged during the 1960s and early 1970s on Britain's role in Hitler's plans formed part of the debates surrounding the relative levels of planning and pragmatism which determined Third Reich policies. The first position holds that Hitler was essentially opportunistic and reacted to events as they arose, usually prioritising domestic matters over foreign policy.²¹ According to this view, it was the haphazard nature of his expansion plans which caused Hitler's view to change from wanting an emotionally inspired alliance with Britain, to developing an actively hostile policy from 1937 onwards. The second school of thought looks mainly to Hitler's aims as set out in *Mein Kampf* and his unpublished *Second Book*, and focusses largely on Hitler's

²⁰ The developments are summarised in Andreas Hillgruber, 'England's Place in Hitler's Plans for World Dominion', *Journal of Contemporary History* vol.9 (1974) pp.5-22; see also Josef Henke, *England in Hitlers politischem Kalkül 1935-39* (Boppard am Rhein, 1973); Gerhard L. Weinberg, 'Hitler and England, 1933-1945: Pretense and Reality,' *German Studies Review* 8 (1985) pp.299-309; Norbert Wiggenshaus, *Der deutsch-englische Flottenvertrag vom 18. Juni 1935* (Bonn, 1972); Hermann Graml, *Hitler und England. Ein Essay zur nationalsozialistischen Außenpolitik 1920 bis 1940* (Munich, 2010).

²¹ Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (London, 1952); Martin Broszat, 'Soziale Motivation und Führer-Bindung des Nationalsozialismus', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 18/4 (1970) pp.392-409;

plans for Europe; in this view, Hitler planned to use an alliance with Britain to neutralise any threat from France, in order to safely carve out a German empire at the expense of Eastern Europe and Russia.²² The third view identifies clear long-term foreign policy aims, which had remained consistent since the late 1920s, and which were global in scope. Not only does this allow for consideration of the entry of the United States into the Second World War, it also incorporated the question of the return of Germany's former colonies as a political priority.

All three of these theories are attempts to reconcile the discrepancies in Hitler's public views and policy decisions concerning Britain. It is widely accepted that at least some of the changes in policy were due to misconceptions about Britain's own foreign policy aims and, specifically, whether British politicians would be ready to go to war over the balance of power in Europe, even if this did not directly threaten the Empire. At the same time, the development and eventual failure of the Nazi regime's negotiations with the British government needed to be conveyed to the German public in ways which placed the blame solely on Britain and which assumed Germany's victory. In this way, German conceptions of Britain's "national character", her relations with Europe, and the importance and stability of different areas of the British Empire were central to the formulation and public promotion of Hitler's policies. These assumptions were in part determined by perceptions of Britain which had their cultural roots decades, if not centuries, before.

The history of Anglo-German "entanglements" involves the interaction of formal relations and cultural transfer, the development of intellectual and business networks and the assessment of the other country in each other's press, publishing and other media.²³ The early consolidation of England and later Great Britain as a state and the long tradition of parliamentary democracy meant that Britain attracted much interest from German thinkers looking for a model for a future unified

²² Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Hitlers Kriegziele' *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1960; Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View: A Blueprint for Power* (London, 1972); Dietrich Aigner, *Das Ringen um England. Die öffentlichen Meinung, 1933 - 1939. Tragödie zweier Völker* (Munich and Esslingen, 1969).

²³ The term has been borrowed from Kris Manjappa's *Age of Entanglement*.

Germany.²⁴ The writings of German visitors assessed British institutions but also identified cultural peculiarities, for example Karl Philipp Moritz's observations of London life and, eight decades later, Theodor Fontane's accounts of his travels in England and Scotland.²⁵ In these portrayals, the characteristics under examination were usually attributed to England and the English, whose culture, habits and philosophy of rule were seen as dominating the British Isles and the British Empire. In *Aufklärung und Anglophilie in Deutschland* Michael Maurer identifies the following positive associations held by the German elite about England: the quality of English literature (particularly Shakespeare and the English novel); political and economic institutions; political freedom leading to mass participation and strong sense of citizenship; individualism tempered by patriotism; a tolerant, secular society; and advancements in science and agriculture.²⁶ Some intellectuals also identified historical and ethnic bonds between the English and Germans and it was thought that various German states would benefit from following Britain's example in many areas. However, there was also criticism of English materialism and the lack of government intervention to improve the situation for the poor, as well as sub-standard schools, continuation of child labour, and gaps in cultural achievements, especially music. In this construction of England as a positive albeit imperfect model, contrasts with France were important. English stolidity and sense of "fair play" represented an alternative to the perceived affectedness and insincerity of French culture.²⁷ Gerwin Strobl, for instance, has highlighted the tendency in the Weimar era to look for friendship with Britain in the light of French hostility.²⁸

While improvements in transport and communication links facilitated the strengthening of networks

²⁴ Gerhard Müller-Schwefe, *Deutsche erfahren England: Englandbilder der Deutschen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 2007); Charles McClelland, *The German Historians and England: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Views* (Cambridge, 1971); S.S. Prawer, *Frankenstein's Island: England and the English in the writings of Heinrich Heine* (Cambridge, 1986); Stefan Berger, Peter Lambert & Peter Schuman (eds.), *Historikerdialoge: Geschichte, Mythos und Gedächtnis im deutsch-britischen kulturellen Austausch 1750-2000* (Göttingen, 2003).

²⁵ Karl Philipp Moritz, *Reisen eines Deutschen in England im Jahre 1782* (1783); Theodor Fontane, *Ein Sommer in London* (1854); *Aus England, Studien und Briefe* (1860); *Jenseit des Tweed, Bilder und Briefe aus Schottland* (1860).

²⁶ Michael Maurer, *Aufklärung und Anglophilie in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 1987).

²⁷ Maiken Umbach, *German Cities and Bourgeois Modernism 1890-1924* pp.169-171.(Oxford, 2009).

²⁸ Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000).

and the exchange of information between the Germans and the British, they also allowed for a detailed discussion of difference as national identities were forged in opposition to others. This growing tension between international cooperation and competitive nationalism came to a head in the decades following the newly unified Germany's entry into the colonial sphere. While, as mentioned above, Germans had been active in the colonial projects of other nations for several centuries as explorers, merchants and technical experts, the formalisation of these activities under a national banner recast a collaborative European project as rivalry between imperial powers. Since the establishment of English and French studies on school curricula in the middle of the nineteenth century and the growth in status of this joint discipline at universities, explanations of the English language and of "English" writings and thought also became vehicles for a comparison of supposedly national traits, as well as introducing German schoolchildren to British military and colonial heroes.²⁹ Readers could also learn about Britain through the translated British fiction which formed part of German popular culture. Via a new sub-genre of science fiction, the "future war" narrative, writers from both countries imagined the outcome of a great war between Britain and Germany (in some combination with France, Russia, the United States and other states). These stories combined strategic and technological information with fears about decline in military strength and short-sighted leadership, intersecting with debates in the press and even in government.³⁰

When that "great war" arrived, centuries of negative associations crystallised into a set of anti-British stereotypes. In his examination of newspaper articles, periodicals and aspects of popular culture during the First World War, Matthew Stibbe concludes that Anglophobia was not a spontaneous outburst of feeling caused by the "spirit of 1914" but rather it had deep roots in

²⁹ Roland Schopf, *England und die Engländer in Schulbüchern des Kaiserreichs und der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990); Frank-Rutger Hausmann, *Anglistik und Amerikanistik im „Dritten Reich“* (Frankfurt am Main, 2003); Klaus Scheunemann, *Der Blick von außen: Die Darstellung von "Englishness" und ihre Funktionalisierung in deutschen Geschichten englischer Literatur* (Göttingen, 2009); Berny Sèbe, *Heroic imperialists in Africa: The promotion of British and French colonial heroes, 1870-1939* (Manchester, 2013).

³⁰ I.F. Clarke, *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914* (Liverpool, 1995); Daniel Stashower, *Teller of Tales: The Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (London, 2000).

imperialist rivalries and in particular outrage-inducing incidents such as the Boer War.³¹ These themes were then taken up and incorporated into the war aims and propaganda after war was declared in 1914. Anglophobia shared characteristics with Anti-French and anti-Polish feelings, while also having some unique characteristics of its own, and was part of much broader trends, such as the Pan-German League's critique of cosmopolitan modernity throughout the early twentieth century.

A small number of studies have attempted to examine Anglo-German relations and perceptions during the 1930s from a wider perspective than that of Hitler and other politicians.³² In his examination of the writings of historians and other German intellectuals on the British Empire, Benedikt Stuchtey identifies a common thread of conservative nationalism and a preoccupation with "the supposed glory of imperial expansion" which endured throughout the Weimar and Third Reich eras.³³ He also identifies the explanatory power accorded to the "English worldview" and the role it was granted by J.R. Seeley and other "new imperialist" thinkers. In the 1920s, the British Empire was at the peak of expansion, which for adherents of Oswald Spengler's highly influential *The Decline of the West* meant that it was on the brink of decline. Stuchtey demonstrates how Britain's past strengths and frequent but localised crises were used to form lessons about Germany's place in world history. Gerwin Strobl identifies a similar fascination for the British Empire in National Socialist writings and attributes this largely to the way in which it symbolised power.³⁴ Drawing on a wide range of books and periodicals, Strobl identifies many positive lessons which "the Nazis" as a whole appeared to take from British history and culture, and draws a direct line from this to

³¹ Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War*; see also Keith Wilson, *The International Impact of the Boer War* (New York, 2001); Gerhard Ritter and Peter Wende, *Rivalität und Partnerschaft: Studien zu den deutsch-britischen Beziehungen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Paderborn, 1999); Jan Rüger, *The Great Naval Game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge, 2007).

³² Dietrich Aigner, *Das Ringen um England. Die öffentliche Meinung, 1933 - 1939. Tragödie zweier Völker* (Munich, 1969); Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000); Benedikt Stuchtey, 'World Power and World History: Writing the British Empire, 1885-1945' in Benedikt Stuchtey and Eckhardt Fuchs (eds.) *Writing World History 1800-2000* (Oxford, 2003) pp.213-253.

³³ Stuchtey, p.218.

³⁴ Strobl, *The Germanic Isle*.

aspects of the German invasion and occupation of Eastern Europe:

Hitler had long regarded the British Empire as the exemplar for the Third Reich's hoped-for expansion. A central role in this was played by the notion of a peculiar British 'ruthlessness' in war and peace. This concept provided a vital connection between Hitler's imperial aspirations and Nazi racial science, which had been developing separately. Together they formed the core of the Third Reich's perceptions of Britain, and the foundation also for the Nazi's persistent misjudgement of likely British reactions to their policies.³⁵

Strobl further hints at a gulf between elite and popular perceptions regarding the palatability of British imperial "brutality" as a positive model for German expansion and posits that praise for British "ruthlessness" decreased as it became apparent that audiences were not receptive to this message. This thesis takes issue with a homogenising tendency within Strobl's conclusions, and focuses on the diversity and ruptures within these sources. Through a close interrogation of different genres of book, and by tracing the incorporation of British texts and images into these books, this thesis aims to differentiate further between the myriad meanings, associations and uses of the British Empire as a concept within the Third Reich.

In analysing books as vehicles of particular messages about Britain and Britishness, this thesis also draws on a wider literature on written propaganda and book publishing within the Nazi propaganda world. Beginning in the Crimean War and greatly facilitated by the rise of cheap newspapers for a mass audience at the end of the nineteenth century, eyewitness accounts of conflict from war correspondents had brought the front lines to the home population, while letters from soldiers, military experts and concerned citizens were published to create a national forum for the discussion and consumption of wars.³⁶ As part of the total war mobilisation during the First World War, all available forms of media were pressed into service of war aims; on both sides of the conflict,

³⁵ Strobl, pp.223-4.

³⁶ Stefanie Markovits, 'Rushing into Print: "Participatory Journalism" during the Crimean War' *Victorian Studies* 50/4 (2008) pp.559-586; Matthew Farish, 'Modern Witness: Foreign Correspondents, Geopolitical Vision, and the First World War' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26/3 (2001); Stefan Hartwig, *Konflikt und Kommunikation: Berichterstattung, Medienarbeit und Propaganda in internationalen Konflikten vom Krimkrieg bis zum Kosovo* (Münster, 1999).

newspapers and other forms of publishing did their bit to strengthen resolve against the enemy and push for greater efforts to achieve victory, while dissenting voices were officially suppressed.³⁷ An important part of this was the development of enemy stereotypes, which rested on older foundations as well as incorporating new material from accounts of atrocities on and off the battlefield.³⁸ After the war, in the shock of Germany's defeat, one of the explanations which gained cross-party acceptance was the superiority of British "atrocity propaganda" and other forms of mass manipulation. There emerged in Germany and elsewhere a widespread interest in psychological warfare techniques, mass propaganda, and the phenomenon of "public opinion".³⁹ Running parallel to the developments in useful communication, which could be turned to nationalist aims, was an explosion in new forms of popular culture and entertainment, some of which experimented with ways of articulating the horror and upheaval of the war.⁴⁰ These diversions brought with them campaigns to protect vulnerable minds (women and young people) from moral corruption by exposure to unregulated mass media. In the area of German publishing, these took the form of the campaigns against "*Schund und Schmutz*" ("trash" and "filth"); these resulted in legislation bringing in censorship, but also a drive to professionalise publishing and bookselling, and research into reading habits.⁴¹ For many people, the nation's ailments seemed directly linked to the corruption

³⁷ Alice Goldfarb Marquis, 'Words as Weapons: Propaganda in Britain and Germany during the First World War' *Journal of Contemporary History* 13/3 (1978) pp.467-498; Anne Lipp, *Meinungslenkung im Krieg: Kriegserfahrungen deutscher Soldaten und ihre Deutung, 1914-1918* (Göttingen, 2003); David Welch, *Germany and Propaganda in World War I* (London, 2014).

³⁸ Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War*; Eberhard Demm, 'Propaganda and Caricature in the First World War' *Journal of Contemporary History* 28/1 (1993).

³⁹ Jeffrey Verhey, 'Some Lessons of the War. The Discourse on Propaganda and Public Opinion in Germany in the 1920s' in Bernd Hüppauf (ed.), *War, Violence and the Modern Condition* (Berlin, 1997); Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On national trauma, mourning, and recovery* (London, 2003); Jason Crouthamel, *The Great War and German Memory: Society, politics and psychological trauma, 1914-1945* (Exeter, 2009); David Welch argues that the techniques used in Germany were sophisticated but not reactive enough: Welch, *Germany and Propaganda in World War I*, here p.2.

⁴⁰ Bernhard Fulda, *Press and Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Oxford, 2009); Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford University Press 2008); Ross, 'Mass Politics and the Techniques of Leadership: The Promise and Perils of Propaganda in Weimar Germany' *German History* 24/2 (2006) pp. 184-211; Anton Kaes, *Shell Shock Cinema: Weimar Culture and the Wounds of War* (Princeton, 2009).

⁴¹ Margaret F. Stieg, 'The 1926 German Law to Protect Youth against Trash and Dirt: Moral Protectionism in a Democracy' *Central European History* 23/1 (1990); Gideon Reuveni, *Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany before 1933* (Oxford, 2006); Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany*.

and contagion of its culture.

The central role of “propaganda” in the Nazi Party’s rise and consolidation of power has long been accepted, although the methods and actors encompassed by the term have steadily expanded.⁴² In the course of their rise to power and while in government, every form of communication and culture was mobilised to create the “people's community” (*Volksgemeinschaft*) while dissenting voices were excluded from participation.⁴³ National Socialist ideology itself was remarkably fluid; through the manipulation of a wide range of existing symbols, forms of expression and emotional appeals, seemingly contradictory ideas could be combined into overarching messages which appeared on the surface to hold the promise of healing the social divides of the Weimar period.⁴⁴ Instrumental in the maintenance of inner harmony (however bogus) was the perpetuation of war rhetoric, directed against supposed enemies of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. As during the First World War, scandals and atrocity stories were woven together with elements of existing prejudices and the resulting stereotypes were used against political and racial “enemies”, positioning National Socialism and the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a defensive bulwark against those who would destroy Germany and persecute Germans abroad.⁴⁵ To maintain the flexibility of these ideological and cultural battle lines, polemics

⁴² Z.A.B. Zeman, *Nazi Propaganda* (London, 1964); Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945* (Oxford, 1983); *The “Hitler Myth”: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987); Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (London, 1998); Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 2001); Randall L. Bytwerk, *Bending Spines: The Propagandas of Nazi Germany and the German Democratic Republic* (Michigan, 2004); David Welch, *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion* (London, 2013).

⁴³ Erhard Schütz, ‘Das “Dritte Reich” als Mediendiktatur: Medienpolitik und Modernisierung in Deutschland 1933 bis 1945’ *Monatshefte* 87/2 (1995) pp. 129-150; Clemens Zimmermann, *Medien im Nationalsozialismus: Deutschland, Italien, Spanien in der 1930er und 1940er Jahren* (Cologne, 2007) esp. pp.10-25; Georg Bollenbeck, ‘German Kultur, the Bildungsbürgertum, and its Susceptibility to National Socialism’ *The German Quarterly* 73/1 (2000) pp.67-83; Bytwerk, ‘Grassroots Propaganda in the Third Reich: The Reich Ring for National Socialist Propaganda and Public Enlightenment’ *German Studies Review* 33/1 (2010) pp.93-118; Volker Dahm, ‘Nationale Einheit und partikuläre Vielfalt. Zur Frage der kulturpolitischen Gleichschaltung im Dritten Reich’ *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 43/2 (1995), pp. 221-265; Richard Etlin (ed.), *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago, 2002).

⁴⁴ Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler's World View. A Blueprint for Power* (London, 1972); On exclusion and the *Volksgemeinschaft*: Thomas Kuehne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918 – 1945* (New Haven, CT, 2010); Michael Wildt, *Hitler's Volksgemeinschaft and the Dynamics of Racial Exclusion* (Oxford, 2012); Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1984); Jost Hemand, *Der alte Traum vom neuen Reich: völkische Utopien und Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988); Paul Betts, ‘The New Fascination with Fascism: The Case of Nazi Modernism’ *Journal of Contemporary History* 37/4 (2002) pp. 541-558.

⁴⁵ The importance of maintaining a constant state of war is explained in: Philip M. Taylor, ‘Propaganda in international politics, 1919-1939’ in K.R.M. Short (ed.), *Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II* (Knoxville, 1983) pp.17-47; On the demonisation of particular peoples of cultures see: Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge MA, 2006); David B. Dennis, *Inhumanities: Nazi Interpretations of*

from *Mein Kampf* and political speeches, to newspaper articles and non-fiction books, used series of linked oppositions to connect enemies into wider conspiracies.⁴⁶ Once created, these chains of associations could be extended to pull in new enemies, such as Britain in 1939 and later the United States. Put simply, the Jewish-Capitalist-Marxist conspiracy against Germany became a Jewish-Capitalist-Marxist-Anglo-Saxon conspiracy.

To contemporary outside observers, Goebbels was seen as architect and puppet-master of all forms of Nazi propaganda. Research on the topic since then has revealed a vast number of actors from the state to grassroots level as well as the limits to productive cooperation between competing institutions.⁴⁷ At the same time, the audience for this propaganda has been partially rescued from its labelling as a passive audience, and the limits of particular campaigns and strategies are gradually being revealed.⁴⁸ While Goebbels for the most part had the final say in individual cases, in Hitler's name, micro-management of every aspect of publishing and the book trade was not possible and actors at the coal face were left second-guessing and making do with very limited resources.⁴⁹ On the surface, the centralisation, standardisation and coordination of operations which made up the process of *Gleichschaltung* within libraries and professional organisations were achieved swiftly.⁵⁰ Book burnings also conveyed an image of control in this area and were a powerful statement of the

Western Culture (Cambridge, 2012). Florian Odenwald, *Der nazistische Kampf gegen das "Undeutsche" in Theater und Film: 1920-1945* (Munich, 2006).

⁴⁶ Neil Gregor, *How to Read Hitler* (London, 2005).

⁴⁷ Peter Longerich, *Propagandisten im Krieg: Die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop* (Munich, 1987); Reinhard Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner: Zum Machtkampf im nationalsozialistischen Herrschaftssystem* (Stuttgart, 1970); Herbert P. Rothfelder, "'Amt Schrifttumspflege': A Study in Literary Control" *German Studies Review* 4/1 (1981) pp.63-78.

⁴⁸ Welch, (ed.), *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations* (London, 1983); Daniel Mühlenfeld, 'Between State and Party: Position and Function of the Gau Propaganda Leader in National Socialist Leadership' *German History* 28/2 (2010), pp.167-192; 'Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man NS-Propaganda? Neuere Studien zu Medien, Kommunikation und Kultur im Nationalsozialismus' *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 49 (2009) pp.527-59; On the agency and choices of readers in particular: Christian Adam, *Lesen unter Hitler: Autoren, Bestseller, Leser im Dritten Reich* (Berlin, 2010); Anson Rabinbach, 'The Reader, the Popular Novel and the Imperative to Participate: Reflections on Public and Private Experience in the Third Reich' *History and Memory* 3/2 (1991) pp.5-44.

⁴⁹ This dynamic is described with regards to the theatre in Glenn R. Cuomo, "'Saint Joan before the Cannibals": George Bernard Shaw in the Third Reich' in *German Studies Review* 16/3 (1993) pp.435-61.

⁵⁰ Christa Kamenetsky, *Children's Literature in Hitler's Germany* (London, 1984) esp. pp.31-50; Ine van Linthout, *Das Buch in der nationalsozialistischen Propagandapolitik* (Berlin, 2012); Monika Schürmann (ed.), *Literatur und Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich: Der Doberaner Dichtertag 1936-1943* (Rostock, 2003); Kate Sturge, 'Censorship of Translated Fiction in Nazi Germany' *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction* 15/2 (2002) pp.153-169; Holger Dainat and Lutz Danneberg (eds.), *Literaturwissenschaft und Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 2003).

types of book which were now undesirable.⁵¹ However despite attempts from several quarters, no one institution was ever granted or even gained control of the whole field of publishing.⁵² The *Kulturkammer* regulated who could legally be involved in the production and distribution of items of culture; in literature, all German authors, publishers, booksellers etc. had to be members of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* (RSK) in order to carry out their activities.⁵³ Denial of membership or threat of expulsion was a blunt instrument. Especially in the early years of the regime, the RSK were wary of damaging Germany's reputation abroad with overt censorship measures; in their role as mediator between creative and regulatory interests, they were occasionally able to curb the demands of more dogmatic actors.⁵⁴ Several institutions had their own review processes and the amount of pre-publication scrutiny a book underwent varied according to genre and subject matter. Books dealing with National Socialism (and, by extension, most German political matters) had to be submitted to the *Parteiamtliche Prüfungskommission* (PPK), and were supposed to be offered first to the official party publisher, *Franz Eher Nachfolger, Zentralverlag der NSDAP*. Similarly, the *Wehrmacht's* offices checked all books dealing with military matters. Entertaining literature, being closest to the category of "pulp" or "trash" publishing, faced similar pre-publication scrutiny, especially foreign imports.⁵⁵ Outside of these categories of publishing, reviews were undertaken mainly post-publication, indicating a higher level of trust corresponding to the increased difficulties of controlling publications once they reached the market. For reasons of maintaining national prestige and the considerable income from the export market, and the necessity of certain material for training purposes, specialist and scholarly literature faced less pre-publication oversight; reviews

⁵¹ George L Mosse and James W. Jones, 'Bookburnings and the Betrayal of German Intellectuals' *New German Critique* 31 (1984) pp.143-155; Otto Seifert, *Die große Säuberung des Schrifttums* (Schkeuditz, 2000); Leonidas E. Hill, 'The Nazi Attack on Un-German Literature, 1933-1945' in Jonathan Rose, *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation* (Amherst, 2008) pp.9-46.

⁵² The legal basis and operational parameters of the institutions working in this area are detailed in by Jan-Pieter Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich: Institutionen, Kompetenzen, Betätigungsfelder* (Frankfurt am Main, 1991).

⁵³ Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im Dritten Reich*, pp.189-201.

⁵⁴ Bollmus, *Das Amt Rosenberg und seine Gegner: Zum Machtkampf im Nationalsozialistische Herrschaftssystem* (Stuttgart, 1970); Rothfeder, "'Amt Schrifttumspflege": A Study in Literary Control' in *German Studies Review* 4/1 (1981) pp.63-78.

⁵⁵ Sturge, 'Censorship of translated fiction in Nazi Germany'.

would take place mainly with a view to inclusion on various promoted lists, or as a result of complaints, disputes, or otherwise having attracted negative attention. Every operator in this area suffered from budget constraints, meaning that ambitious plans to assess every book in Germany were not realisable. The importance of information meant that "blacklists" were really an effort to create something to refer to, to know what was (had been) happening; regulatory institutions were reliant on the police and Gestapo to actually enact bans. Rather than censoring the publications, authors and contributors were, through incentives and threats, persuaded into self-censorship.

Publishing under National Socialism was, then, characterised by cooperation as well as control. From the point of view of publishers, commercial success required the active support of one or more institutions or official bodies, and so there were economic advantages, as well as peace of mind, to be gained through voluntarily exposing the work to increased scrutiny and the risk of official criticism. It was also of great benefit to publishers and booksellers to gain official advice as to the likely reception of their output. For the regime, too, it was desirable to allow market competition to continue, and resources were devoted to ensuring that the book trade continued to flourish.⁵⁶ As in the Weimar period, the health of this area of culture and learning was tied directly to the health of the nation.⁵⁷ In practice these overlapping, multi-tiered systems were effective at eliminating Jewish and dissenting works, especially if they were well-known and could not evade the various "cleansing" or "weeding" operations indefinitely. However, such an essentially chaotic system of oversight, under the leadership of several warring leaders, was not an instrument capable of codifying or standardising more subtle distinctions within a scholarly subject area, or for enacting sudden changes in policy which might require a re-review of many thousands of books. In

⁵⁶ Siegfried Lokatis, "Kriege gegen England! Aber wie?" Die buchhändlerische Vermarktung des zweiten Weltkrieges im Börsenblatt (1939-1940) in: K. Saur (ed.), *Verlage im "Dritten Reich"* (Frankfurt am Main, 2013); Carsten Würmann, and Angsar Warner, *Im Pausenraum des Dritten Reiches: Zur Populärkultur um nationalsozialistischen Deutschland* (Bern, 2008); see also Waltraud Sennebogen, *Zwischen Kommerz und Ideologie: Berührungspunkte von Wirtschaftswerbung und Propaganda im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich, 2008); Shelley Baranowski, *Strength Through Joy: Consumerism and Mass Tourism in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁵⁷ Expressed in books such as Hellmuth Langenbucher, *Die Welt des Buches: Eine Kunde vom Buch* (Ebenhausen bei München, 1938) p.5.

many cases, action was taken by the authorities due to grassroots complaints and disputes, rather than as the application of a new national policy. Therefore the content of the books examined in this thesis will be treated not as a direct reflection of official views but as the result of a series of compromises and a measure of guesswork on the part of authors and publishers.

Rather than ascribing a dominant role to censorship practices, this thesis will draw from the approach of Monika Renneberg and Mark Walker, who proposed a model in which experts (scientists and engineers) acted alternately as actors, pushing their own research agendas, and tools of larger interest blocs.⁵⁸ Books on Britain and the British Empire were written by authors with a wide range of professional backgrounds, including academics (historians, sociologists, linguists and even archaeologists), journalists, novelists and ex-military officers. Their expertise, when packaged as a book, became a tool of commercial interests, of the agents of party and state who promoted it (or publicly criticised it), and of later authors who cited it, favourably or otherwise. The same model applies to works created outside of the controlled environment of the Third Reich, whether they circulated intact or as extracts, images and references incorporated into other works. The mobilisation of many of these works and the creation of others as part of the return to wartime polemics provides a further opportunity to explore the reconfiguration of the source base and argumentation strategies which defined writings on this topic, especially as part of Germany's "cultural propaganda" efforts aimed at audiences in neutral and occupied countries.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Renneberg & Walker (eds.), *Science, Technology and National Socialism*, pp.1-11; on the use of various types of expertise under National Socialism see: Ingo Haar, *Historiker im Nationalsozialismus. Deutsche Geschichtswissenschaft und der „Volkstumskampf“ im Osten* (Göttingen, 2002); Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 2011); John Connelly and Michael Grüttner, *Universities under Dictatorship* (Pennsylvania, 2005); Bernd Faulenbach, *Ideologie des deutschen Weges. Die deutsche Geschichte in der Historiographie zwischen Kaiserreich und Nationalsozialismus* (Munich, 1980); Bruno Hipler, *Hitlers Lehrmeister: Karl Haushofer als Vater der NS-Ideologie* (St. Ottilien, 1996); Willi Oberkrome, 'German Historical Scholarship under National Socialism' in Wolfgang Bialas and Anson Rabinbach, *Nazi Germany and the Humanities* (Oxford, 2007) pp.207-237; Heike Weber, 'Technikkonzeptionen in der populären Sachbuchliteratur des Nationalsozialismus. Die Werke von Anton Zischka' *Technikgeschichte* 66/3 (1999) pp.205-236.

⁵⁹ Reiner Rutz, *Signal: Eine deutsche Auslandsillustration als Propagandainstrument im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Essen, 2007); Karen Fiss, *Grand Illusion: The Third Reich, the Paris exposition and the cultural seduction of France* (London, 2009); Berna Pekesen, *Zwischen Sympathie und Eigennutz: NS-Propaganda und türkische Presse im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Berlin, 2014) esp. pp.83-100; Marlis G. Steinert, *Hitler's War and the Germans: Public Mood and Attitude During the Second World War* (Ohio, 1977); Frank Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe: Die Truppenbetreuung der Wehrmacht 1939-1945* (Paderborn, 2005).

Research on international “propaganda” techniques, too, has problematised the term to such an extent that its use requires firm justification, and yet no replacement terminology seems apt to describe much of the officially promoted or commissioned cultural and literary output of the Third Reich during the Second World War.⁶⁰ Two main directions of research have overturned the monolithic view of wartime propaganda messages, particularly from totalitarian states, as the undifferentiated voice of the government, delivering crude messages to a passive audience via empty mouthpieces. Firstly, studies of the three main organisations behind German *Auslandspropaganda* have revealed that, far from being controlled by Goebbels as “the arch-priest of Nazi Propaganda”, messages were the product of experimentation and competing approaches involving experts from a variety of professional backgrounds.⁶¹ A second strain of research has looked at the variety of media and techniques employed to convey an evolving set of targeted messages.⁶² Through this closer examination of the many methods of delivery employed by all participating governments, via dozens of semi-autonomous agencies, a model of wartime propaganda has emerged which is more nuanced and reactive than previously assumed. Agents on both sides explored every avenue to find ways to influence public opinion at home and abroad. They produced their own media from leaflets to radio broadcasts to feature films, as well as mobilising grassroots, commercial, artistic and academic forces. As part of this diverse campaign, German institutions expended effort and resources on the promotion of German literary products abroad, in particular via special exhibitions, book fairs, and by encouraging or placing positive

⁶⁰ Taylor calls for the term to fall out of use altogether, even while providing a detailed explanation of why it flourished between the wars: Taylor in Short (ed.), *Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II*, here p.18; see also Mühlenfeld, 'Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man NS-Propaganda? Neuere Studien zu Medien, Kommunikation und Kultur im Nationalsozialismus' pp.527-59.

⁶¹ The description of Goebbels is from Ronald Seth, *The Truth-Benders: Psychological Warfare in the Second World War* (London, 1969); For an organisational breakdown of the foreign propaganda activities of the Auswärtiges Amt, Wehrmacht, and Propaganda Ministry see Longerich, *Propagandisten im Krieg* esp. pp.109-125; Aristotle A. Kallis, *Nazi Propaganda and the Second World War* (Houndmills, 2005).

⁶² Anthony Rhodes, *Propaganda: The Art of Persuasion in World War II* (New York, 1976); Robert Cole, *Britain and the War of Words in Neutral Europe, 1939-45: The Art of the Possible* (New York, 1990); Robert Edwin Herzstein, *The War that Hitler Won: The Most Infamous Propaganda Campaign in History* (New York, 1978); Nicholas John Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign against American “Neutrality” in World War II* (New York, 1995); M.A. Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda: Lord Haw-Haw and British Public Opinion in the Second World War* (Edinburgh, 2000).

reviews in the local press. This multi-media effort was characterised by local initiative supported by the steady production of written materials both by central organisations and industrious entrepreneurs. The disruption of channels of information during both World Wars as well as the increased fear for one's self, business interests and loved ones, meant that there was an insatiable desire among audiences for accurate, up-to-date information. This urge, and its ability to act against public cynicism regarding official messages from both sides, gave readers the ability to shape the messages they were being given, if only through the distorting lens of official forays into audience research and investigations into public opinion and morale.

Longerich has identified the second half of 1941 as a turning point towards significantly more aggressive German propaganda initiatives; with some variations, but essentially the same until the end of the war, was a triad of enemy stereotypes - Bolshevism, Judaism and western plutocracy – portrayed as “extraordinarily threatening” precisely because of their differences.⁶³ In his analysis, the reduction of political arguments against enemy nations to "stereotypical polemic and apportioning blame" meant that the German Foreign Office had little scope to use their "white books" to give foreign propaganda new impetus; until the lull in positive military reports in autumn 1940, they could only reinforce and add variety to messages from other institutions.⁶⁴ In his examination of the international magazine *Signal*, Rainer Rutz points to a similar decrease in useable photographs of German warfare and describes how the slogan "Für Europa" became important early in 1941, as a way to increase the magazine's appeal to a wide, diverse audience in occupied Europe. There was a new emphasis on work being carried out in occupied regions, not only to repair war damage but also to build new infrastructure. The aim was to show that National Socialism was building a better Europe now, whereas the Allies could only promise a better future "after the war". Britain's conception of the "balance of power" and the failed League of Nations were attacked as unsustainable in order to lay the ground for a vision of a German-led lasting

⁶³ Longerich, p.81.

⁶⁴ Longerich, p.77.

peace.⁶⁵

In their attacks on British imperialism many of the anti-British books from the Second World War touch on questions of race relations and self-determination outside of Europe, which raises the difficult question of the extent to which common ground can be said to have existed between National Socialism and movements which sought to resist British rule. A key problem within the fragmentary historiography on this topic is with determining the true intentions of key players in the light of vague and contradictory statements and failed campaigns, and in determining any ideological affinities between movements across national and racial divides. Focussing on the Palestine Question, Francis Nicosia does not go beyond the British Foreign Office's own assessment that the anti-British propaganda drive of 1938-39, consisting of newspaper reports within Germany, speeches by Hitler in the *Reichstag*, and the establishment of an Arabic radio station, had no purpose other than to “distract Britain from Europe” while Hitler dealt with Czechoslovakia and worked on his plans for eastwards expansion.⁶⁶ This assessment suggests that there was no long-term planning of anti-British messages or use of the mistakes made in Palestine, which does not explain the number of German publications of different kinds, developed and published over several years, which aimed to bring this information to audiences outside of Germany and Britain. Furthermore, Donald McKale's work on British and German interventions in the region during the First World War demonstrates the long roots of this “tug of war” situation.⁶⁷ More recently, Jeffrey Herf's in-depth coverage of Nazi propaganda activities in the Middle East suggests that the collaboration, mutual curiosity and search for confirmation and reassurance in another culture, all of which were part of these activities, had a life and momentum beyond the focussed military goals of the regime.⁶⁸ However, Herf's analysis relies heavily on the idea of a natural sympathy between two cultures, based on the common ground of anti-Semitism. In its final chapter, this thesis will explore

⁶⁵ Rutz, pp.253-265.

⁶⁶ Francis R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1985).

⁶⁷ Donald McKale, *War by Revolution: Germany and Great Britain in the Middle East in the Era of World War I* (Kent OH, 1998).

⁶⁸ Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (Yale, 2009).

the ways in which a focus on British imperial history marked out another area of common ground between National Socialism and anti-imperial movements and tendencies within other countries.

In its approach to tracing the impact of one culture or set of cultures on another, this thesis draws heavily from Suzanne Marchand's study of orientalism in Germany in which she all but rejects the notion that it is possible to recreate or access an entire discourse or "image of the Orient" through "cobbling together statements by a colonial official here and a novelist there".⁶⁹ Instead, her work traces German scholars' interpretations of original sources in order to explore the variety of individual and collective agendas which informed them. In the same way, it would be tempting to conclude from a cursory survey of the books published on British imperialism in the Third Reich that British colonial heroes and practices were viewed favourably from 1933 until at least 1938, and that these views were swiftly reversed at the start of the Second World War. By assessing not only what was published, but how this information was presented, promoted, reviewed, reused and revised, this thesis will explore the variety of purposes to which different aspects of this material were applied as well as the wider web of associations of which it formed a part. It will also address the question of multiple audiences for these books, assuming not one body of work, directed by a uniform set of factors, but several overlapping and competing "conversations", each appealing and reacting to a particular set of concerns. These audiences were not necessarily constrained by national boundaries.

As explained above, there is no single comprehensive regulatory mechanism or "white list" from which can be determined an "official" view of British imperialism. While lists such as the *NS-Bibliographie*, Rust's foundational lists for school libraries, and the "List of Damaging and Undesirable Writings" curated by the Propaganda Ministry provide a useful starting point for tracing the exclusion of certain ideological viewpoints or the core texts for priority subjects such as

⁶⁹ Marchand, p.xx.

racial science, German folklore or the history of the Nazi Party, British imperial themes were not codified in the same way.⁷⁰ A better impression of how books were being assessed from month to month can be gleaned from the *Gutachtenanzeiger* supplement to the monthly magazine *Bücherkunde*. Between February 1936 and March 1941, around 150 titles covering aspects of British history, politics and imperialism were included, at least half of which were published before 1939. The vast majority of these were designated as “to be promoted”. An impression of how influential a particular book was, including those published before 1933, can be gained from tracking how many times they were referenced by others, especially in book reviews from journals such as the *Historische Zeitschrift*. Priority has been given to examining books which have been referenced several times by others, which received a mark of approval by one or more official body, or for which a review can be found.

Reviews have also been used to break down books into individual elements and ideas, and trace their reception. Two linked sets have been consulted in depth: unpublished, anonymous reviews written by members of the National Socialist Teachers’ Association on behalf of Rosenberg’s Reich Office for the Promotion of German Literature, and reviews published in *Bücherkunde*, which was a product of that review process. Of the anonymous reviews around 130 are of English language “readers” or books related to Britain or imperialism, including German-language books for use in geography and history classes. Although these were assessed for their use in schools, reviewers were also asked to assess their suitability for a wider, adult audience and for use in Party education programmes. Cross-referencing reviews with the books themselves reveals which elements of a book drew the attention of members of the grassroots of the Party, as well as forming a picture of

⁷⁰ The monthly installments of the *NS-Bibliographie* were the result of the PPK’s review process, and were therefore weighted towards those subject areas which brought books under its jurisdiction. The wartime supplement for 1940 does contain some titles pertaining to British imperialism: Parteiamtliche Prüfungskommission zum Schutze des NS.-Schrifttums (ed.), *Bibliographische Materialien 1940* (Berlin, 1941); Reichsstelle für volkstümliches Büchereiwesen (eds.), *Grundliste für Schülerbüchereien der Volksschule* (Berlin, 1937) – this and the two supplementary lists from 1939 and 1941 are assessed in Kamenetsky, *Children’s Literature in Hitler’s Germany* pp.265-283; The “Liste des schädlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums” is searchable at www.berlin.de/rubrik/hauptstadt/verbannte_buecher/ [last accessed 04.11.2014].

their hierarchy of priorities.

Books will be considered here not only as incursions in public debate and sources of knowledge but also as consumer objects. Advertisements for books from the *Börsenblatt*, as well as blurbs, prefaces, author's introductions and contents pages have been looked at to show the ways in which particular aspects of the books were emphasised to attract and guide readers. These are analysed as products of self-censorship by publishers but also as attempts to be included on approved lists, both while still attracting customers. This builds on Zantop's approach in *Colonial Fantasies*, in which she demonstrates how contextualising elements and internal modifications were made to the texts to guide readers' interpretations.⁷¹ In many of the books examined here, especially anti-British texts from the Second World War, captioned images, chapter and section titles, featured quotes and explanatory notes create a narrative which supplements or is even at odds with the main text.

There is a very small archival footprint for most authors, although a sense of where these books fit into their overall output can be gained from library catalogues. Similarly, official documentation on particular volumes generally appears as part of an institution's correspondence with that particular publisher or, where a dispute arose, between institutions. In most cases this was restricted to disputes over royalty payments, particularly when contributors were based overseas, or fact-checking regarding an author's racial or political background and membership of the RSK.

Collecting together enough to build up a picture of books' official assessments via this route would be a research project in itself. However, one set of archival material which has proved to be particularly fruitful is the assessments of the propaganda value of the series 'England ohne Maske', published by a division of the German Foreign Office. These were evaluated by members of German embassies and consulates with regard to their likely reception by local audiences, and provide a valuable insight into how German interpretations of British imperialism fared when removed from the context-control mechanisms of Third Reich publishing.

⁷¹ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, esp. pp.18-30.

In order to trace the various ways in which earlier material was re-contextualised and reinterpreted after 1933 and against after the outbreak of the Second World War, the chapters in this thesis are not divided along strictly chronological lines. Instead, they are arranged into three pairs, linked by the ideas “reflection”, “incorporation” and “rejection”. Chapters One, Two and Three cover the period from 1933 until 1943, which marks the end of the publication of new, substantial works on British imperialism. Chapter Four traces the incorporation of older works and ideas into German books and has as a starting date the creation of Germany as a nation state in 1871. Chapter Five and Six cover the Second World War exclusively.

The first pair of chapters explore the extent to which the presentation of books to customers through reviews and promotional material, and the treatment of particular discussion points regarding the British Empire and its role in Anglo-German relations, reflect particular aspirations and concerns. Chapter One looks at the position of books on Britain and British imperialism within the market as a whole, and asks what wider concerns these books were seen as addressing. By examining the ways in which books were categorised by reviewers, and the methods employed by publishers to advertise the value of their products to customers and regulators, it will account for the variety of books – and the plethora of views within them – which were available to customers even on the wartime book market. Chapter Two will build on the theme of variety by exploring the treatment within books of one particular set of concerns: the role of “empire” within Anglo-German relations. In particular, it will ask what connections can be drawn between expressions of admiration or condemnation of British imperialism and the regime’s own expansionist aims.

The second pair of chapters trace the incorporation of older material on Britain, the British Empire and the “English national character” into new German works, for adult readers and for use in schools. Focussing on books for use in school English lessons and reviews written by teachers, Chapter Three asks what wider educational goals this material was seen as serving. It will also identify the methods by which learners were guided in their interpretation of original British material, and will question the extent to which portrayals of British colonial heroes or accounts of

the establishment of the British Empire can be taken at face value. Chapter Four asks how authors negotiated the wealth of pre-existing material, literary traditions and conventions of genre which might affect how readers would react to new arguments about Britain and Germany's roles in the world. It will explore how readers were guided towards interpretative practices which could be applied to other material they may encounter, essentially forming a new context in which British material was intended to be understood.

The final pair of chapters cover the types of evidence and rhetorical strategies used by wartime "propagandists" to advocate to readers in Germany and abroad a rejection of all things Anglo-Saxon, in particular Britain's "imperial" influence over mainland Europe. Chapter Five examines the elements of the anti-British stereotype which existed within German publications for a home audience during the Second World War. In particular, it will look at the rhetorical strategies employed by authors and editors to incorporate pre-existing material into a coherent diagnosis of the 'English national character' (i.e. the driving force behind British imperialism) as fundamentally hypocritical, rapacious and dishonest. Chapter Six asks how similar messages were directed at an international audience. It will examine how British imperial history was used to posit the existence of a community of common interests which was united in their victimisation by Britain, and the extent to which such anti-British messages could prevail when removed from their original, domestic context.

Chapter 1

Product placement: Pitching books on Britain and the British Empire to readers and regulators

Introduction



Figure 3: *Bücherkunde* (1941), p.207.

The above photograph is one of several accompanying an article which appeared in the magazine *Bücherkunde* in 1941, taken on the occasion of a visit by *Generalfeldmarschall* Walther von Brauchitsch to a *Frontbuchhandlung* (front-line book shop) in occupied France.⁷² The article, by the war correspondent Günther Stöve, uses the visit to explain success and significance of the wartime book market, as well as the military success which the establishment of a German bookshop in France represents:

Should a front-line bookshop move to your location, it may at first appear to be of little consequence. That however the Commander-in-Chief of our armed forces has taken this opportunity to visit the new bookshop in person shows not only the importance one may ascribe to such a facility, but also that which it in fact possesses. [...] With the long-term occupation of enemy territory has grown the significance of the front-line bookshops, which enable the purchase of books. It is well-known that the book trade at home is, even now in wartime, enjoying an

⁷² Günther Stöve, 'Besuch in einer Frontbuchhandlung' in *Bücherkunde* (1941), p.204.

extraordinarily great uptake. Even more surprising is the development of the front-line book trade.

According to the article, this particular shop had sold 15 000 books in December; the majority of customers were German soldiers but the article makes much of the fact that one quarter of the customers were French, not only German-speakers or those wishing to improve their language skills, but also people buying French translations of German political and literary works. This is described as a crucial counterweight to the "dishonest and tendentious" literature about Germany prevalent in France, in particular exile literature. As for the soldiers, the article praises the variety of literature they were offered, from classics to the newest publications. The picture itself conveys the importance of reading, in particular for information and self-improvement, even in a military situation. In common with the article, it foregrounds the idea of freedom of choice; the soldier is browsing the selection alone, as a consumer with free choice, rather than receiving direction from another. His surroundings are pleasant and relaxing, with carved bookcases and flower arrangements. Part of this could be as a direct result of the official visit, however the impression created also highlights the importance of books in the leisure time of German soldiers. This was a long-running topic in *Bücherkunde*, as part of a campaign for book donations for soldiers. It also emphasises the role of literature in attempts to improve Germany's image abroad, with front-line bookshops acting as cultural outposts in enemy territory.⁷³

While there are two other photographs of the visit, this is the one which most clearly showcases the range of books laid out to attract customers. Most of the identifiable books on display are about international relations, including the British Empire, rather than core ideological texts (*Mein Kampf* is visible but by no means central) or escapist fiction. Whatever the soldiers were actually reading, the impression given is that they were informing themselves about current affairs, and about the nature of the enemy they were fighting. German belletristic works are emphasised in the article but

⁷³ The role and operation of front-line book shops is described in Frank Vossler, *Propaganda in die eigene Truppe: Die Truppenbetreuung der Wehrmacht 1939-1945* (Paderborn, 2005) pp.207-228; see also Peter Longerich, *Propagandisten im Krieg: Die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop* (Munich, 1987) pp.116-120.

books identifiable in the photograph cover a range of global themes. They include: Walter Pahl, *Weltkampf um Rohstoffe* (five editions from 1939 to 1942); Cordt von Brandis, *Afrika... heute!* (published 1938) ; Otto Graf, *Imperium Britannicum: von Inselstaat zum Weltreich* (six editions between 1937 and 1942); Wilhelm Ihde, *Los von England: der deutsche Abwehrkampf gegen Englands wirtschaftliche Weltmachtstellung in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhundert* (published 1939); Wilhelm Nowack, *Australien: Kontinent der Gegensätze* (at least two editions, in 1938 and 1943); and Hans Lührs, *Gegenspieler des Obersten Lawrence* (at least 9 editions between 1936 and 1940). The two works on British imperial matters (Graf and Nowack) are not a product of the anti-British "unmasking" of 1940 and 1941, but are works which existed prior to the outbreak of the war. This photograph therefore hints at a lack of clear divide between pre-war and wartime reading choices, even in a carefully-staged publicity shot, as well as the ability of British imperial history to sit alongside many other categories of book.

This chapter will address the matter of the wide variety of books available to customers in the Third Reich which contributed to their understanding of British imperialism, in its many forms and associations. It will show how the official categorisation and commercial placement of books between 1933 and 1939 laid the foundations for the presentation of choice in the wartime book market. Far from there being a sudden change in the range of books available, with pre-war books being entirely replaced by new anti-British offerings, many of these earlier books were promoted as part of new narratives, which were articulated through official reviews, advertising material, blurbs and prefaces. By establishing the basis on which publishers sought to "sell" books on Britain and the British Empire to customers and middlemen (bookshops and wholesalers) as well as to the various institutions of party and state which sought to regulate the supply of reading matter to consumers, this chapter will establish the range of consumer concerns which these books were intended to address. An examination of the ways in which official and commercial operators attempted to position books about Britain and British imperial matters relative to other topics thus

reveals some of the parameters for the ways in which the British Empire was perceived by audiences.

