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### **Political Warfare Illusions: Otto Strasser and Britain's World War Two Strategy of National Revolts Against Hitler**

In the early years of the last war, British chose to co-operate with a notorious ex-associate of Hitler's, Otto Strasser. Together with his better-known brother Gregor, Otto had helped establish the Nazi movement in north Germany in the 1920s. Josef Goebbels had been his secretary before he took charge of the party in Berlin. In 1930 Otto had broken with Hitler because he felt that Hitler's alliance with the right betrayed the Nazi movement's socialistic or corporative beliefs. When Hitler grasped power in 1933, Otto was driven into exile, while the following year his brother Gregor was murdered during the Night of the Long Knives. Otto spent the time before the war as a refugee in several countries leading his underground anti-Hitler organization called the Black Front and corresponding for various newspapers. In 1940 following the fall of France, the British unexpectedly rescued Otto from his place of refuge in Portugal, and sent him to Canada. There he advised the government, wrote political articles for the leading allied press and journals (including the *Dalhousie Review*), and directed his Black Front together with his more recent Free German Movement of anti-Nazi German emigrés.

Strasser used his credentials, as a protégé of the British and Canadian governments as well as leader of what he termed to be the most powerful and active anti-Hitler organizations of Germans inside and outside Hitler's Germany, to underline his own importance to the allied war effort. Hitler would eventually be brought down by an internal revolt within Germany triggered off by his followers, after which Strasser would emerge to lead a rejuvenated socialistic and nationalistic Germany. However, the shine gradually wore off Strasser, and by 1943 the Canadian government banned him from all further public activity. As a result, his sources of income dried up and he was forced to seek refuge on a farm called "Paradise" outside of Halifax owned by a friend. He later lived in Bridgetown, until in 1955 he was

permitted to return to Germany. How did the welcome ally of 1940 become the "Prisoner of Ottawa", as a postwar book on Strasser was entitled, in 1943? Why did the British at first feel that Strasser might be a valuable asset in their war effort, and then drive him into disgrace several years later?

The answer lies in the illusions created by the early wartime British strategy of political warfare against Hitler. The original British war plan, which failed and so has tended to be forgotten, aimed at bringing down Hitler not by military means primarily but by a series of national revolts against the Nazis to be carried out by patriotic elements in occupied countries, including Germany. Within the framework of this strategy, Strasser was originally picked up by the British to be a trigger through his organizations of the German revolt. However, as the war dragged on without the hoped-for revolts materializing, while Hitler's string of military victories grew longer, the original distinction - never completely accepted - between "good" Germans and Nazis began to fade. At the same time, the British and Canadians gradually came to realize that they themselves had fallen victim to Strasser's own style of propaganda. Even if the original strategy of national revolts had been a viable one, Strasser was not the man to assist with it. Having overstressed political rather than military warfare against Hitler, the British in turn were fooled by the clever fabrications of that more modern and radical Baron Munchausen, the charming Otto Strasser. His two organizations proved to be little more than products of his own fertile journalistic imagination, while his influence among Germans inside and outside Germany remained almost nil.

When war broke out in 1939, a militarily weak Britain in company with an equally unprepared France faced Hitler. To make up for their lack of military might and will, the British devised an optimistic analysis of how to defeat Hitler by other, non-military means. Churchill has given the impression in his war memoirs that from the beginning of the war, long before the Americans and Russians had the idea, the British were in favour of defeating Hitler by military means, and after the fall of France, by a military re-invasion of the continent. Instead, both Churchill and Chamberlain before him chose a strategy of political warfare to undermine the Nazi regime, which sat astride restless and dissatisfied conquered peoples, including the majority of Germans.<sup>2</sup> The Nazi regime represented a facade behind which factions conflicted, which represented potential allies of the British in the war against Hitler and his gangster regime. Divisions among the Nazis, and between the Nazis and the discontented masses of the German and occupied peoples, were siezed upon as cracks to be exploited in bringing down the hated Nazis. The strategy of political warfare aimed not

only at breaking down the enemy's unity and will to resist, but as important, to move the occupied peoples and "good" Germans from apathy to action.<sup>3</sup>

This strategy was a product of both practical necessity and a great deal of wishful thinking based upon fear of repeating WWI experiences. Forced to compensate for their military weaknesses but yet unwilling to admit that defeat of Hitler was not possible, the British built up an image of Europe filled with secret allies in the war - the patriotic Germans and occupied peoples. This served to keep up morale during dark and lonely days. At the same time, they learnt - as did Hitler - the false lesson from WWI that the final 1918 defeat had been due not primarily to military causes at all, but to a break in German morale brought on by constant military pressure, economic blockade and propaganda. The same combination of forces through bombing, blockade, the indomitable British example of grim resistance together with propaganda would again do the job where military means did not exist by themselves. Material shortages, Hitler's inability to break the British and the stretching of Nazi military forces to the limit to control restless and dangerous populations would destroy Nazi morale and bring about Hitler's downfall by 1942. Again, this strategy of indirect political warfare would avoid duplication of the huge bloodletting and atrocious losses entailed during WWI on the continent by conventional military war. Once these hidden allies had risen up and smitten Hitler in a great effort of self-help, the small British army would invade the continent to mop up the remnants of the broken Nazi machine and complete Hitler's downfall.<sup>4</sup>

While Chamberlain thought of political warfare in more defensive terms, during 1940 Churchill gave the earlier strategy an activist, aggressive edge. Encouraged by Britain's courageous defence and a more dynamic political warfare including increased bombing of Germany and subversion through spies, commando raids and propaganda combined with a tighter blockade, the good allies would see that Hitler was indeed defeatable. As a result, they would not despair, but would be animated to become active through revolt. Churchill's political warfare, as a 1941 plan put it, was to arouse active disorder on the continent so that the Nazi regime would collapse before any real military offensive took place.<sup>5</sup>

Upon his assumption of control of the British war effort in mid-1940, Churchill reformed his military and administrative structures; his war cabinet, chiefs of staff, intelligence community and propaganda machine. He organized two top-secret, inter-departmental committees, Special Operations Executive (SOE) and Political Warfare Executive (PWE). SOE was first set up in July 1940 under the

Minister of Economic Warfare Hugh Dalton with Sir Robert Vansittart, the government's Chief Diplomatic Adviser, as his assistant. Specializing in subversion and propaganda to the enemy's occupied nations and to the enemy himself, SOE under Dalton was instructed to make armies appear out of nowhere from among the conquered people of Europe, to "set Europe ablaze."<sup>6</sup> While SOE continued during the war as a subversion and sabotage group, its propaganda work was taken over during 1941 by the new PWE, which was set up under the cover of the Foreign Office's Political Intelligence Department and linked to SOE, the Foreign Office, Ministry of Information, the chiefs of staff and secret services. PWE's director Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart ran PWE as a member of the Foreign Office, and directed its growth to a staff of 1500. PWE aimed its type of political warfare at Germany, her satellites and the occupied countries. Propaganda to the rest of the world was left to the more visible Ministry of Information. It was PWE's responsibility, in consultation with its political-military bosses mentioned above and the BBC, to put out the weekly directive to all propagandists on the political warfare line to be followed. This SOE-PWE division was later duplicated in the US in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) under William Donovan and the Office of War Information (OWI).<sup>7</sup>

The strategy of undermining Hitler through political warfare originally included the "good," anti-Nazi Germans as well, although a great deal of public discussion continued about the reality or existence of a body of "good" Germans on whom one could depend.<sup>8</sup> At the beginning of the war, Chamberlain made a clear distinction between Hitler and the Nazis as enemies and the rest of the German people as probable allies in the war against Hitler, which Churchill carried on. The new SOE was ordered in 1940 by the British chiefs-of-staff to incite revolts in the occupied countries "and by popular uprisings against the Nazi party inside Germany."<sup>9</sup> SOE and the PWE carried out the original Chamberlain doctrine of seeking for a peace "that all the peoples of Europe, including the Germans, long for."<sup>10</sup> An early PWE directive stated that the allies intended to liberate the Germans as well as the other submerged people. Germans were to be informed that the British understood their difficulties; that "they were being kept in the dark and under the heels of a ruthless dictatorship."<sup>11</sup> When in mid-1941 a rebellious member of PWE dared to question this line, arguing instead that Hitler would only be defeated by military means, he was promptly fired from PWE. The head of PWE's German section re-iterated that it was the NSDAP, the soul of the war machine, which had to be attacked, not the German people.<sup>12</sup>