Although, as explained in the introduction, the "freedom" of the book market under National Socialism was to some extent a carefully-crafted illusion, commercial success and the survival of publishing businesses still largely relied on producing books which would appeal to customers. However, in order to avoid being categorised as "trash" literature, publishers also strove to demonstrate the "worthiness" of their output, either in terms of literary or scholarly merit or by showing the relevance of the subject matter to questions of national importance. Regulatory institutions, all of which lacked the funds, personnel and legal basis to conduct a review of every book being published, also benefited from any self-censorship which could be encouraged in publishers.⁷⁴ In an article from the daily trade journal *Börsenblatt für den Deutschen Buchhandel* on the role and workload of reviewers based in publishing houses (*Verlagslektoren*), Dr. H.L. writes of a flood of sub-standard submissions to every publisher, from people convinced that they have a great calling as a writer.⁷⁵ The article as a whole displays a realistic approach to the economic constraints on publishers and the number of new authors that they can support and promote; publishers exist to sell books to readers, not to provide an open conduit for the literary outpourings of the *Volk*. The point of the article is to call for ruthless honesty on the part of commissioning editors and an end to the polite stock rejection letters which give authors false hope. Dr. H.L. claims that by avoiding the hard task of being honest about people's lack of talent, reviewers in publishing houses are damaging the reputation of reviewers in state institutions, as after four or five letters from publishers praising their talents but declining to publish their manuscript, authors will turn to these institutions for an opinion. Dr. H. L. argues from numbers but also issues an emotional appeal to *Verlagslektoren* as the guardians of German literature:

⁷⁴ These operational limitations are described in detail in Jan-Pieter Barbian, *Literaturpolitik im „Dritten Reich“: Institutionen, Kompetenzen, Betätigungsfelder* (Munich, 1995).

⁷⁵ Dr. H.L., 'Der Lektor: Seine Tätigkeit im Lichte neuer Forderungen', *Börsenblatt für den Deutschen Buchhandel* 20th February 1936, pp.158-161.

[...] To a great extent it is in his hands that the decisions rest as to what is offered to the people in terms of intellectual and spiritual nourishment and on what they spend the small amount of money they have available to satisfy this need.⁷⁶

Such flattery not only encouraged cooperation and relieved some of the pressure on regulatory institution, but also provided a counterweight to the regime's threats against the uncooperative. A combination of early public displays of 'cleansing' and strict secrecy regarding the processes of review served to foster self-censorship on the part of all involved in the production of books, while literary prizes and access to favoured distribution networks provided financial incentives to cooperation.⁷⁷

This convergence of official and commercial needs led to a synthesis of political and marketing messages within advertising material in print, in the books themselves, and in book shops. Since the 1920s, the *Börsenverein der deutschen Buchhändler* had provided marketing advice to its members, including *Matern* (print designs) which could be used on posters, newspaper adverts, flyers etc. and in shop windows. This continued into the Nazi era, in some cases with the same slogans e.g. "Use your free time: read a book".⁷⁸ The use of simple slogans and imagery to promote book reading in general also took place via the "Week of the German Book", also continued from the 1920s, and in the suggestions for themed windows made in the advertising calendar section of the *Börsenblatt* at the end of each month. Suggestions were a mixture of domestic and international, cultural and political; themes for January 1937 included "Cherry-Blossom and Cannons" (Japan), "A Seer of the Third Reich" (10th anniversary of the death of Houston Stewart Chamberlain) and "Unforgotten German Sacrifice Overseas" ("new and old books" about the former German colonies). Foreign cultures and international matters appear frequently in suggested themes and in photographs of windows provided as examples or submitted by readers (e.g. figure 4, below); if books could be a

⁷⁶ Dr. H.L., p.159.

⁷⁷ George L Mosse and James W. Jones, 'Bookburnings and the Betrayal of German Intellectuals' *New German Critique* 31 (1984) pp.143-155; Otto Seifert, *Die große Säuberung des Schrifttums* (Schkeuditz, 2000); Leonidas E. Hill, 'The Nazi Attack on Un-German Literature, 1933-1945' in Jonathan Rose, *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation* (Amherst, 2008) pp.9-46.

⁷⁸ Gideon Reuveni, *Reading Germany: Literature and Consumer Culture in Germany before 1933* (Oxford, 2006) p.186.

“window into the world”, then bookshop windows doubly so. These pages also included lists of literary anniversaries within the coming month, which helped to foster a sense of pride in a worthy German literary tradition. This harmonised with the contemplative, bourgeois image of reading being projected in many of the *Matern*, although there were some employing more industrial, utilitarian themes too. In this way, the act of purchasing a book was promoted as a way of remaining in touch with German culture, with matters of national importance, or of interacting with the wider world, specifically as a German.



Figure 4: *Börsenblatt* February 1936

Other organisations and companies also suggested window themes in an attempt to co-opt these spaces. In particular, tie-ins were suggested for films to correspond to the dates that they would be playing in particular locations. An advertisement from the Karl May Verlag from February 1936 suggests two possible layouts for a window connected to the film *Durch die Wüste*. The publisher offered to provide large film posters, stills from the film, brochures and bookmarks. A similar tie-in, including the provision of a film poster, is suggested for the two films set in India: *Indisches*

Grabmal and *Der Tiger von Eschnapur*. Publishers whose authors were on tour also aimed for this relatively cheap publicity, for example Sven Hedin in January 1936, and some of the full-page advertisements in the *Börsenblatt* were explicitly intended to double as posters within shops.⁷⁹ While being pitched as a lucrative tie-in opportunities for the bookseller, these strategies would also turn shop windows into well-timed advertisements other companies. Similarly, from the point of view of party and state institutions, political messages could be prominently displayed to passers-by in busy streets via a third party, in a way designed to entice customers to browse and so to absorb the messages in a voluntary manner, perhaps on a subconscious level.

Bookshops therefore had the potential to be spaces in which politics and commerce worked in harmony to guide readers' choices, creating discerning, informed customers who would collect and read the "right" good-quality books in their free time. Within this context, the images and text chosen by publishers for use in advertising pitched to booksellers in the *Börsenblatt* display the areas where the interests of regime, industry and customers coincided. Sales tactics and selling points employed in these very noticeable spaces had to attract custom without attracting negative attention. Book shop windows, then, show a harmony between the interests of the state / party, and of a convergence of commercial operations; although publishers were still in competition with one another, through the promotional activities suggested by institutions such as the *Börsenverein*, products from rival houses could complement each other in a themed display, theoretically leading to increased sales for all. As part of this collaborative process, the classification of particular books as serving a particular purpose for readers and for the National Socialist project determined to a great extent the way in which they were marketed, reviewed, and organised within shops and on displays. This "placement" of books in a specific section of the market was both a reflection of existing associations between authors and topics, and a way of creating and reinforcing connections in the minds of customers.

⁷⁹ *Börsenblatt* 103/18, 22nd January 1936, p.237.

This chapter will first outline the classification of books on Britain, “Englishness” and the British Empire within one of the systems of publishing control in operation in the Third Reich, through the reviews and lists of approved and unapproved books published in *Bücherkunde* from 1934 to 1941. It will ask what thematic links were being drawn between these books, as well as their possible “value” to National Socialist goals for public education. It will then examine how these official categories and associations were adopted by publishers in their marketing material, including blurbs and prefaces, in order to determine what public concerns were being addressed. The advertisements in the *Börsenblatt* had the purpose of persuading booksellers to add a publisher's book to their stock. They therefore constitute examples of a common language of requirements and their fulfilment which developed, if not between readers and publishers, then at least between publishers and booksellers on behalf of consumers of books. Through the appeals made to various consumer needs we can discern the assumptions being made about the market and about the desires and taste of German readers; in common with all advertising this was to some extent an aspirational portrayal, which informed readers how they ought to be educating themselves.

At the same time, the *Börsenblatt* was a showcase of publishers' advertising which was open to scrutiny from rival businesses. In the highly competitive market, with the added pressure of political constraints, advertisements needed to be distinctive enough to sell books without distinguishing themselves in ways which might deviate too far from the new ill-defined "norms". In several cases, comparing these publishers' descriptions from advertisements or blurbs with the author's own preface to their work reveals a shift in focus, allowing for an identification of a publisher's concerns as distinct from those of the authors. Material here will be treated as designed by publishers in order to achieve both consumer appeal and "official" acceptability. It therefore identifies those aspects of “Englishness”, global imperialism, and the British Empire which appealed to regulators as well as readers. While this will to some extent be distorted through a lens of publishers' understanding of the market, and marketing techniques, it will nevertheless provide an insight into how the British Empire as a topic interacted with wider concerns.

As Siegfried Lokatis identifies in his study of book advertisements from the *Börsenblatt* in 1939 and 1940, there was no sudden identifiable change when war was officially declared in September 1939.⁸⁰ He attributes this in part to the “idiosyncratic rhythm of the book-seller’s year”, in which the prospect of Christmas sales affected advertising for much of autumn.⁸¹ Due to the slow pace of change within the publishing world, and the picture of “business as usual” which it tried to project during the war, the sources examined here shed light on the more enduring concerns of regulators and readers, as they pertained to Britain and the British Empire. The final section of the chapter will build on Lokatis’ research by asking which of these concerns were still being addressed, in blurbs and prefaces, at the start of the Second World War.

Official categorisation of books

One indicator of the sub-divisions of the market into which books on Britain and British imperialism were placed is provided by the official categorisations within the review process. For example, the public face of the review process of the RfDS was the *Gutachtenanzeiger* supplement to *Bücherkunde*, and each title on the monthly lists was assigned a number corresponding to the responsible department. Category eleven was for “colonial literature”, meaning almost exclusively German colonialism. Books on British imperial matters found their way into several categories depending on their designation as, for example, European history, international relations, accounts of the First World War or translated literature. Occasionally a book would receive two numbers; Francis Yeats-Brown’s *Lives of a Bengal Lancer* was classified as translated literature and world history. From 1937 until the end of 1939, books to do with the British Empire increasingly received the number thirty-nine, which had initially covered fascist movements and related regimes outside of Germany. This began to cover a wider spread of political “resistance” or independence movements, including books on Ireland and India. In the same group were Wolf von Dewall’s

⁸⁰ Siegfried Lokatis, “Kriege gegen England! Aber wie?” Die buchhändlerische Vermarktung des zweiten Weltkrieges im *Börsenblatt* (1939-1940) in: K. Saur, ed., *Verlage im “Dritten Reich”* (Frankfurt am Main, 2013) pp.165-187, here p.167.

⁸¹ Lokatis, p.187.

Gefahrenzonen britischer Weltpolitik (published 1938 and reviewed positively June 1939), Heinrich Gustav Dittmar's *Die deutsch-englischen Beziehungen in den Jahren 1898/99* (also 1938 and reviewed positively in October 1939), and Rudolf Stache's *Polen. Söldner von Englands Gnaden* (published 1939 and reviewed negatively in December 1939). Category thirty-nine seems to have become the catch-all group for books covering conflicts and alliances in the early stages of the Second World War.

An important change in classification came at the start of 1940, from which point almost all books on Britain and the British Empire were assigned the number fifty-four. This category also included books on France, Poland and the USA, as well as many volumes on enemy tactics and war aims. This re-organisation appears to be an attempt at collecting together and therefore more systematically assessing all books on the geopolitical background to the war, as well as any enemy weaknesses, historical or modern. Before this change, which corresponds with the end to the 'phony war' in Europe, books on weaknesses in the British Empire had been gradually incorporated into category thirty-nine, indicating at least an associative link between fascism as an international phenomenon, and popular uprisings in colonial realms. Coupled with the consistent separation of German colonial literature from that of other countries, this suggests separate criteria for assessment.

Bücherkunde began in 1934 as a confidential circular for official purposes, offering an insight into publications rejected by the RFdS, highlighting publications which contributed to “pseudo-science, pseudo-religiosity, a superficial entertainment and youth literature, as well as a confusing and poor-quality political writing mania”, but also showcasing the best-quality examples as models.⁸² After four months it became an illustrated magazine, tending more towards positive reviews. The majority of these were one or two paragraphs long, grouped together thematically, often following an article on a related topic. While the *Gutachtenanzeiger* section was alphabetical and therefore a

⁸² ‘Vorwort zur II. Auflage der Bücherkunde der Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums. Sonderheft 1.-4. Folge’ in *Bücherkunde* 1/1-4 (July 1934) pp.3-7.

reference tool for checking a particular work or author, the magazine itself offered an overview of whole topics and gave a more general indication of what books were considered acceptable in that field. In the case of literature on Britain, its history and foreign policy, particularly with regard to its imperial interests, the way reviews were presented was in part dependent on contemporary events. This is not to say that the availability of books changed rapidly, or that there was any sudden shift in content, only that there was an attempt by one institution to affect the context in which books were read, and what readers would take from them. To show this contextualisation two articles will be examined here, as well as the reviews which followed them. Each article covers the topic of Britain's interest in maintaining a balance of power in Europe, the first from February 1937 and the second from January 1941.

In the first article '100 Jahre deutsch-englische Beziehung' ('100 years of Anglo-German relations'), Dr. Jahn explains that all British foreign policy towards the continent has been determined by the need to preserve the balance of power in order to protect against imperial rivals.⁸³ This has meant that Anglo-German relations have always been dependent on the strength of France; alliances with, for example, Frederick the Great were formed solely to distract France in Europe. Once her overseas interests had been secured, according to Jahn, Britain withdrew troops and funding "with no consideration for her alliance partners, still locked in a difficult fight". This is stated without judgement; Britain has always joined on the side of the weakest, to prevent any one power gaining hegemony in Europe. With German unification came the British fear that the Netherlands could also join, forming a new great power at the mouth of the Rhine. This, combined with the opportunities for direct encounters with Germany in the colonial sphere, made an Anglo-German alliance impossible, and Britain only courted Germany for its support in particular situations, for example the Fashoda incident. Post Versailles, Britain has broken this tradition by tolerating France's hegemony in Europe as the best way to preserve the peace necessary to solve the

⁸³ Dr. Jahn, '100 Jahre deutsch-englische Beziehung' in *Bücherkunde* 3/2 (February 1937) pp.65-70.

problems arising in East Asia, India and the Middle East:

Only now that Germany, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, has overcome its state of unconsciousness and set about taking its birthright into its own hands, has England abandoned the unconditional support of France's position in Europe and decided to endorse Germany's return to strength.⁸⁴

The article goes on to say that a stronger Germany would be a counterweight to the dominance of the Franco-Russian system. It identifies the Spanish Civil War as the main current concern, and states that the "conservative, democratic bent of the English people" is opposed to both of the forces at play in Europe. It concludes with the hoped that England will choose the side of "the principle of order, of construction, of the preservation and care of precious objects of culture" over "the principle of disorder and of the destruction of all present values, as embodied by international Bolshevism". The article does not condemn Britain's self-serving policies, instead praising British politicians for their "statesmanly intelligence". It shows Britain as a natural force which is predictable and, in the context given, will be useful to German interests.

The article is followed by five suggestions for further reading: George Macaulay Trevelyan's *Geschichte Englands* (1935); Anton Mayer's *Aufstieg zur Weltmacht* (1936); J.R. Seeley's *Die Ausbreitung Englands* (1928); Wolfgang Windelbrand's *Die auswärtige Politik in der Neuzeit von 1494 bis zur Gegenwart* (1935); and a collection of Queen Victoria's diaries (*Ein Frauenleben unter der Krone*, 1936), edited by Kurt Jagow. Taken as a whole, these works have a focus on the stabilising influence of conservative traditions. This impression is reinforced by the inclusion of a full-page photograph of the Houses of Parliament within Jahn's article. By being grouped together in this way, these books on British foreign policy (which is here determined by the need to protect the empire) are explicitly linked to Germany's "new" place in Europe. As presented here, books which set out the conservative tendencies within British foreign policy and Britain's preoccupation with overseas colonies form part of an argument that Germany's current path need not lead to a

⁸⁴ Jahn, pp.69-70.

further war with Britain.

While the focus of Jahn's article is Germany's needs and her prospects under National Socialism, Karlheinz Rüdiger's 1941 article, 'Das Ende der traditionellen Gleichgewichtspolitik' ('The end to the traditional policy of a balance of powers') looks towards better international cooperation in Europe following a German victory.⁸⁵ It draws extensively from Gerhard Jentsch's book *Das Ende des europäischen Gleichgewichts* ("The end of the balance of power in Europe"), published by Junker & Dünhaupt in 1940. The article provides examples of "balance of power situations" from pre-Roman times to the Peace of Westphalia (1648), describing these as "instead intermediate situations, transitional forms, which could only hold for a few centuries and were time and again overcome". In common with Jahn, Rüdiger describes this balance, which has lasted around 400 years, as essentially serving the purpose of ensuring Britain's global dominance. However in his description it is only British politicians which consider it a "natural law", enabling them to use it against any states wishing to "break the chains" of the system. Rüdiger names the "strict refusal" of any German attempts at rapprochement as a current example, and goes on to frame the Second World War as a struggle to free all of Europe:

Today the fight is against Britain's increasing and long-lasting oppression of the Continent with pre-emptive wars, and so against the bodily and spiritual enslavement of a whole continent.⁸⁶

Part of this enslavement is economic, with France and Britain having deliberately divided the world into "haves" and "have-nots". However, Germany and Italy now have a leading role in bringing about a new system in which the nations of Europe are mutually dependent, and in which "peacefully normal relations" are possible. Rüdiger predicts that this new system will end, once and for all, Britain's attempts to subject Europe to the "yoke" of a "suffocating power-balance situation".

⁸⁵ Karlheinz Rüdiger, 'Das Ende der traditionellen Gleichgewichtspolitik' *Bücherkunde* 8/1 (January 1941) pp.1-3.

⁸⁶ Rüdiger, p.2.

Having thus set the tone for the whole issue of the magazine, this article conditions readers to look for corresponding messages within the book reviews which follow. The same issue has a section of reviews titled 'Bücher zum Zeitgeschehen'. The first two are on German naval warfare: Lützlow's *Die heutige Seekriegführung. Mit U-Boot und Minen gegen englische Hungerblockade* is mainly technical while *U-Boot-Fahrer von heute* shows the enthusiasm and comradeship of the people involved: "It reveals much about the spirit which dwells within our *Kriegsmarine*, and [the author] knows how to draw the reader in, using his own enthusiasm for his men and profession".⁸⁷ The two of these neatly set up the third book to be reviewed as a contrast. Iwan Crompton's *Englands Verbrechen an "U41". Der zweite "Baralong" Fall im Weltkrieg*, which went through eight editions from 1940-43, was based on Crompton's 1917 eyewitness account. The second "Baralong incident" was the sinking of a German submarine while the British submarine hunter *Baralong* was flying a US flag as a decoy. The title of the book links this to the more infamous, earlier incident in which the captain and crew of the *Baralong* allegedly shot unarmed German sailors after sinking their submarine, also having used a US flag to get close. Similarly, the review of the new edition draws a direct line from these incidents to cases from the Second World War, to explaining that the worth of the book lies in reminding the reader of earlier precedents:

As these cases are already repeating themselves in a similar form in the current English war, and are thus becoming a standard occurrence [...] The British method of naval warfare, at once inhuman and unbelievable, although the Englishman does not see himself as categorically superior, must and should be scourged.⁸⁸

The fourth review is of Ferdinand Werner's *Englands Krieg gegen Deutschland*, specifically written "for the German youth" but also recommended by the reviewer for adults, particularly as part of the educational work of the Party.⁸⁹ It covers the political, military and economic pre-history of the current war, including speeches from Hitler and Göring. This review picks up the theme that this is an "English war" from the previous review, suggesting that this is underpinned by both

⁸⁷ *Bücherkunde* 8/1 (January 1941) p.21.

⁸⁸ *Bücherkunde* 8/1 (January 1941) p.21.

⁸⁹ *Bücherkunde* 8/1 (January 1941) p.22.

politicians and information from various disciplines. The fifth review is of Ludwig Reichholdt's *Die Schicksalsstunde des Westens*. The reviewer has reservations in that it attempts to cover too much ground; it aims to be about the colonial question but covers "all problems which in this English war appear to us as the conflict between two eras."⁹⁰ The book is nonetheless recommended due to its strong narrative thread and "high knowledge of responsibility regarding the problems of our present". The central thought of the book is this: the sense of the twentieth century is that the overcoming of the separation of Europe into continental and colonial peoples is the condition for recreating a European community. Therefore, the right to colonies goes far beyond simple reparations. It is the deciding criteria for the European community of peoples, "as since the nineteenth century, Europe is no longer thinkable without colonies". In this century there are problems which need to be solved not by one people but by the whole of Europe – the colonial project is European, but not all countries had an equal part. The reviewer concludes: "With this book the author has made a contribution to the revolutionary reordering of Europe, preluded by the current English war".

As a group, this second set of reviews moves from the details of German technical and moral superiority, to the historical continuities allegedly shown through British war crimes and traditions in Anglo-German relations, to a projected post-war Europe which is free from a pernicious British influence. Without referencing or directly challenging the article from four years previously, the wartime article and reviews present a new context in which current works, and those previously reviewed, can be read. As readership of *Bücherkunde* was encouraged among everyone involved in the production and sale of books, it can be expected that publishers took cues from the categorisation of books within its review process and the placement and organisation of reviews in determining how to position their books on the market. It is to their marketing strategies that we now turn.

⁹⁰ *Bücherkunde* 8/1 (January 1941) p.22.

The market positioning of books on Britain and the British Empire

As seen above, one of the marketing techniques which benefited both publishers and regulators was promoting the formation of home libraries. The creation of a home library involves the curation of a collection; a drive towards order and completeness. Books to be included need to contribute something to the collection and to have a sense of permanence through continued future relevance and keeping them implies that they will be read again. Similarly, the incorporation of books by publishers into a linked series creates something greater than the sum of its parts. A volume which may not be worth purchasing in isolation benefits from having a role to play in a larger body of work. The benefits to the publisher included a streamlining of advertising by promoting several new volumes together in a single announcement and by promoting earlier or forthcoming volumes at the back of each book. The themes used to link books into series provide an indication of the "big questions" considered likely to attract a large, dedicated subscribing readership, as well as likely to confer some prestige on the publisher. The titles which were included also provide an indication of the association of topics with these wider themes.

During the Second World War, several series of books were produced which focussed specifically on Britain and the British Empire (see Chapters Five and Six). Before the war, British imperial matters formed part of series on world history and geopolitical matters. The series "Weltgeschehen" from the publisher Wilhelm Goldmann ran from 1936 until 1943 and contained at least sixty-five volumes (figure 5, below). The majority of these covered current affairs in specific countries or regions, while several explained wider issues, for example the effects of war on the economy or the importance of certain raw materials. New titles kept pace with developments, particularly the changing borders in Central and Eastern Europe, with volumes appearing in 1937 and 1938 on Austria, Bohemia and Moravia. The wide spread of subjects continued until the series ceased. Due to Britain's widespread imperial interests, many of the volumes contributed to readers' knowledge of the British Empire. However, as the series tracked developments in problem zones, the overall picture was one of fragmentation and weakness, rather than coherence and strength. The two volumes which provided an overview of the British Empire, *Gefahrenzonen des britischen*

Weltreiches (1938) and *Das britischen Weltreich* (1942) reinforced this impression. A second Goldmann series "Entdecker und Eroberer der Welt" collected together volumes of imperial history. Pre-war volumes were mostly translations of English works, whereas wartime volumes were original German works. The series as a whole promoted a link between exploration and conquest, as well as a master narrative of a common European colonial endeavour spanning several centuries and continents. There is no problematisation of this traditional view of colonial projects, something which separated these history books from the more distinctive and innovative category of "the colonial book".

»Weltgeschehen«

Eine wichtige u. notwendige Bücherreihe

Kölnische Zeitung: „Eine wertvolle und anschauliche Ergänzung zur Kenntnis weltpolitischer Zusammenhänge.“

Der Freiheitskampf: „Sachliche Genauigkeit, übersichtliche Herausarbeitung des Wesentlichen in lebendiger Darstellung... In Schulungskursen und Büchereien werden sie breiten Schichten das nötige Wissen und wichtige Stoffgebiete vermitteln.“

Hamburger Anzeiger: „Ein dankenswertes Unternehmen... zuverlässig und inhaltsreich.“

Mittelrheinische Landes-Zeitung: „In knapper, allgemeinverständlicher Form, die keinerlei Vorkenntnisse erfordert, zusammenfassende Überblicke, die das Wesentliche prägnant herausstellen.“

Lübecker Volksbote: „Aufschlußreiche Darlegungen über Grundtatsachen der weltpolitischen Gegebenheiten...“

Jedes gute Sortiment sollte die Reihe stets vollständig vorrätig haben

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Figure 5: Börsenblatt February 1938

“Colonial books” had a separate aesthetic and set of selling points to those with a historical or international-relations focus. Their focus was on the memorialisation German achievements in the colonial sphere, frequently as part of the ongoing campaign by colonial movements for a return of Germany’s former overseas territories. In this context, books sat alongside magazines, calendars, postcards and other media with a dual role as consumer items and campaign material. However, developments in colonial-themed advertising meant that the same imagery and ideas were also adopted by publishers unconnected to the campaign groups. Secondary literature on the use of themes such as travel, colonialism and knowledge of the wider world in advertising points to a nationalist, imperialist or Orientalist appeal being a popular tactic independent of any state direction.⁹¹ Books, even more so than other consumer items, could lay claim to bringing buyers closer to exotic realms, and to helping readers to explore foreign territories and unravel mysteries from the comfort of their homes. Consequently, advertisements for books on colonial realms, especially Africa, were more likely to use illustrations than many other genres. Frequently, these advertisements showed the cover of the book, giving booksellers an indication of its potential appeal on their shelves, as well as increasing a book's recognisability, and customers’ awareness of the publisher’s branding.

As described above, books on German colonialism, which included histories, memoirs, novels, picture books and books arguing for a return of Germany's former colonies, formed a distinct category within review processes and in the ways they were advertised. Appeals were made to the importance of passing on colonial knowledge and desires to younger generations, in particular through stories of individual heroism in the service of the nation. A typical example of this is the

⁹¹ David Ciarlo, ‘Advertising and the Optics of Colonial Power at the Fin de Siècle’ in Volker Langbehn (ed.) *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory* (New York, 2010) pp.37-54; For a broader analysis of the intersections between advertising and imperialism see e.g. Chapter Five of Anne McClintock, *Imperial Lather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York, 1995); Stephen Constantine, ‘Bringing the Empire alive’: the Empire Marketing Board and imperial propaganda, 1926-33’ in John MacKenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986) pp.192-231.

description of Paul Burg's *Forscher, Kaufherrn und Soldaten: Deutschlands Bahnbrecher in Afrika*, published by K.F. Koehler:

A heroic account of the German exploration of Africa, as well as a people-orientated history of our colonies. The current generation, who have grown up without their own memories of Germany's blossoming colonies, should be shown these men who, as builders of a glorious past, also mean much for the future.⁹²

The sales pitch places particular emphasis on the fact that naturalists and merchants were also "soldiers of the German motherland", linking this colonial book to a wider interest in military and national history. This advertisement is immediately followed by another from the same publisher, for Otto Pentzel's, *Heimat Ostafrika: Aus dem Leben, Wirken und Schaffen eines Kolonialdeutschen*:

In this book, an "old *Afrikaner*" describes four or five years of his own experiences in the Dark Continent. In it he paints a picture of the German colonial type, who lives justly and without pride among the native population. At the same time, he is a link within his circle of compatriots, who must forget their romantic fantasies in order to empathise with this world. When the World War sets an arduous goal for this peaceful development, it is up to them to defend their newly-won home.

The two books, clearly intended to be bought and sold together and to complement each other, offer a picture of German colonial projects as being driven by ordinary settlers, skilled but working towards peaceful, communal aims rather than self-aggrandisement. When they act as soldiers, it is to defend a new homeland which they have worked hard to acquire. Many of these books were anthologies of biographies or personal accounts of life in the former German colonies; this amounts to an extensive fragmentation and de-historicisation of German colonial history. It is rare to find references to British colonial figures within the marketing for 'colonial books', and books exclusively dealing with British colonial history rarely feature the above tropes in imagery or text. Instead, any illustrations on covers or in advertisements tend to be maps or a globe, essentially decoupling objective geographical knowledge from any patriotic or otherwise emotional concerns. In this way, even books which offer little criticism of British imperial methods are nevertheless kept

⁹² *Börsenblatt*, 103/39 15th February 1936, p.134.

separate from the German colonial legacy. One exception to this separation is Dr. Paul Leutwein's anthology *Kämpfe um Afrika*, published by Charles Coleman in Lübeck, containing biographies of Cecil Rhodes, Carl Peters, Theodor Leutwein, Lettow-Vorbeck, Menelik II and Haile Selassie. The advertisement points to a growing interest within Germany in "colonial questions" and features a quote from American E.A. Forbes from 1911, in which he attributes to Germans "the cleanest hands" of any colonising peoples.⁹³ This clearly frames the book as a means to a comparison of colonial histories, rather than these being contributions to a common legacy, and in particular as a counter-argument to the "colonial guilt lie" used to transfer Germany's former colonies to other powers.



Figure 6: *Börsenblatt*, 27th January 1938

⁹³ *Börsenblatt*, 103/49 27th February 1936, p.181.

While the main selling points of these German colonial “histories” were their ability to create a positive and patriotic record of events, advertisements for history books pertaining to other countries tended to emphasise a balance between accessibility and information. The academic credentials of authors were frequently foregrounded, as was the analytical rigour of their arguments. A triple advert from publisher R. Oldenbourg for Friedrich Stieve's *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*, George Macaulay Trevelyan's *Geschichte Englands* and Charles Seignobos' *Geschichte der französischen Nation: Versuch einer Entwicklungsgeschichte der französischen Volkes*, featured reviews from four publications, with the final extract praising them as a group:

All three books are work not for teaching and studying, but for reading. They clearly draw out the lines of development, the intersection of the different cultural influences and the effectiveness of great personalities.⁹⁴

The three appear to work as a set through their clear narrative threads and the central position given to the role of strong characters in shaping history. In particular, the blurb for Trevelyan's work emphasises the German foundations of features of British life, and his willingness to identify the weaknesses of his own people. Another aspect publishers could promote was the exciting nature of the subject matter, but they were also careful to show that these were well-written accounts, resting on thorough research. An advertisement for Friedrich Wencker-Wildberg's *Raubritter des Meeres: Eine Weltgeschichte der Seeräuber* (which covers pirates of many nationalities, including Henry Morgan, Anne Bonny and Mary Read) provided extracts from eight newspaper reviews which describe it, for example, as “entertaining reading, from which even a reader trained in history can learn a lot”.⁹⁵ Similar appeals to adventure are made in the advertisement for Konrad Haemmerling's historical novel, *Der Mann, der Shakespeare hieß*, published by Deutscher Verlag (figure 6, above). In this case the reliance on “poetic fantasy” rather than on “a mass of dry dates and sober biographical details” is justified through the high-culture credentials of the central

⁹⁴ *Börsenblatt*, 103/42, 19th February 1936, p.149.

⁹⁵ *Börsenblatt*, 103/37 13th February 1936, p.128.

figure.⁹⁶ Also prominent in the illustrations are the figures of Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots, both well-known to German readers through dramatic portrayals such as Schiller's *Maria Stuart*. As will be explained in Chapters Five and Six, the subject matter of each of these – the Tudor period and pirates – are important components of the anti-British stereotype in books of the Second World War. However there is no hint of this later, critical deployment in these advertisements. It seems likely that their pre-war appeal as dramatic, almost escapist, historical material added to their usefulness as part of later wartime offerings to consumers.

There are also instances where publishers have connected their books to matters of British history, “national character” and foreign policy, when this is not the main focus of the books itself. One example of this is Hans Lührs' *Gegenspieler des Obersten Lawrence*. An archaeologist and lieutenant under the command of Major Friedrich Klein during the First World War, Lührs was part of a small force who attacked British pipelines in the Middle East. This book is his account of the war and could easily have been pitched as an example of German heroism, however the title foregrounds his famous “opponent”, T.E. Lawrence, who achieved notoriety not only through his exploits in the First World War, but through very successful post-war publicity for his books and talks. Similarly, the title and advertising for Hans Hummel's *Vor dem Ziel steht England: Das Leben Ferdinand de Lesseps* pitches the life and work of the French diplomat who was instrumental in building the Suez Canal in terms of its effects on Britain's role in contemporary Mediterranean affairs.⁹⁷ The advertisement in the *Börsenblatt* pitches the story as one of “civic-mindedness, imagination, unscrupulousness and tenacity” versus “the Briton’s more sober examination of the world, his clearer view into the future, his more intricate politics”. In this description, coupled with the title chosen for the book, the praise for Britain's foreign policy acumen overshadows the skills of the French central figure. This change in focus can also be seen through a comparison of some blurbs with the authors' introductions. Karl Haushofer's *Weltmeere und Weltmächte* (published

⁹⁶ *Börsenblatt*, 105/49 27th January 1938, p.180.

⁹⁷ *Börsenblatt*, 106/39 15th February 1939, p.135.

1937) linked geopolitical and historical concerns, and also has a big name thinker as a selling point. While his introduction does not mention Britain at all, the publisher's blurb makes much of Anglo-German encounters at sea and the dangers of continuing to overlook this topic.⁹⁸ This indicates that the publisher recognised Britain as an important concern of potential customers.

This prioritisation of the relevance of British imperial history is likely connected to the relevance of British Empire to many global “problem zones” and “questions” of contemporary international relations. As explained in the section above on shop windows, a common marketing technique was to link books to information currently available through other media, and to events at the forefront of people's minds. This was not only a consideration for booksellers in planning their displays but also for publishers when pitching books to shop owners. Speculation and uncertainty are effective techniques for selling information and potential weaknesses of the British Empire seem to have been increasingly discussed up to the outbreak of war, based on publication announcements and reviews. The question of Anglo-German relations also appears to have been a great concern. An advertisement for General von Eisenhart-Rothe and Walter Beckmann's *Deutsch-britische Front in der Geschichte*, published by Kyffhäuser-Verlag, carries the headline “A book of understanding”.⁹⁹ Addressing the bookseller directly, it explains how customers will be reading daily reports of the growing cooperation between the British Legion (encouraged by Edward VIII) and the German *Frontkämpfer* organisations, and states that the bookseller will have many customers who are strongly interested in the two countries' *Verständigungspolitik* and will be looking for more information. Under these circumstances, the advertisement claims, the book will be easy to sell. The publisher Wilhelm Goldmann made particularly good use of press cuttings in their marketing. An advertisement for Robert Bauer's *Irland: Die Insel der Heiligen und Rebellen* consists of book cover, basic details of format and price, an unattributed, undated press cutting regarding IRA actions in January, and six attributed one-line extracts from newspaper reviews. There is nothing to

⁹⁸ On the position of Haushofer within National Socialism see Bruno Hipler, *Hitlers Lehrmeister: Karl Haushofer als Vater der NS-Ideologie* (St.Ottilien, 1996).

⁹⁹ *Börsenblatt*, 103/27 1st February 1936, p.418.

explain the connection between the article and the book, suggesting that this was a sales technique already familiar to booksellers.¹⁰⁰ Two days later, an advert for Ernie O'Malley's *Rebellen in Irland: Erlebnisse eines irischen Freiheitskämpfers*, published by Alfred Metzner Verlag, similarly references consumer interest in current events:

What do the Irish actually want?
Threatening letters sent to prominent people...
Bomb attack on Chamberlain's son...
Explosive attacks on the London Underground...
The newspapers report almost every day on these events in England. However, the reader cannot learn the connections from these individual reports, and learns even less about the background to them.
Therefore recommend to your customers the book from:
ERNIE O'MALLEY¹⁰¹

There is little here to indicate where readers' sympathies are supposed to lie, only that they will naturally be in search of information which could explain these events. This emphasis on providing a seemingly neutral but informed guiding hand through conflicting reports is common for books on foreign relations in the run-up to September 1939. For example, C.E. Graf Pückler's *Wie stark ist England?* is described in the following terms:

Some consider England and her empire to be the strongest power in the world, while others foresee her downfall and collapse. In this book Graf Pückler, who has been observing the situation in England for several years as London Correspondent for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, investigates the current state of the political, economic and military foundations of British strength, and whether the future holds any threats to these.¹⁰²

A follow-up advertisement provides an extract from "the first press review" from the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (16.02.39), which counts the book's portrayal of Britain's weaknesses as more significant than the explanation of its strengths. The book is reviewed as being a "useable guide to the being and development of the British Empire".¹⁰³

As war looked increasingly unavoidable, a tone of measured, cautious speculation and the extrapolation of future scenarios from past trends allowed books to remain relevant, even once war

¹⁰⁰ *Börsenblatt*, 106/34 9th February 1939, p.707.

¹⁰¹ *Börsenblatt*, 106/34 9th February 1939, p.732

¹⁰² *Börsenblatt*, 106/34 9th February 1939 p.734.

¹⁰³ *Börsenblatt*, 106/44 21st February, 1939 p.801.

was declared between Britain and Germany. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the approval of paper allowances for publication runs relied on proving the importance to the war effort of the book in question. From autumn 1939 until around the Summer of 1940, one of the priorities of anti-British books was to explain why all attempts at “understanding” between Britain and Germany had failed. Books published or substantially written before September 1939 often received an amended foreword or extra chapter to explain more recent developments and assure readers of the book’s continued relevance.¹⁰⁴

The introduction to *Aus Englands Schuldbuch* by Paul Bang expresses “sorrow and regret” that it is an “Aryan and in essence a Germanic people” whom he must accuse of the politics and methods of warfare he describes.¹⁰⁵ The fact that war was declared is cast as an avoidable tragedy, for which Britain deserves full blame:

One can view it as the fate of global history that Germany and England could not reach an accommodation and that the two Aryan *Kernvölker*, related by blood, now stand facing one another as sworn enemies.¹⁰⁶

Bang goes on to describe what he sees as Hitler’s efforts to reach such an accommodation with Britain, even after war had been declared, only to be met with “contempt and mockery”. To suggest that this is an ingrained, historic trait, he then quotes a letter from Bismarck to General Leopold von Gerlach in which he claims that he has always been sympathetic towards Britain, “but these people just do not wish to allow themselves to be loved by us”. This sentence, Bang says, encapsulates all of Anglo-German relations.

The capacity for much earlier works to continue to be pitched at wartime audiences and regulators is further evidenced by the blurb for Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon's *England sperrt den Kanal: Der Abschnitt Dover 1915-1917* (Werner Jacobsen’s translation of *The Dover Patrol 1915-1917*, originally published in 1919):

¹⁰⁴ Ernst Schulze’s *Sorgen des britischen Weltreiches* (Leipzig, 1939) is a good example of this, see Chapter Five.

¹⁰⁵ Paul Bang, *Aus Englands Schuldbuch* (Stuttgart: Alemannen Verlag, 1940) p.5.

¹⁰⁶ The idea that there was a Germanic “core” to the British racial and cultural mix is covered in Chapter Five.

War with England!

The methods of British policy which are being directed against Germany are the same as twenty-five years ago. When one looks back to that time at Britain's cunning naval warfare then this new edition is more than relevant to the present. It offers first-hand details about the work which went on "behind the scenes", about the guiding ideas which underpinned the military strategy, and the ways in which these were implemented. [...] The lessons of this naval warfare are a model for tactical thinking and seamanship; they are universally applicable and therefore, in the current situation in Germany, they deserve to be heeded.¹⁰⁷

This book is simultaneously a character study of the British military and navy, and a general lesson in marine warfare. Neither the advertisement nor the book itself identify a specialist audience for this work. It contains several maps and technical photos, but the information is pitched at the interested amateur. There are also five pages of related books, many from the *Kriegswissenschaftlichen Abteilung der Marine*, placing this firmly in a wider context of recent naval history, almost entirely from a German perspective. By inviting readers to "heed the lessons" of past naval battles, the advertisement draws them into questions of naval tactics over which they have no control. It presents an aspirational picture of the prospective reader engaging, in an informed manner, with matters of national importance.

That same sense of the importance of the acts of reading and of publishing, above and beyond the actual content of the book, is conveyed in the presentation of Gert Heinrich's *In Burmas Bergwäldern* (foreword October 1939). The book contains nothing about the geopolitical situation surrounding Burma, only the author's account of his scientific expedition there. The blurb describes the expedition in a manner which foregrounds the exotic location and wildlife as well as the humour and dedication of the participants. The foreword however, written by E. Stresemann, describes the "difficult circumstances" which had to be overcome to produce the book. The author, he says, "in common with all of German origin", was exposed to the "suppression of Germanism in the former Polish corridor"; a long description follows of the author's successful concealment in the moorlands near his home, quoted directly from a letter written by Heinrich to Stresemann. In this case then, the

¹⁰⁷ Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon, *England sperrt den Kanal: Der Abschnitt Dover 1915-1917* (Berlin, 1939), inside cover.

location of the expedition being described, and its wider geopolitical connections as part of the British Empire, are unimportant. Instead, this is an inspiring and entertaining story of a German undertaking, in the same vein as the heroic tales of German exploits in Africa. The book's publication is pitched as an act of continuing as normal, despite the recent declaration of war and attendant upheaval.

In contrast to the market positioning of Heinrich's first-hand account, the focus of Anton Hantschel's *Burma: vom britischen Glacis zum selbstständigen Staat*, published in 1943, is on the area's vulnerability to attack by Japan. The introduction also emphasises the history of unrest in the region as a way of showing the weaknesses of Britain and the United States in the Pacific. The same topic of Japan's role in the Pacific had been dealt with in Ernst Otto Hauser's *Japan und die Mächte* in 1935 and the potential for great consumer interest in Germany's new, exotic ally is indicated in the repeated appearances of Japanese themes within the *Börsenblatt's* suggestions for shop windows. In common with the British Empire, the topic of Japan was connected in marketing material with the idea of a world on the brink of change and Germany's projected role in the future. By linking books on Britain with areas of conflict, Britain's position was increasingly shown to be precarious while Japan was positioned as a rising power with parallels to Germany.

Conclusions

A reader's expectations of a book's content and the hopes they have of what they will gain from reading it can form long before they begin to read the first chapter. Through the shared commercial and political spaces for book advertisements in the Third Reich, in print and in bookshop windows and displays, publishers and regulatory institutions developed a common language for articulating the wider relevance of books. The above examination of the division of the book market and variety of marketing appeals has shown that the topic of British imperialism overlapped with many other segments of the market including current affairs, world history, and colonial and travel literature. As successful advertising and political propaganda (loosely defined) each make aspirational

appeals, the messages contained within this review and advertising material reveal not what readers wanted, but what readers were told they should want.

Within this, books on the wider world, the history of German colonialism, and on British imperial matters were linked, explicitly or implicitly, to the past, present and future roles of Germany and Britain in the world. The phrases and images used by publishers and authors to distinguish their books as meeting the requirements of potential customers and regulatory institutions indicate areas of overlap between the regime's self-projections and the needs of readers. Both before and during the Second World War, books on British imperial matters sat somewhere between escapism and instruction. Pre-war advertisements merged foreign excitement and adventurous tales with applicability to current events, as well as expert takes on "big questions". At a time of aiming for good relations, interest in the development of British culture and politics was directed towards thoughtful German works which purported to carefully assess the best available sources, while British works were pitched as contributing to an understanding of the British mentality, which would aid understanding between the two nations (thus bringing readers into the process, giving them a stake in German foreign affairs). Wartime blurbs and introductions naturally emphasised their contribution to the war effort, but also stressed a supposed objectivity, a stance of disappointed morality, and (frequently) of a National Socialist 'unmasking' of the hidden processes behind current events. In this way, the same position of self-improvement through informed reading and critical distance regarding British works was continued in the promotion of new, wartime reading material. These new works did not (and could not) replace the books sold prior to 1939, but, as will be explored further in the next chapter, they were framed in such a way as to encourage a reinterpretation of existing works, directed towards new "big questions".

On the whole, books on British imperial history and the state of the British Empire were linked to problem zones and "questions" of immediate geo-political relevance. The exact nature of this complex entity appears to have been of great public interest, evidenced by the marketing strategy of linking books on other topics to British imperial matters. However, material on the British Empire

was rarely incorporated into the de-historicised material on German colonialism. While the German colonial record was divided into easily-consumed portions denoting patriotic, formative endeavours towards improving a territory, similar colonial acts from British history appear as counter-examples; they are packaged as further arguments that Germany is deserving of colonies, rather than as edifying examples in their own right. The British Empire remained an exotic, "unknowable" and potentially dangerous realm, which could be explored and explained with German (or Germanic) expertise.

Chapter Two

Criticism between Friends: An Anglo-German Dialogue on Empire

Introduction

The time for Anglo-German settlement is now. [...] We cannot allow the British Empire to be dragged down to disaster by the separate French alliances with Moscow and Prague. Neither the continental nor the colonial question is an insuperable obstacle to friendship between the British and German peoples.¹⁰⁸

The above quote is from an English “reader” for use in German schools, published by B.G.

Teubner, which contains nine extracts from British texts about Germany. This passage is from an editorial from November 1937 by James Louis Garvin of *The Observer*. The text is abridged and the explanatory notes disagree with several of Garvin’s assertions (such as his opening claim that the Allies never had as a war aim the confiscation of Germany’s colonies) but the inclusion of this text conveys to German schoolchildren that there is some sympathy for Germany’s demands in Britain. An earlier volume from the same series, *National Socialism Seen through English Eyes*, describes its purpose as overcoming the “centuries of separation from the common Germanic mother-tribe” which makes Anglo-German understanding difficult.¹⁰⁹ Further blocks to friendship, it claims, are caused by a “political conception” which seeks to combine “freedom and power, liberalism and imperialism” in a way which is difficult for Germans to understand, as well as the legacy of British “atrocious propaganda” from the First World War.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the role of the topic of empire in books which sought to make sense of the possibility of friendship between Britain and Germany. The books examined here, whether written for schoolchildren or adults, formed a cross-border “conversation” in print. In this exchange of ideas, staged by publishers for the German consumer, German writers offered their assessment of the “public mood” in Britain, and British writers’ impressions of the “new” Germany were presented to German readers, singly or as part of edited collections. This analysis will

¹⁰⁸ Max Zabeck and Albert Rost (eds.), *Englishmen Look at the Reich* (Leipzig, 1938) p.30.

¹⁰⁹ Wilhelm Gschwend, *National Socialism seen through English Eyes* (Leipzig, 1935) inside cover.

primarily concern itself with the six year period from mid-1933 to mid-1939. However, as relations worsened in the run-up to the Second World War, German writers began to anticipate the conflict and formulate arguments against Britain. Rather than stop at the beginning of the war, some lines of continuity will be traced forwards, to show how the pre-war conversation formed a foundation for wartime accusations of British duplicity and hypocrisy.

As set out in the introduction to this thesis, debates on the Nazi regime's attitude towards Britain, almost always described in terms of Hitler's own opinions, have overwhelmingly been bound up with establishing Hitler's foreign policy aims and with explaining the failure of Britain's appeasement strategy to prevent Germany's expansion into Eastern Europe. The significance of the British Empire to these political and diplomatic histories was as a demarcation of Britain and Germany's primary zones of interest, and in raising the possibility that if Germany renounced her claim to an overseas empire and did not threaten Britain's dominance on other continents, Britain in turn would not interfere with Germany's plans for Central and Eastern Europe. This is Hitler's programme as it appears to be set out in *Mein Kampf* and there is no evidence to suggest that this was to change in the short-term. Two historians have revisited this topic in depth in the past twenty years, examining different source bases and producing substantially different assessments of "German" views of Britain and the British Empire.¹¹⁰ In his two articles on Anglo-German relations, the first of which focusses on the developing attitude of Hitler and his various sources of advice, the second of which looks at the operations of Ribbentrop's office, G.T. Waddington adopts the approach of earlier papers and limits the range of "German views" to only those of the government. Tracing the many gains and losses in the search for a working relationship between the Nazi takeover and the declaration of war in 1939, he identifies a growing disillusionment with the

¹¹⁰ G.T. Waddington, 'Hassgegener: German Views of Great Britain in the Later 1930s' *History* 81 (1996) pp.22-39; "An idyllic and unruffled atmosphere of complete Anglo-German misunderstanding": Aspects of the Operations of the Dienststelle Ribbentrop in Great Britain, 1934-1938' *History* 82 (1997) pp.44-72; Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000).

assumed power of the British Empire as British politicians failed to force their will on Italy over Abyssinia:

Far from witnessing a display of that formidable power with which he associated the British empire and which he wished to share, the Führer looked on in amazement as Britain tried desperately to avert an Anglo-Italian breach with offers of compensation and compromise solutions.¹¹¹

Gerwin Strobl's 2000 study *The Germanic Isle* does not go over the familiar ground of Anglo-German negotiations, but seeks to place the views of Hitler and other Party figures in a wider context of German perceptions of Britain from the Weimar period until the end of the Second World War. He also takes as a starting point the idea that Hitler held the British Empire in great esteem as an embodiment of power and "a peculiar British 'ruthlessness' in war and peace".¹¹² However, he contends that this deeply held admiration continued throughout the regime, and that it provided a model for Hitler's expansion plans into Eastern Europe. Two pieces of evidence for his claim are worth examining in tandem, as they appear in his study, to illustrate a methodological problem which arises from his analysis and which will have a bearing on this chapter. Firstly, he points to a tendency in Party publications such as *Der Angriff* to have articles on British imperial history "which had no obvious bearing on contemporary affairs". These he reads as lessons for the German reader in the importance of decisive action in the pursuit of national aims. In particular he seizes on the language in an article from the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* which discussed the Fashoda crisis of 1898:

The focus of the article was, however, firmly on Britain's handling of the crisis. This culminated in the thought that 'when the moment came, Britain seized the opportunity brutally'. The link - in language alone - with Hitler's views about Britain is obvious. And the fact that this article appeared in the wake on German armies re-entering the Rhineland is surely no coincidence either. It suggests that for all the Nazi rhetoric about an 'unprecedented age', some party members saw the Third Reich following where other imperial powers had led.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Waddington (1996), p.27.

¹¹² Strobl, p.223.

¹¹³ Strobl, p.62.

Immediately following this, concerning the occupation of Czechoslovakia, he points out that the designation 'Protectorate' had no precedent in German history, but had clear parallels in the British rule of India. He claims that such explicit parallels were intended to shame Britain into “silent acquiescence”:

The fiction of Czech self-government under the ‘protection’ of the Reich was intended above all for British eyes. For the new dispensation in Prague was a deliberate mirror image of Britain’s own relations with the so-called Princely States in India [...] Creating such parallels was an act of conscious malice.¹¹⁴

These opposing interpretations of two occasions on which the choice of language appears carefully selected raise the problem of establishing the audience of any given statement by a National Socialist mouthpiece, whether speaking via (what is presumed to be) an approved article in the press or through the choice of name for a newly acquired territory. Strobl suggests that the article was an honest communication to readers that Britain’s past “brutal” foreign policy was a model for Germany’s current path, whereas the naming of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia had the British government as its audience and was a prelude to accusing the British of hypocrisy when they protested. Given the British government’s stake in developments in the Rhineland, it is not unreasonable to read the Fashoda article as a similar reminder that Britain’s foreign policy record is far from spotless. With regards to the establishment of the “Protectorate”, however, more recent research has emphasised the haphazard way in which occupation policy was designed and put into practice. In *Hitler’s Empire*, Mark Mazower describes a last-minute scramble after a workable strategy for rule in occupied Czechoslovakia, formulated literally overnight not by Hitler, but by a team led by Wilhelm Stuckart. Their reasoning, according to Mazower, was not dominated solely by thoughts of the British example but drew on French treaties with Tunis and Morocco as well as the position of Egypt, Iraq and Cuba.

¹¹⁴ Strobl, pp.62-3.

Involved in the process of relationship-building between Britain and Germany were, aside from diplomats and other members of both governments, a plethora of semi-autonomous groups and individual voices.¹¹⁵ These included Ribbentrop's *Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft* / Anglo-German Fellowship and its youth organisation the *Deutsch-Englische Kreis*, which organised youth camps and produced the magazine *Unser Lager* / *Our Camp*. As we saw in the previous chapter, there was an almost symbiotic relationship between coverage of current affairs in the press and the publication of relevant material, whether personal observations or relevant historical background, in books. Many authors, particularly journalists acting as special correspondents, combined personal observations with extracts from newspapers to assess the public mood in their target country. Among these voices were many military and literary figures who could combine the themes of comradeship across the national divide with a rhetoric of realistic peace-seeking from people who knew war, rather than from internationalist pacifists. Naval officer and writer Fritz Otto Busch and war correspondent Sir Philip Gibbs, whose works are discussed below, both fall into this category. This chapter will first examine some of the views of the Nazi elite, exemplified by Hitler, Goebbels and Rosenberg, in order to establish what "meaning" the British Empire appeared to hold for them. It will then turn to a selection of books published between 1933 and 1939 which created a conversation on the role of empire – British possessions and German former possessions – and which appear to deliberately perpetuate this discussion among "equal" parties rather than seek a solution to the *Kolonialfrage*. Matthias Schmitt's *Kolonien für Deutschland* uses photographs and photo-montages, readily understood graphs, tables of statistics, and biographical information and has been chosen because it combines elements of many other texts advocating the return of Germany's former colonies into a single, engaging book.¹¹⁶ The book was also approved for

¹¹⁵ Dietrich Aigner, *Das Ringen um England: das deutsch-britische Verhältnis, die öffentliche Meinung 1933-1939. Tragödie zweier Völker* (Munich, 1969); Richard Griffiths, *Fellow travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany, 1933-9* (London, 1980); Ian Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's Road to War* (London, 2004).

¹¹⁶ Matthias Schmitt, *Kolonien für Deutschland. Eine Forderung der nationalen Ehre, des gleichen Rechtes, der wirtschaftlichen Notwendigkeit* (Stuttgart, 1939).

inclusion into the *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie. Germany Speaks*, edited by Joachim von Ribbentrop, contains contributions by German politicians aimed at a sympathetic British audience and is a good indication of official attempts to steer discussion.¹¹⁷ Sir Philip Gibbs' *England Spricht*, a translation of *Ordeal in England*, offers first-hand observations on British reactions to the abdication crisis, rearmament, and Germany's foreign policy demands, describing what Gibbs sees as a gulf between official policy and public opinion.¹¹⁸ Abridged extracts from Gibbs' reports on the First World War and his opinions on Germany appear frequently in school English "readers" (see Chapter Three) and he was often quoted in discussions of differing perceptions of the war, particularly his post-war books *The Realities of War* and *Now It Can Be Told* (both published in 1920).¹¹⁹ *England Spricht* was translated into German by Fritz Otto Busch, a member of the PEN Club from his instalment in April 1933 as part of the *Gleichschaltung* process until the German branch was formally excluded in 1934.¹²⁰ His own book *Flug nach England* is primarily a travel account, providing first-hand observations on the British and on Anglo-German relations for a German audience.¹²¹ The three texts from Ribbentrop, Gibbs and Busch form a self-referential commentary on relations while seeking to improve them.

Finally, this chapter will identify one strain of criticism regarding the British Empire which drew from these earlier ideas and formed part of the arguments directed against Britain at the start of the Second World War. In contrast to the books by Ribbentrop, Gibbs and Busch, *Als Nationalsozialist in England*, written by the *Völkische Beobachter*'s London correspondent Hans W. Thost, is primarily an assertion of his own political identity and of the superior awareness and understanding gained by Germans under Hitler when compared to the British.¹²² Similarly, the book *Twilight over*

¹¹⁷ Joachim von Ribbentrop (ed.), *Germany Speaks. By 21 Leading Members of Party and State* (London, 1938).

¹¹⁸ Philip Gibbs, *England Spricht* (Berlin, 1937).

¹¹⁹ Angela Schwarz, 'Visitors to National Socialist Germany: In a Familiar or in a Foreign Country?' *Journal of Contemporary History* 28/3 (1993), pp.487-509; Jon Lawrence, 'Forging and Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain' *The Journal of Modern History* 75/3 (2003) pp.557-589.

¹²⁰ R.A. Wilford, 'The PEN Club 1930-50' *Journal of Contemporary History* 14/1 (1979) pp.99-116.

¹²¹ Fritz Otto Busch, *Flug nach England: Ein Beitrag zum gegenseitigen Verstehen* (Munich, 1937).

¹²² Hans W. Thost, *Als Nationalsozialist in England* (Munich, 1939); Thost's activities in London as part of Rosenberg's attempts to carve out a role for himself in the area of foreign policy are described in Robert Cecil, *The Myth of the Master Race: Alfred Rosenberg and Nazi Ideology* (London, 1972).

England or *Dämmerung über England* by the Anglo-Irish fascist William Joyce is analysed here to show how disappointment and despair at Britain's declaration of war against Germany produced damning criticism of the precise nature of British imperialism from a self-confessed supporter of the British Empire as a concept. Like Thost, Joyce was a committed anti-Semitic nationalist who had tried hard to get British society to recognise what he saw as the Jewish threat.¹²³ The ways in which Thost and Joyce bring their obvious resentment to bear on the nation which refused to take notice of their warnings sheds further light on the connections between empire, relations and the views of individuals within National Socialism.

How did prominent Nazis view the British Empire?

The writings and recorded statements of prominent National Socialists from the movement's beginnings in the 1920s to the outbreak of the Second World War reveal a preoccupation with the apparent decline of the British Empire and the political forces behind its power, compared to the facade which the British tried to maintain in the name of "prestige". In Book Three, Chapter Six of *The Myth of the 20th Century*, Rosenberg sets out what he sees as the developing battle lines between West and East and, frequently conflated with this, between white and non-white races.¹²⁴ The qualities which allowed the British to build their empire still exist, he claims, but have been eroded by industrialisation, capitalist finance and the "Franco-Jewish sickness" which forms the current system of thought in the West.¹²⁵ He blames the "selfish aggressive imperialism of the West" for causing a well of resentment which may break out as "revenge" from the East. Against this, he sees the British Empire as a protective structure, for example in the Suez. He also blames the arming of colonial troops against Germany in the First World War for this increase in self-awareness among non-whites and for this he primarily blames the French. In terms of consequences

¹²³ William Joyce, *Twilight over England* (Berlin, 1940).

¹²⁴ Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit* (Munich, 1939), pp.637-677.

¹²⁵ Rosenberg, p.643; p.660.

for the British Empire, he points to the demand for increased independence and self-rule in the Dominions, and the consequent weakening of London's power over the empire:

...as once what is now the United States separated from England, so are the separatist forces in the so-called Dominions now greatly strengthened, and London can only prevent the collapse of the British Empire by pliantly agreeing to all wishes for self-determination, so that England really is no longer an empire ruled from the centre, but appears as a confederation.¹²⁶

Waddington quotes a similar reaction from Hitler to the news that the British Empire was now to be officially referred to as the British Commonwealth of Nations. He declared that this sounded "as flabby as "League of Nations"" and that it was, alongside the abdication crisis, "another indication of decline".¹²⁷ Goebbels' reaction to the abdication of Edward VIII as recorded in his diary is one of baffled disappointment:

Work at home. Führer telephoned from Obersalzberg: we stylise press commentary on the English crisis. [...] So the moral hypocrites have run him to earth. A hard blow for the empire. I don't understand the king. I would have fought and likely won. But not everyone is built that way. [...] Ribbentrop telephoned from London: in England the deepest dismay. The king was and is very popular. The English are a strange people. But they still have race.¹²⁸

In his diaries, Goebbels uses the term "*Weltreich*" almost exclusively as in the above passage, to emphasise Britain's apparent decline. In response to an anti-German article by Ramsay MacDonald, he describes him as a "senile grandfather, trusted with a (global) empire", he declares "Poor empire!" (*armes Weltreich*) following the news of students protesting in the House of Commons, and an entry for 29th July 1937 reads: "In Ireland terror against the royal couple's visit. That is the empire."¹²⁹ His diaries also show the effort which he and others put into scanning the British press for coverage of Germany, and finding opportunities to create German press coverage of British domestic and foreign policy incidents which would strengthen Germany's arguments at home and

¹²⁶ Rosenberg, p.647.

¹²⁷ Waddington (1996) pp.28-9.

¹²⁸ Diary entry from 11. December 1936, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*. (Berlin, 2000) [Retrieved 06.11.2014 from <http://www.degruyter.com.780109627.erf.sbb.spk-berlin.de/view/TJGO/TJG-3404>].

¹²⁹ Diary entries from 27th April 1935, 20th February 1937 and 29th July 1937 in *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*.

abroad. In this peace-time offensive, as in propaganda pieces from the Second World War, any seeming inconsistency or sign of hypocrisy in the “English mentality” or “English national character” was rigorously exploited.¹³⁰ Using British imperial history to accuse the British of hypocrisy also seems to have been a frequent tactic in meetings between prominent Nazis and British statesmen. For example, on his second visit to London in 1933, Rosenberg pointed to British methods in India when asked by Lord Vansittart about the treatment of Jews in Germany.¹³¹ This message seems to be consistent whether used in face-to-face negotiations with the British or, as will be described later in this chapter, in books for a German audience.

Private statements made by Hitler have been cited remarkably often as evidence of a genuine wish to model Germany’s occupied territories in Eastern Europe on British rule in India; in particular, the statement “What India was for England, the territories of Russia will be for us”, recorded in *Hitler’s Table Talk*, echoes throughout academic and popular writing on the subject.¹³² As this comparison between the two territories has become such a widely accepted signifier for Nazi ambitions in the East, it is worth examining Hitler’s statements on the British Empire, as recorded in *Hitler’s Table Talk*, to establish the limits of this source as a window into his view of British imperialism.¹³³

Several points emerge from this survey. Firstly, Hitler’s remarks indicate that he viewed India as the most important British possession in terms of both strategic importance and as a status symbol,

¹³⁰ For example Goebbels’ essay on “Logic and Clarity” in which he “quoted the English against themselves” and which he claims met with a warm response in the German and foreign press: Diary entry for 20th March 1935 in *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*.

¹³¹ Cecil, p.172.

¹³² Remarks recorded on the night of the 10th-11th August 1941 in H.R. Trevor-Roper (ed.), *Hitler’s Table Talk 1941-44: His Private Conversations* 2nd ed. (London, 1973) pp.23-4; The following is a sample of citations for this quote from the past ten years: André Mineau, *Operation Barbarossa: Ideology and Ethics against Human Dignity* (Amsterdam, 2004) p.35; Wendy Lower, *Nazi Empire-Building and the Holocaust in Ukraine* (Chapel Hill, 2005) p.24; Alex J. Kay, *Exploitation, Resettlement, Mass Murder: Political and Economic Planning for German Occupation Policy in the Soviet Union, 1940-1941* (Oxford, 2006) p.80; Dan Stone, *History, Memory and Mass Atrocity: Essays on the Holocaust and Genocide* (London, 2006) p.176; Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: Genocide and Extermination from Carthage to Darfur* (London, 2007) p.432; Tamás Stark and Gustavo Corni, *People on the Move: Forced Population Movements in Europe in the Second World War and its Aftermath* (Oxford, 2008) p.12; Romain Hayes, *Bose in Nazi Germany: The first account of Subhas Chandra Bose’s relationship with Hitler and the Nazi Party* (London, 2011), unpaginated prologue.

¹³³ The version used here is the second edition of that edited by H.R. Trevor-Roper, which is the version most frequently cited in the secondary literature surveyed for this thesis. A comparison of the various versions and their limitation is provided by Richard C. Carrier, “‘Hitler’s Table Talk’: Troubling Finds’ *German Studies Review* 26/3 (2003) pp.561-576.

to the extent that barely any other territory is mentioned. In terms of wartime strategy this is the possession Britain will fight hardest to save, potentially affecting their alliance with Russia.¹³⁴ In this interpretation of the state of the Alliance, the British Empire is a liability. However, Hitler viewed British politicians as being unable to abandon the “out-of-date political idea” of the European balance of power, and properly co-operate with other European nations. It was this “superstition” which Churchill used to persuade the British people into war with Germany, and this unwillingness to work “within a framework of a continental organisation” is what will lose Britain her empire.¹³⁵ In this conception, Britain’s empire is a weakness only in the sense of her arrogance and out-dated ideas regarding relations within Europe.

In his statements on India as a parallel for the future value of the Eastern Territories for German pride we can read an implied criticism of those in Germany who were fixating on a return of colonial possessions. The key to the prestige of India is the importance of a great people to have such a “vast space”, and to rule over it and “millions of people” with “a handful of men”.¹³⁶ One of his most commonly used tropes is the number of British men it takes to rule over a much larger native population. The numbers he quotes vary considerably; on 27th July 1941 he refers to “two hundred and fifty thousand men in all, including fifty thousand soldiers” governing “four hundred million Indians”, and suggests that the same number of Germans, “plus a cadre of good administrators” could dominate the space west of the Urals.¹³⁷ In November the same year, when talking about the over-centralisation of German bureaucracy, he talks of the English in India doing “exactly the opposite”, with 145,000 men governing 150 million.¹³⁸ By the 12th January 1942, the number has swelled again to 350,000 British to govern 350 million, although his emphasis is on the predicament the British would find themselves in if the Indians suddenly refused to fight for

¹³⁴ Trevor-Roper, p.53; p.180; p.207.

¹³⁵ Trevor-Roper, p.202; pp.264-5.

¹³⁶ Trevor-Roper, p.23.

¹³⁷ Trevor-Roper, p.15.

¹³⁸ Trevor-Roper, p.129.

them.¹³⁹ Three days later, in a discussion of Russian and German birthrates, he explains the source of this latest figure:

I read today that India at present numbers three hundred and eighty-eight million inhabitants, which means an increase of fifty-five millions during the last ten years.¹⁴⁰

This more specific figure of 388 million is used again on 31st January and on the 3rd March it is stated as 380 million.¹⁴¹ A similar idea is expressed on 22nd January 1942 regarding the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the full population of fifty million could have been ruled over by nine million Germans, he claims, if the Habsburgs “hadn't linked themselves so closely to the outer element of their empire”.¹⁴² What these changes point to is a hazy impression of “thousands” of Englishmen ruling roughly a thousand times as many natives, used to advocate a very general ruling strategy, gradually becoming more specific based on new information. The inclusion of the Habsburgs suggests that British rule in India was simply one well-known example of the system of rule Hitler hoped for in the East, not that it was being particularly singled out as inspiration for this policy. This ruling strategy was achieved, in part, through a system of divide and rule, and Britain's deployment is only the latest example in several:

History affords three examples where those who have seized power have succeeded in winning over the people - the Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire and the British Empire. In India the British started by dividing the country [...] In the Eastern territories, our policy should be to encourage the survival of as many religious sects and communities as possible.¹⁴³

Hitler identifies limits to the success of British rule in India, which he attributes largely to the education of Indians at British universities. There, he argues, the youth of India “learns things it would be better for it not to know”.¹⁴⁴ This echoes the sentiments of Rosenberg and H.W. Thost

¹³⁹ Trevor-Roper, p.202.

¹⁴⁰ Trevor-Roper, p.207.

¹⁴¹ Trevor-Roper, p.264.

¹⁴² Trevor-Roper, p.229.

¹⁴³ Trevor-Roper, p.671.

¹⁴⁴ Trevor-Roper, p.203.

(below) regarding the European-educated revolutionaries they saw as spread across the globe. The subject of education also allows for a moment of cynicism regarding German educators, whom he insists must never be “let loose [...] on the Eastern territories”.¹⁴⁵ This cynicism regarding German professionals find its best target in concerned, paternalistic colonial administration:

In this respect the British are our superiors. They, too, are the most frightful bureaucrats; but at least they have the sense not to exercise their bureaucracy in occupied territory to the advantage of the local inhabitant and the detriment of their own country! They have a genius for keeping others at a distance and in winning and preserving respect. Here, perhaps, we have the worst possible example of our methods - de-lousing infuriates the local inhabitants, as does our fanatical desire to civilise them.¹⁴⁶

While the British are happy to make a profit from Opium, he complains, Germans would start a moral crusade against smoking, set up “Commissions to enquire into the conditions of every aspect of human activity with a view to their amelioration”, and would conduct research which would “finish up by quickly proving that India has a civilisation older than our own!”¹⁴⁷ He continues this complaint with an anecdote from his reading which neatly combines the triple stereotype of the native population as uncivilised, the British as unfeeling, and the Germans as too soft-hearted:

I have been reading tales of the burning corpses at Benares. If we were out there, our hygiene experts would rise in their wrath and institute a crusade, backed by the most rigorous penalties, to suppress this evil practice! Every day official chemists would come and analyse the river-water, and in no time a new and gigantic Ministry of Health would be set up! The British, on the other hand, have contented themselves with forbidding the immolation of widows. The Indians can think themselves lucky we do not rule India!¹⁴⁸

This expression of annoyance at a German tendency towards “nannying” bureaucracy: health and safety initiatives, vaccination schemes and so on, echoes a long-standing tension in German debates about the usefulness of the former German colonies and the desirability of their return (see Figure 7, below). A problem with using *Hitler’s Table Talk* is that generally only Hitler’s own remarks are

¹⁴⁵ Trevor-Roper, p.354.

¹⁴⁶ Trevor-Roper, p.615.

¹⁴⁷ Trevor-Roper, pp.654-5.

¹⁴⁸ Trevor-Roper, pp.656.

recorded, with little sense of what he is reacting to. So many of his statements appear as complaints against a prevailing view in Germany, including the comparison between Russia and India, that they are best read as engagements with ongoing discussions than as decisive, programmatic statements or a reflection of fixed ideas about the British Empire. Frequent references to his reading and his recommendation of books to others further place his views within an exchange of developing ideas about British imperialism.¹⁴⁹

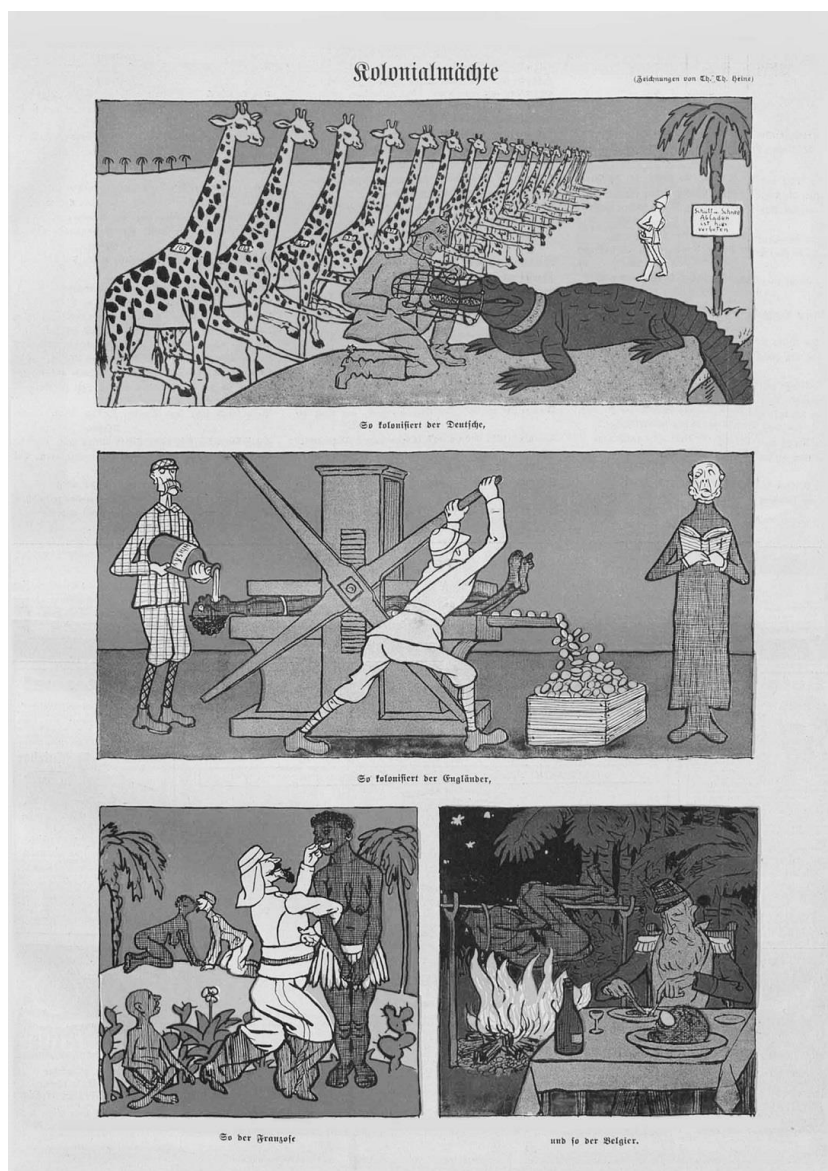


Figure 7: Thomas Theodor Heine for *Simplicissimus* 9/6 (03.05.1904), p.5.

¹⁴⁹ For example he mentions “Alsdorff’s book, which should be read by every diplomat”, which he claims shows that “it was not the British who taught Indians evil ways”: Trevor-Roper, p.655; This likely refers to Ludwig Alsdorff, *Indien* (Berlin, 1940), although the specifics he mentions do not reflect the book’s content.

The unanswerable “Colonial Question”

Regarding the *Kolonialfrage*, too, a gulf existed between the position of the government and the question as it was presented to the German population. According to Sebastian Conrad, the demand for the return of Germany’s former colonies was an issue able to unite members of the *Reichstag* in the Weimar period, despite remaining a political “side issue”.¹⁵⁰ What this indicates is that it was a strong enough idea to rally cross-party support, but was not a practical priority for any government while in power. Little wonder, then, that this demand was included in the NSDAP’s programme. The topic continued to gain at least casual support during the Nazi period; the *Reichskolonialbund* had over two million members in 1940 compared to the 43,000 members of the German Colonial Society in 1914.¹⁵¹ However, the relationship of the movement to the regime declined as the focus of planning moved to the development of occupied territories in the East.¹⁵² In negotiations with Britain the colonial question was almost entirely treated as a bargaining tool and red herring, rather than as a real priority.¹⁵³

Despite the limited influence of colonial lobby groups on politics, they had a significant impact in the cultural realm, perpetuating myths of German benevolent rule and the “loyal Askaris” who had fought against the British occupation of German colonies during the First World War and were even now, according to campaigners, eagerly awaiting the return of their former masters. Keeping these feelings alive in the population as a whole meant mobilising particular types of narratives in a colonial strain of *völkisch* literature / cultural production through, amongst other things, books, pamphlets, magazines for adults and children, postcards and calendars. Memorialisation also took place in a participatory way through spatial practices. Huge crowds turned out to welcome Lettow-Vorbeck and Heinrich Schnee back to Berlin in 1919; part of the *Dolchstoßlegende* was that

¹⁵⁰ Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History* (Cambridge, 2012) p.188.

¹⁵¹ Conrad, p.189.

¹⁵² Willecke Sandler ‘Here Too Lies Our *Lebensraum*’ in Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann and Maiken Umbach, *Heimat, Region, and Empire: Spatial Identities under National Socialism* (Houndmills, 2012) pp.148-165; Karsten Linne, *Deutschland jenseits des Äquators? Die NS-Kolonialplanungen für Afrika* (Berlin, 2008).

¹⁵³ Waddington (1996); Andrew J. Crozier, *Appeasement and Germany’s Last Bid for Colonies* (London, 1988).

German resistance in East Africa, led by Lettow-Vorbeck, never capitulated.¹⁵⁴ As mentioned in Chapter One, this popular enthusiasm was not only useful for the interest groups, as part of a political campaign, but also to advertisers wanting to tap into this sense of excitement produced by exotic and colonial subject matter. Keeping memory of the German colonies alive was a specific campaign tactic for colonial advocates, which dovetailed with lucrative marketing for publishers. Ethnographic shows and “colonial weeks” were organised by many cities and there was an increase in the publication of colonial literature such as Lettow-Vorbeck’s *Heia Safari!* (1920) and Hans Grimm’s *Volk ohne Raum* (1926), of which over 650,000 copies had been sold by 1945.¹⁵⁵ Regardless of the level of desire for overseas colonies, arguing against the reasons given for their confiscation and therefore attacking the Treaty of Versailles was a point of national pride and so presenting the German colonial record as positive was a nationalist goal in itself. An important counter to the *Kolonialschuldfrage* was found in the colonial records of other European powers. As explained in the introduction to this thesis, since their beginnings, the colonial projects of European nations had incited criticism and condemnation from other nations. The rise of the war correspondent and the mass media brought this to new heights at the turn of the century, with criticisms of the Belgians in the Congo, British actions in the Boer War, and the Herero massacre. These developments brought the moral questions arising in far-flung lands into the homes and conversation of interested readers, and invited them to draw parallels with other events, and form conclusions about the racial hierarchy, rise and fall of civilisations, and the rights and responsibilities of ruling nations.

The comparison of competing imperialisms before 1918 and in Germany’s post-colonial reflections also incorporated assumptions about differences in national character. For example, in a 1904 cartoon by Theodor Heine in *Simplicissimus*, stereotypes of the Germans, British, French and Belgians as colonisers are presented for comparison (figure 7, above). While the second panel

¹⁵⁴ Conrad, p.187.

¹⁵⁵ Conrad, p.192.

includes a clear criticism of British materialism, the first shows German bureaucracy taken to ridiculous, futile lengths; the placing of a muzzle on a crocodile and the detail of the snow-related regulations on the palm tree, are the epitome of misplaced administrative concern, while the composition of the four panels draws the eye to the box of money being filled by the British machinery. The impression given by these two larger panels (ignoring the outright condemnation of miscegenation in French colonies and murder in the Belgian Congo) is that successful and morally correct colonialism would combine some of both British and German approaches, although this issue of *Simplicissimus* had an overall theme of scathing criticism of colonialism in general. While the specific charges of mismanagement which formed the *Kolonialschuldlüge* were an affront to national pride and were countered with positive portrayals in various media, there was also a feeling among some that Germany had been too considerate and not practical enough, in terms of getting the most out of her overseas possessions. The concept that the German colonial experiment had been a failure of the “old” Germany, to be improved upon by “new” Germany, was politically useful, as was the contradictory view that the colonial project's alleged faults were a smear campaign by Germany's enemies; both therefore coexisted through the lifespan of the Third Reich. As campaign literature, many of the pamphlets and books aimed at a German readership which made the case for the return of Germany's former colonies brought together a variety of methods for presenting their arguments. Representative of this multi-faceted approach is Matthias Schmitt's *Kolonien für Deutschland*. Schmitt employed a combination of informative and emotional appeals, memorialising Germany's past achievements with photo montages of colonial figures but also presenting detailed rebuttals to common arguments against colonial return. A common approach in campaign material which is used extensively by Schmitt is to present statistics as illustrated graphs, showing in a clear and engaging way the productiveness of the colonies or Germany's need for overseas territory. For example, one graph in *Kolonien für Deutschland* (figure 8, below) portrays the population density of various European powers compared with the area of their empires.

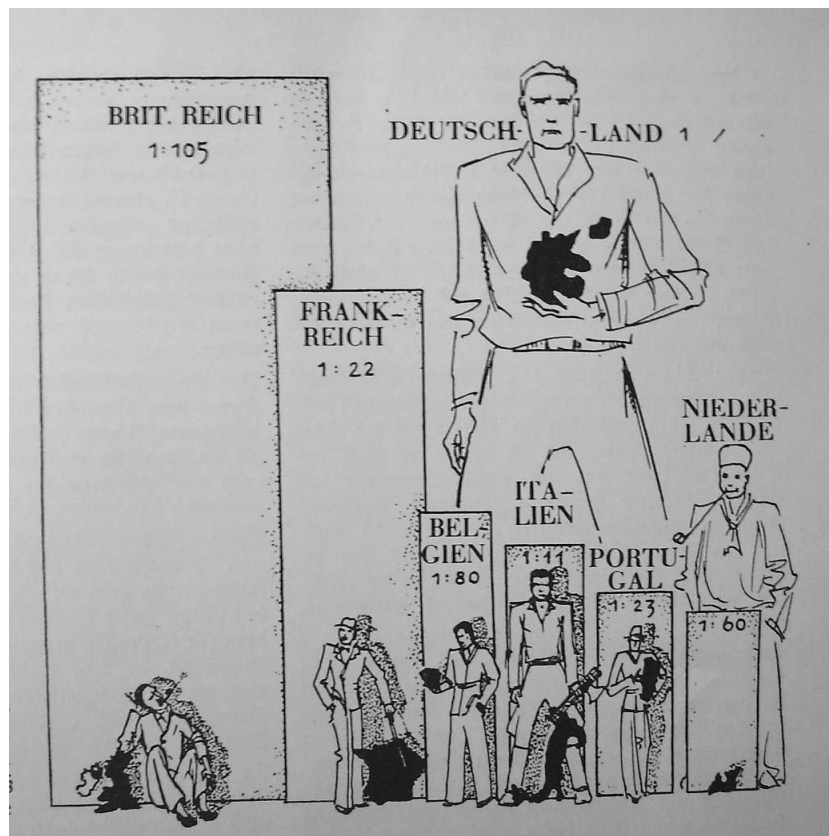


Figure 8: *Kolonien für Deutschland* (1939) p.21.

In Schmitt's diagram, the size of the figures represents population density while the columns represent the area of each nation's empire. The figures themselves are given in the accompanying text, however the illustration conveys additional messages. The steady, dynamic pose of Germany (and Italy, clearly marked as fascist by the *fasces* symbol) contrasts strongly with the more casual poses of France and Britain, suggesting a discrepancy between national character (i.e. the national will) and reward in the form of territory. Making the size of the figure representing German population roughly equivalent to the size of the column for the British Empire creates a visual link between the two; in order to create a fair balance between population and territory, the illustration suggests, Germany should have an empire similar in scope to that of Britain.

Books which combined discussion of the Colonial Question with an appeal specifically to Britain made similar arguments from statistics such as these but also appealed to what was seen as a peculiarly British sense of "fair play" (usually not translated). As with the diplomatic negotiations, the creation of common ground through the discussion of the Colonial Question was an end in itself, beyond the actual outcome of the dialogue. This artificial "conversation", created and

perpetuated through books, was used as a vehicle for messages about mutual respect and understanding between the British and Germans as equal parties, united by their colonial experiences. How this was achieved through layers of cultural references can be seen in the connections between three books: *Germany Speaks*, edited by Ribbentrop; *England Spricht*, a translation by Fritz Otto Busch of Philip Gibbs' *Ordeal in England*; and Busch's own book *Flug nach England*.

Germany Speaks, written specifically for a British audience and published in 1938, consists of twenty one explanations of particular aspects of National Socialist Germany, by people in positions of responsibility. Contributions include 'The Press and World Politics' by Reich Chief of Press Otto Dietrich, General Ritter von Epp on 'The Colonial Problem' and Ernst Wilhelm Bohle on 'Germans Abroad'. The volume concludes with an essay by Freiherr von Rheinbaben titled 'Germany and England. What has been: What is: What ought to be'. The essay on Germany's colonial demands begins by asserting Germany's right to make this demand in the first place, and then runs through statistical arguments about raw materials and population density; von Epp's declared aim is to establish the factual basis for Germany's claims. However, in other essays in the volume, more emotional appeals are made to Britain's colonial and seafaring heritage, and the kinship and common interests the British therefore share with Germans. For example, Bohle's essay begins with a mention of his childhood in the British Empire (first Yorkshire, then South Africa), which he claims gives him a greater understanding of Britain and the British than someone who has only made a study of the country. He offers this information, he says, as his critics "have entirely failed to appreciate the significance of the facts indicated".¹⁵⁶ Von Rheinbaben also complains of undue criticism, blaming it in part on the misinformation he sees as being spread abroad and a press manipulated by elements that fear or are jealous of a strong Germany.¹⁵⁷ The tone is strident but he

¹⁵⁶ E.W.Bohle, 'Germans Abroad' in Ribbentrop (ed.), *Germany Speaks* pp.326-342, here p.326.

¹⁵⁷ Freiherr von Rheinbaben, 'Germany and England. What has been: What is: What ought to be' in Ribbentrop (ed.), *Germany Speaks* pp.366-407.

also uses cultural references to establish common ground. To show the interaction of these, it is worth quoting an extended passage in full:

I believe that if I were to employ in Germany to-day the method, say, that Sir Philip Gibbs applied to his own countrymen in his extremely interesting book *Ordeal in England*, I should have to describe the frame of mind produced in Germany during five years of National Socialist government somewhat as follows: "let a portion of the international Press vilify and misjudge us - after so many years of humiliation we have to-day a new, magnificent and strong Germany. We shall attack nobody, but woe to those who attack us!" I could make this feeling still more clear to English readers by citing some of what in my opinion are the finest lines in Rudyard Kipling's *Seven Seas*:

Stand to your work and be wise, certain of sword and pen,

Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a world of men.

That should have been the spirit pervading "Britannia ruling the waves". It corresponds well, however, with the spirit that once again animates the German people. Who will deny Germany's present Führer the historic merit of having made this national pride, this calm feeling of security, and this manliness the common property of his people?¹⁵⁸

The inclusion of British literary and cultural references displays a knowledge of English writings and thought and a willingness to understand the country. The choice of references is also telling. Philip Gibbs' book had been published the previous year and was heavily critical of socialist and anti-German elements in British politics and society. The lines of poetry are the closing lines to 'England's Answer', the final part of Kipling's 'A Song of the English'. The poem is an appeal to solidarity between the British mainland and the farthest reaches of the empire based on ties of race and blood, but also on mutual prosperity and security, and calls for hard work in the pursuit of long-term goals rather than short-term gain.¹⁵⁹ Linking Germany's national hopes directly to the sense of pride and the virtues of duty and hard work which Kipling's ascribes to British colonial endeavours places them beyond criticism. There is a distinct appeal to "fair play" in von Rheinbaben's claim that Germany only wants the security and national pride which England already enjoys, as well as

¹⁵⁸ Von Rheinbaben, p.383.

¹⁵⁹ Rudyard Kipling, *The Seven Seas* (London, 1896); for an analysis of the poem's theme and reception see Elleke Boehmer, 'The Worlding of the Jingo Poem' *The Yearbook of English Studies* 41/2 (2011) pp.41-57; Robert H. MacDonald, *The Language of Empire: Myths and Metaphors of Popular Imperialism, 1880-1918* (Manchester, 1994) pp.149-173.

in his choice to include the words “men in a world of men”. The complaint or warning that the British freedom of the press is a myth and that a conspiracy of interests is providing the British public with a distorted view of Germany is a common one in German texts on relations as well as in part justifying the existence and distribution of this book.

In the foreword to his translation of Gibbs’ *Ordeal in England*, Busch describes the book as a “pleasant and just [...] voice in the wilderness of English opinions on us Germans and the Third Reich”.¹⁶⁰ The contribution it makes to increased understanding between both peoples will, according to Busch, be of benefit to the whole of Europe, and he singles out as evidence of the book’s importance the fact that English and German readers can each draw the same lessons from it. The book itself begins by assessing the public mood on the occasions of the death of George V, the abdication crisis (which, as mentioned above, was confusing for some German observers) and the coronation of George VI. The colonial question is covered at the end of the tenth chapter, which otherwise discusses the question of what forces in Germany and Britain are looking to start a war. According to Gibbs, the potential return of Germany’s former colonies is difficult for many British people not only because of the difficulty of complying, but because Hitler has declared it to be a “point of national necessity and honour”. His arguments are thus placed in opposition to what he sees as a knee-jerk reaction against National Socialist demands. He points to objections on military grounds i.e. the strategic importance of these colonies as submarine bases, however his own objections are practical, legal ones. Due to the number of countries involved in administering these areas, it would be impossible for Britain to return them unilaterally. However, he states that frequent mentions in the press allow the issue to continue to weigh on the British public’s conscience and predicts that the situation will cause problems in future. He then makes an appeal to fairness and best use of the land:

¹⁶⁰ Fritz Otto Busch, foreword to Philip Gibbs, *England Spricht* (Berlin, 1937), pp.7-8.

Peace in Europe is surely worth a concession to Germany, who is being robbed of every possibility of colonial activity by a power who has her own extensive possessions, which in parts lie useless and undeveloped.¹⁶¹

According to Gibbs, this could be achieved by a return to the open door policy, by which Germans would be able to freely settle and trade with these areas again. If Britain does not hold the door open, so he warns, one day it may be beaten down. Beyond this cooperation, he predicts that the question of formal rule will remain a “curse”, left by those who designed a peace settlement without due concern for the future. At the end of the section he returns to Germany’s peaceful intentions and the pettiness of fighting over colonies:

Is the colonial question worth a world war or a bloody conflict between us and Germany? The question answers itself, it is absurd! A German diplomat who knows the plans and intentions of Hitler has assured me that the *Führer* will never make the colonial question an excuse for war.¹⁶²

This conciliatory attitude, founded on pragmatism and the need to ensure continued peace, resonates with the sentiment expressed in Garvin’s editorial in the opening quote for this chapter. Under Gibb’s proposed solution, Germany need not be excluded from all colonial activities and the benefits that come from this, simply because Britain cannot unilaterally return the former colonies. In this text, Germany’s claim is acknowledged and cooperation proposed even though the outcome is not exactly that demanded by Germany. In his own book, *Flug nach England*, Busch offers a fictional exchange with a sample German-friendly British person on the subject of colonies. The British “response” proposes the same solution as Gibbs, though expressed in a more casual way:

Say, what do you Germans even want? Be happy that you no longer have any colonies. They only cost money and you can see here that we have to pay more for our goods from the Dominions and colonies than if we get them from abroad. Which naturally we do anyway! If we guarantee you raw materials then you’ll only get the benefit of it, and won’t need to worry about expensive colonies!¹⁶³

To this Busch counters, for the benefit of the reader, that the British either do not agree or choose to ignore the fact that Germany cannot pay for colonial wares in competition with other powers. To

¹⁶¹ Gibbs, p.210.

¹⁶² Gibbs, p.212.

¹⁶³ Busch, *Flug nach England*, p.47.

support his assertion he refers to “arguments made by Hitler and Göring in speeches”, clearly expecting readers to be familiar with these. His fictional conversation continues:

To the objection that we Germans would certainly not allow such an imbalance to develop if we had colonies, and that with the help of our organisational skills and – not to be forgotten! – our colonial experience, our practical wits, we would certainly make the situation productive, the Englishman answers with a meaningful shrug of the shoulders and an expressive sideways glance which essentially says: “Yes, the Devil knows you’d manage that!”¹⁶⁴

What this says to German readers, alongside reinforcing a positive view of Germany’s colonial past, is that the British respect German colonial and organisational skills, even as a rival. Crucially, this artificial exchange comes to a conclusion which runs counter to that put forward by Gibbs, in the book translated by Busch. In this case study, the act of running through these arguments and presenting the ensuing “conversation” is an end in itself; presenting the reader with a single “solution” to the colonial problem is not the main goal. Instead, these three books, and others such as the schoolbooks mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, offer their readers a vision of Anglo-German relations in which Germans show respect for the British mentality and their culture, in particular as an imperial nation, and are rewarded with a fair hearing and a reciprocal acknowledgement of their colonial past and current needs. The next and final section will show how this relationship was presented to German readers by authors who recognised that such an understanding would not be reached, shortly before and during the Second World War.

From "fair play" to crying foul

In the opening paragraph of *Flug nach England*, Busch quotes an Englishman, as part of a gathering of international ferry passengers, making light of the threat which Germans see in the Jews. The concept that the English are blind to a threat which they have in common with Germany, and which should be a unifying factor between the two nations, also provides the starting-point for H.W. Thost’s *Als Nationalsozialist in England*. He begins by describing the friendly relations between the

¹⁶⁴ Busch, *Flug nach England*, p.47.

residents of Cologne and British occupying soldiers, who would be welcome to return as friends and guests, in contrast to the French who returned as invaders.¹⁶⁵ Having established this shared experience on European soil, his focus then moves to unrest across the globe; to “Stalin’s Jewish agitators” from Germany and Spain to India and China. He points out that the subordinates of Gandhi, “this haggard, bespectacled Hindu with the loin-cloth and the penchant for goat’s milk”, are Indian students who have studied in European capitals, including Moscow, and have returned, “a heap of undigested European politics in their stomachs”, unable to find employment suited to their level of education.¹⁶⁶ Quoting an article by Rosenberg in the *Völkische Beobachter*, Thost points to the absurdity of British reactions to this threat, describing how the “pacifist” MacDonald is now sending tanks and bombers against his Indian ‘comrades’:

Today, at the beginning of 1939, the “state of war” is exactly the same. The Faqir of Ipi still lives in a cave in the region of Waziristan, sending his warriors against solitary British battalions. British aircraft bombs still come humming into rebel villages. In London this is called “sanctions” and people are outraged when one compares it to the use of bombs by nationalist Spain or by Japan.¹⁶⁷

The purpose of Thost’s description of this conflict within the British Empire is not to argue for one side or the other, but to argue against any view of the situation which does not map onto a race-based, National Socialist understanding of the world. As a further example, he describes strikes by miners in South Africa as initiated by Jewish interests:

The Hebrews control not only the gold mines and diamond fields, the exchanges and therefore a majority of the whole economy but also – as everywhere – the Marxist movement. And so it came to pass, during the time period under discussion here, that – probably for the first time in the history of the white race – unemployed whites demonstrated alongside Negroes. That was without doubt a serious symptom for the British Empire and by extension for the civilised world.¹⁶⁸

In these passages, the British Empire is both a space in which different races interact, and an unregulated ‘playground’, within which Jewish / Marxist forces can distort the racial hierarchy,

¹⁶⁵ Thost, p.8.

¹⁶⁶ Thost, p.14.

¹⁶⁷ Thost, p.16.

¹⁶⁸ Thost, p.16.

manipulating peoples into forming unhealthy alliances. Not only is the recognition of this threat the “foundation of the Anglo-German Problem”, according to Thost, but the future of the “civilised world” depends upon its solution, and upon the Germans and British maintaining the friendly relations described at the beginning of the book. Thost also, in his explanations of British education and character, makes much of the spirit of “fair play”, as well as a political tendency towards flexibility (which he claims is connected to the fact that there is no English word for *Weltanschauung*).¹⁶⁹ Recounting a conversation with an English friend, he says that he sees truth in his friend’s assertion that much of the British criticism of Germany is motivated by concern, which stems from a feeling of familial and cultural closeness.¹⁷⁰ In response, Thost compares such well-meaning interference to attempting to take the wheel when a car is taking sharp bends on a dangerous road. In such situations, he says, one must simply trust the driver.

However, the book is ultimately an account of Thost’s failure to persuade the British people he met of the common threats he felt should bind Britain as an imperial power to Germany. In his contribution to the wartime series ‘Das ist England!’ published by the Party’s own publishing house, Thost gathers together speeches and articles to “prove” that Britain always intended to go to war with the Third Reich.¹⁷¹ Another book in the series, *Wie sieht uns der Engländer?* by Theodor Seibert, similarly argues that the British are to blame for the failure to establish good relations. He traces this tendency to before the existence of a unified Germany, drawing his final point from a quote from Bismarck: “They [the English] simply do not wish to be loved by us”.¹⁷² In the wartime picture of British imperialism, that which had been attributed to misunderstandings and mild stubbornness over the colonial question was now cast as ingrained hypocrisy, while the untrustworthy and manipulative nature of some elements of the British press became a

¹⁶⁹ Thost, p.67.

¹⁷⁰ Thost, p.75.

¹⁷¹ Hans W. Thost, *England wollte keinen Frieden! Britische Reden und Aufsätze aus den letzten sieben Jahren* (Berlin, 1940).

¹⁷² Theodor Seibert, *Wie sieht uns der Engländer?* (Berlin, 1940) p.73.

characteristic of all British authority figures. Within this, English voices were usually present as objects of criticism, but some were also used in support.

One such voice was that of William Joyce, in his wartime incarnation as “Lord Haw Haw”.¹⁷³ Joyce was born in the USA to naturalised parents but spent his childhood and teenage years in Ireland, where he emerged as a fiercely anti-Catholic loyalist. He was involved in street-fighting and other violence, as well as some anti-separatist intrigue on behalf of the British government. After moving to London and studying languages at Oxford, he became essentially head of propaganda for Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF). When he left (or was dismissed) he formed the British National Socialist League. He left for Germany on 26th August 1939 with his wife, who had also been a member of the BUF. Both went on to work full-time, writing material as well as broadcasting, for the *Reich* Radio's *Deutsche Europasender*, as well as for the RMVP's *Bureau Concordia*, whose programming was designed to sound like underground broadcasts from British soil. His book, *Twilight over England* was published in English and German in 1940. According to Martland, M15 reports indicate that 100,000 copies of William Joyce's book *Twilight over England* had been published for distribution in British Prisoner of War camps.¹⁷⁴ These facts indicate that the book was written for a similar bi-national audience as that appealed to by Gibbs and Busch. In the section on the British Empire in *Twilight over England* Joyce alternates between two broad points over the course of fifteen pages. Firstly, he argues that the Jewish finance which has taken control of imperial matters has deliberately left the areas incorporated into the British Empire underdeveloped, preferring an easy, high return from speculation in “useless” jewels to a lower return from the hard work of true settlement. This, he claims, is what has led to inequality and severe hardship. British imperialists have been left with only the delusion that they are ruling an empire:

¹⁷³ Biographical information has been taken from M.A. Doherty, *Nazi Wireless Propaganda: Lord Haw-Haw and British Public Opinion in the Second World War* (Edinburgh, 2000); Peter Martland, *Lord Haw Haw: the English Voice of Nazi Germany* (Lanham, 2003).

¹⁷⁴ Martland, p.31.