The early wartime strategy of the British depended on anti-Nazi everywhere, including the "good" Germans, wherever they might be. It was, however, not clear in the German case exactly what groups could organize and trigger off the German revolt against Hitler. Somehow it was decided within the British political warfare machine that Strasser might fit the type of German resistance leader sought at the time. Although Strasser had never hidden his disdain for the weaknesses of democracy, this could be interpreted rather as attacks on the democracies' failed appeasement policies towards Hitler. Strasser's own anti-liberal, anti-parliamentarian and corporative roots were well known to the British, but working on the principle that my enemies' enemy is my friend, Strasser seemed to be violently anti-Nazi, to control a vast underground network of disillusioned Germans which could be used to encourage the hoped-for German revolt, and to be prepared unlike other German exiles to participate actively in the war.<sup>13</sup> In November 1942 the Foreign Office could still write the Canadians that "his (Strasser's) organization seemed to provide to some extent a rallying-point for anti-Nazi feeling in a number of countries and as such it may to some extent have served a useful purpose."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, he was a Bavarian who demonstrated a deep distaste for Prussians and the old German ruling castes, promising that if he had anything to do with it, they would lose all their power after the war and be severely punished for their shabby role in aiding the Nazi regime and Hitler's war.<sup>15</sup> Strasser's own early Nazi activities were willingly overlooked, for he had broken with Hitler and his brother Gregor in 1930, struggled against Hitler since then, and was willing to put his knowledge of the Nazi mentality and character at the allies' service. Thus he appeared to be well equipped to fight the Nazis and hit their true weaknesses. As a leading Foreign Office official put it in 1941, "We are, and have been using for this purpose (propaganda to Germany) several Germans with whose *ultimate* aims I totally disagree, but who are thought useful to go on with."<sup>16</sup> Because Strasser seemed to believe in the "socialist" rather than the nationalist side of Nazism, perhaps Strasser could appeal to the non-Prussian, non-elite members of German society against their rulers. Most importantly, Strasser claimed that thousands of secret Black Front members still existed within Germany awaiting his signal to bring down Hitler through revolt.

Strasser created largely his own credentials through his post-1933 writings from his refuges in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and France.<sup>17</sup> His analysis of Nazism as a front for older Prussian-German traits fit well into the general scheme of British thinking and revived memories of WWI. The dramatic story of his break and long fight with Hitler, together with Hitler's great fear of him, made him attractive

as a prospective ally to the British. His 1939 autobiographical *Hitler and I* appeared in 1939 in four languages with separate British and American printings. A well-known London *Times* correspondent, Douglas Reed, wrote his own exciting version of the Strasser saga entitled *Nemesis?*, in which Reed held that destiny had repeatedly saved Strasser to act as fate's avenger in Hitler's inevitable defeat. Strasser emerged in this book as a man of extraordinary courage, energy and political acumen; a personable, pudgy and keen revolutionary and the only man among the German refugees willing to carry on the active struggle against Hitler at the risk of his own life through his secret underground network, the Black Front.<sup>18</sup> Commander King-Hall of the prestigious Royal Institute of International Affairs, MP and during the war chairman of the parliamentary committee on political subversion, boosted Strasser and the idea of a Germany filled with good, anti-Nazi Germans under Strasser's command through his influential, 55,000-circulation private political newsletter.<sup>19</sup> Strasser's story was so well known that in 1941 he co-operated with the actor Erroll Flynn in putting out an anti-Nazi pamphlet, while Warner Brothers of Hollywood was prepared to make an adventure film of daring and suspense out of his struggle against Hitler.<sup>20</sup>

With this sort of reputation and backing, it is understandable that the British secret service would be commissioned - much to Strasser's own surprise and delight - to rescue him from Portugal in 1940 and bring him to Britain. The Foreign Office was merely informed of this action, and could later find no files on how Strasser ever came to have turned into a British responsibility. The whole matter was handled personally by Vansittart, the Chief Diplomatic Adviser in the Foreign Office and number two in the secret SOE.<sup>21</sup> When it came to bringing Strasser to Britain, however, the Foreign Office and its advisers, many of whom were other German emigrés, gagged at the suggestion, while angry questions were asked in Parliament. It therefore became impossible to follow the original plan to bring Strasser to Britain.<sup>22</sup>

It was decided instead to send him to the United States to rally opinion there and to combat neutralism. To this end, Vansittart asked a member of the Canadian High Commission in London to visit him discreetly at the Foreign Office. In the words of H. H. Wrong, the Canadian official invited to Vansittart's office,

He (Vansittart) showed me a letter from "C" to himself, saying that Strasser was in Lisbon under a Portuguese permit which would expire in a few days and urging that steps should be taken to get Strasser out of Portugal irremediately ... (rather than) allow him to fall into German hands. Vansittart appealed to me most strongly to try to persuade the Canadian Government to permit his entry to Canada for the duration of

the war. He said that he himself was in favour of allowing him to come to England, but had not been able to persuade the authorities there to accept him.