The pertinent charge [...] is not that they are grasping Imperialists but that they have no concept of Imperialism at all.¹⁷⁵

Having absolved the British of any charges of exploitation by accusing them instead of blindness to their own exploitation, he then blames the Boer Wars on the same combination of factors:

They were fought in order that the Jews of Jo'burg might gamble in gold and diamonds, at the expense of the agricultural population. [...] Truly the City of London has created an Empire of Jewels in which men die for lack of bread.¹⁷⁶

Secondly, he argues that violence in itself is not a problem. Every great empire, so he says, including the Roman and Holy Roman Empires, have been founded on violence. However, the extent and methods of Britain's subjugation of "small nations", particularly in recent years, means that the British have no right to criticise Germany's management of former colonies, or actions in Eastern Europe. Further, he makes an argument similar to one which we will see in the next chapter, regarding children's exposure to British imperial history in schools:

...if it be said that Russia invaded Poland because the morals of poor, innocent Commissars had been corrupted by the wicked Nazis, the wicked Nazis themselves had been corrupted by reading, in their youth, the exploits of Raleigh, Marlborough, Clive, Hastings, Wellesley, Napier, Codrington, Roberts, Rhodes, Jameson, Kitchener and Wolseley, to say nothing of Hawkins, Mountjoy, Carew, and Oliver Cromwell. A serious study of these biographies by apt pupils should leave one gasping at the modesty of the military measures that Germany has recently taken in Europe.¹⁷⁷

The two arguments combine on the final page of this section, when Joyce refers specifically to the Colonial Question:

The agents of the Third Reich would have to be much more depraved than they are pictured by the Left Book Club before they could rival some of the more recent performances of British agents in Palestine. [...] Germany has asked only for that which was developed, formed, fashioned, and made productive by the honest sweat of German workers and pioneers, who have no reason to regard Britain's Empire-builders as their superiors.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Joyce, p.115.

¹⁷⁶ Joyce, p.116.

¹⁷⁷ Joyce, pp.114-5.

¹⁷⁸ Joyce, p.128.

In this argument, Germany's right to territory in Eastern Europe is conflated with the work of building overseas colonies. By claiming that Britain's own colonies are poorly developed (and therefore not as well earned as those won by "the honest sweat of German workers"), the violence used to secure these territories, particularly in recent years, is classed as unjustified. In this way the history of the British Empire provides an argument in favour of German expansion, not as a model, but as a failure which is used to deflect criticism. At the same time, by blaming the failings of the British Empire on the influence of Jewish finance, Joyce invites British readers to support Germany's cause by finally recognising the threat German writers had been warning them about since 1933.

Conclusions

The previous chapter identified a wide network of concerns which books on Britain and the British Empire could be linked by those wishing to steer readers in their choices. This analysis has shed further light on the variety of meanings which could be ascribed to the British Empire, as a concept, even by a group who were relatively narrow in their range of political views. Two overlapping sets of concerns are at play here. From the point of view of core National Socialist foreign policy aims – rearmament in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles and the expansion of Germany's borders – Britain's imperial interests could be seen as a burden which would discourage Britain's involvement in Continental affairs. When commenting on the apparent lack of unity or decisive statesmanship within British politics, the British Empire could be invoked as a way of mockingly measuring the distance between "empire" as a symbol of Britain's past glory and the present reality. When the main concern was the forging of better relations between the two countries, the British Empire, its history and cultural legacy, could be turned to a different purpose. In the cross-border exchange of ideas which developed within books during the early years of the Third Reich, references to Britain's status as an imperial power was a way of establishing common ground. By displaying an appreciation of the British Empire as a source of national pride, German writers attempted to signal their willingness to understand the British point of view. However, this cannot

be separated from ongoing arguments against the accusations levelled against German colonialism and agitation for the return of Germany's former colonies. By invoking British imperial culture, German writers can also be seen as signalling that Germany is a "natural" colonial power; the discussion of empire within these books, and especially the frequent references to "fair play" and the advantages Britain's empire granted her can be read as appeals for equal status.

When attempts and friendship were seen to have failed, the suppressed tensions within these earlier treatments of the topic of empire became outright condemnation of Britain's attitude towards Germany and her territorial claims. Within wartime portrayals – shown here by Thost and Joyce but repeated many times in the sources covered in later chapters of this thesis – accusations of political weakness, of stubborn adherence to obsolete policies, of arrogance, hypocrisy and sadistic violence in the pursuit of wealth, were combined within portrayals of British imperialism.

Chapter 3

Englishness and Empire in Books for use in Schools

Introduction

In his introduction to the cigarette card album *Raubstaat England* ("England, The Robber State"), sarcastically titled 'Vorkämpfer der Freiheit' ('Pioneers of Freedom'), Ernst Lewalter recalls how his first school English textbook began with an sea shanty which his teacher read, syllable by syllable, with the pupils doing their best to imitate the "perversions of the muscles of the larynx" necessary to reproduce the sounds of this strange language.¹⁷⁹ Then came the proud day when, "with boyish delight", they were considered advanced enough to recite the entire text in unison:

And so our as yet unbroken voices reverberated off the walls and through the open window to the street below [...] by the final verse degenerating into a cry of triumph. This final verse, however, ran:
"And 't is our endeavour,
In battle and breeze,
That England shall ever
Be Lord of the seas."

Lewalter renders this into German as "Whether battles rage or storms threaten, **England must be Lord of the seas**" (emphasis his), replacing the aspirational tone of the original with one of arrogance. He suggests that some readers may remember this sea shanty having been practised in schools even during the First World War, with children changing the "ever" to "never". He goes on to describe how much of the material in his old textbook seemed designed to inspire respect for British acts of heroism in battles against other European peoples, with the British always appearing to have right on their side, and therefore also the sympathies of German readers. Such an appropriation of another nation's self-image, so he claims, only occurs in the case of Britain, and similar material would be unthinkable in a textbook for learning French.

Lewalter's complaint at the German youth being raised in a "strange, almost resigned reverence of England", written in order to establish his volume as an antidote, illustrates a problem faced by German educators both before and during the Third Reich; whether as children or adults, mastering

¹⁷⁹ Ernst K. Lewalter, *Raubstaat England* (Hamburg-Bahrenfeldt, 1941), p.4.

the English language and gaining an understanding of British culture and the "English national character" necessitated exposure to original British material, much of it patriotic in nature. Such exposure could not be entirely avoided, even in times of war. How, then, could this be presented to learners and more casual readers in such a way that they were insulated from the effects of unthinking Anglophilia, frequently termed *Englandschwärmerei*?

This chapter will examine books recommended for use in English lessons in Third Reich schools, as well as anonymous book reviews by members of the National Socialist Teachers' Association (NSLB). It will thus build up a picture of which aspects of British patriotic and imperial texts were considered desirable or suitable for use in schools, and which aspects were changed or led to a negative review. At the same time, it will shed light on some of the ways in which learners' encounters with British history and thought were in effect chaperoned by teachers and by explanatory notes in the texts themselves; through these pedagogic interventions, attention could be drawn towards desirable lessons regarding heroic action, patriotic self-sacrifice, and the importance of community, while elements which ran counter to National Socialist educational goals could, especially during the Second World War, be contextualised as the products of an alien culture. In a trend paralleled by research on many aspects of National Socialist cultural policies, work on teaching and school textbooks in the Third Reich has gradually eroded the assumptions, hardened during the Second World War and post-war reconstruction periods, that the regime effected a complete departure, centrally administrated and universally applied, from Weimar conditions. From the mid-1980s onwards, research into the controversies and front-line application of educational reforms during the Wilhelmine, Weimar and Third Reich eras has identified a continuous tendency to insist that schools remedy any perceived lack of national unity, patriotic feeling or ability to compete on the world stage. Often, reforms were suggested with an eye to international competition and the perceived state of education in neighbouring countries.¹⁸⁰ Work by Jeff Bowersox has

¹⁸⁰ Stephen Harp, *Learning to be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* (DeKalb, 1998). Joachim S. Hohmann & Hermann Langer, *"Stolz, ein Deutscher zu sein. . .": Nationales*

shown that knowledge of other nations' empires was incorporated into classroom instruction around the same time as German colonial development, becoming established on school curricula in the 1880s.¹⁸¹ Some teaching material was specific to German colonies, while other material was more general, with "markers of the colonial world, ranging from elephants to ostriches and coffee to coconuts" being incorporated into natural history lessons and recent colonial acquisitions and conflicts being included on history curricula.¹⁸² Bowersox identifies this institutionalisation of colonial knowledge in school curricula as due not to pressure from colonial organisations, but from geography teachers who were educational reformers first and colonial enthusiasts second. In their attempts to raise the appeal and status of their discipline they linked colonial knowledge to "the long-standing notion that a measure of global awareness was important for any "educated" (*gebildet*) individual", as well as to contemporary concerns about Germany's competitive faculties.¹⁸³

Exploring the dual role of teachers as reformers and the subject of reforms, Marjorie Lamberti takes a generational approach in which younger, more radicalised teachers banded with older, conservative colleagues against a middle group of liberal 'reformers'.¹⁸⁴ By focussing on the politics of education, she demonstrates how resistant schools in fact proved to be in the face of attempts, from unification onwards, to turn them into sites of patriotic indoctrination. Joining the NSLB, established by Hanns Schemm in 1927, was therefore a way for reform-minded teachers to feel part of a grassroots movement which could act against the influence of liberal colleagues, while at the same time conferring additional status.¹⁸⁵ According to Lamberti, National Socialism held the

Selbstverständnis in Schulaufsätzen, 1914-1945 (Frankfurt am Main, 1995); Hohmann, *Frauen und Mädchen im faschistischen Lesebüchern und Fibeln* (Cologne, 1986).

¹⁸¹ Jeff Bowersox, *Raising Germans in the Age of Empire: Youth and Colonial Culture, 1871-1914* (Oxford, 2013).

¹⁸² Bowersox, p.54.

¹⁸³ Bowersox, p.55.

¹⁸⁴ Marjorie Lamberti, *State, Society, and the Elementary School in Imperial Germany* (New York, 1989); 'State, Church, and the Politics of School Reform during the *Kulturkampf*' in *Central European History* 19/1 (1986), pp. 63-81; 'Elementary School Teachers and the Struggle against Social Democracy in Wilhelmine Germany' in *History of Education Quarterly* 32/1 (1992), pp.73-97.

¹⁸⁵ Lamberti (1986); An analysis of the motivations and petty politics involved in grassroots National Socialist activism is offered by Randall L. Bytwerk, 'Grassroots Propaganda in the Third Reich: The Reich Ring for National Socialist Propaganda and Public Enlightenment' *German Studies Review* 33/1 (2010) pp.93-118.

promise of elevating the role of (particularly younger) teachers to that of "forward-looking activists serving big national goals".¹⁸⁶ One way for members to serve these goals was to review schoolbooks and other educational materials.

In her assessment of German children's literature, which focussed on the politicisation of fairy tales and other folk themes, Christa Kamenetsky describes how National Socialist institutions attempted to rationalise the provision of "readers" for use in schools, systematically reviewing the wide range available from before 1933, as well as creating a new series of "Reich readers" between 1935 and 1940.¹⁸⁷ Approved material followed five ideological principles: blood and soil; leadership and followership; honour and loyalty; service and sacrifice; struggle and work. They were to avoid positive references to Jews, Christian themes, references to the unity of mankind, and even "some neutral information or purely cultural items pertaining to other lands".¹⁸⁸ These restrictions were to create a German literature for children which portrayed German history and culture in the most positive light possible. However, Kamenetsky also explains how German schoolchildren had long been exposed to British classics, in heavily altered translated editions.

As shall be shown by this chapter, "readers" for English lessons had to bring a foreign culture to learners in a way which did not fall foul of these criteria. In *Englischunterricht im Nationalsozialismus*, Reiner Lehberger demonstrates how English teachers argued against the marginalisation of their discipline by stressing the character-building examples, military awareness, and knowledge of Germany's place in the world (especially regarding the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles) which could be promoted through the right reading material.¹⁸⁹ New schoolbooks were therefore shaped by two forces of existential justification which worked in tandem; the teacher's need to have the utility of their field validated, and the publisher's need to have their books appear on core reading lists. While Lehberger's analysis is focussed on points of overlap

¹⁸⁶ Lamberti (1986) p.64.

¹⁸⁷ Christa Kamenetsky, *Children's Literature in Hitler's Germany: The Cultural Policy of National Socialism* (London, 1986).

¹⁸⁸ Kamenetsky, p.187.

¹⁸⁹ Reiner Lehberger, *Englischunterricht im Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen, 1986).

between the National Socialism and the content of English “readers”, this study will also take into consideration developments in format and its likely impact on how books were used by teachers and learners. As well as shaping their output according to ideological concerns, publishers of schoolbooks and teaching material also incorporated new approaches to pedagogy. Gregory Paul Wegner's work on anti-Semitism in teaching material shows that changes in the Third Reich were not brought about by a single, centralised process, but that differences arose due to regional governance, the requirements of particular subject areas, and personal preference.¹⁹⁰ In particular, Wegner shows how curriculum reformers built upon earlier traditions of anti-Semitism, using different forms of information, including statistics, visual aids, and simple stories, to illustrate supposed cultural differences between Jews and Germans. In a similar fashion, as well as promoting understanding for British culture the examples of British thought and colonial methods in English “readers” could also be used to draw attention to other supposed cultural differences, and ultimately promote enmity.

As explained in Chapter One, there were many separate review processes being conducted within the Third Reich, creating interlinking systems of control which material could pass through several times, but which were not subject to one set of clear, top-down instructions to all reviewers. The many different groups of reviewers attached to publishing houses, institutions of party and state, and publications such as academic journals and magazines, provided ample opportunity for conflicting assessments, personal subjectivity and competing priorities. Jan-Pieter Barbian identifies the *Gutachtenanzeiger* section of the monthly journal *Bücherkunde*, the product of the review process of Alfred Rosenberg's Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums (RFdS), as “probably the most comprehensive review and evaluation of German and foreign literature distributed within Germany”.¹⁹¹ Some of these reviews were marked for publication in *Bücherkunde*

¹⁹⁰ Gregory Paul Wegner, *Anti-Semitism and Schooling under the Third Reich* (New York, 2002).

¹⁹¹ Jan-Pieter Barbian, *The Politics of Literature in Nazi Germany: Books in the Media Dictatorship* (London, 2013) p.118.

while others were for internal assessments of books for use in schools.¹⁹²

Of the surviving reviews, around 130 are of English language readers or books related to Britain or imperialism, including German-language books for use in geography and history classes. These have been examined for the priorities they reveal, which of these priorities appear to overrule others, and especially for any disagreements; in some cases there are two conflicting reviews of the same book or the assessment runs counter to its recommendation or censure by other institutions. The reviews analysed here are of books from many publishing houses, some of which were not necessarily designed for use in schools. In the case of 'readers', these predominantly consisted of original English material, often from before 1933. In many instances, these reviews contain brief hints as to how the material should be presented to children, and what aspects should be emphasised; as many of the reviewers are themselves teachers, this offers an insight into their own teaching methods. Additionally, there are many instances where reviewers have expressed their own opinion on political matters, outside of the scope of the review.

As well as these anonymous, unpublished reviews, this chapter examines a selection of the books themselves; due to the extensive overlap between books designed for the adult market and those used for advanced school classes, some of these appear elsewhere in this thesis. Exclusive to this chapter are volumes from school-specific series of language readers; books on relating to British imperialism have been selected from two particularly long-running series: 'Teubners Neusprachlich Lesebogen' and 'Westermann-Texte'. Particular attention has been paid to explanatory notes, illustrations and explanations of the role of the books (blurbs and end advertisements), in order to establish how British texts, culture and history were simplified and presented to learners. More so than other genres of book on the open market, books for school use could undergo extensive revision while maintaining the same title. Two examples are analysed here: *Pleasant English*, which was published in 1928 and 1939, and editions of *The British Empire* from 1936 and 1939. In each

¹⁹² BArch NS12/77: Dienstanweisung Nr.1 für die Lektoren der Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums (09.12.1935).

case, changes have been assessed in terms of pedagogical concerns as well as for what they reveal about the evolving use of British imperial and patriotic material in German schools.

The first part of the chapter will establish where the topic of British imperialism and specific aspects of it sat within the subject area as a whole. It will cover the imperial content of English textbooks and "readers" and their position as part of the curriculum. It will briefly explore the types of British material offered to learners and how texts were supplemented with images and explanatory notes. It will then look at the substantial revisions made to the books *Pleasant English* and *The British Empire*. The second part will examine how this content was contextualised by reviewers, teachers and through explanatory note in the texts themselves. It will look at four main aspects of the "reception" of British imperial or patriotic themes in the classroom: British characters as embodiments of particular heroic characteristics; the British "national character" and "gentleman ideal"; memorialisation of the First World War and the urge to attack the Treaty of Versailles (especially as regards Germany's former colonies); and the position of Britain within European colonial history. In its treatment of these four topics, the chapter will also describe how a second wave of contextualisation was attempted during the Second World War in order to further undermine any remaining *Englandschwärmerei*.

The imperial content of English lessons

While many of the English "readers" created for German schoolchildren were abridged versions of classics or (for less advanced learners) stories designed to convey basic vocabulary, publishers also brought out annotated political works, in particular ones which would offer an insight into the phenomenon that was the British Empire. An examination of the series lists for 'Teubner's Neusprachliche Lektüre' and 'Westermann-Texte', to take two long-running examples, reveals over a dozen titles from each which have an overtly imperial theme, in addition to biographies of statesmen, collections of speeches and other political writings, and military memoirs.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Information collated from a range of library catalogues as well as lists published on the inside cover of individual volumes in those series.

Far from cutting back on material which displayed British military and imperial history in a negative light compared to Germany, or which contained overt, patriotic praise of Britain, such content appears to have significantly increased under National Socialism.

Title	Prussian boys' schools 1926/7 (500 classes surveyed)	Prussian boys' schools 1938/9 (490 classes surveyed)	Prussian girls' schools 1938/9 (230 classes surveyed)
Barrington, <i>Empire England</i>	-	37	20
Büchenschütz, <i>British Imperialism</i>	-	11	7
<i>Der englische Imperialismus in der englischen Lyrik</i>	-	7	-
Drinkwater, <i>Oliver Cromwell</i>	-	23	22
<i>Germany's Colonial Work in Africa</i>	-	7	-
Hagemann, <i>Great Empire Stories</i>	-	6	-
Kerr, <i>Growth of the British Empire</i>	-	8	-
Lewington, <i>Called by Providence</i>	-	37	15
Littleton, <i>A Short Life of Cecil Rhodes</i>	-	6	-
Littleton, <i>The Call of Empire</i>	-	15	-
Macaulay, <i>Lord Clive</i>	9	-	-
Macdonald, <i>Cecil Rhodes</i>	-	11	7
Marshall, <i>Our Empire Story</i>	8	-	-
Norman & Kamitsch, <i>The British Empire</i>	-	11	-
Seeley, <i>The Expansion of England</i>	65 (most cited)	14	12
Spatzier, <i>Heralds of British Imperialism</i>	-	9	5
Wenzel, <i>Oliver Cromwell</i>	-	11	-

Figure 9: Most-read books with imperial themes used in English lessons in Prussian schools.

Source: Lehberger, pp.255-9

The above statistics are from lists of the fifty most frequently named books on English reading lists for schools in Prussia.¹⁹⁴ The numbers indicate the number of classes out of those surveyed which read each book. The table shows a substantial increase in imperial content on class reading lists from the mid-1920s to mid-1930s. Mirroring its success in the adult market, J.R. Seeley's *The Expansion of England* was the most popular choice in the 1926/7 survey; although it was no longer as dominant on the later survey, extracts were included in other books (for example, as the first entry in Spatzier's *Heralds of British Imperialism*) and it continued to be used in schools in some form at least until 1943.¹⁹⁵ The lists also show the popularity of biographies of "great men", in particular Oliver Cromwell and Cecil Rhodes. While the top 50 choices for the girls' schools contain half as many titles with imperial content as those for the boys' schools (spaces being occupied instead by English and American classics and biographies of Elizabeth I and Florence

¹⁹⁴ The full lists are in Lehberger, pp.255-9.

¹⁹⁵ Lehberger, p.261.

Nightingale), girls were still a substantial portion of the audience for these books.

Although publishers claimed to be bringing British literature and thought to learners, the primary goal of providing reading practice for learners granted a large degree of flexibility with regards to the choice of language and indeed content. One of the most influential British classics in German education was Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. First published in English in 1719, it enjoyed a long history of German reimagining, beginning with Joachim Heinrich Campe's special children's edition *Robinson der Jüngere* in 1779. In common with *Gulliver's Travels* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, this was not officially recommended by Third Reich institutions in its original form but also not "blacklisted".¹⁹⁶ Kamenetsky identifies it as the most recommended edition in the Third Reich as it presented Crusoe as a "German hero"; the story was recommended for portraying an outdoor lifestyle, brave and hard-working character traits and the importance of community. It also changed Defoe's ending by having Friday shot by his own people, rather than sailing away with Crusoe, thus avoiding the suggestion that an enduring partnership had been created across the racial divide. In cases where the selected British texts were true to their original source, explanatory notes in German served to insulate learners from ideologically unsound ideas. These notes are particularly extensive in Max Spatzier's *Heralds of British Imperialism* (published by Teubner).¹⁹⁷ Intended as additional source material for *Empire England* (Vol.6 of Andrew W. Barrington's *England through the Ages*), it contains examples of texts arguing in favour of expanding and strengthening Britain's empire as well as examples of "imperial propaganda" (e.g. Figure 10, below). The notes provide explanations of people, places and events mentioned in the texts and also of terms which cannot be easily translated. These include a brief explanation of "imperialism", which describes it as an exclusively British concept with its origins in Puritan England. In this way, notes could contextualise the main texts, transforming them into not only examples of English prose, but artefacts of a foreign culture.

¹⁹⁶ Kamenetsky, pp.142-4.

¹⁹⁷ Max Spatzier, *Heralds of British Imperialism* (Leipzig, 1938).

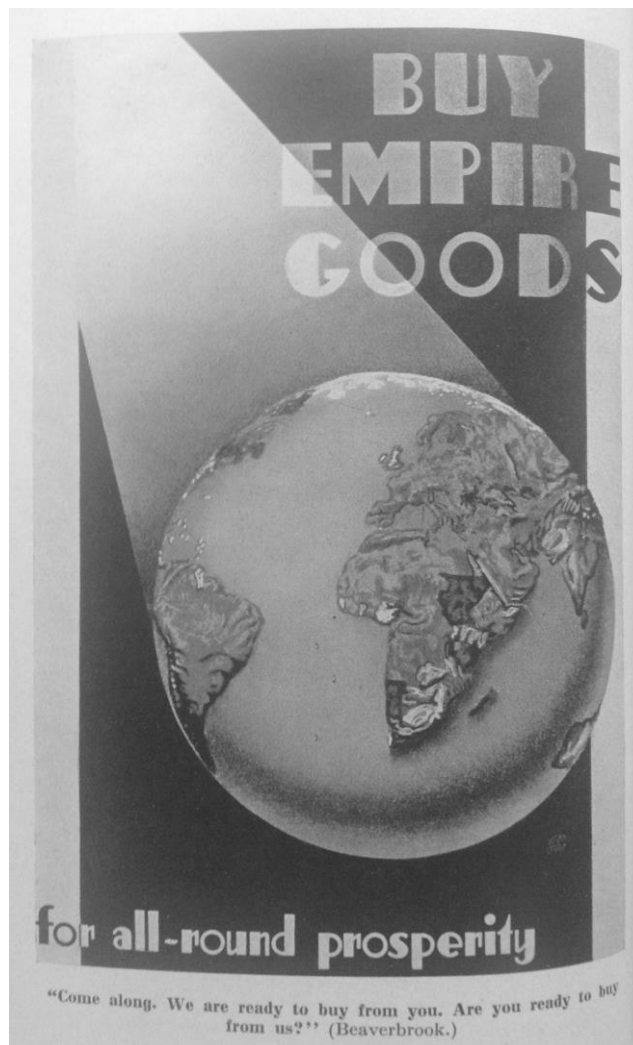


Figure 10: *Heralds of British Imperialism* (1938), p.50.

An example of how information on the British Empire could be presented while still inspiring pride in Germany is provided by the 1939 edition of the textbook *Pleasant English*.¹⁹⁸ The book follows the experiences of a German brother and sister whose family have moved to Britain. Chapter seventeen is 'Bird's Eye View of the British Empire', a description of a geography lesson. The addition of this scene was one of many changes made since the 1928 edition of the book, many of which had no ideological content but introduced improved grammatical tables and exercises. In the scene, the teacher shows the class each of the British colonies on a globe. Footnotes name New Guinea, Tanganyika and Kenya as the German colonies of Kaiser-Wilhelms-Land, German East Africa, Kamerun and Togo respectively, and the chapter concludes with Peter's reaction, as a

¹⁹⁸ Helmut Hamann, *Pleasant English: Book II, Peter and Kate in England* (Frankfurt am Main, 1928); *Pleasant English Book II* (Frankfurt am Main, 1939).

German boy:

Peter was deeply impressed. But at the same time he was thinking of what the Fuehrer had said about the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' and saying to himself: "Well, one day we'll have colonies of our own again, after all." But he did not say anything about what he was thinking, not even to Morris. He had already learnt to keep his tongue and leave things to those responsible for his country's welfare.¹⁹⁹

In five sentences, this passage combines respect for Britain's achievements with respect for Hitler's opinion on the subject of Germany's future colonial projects. Although Peter is asserting his national rights in a thought which sets him apart from his British classmates, it is a thought fully in line with the wishes of his national leader, and he is trusting that the German government will act in the right way without him needing to press for action. This seems to contain a complex message about what the British Empire should mean to Germans; appreciation of British achievements should prompt the opinion that Germany should have colonies as well, however this process is in the hands of the present government and requires no further action from citizens. The addition of this scene is in keeping with the trend towards increased imperial content on English curricula indicated in Figure 9.

Significant revisions were also made to Teubner's *The British Empire*, between 1936 and 1939.²⁰⁰

A collaboration between British and German academics, the book describes an international Boy Scout jamboree, at which scouts give presentations on their countries within the British Empire. Many of the amendments between 1936 and 1939 make the text more readable; there are more, shorter chapters, less factual information about population and industry, more pictures (only three of the forty-six were kept from the earlier edition) and there is more personality and even humour in the speakers and their interactions with the audience. The 1939 edition includes more naval information, added through the inclusion of a section on Newfoundland and a description of the voyage from London to Singapore, via the Suez Canal. Through these and the additional maps, learners gain a better sense of the layout of the British Empire and the main routes between

¹⁹⁹ Hamann, *Pleasant English* (1939) pp.76-7.

²⁰⁰ F. Norman and G. Kamitsch, *The British Empire* (Leipzig, 1936 / 1939).

countries, as well as an enhancement of their “military awareness” as per the selection criteria for reading material.

Some of the changes to *The British Empire* alter the “calls to action” made by the scouts. In the 1939 version there is no longer any reference to the importance of capital to colonial development and it no longer ends by encouraging the scouts in the audience to leave Europe and start a new life in Canada. Similarly, the section on the Suez Canal no longer describes the underhand purchase of shares. Both editions end with a presentation on India. In the 1936 version, this ends with the Indian scout and group captain agreeing enthusiastically on the question of India self-rule, and the speaker being carried on the other scout's shoulders. The later edition instead ends with a statement about how each person present embodies the strength of the empire as a whole. The final picture of the 1936 edition, which shows a line of scouts of various nationalities and races linking arms, has been moved to the beginning in 1939 (Figure 11, below). Here it illustrates the concept of the jamboree rather than being a clear statement of equality and unity following the speech on Indian self-rule. Using the map at the end instead (Figure 12, below), moves the focus to the impressive scope of the empire, using the same globe imagery as in *Pleasant English*.

Figure 11 also raises the question of race. In the 1936 edition, the Australian scout talks of the need to keep Australia “for the white man” and describes the aboriginal population as inherently primitive.²⁰¹ The 1939 version also talks of the need for a unified, white country, but mentions the possibility of training an aboriginal workforce.²⁰² There is also a description of positive race relations in New Zealand, which mentions Maori members of the government, and a longer discussion of the complexity of race relations in South Africa, although with a joke about cannibalism and another about “lazy” black workers.²⁰³ This indicates that the authors are providing expanded material for a discussion of race in the colonies.

²⁰¹ Norman and Kamitsch (1936) p.29; p.23.

²⁰² Norman and Kamitsch (1939) p.22.

²⁰³ Norman and Kamitsch (1939) p.24; p.28.

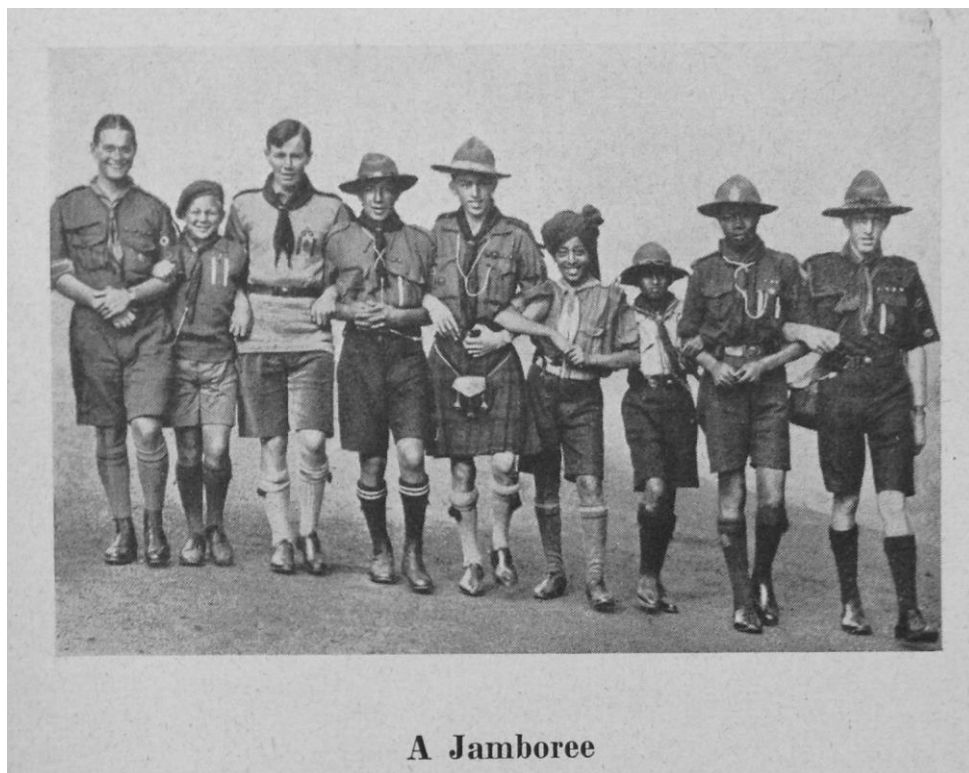


Figure 11: *The British Empire* (1939), p.1.

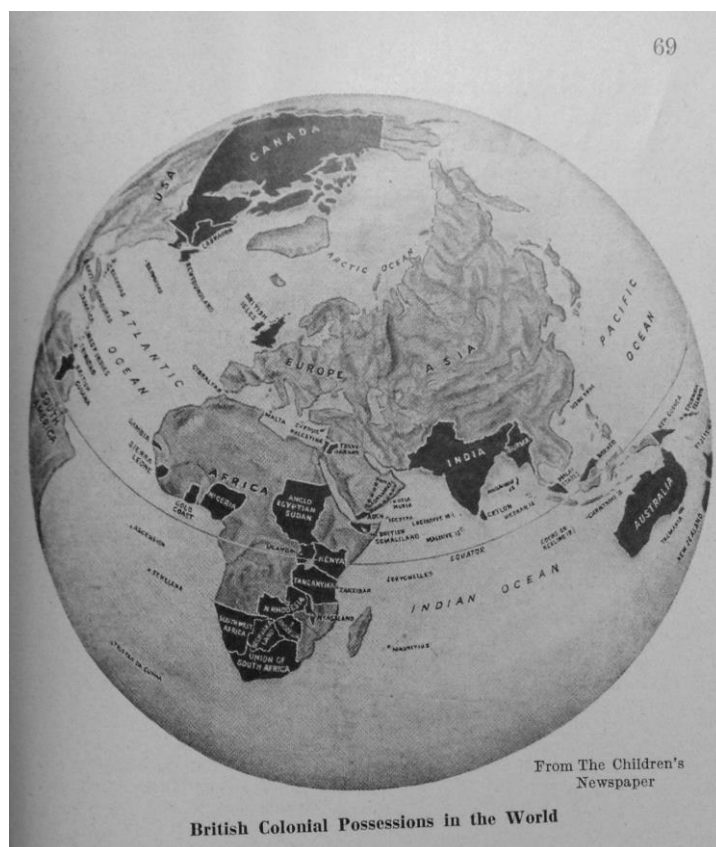


Figure 12: *The British Empire* (1939), p.69.

Teachers' Reviews of Books for English Lessons

The RfDS's operational guidelines for reviewers from the 9th December 1935 describe their role as that of "systematically assessing the essential German-language writing of the new era based on ideological, political, artistic and public-educational concerns."²⁰⁴ On these assessments were to be based the RfDS's efforts to promote and recommend "valuable writing" and to protect against "inferior and damaging intellectual products". The guidelines set out the role of 50 Head Reviewers (*Hauptlektoren*), appointed by Rosenberg to be ultimately responsible for the reviews of books in their subject area. A full list of Head Reviewers was regularly published in *Bücherkunde*. In the case of multiple, conflicting reviews of the same book, the one with the Head Reviewer's signature was to be considered valid. They were allowed to provide advice to authors and publishers, so long as the review process had been completed. The reviewers (*Lektoren*) in each of the 50 subject areas were anonymous and the guidelines warn them against abusing this anonymity by, for example, judging books based on personal or purely intellectual disagreements (i.e. differences of opinion within a specialist field which had no wider ideological or political implications). Reviewers were appointed on probation after filling out a questionnaire and writing a test review. Many appear to have been members of the NSLB – a circular from 15th November 1934 announced the merger of the NSLB's Review Office (*Begutachtungsstelle*) with the RfDS's Main Review Office for Pedagogic Writing (*Hauptlektorat für das pädagogische Schrifttum*) – but, despite most reviewers working full-time, this was not to be used as an excuse to take longer than 2-4 weeks to return a review.²⁰⁵

The guidelines also include specifications on the content and tone of reviews. Positive reviews were to specify the age group for which the book was suitable, as well as any other potential uses, such as circulation within the Party. Despite the "understandable annoyance" induced by "inferior products from incompetent or ideologically unsound writers", reviewers were to limit criticism to the works

²⁰⁴ BArch NS12/77 Dienstanweisung Nr.1 für die Lektoren der Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums (09.12.1935).

²⁰⁵ BArch NS12/694. Reichsamtsleitung des Nationalsozialistischen Lehrerbundes. Abt. „Erziehung und Unterricht“ Begutachtungsstelle. Rundschreiben F82/1934 (15.11.1934).

themselves and avoid *ad hominem* attacks which had in the past, according to the guidelines, led to suspicions of personal enmity. Works by beginners were to be treated fairly, and constructive criticism offered where possible. In contrast, works from "ideological opponents" were to be turned down unequivocally and the reasons clearly stated. Although, as the guidelines acknowledge, the RFdS did not have the formal power to ban books, all such submissions were to be reported so that such a process could be set in motion. Reviewers were warned that "the ideological opponents of National Socialism were to be neither pitied nor underestimated". We can, then, expect any opposition to the content of books on ideological grounds to be clearly expressed in these reviews. Most reviews met the priority to assess the books' suitability for use in schools, and what age group they would be most suited to. However, there was also an eye to wider publication and a book's role in educating adults. Many reviews therefore provide an insight into the expectations placed on teachers in guiding their pupils' reading (and the assumption that not all teachers were up to this task), as well as into the hopes for and limitations of the reading public to think in the most ideologically helpful way about what they were reading. Furthermore, these reviews show how very different texts formed pieces of a larger picture, with books on geography, history, military strategy, science and language "readers" complementing each other and highlighting the most useful facets from one another.

In addition to their official function, these reviews were also clearly a place for the reviewers, arguably part of the real grassroots of the party, to air their own political views, either to display their loyalty to their superiors or simply to take advantage of the opportunity for expression. As shown below, Britain's refusal to return Germany's former colonies was one of the topics likely to induce this 'soapboxing'. It is clear that their involvement in this institutional process conferred a feeling of importance and agency on the reviewers. A line could occasionally be crossed, for example in the case of Harburg teacher Ernst Helmers. On the 5th June 1935, the RFdS wrote to the

NSLB demanding an explanation for his nomination as a reviewer.²⁰⁶ They included an extract from an essay Helmers had written "especially for them", which criticised in a "hair-raising observation" Rosenberg's repeated use of the Teutonic Knights as a parallel for Hitler's Germany. A reply dated 25th June reports that Helmers had been "relieved of his post". What is striking about this incident is the confidence Helmers apparently had, two years after the take-over, to criticise a leading Nazi's opinion in a letter to his office. It also illustrates a paradox in the job of the reviewers: while they were entrusted with the task of assessing, as loyal party members, works by all manner of experts from artists to scientists to foreign and former politicians, the writings of Party leaders, which pretended to be a part of a 'free' exchange of ideas, was strictly off-limits to criticism even when expressed in good faith.

In keeping with this wide ideological remit, material for English lessons was reviewed not only for its linguistic content but also in light of the ways it touched upon broader educational goals. The most commonly cited wider theme in reviews of English language readers was their inclusion of character-building examples and heroic figures, such as in the four short stories which made up *In the Real Service to Man*. In each, according to the reviewer, the author aimed to show the young reader which character traits "contribute to the worth of a person".²⁰⁷ The stories teach the importance of self-restraint, tenacity, self-discipline, comradeship, and self-sacrifice. Two have military settings: in the third story, a "vagabond and ne'er-do-well" serves his country through "extraordinary willpower and heroic sacrifice"; in the final story, the "comradely faith and implacability of an officer" saves a young soldier from "losing his honour through cowardice". Another collection, *Six Stories of Courage and Loyalty*, was praised not only for its portrayal of "courage and true comradeship", but for doing this in a way which was compatible with "the sense

²⁰⁶ BArch NS12/77 Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums to Reichsleitung des Nationalsozialistischen Lehrerbundes (05.06.1935).

²⁰⁷ BArch NS12/238, Review 6502 (September 1939).

of the new era and the taste of the new youth".²⁰⁸ Moreover, this was done in a way which was not boring or overly moralising. Similarly, the two stories 'Buried Alive' and 'Adrift on the Ocean' which made up the "reader" *Face to Face with Death* were "recommended most warmly":

In both cases men are shown who, in the face of great danger, do not timidly despair, but look death fearlessly in the eye and allow no weakness to present itself.²⁰⁹

Although these stories showed generic heroism, with no reference made to nationality, publishers were keen to point to the same qualities in the British heroes of their books. For example, the blurb for Littleton's *The Call of Empire: A Short Life of Cecil Rhodes* begins by describing the story as "adventurous and exhilarating" but goes on to say that the most important aspects are the love he has for his country and his race, and the "dauntless energy", "systematic self-discipline" and "personal prudence and modesty", which he brought to bear on his imperial mission.²¹⁰

Some reviewers expected such characteristics to be pointed out by teachers as specifically 'Nordic'. The volumes *Great Explorers*, *Great Soldiers* and *Great Sailors*, three of the many English "readers" edited by Baroness Seydwitz and Dr. Alwin Paul, were recommended so long as teachers pointed out "the men as carriers of a northern genetic inheritance"; they were also to draw leaders' attention to the fact that the *Führer* Principle, and "the national-political principles of the Third Reich" could be demonstrated in the history of foreign peoples.²¹¹ Teachers were thus expected to mitigate those aspects of the material which would have inspired patriotism in a British audience by explaining how those qualities were 'Nordic' in nature, and how this related to the future of Germany under National Socialism.

There were some efforts made to create different reading material for girls, which would illustrate different models of behaviour. The "reader" *Geraint and Enid* was specifically recommended for girls' schools, as it was "a portrayal of brave, gladiatorial and knightly masculinity on the one hand,

²⁰⁸ BArch NS12/238, Review 6512 (August 1939).

²⁰⁹ BArch NS12/238, Review 6539 (July 1940).

²¹⁰ M. Littleton, *The Call of Empire: A Short Life of Cecil Rhodes* (Berlin, 1936), inside cover.

²¹¹ BArch NS12/232, Reviews 1165, 1166 and 1167 (November 1934).

and on the other hand great and pure femininity".²¹² However, recommended English material for girls did not show only passive role models and publishers offered a range of trail-blazing female characters, frequently in colonial settings. Containing the biographies of explorer Gertrude Bell and pilot Mildred Bruce, *English Women of Renown* was recommended on the basis that it showed the "brave lives and struggles" of two well-known women, both in their own way pioneers.²¹³ *Gallant Girls of Old: Thrilling Historical Tales* was also highly recommended, and assessed as providing knowledge of English history. However, it was the female role models which were the main selling point for the reviewer:

English reading matter for girls' classes should be so exciting that the schoolgirls are gripped by the material and so overcome the language difficulties. On the hunt for such material the editor has found heroic and adventurous stories in which girls take centre stage. In this way, participation is doubly assured.²¹⁴

In this case, schoolgirls were to be given these heroic figures not necessarily as role models, but as motivation for the primary goal of learning English. As Jeff Bowersox identified for the Wilhelmine period, including colonial content in teaching materials was recognised by educators as a way of capturing and holding pupils' interest:

By tapping into the exoticized and adventurous colonial world that was proving so attractive in mass culture, geography lessons could capture students' imaginations and instil both practical information and mature judgement.²¹⁵

Other reviews suggest that the kinds of heroic behaviour expected of girls was different to that which boys should aspire to. The review of *Brave Girls of the Empire* describes the four stories as companions to adventure stories about boys, but "deftly mellowed and related to the feminine".²¹⁶ In these stories, according to the reviewer, the ability to endure unpleasant circumstances is emphasised as much as the will to overcome them, and girls in these "frontier positions" in the colonies display the important qualities of patience, love of animals, and readiness to help others.

²¹² BArch NS12/238, Review 6528 (July 1940).

²¹³ BArch NS12/238, Review 6526 (July 1940).

²¹⁴ BArch NS12/238, Review 6537 (October 1939).

²¹⁵ Bowersox, p.56.

²¹⁶ BArch NS12/239, Review 7486 (July, 1940).

Each story has the positive outcome of good deeds as a moral, but the colonial setting is also considered important; the reviewer believes the descriptions of the exotic climate and plant life to be “promoting” generic colonial thinking, regardless of the fact that the stories are set in the “English Empire”. Although the reviewer claims that the setting of the stories does not detract from their educational value, the choice of the term “*englische* Empire”, therefore emphasising an English rather than British imperial character, and the specific connotations of 'Empire' rather than the more usual *Reich* or *Weltreich*, suggests a personal distaste which is being put aside in recommending this book.

Several of Oscar Wilde's works were also assessed as being a source of examples of good, socially-minded behaviour, despite his own homosexuality, and his stories *The Selfish Giant* and *The Happy Prince* appear on a 1943 list of works which were to be printed despite paper shortages.²¹⁷ That these English “readers” could provide examples to learners of good behaviour appears, therefore, to have taken priority over any supposed character flaws of their authors or the English, British or Anglo-Saxons as a people or race. For the most part, the declaration of war in 1939 appears to have had little impact on this aspect of the reviews. However, it cannot be assumed that all books with strong central characters were approved on the basis that these provided heroic role models for learners. Sometimes the background to these characters was considered more important or instructive. For example, a review of *The Lady with a Lamp*, taken from Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, describes it as a character study of Florence Nightingale but also as a study of the culture of Victorian Britain. It is described in the review as:

...an Englishman's unsparing criticism of the Anglo-Saxon peculiarity of “muddling through”, via an example of the extraordinarily carelessly organised care for the sick during the Crimean War.²¹⁸

Again, the use of an English term (“muddle through”) within the review emphasises the presumed cultural differences between Britain and Germany. According to the reviewer, the continuing

²¹⁷ Lehberger, p.264.

²¹⁸ BArch NS12/238, Review 6671 (July 1939).

relevance of this British tendency towards carelessness is obvious, but is also highlighted in the editor's preface. The book is recommended in particular for use in girls' schools, but, due to difficulties of content and language, only for advanced classes. Interestingly, Strachey's name appears on the 1941 SS Special Arrest List (*Sonderfahndungsliste*), compiled in preparation for an invasion of Britain, despite having died in 1932. Although he is mentioned by name in the review, possibly indicating a degree of notoriety, no indication is given of any reason why he could have incurred official disapproval. *The Lady with a Lamp* also appears on the 1943 list of publications to be printed despite paper shortages.²¹⁹

While before the Second World War, heroic traits displayed by British imperial figures were being characterised as “Nordic”, there was also a tradition in schoolbooks (some of which were also intended for adults) of dissecting the “English national character”, in particular the “Gentleman ideal” which was seen as dominating much of English public life.²²⁰ From late 1939, a spate of reviews assessed earlier works with a view to “exposing” negative character traits in the British nation.

The review of *England und der englische Mensch*, written in 1938 and reviewed in November the same year, judges it to be somewhat dated but still useful. It covers, briefly, race, language, geography, politics, church and the Dominions. The reviewer suggests that a change of focus may be better:

In any case, the most relevant aspects are illuminated, even though we Germans now consider it necessary to sketch some things more sharply and darkly in light of the last few months. Spotlights work differently, according to the standpoint of the observer or object. Perhaps, in the present lighting, we can discern many things more clearly than in 1938.²²¹

In spite of the “new light” being shone on the subject during wartime, the reviewer singles out the topics of “the tyranny of public opinion”, “democratic dictatorship”, defence, and some of the plans

²¹⁹ Lehberger, p.265.

²²⁰ Roland Schopf, *England und die Engländer in Schulbüchern des Kaiserreichs und der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1990) esp. pp.310-2.

²²¹ BArch NS12/238, Review 6791 (November 1939).

for the Dominions, as particularly pertinent. In contrast, *An English National Character Reader*, published in 1935 and reviewed in July 1940, was considered to have been rendered obsolete by the change in conditions.²²² The reviewer describes its portrayal of the British national character as no longer meeting the needs of the present, needs which require a portrayal that is "sharper, more ruthless and more destructive". If absolutely necessary, the review concedes, the contents could be used as examples of "English arrogance and hypocrisy", but due to the lack of explanation in the text itself, this would require too much classroom time and too much effort on the part of learners. Carl Erdmann Pückler's *Einflußreiche Engländer*, reviewed in April 1940, attracted even more vitriolic criticism, aimed in equal measure at the author and at the British politicians he is accused of flattering:

...the self-exposure of leading British politicians, which has come to light in the meantime, shows us how little the author has in fact arrived at the „essence" of these war-mongers. Granted, Pückler ventures an occasional criticism, but these occur from a distance, as a rule, with a half-humorous touch, so that any attempt at serious criticism is instantly rendered harmless.²²³

This illustrates a particular irony regarding the origin of sources for British character traits; while “primary” material from the British themselves could easily be abridged, simplified and explained through footnotes in a way which made it compatible with changing educational and ideological constraints, a German work expressing the “wrong” view was more likely to be considered unusable.

However, a use could still be found for the speeches of the same “war-mongering” politicians whom Pückler was accused of misjudging. In the same month as the above review, an assessment of *Great Political Speeches* links the material to awareness of great political figures but also an analysis of British self-delusion. The book contained the words of American and British politicians, as far back as Abraham Lincoln and as recent as Lord Halifax and Neville Chamberlain, as well as speeches by British royals. The reviewer considered a speech by Stanley Baldwin to have great

²²² BArch NS12/238, Review 6502 (July 1940).

²²³ BArch NS12/239, Review 7264 (April 1940).

potential for "a comparison of English and German self-awareness", and suggested that others provided starting points for a discussion of the spirit of public life in Britain and of the current war. The teacher had a further responsibility to protect pupils from falling for the British self-delusion:

It must only be ensured that the student does not uncritically accept at face value everything which the sparkling rhetoric of English statesmen serves up as the bright side of the English character; it can be accepted as characteristic aspiration.²²⁴

The supposed contrasts between German and British character traits could also be drawn from fiction and, even after the outbreak of war, these could be shown as leading to good relations. For example, *The Inseparable Three: A Girl's School Story*, reviewed in December 1939, was praised for showing "peaceable competition between characters".²²⁵ The problem of "the German willingness to understand, versus British prejudice" is, at least for the reviewer, resolved through the actions and behaviour of the German girl, but in a way that still attributes the otherness of the English attitude to decent motives. The review concludes:

German and English character traits and abilities, which in the peaceable competition and conflict of student comradeship beautifully emphasise and complement one another, make possible a new and lasting fellowship of maturity, respect and appreciation.

Playing the Game, reviewed in May 1940, has no convenient German character, but was recommended, at least for older classes with the necessary intellectual maturity, for its portrayal of the "Gentleman ideal" in operation in British schools.²²⁶ The superficiality of this "ideal" was shown, according to its reviewer, in Stacy Aumonier's short story *Evening Dress*. This is described as a "masterful portrayal of an unexpected event with a view to exposing typical English character traits".²²⁷ In the story, the narrator shares a drink with a very reserved gentleman whom he barely knows except through acquaintances at their gentleman's club. Through a misunderstanding which he does not correct, the mysterious gentleman is set upon by several men; he wins the ensuing fight,

²²⁴ BArch NS12/238, Review 6515 (April 1940).

²²⁵ BArch NS12/238, Review 6518 (December 1939).

²²⁶ BArch NS12/238, Review 6535 (May 1940).

²²⁷ BArch NS12/238, Review 6517 (December 1939).

which he seems to enjoy enormously, and the story ends with him soon afterwards sitting calmly at a concert with his wife. To the reviewer, this showed, “what reserves of brutality can be contained within a man who just a few minutes earlier rested his hand, impassive and serene, in that of his wife.”

As will be explained in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis, the concerted operation to undermine the “English national character” in print during the Second World War had various propagandistic functions, one of which was to identify a combination of negative characteristics as the driving force behind the expansion of the British Empire. In new publishing, such as in Lewalter’s cigarette card album and the series of anti-British books which emerged throughout 1940, heroes such as General Wolfe, Sir Francis Drake, and Robert Clive (all of whom feature in volumes of Teubners *Neusprachliche Lektüre*) were portrayed as brutal and rapacious. However, there is no indication that the earlier, positive material disappeared from classrooms, not least because of the inevitable delays in acquiring replacement “readers”. Based on the indications offered by these reviews as to the ability of teachers to guide pupils’ interpretations of their English reading matter, in particular in pointing out instances of “arrogance” and “self-delusion” in British texts, it is more likely that lesson plans were adjusted to read the same material in a more critical light.

Further examples of the flexibility of interpretation and possibilities for adaptation and re-contextualisation of British texts are provided by “readers” which covered the events and aftermath of the First World War. As explained in Chapter One, it was a point of pride among many German nationalists, particularly those who had fought in the trenches, that they could extend a hand of friendship to Britain, in a gesture of mutual respect between former opponents. In this vein, many English “readers” were published which contained accounts of the war from a British perspective; included passages were from war correspondents (such as Philip Gibbs in *Great Dramas of the World War*), officers of the armed forces (including colonial figures such as T.E. Lawrence), soldiers in the trenches, and fictional portrayals (such as Sherriff’s play *Journey’s End*). At the same time, one of the core educational goals which material for English lessons could supposedly

contribute to was the refutation of the “war guilt lie” and “colonial guilt lie”, as well as a revision of the events which led to Germany’s defeat (i.e. a perpetuation of the “stab in the back” myth).

Coupled with the ability to contribute to “military awareness” in learners, it is not surprising that publishers turned to First World War themes to create successful “readers”.

Reviewers too recognised the usefulness of these books. *Wild Rides in Africa* was recommended for its portrayal of the landscapes, climate and difficulty of cultivation of African land, which highlighted the "extraordinary achievements" made by the German Schutztruppe.²²⁸ The book recounts episodes from the war in the colonies, and Lettow-Vorbeck is described as standing "masterfully in the foreground". Showing a German hero through British eyes emphasises understanding and respect between nations in a patriotic, non-pacifist way. Similarly, an explanatory note at the end of *With Colonel Lawrence in the Arab Revolt* explains:

We Germans have every reason to acknowledge L’s fairness in the judgement of our troops in Turkey. In his book *Revolt in the Desert* he speaks with the greatest respect of the tenacity and bravery of German officers and soldiers. At the end of the account of a battle he even uses the words: “They were magnificent”.²²⁹

Memoirs from the First World War could, then, be a source of heroic stories but could also cause problems. Dr. Max von Bahrfeldt, who was condemned to death in absentia for war crimes by a Belgian court in 1925, wrote about the case in *Kriegsverbrecher Nr.10*. The review, from April 1936 does not recommend the book for wide circulation, as it could make more difficult Hitler's efforts to build good relations with Germany's "western neighbours", but concedes that it could be used for study purposes, when handled with the necessary tact.²³⁰ This is stated on the condition that the “unworthiness” of the government of the time is pointed out to learners. Despite these reservations, the book can be found on the "recommended" list of the *Gutachtenanzeiger* for February 1936.

Even as late as 1942, material on the British war effort in the First World War could receive a

²²⁸ BArch NS12/234, Reviews 2556 and 2536 (August 1937).

²²⁹ H.E. Lewington & Kurt Schulze, *With Colonel Lawrence in the Arab Revolt* (Berlin, 1936) p.40.

²³⁰ BArch NS12/233, Reviews 1364 and 1335 (April 1936).

positive review. For example, *Women's Work in the World War*, in which over four stories the author explains the contributions women made to the war effort.²³¹ The chapters are titled: 'Seven sons in the war', 'Field Kitchen', 'Field Hospital' and 'Munitions Factory'. Each example of self-sacrifice is just as applicable to Second World War conditions, and none go against the conception of a woman's accepted roles being those of mother, carer and supporter. The book was recommended for its conduciveness to drawing comparisons with Germany, its contribution to the knowledge of advanced learners, and its promotion of heroic acts of self-sacrifice. The lesson drawn most from British accounts of the First World War, by reviews and in the books themselves, was vindication of the view that Germany was not defeated on the front line (or indeed in the colonies), but was betrayed by revolution at home. This subject frequently brought out reviewers' emotions, such as in this review of *Great Dramas of the World War*:

The young German learns here, confirmed by the enemy, that which must be emphasised again and again in the new Germany, made self-aware again: the German Army was the best in the world, and had victory within its reach more than once. However, he also learns the unbending perseverance of the enemy, in particular the dogged tenacity of the Englishman, and so much the clearer does he grasp the guilt of those who, out of malice or stupidity, broke Germany's will to continue.²³²

In this way, according to the reviewer, the book contributes to German patriotism rather than humility with respect to Britain. The text itself encourages this reading through the selection of eyewitness reports and the use of explanatory notes. In particular, one note describes the British deployment of tanks as "not as demoralising as the author believes", while another offers a justification for Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare.²³³ In an attempt to provide evidence of the respect the British held for German soldiers, one note describes how the derogatory nickname "the Hun" later changed to the more respectful "Fritz" and "Jerry" due to the "deep impression the German successes of 1918 made on the Tommies".²³⁴

²³¹ BArch NS12/238, Review 6542 (March 1942).

²³² BArch NS12/232, Review 1161 (November 1935).

²³³ B. Engelhardt, *Great Dramas of the World War in the Light of Post-War Disclosures* (Berlin, 1935) p.56; p.61.

²³⁴ Engelhardt, p.70.

That a British text describing past events could incite bitterness at Germany's post-war position applied equally to books about other countries' empires. The reviewer of *England erobert den Orienthandel* takes the opportunity to lament the fact that while other nations were applying their powers to conquering the world, the German people were "tearing themselves to pieces with inner disunity" and thus "excluding themselves from the division of the Earth and its treasures".²³⁵

In this example, then, a book about British pioneers' achievements becomes evidence not of British superiority, but of Germany's wasted colonial potential. Reviewers became particularly vitriolic when this subject was combined with that of race relations in other nations' colonies. For example, the review of Paul Rohrbach, *Koloniale Siedlung und Wirtschaft der führenden Kolonialvölker*, which covers the colonial projects of European peoples as well as Russia, the USA and Japan, ends by declaring the only Germany "handled the native problem correctly".²³⁶ The book is assessed as being a clear call for the return of Germany's colonies, as a question of necessity.

In their desire to see their own views vindicated, reviewers appear to have been willing to recommend books despite disagreeing with the author. *Die Weißen und die Schwarzen: Erlebnisse in Französisch-West-Afrika* receives a positive view but not due to agreement with the author's position or the situation he describes.²³⁷ Instead, the "Francophile Polish author" is sarcastically thanked for his "eye-opening" explanation of French colonial policy. He is also criticised for having no feeling for the German youth, and for being "far removed" from the German spirit, and much of the contents is considered banal or unclear. However, the reviewer recommends the book on the basis that it "rips the veil" from the true conditions in the French colonies, and would shock any reader unfamiliar with the facts. The wider point becomes clear halfway through:

It teems with near unbelievable incidents, with sexual perversion, with the most evil race shame, that one must ask oneself: How can this people at all presume to call we Germans "unfit for colonies"?

²³⁵ BArch NS12/236, Review 5028 (March 1939).

²³⁶ BArch NS12/237, Review 5287 (March 1940).

²³⁷ BArch NS12/235, Reviews 2784 and 2737 (September 1937).

A review of Wilhelm Nowack's *Australien. Kontinent der Gegensätze* from January 1940 also focusses on racial policy, claiming that the Australian government's actions in this area are motivated by "purely egotistical" interests, grounded in an "entirely materialistic" ideology. According to the reviewer, the author's predictions for Australia's future are unfortunate but probably accurate.²³⁸

Although some reviewers, such as those above, prioritised the expression of their own political opinions over the needs of the learners and adult readers on whose behalf they were assessing the books, others praised books on the British Empire and British imperial figures for providing an objective view on matters of global importance. Walter Schneefuß' *Gefahrenzonen des britischen Weltreiches*, reviewed in March 1939, is part of the Goldmann series 'Weltgeschehen' (discussed in Chapter Two). Referring to the series as a whole the reviewer declares that geopolitical thinking should be "awakened in the German people" so that they can quickly and accurately assess "economic-political" events.²³⁹ When events are reported in the press, so it says, the connections between them are lost; this series offers the reader a full picture of contemporary questions. This specific book shows the strengths but also the weaknesses of the British Empire, which the reviewer praises as showing German boys and girls the reality of the world, providing an objective picture of "England and her empire".

The central questions of Friedrich Plümer's *Das britische Weltreich: Die geopolitischen Grundlagen seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung* are, according to its reviewer, how the British Empire was created and what qualities enabled this "island people" to rise to global prominence.²⁴⁰ In answering these, the book combines history and geopolitical observations in an "exemplary manner". Through the British example, the importance of the National Socialist conception of the state is made clear; unity of people and space, and of blood and soil. It also shows the "geopolitical instinct" which has allowed Britain to always turn the rest of Europe against its most dangerous

²³⁸ BArch NS12/239, Review 7277 (January 1940).

²³⁹ BArch NS12/236, Review 5027 (March, 1939).

²⁴⁰ BArch NS12/236, Review 5036 (March 1939).

opponent. The focus in this review is therefore the Nazi's own nation-building project, coupled with the strategic implications of British policy.

Dr. Anton Mayer's *Aufstieg zur Weltmacht: Entstehung, Entwicklung, Vollendung des britischen Weltreiches* was recommended by a reviewer in October 1938, but the decision was overruled.²⁴¹

The initial review starts with the observation that Britain became an imperial power "relatively late" and that other states had previously founded empires "on which the sun never set", though they did not last as long. The review highlights as positive the book's illustration of the methods of British rule: "shrewd diplomacy, brutal methods of subjugation, great men and a mercantile spirit for trade". It also draws out a contradiction in the British attitude to the Empire, explaining that although colonies were often "left to fend for themselves", at home, the will to have a globe-spanning empire won out time and again. This initial assessment weighs the positive and negative aspects of the British colonial record, with the emphasis being placed on "great men", in a way similar to in reviews of material on former German colonies. It also emphasises the colonial feeling back home as something to be praised. However, this was overruled on the grounds that the book does not show the desired understanding of racial theory:

Concepts of race and people often confused in unacceptable ways. The author states in several places that the future geopolitical situation of a people is more important than its racial composition.

This would indicate that ideological matters, on the occasions they did arise, took priority over other concerns.

What has been built up here is a system of priorities; which aspects of a book override others in determining whether it is to be promoted depends to some extent on the political climate and, in some cases it would seem, on the reviewer. Even though the concept of race / people is a key concern, the nationality of an author is not, in the sense that non-German authors are not at a

²⁴¹ BArch NS12/234, Reviews 2556 and 2536 (August 1937).

disadvantage. Instead, their work may be read as a primary rather than a secondary source, and used as a way into the 'national character' of another country. In the case of education goals such as building character or increasing military awareness, the specific nationality of the examples does not matter (at least in the case of Britain's former enmity with Germany). That said, the example of *The Lady with a Lamp* shows that it is not always the figure in the foreground which is considered the most useful focus for readers. With all of these layers of meaning, the role of the teacher in guiding students' reading is crucial, and it is understandable that the teachers reviewing these books would take this into consideration. However, these reviews also consider books for wider circulation to an unsupervised, independent readership. There is an implication here that they are being trusted to read these books, particularly British material, with the necessary critical distance. The advent of war does not appear to have had clear, consistent outcomes on all review criteria. Before the war, in spite of an awareness that good relations and better understanding between Germany and Britain was desirable, the need to explain the unfairness of the Versailles Treaty, particularly the loss of Germany's former colonies, lends a critical note to assessments of Britain's imperial development (and that of other countries). Furthermore, many wartime reviews, in particular of children's 'readers' containing fictional tales, make no mention of the war when assessing the morals and positive characteristics displayed.

Conclusions

Ernst Lewalter's complaint about the amount of British imperial material used in schools appears, on the surface, to have been justified. British texts which offered overwhelmingly positive portrayals of colonial figures and state-builders such as Rhodes, Clive, Cromwell, Wolfe and Drake were prominent on publisher's lists of English language "readers", were often positively received by reviewers, and were (if the figures for Prussia are representative of Germany as a whole) widely used in classrooms. These biographies sat alongside detailed descriptions of Britain's colonies, British victories in the First World War, and even reproduced "propaganda" for the British imperial

project.

However, these texts were not read in the same manner as those from German authors. Instead they were treated as primary sources for assessing a foreign culture and world view. Learners were guided in their interpretations by their teachers, who were in turn advised by professional journals, colleagues, and political training. Contextualising information was also provided through annotations to the texts themselves. With this constant “chaperoning”, learners could easily be insulated against Lewalter’s dreaded *Englandschwärmerei*.

These pedagogic interventions also shed further light on the possible “meanings” of the British Empire and the “English national character” to Germans in the Third Reich. Contradictions, conflicts and the scope for personal “soapboxing” within the above reviews confirm the conclusions in previous chapters as to the flexibility of these concepts. In a classroom setting as well as on the adult book market, books on British imperialism could be pressed into a wide range of causes, from raising awareness of military questions and geo-political strategy, to adding weight to demands for the return of Germany’s former colonies, to instilling in citizens the necessity of loyalty, hard work and self-sacrifice to the creation of a world power.

Chapter 4

“If this reads like a bandit novel...” Authority, Credibility and Incorporation

Introduction

The following quote is from the introduction to Paul Bang’s *Aus Englands Schuldbuch* (*From Englands Register of Debts*), published in 1940 by Air Force Executive Office (Luftwaffenführungsstab) Ic/III:

That which is communicated here rests throughout on historical and documentary evidence, so that the reader can rest assured that he is being presented with nothing invented or based in hate. It is necessary to establish this because much of it sounds dramatic and horrifying. If some parts read like a kind of bandit novel, then this is not due to us, but to the degenerate policies and methods of the English.²⁴²

There is a deliberate blurring of genre distinctions here, achieved through a supposed clarification. In the very act of assuring the reader of the unsensational, evidence-based foundations of the book, Bang gives them leave to read it in the manner of a crime-based adventure novel, inviting them to insert the moral judgements he claims are absent. The “historical and documentary evidence” is thus woven into a narrative in collaboration with the reader, who brings their prior experience with the narrative templates for crime stories and morality tales to bear on the information they are given. The previous chapter of this thesis showed how British patriotic and imperial material was incorporated into German schoolbooks for English lessons and the strategies employed to mitigate the perceived effects of this material as cultural propaganda for Britain. This chapter will similarly identify some of the distancing strategies used by writers and publishers to guide adult readers in their interpretation of British imperial history and culture. Through a series of case studies, it will explore the use and blurring of genre conventions, as well as the complex histories of the reuse of British material, evident in books dealing with the British as imperialists published in the Third Reich. In doing so, it will identify foundations which could not be overturned either in 1933 or as part of gearing up for war, but which had to be accommodated, reinterpreted and undermined. It

²⁴² Paul Bang, *Aus Englands Schuldbuch* (Stuttgart, 1940) p.4.

will further demonstrate how readers were guided towards particular methods of interpretation which could then be applied, independently, to further material; as the micro-management of all material pertaining to British imperialism was practically impossible, management of the way in which it was read was essential to ensuring reader reactions which were compatible with National Socialist messages.

A cornerstone of genre theory is the assumption that genres play a role in the naturalisation of ideologies, and help to present values and thought processes as natural and immutable, if not universal.²⁴³ The shaping or confounding of audience expectations through the employment or subversion of genre conventions is a further means of communication between writer and reader; in this way, texts can both reflect and attempt to shape values, by purporting to show “universal dilemmas” and “moral conflicts”.²⁴⁴ This is achieved in part through the “positioning” of the reader by the author. In Gunther Kress’ phrasing: “Each written text provides a ‘reading position’ for readers, a position constructed by the writer for the ‘ideal reader’ of the text”.²⁴⁵ In the case of Bang’s introduction, the reader is positioned as judge over Britain, which has been cast in the universally understood role of the thief. To the “ideal reader”, who is assumed here to be seeking an objective account, the facts presented will nevertheless appear as “horrifying”, thus placing the reader and the agents of the “degenerate” British policies on opposing sides of a universalised moral divide.

²⁴³ Tony Schirato and Susan Yell, *Communication and Culture: An Introduction* (St.Leonard’s NSW, 2000) p.73.

²⁴⁴ Ira Konigsberg, *The Complete Film Dictionary* (London, 1987) pp.144-5.

²⁴⁵ Gunther Kress, *Communication and Culture: An Introduction* (Kensington NSW, 1988) esp. Pp.106-9, here p.107.

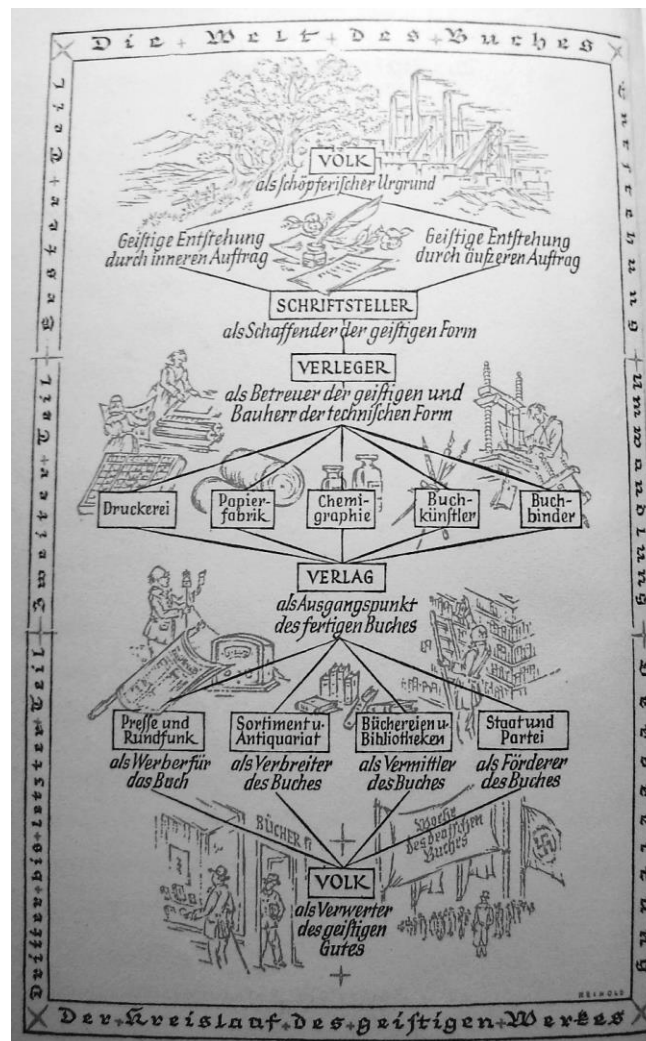


Figure 13: *Die Welt des Buches* (1938), inside cover.

In a preface to Hellmuth Langenbucher's *Die Welt des Buches*, President of the RSK Hanns Johst describes a special connection between the German people and the “power and meaning” of books.²⁴⁶ The German people, according to Langenbucher and Johst, have both the ability and the responsibility to better engage with books than other peoples, because of Germany's invention of the printing press and its status as “the land of thinkers and poets”. In the first illustration of the book (Figure 13, above) and in later, smaller illustrations throughout, this supposed historical affinity is reinforced with images of quill pens, and artisans working at pre-industrial printing presses. The diagram shows literary ideas arising from the *Volk* through both nature and artistry (the *Volk* are portrayed as both agricultural and industrial), various technical and artistic processes then

²⁴⁶ Hellmuth Langenbucher, *Die Welt des Buches: Eine Kunde vom Buch* (Ebenhausen bei München, 1938) pp.5-6.

refine the product before bringing it back to the people, who are shown engaging with it either alone (browsing a bookshop) or in public (at a book-week event, under a Nazi flag). The role of party and state in this is labelled "promoter of books". This is a picture of responsibility on the part of everyone involved in publishing, rather than of control from above, with the state's role being the endorsement of the best products. The role of the *Volk* is described as "creative fundament" and "users of intellectual goods". In the vision presented by the text and illustrations, the German people can bring centuries of inherent, race-based understanding to bear on the questions posed by modern literature.

As described in Chapter One of this thesis, one way in which institutions tried to guide people's reading choices was through the maintenance of lists of approved and recommended books. One effect of these was to provide an incentive to publishers to bring their products in line with the criteria for inclusion on these lists, and so reach a wider audience. Another effect was that these lists provided standardised scholarly pathways through the range of material on offer. One such route through material on the British Empire could be to consult the books recommended by the *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie*, journals such as Friedrich Berber's *Jahrbuch für auswärtige Politik* or the *Historische Zeitschrift*, or study guides such as Kurt Fleischhack's *Wege zum Wissen*.²⁴⁷ Readers might also consult the Brockhaus or Meyer's encyclopaedias and follow their suggestions for further reading. Each of these starting points would lead to a set of frequently-cited eminent British and German works on the history, legal basis, and operation of the British Empire. From here, readers interested in the English 'national character' or modes of thought would, through many of these scholarly pathways, arrive at Wilhelm Dibelius' two-volume guide *England*, to J.R. Seeley's *Expansion of the British Empire*, or to the writings of Thomas Carlyle.²⁴⁸ One indication of

²⁴⁷ Kurt Fleischhack, *Wege zum Wissen: Buch – Buchhandel – Bibliotheken. Schrifttumsverzeichnis* (Leipzig, 1942).

²⁴⁸ Dibelius' *England* went through at least six editions from 1923 to 1931. Strobl describes Dibelius as "the leading conservative *Anglist* of the 1920s": Gerwin Strobl, *The Germanic Isle: Nazi Perceptions of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000), p.26; Seeley's lectures, collected into *The Expansion of England*, were first published in German in 1928, translated by Dora Schöll: J.R. Seeley, *Die Ausbreitung Englands* (Berlin, 1928). The extensive preface by Karl Alexander Müller describes how Seeley's approach made history directly relevant to politics. Extracts and quotations from *The Expansion of England* are very common in German books on British imperialism throughout the lifespan of the Third Reich, and it was also used in schools (see Chapter Three). His impact on German historians is described in Benedikt Stuchtey,

the foundational nature of certain books, beyond their frequent citation in later works, is their use as benchmarks in reviews of other books. For example, a *Historische Zeitschrift* review of Hermann Wanderscheck's *Weltkrieg und Propaganda* from 1938 mentions Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime* (see below).²⁴⁹ Similarly, a review of Johannes Stoye's *Das britische Weltreich: sein Gefüge und seine Probleme* mentions Dibelius' *England* as providing the cultural information which Stoye neglects.²⁵⁰

However, this formal, semi-codified body of works was only one "route to knowledge" about the British Empire, and was likely to be followed by only a minority of specialist readers. The majority of the population, if they concerned themselves with this topic at all, would absorb messages from a wide variety of genres of publishing, as well as from other media such as radio broadcasts, news items and opinion pieces in the press, as well as by attending plays, films and public talks. As we have seen from Chapter One, publishers deliberately linked their books to these other media to advertise their relevance. A home library would likely contain all manner of books bought over the years, supplemented by volumes borrowed from libraries or friends; whether these were read for information and self-improvement or escapism and entertainment, or indeed if they were read in full or only for occasional reference, would be down to the individual reader. In collating all references, bibliographical citations, quoted texts and reproduced images from the Third Reich texts surveyed for this thesis, a discrepancy emerges between acknowledged sources and earlier, very similar works. The Third Reich books assessed in this project draw on a wide range of British primary and secondary sources, including official papers and statistics, academic writings, newspapers and journals, memoirs and bibliographies. They also drew on works from third-party countries, frequently France and the United States. Even fictionalised accounts of historical events such as Dieter Mark's *Blutrache gegen England* or the books by Otto Kindler and Friedrich Wencker-

'World Power and World History: Writing the British Empire, 1885-1945' in Benedikt Stuchtey and Eckhardt Fuchs (eds.) *Writing World History 1800-2000* (Oxford, 2003) pp.213-253.

²⁴⁹ Review by Ernst Anrich, *Historische Zeitschrift* 158/1 (1938) pp.148-150.

²⁵⁰ Review by Ulrich Noack, *Historische Zeitschrift* 160/3 (1939) pp.603-606.

Wildberg (below) offer a short list of non-fiction sources. Another common stated “authority” is the author’s own first-hand observations of Britain or insights born of their professional expertise. What is very rarely acknowledged or explicitly drawn upon is the body of very similar work – in terms of content, source base and specific turns of phrase – created and promoted in Germany during the First World War.²⁵¹ For example, Benedikt Stuchtey has identified that Ernst Schultze’s *Sorgen des britischen Weltreiches*, first published in 1939, conspicuously neglects to reference Erich Marcks’ essay ‘Die Machtpolitik Englands’ which “famously” drew the same conclusions in an edited volume which had become “a classic” after its publication in 1915.²⁵² Similarly, the publisher of Graf Ernst zu Reventlow’s essays on Britain from the First World War reissued them on the eve of the Second World War with only a few typographical changes and the addition of a final section bringing the account up to date.²⁵³ However, there are very few references to Reventlow’s work in any of the books surveyed for this thesis. Instead, prefaces and blurbs present works from the Third Reich as part of a new, unbiased assessment or, in Second World War books, as the first “unmasking” of British imperialism (as will be shown in Chapters Five and Six). That authors and publishers should wish to present their products as both novel and necessary is no surprise, but the depth of engagement with and reproduction of British sources compared to the lack of acknowledgement of earlier German works is worthy of further analysis.

In this chapter, several case studies will highlight issues of incorporation and reception which arose from the translation and importation of pre-existing material on the British Empire into the Third Reich. In each case, books have been selected which best demonstrate the interaction between different concerns, for instance the need to accommodate readers’ pre-existing knowledge and

²⁵¹ German anti-British messages during the First World War are analysed in Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 2001); For more general overviews of the field see David Welch, *Germany and Propaganda in World War I* (London, 2014); Alice Goldfarb Marquis, ‘Words as Weapons: Propaganda in Britain and Germany during the First World War’ *Journal of Contemporary History* 13/3 (1978); Eberhard Demm, ‘Propaganda and Caricature in the First World War’ *Journal of Contemporary History* 28/1 (1993).

²⁵² Benedikt Stuchtey, ‘Writing the British Empire, 1885-1945’ p.248; Ernst Schulze, *Sorgen des britischen Weltreiches* (Leipzig, 1939); Erich Marcks, ‘Die Machtpolitik Englands’ in Otto Hintze, Friedrich Meinecke, Hermann Oncken and Hermann Schumacher (eds), *Deutschland und der Weltkrieg* (Leipzig, 1915), pp.297-322.

²⁵³ Dr. Karl Scharping (ed.), *Wir erinnern uns... Britenpolitik vor 25 Jahren und heute. Gesammelte Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1914-18 von Graf E. Reventlow* (Berlin, 1939).

expectations versus the wish to convey a particular message. To show how earlier ideas and conventions were built upon, the books under analysis span a period from 1900 until the Second World War and priority has been given to those which are quoted, referenced or otherwise clearly had an impact on Third Reich texts.

Whole British works: Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime* and Francis Yeats-Brown's *Bengal Lancer*

One possible explanation for the apparent reluctance to cite German sources from the First World War is the legacy of mistrust of government sources, especially regarding enemy nations, left by the propaganda drives of both sides.²⁵⁴ The bitterness caused by the spreading of “atrocities myths” by the mass media of participating countries was kept alive in Germany through a constant juxtaposition of memorialisation and mythologisation of the frontline soldiers, and condemnation of the Versailles Treaty, in particular the “war guilt lie” and “colonial guilt lie”. The National Socialist regime adopted this mantle by labelling as “atrocity propaganda” (*Greuelpropaganda*) any accusations against them in the foreign press.²⁵⁵

Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime* (*Lügen in Kriegszeiten*) was first published in English in 1928 and a German translation was printed in 1928, 1930 and 1941, first by Georg Stilke Verlag, then by the German Foreign Office. This translation appears true to the original in content and sentiment. Ponsonby traces the origins of various untrue rumours during the First World War, dealing mostly with Britain but with short sections at the end dealing with France, Germany, Italy and the USA. Much of this involves a 'debunking' of stories of German atrocities as well as a criticism of the way in which the press sensationalise stories without checking their facts. The usefulness of these lessons as part of the project to create discerning readers who would read

²⁵⁴ Peter Longerich, *Propagandisten im Krieg: Die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop* (Munich, 1987) esp. pp.69-72; Jeffrey Verhey, 'Some Lessons of the War. The Discourse on Propaganda and Public Opinion in Germany in the 1920s' in Bernd Hüppauf (ed.), *War, Violence and the Modern Condition* (Berlin, 1997).

²⁵⁵ See for example Otto Dietrich 'The Press and World Politics' in Joachim von Ribbentrop (ed.), *Germany Speaks: by 21 Leading Members of Party and State* (London, 1938) pp.343-365.

material in the 'right', German way, counterbalance the warnings in the introduction about official propaganda during a time of war:

The psychological factor in war is just as important as the military factor. The morale of civilians, as well as of soldiers, must be kept up to the mark. [...] the stimulus of indignation, horror, and hatred must be assiduously and continuously pumped into the public mind by means of "propaganda".²⁵⁶

A statement from the next page appears with hindsight to strike against National Socialist claims that they do not wish for war:

At the outset the solemn assertions of monarchs and leading statesmen in each nation that they did not want war must be placed on a par with the declarations of men who pour paraffin about a house knowing they are continually striking matches and yet assert they do not want a conflagration. This form of self-deception, which involves the deception of others, is fundamentally dishonest.²⁵⁷

However, the fact that accusations of self-deception are so prominent in the anti-British stereotype formed in both World Wars, combined with the vast majority of Ponsonby's examples being drawn from Britain, means that the introduction can easily be read by carefully conditioned readers as a vindication of the National Socialist interpretation of the causes of the First World War and of Germany's defeat. There is little harm to the Nazi regime in exposing untruths told by previous German governments or in reinforcing the role of British propaganda in the myth that the German army was not defeated, but was betrayed by a failure of morale on the home front. The first four chapters in particular cover the pre-war agreements between France and Britain, assess the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and the invasion of Belgium as causes of the war (specifically undermining the position of Britain as the "defender of small nations"), and criticise the Treaty of Versailles' emphasis on placing sole blame for the war on Germany. Later stories in the volume focus on the gullibility of people who believed and spread rumours, and the lack of journalistic rigour. All of these factors help to explain why a left-leaning, British, pacifist work cautioning

²⁵⁶ Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime: containing an assortment of lies circulated throughout the nations during the Great War* (London, 1928) p.14.

²⁵⁷ Ponsonby, p.15.

people against believing official sources was published during the Second World War in both London and Berlin, with each side viewing it as clear condemnation of the other.

While the case of Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime* shows a straightforward if at first glance problematic appropriation of a British work into a German context, the entanglements of Francis Yeats-Brown and his memoir *Bengal Lancer* with various areas of German political and cultural life show how complex a reception history of British imperial figures can be. Francis Yeats-Brown served in India until 1924, after which he worked as a journalist. *Bengal Lancer*, published in 1930, is one of two autobiographical accounts of his time as a soldier. However, much of it forms a highly introspective account of a journey of self-discovery, towards greater understanding of Indian philosophy and religions.²⁵⁸ Yeats-Brown himself is described by Richard Griffiths as being sympathetic towards Fascism due to his sympathy for the struggles of the working classes, interest in corporatism, and animosity towards Bolshevism.²⁵⁹

Paramount Pictures released the film *Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, very loosely based on Yeats-Brown's book, in January 1935 and it was released in Germany as *Bengali* later that year. In fact, only two scenes from the book, both incidental to the plot, are present in the film.²⁶⁰ In his memoir *Inner Circle*, British diplomat Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick recalls a conversation with one of Hitler's aides about his film preferences.²⁶¹ The aide told Kirkpatrick that *Bengali* was a frequent choice and that Hitler had recommended that it be shown to all members of the SS due to the way it displays the heroic qualities which built the British Empire. The lines which likely led to this interpretation, which are not present in the Yeats-Brown's book, are said during an argument between an older and younger officer, over the colonel's refusal to weaken the regiment's position by sending a rescue party after his kidnapped son:

²⁵⁸ Francis Yeats-Brown, *Bengal Lancer: The classic story of an Indian Army officer's experience on the North West Frontier and subsequent adventures in World War I France and Mesopotamia* (London, 1924).

²⁵⁹ Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right: British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany* (Oxford, 1983) esp. pp.17-19, 43-9.

²⁶⁰ *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, directed by Henry Hathaway (Paramount Productions, 1935); For an analysis of the film's themes from the perspective of Anglo-American relations see Michael Todd Bennett, 'Anglophilia on Film: Creating an Atmosphere for Alliance, 1935-1941' *Film and History* 27/1-4 (1997) pp.4-21.

²⁶¹ Ivone Kirkpatrick, *The Inner Circle* (London, 1959) p. 97

Younger Officer: "Why can't he be a little less of a soldier and more of a man? Why can't he forget his blasted duty for once?"

Older Officer: "Oh man you are blind! Have you never thought how for generation after generation here a handful of men have ordered the lives of three hundred million people? It's because he's here and a few more like him. Men of his breed have made British India. [...] When his breed of man dies out, that's the end. And it's a better breed of man than any of us will ever make.

This description of the perfect soldier is to some extent undermined by the fact that the younger officer disobeys orders and goes to rescue his comrade, which means that they are then both in a position to save the regiment from certain death. However, the film does not seek to clearly demonstrate that the colonel was "wrong". All of the western characters are heroes in their own way. Despite clearly being written as entertainment, the film and its potential impact were taken seriously by political actors in Germany. In May 1935, Subhas Chandra Bose, former member of the Indian National Congress, protested to the German Foreign Office against the showing of *Bengali*, in a letter which also complained about an article in the *Völkische Beobachter* which had called Indians "bastards".²⁶²

The chapter of Fritz Otto Busch's *Flug nach England* (see Chapter Two) on the British Commonwealth opens with the final stanza of Rudyard Kipling's "The English Flag".²⁶³ Busch justifies this by the fact that one of the characters in the film uses it as a mantra, allowing him to withstand being tortured for information which would betray his regiment. Busch claims that the film "says more than long speeches, thick books or anything else about the bearing of the Englishman".²⁶⁴ For all his first-hand knowledge of the British, Busch nevertheless offers his readers a second-hand, heavily-romanticised portrayal as more authentic than other sources. Despite these wider connections being drawn by Bose and Busch, a review of Yeats-Brown's book in *Bücherkunde* in 1936 makes no mention of political themes or any wider lessons about the

²⁶² Johannes Voigt, 'Hitler und Indien' *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 19/1 (1971) pp.33-63, here p.43; see also Romain Hayes, *Bose in Nazi Germany: The first account of Subhas Chandra Bose's relationship with Hitler and the Nazi Party* (London, 2011).

²⁶³ Fritz Otto Busch, *Flug nach England: Ein Beitrag zum gegenseitigen Verstehen* (Munich, 1937) pp.42-55.

²⁶⁴ Busch, p.42.

British character or methods of imperial rule.²⁶⁵ There is also no mention made of the film, or of Yeats-Brown's own pro-German leanings. Instead, the review emphasises the exotic landscape, exciting incidents such as hunting expeditions and polo tournaments, as well as the book's insights into "the mysteries of the secretive land of wonder that is India". The book's writing style is praised and it is recommended as a good, entertaining adventure. We can see then that prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, Yeats-Brown's memoir enjoyed a complex set of entanglements with various German discourses; political associations were gathered, but not universally recognised or referred to. In particular, the film's positive reception by Hitler apparently did not result in it or the book's widespread promotion, at least not for explicitly the same reasons. There appears to be no universally applied template for its reception within the Third Reich, rather a series of semi-independent decisions by reviewers, authors and activists, with *Bengal Lancer / Bengali* acting as a shared reference point.

The flexibility of the book, film and author's reception is further shown by Yeats-Brown's appearance as a character in Dieter Mark's *Blutrache gegen England*, published 1940. Mark's fictional account of the ongoing conflict on India's border with Afghanistan describes how Mirza Ali Khan, also known as the Faqir of Ipi, is moved to fight against the British when he sees a woman and child trampled to death in the street by a cavalry regiment, the members of which pay no attention to the damage they have caused.²⁶⁶ Several scenes later, an officer named Yeats-Brown is shot dead outside Fort Wana by the Faqir. The narrator describes how it was Yeats-Brown who had led the regiment in the opening scene. In the paragraphs leading up to his death he is portrayed as both vain and ignorant: he refuses to remember the names of his Indian subordinates, instead calling them all "Mehmet", and he pretends to have better eyesight than he does. The superior eyesight of the Indians compared to the British is repeated later in the book as a way of showing that the British are out of their depth, somewhere they don't belong. Beyond the name, the character

²⁶⁵ *Bücherkunde* 3/3 (1936), p.155.

²⁶⁶ Dieter Mark, *Blutrache gegen England. Die Fahne des Propheten über Nordwestindien* (Berlin, 1940).

here is far from the intelligent and sympathetic self-portrayal in *Bengal Lancer*. It is likely that the name was chosen to draw a known British figure into the story, thus implicating him in the crimes of British Imperialism. The better-known T.E. Lawrence receives similar treatment: earlier in the narrative he is persuaded back into active service against his will by the British Secret Service, and sells the Faqir 2000 Lee-Enfield rifles, one of which is used to kill Yeats-Brown.

The assassination of the fictional Yeats-Brown as a plot point functions without prior reader knowledge of the real-life Yeats-Brown. In fact, although there are no dates assigned to any of the scenes, too much familiarity with the real careers of Yeats-Brown or Lawrence would undermine the credibility of this account. However, this is a very deliberate attempt to discredit two British colonial figures with good reputations in Germany. Taken as a whole, the reception history of Yeats-Brown in the Third Reich shows the reduction of a man and his work, via the popular but unrepresentative mediation of a Hollywood film, into a simple signifier for British rule in India; this rule is then symbolically ended by the unforeseen consequences of a Secret Service arms deal. It also points to an ability to separate or reunite a cultural figure and his “baggage” according to changing needs.

Genre: Travel accounts, future war stories, and fictionalised history

At the beginning of his widely-cited, two-volume guide to Britain, Wilhelm Dibelius recommends an outsider's view as a starting point for understanding British culture, as British authors lack the necessary critical distance to provide a useful overview.²⁶⁷ As older travel accounts, he suggests those of Theodor Fontane, Hippolyte Taine, Price Collier and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Taken as a body of work, these accounts have several focal points in common: the state of press freedom and influence over public opinion, especially how open-minded Englishmen are to foreign ideas; the racial character of the people (“Saxon”, “Teutonic” or otherwise), contrasts with others, particularly the French, and the creative energy that comes with this; relative levels of organisation or

²⁶⁷ Wilhelm Dibelius, *England* vol.1 (Stuttgart, 1929), p.3.

pragmatism, especially as regards the foundation of the empire; social cohesion and the class system, particularly the role of the aristocracy; and speculation on likely future developments.²⁶⁸ At the centre of all accounts lies a need to explain a supposed paradox: how did this stubborn, insular, petty-minded island people end up with such an empire, and such dominance in global affairs? This supposed contrast between the quirks of the British character and the successes of the nation create a paradox to be investigated, which is a useful conceit for travel writers, linking their first-hand observations to reader awareness of and interest in questions of race, character, and national destinies. Delivered in this tone of wonder, positive statements about the achievements of the English therefore have underlying negative assumptions.

In *England and the English from an American Point of View*, first published in 1909, Price Collier directly relates peculiarities of English cuisine and manner to colonial rule, via a description of the breakfast served on the sea voyage to Britain:

These islanders, you soon find, have little regard for lightness. [[...]] You soon forswear coffee for tea, and ere long the passive bulwark of resistance wearies you into eggs and bacon, and cold meat, and jams, for your first meal of the day. Little things are typical. What you want is not refused you, but what they have and like is gradually forced upon you. Thus they govern their colonies. No raising of voices. No useless and prolonged discussion, no heat generated, no ridicule of your habits, or eulogy of their own, none of these, but just slow-moving, unchanging, confident bulk!²⁶⁹

While this in one sense describes a reason for the success of British rule – the fact that they gradually force the world to bend to their way of doing things – there is no sense that this can or should be emulated. As with Dieter Marck's description of the fictionalised Yeats-Brown's actions in India, the Englishman's inability to adapt to changing circumstances or reach accommodations with other peoples and cultures is likely to lead to his downfall.

In this way, small details about British culture, habits and mannerisms gain a wider significance, in that they reinforce the contrast between an insular, xenophobic island-based people and their

²⁶⁸ Price Collier, *England and the English from an American point of view* (New York, 1909); Theodor Fontane, *Aus England, Studien und Briefe* (Berlin, 1860); Hippolyte Taine, *Notes on England* (London, 1872); Ralph Waldo Emerson, *English Traits* (New York, 1856).

²⁶⁹ Collier, p.4.

international impact. In positive or neutral portrayals, this poses a question: “How did they gain such a vast empire?” In negative portrayals, this easily becomes indignation: “How *dare* they gain such a vast empire?”

For a German view, Dibelius recommends Carl Peters’ *England und die Engländer* from 1904. In the foreword, Peters claims that the book is the result of ten years of personal observation, during which he has attempted, as far as possible, to be a “purely receptive camera”, avoiding “every colouring in a favourable or unfavourable light”.²⁷⁰ He places this in contrast to what he identifies as a German tendency to underestimate the British, which he believes is based on a lack of knowledge. He offers a warning similar to that in the 1939 edition of the textbook *Pleasant English* (see Chapter Two): “It is surely damaging for a people to overestimate their competitors in international competition, but it is even more damaging to underestimate them.” What Collier wrote in a humorous way, Peters describes as a more noble quality, with a positive effect on the globe:

...this race clings tenaciously, everywhere, to their national idiosyncrasies. And with the British settlers come, to all places, the characteristics of a typical English lifestyle. In all lands he carries with him his teapot and his marmalade, his football and cricket balls and his lawn-tennis nets. [...] In this way, the global empire, however international it may be in its composition and above all in its origins, is nevertheless nationally English in its bones; above all it is a middle-class community.²⁷¹

This quality, he claims, has made other continents habitable for the entire “white” race, and therefore justifies that British pride which so often irritates people of other nationalities. In terms of the Anglo-German rivalry, Peters says that as things stand, the two countries still have much to learn from one another. Britain is a model for the role of individualism in the creation of a community, while Germany is a model for state-led organisation, especially its army and schools. However, Peters does hint at a new organisation of the world, far in the future, in which a united Europe, which can only be achieved through German leadership, would provide a counterweight to a truly united Anglo-Saxon global entity. Although he claims he is reluctant to end his portrayal of

²⁷⁰ Carl Peters, *England und die Engländer* (Berlin, 1904) p.V.

²⁷¹ Peters, p.277.

the British with “fantastical dreams of the future”, he nevertheless makes mention of British novelists who have imagined the complete dominance of Britain over the rest of the globe, which would be inhabited “exclusively by the English and their slaves”.²⁷² In the two examples he mentions, the British either successfully develop aeroplanes which can be used to wipe out all other nations, or manage to defeat the combined forces of Germany, Russia and France, finally denying them access to overseas territories.

By bringing an element of speculative fantasy into his account, which is otherwise rooted in first-hand observation and official statistics, Peters attaches his book to an influential literary trend which blossomed in the fin-de-siècle. Developments in cheap mass media, popular involvement in politics and rapid technological advancement in many areas meant there had been a public appetite before World War One for speculation by writers and experts on the future of warfare. I.F. Clarke identifies the Franco-German War of 1870 as a turning point:

The new weapons and new methods of army organization had shown that the conduct of war was changing; and, in response to that perception of change, a new form of fiction took on the task of describing the conduct of the war-to-come.²⁷³

In this collection, Clarke traces the development of imaginary invasions between combinations of British, French and German forces, with the authors in each instance drawing on international affairs, current public fears, and ongoing debates. Consequently, many such stories impacted on these debates.²⁷⁴ Arthur Conan Doyle’s short story *Danger! Being the Log of Captain John Sirius*, from early 1914, was written to argue for the building of a channel tunnel, and he sent it to several naval experts, publishing a selection of their responses at the end.²⁷⁵ The story itself is of a fleet of six submarines, operating from a secret naval base, bringing Britain to surrender by sinking much of its merchant fleet and causing devastating shortages. The first-person narrator, orchestrator of the

²⁷² Peters, p.266.

²⁷³ I.F. Clarke (ed.), *The Tale of the Next Great War, 1871-1914* (Liverpool, 1995)

²⁷⁴ Such conquest fantasies or invasion scares (one becoming the other upon translation) were not necessarily military. See for example Maiken Umbach’s analysis of E.E. Williams, *Made in Germany* (London, 1896) in Hagen Schulze and Etienne François (eds), *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* vol. 2 (Munich, 2001), pp. 405–18.

²⁷⁵ Arthur Conan Doyle, *Danger! And Other Stories* (New York, 1919).

plan, wonders that the British authorities did not foresee such a disaster and take precautions; and the fact that Doyle used largely negative expert assessments to promote his book, as his biographer Daniel Stashower argues, makes this the main message of his narrative.²⁷⁶

The themes of stubborn complacency in the face of technological advancement, the future of British naval dominance, and the increasing vulnerability of the civilian population in wartime, are common themes in "invasion scare" literature, opinion pieces, cartoons, and works of serious speculation by military experts. As highly contemporary commentaries on real-world developments, combining narration with technical and geographical details, these works of fiction took on a factual, educational aspect. Invasion scare literature also formed an international conversation of stories, as they were translated, commented on, and responded to in kind; in translation, one country's invasion scare becomes another's fantasy of conquest, and vice versa. Doyle's story *Danger!* was adapted as a "reader" for use in German schools by publisher Velhagen and Klasing in 1915, and was even mentioned in the Reichstag as a premonition of Britain's downfall through submarine warfare.²⁷⁷

This means that factual accounts of the British Empire's operation, its strengths and weaknesses, could be read with a view to assessing the feasibility of its future conquest. Third Reich examples of this more fact-based speculation include Oberleutnant E. von Belli's *Der Krieg der Zukunft im Urteil des Auslandes* (*The War of the Future in Foreign Assessments*), which weaves together extracts from military magazines from various countries to form predictions about, among other things, the increased mechanisation of warfare, the future importance of air forces, and psychological factors such as the use of propaganda and the effects of air strikes on civilian morale.²⁷⁸ Many German books on the military capabilities of the British Empire, its strategic strengths and weaknesses, and the decreasing importance of the factors which led to its formation

²⁷⁶ Daniel Stashower, *Teller of Tales: the Life of Arthur Conan Doyle* (New York, 1999).

²⁷⁷ Stashower, p.122.

²⁷⁸ Oberleutnant E. von Belli, *Der Krieg der Zukunft im Urteil des Auslandes* (Berlin, 1936).