Vansittart informed Wrong that his request "should be treated as a request from the British Government."<sup>23</sup> The aim was to hide Strasser's connections with the British Government by furnishing him with a new identity (Boestrom) so as to look like a refugee, then apply for entrance to the United States. The Canadians were reluctant to respond positively to this highly secret request from Vansittart, as they feared that he might actually use his Canadian visa for entry to Canada if refused by the US authorities. Vansittart insisted that the Canadian visa was only to establish his bona fides when applying to the United States, and so the desired Canadian visa "valid for the duration" was issued.<sup>24</sup> He was then embarked for Bermuda, where he made his application for an entry permit into the US.<sup>25</sup>

While in Bermuda awaiting an answer from the Americans, Strasser granted interviews to all and sundry, and announced in grandiose fashion the formation under his chairmanship of a world-wide front of anti-Nazi Germans, of which his Black Front would be part, called the Free Germany Movement.<sup>26</sup> While his Black Front would continue to work against Hitler within Germany, the Free Germany Movement (FGM) would rally all ethnic and emigré Germans outside Germany into a powerful political force similar to that of the other free movements such as the French, Norwegian or Danish. However, his self-publicity and hints about his own brilliant future in the US, drew attention to himself in the US and caused the refusal of his application. Protests against Strasser were raised in Congress and among German-Americans, for some of whom he was too Nazi and for others not enough so.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the decision was taken after all to use his Canadian visa and send him to Canada instead.<sup>28</sup> Thus in April 1941 Strasser arrived by steamer in St. John's, New Brunswick, and quickly entrained to Toronto.

Despite some initial hesitations, the Canadian press welcomed Strasser at his first Toronto press conference, for he seemed to enjoy official government protection in order to move about during wartime as he did.<sup>29</sup> The *Star* greeted him enthusiastically as a "welcome ally" in fight against Hitler, while the *Globe and Mail* termed him warmly "the well-known German politician" who would aid the British through his underground organization and his new FGM to bring Hitler down by October 1941, the date mentioned by Strasser. To the delight of the press, Strasser even announced that he hoped to start yet a third wing of his anti-Hitler groupings, a Free German Legion of German emigrés

and released POW's to fight alongside the allies.<sup>30</sup> Little wonder that Strasser was compared so favourably with other, more retiring German exiles such as ex-Chancellor Heinrich Brüning in the US or ex-Weimar minister Gottfried Treviranus, farming outside of Toronto.<sup>31</sup>

With the help of the British secret service, Strasser was brought to Montreal under yet another name created for him - Oswald Bostock - and moved to Westmount with his female secretary, who had been rescued with him by the British. The Canadian Royal Canadian Mounted Police was assigned to guard him against Nazi assassination attempts.<sup>32</sup> From his new residence, Strasser produced a vast surge of articles, which he sold to leading North American and British papers including the *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *New Statesman*, *Current History* and even *Reader's Digest*. In his articles he inevitably claimed inside knowledge of Hitler's Germany through his Black Front contacts, which had even infiltrated the Nazi hierarchy and were working to bring down Hitler.<sup>33</sup> Two years after his arrival in Canada, in October 1942, a two-page spread in the *Christian Science Monitor* was still introduced by the editor labelling Strasser as "the directive voice" among Germans working to overthrow Hitler, and personally vouched for the authenticity of his secret Black Front News sources within Germany.<sup>34</sup>

Strasser's political analyses based on these credentials received a respectful reception from the Canadian government. Norman Robertson, the Canadian Department of External Affairs' senior official, sent his memos and articles to the Prime Minister and military chiefs, who showed themselves impressed by Strasser's grasp of the German situation.<sup>35</sup> On one of these memos the Prime Minister noted that Strasser's views were "pretty shrewd." Especially praiseworthy was Strasser's call for the punishment of German (Prussian) militarists and industrialists after the war.<sup>36</sup> An August 1941 External Affairs internal paper agreed that there existed many "good" Germans inside Germany, who could be appealed to in the fight against Hitler. In many ways, the allies had only themselves to blame for Hitler's rise through their imposition of the Versailles Treaty, their shabby handling of the Weimar Republic, and their policy of appeasing Hitler before the war. In fact, the Germans were just like the Canadians, who in the same circumstances would also have learnt that it paid to play tough with other countries as had Hitler after 1933. A decent peace must be made after this war to avoid a third world war, for not all Germans were to be blamed for Hitler. The Nazi type existed in Canada and elsewhere, as well as in Germany, and once released from the restraints of law, would act just like the German Nazis towards their national minorities.



You would see a pack of yellow curs creeping out in Montreal and Toronto, just as they did in Vienna after the German occupation, to kick the Jews when they are down and to yell and sneer at them and make them scrub the pavements. We have that kind here.