(Britain's island location, for example) made similar appeals to evidence-based speculation about the future.²⁷⁹

In *Der Weltkrieg, deutsche Träume*, published 1904 in German and in English as *The Coming Conquest of England* in the same year, August Niemann describes how an alliance of France, Russia and Germany, united in their annoyance at being dictated to by Britain, defeats the British in the colonial sphere and successfully invades Great Britain by landing a joint fleet at Leith and marching to London. As the author describes in his preface, this is an image which had been forming in his mind for some time, made stronger by events such as the Kruger telegram:

In my mind's eye I see the armies and fleets of Germany, France and Russia moving together against the common enemy, who with his polypous arms enfolds the globe. The iron onslaught of the three allied powers will free the whole of Europe from England's tight embrace.²⁸⁰

In the first stage of the attack, a Russian force crosses India's northern frontier, proving to be the catalyst for a widespread uprising against British rule. The Russian secretary of State explains that this is a consequence of Britain having "so brutally destroyed" the independence of India's chieftains; Russia is welcomed "with open arms, as rescuers of the Indian people from their intolerable yoke". Good relations with colonised populations, and an understanding of other cultures, had been part of fantasies of good governance for centuries.²⁸¹ By the beginning of the twentieth century it was also recognised as having strategic importance, and the bush craft and other skills learned by soldiers on non-European battlefields were frequently described in great detail by war correspondents and fiction writers. An example of this from the British side is John Buchan's 1916 novel *Greenmantle*, in which a small band of British, South African and American characters

²⁷⁹ For example, Johannes Stoye, *Das britische Weltreich: Sein Gefüge und seine Probleme* (Munich, 1935); Hermann Lufft, *Das Empire in Verteidigung und Angriff* (Reichenau i. Sachsen, 1936); Ernst Schultze, *Sorgen des britischen Weltreichs* (Leipzig, 1940).

²⁸⁰ August Niemann, *The Coming Conquest of England* (London, 1904), p.vi.

²⁸¹ On the qualities peculiar to colonial heroes see Berny Sèbe, *Heroic imperialists in Africa: The promotion of British and French colonial heroes, 1870-1939* (Manchester, 2013); Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (London, 1997).

use a variety of technical and colonial skills to thwart a German plot to unite the Arab world against British rule.²⁸²

Much of the action in *The Coming Conquest of England* centres on the experiences of Captain Hermann Heideck of the Prussian General Staff, who is travelling in India as a merchant. There he meets the charming and intelligent Edith, wife of the brutish Captain Irwin. On the eve of the Russian invasion of India, Heideck protects Edith from being kidnapped by a Maharajah, to whom her husband has “sold” her in order to clear his gambling debts. In the midst of the chaos which attends the uprising Heideck, aided by his Indian servant whose loyalty he has managed to secure with kind treatment, manages to get Edith to safety. The pair quarrel over his decision to return to Germany to assist in the naval war with Britain. At the end of the novel Edith, who has lost all sense of patriotism, steals important battle plans and brings them to Hamburg and to Heideck, smuggled on a fishing vessel. He makes clear his horror at her act of treason but nevertheless brings his plans to his superiors. Edith and Heideck both die; Edith is swept off the decks of the fishing boat during a storm, while Heideck dies a hero on the gun-deck of a battleship.

The lengthy explanations of the military situation in India and in Europe work in tandem with the portrayal of English character traits, both in the immediate action and the background provided on British relations with other peoples. Niemann makes clear, at every opportunity, that the British were responsible for their own downfall. In contrast, Heideck is portrayed as the perfect soldier, patriot, and colonial hero. Similar contrasts were also frequently portrayed via British characters in Third Reich films. The same British stubbornness, materialism and lack of ability to interact productively with their environment or react to emerging situations provides narrative impetus in, amongst others, *Germanin: Die Geschichte einer kolonialen Tat* (1943) and *Titanic* (1943), as well as being a feature of George Bernard Shaw’s plays.²⁸³

²⁸² John Buchan, *Greenmantle* (London, 1916). The retention of bushcraft and other colonial skills was also a motivating factor in the foundation of the Boy Scouts in Britain and the *Pfadfinder* in Germany: Jeff Bowersox, *Raising Germans in the Age of Empire: Youth and Colonial Culture, 1871-1914*.

²⁸³ Paul Malone, ‘Goebbels Runs Aground: the Nazi Titanic Film (1943)’ in Tim Bergfelder and Sarah Street, *The Titanic in Myth and Memory: Representations in visual and literary culture* (London, 2004) pp.121-130; Sabine Hake,

We have already seen how real-life characters were woven into the book *Blutrache über England* in order to undermine any previous positive impressions the reader may have gained about them. The same technique is widely used in the series 'Weltpirat England', published by Otto Uhlmann Verlag, which consists of twenty fictionalised accounts of events from British imperial history published between 1939 and 1942. The third book, Friedrich Wencker-Wildberg's *Ausbeuter Indiens*, covers the careers of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings.²⁸⁴ The two life stories mirror each other. Clive first appears as a young clerk, is instrumental in allowing a small British force to gain control of India, and later returns with the task of stemming the tide of corruption within East India Company's administration. In retaliation, they accuse him of the same crimes, but he is acquitted. Hastings also first appears as a young subordinate to Clive. He does indulge in the same corrupt behaviour as the others, is subject to a parliamentary enquiry, but the vote goes in his favour. Beside these explanatory discussions, much of the action is military, regarding the besieging of various cities. Despite the cover picture (figure 14, below), the Indian population is all but invisible; several princes appear, plotting against rulers, and are manipulated and out-manoeuvred by Europeans, and unnamed Sepoys are killed in battle. India is very much a prize to be fought over. The real moral condemnation is for Hastings taking massive bribes and the gross mismanagement by Company employees, including withholding grain in order to cause a famine and thus raise the prices. The combination of materialism with a search for flexible moral justification is characterised as peculiarly British.

The first book in the series, *Raub der deutschen Kolonien* by Otto Kindler, is a fictionalised account of the events leading up to the confiscation of Germany's colonies after the First World War.²⁸⁵ The conversations are invented, but the locations and many of the names mentioned are real. There is a

'Mapping the Native Body: On Africa and the Colonial Film in the Third Reich' in Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox & Susanne Zantop, *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and Its Legacy* (Ann Arbor, 1998) pp.163-188; Cuomo, Glenn R., "'Saint Joan before the Cannibals": George Bernard Shaw in the Third Reich' *German Studies Review* 16/3 (1993) pp.435-461.

²⁸⁴ Friedrich Wencker-Wildberg, *Ausbeuter Indiens* (Berlin, 1940).

²⁸⁵ Otto Kindler, *Raub der deutschen Kolonien* (Berlin, 1939).

wealth of real-life detail here, meaning that readers are expected to either know this information already or be willing to do further research. The book is divided into three sections. The first, “Das Netz wird genüpft”, shows pre-war encounters between German colonial figures and British characters. These scenes – in Africa and Europe – serve to demonstrate how well-run the German colonies are, to the benefit of the native population. They include a scene at an African school, and a lecture at the Koch Institute on the success of Germany’s vaccination programme. In these scenes, British characters are unsettled by these successes, while German characters talk of the unlikelihood of war with Britain: “What have we ever done to England?” asks Pfarrer Schowalter in the opening scene, when Louis Botha warns him of Britain’s plans. Mentions are made of alleged atrocities – in the Reichstag, where the accusations of representatives Noske and Erzberger are mentioned, and by Bishop Frank Weston on his visit to the German school – but the ensuing discussions of the evidence for these come out firmly in Germany’s favour, and similar incidents from British colonial history are also raised.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ Kindler, p.13.

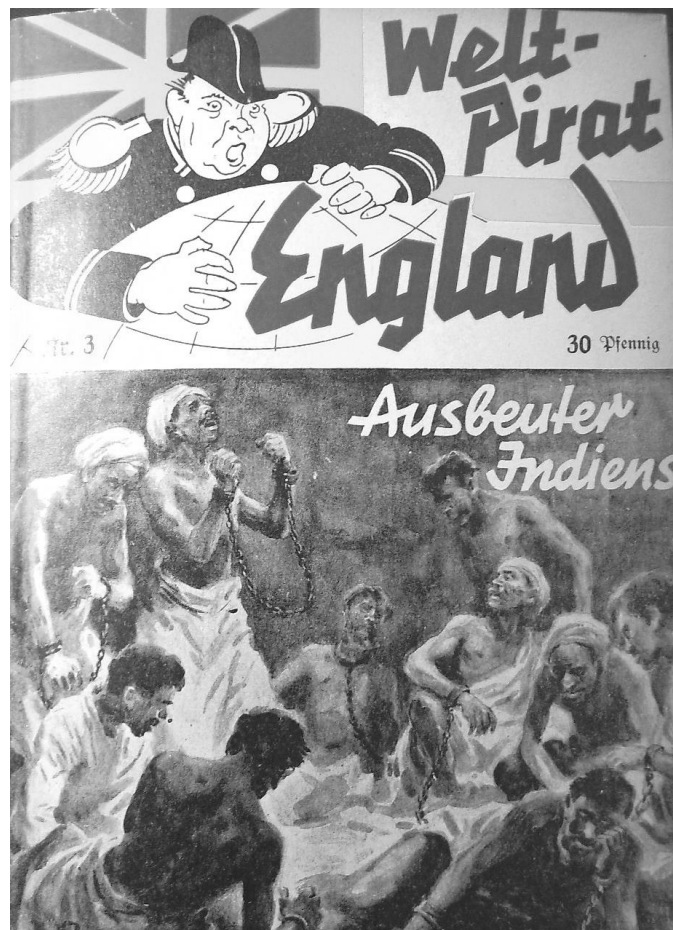


Figure 14: *Ausbeuter Indiens* (1940), front cover.

The second section, “Das Netz wird Ausgelegt”, is set during the First World War. Longer scenes at the beginning and end are set in German areas of Africa: at the start, a detailed discussion between residents of Dares-Salaam of the legal basis for the colonial realm’s neutrality in case of war in Europe is interrupted by shelling from a British war ship. At the end, two German resistance fighters, caught in the act of trying to blow up a railway line are informed by a British officer that Germany has surrendered. The scenes in between are shorter and describe diplomatic discussions and meetings between British leaders and trade union representatives; the declared motives of British politicians are undermined by references to secret agreements and British manipulation of other countries.

The final section, “Das Netz wird zugezogen”, covers the peace conference and preparations for it. Wilson is shown as well-intentioned but weak, idealistic and easily out-manoeuvred by Britain and the other nations they have manipulated. The British are shown scraping together all the evidence they can to prove that the Germans are unfit as colonisers, including the works by Noske and

Erzberger, a letter by Bishop Weston, and a book by Evans Lewin (clearly described as Jewish). Britain's motives are shown to be entirely materialistic, and their acceptance of the mandate system, rather than annexation, is shown to be in order to ensure that it does not count towards the reparations Germany must pay. In the closing scenes, representatives of the local population protest against the new administration, two British postal workers cover up the German franking on a letter with a British stamp while discussing the new 'sport' of shooting at natives, and locals cry out for a return of the Germans. The climax of the text is the three quoted paragraphs from the Versailles Treaty which cover the reasons for the confiscation of Germany's colonies.²⁸⁷ Kindler offers no comment on this, but based on all that has gone before, every statement has been undermined. The careful mention of critical texts, their authors, and their appropriation as British 'propaganda' extends the same undermining process beyond this book, to other material.

Picture collections and the creation of narrative

The example of the series *Raub der deutschen Kolonien* shows how documentary evidence could be incorporated into adventure stories, with a strong narrative allowing them to be read in a particular way. In the reverse approach, several Second World War German sources attracted an audience with collections of images, from which a narrative could be drawn. Three examples of this are found in the cigarette card album *Raubstaat England*, the published guide to the *Reichspropagandaleitung* slide lecture *Weltpirat England. Ein Querschnitt durch die Geschichte des britischen Imperiums* (which had no connection to the 'Weltpirat England' series), and Kurt Wunderlich's *Das Empire* (mentioned above).

Raubstaat England was volume sixteen of a series from the Cigaretten-Bilderdienst Hamburg-Bahrenfeld. Once they had been collected, the album would contain 126 cards, averaging one per page.²⁸⁸ The images ranged from portraits of monarchs and other well-known figures such as Oliver Cromwell and Henry Morgan, to British and French cartoons or a satirical or critical nature, to

²⁸⁷ Kindler, pp.46-7.

²⁸⁸ Ernst K. Lewalter, *Raubstaat England* (Hamburg Bahrenfeldt, 1941).

illustrations or photographs of acts of brutality and destruction. Twelve of these images are also included in the *Weltpirat England* slide lecture, and a further six are significantly similar, for instance showing a different view of the memorial to Boer women and children who died in British camps.²⁸⁹ Wunderlich's book features pictures of 138 stamps as well as five maps and one picture of a postmark from German-occupied Jersey; the description in the caption of the Union Jack giving way to a German postmark echoes the actions of the British postal workers at the end of *Raub der deutschen Kolonien*.

These three books represent different ways in which authors, publishers and commissioning institutions could govern how an audience was affected by pictures, in some instances the same pictures. Through their participatory nature, these collections of pictures and their accompanying explanations teach skills and practices which can be continued beyond the "lesson", essentially honing the "German" or National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, not in the sense of a world view or ideology, but as a way of viewing the world, even through sources that have been found independently. These sources can also be seen as encouraging the scientific behaviours of collecting, cataloguing and organising material; bringing together all formats of "evidence" in a way that makes them uniform, that incorporates them into an overarching system to confirm a predetermined idea, rather than focusing on difference, contradictions and honest evaluation; in other words, some intellectual practices are being encouraged, but not all, and only in the service of the "right" goals.

Both *Raubstaat England* and *Weltpirat England* use a similar mixture of representations of formal and informal imperialism, as well a full spectrum of crimes against all peoples and nations, and incidents which draw parallels with British conduct in war. Themes in common include destruction of residential areas, including Alexandria, Copenhagen, and Palestine, and the execution of prisoners. There is also an employment of particular motifs to build up an impression without the

²⁸⁹ Reichspropagandaleitung (ed.), *Weltpirat England. Ein Querschnitt durch die Geschichte des britischen Imperiums* Lichtbildvortragsmaterial der NSDAP Vol.20 (Munich, 1940)

need to engage with the accompanying text, for example the recurring images of cannon and other heavy artillery in *Weltpirat England*: British figures are shown as largely invulnerable behind these, using them against civilians and prisoners or to destroy homes (see figure 15, below). The inhumanity of this is driven home by a picture of one of the cannon used to execute Indian prisoners being repurposed as part of a British memorial.

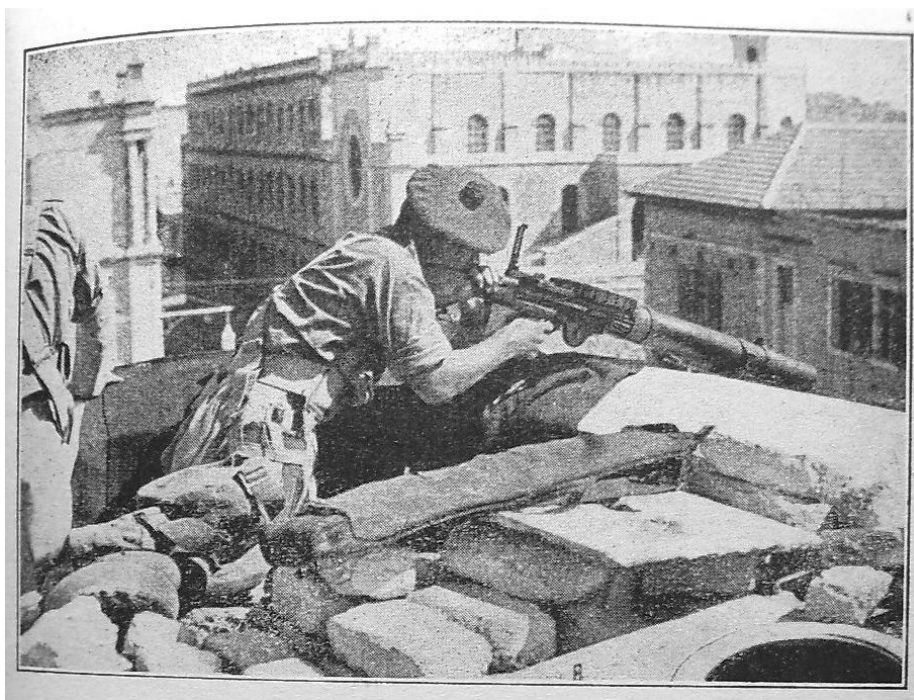


Figure 15: *Weltpirat England* (1940), image 38.

The introduction of *Weltpirat England* begins with quotes from Napoleon from 1801 and Carlyle from 1850, which describe what they see as the English characteristics of hypocrisy, egotism, false morality, brutality and dishonesty. It goes on to describe how Poland fell victim to British "perfidy" and has paid for its mistake with destruction, and that France will suffer the same fate for having missed the opportunity to reach an understanding with Germany. Now, it claims, the situation has changed:

However, now the German people have taken on the task of once and for all eliminating the British system of rule, which, in its baseness and hypocrisy, in its rapacity and lust for money, has for three hundred year gone unrecognised for what it is: the enemy of all humanity and the destroyer of world peace.

To draw attention to British lies, *Weltpirat England* includes a drawing of German soldiers tying a boy to a tree, ready to be executed by firing squad (see figure 16, below). Although there is no

explanation in the text, this is almost certainly a depiction of the story debunked in Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime*, of a French boy killed for refusing to betray the location of French troops. To a German audience the highly romanticised picture, which contrasts the dark, unsympathetic line of German gunmen with the open innocence of the boy, dressed in white and with a pose and expression similar to many depictions of the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, would appear as a ridiculous slur on German conduct in the First World War.

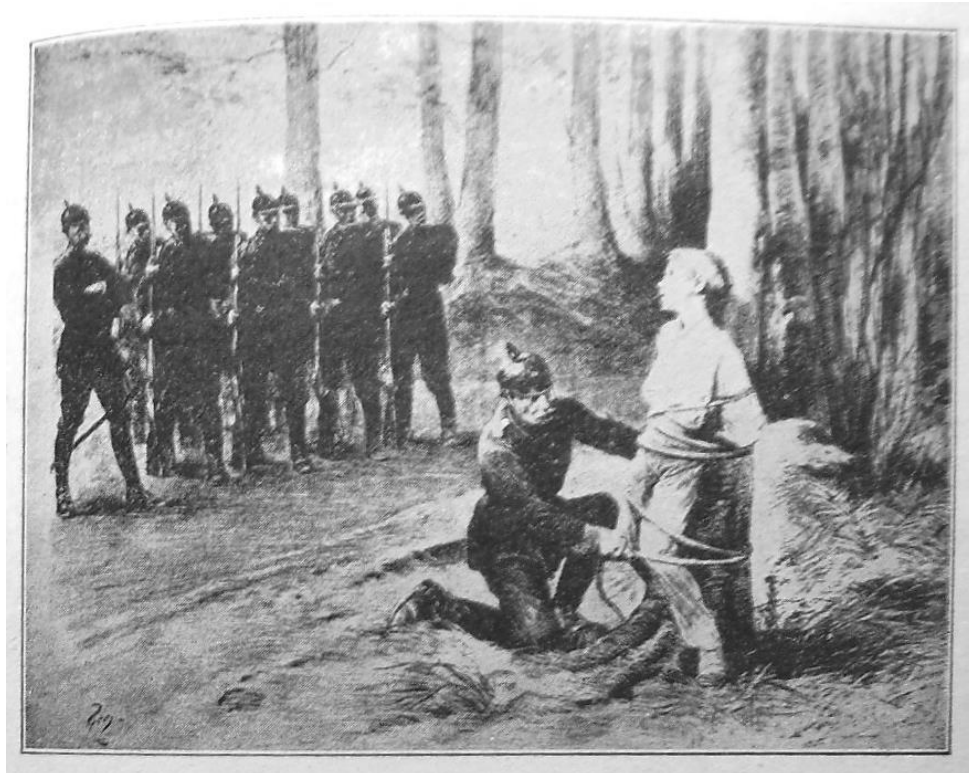


Figure 16: *Weltpirat England* (1940) image 52.

Although both *Raubstaat England* and *Weltpirat England* create through the majority of the pictures the same narrative of the British Empire having been founded on brutality and deception, a dozen or so pictures from the end of each collection provide two alternative (but not necessarily incompatible) visions for the future. *Raubstaat England* concentrates on the former German colonies, with a set of coloured photographs of schools and crop-picking scenes. Unlike the previous images, these would seem to correspond to Joachim Zeller's analysis of colonial trading

cards as primarily positive images, designed as a sales technique.²⁹⁰ It concludes with images of conflict in Palestine, the connection being made by two contrasting images on facing pages; a German youth standing next to a horse, a clear symbol of health and national renewal through overseas colonies, and a young British soldier firing a pistol from behind a crumbled wall (figures 17 and 18, below). The latter is captioned, "The face of British imperialism". *Weltpirat England* also has Palestine as its final theme from British imperial history, but concludes with several Party-specific pictures: Hitler, and Nazi campaign posters.

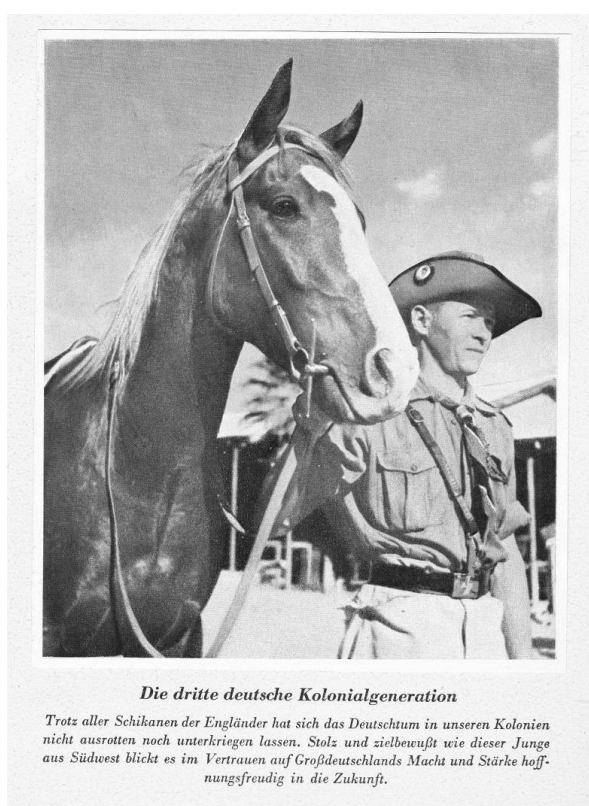


Figure 17: *Raubstaat England* (1941) image 125

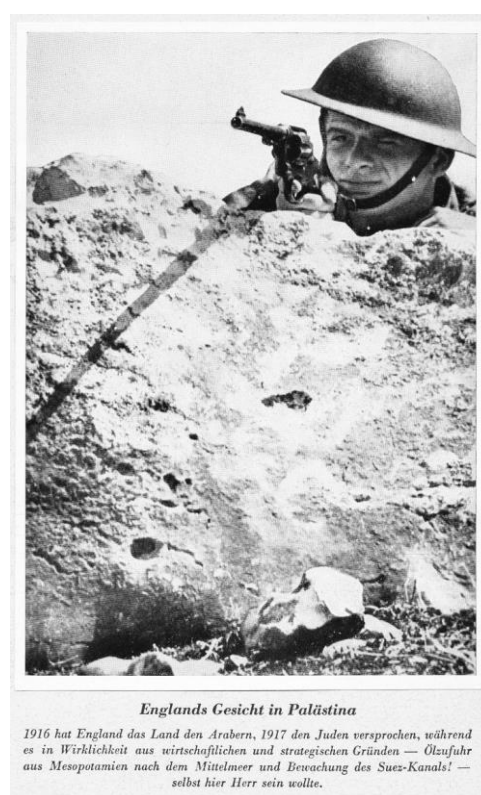


Figure 618 *Raubstaat England* (1941) image 124

Das Empire: Britischer Raub und Verrat amtlich belegt durch Postwertzeichen (The Empire: British Robbery and Treachery Officially Documented through Postage Stamps) by Curt Wunderlich consists of black and white reproductions of 139 stamps from parts of the British

²⁹⁰ Joachim Zeller, 'Harmless "Kolonialbiedermeier"? Colonial and Exotic Trading Cards' in Volker M. Langbehn (ed.), *German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory* (Abingdon, 2010) pp.71-86.

Empire and elsewhere.²⁹¹ Each has a caption tying it to a particular incident from British imperial or diplomatic history. According to the book's blurb, stamps can assist in the "determination of dissemination of historical truth" as well as being a "sharp weapon of state propaganda".²⁹² This weapon, according to Wunderlich, can be double-edged, unwittingly but undeniably revealing Britain's "infamous acts". This book, he claims, can therefore be seen as German philately's "contribution to the war effort". Contrary to the claims of his blurb, the stamps in Wunderlich's *Das Empire* show very little on their own, but rely entirely on the accompanying text for the damning narrative (see figure 19, below). The readers again have to complete these connections, and in so doing collude in the politicisation of the hobby.



Figure 19: *Das Empire: Britischer Raub und Verrat* (1940) p.60.

²⁹¹ Curt Wunderlich, *Das Empire: Britischer Raub und Verrat amtlich belegt durch Postwertzeichen* (Berlin, 1941).

²⁹² Wunderlich, inside cover.

This fragmentary approach is also evident in the use of isolated quotes at the start of chapters. These are worth examining independently of the rest of the book's content because, as with Yeats-Brown as his "baggage", they can act as shared reference points and contextualising elements divorced from their original context and intentions. The thirteen headings and related quotes in *Das Empire* emphasise points being made in the extended captions for the stamps, and draw the attention of even the most casual reader. Quotes are short, taken from a range of politicians, historians and literary figures, from Britain, France and the USA. *Reich* Chief of Press Otto Dietrich is the only German figure quoted, and he appears in the introduction.

The quote introducing the first section, 'Fremde Siedlung – Englands Beute' ('Foreign settlements – England's booty'), is from Herbert Spencer's essay 'Patriotism' in *Facts and Comments* from 1902. The sentence provided by Wunderlich is a faithful translation, but without the two sentences which precede it, the overall effect is a less balanced and more damning condemnation of the methods by which Britain's empire developed. The sentence in bold is that from Wunderlich:

And when England gave a home to political refugees and took up the causes of small states struggling for freedom, it again exhibited noble traits which excite affection. But there are traits, unhappily of late more frequently displayed, which do the reverse. **Contemplation of the acts by which England has acquired over eighty possessions - settlements, colonies, protectorates, &c. - does not arouse feelings of satisfaction.**²⁹³

Wunderlich also uses quotes from T.E. Lawrence on the methods used to gain support in the Middle East during the First World War, Ralph Waldo Emerson's *English Traits* (recommended by Dibelius, above), Gladstone on Ireland, and Churchill from 1900 on the role of deception in a democracy. In this way, readers are introduced to British and other non-German voices which appear to support, whether deliberately or unwittingly, Wunderlich's unrestrained condemnation of British imperial methods.

²⁹³ Herbert Spencer, 'Patriotism' in *Facts and Comments* (New York, 1902) pp.122-3.

Conclusions

As with the reviews of schoolbooks in the previous chapter, the incorporation of particular whole British works into the German adult book market indicates that a book's reception was determined by a series of subjective and often contradictory decisions rather than a single pronouncement by a high-ranking Party member. As the example of Yeats-Brown's *Bengal Lancer* shows, a book, its author and derivative works could move independently from one another within the cultural life of the Third Reich, gathering seemingly contradictory associations. Taken as a whole, Yeats-Brown was both the creator of an influential portrayal of the British as model imperialists and a convenient scapegoat in fiction for that same imperialism's display of deadly indifference towards its subjects. However, this was not the result of a linear development from positive to negative portrayals directed from the centre, but of a series of independently taken decisions based on the needs of other authors and promoters. There is, then, little point in attempting to establish a single "Nazi" reception of any particular figure or work.

Works of fiction and non-fiction together, whether single-author texts or edited collections, provided readers with a wealth of verifiable references to people, works and events, presented in ways which could change their prior understanding or affect any later engagement with the same material. Consequently, any analysis of a single representation must be understood as part of this wider web of associations. The effects of National Socialism and of *Gleichschaltung* within publishing are therefore best understood not as a lens or a uniformly distorting prism, but as a constantly shifting set of prisms (i.e. a kaleidoscope); a shared set of factual material was twisted and realigned in different combinations by different creators and promoters, in a mixture of education and entertainment.

The methods of engagement with British sources reveal how complementary strategies for guiding readers could overcome the lack of centralised control; in effect, these incorporation strategies managed the contexts in which this material appeared, as a proxy for managing the content itself. Readers in the Third Reich came to the topic of British imperial history or the impact of British policy on current affairs with prior knowledge, not all of it accurate, and a set of existing

interpretative frameworks gained though their engagement with earlier works from many genres. In cases such as the writings of Thomas Carlyle, J.R. Seeley's *Expansion of England* or Arthur Ponsonby's *Falsehood in Wartime*, continued engagement with these works, in their entirety, was encouraged; other material, such as German treatments of British imperial "crimes" from the First World War, were omitted from footnotes and reading lists. Instead, authors and editors seeking to create a negative impression returned again to British, French and American sources, and presented their arguments as part of a new National Socialist view, unclouded by the effects of British propaganda. Sources could be reduced to a single compatible idea or quote, as evidence of long-term trends, or undermined and presented as evidence of self-delusion.

Positive or seemingly neutral portrayals from 1933 to 1939 were similarly coloured by legacies of rivalry and animosity, in some cases stretching back centuries. Travel literature and other guides to British culture and society purported to have the practical purpose of explaining the reasons for British success and make predictions about the sustainability of the British Empire. Through fictions of invasion and conquest, as well as non-fiction analyses of its strengths and weaknesses, or advances in military technology, the British Empire was conquered time and again from the comfort of German armchairs. As we shall see in the following two chapters, during the Second World War the same information was linked explicitly to arguments about Germany's superior morality and prospects for victory.

Chapter Five

Reading the Enemy: The German “unmasking” of British imperialism in books from the Second World War

Introduction

This chapter will examine the interaction of intellectual and emotional appeals, made through the presentation of historical and cultural information, used to build up a negative picture of the British as imperialists during the Second World War. From previous chapters we have seen how the years 1933-1939 allowed scope for a variety of portrayals of Britain's history, its racial, political and social development, and of the development and sustainability of its overseas empire, as well as the extent to which this variety continued after the start of the war. We have also seen how books on these topics were shaped not only by the demands of regulatory institutions but also by the need to appeal to consumers' interests and concerns, which had in turn been shaped by earlier debates, literary products and modes of interpretation. Books on British imperialism published during and in anticipation of the Second World War were equally the product of the interaction between government and reader concerns, and the legacy of previous works. Just as they had with material from pre-1933, wartime readers needed to be guided to reinterpret what had gone before, in a process presented as an “unmasking” of Britain. This involved a further reframing of imperial history and supposedly national characteristics, using familiar information as reference points, but also incorporating current events.

This “unmasking” was frequently framed in pseudo-scientific terms as a diagnosis of Britain as a sick organism. Historical information ceased to be elements of a narrative, tracing cause and effect, and became atemporal symptoms; a fault identified from medieval history was given equal weight to one from the interwar years. This synchronisation of British imperial history helped to portray its political system and Empire as incapable of change and doomed to be replaced by a new world order. At the same time, the repetition by many authors of the image of the mask, or the removal of a veil, and the constant comparison of a British “lack of self-awareness” and “self-aggrandisement” with the allegedly clearer view available to citizens of the “New” Germany, served to undermine

any messages from British sources; by attacking the mental processes behind British statements of war aims etc., writers could reinforce the message that official German statements were inherently more reliable. The mask was also a common theme in cartoon portrayals of the British, for example the two covers from *Lustige Blätter* shown below.



Figure 20: *Lustige Blätter* 54/44, 27.10.39

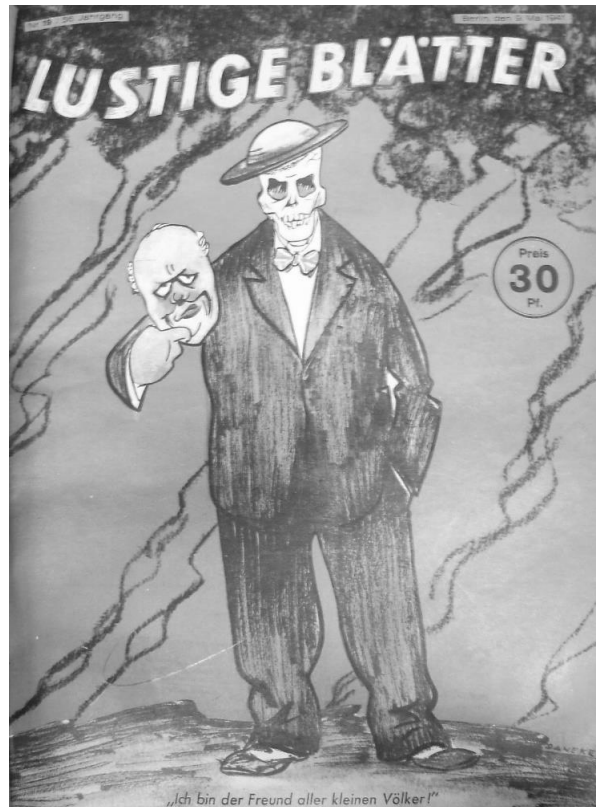


Figure 21: *Lustige Blätter* 56/19, 04.05.41

In the first cover, published October 1939, Neville Chamberlain requests a new costume from his tailor, Winston Churchill, as the world is not yet ready to see his “real face” and the three options hanging on the wall, “crusader”, “friend of the small” (complete with a pocket full of chocolate), and “angel of peace” no longer work. The second cover, from May 1941, shows Churchill, alone in suit, spats, union flag bowtie and metal helmet, standing in a casual pose against a red, smoke-streaked background. Holding his face as a mask in one hand, he reveals himself as Death in an apocalyptic landscape; the caption reads “I am the friend of all small nations”. Between them, the two covers show the durability of the themes of duplicity and exposure in German anti-British portrayals, as well as the variation between serious and humorous treatments.

Many of the books under examination in this chapter were written by authors with academic credentials. At the start of the First World War, as Matthew Stibbe notes, academics played “a leading role in defining and giving voice to what later became known as ‘the spirit of 1914’”.²⁹⁴ As explained in Chapter Three of this thesis, a conflict between the main European powers, spilling over into the colonial realm, had been long anticipated and imagined in works of future fiction and speculative assessments of military and technological developments. Academic voices were able to consolidate and edify the combination of patriotic confidence and anti-British sentiments by shaping it into eloquent, evidenced arguments; their reward was access to a wider audience, through their patriotic publications: “poems, war lectures and sermons, ‘academic’ treatises, novels and art periodicals”.²⁹⁵ In the aftermath of the First World War, Arthur Ponsonby described, scornfully, the usefulness of intellectuals and literary figures in propaganda:

They were able to clothe the rough tissue of falsehood with phrases of literary merit and passages of eloquence better than the statesmen. Sometimes by expressions of spurious impartiality, at other times by rhetorical indignation, they could by their literary skill give this or that lie the stamp of indubitable authenticity, even without the shadow of a proof, or incidentally refer to it as accepted fact.²⁹⁶

The indignation in Ponsonby’s book is explainable by a gulf between the noble goals and interest in “the truth” which intellectuals are assumed to have and their apparent abandonment of these ideals in favour of “vindictive” and “narrow” nationalism. This supposed contradiction has also been an enduring point of orientation for secondary studies on the role of academics in supporting National Socialist aims, and a side-effect of the resulting focus on biographical details or institutional histories in an attempt to explain academic collaboration with the regime has been the relative neglect of the content and rhetorical techniques of the works themselves. A recent challenge to this paradigm comes from Christian Ingrao’s *Intellectuals in the SS War Machine*, which traces the careers of eighty German academics who were active in the SS, beginning with the ways in which

²⁹⁴ Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, 2001), p.11.

²⁹⁵ Stibbe, p.10.

²⁹⁶ Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime* (Woking, 1928), p.25.

they were affected by the First World War. Ingrao combines anthropological and biographical elements with a detailed analysis of the beliefs expressed in their works, and so shows the accommodation of intellectual with emotional impulses within actors at the forefront of the Nazi extermination operation.²⁹⁷ Benedikt Stuchtey's analysis of histories of the British Empire similarly selects the First World War, and the inability of German historians to come to terms with Germany's defeat, as a defining moment.²⁹⁸ Willi Oberkrome's examination of Kleo Pleyer's *Die Landschaft im neuen Frankreich* shows the extent of certain scholars' vision to do away with disciplinary boundaries and with what they saw as "Jewish-influenced, placid, bourgeois erudition", in order to create a "total science" of *Volkstum*.²⁹⁹ The resulting examinations of national or racial "character", as well as long-term economic and social weaknesses, of countries potentially hostile to Germany, were considered by Pleyer and others to be "a means of engaging in enemy reconnaissance relevant to the present day."³⁰⁰ This deployment of historical analysis as a form of remote espionage is evident in wartime histories of the British Empire too, alongside attempts to identify and account for the peculiarities of the "English national character".

During both conflicts, academic lectures and monographs were turned into series of books to increase their audience reach. As well as spreading and reducing the costs of promotion (as explained in Chapter Two), these series also drew together diverse topics and specialisms under a common umbrella. In autumn 1914, publisher L. Friedrichsen & Co. brought out the collection 'Deutsche Vorträge hamburgischer Professoren', which included the lectures *England und Wir* by Wilhelm Dibelius, *Britische Reichsprobleme und der Krieg* by Friedrich Keutgen, *Der Islam und der Krieg* by Rudolf Tschudi and *Die indische Frage* by Sten Konow. The list of titles alone reinforced connections between Anglo-German relations, the state of the British Empire, and unrest

²⁹⁷ Christian Ingrao, *Intellectuals in the SS War Machine* (Cambridge, 2013), esp. pp.32-48 and 136-160.

²⁹⁸ Benedikt Stuchtey, 'World Power and World History: Writing the British Empire, 1885-1945' in Benedikt Stuchtey and Eckhardt Fuchs (eds.) *Writing World History 1800-2000* (Oxford, 2003) pp.213-253.

²⁹⁹ Willi Oberkrome, 'German Historical Scholarship under National Socialism' in Wolfgang Bialas and Anson Rabinbach, *Nazi Germany and the Humanities* (Oxford, 2007), p.209.

³⁰⁰ Oberkrome, p.208.

in India and the Middle East, which were already familiar to readers through other sources (see Chapter Three). Series from World War Two displayed a similar range of topics and individual volumes recycled much of the same material and arguments, with the addition of more recent events and explicit contrasts with Germany under National Socialism. What is being examined here is therefore the continuation rather than the invention of an enemy stereotype.

In order to show both the continued variety of products on the German book market during the Second World War, as well as to further show the perpetuation of the categorisation and marketing strategies identified in Chapter One, this chapter will analyse books which functioned as part of a series as well as individually. The series ‘Das britische Reich in der Weltpolitik’ (‘The British Empire in World Politics’) from the *Deutsche Auslandwissenschaftliches Institut* (German Institute of Foreign Studies) consisted of thirty-five volumes by authors from a range of academic fields, almost all of which were published in 1940. Around a third of these (twelve) describe Britain’s relations with a particular country or the history of an area of the British Empire. The remainder cover cultural and political topics, including Britain’s war economy, religious history, and the activities of the British Council. ‘Das ist England’, published by the NSDAP’s own publishing house, contained twelve volumes and covered similar themes to the DAWI’s series, although the only country-specific volume is Reinald Hoops’ *Irland und England*.³⁰¹ Single, stand-alone books also continued to be published well into the Second World War, and the multiple review processes described in Chapter Two continued. Even in a total war situation, the publication of a book is not a straightforward indication that its contents were in keeping with every aspect of official policy or doctrine, even in as far as such a party line existed on all questions pertaining to Britain.

Many of the books published in the first year of the Second World War had been in preparation before war broke out; later editions tended not to be substantially rewritten, but would receive an additional foreword and sometimes an extra few pages, to incorporate recent developments and to

³⁰¹ The series ‘England ohne Maske’, which was also similar in scope and themes to the DAWI’s series, will be analysed in Chapter Six, as it was primarily directed at an international rather than a domestic audience.

explain the continued relevance of the work. For example, the first edition of Ernst Schultze's *Sorgen des britischen Weltreichs* has an initial foreword dated August 1939, and a conclusion which was added on the third of September. An additional foreword for the second edition, added April 1940, explains that this wartime edition is largely unrevised, but has an additional few pages on the situation in Denmark and Norway, to bring it up to date. Similarly, the foreword to Adolf Rein's *Warum führt England Krieg?* (the first volume of the series 'Das britische Reich in der Weltpolitik') explains that the book was completed in October 1939, and argues that the attempted assassination of Hitler in the Bürgerbräukeller in Munich in November 1939 lends additional weight to his argument that Britain is waging a war against the person of Hitler. These small amendments show that rather than being the product of a clean break with earlier assessments of Britain as a potential ally, or at least non-participant in the war, these books were part of a constant process of building on and reinterpreting earlier material and creating an altered record of developments.

A key feature of these sources is how easily interchangeable chapters and sections of argument are between texts and how each book contains most of the elements of the overarching anti-British stereotype, given differing emphasis. While many of the same points and supporting evidence appear in different texts, the precise construction of the arguments varies; even on matters such as the racial mix in Britain and the nature of Jewish influence on British society and politics, there is considerable variation between authors. Each text nevertheless reinforces several core anti-British messages. The variety of evidence presented and the use of different starting points for essentially the same arguments gives an illusion of plurality and open discussion. What follows will examine the argumentation strategies and use of evidence within these books to determine how complex historical and cultural information was "mobilised" as part of the broad sweep of interlinked propaganda messages found in many genres of material. It will also compare the central messages and the effect these detailed, intellectual sources were intended to create, with those of German anti-British cartoons from popular magazines, as these provided the same moral and "exposing"

messages in a more condensed form. The chapter will first compare the complimentary processes of “unmasking” through the use of historical evidence and satire, then look at the way in which certain aspects of the British self-image were undermined: the racial mix as established by the Norman Conquest, the “ideal” of the gentleman, British morality, and the cohesion of the British system, both at home and in the empire.

Constructing and removing the “mask”

Reasoned arguments and humorous portrayals each relied on constructing and purporting to expose a gulf between British self-perception and reality, as German readers are intended to see it. Two literary figures with British connections whose earlier works had a lasting impact in the Third Reich were Houston Stewart Chamberlain and George Bernard Shaw. Each employed different methods of “revealing” “truths” about British society; this, and the continued use of their works in Germany during the Second World War, makes a comparison of their work a useful example for the incorporation of historical and satirical elements within anti-British books.

According to his biographer Geoffrey Field, Chamberlain's disillusionment with British politics began long before 1914, in particular as a reaction to Britain's policies regarding southern Africa, British conduct during the Boer War, and increasing antagonism towards Germany. He also saw Jewish influence as "the agent of corrosion" within Britain, making society increasingly materialistic and alienated from its roots.³⁰² Upon the outbreak of the First World War, he "became one of the most prolific and extreme advocates of the German cause", receiving an Iron Cross for his services in 1915.³⁰³ As Field points out, the direct influence of Chamberlain within the Third Reich is hard to pinpoint, partly because of the "heterogeneous character" of Nazi ideology, and partly because of the number of contemporaneous writers expressing very similar ideas. He was, however, clearly adopted as a "precursor", becoming "the subject of a vast array of speeches, articles, radio programs and school lessons". Field also describes Chamberlain's methodology,

³⁰² Geoffrey G. Field, *Evangelist of Race: the Germanic Vision of Houston Stewart Chamberlain* (New York, 1981), p.363.

³⁰³ Field, p.363.

which entailed searching for material through wide-ranging reading into politics and history, carrying on “vast correspondence with soldiers and civilians”, as well as drawing on his personal experiences; the result was a writing style which brought together many different kinds of evidence, including quotes (or “misquotes”, according to Field) from many British historians and cultural critics.³⁰⁴ This is a style very much in keeping with that of the German academic authors of the Second World War. Chamberlain’s works enjoyed many reprints in Germany, unabridged or as anthologies. Field does not look at Second World War publications of Chamberlain’s earlier works, and a sweep of library holdings indicates that collections of his First World War essays were not reprinted as often as his *Die Grundlagen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts*, however his opinions continued to have relevance through works such as Georg Schott’s *Chamberlain, der Seher des dritten Reiches*, reprinted in 1940 and 1941.

In one of his essays, ‘England’, Chamberlain aims to provide a coherent picture of the “English character” by constructing a “cross-section” out of three significant events: the Norman Conquest of 1066, the transformation of the British people from farmers to sea-faring merchants under the Tudors, and the attempted impeachment and eventual exoneration of Warren Hastings in 1795.³⁰⁵ He cautions against attempts to sketch a single character from a variety of subjects, claiming that this will likely turn out not to resemble any of them. For this he gives the example of composite photographs of murderers in Cesare Lombroso’s *Criminal Man* (1876). This displays a scepticism of this sort of pseudo-scientific classification of peoples into ‘types’, possibly driven by a sense of distaste at this technique being applied not to the criminal classes or other races, but to upstanding citizens of an advanced nation. Instead, he turns to the more edifying idea of “blood relationship” producing a “psyche of the masses”, through which the individual becomes subject to the influence of the community.³⁰⁶ Searching for the “English character” in incidents from history is a less degrading form of examination than the scrutiny of physical features. Many of Chamberlain’s

³⁰⁴ Field, pp.364-7.

³⁰⁵ Houston Stewart Chamberlain, ‘England’ in *The Ravings of a Renegade* (London, 1915) pp.109-158.

³⁰⁶ Chamberlain, p.111.

motifs and linking strategies can be found in German anti-British books in circulation three decades later. In both instances - Chamberlain's essay for an American audience, and the later works - a coherent diagnosis of the British as pathologically materialistic and socially fragmented is built to form a clear contrast with a healthy, socially-united Germany; a definite propagandistic purpose necessitates the formation of a logical argument from the selected historical information. Just as Chamberlain rejected the "composite photograph" approach in favour of his "historical cross-section", so Second World War books used historical rather than purely modern figures to illustrate the "English national character".

In contrast to Chamberlain's dedicated support of Germany's cause, Shaw assumed an artists' role of devil's advocate throughout his career. He frequently criticised in his plays and essays the impotence of liberal democracy as opposed to the decisive leadership of Mussolini and Hitler, but also lampooned both in his 1938 play *Geneva* and spoke out against Nazi Germany's anti-Semitic policies. As Glenn Cuomo's essay on Shaw's reception within the Third Reich illustrates, his early support of Hitler, as well as Hitler and Goebbels' personal appreciation of his humour, accorded his plays an exceptional degree of protection and patronage within the Third Reich, culminating in their being performed well into the Second World War.³⁰⁷ It would appear that the contradictory messages and lack of coherence within Shaw's works, taken as a whole, allowed instances of criticism which would have led to a ban of all works in the case of most other artists to be dismissed as unfortunate but negligible lapses.

³⁰⁷ Glenn R. Cuomo, "'Saint Joan before the Cannibals': George Bernard Shaw in the Third Reich" *German Studies Review* 16/3 (1993) pp.435-461.

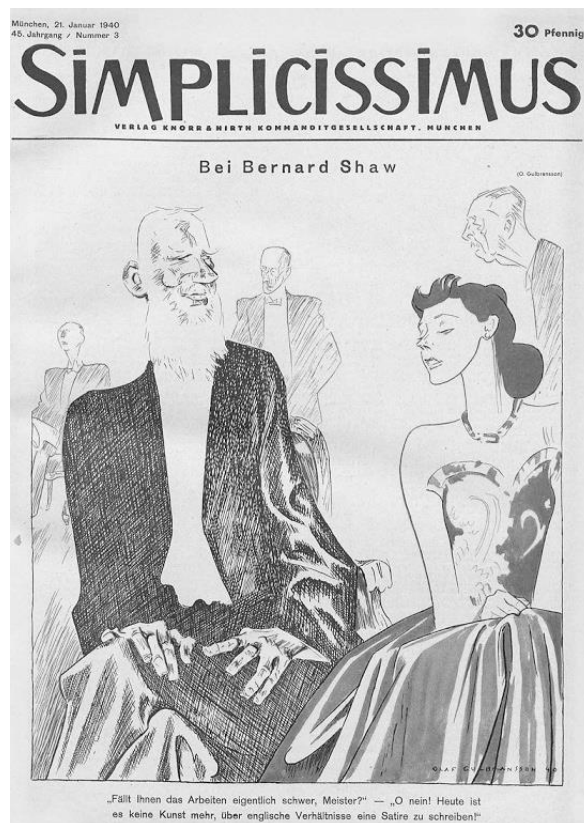


Figure 22: Simplicissimus 45/3, 21.01.40

As the illustration above (figure 22) suggests, the mere existence of Shaw's satires could be the basis for a joke at Britain's expense. In the caption, the young lady asks Shaw, "Do you find your work at all difficult, master?" He responds, "Oh no! Today it takes no skill at all to write a satire about conditions in England." While this caricature offers no praise of Shaw, in fact calling into question his skill as a writer, the real object of criticism is British society; this is reinforced by the typical portrayal of the upper-classes as long-necked, weak-chinned and in awkward, listless attitudes.

The two examples of Chamberlain and Shaw also illustrate the extent of the contradictions which could exist between sources which nevertheless contributed towards the same overall stereotype. The difference between their works, in terms of their re-deployment in anti-British material during the Second World War, is most pronounced in their understanding of the British class system. In Chamberlain's argument, noble Norman families who came to rule England "remained entirely segregated" from the Anglo-Saxon population, the impact of which is still evident:

From this circumstance evolved that ruling caste which is peculiar to England, and this caste has preserved its language or, more correctly, its pronunciation to this very day. Its forms of expression include not only special words but special turns of phrase which, like the very accent of this caste, the Englishman of the common classes is incapable of making.³⁰⁸

Via this linguistic observation, he draws a direct line to the present day, and the strictly separate schooling system for members of different classes (contrasted with the more mixed system in Germany). His claim is that the children of upper and lower classes are taught in different idioms, with the result that there is no mutual understanding between them. Following this, he poses the rhetorical question of how an army can possibly function without effective communication between the officer class and ordinary soldiers. In this conception then, Britain's key weakness is her lack of social cohesion, stemming from a genuine racial difference so profound that it has endured the passing centuries. This is the very opposite of the criticism of the English class system within Shaw's play *Pygmalion* (first performed 1912), which was extensively performed in Weimar and the Third Reich, only ceasing in 1944 with the closure of all German theatres.³⁰⁹ In this conception, supposedly entrenched, insurmountable class differences are artificial and artificially preserved and all upper-class assumptions of natural superiority and their right to power are therefore baseless. From this opposing starting point, however, the same useful conclusion can be reached; Britain's lack of social cohesion will inevitably lead to defeat, in this case with a focus on hubris rather than on natural laws and a sense of fate. In other topic areas too, contradictions could exist between works, while maintaining the essential "unmasking" effect.

As with Chamberlain, most Second World War German accounts of British history begin with the Norman Conquest and the relationship between Germanic and French elements in Britain's racial and cultural mix. Max Everwien, in *Bibel, Scheckbuch und Kanonen* (foreword signed July 1939) argues that the "Northmen" or Normans were mostly concerned with plundering, but their heroism and fearlessness stripped their acts of all pettiness and brought them admiration. In his account,

³⁰⁸ Chamberlain, p.38.

³⁰⁹ Cuomo, p.451.

settling in Normandy, which was inhabited more by “romanised Celts” than “Germanic Franks”, and converting to Christianity, is what added this “pettiness” and “untruthfulness” to the national character, and clothed Norman materialism in the sanctimoniousness (*Scheinheiligkeit*) “which we still find so dissatisfactory in the modern Englishman”.³¹⁰ Everwien goes on to describe William the Conqueror’s invasion of the British Isles as an act of piracy, setting up the narrative thread for the whole book. However, to achieve this, he provides an inaccurate description of Harold Godwinson’s claim to the throne, by claiming that he was the son of Edward the Confessor. It is inaccuracies such as this which may have led to the inclusion of *Bibel, Scheckbuch und Kanonen* on the “not to be promoted” list in *Bücherkunde* February 1940, although it does not appear to have been banned by the Propaganda Ministry.³¹¹

Karl Heinz Pfeffer in *England. Vormacht der bürgerlichen Welt* maintains that the Germans and English are essentially the same Nordic / Saxon racial stock. He describes the current conflict as a clash not between two different peoples, as with Rome and Carthage, but between two alternative 'regimes' of the same race, as with Athens and Sparta.³¹² Regardless of the differences in political system and world view, he claims, the “ruling race” within each country, which determines the character of both peoples, is “related by blood”. According to Pfeffer, the English ruling class, choose to overemphasise the French and Mediterranean cultural influence on Britain, 'starting' British history with the Norman conquest of 1066; English historians and writers therefore tend to overlook the Anglo-Saxon foundations on which their history rests. However hard their leaders try to distance themselves from their Germanic origins, Pfeffer maintains, the English people can never completely overcome what is in their nature:

³¹⁰ Everwien, p.15.

³¹¹ *Bücherkunde* (February 1940); *Liste des schädlichen und unerwünschten Schrifttums* searched via www.berlin.de/rubrik/hauptstadt/verbannte_buecher (last accessed 05/10/2014).

³¹² Karl Heinz Pfeffer, *England. Vormacht der bürgerlichen Welt* (Hamburg, 1940), pp.14-15; Helen Roche, “‘Spartanische Pimpfe’: The Importance of Sparta in the Ideology of the Adolf Hitler Schools’ in *Sparta in Modern Thought. Politics, History and Culture* (Swansea, 2012); Alexander Demandt, ‘Klassik als Klischee: Hitler und die Antike’ *Historische Zeitschrift* 274/2 (April, 2002) pp.281-313.

The spiritual arrogance of the race-forgetting ruling class may be able to stop a people's ears against the voice of its own blood, but it cannot remove from the world the facts of blood origin.³¹³

Each of these accounts provides a different explanation for the apparent contradiction between Britain's Germanic links and Britain's treatment of Germany. While the diametric opposition between French and Germanic culture forms was by no means a new concept (as explained in Chapter One) the racist thinking which underpins the Nazi understanding of historical change has lent a new emphasis on race, blood and the betrayal of a people caused by its leaders 'forgetting' their inherent nature. The two elements of this are central to the arguments of many other contemporaneous texts: firstly that there is a clear difference between the ruling class and the general population of England, and secondly that the members of that ruling class are deliberately suppressing their true nature. The second aspect is gone into in great detail by writers explaining the phenomenon of the 'gentleman'.

At the start of *England. Land ohne Liebe*, Dr. Wilhelm von Kries also reminds readers of England's Germanic heritage but says that being on an island, somewhat removed from continental Europe, has led the English to emphasise their own separateness, and to try to distinguish themselves from others in all ways. Accordingly, he claims, you can recognise an Englishman in any European restaurant by the way he holds his spoon and the way he cuts his potatoes.³¹⁴ The aim of the book is to call into question the suitability of the 'English gentleman' as an ideal model, claiming that it relies on suppressing all human emotions, enjoyment and the German understanding of 'love' i.e. a true affinity with the things one does and interacts with. This affectation of other-worldliness is the preserve of a small minority of Britons. He offers a damning diagnosis of this privileged class; one of the supposed "privileges" is being "trained in lovelessness". He draws the reader's attention to the thousands of photographs and portraits of members of the British ruling class through the ages,

³¹³ Pfeffer, p.16.

³¹⁴ Wilhelm von Kries, *England. Land ohne Liebe* (Berlin, 1940), p.13.

found in newspapers, magazines and books circulating in Germany. He claims that it is clear to see in these pictures that none of them has ever been happy in love or in life:

With the majority of “society ladies” and equally with the world of gentlemen which has been made subordinate to them, with a few exceptions, one sees time and again the same unsubstantial, almost tragic gaze into space, a firmly closed mouth, austere cheeks; and nowhere can one find the least hint of vitality. These people look like the inmates of a convent for disappointed virgins, or like political priests.³¹⁵

The example of relations between the sexes is used by many contemporary writers to illustrate what they see as the enforced insincerity required to be a gentleman. The above mention of a world of men 'subordinate' to the women, of 'disappointed virgins' and 'political priests' builds a picture of a society (and individual actors) who have been emasculated. In fact, von Kries goes on to compare the British political system with the Catholic Church, as being run by a very small elite of fanatics, belonging to a delusional quasi-religion based on unnecessary levels of self-denial and assumptions of supreme morality. The type of society pictures described in the above quote are used to good effect in Giselher Wirsing's *Hundert Familien beherrschen das Empire* (covered in Chapter Six) and are echoed in wartime cartoons. In the above quote, von Kries is inviting the audience to use their own initiative and to observe what he is saying in other sources, particularly in those provided by the subjects themselves, in self-glorification in the world press. Despite this essentially dehumanising approach, in which the English become empty, emotionless automatons, the author asserts repeatedly that he is not aiming to show the English as "evil", only to question their assumed right to make moral pronouncements on the rest of the world. Germans are driven to criticise the “exemplary nature” of the English, he claims, precisely because they presume to set themselves up as an example. The English press in particular is described by von Kries as meting out unwarranted levels of criticism of all other peoples. Although it may also comment on faults within Britain, “the institution of the ruling class and the term 'gentleman', in which they cover themselves like a form

³¹⁵ Von Kries, p.17.

of holy blessing, is never called into question”.³¹⁶ This is an accusation of press bias or blindness which is impossible to refute; von Kries is setting the bar for acceptable self-reflection, as a nation, impossibly high in order to deny the British the right to criticise others. Vague accusations of this sort of common in anti-British texts precisely to set up this “double standard”.

In portrayals of individual members of this ruling class, writers chose to remind their audience, at every opportunity, of the character flaws of these familiar historical figures. For example, in the captions accompanying the cigarette cards in the album *Raubstaat England* (see Chapter Three), Henry VII is said to have passed up the opportunity to fund the discovery of the New World; while Columbus was busy gaining an empire on behalf of the Spanish King and Queen, the caption claims, Henry - more "grocer" than king - was busy extorting protection money from German traders in London.³¹⁷ Henry VIII is described as having initiated the 'destruction of the English farming class' by allowing farmland confiscated from monasteries to be enclosed, while Elizabeth I is presented as the leader of a network of pirates. Such easy, critical reference points are integrated into many other writers' works whenever these figures appear. Reinald Gadow in *Seeräuberstaat England*, in an explanation of the development of the English navy under the Tudors, refers unnecessarily to Henry VIII's many wives, and to Elizabeth I being the daughter of an executed woman.³¹⁸ She is furthermore described as being "wedded" to greed. In fact, Elizabeth incorporates many of the negative tropes of English aristocratic womanhood: a pasty redhead with thin, harsh features, ostentatious dress, and an air of vanity, materialism and frigid distance from genuine passions.

This is a typical portrayal of British women in German wartime cartoons, carried over into depictions of Britannia herself (see figures 23 and 24, below). The cartoon on the cover of *Lustige Blätter* is titled “Britannia’s clearance sale”, and the caption has her begging Churchill to let her keep her shift, “out of respect for her position as world power”. As well as adding a hint of

³¹⁶ Von Kries, p.10

³¹⁷ Ernst K. Lewalter, *Raubstaat England* (Hamburg-Bahrenfeld, 1941) p.9.

³¹⁸ Reinald Gadow, *Seeräuberstaat England* (Berlin, 1940) p.12.

salaciousness to the portrayals of British rulers, historical and modern, and so undermine their authority and moral pronouncements, this process of satirising the British ruling class continues the work of separating them from the rest of the population, conducted in accounts of the Norman Conquest.



Figure 23: Cover of von Kries, *England, Land ohne Liebe*



Figure 24: *Lustige Blätter* 56/18, 02.05.41

Focusing the strongest criticism on Britain's upper-class, who are portrayed as having a stranglehold on power in this "false" democracy, allows for expressions of sympathy and solidarity with Britain's working class. However, this is primarily used as a vehicle for further criticism of "exploitative" capitalism and the links between British financial and political circles. In *Englisches Mitleid – Englische Sozialpolitik*, volume eight of the NSDAP's series 'Das ist England!', F.O. Schulz makes extensive use of critical British voices but makes it clear that this does not exonerate the British in any way:

The veil which this Mammonite caste threw over itself has ripped. Countless Englishmen, living from the blood of their honest fathers, have contributed, if only with reluctance and shame, to removing the hypocrites' masks.³¹⁹

³¹⁹ F.O.H. Schulz's *Englisches Mitleid – Englische Sozialpolitik* (Berlin, 1940), p.106.

He gives the example of Shelley, quoting a verse from *The Mask of Anarchy*, written in 1819 in response to the Peterloo Massacre. Schulz does not name the poem, or explain why it was written, or acknowledge that here two four-line stanzas have become one stanza with two lines omitted; he only states that Shelley is berating the industrialists of Manchester for failing to give their workers a roof over their heads. The original English reads:

Horses, oxen, have a home,
When from daily toil they come;
Household dogs, when the wind roars,
Find a home within warm doors.

[Asses, swine, have litter spread
And with fitting food are fed;]
All things have a home but one—
Thou, Oh, Englishman, hast none!

In selecting these lines, out of the 380 of the full poem, Schulz has ignored the far more damning passages describing, with nightmarish imagery, the violence meted out by the ruling class on the working classes, as well as the description of the Peterloo Massacre itself, in favour of a relatively bland statement of unfairness, in which workers are accorded fewer privileges than livestock. He goes on to claim that the “fromme Gentlemen” (pious gentlemen) exacted their revenge for this criticism by denying Shelley a resting place in Britain. This highly selective deployment of Shelley’s work and its reception is indicative of a tendency to attribute only very limited insight to British figures. The selected lines also fit with a focus throughout Schulz’s book on those aspects of British class relations which contrast most starkly with National Socialists’ portrayal of their own social policy aims; references to tyranny and violence have been passed over in favour of a plea for workers to be properly compensated for their labour.

The concluding paragraph of the book ties together domestic and imperial inequalities, and links both to the world’s perception of Britain and her war aims:

When these unrestrained slave-merchants, colonial robbers and spurners of their own working classes try today to persuade the German people and the world that they are waging this war for the benefit of their opponent, then they should come

up against the knowledge of their own social history, which teaches humanity that the national wealth of England is fuelled by the blood of its murdered victims.³²⁰

Similar points are made in volumes of 'England ohne Maske', covered in the next chapter, and the theme was even continued into cartoons about the Blitz. In Figure 25, below, the recurring figure of the fictional aristocrat Lord Butterbloom stands to one side, unable to engage with the working-class family who have lost their home to bombing. Instead, a middle-class intermediary speaks for him (class denoted here by different hats), maintaining the strict separation of classes. This hierarchy is reinforced in the intermediary's repetition of his master's rank: "His Lordship wishes you to be informed that you have aroused His Lordship's sympathy, and His Lordship has therefore decided to grant you, for the alleviation of your immediate distress, tuppence." The awkward, impersonal phrasing and inadequacy of the offering indicate a system of rule which is unequal to the task of supporting or even understanding the general population. This draws attention away from the direct cause of the damage, which is depicted as extensive, and places the blame for British suffering on the British themselves.

³²⁰ Schulz, p.108.



Figure 25: *Lustige Blätter* 56/5, 31.01.41

Cartoons such as this one, in conjunction with books on socio-economic conditions in Britain and on the history of British class relations, serve to cast any statements of Britain's humanitarian aims as delusional; a ruling class which is so out of touch with the needs of its own people cannot presume to intervene on behalf of other peoples.

To create this picture, biographies, speeches and quotes from English politicians and commentators, if critical of British policy, were used by German writers at this time as straightforward agreement with their own views. If positive, however, they were used as evidence of self-delusion; the Englishman's inability to accept his own faults forms the backbone of many wartime texts, running parallel to his assumption of England's divine right to run the world. This is displayed the review of Hans Wolf's *Das Sendungsbewußtsein in Entscheidungsstunden der britischen Nation* which appeared in the *Historische Zeitschrift* in 1943:

How strongly the awareness of a special purpose is rooted in the British people is clearly evident in the utterances of statesmen, politicians and parliamentarians

provided here. [...] In all cases it is the thought that the relevant decisions affect not only England or the British Empire, but have a wider importance for Europe or even for all of humanity.³²¹

In this assessment, political rhetoric is taken as direct proof of the speaker's own self-image. In this case, then, the "mask" hides the truth of the "English character" and their true situation from the English themselves. By alternating between critical voices such as Shelley's and voices which are cast as unwitting self-betrayal, virtually any British statement could be presented as confirming aspects of the anti-British stereotype. This applies as much to long-dead statesmen as to those whose speeches readers may encounter in the press or in radio broadcasts.

As to the origins of this "awareness of a special purpose", many German writers attributed this to the peculiar development of various branches of Christianity in Britain. The emphasis placed on different events from Britain's turbulent history of religious developments varies widely between books. However, all this very complexity allows authors to portray contradictions, in particular between religious rhetoric and colonial actions. In doing so, they draw on a long European tradition of criticising established religion in Britain.³²² For example, Martin Dibelius begins *Britisches Christentum und britische Weltmacht*, volume twenty-one of 'Das britische Reich in der Weltpolitik' with a quote from Theodore Fontane's *Der Stechlin*, which accuses the British of "saying Christ when they mean calico". Dibelius goes on to explain:

The Christianity of England presents, when viewed from outside, such a contradictory picture that the observer is not surprised when he hits upon this solution to the puzzle: in England people's thoughts are Christian but their actions are unchristian, meaning egoistic. And this suspicion is not restricted to the English motherland. The history of British colonisation in the world appears to show this contradiction even more starkly.³²³

Rather than attribute this to straightforward hypocrisy, Dibelius describes an essentially circular relationship between the "Puritanistischer Erwählungsglaube" (Puritan belief in being God's chosen

³²¹ Rudolf Metz, Review in *Historische Zeitschrift* 167/3 (1943) pp.610-11.

³²² Norman Hampson, *The Perfidy of Albion. French Perceptions of England during the French Revolution* (Houndmills, 1998); Niedhart, Gottfried (ed.), *Das kontinentale Europa und die britischen Inseln: Wahrnehmungsmuster und Wechselwirkungen seit der Antike* (Mannheim, 1993).

³²³ Martin Dibelius, *Britisches Christentum und britische Weltmacht* (Berlin, 1940), p.5.

people) and British foreign policy. To the British mindset, he explains, the defeat of Napoleon and the rapid expansion of the British Empire served as confirmation of their specially blessed status, which in turn justified further expansion and further intervention in foreign affairs.³²⁴

This supposedly blameless self-perception sets up a contrast with a consistent portrayal, across all relevant sources of British imperial history as particularly brutal. In *Aus Englands Schuldbuch*, Paul Bang describes the double standard which supposedly results from this assumption of superiority via a Latin quote:

The Englishman is fully saturated with in the Roman saying, which he applies to himself: “Quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi” (“Jupiter may do what the ox may not”).³²⁵

He goes on to draw parallels between the Northcliffe press in the First World War, which was heavily criticised by German sources of the time, and the Ministry of Information and radio broadcasts of the current conflict. He claims that what strikes “every honest German” as worst about the output of these British information sources is “the abuse of Christianity to conceal the basest of impulses”. “Would it ever occur to a German”, he asks, “to entreat God to let other peoples starve?” Portraying the British as transgressing a moral code followed by other peoples is one common method used in these sources to create moral outrage without drawing attention to National Socialism’s inhumane conduct. Another strategy was to criticise British policies by portraying them as all conducted with the sole aim of enlarging and safeguarding the British Empire. In turn, this empire was characterised as falling short of the standard set for a legitimate imperial construct. The distinction is made clear in Ernst Lewalter’s text for the cigarette card album *Raubstaat England*. “World history”, Lewalter says, does not judge in the manner of a “snivelling Pacifist”, who would condemn any great conqueror for their acts; it only assesses the “creative and constructive power” of a people, and what this has brought into the world.³²⁶ He then

³²⁴ Dibelius, pp.20-33.

³²⁵ Paul Bang, *Aus Englands Schuldbuch* (Stuttgart, 1940) p.54.

³²⁶ Ernst K. Lewalter, *Raubstaat England* (Hamburg-Bahrenfeld, 1941), p.7.

moves the role of judge from “world history” to himself and his readers: “We would therefore have difficulty in criticising the English, if their ascendancy has been the fruit of an irrepressibly pulsating life-force.” This echoes a point he makes on the previous page, explaining the title of the album:

We call England a *robber state*, and mean it plain and simply. We do not use it as a term of abuse. We know full well how to distinguish between conquest and robbery. Many great empire have been created through conquest – that of Alexander the Great, of the Romans, of the Germans of the Middle Ages, of the Spanish, the Swedish, the Russians; in each case there arose a strong people under superior leadership, which accomplished, alongside its victories, a new principle of world history. In other words: it created a new world culture. The same cannot be said of the English empire. It was not conquered but stolen, taken from others piece by piece, brutally and with inhuman cruelty, but without overall leadership, without the creation of a new culture, or any attempt to do so...

In Lewalter’s view of British empire-building, and the related policies towards other nations, the ends do not justify the means. British imperialism is set apart from other historical examples based on a lack of strong leadership and a lack of guiding principles, which would create something truly “new”. This is the same lack of creative power attributed by National Socialism to the Jewish people, as a race. While on one level this contradicts the categorisation of the British as a branch of the Germanic or Nordic peoples, who are viewed as having the greatest state-building abilities, the explanations from Everwien, Pfeffer and many others of the differences between the Germanic core of the population and the French-influenced ruling class help to ameliorate the contradiction. At the same time, parallels are frequently drawn between the “emptiness” or “lovelessness” of members of the aristocracy, as identified by von Kries, and the apparent lack of principles in British politics and imperialism. In this conception, the haphazard development of the British Empire and the lack of consistency are proof of British character flaws, as well as being a reason for denying the British any right to an empire at all. Hans Thost, shortly before the war, made a point of the fact that in English there is no equivalent word for *Weltanschauung*, claiming that the British are disinclined to categorise ideas in such a systematic way.³²⁷ His point was that the British take a lighter view of

³²⁷ H.W. Thost, *Als Nationalsozialist in England* (Munich, 1939) p.67.

life's struggles, and prioritise "fair play" over winning; as further evidence, he claimed to have seen written on a church door the advice, "Life is far too short to be taken seriously". Meanwhile, British good humour was re-cast as callousness, for example in the frequent depiction of British soldiers either laughing at or appearing indifferent to the suffering of others (see for example figure 37, in Chapter Six). All of this fits well with imagery alluding to a blind, animal instinctiveness behind Britain's actions, and the common depictions of British imperialism as an animal, particular parasitical ones. Again, these were techniques repeated from the First World War and earlier; artist A. Paul Weber's series of anti-imperialist drawings was published in 1940 as *Britischer Bilder*. They included depictions of British Imperialism as a vampire bat feeding on an emaciated Indian man, as a spider occupying Gibraltar (see the opening image for this thesis), and as a hyena, greedily slaver over the mines of the Transvaal (figure 26, below). Each of these images, and similar allusions in book titles, chapter titles and descriptive metaphors, reduce British policy to the unthinking repetition of self-serving acts, stripped of any conscious, tactical calculations by statesmen. Without the need to directly counter previous praise of individual British politicians, an opposing impression is thus created.



Figure 26: *Britischer Bilder* illustration 6.

As common starting point for many discussions of the “haphazard” development of the British Empire is John Robert Seeley's *The Expansion of England*, in particular the much quoted expression that the British Empire seems to have been created “in a fit of absence of mind”. Seeley is also frequently quoted in explanations of the role of European conflict in England's success. He reframed European history in terms of the opportunities for expansion and consolidation which Britain could take advantage of while her rivals were fighting between themselves. During the Second World War, this was used as a starting point for arguments that Britain had instigated conflict in Europe for precisely this reason. For example, Carl Düssel described this as “the core of Britain’s policies towards Europe, and the secret of her rise from have-not to global empire”.³²⁸ The use of the term “have-not” invokes comparison with German colonial development in particular. Paul Bang argues that the British first took an interest in the New World once all the hard work had

³²⁸ Carl Düssel, *Europa und die Achse. Die kontinentaleuropäische Frage als Kehrseite britischer Politik* (Essen, 1942) p.7.

been done by, for example, the German Welser and Ehinger families, and that they therefore had to win territory through piracy and deceit. His description of British deception mirrors the costumes depicted in Figure 20:

Little by little, England stole the hard-won possessions of others, mostly by way of inciting conflict between other countries, in a way which safeguarded as much as possible of her own precious blood, and always in the mask of the selfless helper of one party or in the role of the agent of humanitarian ideals.³²⁹

Schultze also uses Seeley's "absence of mind" quote and asks what forces could have been strong enough to achieve so much success in the absence of any plan or clear goals. His argument is that much was due to luck or Britain's position as an island, neither of which advantages were earned, as well as mistakes made by competitors. His main point, however, is that success was achieved through various methods which set Britain apart, politically, militarily and economically, from other peoples. The methods he identifies are: Getting others, whether allies or mercenaries, to spill blood on Britain's behalf, having turned countries against each other in a policy of "divide and rule"; Espionage, coupled with lies, threats and unrestrained propaganda; the creation of fear though "acts of unprecedented horror", perpetrated in times of war and peace, especially against those suppressed peoples who do not wish to submit; using precious metals and other bribes to increase the reach of their power; robbery and exploitation "of fantastic proportions"; finally, the deliberate establishment of a stranglehold on transport routes by land, sea and air, and over the transmission of news. This amounts to a succinct summary of accusations which levelled at Britain in countless earlier sources, and which would be repeated in various combinations in most anti-British books of the Second World War. In the last decade, according to Schultze, Britain and the dominions, with the exception of Ireland, have talked much of a more "cooperative imperialism" (term used in English); however, this "halo of the most wonderful ideals" has not changed Britain's standard

³²⁹ Bang, p.15; For an exploration of German histories of the Welser colony, see Chapter One of Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (London, 1997).

behaviour towards other countries.³³⁰ In other words, this is the latest “mask” which the British have created for themselves.

In order to convey the inevitability of Britain’s defeat and the dissolution of the British Empire, authors combined practical concerns with arguments from morality and historical precedent; not only was the British system portrayed as unsustainable due to interwar developments, but British pride and complacency was shown as inexorably leading to their downfall. The very factors which had been described as enabling the growth of the empire were recast as fatal flaws. For example, the practical advantages of being an island were described as having been rendered obsolete due to the strength of the German navy and air force and Germany’s central location within Europe was seen as granting it inevitable world power status once flight took over from naval power. Cartoons celebrating the sinking of British ships are among the most common in *Lustige Blätter*, and covers frequently depicted a British Lion as marooned on a small island, or defenceless in other ridiculous situations (for example, figure 27, below). The fact that the British Empire covered every part of the globe, restricting every other state's movements and access to resources, also meant that it relied on long routes which would be easy for a strong enemy navy to sever. A further weakness described in many German sources was the decline of farming in Britain which, as mentioned above, was cast as the result of a long process started by Henry VIII. Mentioning this not only formed a contrast with the Nazi regime's promotion (at least on paper) of all things agrarian and rural but also formed part of a practical argument; growing less food themselves meant that the population of the British Isles would be unable to feed themselves without overseas imports, making them reliant on those vulnerable sea routes to far-flung colonies. This is also constructed as potential revenge for the “hunger blockade” of the First World War. Furthermore, unrest in the Empire was described in detail to portray those vast possessions as a liability rather than a strength. Defence relied on having a small number of English generals leading indigenous troops (or soldiers from other colonies).

³³⁰ Schulze, p.32.

Vulnerable to mutiny, so the arguments went, if the colonised populations were made aware of their power they would be encouraged to free themselves. British complacency was shown as preventing them from recognising this; a cover for *Simplicissimus* in October 1939 (figure 28, below) is titled “A solution is thought of” (lit. “The rescuing idea”). Two British soldiers are watching an Indian Fakir walking on hot coals and one declares that he could “snatch the chestnuts out of the fire” for Britain. The lazy attitude of the soldiers, slouching low in their deckchairs, and the thin, wild appearance of the Fakir, highlight the ridiculousness of this “solution”, as well as harking back to the British use of colonial troops in the First World War.

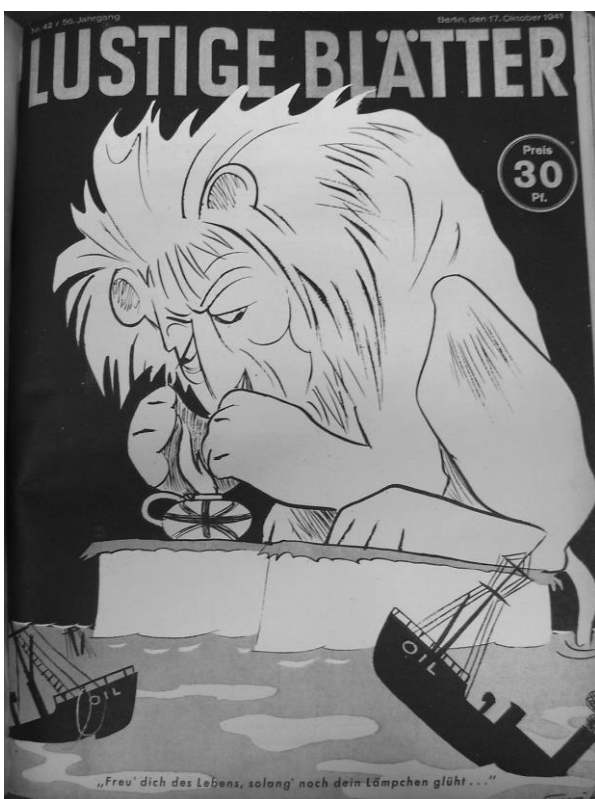


Figure 27: *Lustige Blätter* 56/42, 17.10.41



Figure 28: *Simplicissimus* 44/40, 08.10.39

The inadequacy of the British Empire as a shield for Britain was shown to be a direct result of the lack of proper planning in its acquisition. Schultze, begins the section “England on the defensive” with an image of Britain as suffering from bad digestion:

Today, England can win nothing from a large war, but it does have an enormous amount to lose. It is so stuffed full of foreign countries that it has no idea how to digest them. Unremittingly, there is in some area or other of the empire unrest,

uprisings or internal conflicts. England has a lot to do before it can truly speak of a “Pax Britannia”.³³¹

At the end of the section he describes British politicians as hypersensitive to any perceived threat to any part of their far-flung empire: “In this regard the British Empire gives the impression of a hysterical female: a bundle of nerves who, at the slightest discomfort, gives full rein to her foul temper.”³³² He quotes Erich Obst’s 1927 book *England, Europa und die Welt*, saying that Britain presents a “two-columned” picture: showing on the one hand an almost mystical belief in the future of the empire, but also a conviction that Britain’s affiliation with continental Europe is a vital necessity of a far-sighted policy. Since Obst’s work, he says, this has become an even greater inner conflict. In this method of argumentation, the actual impossibility of simplifying British policy is used as evidence of a flaw in this policy. Furthermore, he claims that Britain is failing to acknowledge any recent changes in power relations:

England is still behaving as though she were the only naval power, dominating the world; as though power relations were the same as at the *diktat*-tables of Versailles.³³³

Schultze also uses classical references to link what he sees as British self-satisfaction and the coming downfall of the British Empire. For example, he compares British self-satisfaction to the hubris of King Croesus visiting the oracle at Delphi, learning that he will destroy a great empire but not realising that it would be his own. He goes on to describe as a universal law the decline of empires after a certain point:

Time and again history shows that empires, at the exact point that they appear to be at the height of their strength, have usually already passed their peak. Somewhere within them the rot has set in, or else there were new powers in the ascendancy, with which they should have reached an understanding, rather than underestimate their importance.

³³¹ Schultze, *Sorgen* pp.44-5.

³³² Schultze, *Sorgen* p.46.

³³³ Schultze, p.16.

Written shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, this is a clear warning to Britain not to oppose Germany; to readers during the war, it is justification for Britain's supposedly imminent defeat.

While Schultze's allusions do not explicitly state earlier models for Britain's decline, Fritz Taeger's lecture *Das Römische und das Britische Weltreich*, printed as volume two of the series Marburger Universitätsreden in 1940, identifies what he saw as many similarities between the two empires, and therefore predicts a similar fate.³³⁴ Both empires, Taeger states, carried within them "Nordic heroism", and Nordic farmers laid the foundation for their ascendancy. In his description of the British racial mix left after the Norman Conquest, the qualities he attributes to each race differ from the classifications offered by Chamberlain, Pfeffer and von Kries, but the point he makes is the same: racial mixing, together with the effects of being isolated on an island, added to the "English" qualities not found in "the old home" of other Germanic peoples. Each empire, he claims, expanded haphazardly, without planning, and Rome and Britain were inevitably drawn into wars with every power they encountered. A further parallel he identifies is the role of capital; in each case, he argues, the "high-capitalist plantation economy" was imported from the colonies to the "old farming lands", destroying this source of the empires' strength.

Conclusions

The sources analysed here created an anti-British picture which would evoke an emotional, moral response while at the same time appearing to be based in a wealth of supporting evidence. By tracing characteristics, in particular of Britain's methods of building and keeping her overseas empire, back to the Middle Ages or earlier, these traits were presented as innate and incurable. While quotes from British and foreign observers were presented as evidence of these traits, and their use and the arguments they were woven into had been deployed before, during the First World

³³⁴ Fritz Taeger, *Das Römische und das Britische Weltreich*, volume two of the series Marburger Universitätsreden (Marburg-Lahn, 1940).

War, German writers nevertheless were able to argue that it was National Socialism which first allowed for a consistently clear view of Britain's "true face". Classical references not only added to the intellectual veneer of these books, but also referenced ancient "laws" of pride and hubris in rulers; this helped to portray Britain as the architect of her own destruction. At the same time, certain of Britain's methods of warfare – naval blockade, the bombing of residential areas, restriction of information (i.e. the cutting of transatlantic cables), and the use of snipers – were portrayed as particularly inhuman, whether used against the indigenous populations of colonies or against Germans. In other words, Britain's acts of war were firmly linked to the British, as a flawed people, while Germany's acts against Britain were depersonalised, as the workings of fate. Very little of the actual content of these sources is truly new to the Second World War. Instead, what has been described here is a process of codification and an attempt, by publishers of series and authors of individual works, to tie material together into a master narrative which contrasts British imperial history with the "healthy" or "just" development of a state. The messages at the heart of this body of material, in their combination of factual and emotional appeals, were simple enough to be conveyed just as effectively through cartoons. However, as will be shown in the next and final chapter of this thesis, the extensive use of original source material in anti-British portrayals was seen as filling a gap left by other forms of propaganda, and was therefore intended to appeal to a different portion of the audience.

Chapter 6

“The Empire against Europe”: The British as imperialists in German publications for an international audience

Introduction

One of the many myths which developed to explain Germany's defeat in the First World War was that Britain had been more skilful at directing “world opinion” and securing allies through the manipulation of foreign press and formulation of “atrocities lies”.³³⁵ As we saw in Chapter Four, Third Reich commentators expressed concern about British cultural influence on German youth; of equal concern was the spread of British “cultural propaganda” abroad, for example by the British Council. This chapter will examine one specific attempt to counteract this. In 1940, the German Foreign Office began a project to publish the series “England ohne Maske” (“England Unmasked”) in countries across the globe. The series eventually ran to thirty volumes, including books on slum housing in Britain, the history of the slave trade and Britain's relations with specific countries. In exploring the usefulness of such niche topics to Germany's international propaganda output, this chapter will query why these books were considered worthy of global distribution, tying up precious wartime resources. The answer lies in the role in which German anti-British books cast the British as imperialists, and the methods employed in the presentation of British source material within these books, in order to undermine British propaganda messages.

The following extract from a review of the series, published in *Bücherkunde* in 1941, explains the gap in the market which these books were designed to fill:

It is very difficult today to single out from the number of books which have appeared in the defensive struggle against British imperialism those which document, beyond the limits of a specific conflict, the far-reaching continuities and fundamental attitude of British policy towards other peoples. As welcome as every propaganda text is which sets itself the serious task of contributing to the strengthening of German resolve, to securing the rights of Germany, and to exposing the opposition's methods of warfare, it is as important that the politically interested are given the opportunity to find, alongside the directly reproduced Foreign Office documents in the white papers, further documents, reports and

³³⁵ Rainer Rutz, *Signal: Eine deutsche Auslandsillustrierte als Propagandainstrument im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Essen, 2007) p.26.

evidence central to the political development brought together in a series of monographs.³³⁶

The review describes the books as providing “a wealth of extraordinarily useful documentation”, made readily understandable by experts. It identifies the role of such books as bridging a gap between the raw, unmediated official papers of the Foreign Office (the “white books”) and those “propaganda” texts which made direct arguments in favour of Germany’s war effort or against its enemies. The articulation of the war as against British imperialism makes relevant to this war effort any academic work on the history of Britain’s foreign policy or its underlying principles, and the books are described as providing a “clear and unveiled” picture of the realities of British policies. While the review identifies a specialist audience for these works, it also recommends the series for all Germans and foreigners, in particular for the work of political education.

Each of the 30 volumes was by a different single author, and the series covers a wide range of topics. In German editions, the publisher is given as the *Deutsche Informationsstelle*, which was part of the information arm of the Foreign Office, virtually identical in personnel and operations to Ribbentrop’s *Deutsches Institut für außenpolitische Forschung* (German Institute for Foreign Policy Research).³³⁷ Head of the *Informationsstelle* was expert in international law Professor Friedrich Berber, attached to the Foreign Office as ambassador. Amongst other things, he was responsible for the publication of the *Monatsheft für Auswärtige Politik* and the *Jahrbuch für Auswärtige Politik*. Books were first translated into French and English as a way of making them quickly available for distribution to prominent “interested parties” in neutral countries.³³⁸ This initial, specialist audience consisted of diplomats and the influential contacts they cultivated, members of pro-German organisations, and literary and academic figures advocating for Germany. According to the instructions which were sent to each embassy and consulate, the second phase of distribution was

³³⁶ ‘Englands wahres Gesicht: Dokumente, Urkunden und Protokolle in der Schriftenreihe der “Deutschen Informationsstelle”’ *Bücherkunde* (1940) pp.74-5.

³³⁷ The operations of the *Deutsche Informationsstelle* within the German Foreign Office are detailed in Peter Longerich, *Propagandisten im Krieg: Die Presseabteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes unter Ribbentrop* (Munich, 1987) pp.52-3.

³³⁸ The documentation for this process, including reports on strategy and progress, are held in the political archive of the *Auswärtiges Amt*: AA R66697 and R66698.

intended, where possible, to bring the same books to the general reading public in each country. Throughout 1940 and 1941, German diplomats were sent copies and asked to report back on their possible propaganda value; if they considered the endeavour worthwhile, they were to organise translation into the local language and printing by a local publisher. Most European countries were covered, as well as Brazil and Argentina, Japan, China and the USA. Books from the series were published in at least 17 different countries, in print runs of between 1000 and 10,000. Although the Foreign Office bore the costs of developing the series, as well as providing many free copies, the local editions were to be subject to the commercial pressures of the local book market. In some cases, the name of the *Deutsche Informationsstelle* was omitted, as was any reference to the original German edition, making the books appear to be the work of a concerned but independent expert. With details of their official origin obscured, individual volumes sat alongside books by non-German authors such as Carlo Scarfoglio, Karl Olivecrona and Einjar Vaaben, who framed the Second World War as a battle for a Europe freed by Germany from pernicious foreign influence. This chapter will analyse the volumes of “England ohne Maske” both as a series and as individual contributions to the international conversation which was created by and between the propaganda output of both sides of the conflict. However staged this conversation may have been, especially regarding attempts to incite moral outrage, it nevertheless guided discussions of British foreign policy and the British Empire towards wider issues of legitimate methods of warfare and the limits of justifiable intervention in other countries’ affairs. It will assess how these books attempted to use sympathy for the “victims of British Imperialism” to create an international audience who were united through anti-British feeling fuelled by moral condemnation. It will also explore how Britain’s “national character” and world view were portrayed as belonging to a past, failed era emphasising the age and decrepitude of Britain and making way for the new dynamic German force in Europe. The whole should provide an answer to two linked questions Firstly, what function did the information presented in these books perform as part of Germany’s international propaganda

drive? Secondly, what does their success or otherwise reveal about the limitations of history books as propaganda?

Of the thirty volumes in the series, fifteen cover specific regions or localised events, such as Britain's relations with Cyprus (Reinhard Wolf's *Zyperns Leidensweg*) or the history of Northern Ireland (Ernst Falk's, *Nordirland. Englands Garnison auf irischem Boden*). Seven volumes cover aspects of social inequality in Britain, from the decline of farming (Karl Pfeffer's *Bauerntod in England*) to child labour (*Frauen- und Kinderarbeit in England: Eine sozialpolitische Kritik* by Anna Kottenhoff, the only woman among the authors).³³⁹ Only five of the books focus directly on an examination of Britain's tactics in the war so far: two examine British "lies" and propaganda techniques, one covers issues of neutrality, and two provide an account of specific naval incidents (the supposed conspiracy surrounding the sinking of the *Athenia*, and the treatment of the Norwegian ship *Altmark*). Taken together, the series creates a similar "canon" of British atrocities to that seen in other series (see Chapters Two and Five), and similarly creates links between current events, longer trends in British history, and the supposed national character which drove them. As explained in the introduction to this thesis, books had a dual role within international propaganda. They were a means of transmitting detailed arguments and supporting information about the war, its origins, the aims of each side, and the likely outcome as expressed by each participant. However, they also continued in their function as consumer and leisure items, and as a means of promoting understanding through appeals to shared cultural reference points and moral responses. This conception of international, inter-cultural propaganda as a transaction with interest on both sides – audience and propagandist each having something to gain – was utilised by both Germany and Britain to distinguish their activities from those of the opposition; *we* are providing

³³⁹ Anna Kottenhoff was a *Reichsreferentin* in the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Nationalsozialistischer Studentinnen*: Karin Fontaine, *Nationalsozialistische Aktivistinnen (1933-1945): Hausfrauen, Mütter, Berufstätige, Akademikerinnen: so sahen sie sich und ihre Rolle im „tausendjährigen“ Reich* (Würzburg, 2003) p.102.

valuable information, whereas *they* are trying to deceive and falsely gain your trust. In this context the covert nature of some of the translations was particularly sensitive.

Propaganda is most effective when it builds on an audience's prior knowledge and preconceptions, rather than presenting them with entirely new ideas.³⁴⁰ The anti-British stereotype conveyed through German international publishing extensively employed older material – caricatures, paintings, and quotes – and added very little that was truly “new”. Instead, it drew from long traditions of anti-British feeling, particularly in Western Europe.³⁴¹ The situation in neutral and occupied countries changed throughout the war, and German propaganda also had to constantly adapt, in messages and techniques, to keep pace with that of Britain.³⁴² Nevertheless, alongside anti-Semitism (depending on the country) and fear of communism, resentment regarding British dominance and past conflicts was a widely-applicable and constant unifying argument, meaning that the theme of British imperialism remained at the heart of anti-British material. According to Cole, during the “phoney war”, the aims of British propaganda for neutral countries were to “persuade their audience of the material strength, ethical superiority and defence of Christian Europe represented by Great Britain in the war.”³⁴³ Britain was keen to “maintain” its reputation for truthfulness while exposing every German untruth. Successful themes in these early months included Scandinavian solidarity, workers' solidarity in defence of democracy and opposition to Fascism, war being against Nazism rather than against the German people, and Britain's commitment to social democracy. Fear of Russia dominated in every European country. The aims

³⁴⁰ This point is emphasised repeatedly in the work of David Welch. See in particular Welch (ed.), *Nazi Propaganda: The Power and the Limitations* (London, 1983); *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (London, 1993); *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion* (London, 2013).

³⁴¹ Matthew Stibbe, *German Anglophobia and the Great War, 1914 - 1918* (Cambridge, 2001); Troy Paddock, ‘Creating an Oriental Feindbild’ *Central European History* 39/2 (2006) pp.214-243; Gottfried Niedhart (ed.), *Das kontinentale Europa und die britischen Inseln: Wahrnehmungsmuster und Wechselwirkungen seit der Antike* (Mannheim, 1993); Norman Hampson, *The Perfidy of Albion. French Perceptions of England during the French Revolution* (Houndmills, 1998); H.D. Schmidt, ‘The Idea and Slogan of “Perfidious Albion”’ *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14/4 (1953) pp.604-616.

³⁴² Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe* (London, 2009); Christian Leitz, *Nazi Germany and Neutral Europe during the Second World War* (Manchester, 2000); Jeroen Dewulf, Jeroen, “‘Thus Spoke Zarathustra’ by ...Albert Helman: The Image of Germany and the Germans in Dutch Clandestine Literature (1940-1945)’ *German Studies Review* 33/2 (2010) pp.262-284; Steinweis, Alan E., ‘German Cultural Imperialism in Czechoslovakia and Poland, 1938-1945’ *The International History Review* Vol. 13, No. 3 (1991), pp. 466-480.

³⁴³ Cole, p.8.

here were to “convince neutrals that Britain could and would win, and they should want it to”. In turn, German propaganda also focussed on exposing “untruths”, on describing social inequality within Britain (in order to undermine any statements that Britain was fighting on behalf of Europe’s working class), and on inciting fear through a vision of a post-war Europe enslaved by British economic and cultural imperialism. Specific German messages included the Allies' inability to protect neutral countries, blunders such as the bombing of Esbjerg, the blockade, and violations of neutrality.³⁴⁴ The two main messages used by Germany against enemies at this early stage were allegations of atrocities and blame for starting the war.³⁴⁵ According to Longerich, the invasion of Poland was "justified" by alleging Polish border violations but after this campaign blame was shifted to the Western powers, settling on Britain; as the war progressed, the invasions of further European countries were presented as necessary measures against British interference. The reach and perceived strength of the British Empire worked against British arguments, and could be used to support National Socialist claims to be fighting a defensive war.

Neutral countries were willing to restrict propaganda activities in response to pressure from either side and this could manifest in haphazard, localised measures. These bureaucratic and physical barriers (from bag searches in defiance of diplomatic immunity, to the refusal to issue ration cards to press attachés) could only be circumvented with expertise, tact, effective communication between agencies, and hotly-contested resources. As well as these widespread difficulties, each neutral country had its individual requirements in terms of themes, choice of language, and thorny issues. As Cole explains, “Portugal regarded democracy, socialism and communism as three words for the same thing,” while successful messages in Holland and Sweden required appeals to democracy.³⁴⁶ Local knowledge and adaptability was key to the successful integration of propaganda messages. Britain's theme of a Christian struggle against “pagan” Nazism was hampered by its history of denominational conflict, being a frequent Protestant opponent of, amongst others, Catholic Spain.

³⁴⁴ Cole, p.18.

³⁴⁵ Longerich, p.76.

³⁴⁶ Cole, p.8.

The ongoing problem of Gibraltar also marred relations here. There was also no shortage of immediate pressures on British-neutral relations for Germany to exploit: shortages caused by the British blockade were a cause of ongoing resentment as were specific violations of neutrality, such as the *Altmark* incident, and mistakes such as the RAF's accidental bombing of Danish territory on at least two occasions. Books on the history of British imperialism and foreign policy could be made directly relevant to the German war effort by including these failures as part of a litany of British indifference to other nations and history of violating the independence of other nations. The following analysis falls into three sections. First, this chapter will examine the reproductions of British source material within the volumes of “England ohne Maske” in order to explain how authors attempted to frame their arguments as a process of objective scrutiny in collaboration with their audience. It will then explore the various roles of the British Empire within German international propaganda, paying particular attention to the ways in which Britain’s imperial conduct, policies towards the Continent and the national characteristics which were extrapolated from these histories were used to separate Britain from “the civilised world”. Finally, it will describe the reception of the volumes from the series by German embassies and consulates in order to identify the limits to the global effectiveness of these strategies.

Academics, journalists and their use of primary sources in ‘England unmasked’

The authors of the “England ohne Maske” books were a mixture of academics and journalists, many of them recognised experts in their fields. Paul-Lenert Breutz was an ethnologist specialising in South Africa. Paul August Schmitz, who wrote under the name Paul Schmitz-Kairo, was a recognised authority on Islam, and worked out of Cairo as a reporter for the *Völkische Beobachter*.³⁴⁷ Ernst Schulze was a sociologist whose work included an analysis of behaviour in German and American parks, and who had been a prominent campaigner against trash literature.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ Barry Rubin and Wolfgang G. Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New Haven, 2014) p.85. See also Christian Ingrao, *Believe and Destroy: Intellectuals in the SS War Machine* (Hoboken, 2013).

³⁴⁸ Edward Ross Dickinson, *Sex, Freedom, and Power in Imperial Germany, 1880-1914* (Cambridge, 2014) p.34; Charles Bohl and Jean-François Lejeune, *Sitte, Hegemann and the Metropolis* (New York, 2009) pp.288-9.

Giselher Wirsing was a career journalist and editor-in-chief of the international magazine *Signal*, who had travelled in Palestine and the USA and, from April 1942, worked as a war correspondent on the Russian front.³⁴⁹ Their analyses may have been in places tendentious and self-interested, but they were far from ignorant of other cultures or lacking in intellectual skills; this series was not the product of an anti-intellectual ideological bubble.

True to the aims of the series as stated in the *Bücherkunde* review, above, the most striking feature of the series is the extensive reproduction of primary source material. In volume one, *Der "Athenia" Fall* by Adolf Halfield, is full-page facsimile of a memorandum to German booking offices of the Cunard White Star Line, advising them not to make bookings for the SS *Athenia* or three other ships. This is presented as evidence that the sinking of the ship on the 3rd September 1939 had been a British plot to implicate Germany and repeat the effect of the sinking of the RMS *Lusitania* in 1915; the block on German bookings was construed by Halfield and others as an attempt to minimise potential hostile witnesses. The volume *Englands Regiment in Palästina* by Gert Wunsch also presents facsimiles of documents, including a handwritten letter from William Ormsby-Gore to Sir Arthur Wauchope, which takes up a full six pages, and a further handwritten letter in Arabic. There is also a detailed list of property allegedly stolen by British troops from citizens of Jerusalem's Old Town in October 1938. In both books, and with similar material in other volumes, full German transcriptions are provided; the complete reproduction of the original documents adds a impression of verifiability to the authors' claims.