It was certainly in the allies' best interest to split the "good" from the "bad" Germans. Why should allied soldiers fight "the whole 80,000,000 Germans, all convinced that they must hold out to the last ditch to save their country from a second and worse Versailles?"<sup>37</sup>

Another Canadian External Affairs paper outlined the organization and status of the various free movements in Canada, among them Strasser's Free Germany Movement. It stated that "Strasser is now leader of the anti-Hitler Black Front," among other things. His FGM programme was quoted in full, many of whose ideas on the war and treatment of Germany paralleled those of the other paper referred to above. FGM was called part of a "German National Council" of all anti-Nazi Germans including other refugees such as Treviranus, Bruning, Thomas Mann, Social Democrats and Strasser. The paper expressed the hope that Strasser's plans would receive in the future more vigorous British support.<sup>38</sup> For the Canadians realized that final responsibility for Strasser lay not with them but with the British government through their secret service office in Montreal, which controlled him.<sup>39</sup>

Opinion among leading External Affairs officials, especially Robertson, remained firm in its distinction between Hitler and the Germans and its conviction that postwar treatment of Germany should be fair. Robertson felt, for instance, that his views were reflected in the Atlantic Charter of August 1941, which seemed to make a clear division between "Nazi tyranny" or "Hitlerite Germany" and the Germans as a whole. This was especially welcome in the light of the rising tide of anti-German feeling whipped up in England especially by Vansittart. As a statement of war aims and for war propaganda purposes, the Charter would certainly be effective in splitting Hitler and the Germans from each other.

In the same way, its promise of equal participation, for victor and vanquished, in the economic and social benefits of international co-operation give the demoralized opposition to Nazism in Germany a better basis for political action than it has ever had before.<sup>40</sup>

An intra-departmental bulletin for External Affairs staff also endorsed an article by Dorothy Thompson printed in the *Montreal Gazette* criticizing other aspects of the Charter from this same perspective, namely the allies' unwillingness to negotiate with a defeated Germany and their call for total German disarmament. These two points risked

uniting the Germans and Hitler in a "way Hitler was not able to do." The offensive article, number eight, "is just a revival of the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles," concluded the department's commentary on the Thompson article.<sup>41</sup> The Prime Minister was informed that Strasser's and their views seemed close, and that his memos were being forwarded to the British, through Vansittart, Robertson believed.<sup>42</sup>

Although the Canadians were sympathetic to Strasser and his cause, they did not offer him a great deal of practical assistance besides leaving him free to write and talk in public. In the first place, the Canadians were not enthusiastic during the war about recognizing free governments or movements of any kind. Although they did extend recognition to the free governments-in-exile set up in Britain in 1940, they were slow about exchanging diplomatic representatives with them.<sup>43</sup> As Robertson put it, "our position to various "Free Movements" was invariably rather different from that of the UK ... Canada was a land of immigration," which hoped that residents in Canada would assimilate to Canada rather than hold onto old loyalties. It was more in Canada's interest to encourage citizens of European origin to co-operate with the Canadian rather than ex-homeland war effort.<sup>44</sup> It would only be to Hitler's advantage, a January 1942 External Affairs paper stated, to encourage divisions and differences among the Canadian population. Besides, the free movements themselves were deeply divided, while recognition would only result in greater factionalism. Again, any such recognition would tie the government into unwelcome postwar commitments. It was therefore not up to Canada to take an independent lead in this regard. While no official recognition could be given any of these movements not yet recognized by the major allies, to avoid further divisions, animate their anti-Hitler spirit and avoid postwar commitments, these movements could be permitted to publicize their opposition to Hitler, their ardent desire for allied victory and their major interests in European reconstruction after the war.<sup>45</sup>

In the second place, Strasser was clearly a British responsibility and it was up to the British to decide how best to make use of him. Gently the Canadians suggested to the British that they might employ recorded Strasser talks for their propaganda, or that they might like to finance some of his activities, but they were always rejected by the Foreign Office. Confusion existed because the Dominions Office, with which the Canadians dealt, together with the Foreign Office were not aware of what Strasser's real connection was with the British government. A 1941 Vansittart minute dealing with the original decision to rescue Strasser cast no light on the subject, while no other papers could be found on the subject. Thus the Strasser case entered into the larger

discussion carried on in the Foreign Office and British public about the original distinction drawn between "good" Germans and Nazis. Because of his Nazi background and authoritarian ideas, Strasser did not enjoy much support in the British Foreign Office. He was most often rejected as a "near Nazi" abhorrent to the Foreign Office's German advisers.<sup>46</sup> Despite Canadian pleas, supported by the British High Commissioner to Canada, that better use be made of Strasser, the Foreign Office would do little but express amazement that they had even become linked with such a strange personality. In July 1941 the British High Commissioner Malcolm MacDonald wrote London that his government was being over-cautious in its refusal to support Strasser's anti-Nazi activities.

Otto Strasser, though he may not be a man whom we would like to see leading the new Germany after the war, is a most active and intelligent individual, and his actions, so far as can be seen through the very close watch which is kept on him here, are strongly anti-Nazi. He is a tool which we ought to be capable of using without hurting our fingers, and if Canadians, who are extremely cautious in such matters, are not afraid of him, I really do not see why we should be.