One illustration of the extent to which British material could be reused is provided by a translation of pacifist Osbert Sitwell's anti-imperialist poem 'Shaking Hands with Murder'. It was first published in 1924 and the translation appears as an appendix to Reinhard Frank's *Englands Herrschaft in Indien*.³⁵⁰ Of the 151 lines of the original, sixty-six have been cut, including those which give the poem its title and unifying theme. The resulting poem, given the new title 'Amritsar'

³⁴⁹ Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 2011) pp.173-180.

³⁵⁰ Osbert Sitwell, 'Shaking Hands with Murder' in Joan Beauchamp (ed.) *Poems of Revolt* (London, 1969 [1924]) pp.79-83; Reinhard Frank, *Englands Herrschaft in Indien* (Berlin, 1940) pp.90-92.

is less satirical and more tightly focussed on that one incident. The only change acknowledged in the footnote is that the poem has been "somewhat abridged". Maintained in the German text is the sarcastic repetition of the term "law and order", the role of a ruling race (but not "*the* ruling race"), the excuses regarding Irish self-rule, the contrast with "Huns" and "Bolsheviks", the term "tried in cold blood", the well-known phrase "white man's burden", and the description of a culture clash amounting to insubordination. The most important changes are that the entire section on "shaking hands with murder" is omitted, as is the section making fun of army hierarchy and militarism. There is also the omission of "It is wrong to have natural resources and not to develop them", which changes the subject of the next line. Blame for the actual massacre in Amritsar is spread from the one officer who gave the order to fire on protesters to a wider group, by changing "for *he* knew" to "Denn wir wußten" ("for *we* knew"). The loosest translation applies to the section on Irish home rule; some of this may be due to the intervening two decades since this was achieved, but the resulting passage also have a stronger focus on Ireland as a potential strategic liability for Britain in times of war. As a result of these changes, much of the biting satire of the original is lost, along with its central pacifist message. The abridged poem is much more tightly focussed on the types of breaches of human and national rights being highlighted in the series, rather than on the underlying logic of imperialism.

A common approach is also discernible in the selection of illustrations for several volumes, especially those on India, Egypt and Ireland (volumes three, four and five). For India, the focus is on the fate of prisoners and types of freedom fighter, with the inclusion of a painting of Indian soldiers tied to cannons (a form of execution mentioned in many other sources), and a row of corpses lying in the street. For Egypt, pictures emphasise the destruction of buildings, implying a disrespect for history and culture, as well as the cruel treatment of prisoners. Pictures in the volume on Ireland mainly depict destroyed buildings, with an emphasis on harm caused to ordinary citizens (see figure 30, below).



Figure 30: *Englands Gewaltherrschaft in England* (1940), Illustration 5: “Destruction of the Irish city of Cork by the Black and Tans.”

A different approach is found in Giseler Wirsing’s *Hundert Familien beherrschen das Empire* (volume ten). The images used here present the reader with an array of prominent politicians and businessmen in a uniform of formal dress and top hats; the collective impression is of a homogenous and close-knit group, removed from the concerns of the general population (see figure 31, below).³⁵¹ This impression is reinforced by the inclusion of highly detailed diagrams showing the financial connections of individual politicians (see figure 32, below). As with the separation of ruling class from general population described in Chapter Five with regards to a domestic audience, this approach allows the fight against Britain to be portrayed as against a web of financial and political manipulation, which controls every aspect of international affairs.

³⁵¹ Such images were recognised as problematic by British propaganda operatives; one expert recommended that the *Picture Post* should no longer be distributed in Holland, as society photographs of the life of Britain’s elite were doing little to help Britain’s messages of solidarity with occupied countries: Cole, p.26.



Figure 31: *Hundert Familien beherrschen das Empire* (1940), front cover.

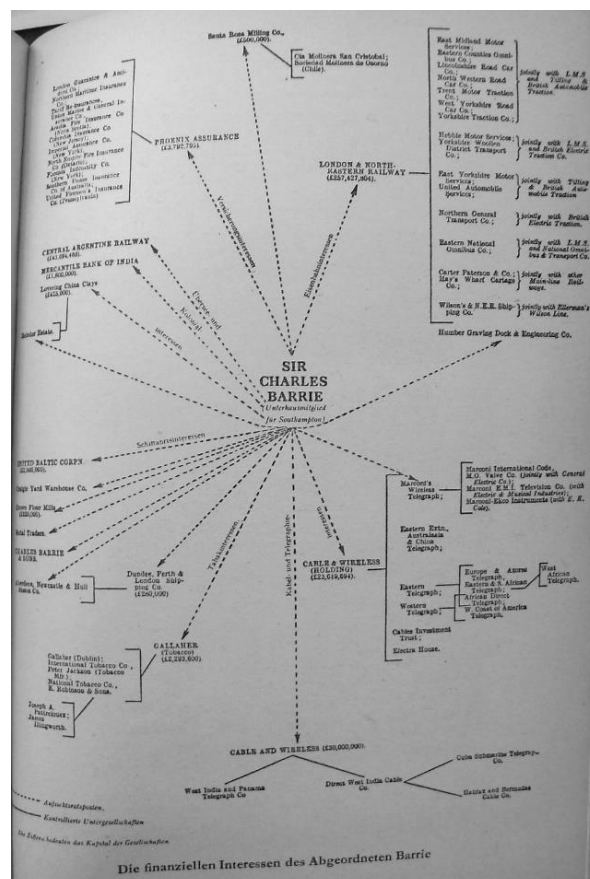


Figure 22: *Hundert Familien beherrschen das Empire* (1940), Illustration 1.

By referencing Britain's past and current prosperity, achieved through an economic imperialism which impinged on the interests of all other countries, messages of defiance or "business as usual"

from Britain could be spun as indifference and as another example of Britain being protected from damage during a conflict she had engineered.

As well as primary documentation and photographs, the series also presented readers with extracts from British works. Two volumes in particular are largely composed of critical voices from within British society, politics and cultural circles. *Der Greuel von Denschawai und andere britische Greuel*, edited by Heinz Hüniger, contains six stories: the one which gives the books its title is George Bernard Shaw's description of the Denshawai Incident of 1906, from the preface to his play *John Bull's Other Island*. There follow uncredited accounts of British imperialism in Australia, Trinidad and Southern Arabia, and two articles against the bombing of German cities by H. St. John Philby, with facsimiles of the first pages of both. The blurb on the inside cover describes the "the executions of Denshawai" (mistakenly dated 1905) as having shocked "the entire civilised world". This unifying moral response is contrasted with the description of the immediate cause of the incident and with an underlying characteristic of British imperialism. The blurb highlights the pettiness and brutality of British officers involved in the dispute, and concludes with the warning that the methods described in the books are used against any people who "oppose Britain's plutocratic interests".

England in englischer Kritik by Wilhelm Jung claims to similarly show British self-criticism, however the quotes presented are a mix of deliberate criticism and supposedly "unwitting" self-betrayal, creating a similar impression of blind arrogance to that in the sources examined in Chapter Five of this thesis. Quoted figures include historians Seeley and Trevelyan, well-known critics Shaw and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and "self-betraying" politicians Baldwin, Lloyd George and Churchill. There are also extracts from debates in the House of Commons and from the British and American press, most notably an article by H.G. Wells in favour of bombing German cities. Whether self-criticism, self-betrayal or critical voices from outside of Britain, these voices create an atmosphere of mistrust around every statement from or about Britain. Again, this was a recognised problem which British operatives attempted to combat. According to Cole, British propagandists

were “reminded to avoid 'superiority, self-righteousness, the haughty, preaching, self-satisfied or smug attitude’”.³⁵²

By focussing on the details of specific incidents and presenting primary sources so that readers could “see for themselves” the evidence against Britain, these books offered rebuttals to any argument that Britain had a tradition of acting on behalf of “small nations”. At the same time, the overarching arguments made by each book’s author regarding the “character” of British imperialism tied these case studies directly to the ongoing conflict, inviting readers to draw parallels between Britain’s historical and current conduct. Alternating between the very specific and the very general, the series avoided any direct engagement with British criticisms of Germany’s conduct or aims, attacking instead Britain’s right to make any such judgement.

Functions of a focus on British imperialism in international propaganda

The origins of the concept of “perfidious Albion”, in the sense of an inherent English untrustworthiness and tendency towards treachery has been traced by Schmidt back to the medieval wars between England and France. He argues that the proverbial treachery of the English was cemented in the minds of Continental observers by scandalous events of the Tudor period, such as the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and was further confirmed by the fate of Charles I.³⁵³ In the German tradition, he identifies the withdrawal of support from Frederick the Great during the Seven Years War as a defining moment. The use of “Albion” began as a mockingly poetic term, and satirical juxtaposition of Britain’s glorious self-portrayal with scenes of betrayal or images of a downtrodden working class at home and in the Empire remained a feature of anti-British propaganda throughout both World Wars.

Closely linked to the idea of inherent British dishonesty was the long tradition of portraying propaganda as seduction. It was frequently depicted in this way in cartoons in the late nineteenth

³⁵² Cole, p.29.

³⁵³ H.D. Schmidt, ‘The Idea and Slogan of “Perfidious Albion”’ *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14/4 (1953) pp.604-616; see also Norman Hampson, *The Perfidy of Albion. French Perceptions of England during the French Revolution* (Houndmills, 1998).

and early twentieth centuries and particularly during World War One. The encirclement of Germany, which Britain was accused of orchestrating, and the financial and military support from British colonies, was portrayed as manipulative and exploitative via the depiction of wooing scenes in which Britain seduces, uses and betrays colonies and potential allies, and leaves them with the consequences. In *Am Pranger*, an album of anti-British material put together by the magazine *Kladderadatsch*, a cartoon from 1900 shows a wrinkled, diminutive and pot-bellied John Bull with a mandolin, serenading South Africa, who is peeping through the curtains.³⁵⁴ In a second frame, he can be seen hiding behind his own curtain while an emaciated Indian woman holds her starving child up to his window. A further cartoon from 1907 (figure 34, below) shows John Bull as a Sultan, trying to tempt a coy Germania to dote on him as are all the other countries in his harem.



Figure 34: *Am Pranger* (1915), p.17.

This comment on the Hague conference not only sets Britain apart from other nations, but also portrays Germany as more wary and morally superior to her European neighbours; mistrust and

³⁵⁴ *Am Pranger: England-Album des Kladderadatsch von der Zeit des Burenkrieges bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1915), p.14.

withholding ones assets are shown as akin to bodily virtue, while overeager cooperation is portrayed as debasement. The same image of foreign relations as an unequal love match was also invoked through satirical texts. Towards the end of the collection there is a parody of a love song from 'Albion' to Japan, the fourth and final stanza of which reads:

My heart, it will forever be aflame with love
For you, long after other friendships wither;
Our souls grow closer to one another
But won't you step away from Australia!³⁵⁵

In these cartoons and satirical poems there is an implicit criticism of other countries for allowing themselves to be seduced by Britain, as well as references to miscegenation and an “unnatural” alliance between European and non-European forces. German cartoons on this theme from the Second World War tended to place an emphasis on showing the futility of Britain’s efforts to entice neutral countries into the war, as well as on ridiculing British propaganda messages. In both cases, these are messages intended to discredit a rival in the eyes of the audience: they are not like you; they do not have your best interests at heart. To achieve this effect, the British had to be portrayed as somehow inhuman, and different to the rest of Europe. Britain’s very success as a world power was used to place it outside the “normal” and “respectful” system of relations between equal nation states. In these portrayals, the monstrous nature and extent of the British Empire ruled out any sincerity, altruism, friendships or non-materialistic policies, as well as being evidence of these perfidious qualities.

At the start of the war, instructions had been issued by Hitler that no specifics were to be given regarding Germany’s war aims; instead, the focus of most propaganda activity in the initial stages of the war was on the awe-inspiring successes of the German war machine in Europe.³⁵⁶ Similarly, the topics of the future of Europe and the possible future division of Africa were covered in the vaguest terms, and whether the “European question” should be discussed in propaganda at all was

³⁵⁵ *Am Pranger*, p.25.

³⁵⁶ Longerich, p.75.

the subject of contradictory directives.³⁵⁷ Nevertheless, many wartime books whose creation or distribution was supported by German authorities purported to answer the question of what would happen to Europe in the event of a British or a German victory. German-friendly authors from various European countries spoke to an audience of Europeans, positing a “community of fate” (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) which binds the Continent, or at least the northern part of it, on a common future path. In the absence of details from which to form positive arguments about Germany’s post-war plans,³⁵⁸ European supporters of Germany relied on negative arguments about Germany’s enemies; these were made universal, and cast as threats to the whole of Europe.

Karl Olivecrona was a legal philosopher and member of the *Reichsvereinigung Schweden-Deutschland*, a Swedish nationalist academic association which also included the explorer Sven Hedin. His book *An important Swedish voice: England or Germany?* was published in Swedish in 1940, and in German the following year, by the *Nordische Gesellschaft*.³⁵⁹ Also in 1941, editions appeared in English, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian and Hungarian; this operation was also coordinated by the *Deutsche Informationsstelle* although, in common with many local editions of the “England ohne Maske” books, this was not always apparent to readers.³⁶⁰ Olivecrona forms his argument for neutrals’ support of Germany by looking at Britain’s actions after the First World War to make predictions about a British-led future after the current conflict:

We must here look beyond the misery of the war and turn our attention to the future beyond it. The very talented, strong German people with its ancient culture is really no less suited than the English to take on the lead in Europe. It even possesses many more properties which make it suitable for the task. Germany, has quite

³⁵⁷ Longerich, pp.79-80.

³⁵⁸ The technique of creating a deliberately vague vision for the future of Europe, which could be embellished by the audience’s own imagination, is described in Rutz, *Signal* p.262; see also Robert Edwin Herzstein, *When Nazi Dreams Come True: The Third Reich’s Internal Struggle over the Future of Europe after a German Victory* (London, 1982).

³⁵⁹ Birgitta Almgren, Jan Hecker-Stampehl & Ernst Piper, ‘Alfred Rosenberd und die Nordische Gesellschaft. Der „nordische Gedanke“ in Theorie und Praxis‘ in *NORDEUROPAforum* 2 (2008) pp.7-51.

³⁶⁰ The edition consulted for this thesis is in Dutch and no publisher name is given: Karl Olivecrona, *Een belangrijke Zweedsche stem. Engeland of Duitschland?* (The Hague, 1941).

different, more real possibilities than England to grant the European nations peace, order, satisfied labour and a stable economy.³⁶¹

In this approach, a comparison of British and German aims is ignored in favour of supposed national characteristic which are to be discerned from a generalised history of the two nations' relations with Europe. Invoking the image of the "judgement of history", he compares Britain to a teacher who cannot maintain order in class and should therefore lose their job. In common with other pro-German commentators, he argues that Britain should be held to a higher standard than other countries, in this case because the British claim to have the only correct method for ensuring peace.

In a similar approach to the identification and depiction of British "self-betrayal" as that employed in the volumes of "England ohne Maske", the first section of Carl Düssel's *Europa und die Achse* quotes extensively from J.R. Seeley and G.M. Trevelyan regarding the role of European conflict in helping to secure Britain's imperial possessions. This is given as evidence that Britain's alliances with European countries is only ever a means to increasing her own control over territory and trade, a dominance "which happens to be viewed by England as willed by God".³⁶² He draws from this explanation of the driving force behind British foreign policy in Europe a definition of the "Continental Question". He poses five linked questions, three of which are:

How is it possible to protect Continental Europe from the atavism of English concept of warfare, which will in the short or long-term drag England herself into ruin, but which also threatens to turn Continental Europe into rubble? How is it possible to give validity to the desire of the people of Continental Europe to work together as neighbours? How is it possible to give Continental Europe back control over its own political and cultural destiny, which over the last three centuries has fallen victim to the power claims of a Euro-phobic island empire?³⁶³

The answer, according to Düssel, lies in the "new leadership core" of the European "community of fate", the Axis Powers. However, the focus is on what Europe is to be saved from, not how this is to be achieved. The vision offered in the above questions is an aspirational one, whereas a future

³⁶¹ Olivecrona, p4.

³⁶² Carl Düssel, *Europa und die Achse. Die kontinentaleuropäische Frage als Kehrseite britischer Politik* (Essen, 1942) pp.26-7.

³⁶³ Düssel, p.56.

determined by Britain would herald destruction not only for mainland Europe, but for Britain too.

That Britain's path is a self-destructive one, but that her rulers are blind to the danger, is a common theme of wartime anti-British books. This rhetorical stance enabled Germany's fight against Britain to be characterised as a war not only in defence of Germany and continental Europe, but even ultimately of Britain too.

In *Das Empire gegen Europa*, volume eight of the series 'Das Britische Reich in der Weltpolitik', Hermann Lufft judges Britain not equally with other European nations, but against a higher standard. In his argument, faced with the racial, cultural and political dividedness of continental Europe, Great Britain, enjoying all the advantages provided by its island-position, natural resources and by good luck, could have taken on the role of a "great equaliser and bringer of peace". Lufft's judgement is that the English people, represented by the English state, have fully failed in this task:

Alongside the privileges and with them the rights which nature and luck have granted her, and which seem to have been leant to her indefinitely, England has never acknowledged or even recognised the responsibilities which are always bound with these privileges.³⁶⁴

The above quote brings together an alleged blindness or lack of self-awareness with the suggestion that these lucky advantages have been "on loan" for an overly long time, and may be about to end. This point is brought home in the following paragraph, which describes the "English character" as having become saturated with a self-interest veiled by hypocrisy which, "through practice over many generations", has become a subconscious part of British politics. In common with other texts, Lufft's conclusion describes Britain's aim in the Second World War as the commercial and financial enslavement of Europe, and Germany's existential war as a war of freedom against "Anglo-Saxon tyranny and Jewish avarice", fought on behalf of the "family of European peoples".³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Hermann Lufft, *Das Empire gegen Europa* (Berlin, 1940) p.8.

³⁶⁵ Lufft, p.57.

The similarity of the arguments put forward in Carlo Scarfoglio's *England und das Festland*, originally published in Rome in 1936 as *L'Inghilterra e il Continente*, to those found in anti-British books after 1939 shows the earlier misgivings among some European observers, which contributed to the foundations on which wartime animosity rested. His foreword describes the book as an unbiased representation of the inevitable view of every European:

The book is not a list of charges against England; it only explains how her interventions on the Continent manifest themselves, and shows the only way in which these can be viewed by continental observers who look past outward appearances and the historical and political polemic. Only the suffering of the Continent is described here. [...] Due to the present-day regime in Malta, the author denies every Englishman the right to even think the words freedom, democracy or respect for national sovereignty. Anyone who is not sick with Anglophilia has to agree.³⁶⁶

His claim that this is not an accusatory text is partially negated by the strength of language in the second half of the quote. However, there is a rhetorical attempt here at a mutual accommodation between personal strength of feeling and the assumed view of any rational observer; objective rationality and human empathy complement one another in contrast to the “sickness” of a pro-British bias.

In an afterword written in October 1939, Scarfoglio describes the current war as the thirteenth coalition war in the last 255 years, starting, true to the pattern identified in his preceding chapters, twenty years after the previous war. He repeats his claim from the introduction that the subject of the book is political mistakes and their effect on mainland Europe, not moral judgement. Crimes can be rendered harmless through police action, he says, but the only remedy for political incompetence is war.³⁶⁷ This political incompetence is described in terms of an inability to see past Britain's immediate needs. He points to the Abyssinian Crisis as a moment when Britain acted purely on instinct, and so showed Europe the true weakness of her post-war position; he claims that one phrase was repeated by three quarters of the population of Europe as well as all of Britain's

³⁶⁶ Carlo Scarfoglio, *England und das Festland* (Leipzig, 1939) pp.V-VI.

³⁶⁷ Scarfoglio, p.218.

public sphere: “England must do something or risk a loss of prestige”. However, in the case of restoring Germany’s rights and functionality as a state, Scarfoglio claims that Britain and France refused all practical action and, when Germany took the only available course, British publicists decried the fact that it was done with violence. This brings him to a point about morality similar to that made by Lufft: Britain gave herself the role of moral leader, but has confused moral leadership with “the urge to reject or force into silence any country which cannot find its feet”.³⁶⁸

He then turns his attention to the kind of peace which would be desirable after the current war, which is dependent on the type of warfare being conducted:

Without wanting to be disrespectful towards England, it nevertheless remains certain that the best manner of war and therefore the best manner of peace is that which leaves untouched the greatest possible portion of the worth of the Continent.³⁶⁹

Soon after he continues:

If we are to rescue our part of the world, we must become used to viewing it as a unit, with which can be bound, naturally, consideration for all differences between peoples and all justified feelings of nationhood.³⁷⁰

He then describes how the League of Nations and similar futures proposed by the USA in the event of a British victory are not compatible with this union of different but compatible parts. He describes the League as a giant net, which caught up the nations of Europe like a “school of herring”. Any future solution, he says, would be similarly imposed through violence on the unwilling:

But we people of the Continent are not fish. Our rescue and that of our part of the world can only come from within, never from outside.³⁷¹

The main evidence he offers for a German victory leading to a better future for Europe is that she has shown restraint towards France, proving that she wishes to cause no unnecessary harm to any European country. Again, the bulk of the arguments are negative, resting on the past conduct of

³⁶⁸ Scarfoglio, p.226.

³⁶⁹ Lufft, p.231.

³⁷⁰ Lufft, p.232.

³⁷¹ Lufft, p.232.

Britain and the USA, rather than offering many positive details about Germany. Scarfoglio's argument rests on the premise that all British interventions in affairs on the Continent have been motivated by self-interest, and suffer from a lack of imagination which leads to the application of "one size fits all" policies. The sense that Britain is ageing and is somehow too old or ill-prepared for the modern world pervades these arguments, in implied opposition to the dynamic young power of Germany.

Arno Deutelmoser's *England gegen Skandinavien*, volume thirteen of 'England unmasked', begins with England's defeat of Holland in the seventeenth century, which had the aim not only of taking its colonies, but also its trade links with Baltic countries. The importance of wood, hemp and tar for building the English fleet meant that it could not afford to let any one country gain control of the area and force England into dependency; thus began, according to Deutelmoser, England and later Britain's policy of "divide and conquer" regarding Scandinavia.³⁷² There follow seventy pages cataloguing the British manipulation of Scandinavia, leading up to the attacks of April 1940, which are described as "worthy of a place in the long chain of British violations of the rights of Scandinavian countries".³⁷³ The book concludes with a quote from Ribbentrop to the international press on 9th April 1940, in which he describes the German occupation of Denmark and Norway as for their own protection:

England has violated Scandinavia and to this violation of international rights the *Führer* today issued the appropriate response. With it, Germany has saved the countries and peoples of Scandinavia from destruction and henceforth until the end of the war will ensure true neutrality in the North.³⁷⁴

This quote is not analysed in any way, but is intended to ring true in the light of the three and a half centuries of events described before it. By this point, the reader has been "trained" in how to read and use these quotes; the rhetorical function of quoting from British sources is so self-evidently

³⁷² Arno Deutelmoser, *England gegen Skandinavien* (Berlin, 1940).

³⁷³ Deutelmoser, *England gegen Skandinavien* p.77.

³⁷⁴ Deutelmoser, *England gegen Skandinavien*, p.78.

clear that “quoting” an authority is equal to, or widely encouraged to be considered as disparaging it in some manner.

As mentioned above, one way to rhetorically separate Britain from the rest of Europe was to refer to incidents which had caused widespread moral condemnation of Britain. One way of undermining any British statements of good intentions was to juxtapose them with a canon of well-known British “atrocities”, fleshed out with less notorious events. The Boer War, for example, was a unifying moment of international condemnation from within living memory.³⁷⁵ Stefan Schroeder’s *England und die Buren* consists mainly of extracts from official reports on the treatment of Boer women and children by the British. Official statements of the “good” conditions in the internment camps and humane treatment of prisoners are contrasted with photographs and French cartoons which show the suffering of prisoners, especially women and children.³⁷⁶ For example, the cartoon “Die Fortschritte der Wissenschaft” (“The progress of science”) condemns the use of electric fences, described by in a quote from Lord Kitchener as giving “the illusion of freedom” (figure five, below). Prisoners are shown being electrocuted while attempting to scale the fence, and are being jeered at by British soldiers. The same combinations of cartoons and captions had been used in 1915 in Walther Unus’ *England als Henker Frankreichs*, which had in turn reproduced them from the Parisian satirical magazine *L’Assiette au Beurre* (see figure 35, below).³⁷⁷ In this earlier book, the reuse of older material spanning one hundred years was intended to show the long-term animosity and criticism between countries which were now allies, in an attempt to cast doubt on the durability of that alliance. Despite using the same source material, the main aim in Schroeder’s book, as in other volumes of the series, is to provide evidence of British hypocrisy and to undermine any claims to superior morality in warfare. Paul Moore has shown that even before 1939, German descriptions of British “concentration camps” in the Boer War had been used to invalidate any British criticism of the treatment of prisoners within Germany. In particular, the British record contrasted with positive

³⁷⁵ Keith Wilson, *The International Impact of the Boer War* (New York, 2001).

³⁷⁶ Stefan Schroeder, *England und die Buren* (Berlin, 1940).

³⁷⁷ Walther Unus, *England als Henker Frankreichs: Ein Kampf um die Weltherrschaft und sein Ende* (Hamburg, 1915).

reports of the rehabilitative work supposedly carried out within German camps; the emphasis on the innocence of the Boer women and their children disassociates them from the alleged crimes of German prisoners.³⁷⁸ There is therefore nothing incongruous about the German condemnation of British camps, and criticism of specific technologies such as electric fences, even while the Nazi death camps were in operation.

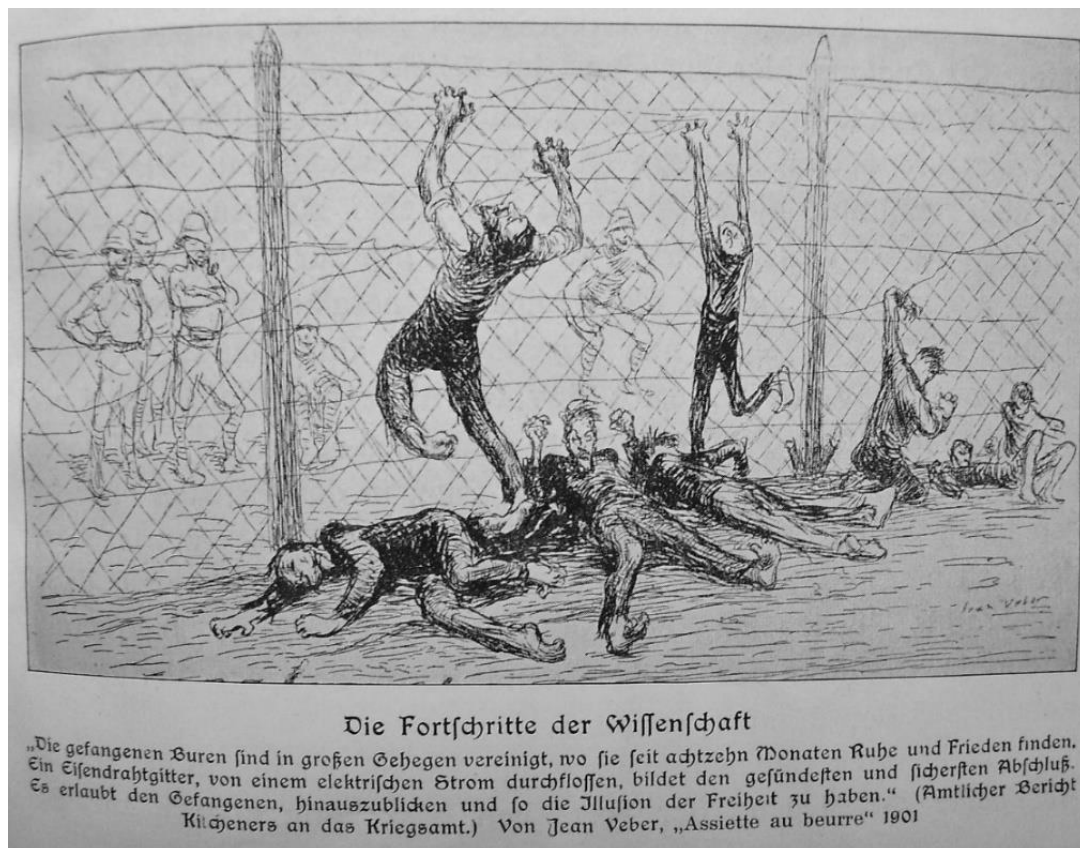


Figure 35: *England als Henker Frankreichs* (1915) p.27.

³⁷⁸ Paul Moore, “‘And What Concentration Camps Those Were!’: Foreign Concentration Camps in Nazi Propaganda, 1933-9” *Journal of Contemporary History* 45/3 (2010) pp.649-674.

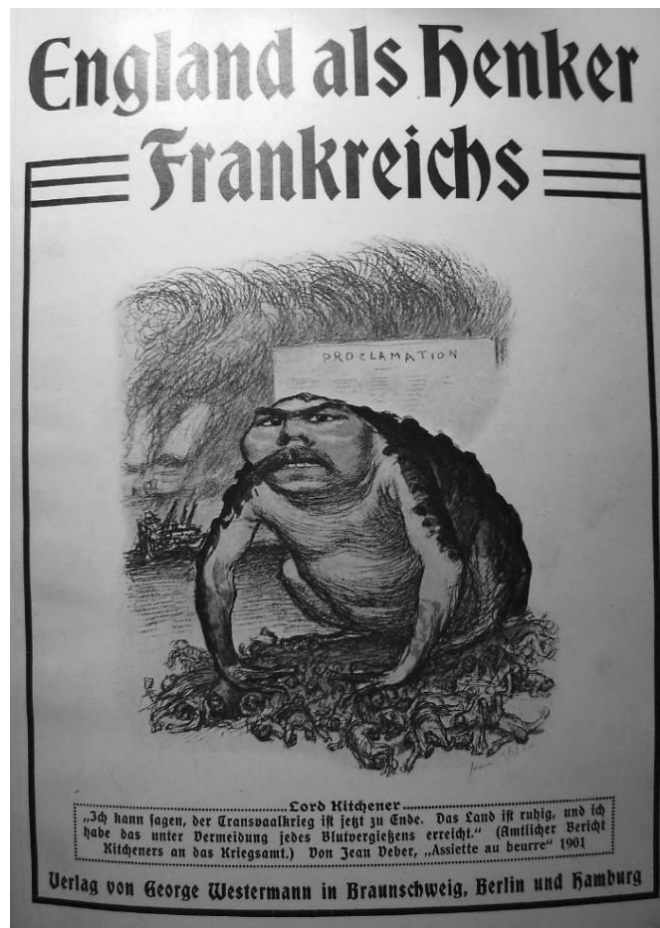


Figure 36: *England als Henker Frankreichs* (1915) cover.

As well as undermining the British case that their war against Germany was a moral cause, constructing a history of British mistreatment of prisoners of war and civilians had the effect of provoking revulsion and fear in readers. The reproduced French cartoons and Schroeder's accompanying text demonised particular British politicians such as Lord Kitchener (on the cover of *Unus'* book, figure 36) but also British soldiers. The focus of the caricature, in these earlier depictions and in contemporary cartoons, was on discrediting the British soldier as weak, lazy, cruel and with an inappropriate sense of humour (for example in figure 37, below). Pictures of smiling British soldiers and examples of British humour, which could be construed as callousness, were a cause of concern to British propagandists, who worried that they were potentially damaging their message in neutral countries.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁹ Cole, p.34 and p.36.



Figure 37: *England als Henker Frankreichs* (1915) p.29.

Aimed at European audiences, the parallels between treatment of non-Europeans (in, for example, Ernst A. Olbert's *England als Sklavenhändler und Sklavenhalter*), and of the white Boers reinforced the arguments regarding Britain's traditional relations with European countries, especially (as in the blurb for *Der Greuel von Denschawai*, above), that Britain would not hesitate to use the same methods against any country or people. If Britain treated all its imperial victims the same, regardless of continent or race then, as Lufft, Scarfoglio and others warned, Europe could expect to experience mistreatment and "enslavement" after a British victory. Rhetorically, this placed Britain on one side of a moral divide, with all victims and "the civilised world" on the other. This allowed Germany to be positioned as a moral leader and as rescuer of oppressed peoples, without the need to provide evidence for these claims.

However, as with the volumes of the series "Weltpirat England" (see Chapter Three), the real subject of "England ohne Maske" was British rule, and any concern expressed for the indigenous populations of British colonies can be viewed as secondary to the creation of the anti-British stereotype. The letters and petitions to British authorities reproduced in Frank's *Englands Herrschaft in Indien* or the description of defiance during an interrogation reproduced by Schaeffer

from Ernie O'Malley's *On Another Man's Wound* are presented as evidence of British brutality, rather than as models for resistance. Nor did the more sympathetic portrayal of non-Europeans completely eclipse the First World War strategy of singling out the use of colonial troops on European battlefields for particular condemnation, although depictions of African and Asian soldiers were on the whole less dehumanising and the emphasis was on their exploitation rather than the "crime" of their deployment against "the white race".³⁸⁰ For example, in a cover for *Simplicissimus* from March 1940 (figure 38, below), an African man informs his father that he is about to set off to fight "for England and culture". His father tells him to remember that they "have already bled once for England's purse". The natural pose of the father is contrasted with the awkward stance of the son in his ill-fitting uniform. Despite the humour being extracted from the combination of African and European dress, this is a far more sympathetic portrayal of the colonial soldier's position than that of, for example, Woldemar Schütze's *Englands Blutschuld gegen die weiße Rasse* from 1914. The cover illustration (figure 39, below) encapsulates Schütze's condemnation of the British deployment of African and Asian troops against a European people. In the light of Germany's military alliance with Japan and rhetorical alliances with subaltern groups, such images were counterproductive in a Second World War context.

³⁸⁰ It was described as such in Woldemar Schütze, *Blutschuld gegen die weiße Rasse* (Berlin, 1914).

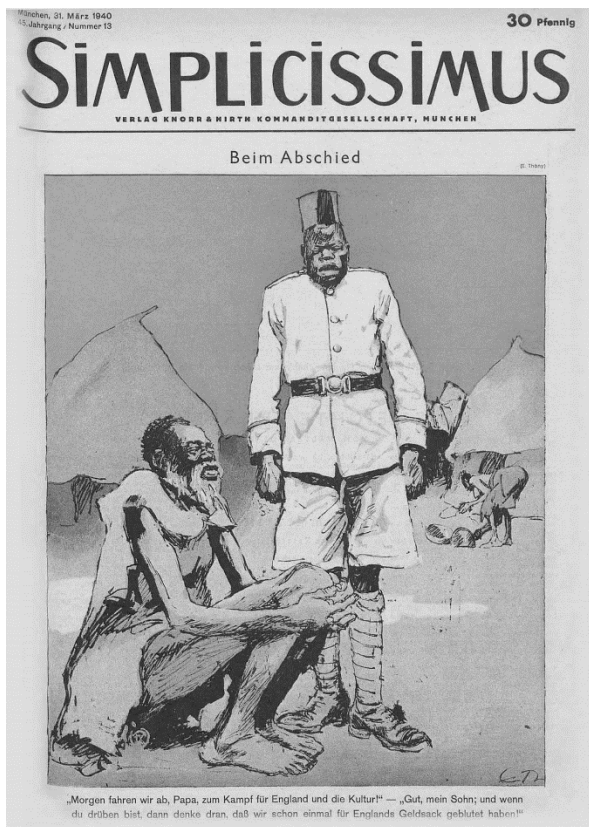


Figure 38: *Simplicissimus* 45/13 (31.03.40).



Figure 39: *Englands Blutschuld* (1914) cover.

The father's words in the *Simplicissimus* cover, as well as the history of unrest offered by “England ohne Maske” also highlight the potential weakness of the British Empire, portraying it as threatened by a lack a loyalty which could undermine it at any time. Coupled with the theory that Britain will defend its empire first, and German attempts in both wars to incite trouble in already troubled regions of the British Empire, such allusions were intended to bolster any European doubts that Britain was fully committed to defending her allies. Britain's self-proclaimed technical and military superiority was no argument unless neutrals could be convinced that Britain really would put itself on the line and come to their aid. The early months of the war, combined with all the historical examples that German experts could catalogue, suggested otherwise.

Official reception of the series ‘England ohne Maske’

We have seen how the volumes of the series were intended to work together, reinforcing each other's core messages to create an overarching anti-British stereotype with British imperialism as a binding theme. By rhetorically unifying all Europeans and all peoples “subjugated” by British

imperial methods, the books could theoretically appeal to audiences across the globe and thus be a useful tool for gaining international support for Germany's cause. Official assessments by diplomats at German embassies and consulates who were sent copies of the books for assessment were, however, mixed.³⁸¹ A comparison of all responses collected by the *Deutsche Informationsstelle* indicates that most volumes were received favourably by "interested parties" in many countries, and there were requests for additional copies from several countries as well as other organisations. This initial success was for books in German, English or French; they appear to have resonated with the more specialist audience identified in the *Bücherkunde* review at the beginning of this chapter, in other words with the same intellectual networks which were being drawn upon to create these and other pro-German works.

However, the translation of individual volumes into local languages for more general distribution varied by topic and target country. For example, the authorities in Belgium requested additional copies of Wirsing's *Hundert Familien beherrschen das Empire* in French and Dutch, but very few Dutch copies had been printed due to "extremely low interest" reported from The Hague, and in September 1940 it was reported that no further volumes would be translated or published in Dutch as the texts had been "overtaken by more recent events".³⁸² Offices in Belgrade and Sofia seem to have distributed several thousand copies of most books in the series. In Denmark, however, only Deutelmoser's *England gegen Skandinavien* was deemed useful by one assessor, although at least numbers 2-6 were translated into Danish:

...the text had a positive effect, despite its anti-British bias, because it was tailored to the Danish mentality. The skilful treatment of Scandinavian views has in this case contributed greatly to the promotion of interest in this topic.³⁸³

In most of the negative assessments, the books were considered to be either too dry, too far removed from local concerns, lacking in relevance to current events, or overtaken by the course of

³⁸¹ AA R66697 and R66698: Schriftenreihe Länder, England ohne Maske, A-J and K-Z, 01.05.40 – 31.03.43.

³⁸² AA R66697 / 278455: German Embassy in Brussels to the German Foreign Office, 06.09.40; AA R66698 / 278951: Reich Commissioner for the Occupied Netherlands to the German Foreign Office, 11.09.40.

³⁸³ AA R66697 / 278509: German Consulate in Copenhagen to the German Foreign Office, 16.07.41.

the war, to be worth translating the text and engaging a local printer. Particularly problematic were the volumes on specific areas of Europe when considered for audiences on other continents. A memorandum from Buenos Aires on 9th December 1940 reported that the publication of *England gegen Skandinavien* had been temporarily suspended, "as the Scandinavian problems lie too far outside the interests of South American countries".³⁸⁴ Similarly, a memorandum from Beijing on 13th February 1941 regarding the volume *Lebensraum oder Imperialismus* declared:

An edition in the local language seems pointless, as there is likely to be next to no understanding for such a topic on the part of the Chinese population.³⁸⁵

Also from Beijing on the same date was a negative assessment of *Der Aufstieg der Reichen*. In this case, distribution in local circles was decided to be "pointless", as the social inequality the volume described in Britain was "just as great in China".³⁸⁶ Similar concerns prevented the volume *Slums. Englands Wohnungselend* from being published via the German Embassy in Rio de Janeiro:

The English accommodation crisis has already been evaluated for propaganda purposes through the distribution of a translation of information leaflet No.6 "4 Million Look for a Home". A distribution of the volume "Slums" in Portuguese would likely be construed by local circles as veiled criticism of local living conditions, which are in places indescribably poor.³⁸⁷

The above response also illustrates the necessity of prioritising resources and avoiding the duplication of efforts, in this case by organising the publication of two volumes which covered the same ground. In each case, the embassies and consulates had to work within the limits set by local publishers, the sensibilities and expectations of the reading public, and the local and national authorities. In areas where this series was deemed to be able to sway opinion, print runs were still only in the low thousands and books were likely to have been read by people with existing pro-German leanings. Publication of all histories of this kind seems to peter out by mid-1943; in the

³⁸⁴ AA R66698 / 279174: German Embassy in Buenos Aires to the German Foreign Office, 09.12.40.

³⁸⁵ AA R66697 / 278502: German Embassy in Beijing to the German Foreign Office, 13.02.41.

³⁸⁶ AA R66697 / 278503: German Embassy in Beijing to the German Foreign Office, 13.02.41.

³⁸⁷ AA R66698 / 279178: German Embassy in Rio de Janeiro to the German Foreign Office, 04.12.40.

face of war shortages and logistical problems history, however much in support of the Germany's war aims, could not be a priority.

All in all, this series of books seems to have had far less reach and impact than was expected, judging by the efforts the German Foreign Office had initially devoted to their publication and distribution. Although the combination of topics encapsulated by "England ohne Maske" made sense within the context created for a German audience, as indicated by its similarity to many other books and series described elsewhere in this thesis, it does not appear to have translated well to areas beyond Germany's borders. The fact that volumes were assessed in isolation, without this additional context in part explains the negative judgements. Taking the example of *Slums. Englands Wohnungselend*, in the context of the whole series, especially to a projected "ideal" Western European reader, a book documenting British working-class living conditions would show an unhealthy, uncaring state, contrasting with the British self-projection and Nazi Germany's stated social goals. However, this integrated, interdisciplinary approach was not self-explanatory enough to "sell" an individual volume on this topic as its relevance to global current affairs was not obvious.

Conclusions

British imperialism had the potential to be a useful topic for German foreign propaganda as it could illustrate the supposed hypocrisy at the heart of Britain's imperial mission, inspire mistrust, foster moral outrage, and form the basis of predictions about the consequences of a British victory. Providing detailed evidence of Britain's past imperial crimes the extensive reproduction of source material compensated for an enforced lack of specifics about Germany's intentions towards other countries and peoples. The variety of global theatres in which Britain operated added to potential reach of this propaganda as a range of local contexts could be invoked and their general applicability highlighted through the discussion of specific examples. The main change evident when comparing books from the Second World War with earlier material, particularly from the First World War, is in the portrayal of non-European, non-white "fellow victims" of British

imperialism. By selecting the very worst episodes from British imperial history and linking them directly to the concept of an immutable national character, these books attempted to invoke a sense of moral revulsion which could transcend national and racial barriers and present Britain, as an imperial state, as a universal enemy. The British Empire could be a theme that all countries had in common and delving back into its history could be a way to form arguments without exposing gaps in more current arguments.

Wartime propaganda needed to be pragmatic and reactive, providing counter-arguments in a conversation with British propagandists. This has to be understood as one side of a discussion, and as a continuing attempt to control the official record of that conversation through the presentation and reinterpretation of quotes. Authors and academics were used as a resource by the German Foreign Office and other institutions, just as they had been in peace-time. Their different approaches and specialisms could create a detailed, multi-faceted portrayal of the many alleged dangers of British dominance, in which historical trends and character traits could be identified and used to predict the outcome of the war and the peace to come after it. However, success relied on building upon older messages and on retaining links to the “conversation” between British and German propagandists. Removed from these contexts, books could gain unintended associations (such as reminding readers of shortcomings in their own situation) or appear irrelevant to the target audience. These books were part of a project which assumed a dedicated and sympathetic readership, hence this is where they had most success. To the casual reader they appeared out of context, especially in neutral countries where the broader print culture was neither dominated by Nazi messages, nor organised exclusively as a bilateral competition between Britain and Germany. In an open print market the expectation that particular sources would be read together, or against each other, presumed a greater degree of organisation and regulation than could be achieved by foreign propaganda operatives.

The books in the series seem to have worked best when used to consolidate existing pro-German leanings within Europe. There was a good deal of common ground, or at least perceived or

presumed common ground, between Germany and other countries regarding Britain's imperial history, parallels and connections with its "imperialist" foreign policy in Europe, and what this meant for the future of Europe. There is a constant line to be walked between drawing an audience in, not declaring your intentions too clearly; but also guiding them to put this information in the required context, and draw the desired conclusions. Considering all of the obstacles, limited resources, and amount of cross-party collaboration such a task required, it is no surprise that many works fell short of this ideal.

Conclusion

The introduction to this thesis identified three core questions to be addressed through three pairs of chapters, linked through the concepts of “reflection”, “incorporation” and “rejection”. The first question pertained to the interaction of British self-projection and National Socialist perceptions of the British within the books available to readers in the Third Reich. Chapters One and Two showed the ways in which the book market as a whole, and particular “conversations” within it, reflected a wide range of concerns. While this does not reveal the worries and hopes of the readers themselves, it nevertheless shows how publishers and regulators (who were attempting to regulate readers through the books they read) wished readers to choose books. The variety of books on offer to consumers through which they could read about the British and their empire further reflects the malleability of the concept of “British imperialism” and the many, often competing, messages it could be used to convey.

The ability of the subject to incite interest and enthusiasm in readers is also indicated by the increased incorporation of British imperial and patriotic material into schoolbooks. That this was done despite concerns that it could indoctrinate learners into unthinking *Englandschwärmerei* is further testament to a flexibility of interpretation. To answer the second question, authors, publishers, reviewers and officials employed many different techniques to re-purpose old material for new arguments. Due to the limitations of the censorship apparatus, as well as the more or less permanent and private nature of home libraries, views of Britain contained within earlier publications could not be “erased” once they became incompatible with current official proclamations, nor could they be as quickly replaced as newspaper articles, radio broadcasts or newsreels. Instead, books which had become undesirable could be discredited or shown as obsolete by later waves of publications, or via other media. This was achieved through a collaborative process of what could be termed “context management”; through changes in the presentation of book reviews and the formulation of advertisements, through the addition of new forewords and conclusions to the texts themselves, and by “teaching” readers to interpret information in new ways,

material which no longer suited official purposes could be rendered harmless or even turned to a new purpose. This process of “context management” is most evident in the new books which were published during the Second World War, many of which consisted of extensive quotations or collections of British sources tied together with a narrow repertoire of well-worn messages. Whether this material actually supported the arguments being made is doubtful. The main purpose appears to have been to create an atmosphere of mistrust around any British statement or source. However, another conclusion which emerges from this thesis is the essential subjectivity of any interpretation of British material. The influences on the ways in which the British Empire was portrayed did not come from a single, centrally directed process. Even within institutions such as the review section of Rosenberg’s office, reviewers differ in their assessments of similar, sometimes even the same, British material. Where one reader or reviewer might see the edifying struggle of a heroic central figure, such as Florence Nightingale, another might focus on the forces within British society which they were struggling against. For all that the topic of the British Empire could be used to create the illusion of common ground in a target audience, away from the guiding hand of a reviewer, teacher, or additional explanatory material, the intended message could easily go unread.

Regarding the moral dimension of imperialism and the hypothesis that Nazism represented the outcome of a process of “brutalisation” through global imperialism, this thesis has identified a trend which runs counter to this. The anti-British stereotype as analysed here relied on invoking moral outrage at incidents from the British imperial record and the supposedly rapacious and inhuman character which drove them, in order to fuel accusations of hypocrisy to counter any charges levelled at Germany. Although a fundamentally dishonest rhetorical strategy, it nevertheless indicates that there was no “moral slippage” at the level of public discourse or attempts to manipulate public opinion regarding imperial crimes, particularly summary execution and genocide. As a consequence of this strategy, the German propaganda output of the Second World War did always dehumanise non-European peoples to the extent of that produced during the First World War. This was due in part to changes in the system of alliances (most notably Japan’s alliance with

Germany rather than Britain), but was also due, in some sources, to a rhetorical positioning of German as among the oppressed peoples of the globe, in a quasi-Spartacus role. Although this conception was privately dismissed by Hitler, and denounced in some Party publications, it was still a feature of many texts and rhetorical positioning blended into strategic intent; in common with the German government during the First World War, Third Reich agitators attempted to encourage resistance to imperial rule in many areas of the British Empire.

Germany's war was justified to domestic and international audiences partly as self-preservation but also as a counter to a "British-led" state system, which, it was claimed, only served British interests. Especially in texts written by and for Europeans, distributed through German channels, two alternative visions for the post-war world were offered, with the fairest, most prosperous and most peaceful future being under Germany's guiding hand. Perhaps the most striking aspect of the reuse of British imperial history by authors in the Third Reich is the ease with which it could be formed into arguments in favour first of German territorial expansion and later of a German-led future for Europe and the "civilised world".

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