In a last sentence, MacDonald hit the truth when he quoted Robertson as suggesting that "there may be some lack of contact between the Foreign Office and the Secret Service on this subject."<sup>47</sup> Without other information, the Foreign Office could only repeat that the British government had rescued Strasser in 1940 for purely humanitarian reasons, and that it could not see any use for Strasser.<sup>48</sup>

The British gradually lost faith in their original strategy of splitting Hitler and the Germans, a strategy never very appealing to the Foreign Office, which distrusted the activities of the "irregular" political warfare organizations from the beginning.<sup>49</sup> Although the Foreign Office recognized the importance for purely propaganda reasons of stressing the division between Nazis and other Germans in order to avoid playing into Goebbels' ploy of uniting all Germans behind Hitler through threats that the allies would punish them all equally, they never really believed this distinction to be real.<sup>50</sup> The Russians too stressed this distinction in their propaganda to Germany, but they could do so because they did not have to take domestic opinion into account as did the British. In the British case, it was dangerous to stress this distinction publicly at home for two main reasons. Firstly, the allied governments and especially the Russians would be very suspicious of British promises made to "good" Germans that a soft peace might be made with them. Secondly, any government statement on this subject would involve the government in the passionate debate growing during 1941 between partisans of the "good" German theory

such as King-Hall and the Bishop of Chichester on the one hand, and Vansittart and the anti-Germans on the other.<sup>51</sup> Thus the Foreign Office decided for discretion whenever possible, although many members of that office including Anthony Eden tended to equate Nazi and Germany, while leaving the "good" German argument for use by the propaganda people beaming directly to Germany.<sup>52</sup> According to a Canadian External Affairs analysis of mid-1941, "the British Government are coming around to the Vansittart hypothesis of innate German depravity." Vansittart's argument could only be a plausible theory "if, like Vansittart, you ignore all the facts that count against it."<sup>53</sup>

In mid-1941 Eden disassociated himself from the political warfare campaign against Germany by issuing a paper to all British foreign missions on free Austrian and German movements. Since the Russian invasion by Germany, the government had ceased to speak of the Nazi army or air force, but had begun applying the word "German" for Nazi overall. For "it would be optimistic in the present circumstances to expect the German people to disassociate themselves from the Nazi cause." While no objection could be made to anti-Nazis supporting the allied war effort, the British had "made no attempt to promote the formation of Free German movements in this country or elsewhere." Of the three leading German exiles, Bruning had retired completely from political activity while at Harvard, Rauschning was suspect among other emigrés for his authoritarian personality and Nazi past in Danzig, while "Strasser is condemned by many other Germans as a revolutionary and 'near Nazi'."<sup>54</sup>

This clear official view was inspired by Germany's invasion of Russia and declaration of war against the US during 1941, which for the first time during the war brought Britain powerful military allies. The Russians did not like Strasser's strident anti-Bolshevism, while the Americans were never convinced of his usefulness as an ally. William Donovan, head of the US Office of Strategic Services, never put any stock in Strasser. As he told President Roosevelt, "Above all, he is by no means so much anti-Nazi as anti-Hitler ... At heart he subscribes to the principles of National Socialism...." US diplomatic officers were warned to keep clear of Strasser, even if "it seems evident that the British and Canadian governments have, to some extent at least, considered using him" not only as head of the anti-Nazi movement, "but also as head of an underground organization, which might do intelligence work within Germany."<sup>55</sup> Despite the dislike evident here of Strasser, his claim to control a powerful internal German group like the Black Front appears to have been taken seriously by the OSS and US government. The Canadian government too felt under pressure from the Russians because of Strasser's anti-Soviet stance, a theme

picked up by several Canadian newspapers, which asked whether the government was not being over-tolerant.<sup>56</sup>

The attack against Strasser built up during 1942 in Britain as well. In a sensational article entitled "Otto Strasser: An Ally We Don't Want," H. G. Wells showed Strasser as a dangerous ally, a man insanely anti-bolshevik and soaked to the marrow with the idea of the German people being first and foremost in Europe and the world. Wells had met Strasser in Bermuda, and made the unbelievable claim that each anti-semitic statement of his ended with a resounding "Heil Hitler." The article was reprinted across Canada.<sup>57</sup> In May 1942 Strasser was attacked in the Canadian House of Commons by the leader of the CCF as being "still a Nazi and as much a Nazi as he always was." When questioned in parliament, the Canadian Prime Minister denied that Strasser received any government support, stating vaguely that he had been admitted to Canada "for reasons of public policy."<sup>58</sup> Leftwing and Russian pressure against Strasser built up based upon "false statements as reckless and unscrupulous as any of Goebbels," as an External Affairs official phrased it.<sup>59</sup> True, wrote Robertson, Strasser may not be a democrat, but how many other allies such as Metaxas of Greece and Stalin were much better in this regard? Besides, many of the allies shared Strasser's views about the new Soviet allies.<sup>60</sup>

Vansittart, the man who had been deeply involved in rescuing Strasser in 1940, had in the meantime become the leader of the anti-German hate forces in Britain, and turned his guns on Strasser as well. Vansittart had broken with Churchill in 1942 and had been raised to the House of Lords, where he attacked the government's hesitant attitude to the question of the punishment of the Germans after the war.<sup>61</sup> Those who made the distinction between good Germans and Nazis were wrong, he maintained, while such views could only lead to a wrongheaded New Appeasement. "The rats are rustling behind the arras of the New Appeasement." Their "boobies and stooges" must be ruthlessly smoked out. Rumours of a possible internal German revolt belonged "mainly in the realm of the filmband," and those holding these views should be punished. Strasser should be exposed, as any regime such as the one he contemplated after the war would inevitably lead to yet another authoritarian and anti-western dictatorship.<sup>62</sup>

I see from time to time some large headline in a newspaper, particularly in the American press, to the effect that some fugitive German is the leader of a vast underground movement in Germany. Such tales are, of course, untrue, and it is fortunate for us that they are not true. Militarism with a socialist label is the worst form of political hooch.<sup>63</sup>

It was true that Vansittart's ideas on the Germans as a whole, which linked the German-Prussian memories from WWI to WWII in such a slick fashion, were generally so extreme that Goebbels liked to quote from him and even translated a book of his into German to frighten the Germans. Was he also exaggerating Strasser's position? As Harrison of the German Section of the Foreign Office expressed it, "Lord Vansittart is always a gift to Dr. Goebbels," but no one contradicted his analysis of Strasser's position.<sup>64</sup>

Vansittart was quite correct in his claim that there was no substance to Strasser's claims to leadership of powerful German organizations. In the end, it was not only the allies' shift away from political to more orthodox military warfare or their dislike of Strasser's ideas concerning "good" Germans or an authoritarian postwar Germany under his guidance which relegated Strasser to forced silence, but also their realization that his Black Front and Free Germany Movement were little else than clever public relations tricks. Strasser's mail was closely censored, and it soon became possible to see just how isolated Strasser really was even among anti-Nazi Germans. No leading German exile joined his FGM, which consisted largely of Strasser and a few friends from his Black Front. Ex-Chancellor Heinrich Brüning at Harvard, ex-Weimar minister Wilhelm Solman at a Quaker college in Pennsylvania, Gottfried Treviranus, the ex-minister living outside Toronto, all turned him down cold when he suggested they join the FGM.<sup>65</sup> Ex-Lord Mayor of Danzig Hermann Rauschning threatened to bring legal action against him if his name was ever so much as mentioned in conjunction with Strasser's.<sup>66</sup> After all, as Treviranus told his friends at the Canadian Department of External Affairs, before 1933 Strasser had attacked what he termed the "Weimar system" as bitterly as had Hitler.<sup>67</sup> Canadian ethnic Germans avoided him, as did those from the US. George Shuster, President of Hunter College and co-founder of the "Loyal Americans of German Descent in the United States," refused his collaboration "for reasons which are complex."<sup>68</sup> Nor was his success among other free groups any better. Norwegians and Czechs did not wish to work with him, while Austrians avoided him because of his Greater Germany leanings, which would have left Austria within an enlarged postwar Germany.<sup>69</sup>

His much-vaunted Black Front also emerged as little more than a small circle of personal friends, who found it useful to hang onto Strasser's febrile journalistic coattail, and a few ex-Black Fronters from Germany who fled to South America and New York, but there were none within Germany who were in contact with Strasser. One Jewish ex-Black Front member in New York and his two female cousins formed the American "wing", which handled his literary out-

put there and sent out his FGM and Black Front literature. Three old friends from Germany were named South American "sub-leaders", but possessed no real organization of their own. One eventually ended up in jail on trumped-up drug charges, while the other recruited a few friends unknown to Strasser. His Central American "representative" was a complete stranger to Strasser. No membership lists or formal structure ever existed outside Germany. In fact, Mrs. Strasser, who had remained in Switzerland, sent her husband in Canada current war gossip, which later appeared in his articles as information culled from his "secret" Black Front sources within Germany. As far as the allies were concerned, Strasser could continue his correspondence because of the possible intelligence value of his correspondents about Nazi activities in South America and elsewhere, while his articles at least helped boost allied morale that the end of the war was in sight.<sup>70</sup>

Eventually, Canadian official circles were forced to admit that his so-called organizations were worthless. At the same time, they showed some sympathy for his lonely and isolated position. His political influence draining away, it was all he could do to keep his head financially above water. He "eked out a miserable existence," wrote Robertson to his Prime Minister, "writing potboilers for the local and American press. The course of the war had cost him most of his income and he is now on his uppers [defeated]."<sup>71</sup> Once the darling of the British, Strasser had become a victim of their "fighting shy" of free German movements.<sup>72</sup> Strasser had not changed his authoritarian ideas, covered lightly with a "thin veneer of liberalism," since the war had started, but the war itself had changed the situation completely.<sup>73</sup> Allied pressures, both Russian and British, came to bear upon the Canadians to muzzle Strasser completely.<sup>74</sup>

As a result, the Canadians politely and half-heartedly asked Strasser to stop his public activity.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, Eden reiterated the British Foreign Office's position that Strasser had never been a client of the British but had been rescued by them in 1940 for purely humanitarian reasons.<sup>76</sup> Strasser of course protested against the ban, for it would mean the end of any influence and financial means whereby to support himself and his family in Switzerland. Despite warnings, he continued to write and smuggle letters and articles out of the country, thereby evading the loose ban. In early 1943 the Canadian government was embarrassed by the publication - and positive reception - in New York of another saga about his adventures with and against Hitler.<sup>77</sup> Another new development was that he dropped his earlier attempts to appear liberal, and revived some of his earlier authoritarian ideas. He began to write to his friends castigating the weakness of western democracies, touting "the necessities of a European New Order" after

the war, and drawing up his postwar corporative programme of Solidarism, which would save Germany as a nation from both east and west. There was little else left for the Canadian government but to silence him officially under the Defence of Canada Regulations.<sup>78</sup> His income cut off, Strasser took refuge in mid-1943 on his friend's farm. There he subsisted with the help of meagre subsidies from his brother Paul, a Benedictine monk living in the western United States.

The Canadians regretted deeply that Otto Strasser had been pawned off on them by the British, and that they were now forced to appear before the world as his jailer. It was definitely true, as an American intelligence report stated, "that they wish that Strasser were anywhere but in Canada."<sup>79</sup> After all, it was only following a British promise not to use Strasser's Canadian visa that the Canadians had issued a visa for Oswald Bostock alias Strasser in 1940. When he arrived in Canada after all, the Canadians had felt the British must find him useful, and gave him at least moral support. The British, on the other hand, while recognizing the service the Canadians had rendered by keeping Strasser, were unable to arrive at any other solution than keeping Strasser silenced and in Canada. All those involved in the original Strasser rescue a year later downplayed their role in it. Vansittart submitted a minute showing that he and "C" agreed that it would be a mistake to use Strasser.<sup>80</sup> Makins of the Foreign Office admitted that he was only at the very first in favour of using him, but was almost immediately persuaded by his German friends to drop him.<sup>81</sup> Strasser became a black eye for Canada, especially as after the war the occupying powers in Germany felt Strasser too dangerous to allow back until 1955. The Canadians requested the British many times to take him off their hands, but the British were unable to find anywhere else to send him, with the result that he stayed in Canada.<sup>82</sup> Influential Canadians formed a "Friends of Otto Strasser" group after the war, which included Henry Hicks, later president of Dalhousie University, to persuade the Canadian government to allow Strasser to leave for Germany, an action the Canadians would only too happily have undertaken if there had been some alternate country prepared to take him.<sup>83</sup> When in 1950 Strasser was attacked in the *Christian Science Monitor* as having been one of Hitler's henchmen and posing a threat to postwar Germany, Strasser sadly responded in a letter to the editor, "Do you not remember that this "Hitler's Henchman" was quite a regular contributor to your own paper some years back?"<sup>84</sup> Finally, upon his return to Germany he ran in the federal election of 1956, failed to make any significant impact, and retired from public life.<sup>85</sup>

Strasser's personal tragedies are important for what they tell of the early wartime strategy of political warfare undertaken by the British in



place of purely military resistance. Both Strasser and the British government raised their own morale and hopes by creating myths; the one of his immense importance as a tool in Hitler's destruction, the other that Hitler would be brought down by internal revolt triggered off by patriots such as Strasser. As the war progressed, and especially after the entry into the war of strong Russian and American allies, who took a while to prove themselves able to withstand Hitler, the concept of national revolts based upon "good" national elements was dropped and replaced by purely military plans. Even then, the British tended to drag their heels, or so claimed the Russians and Americans, regarding the re-invasion of Europe preferring still to nurture hopes about indirect warfare.

It is only against this background of British political warfare that Strasser's initial rescue by the British secret service is understandable. Not knowing that his claims to leadership of a potential German revolt were fraudulent, the British saw in Strasser a worthwhile ally for their original political warfare against Nazis. In the end both Strasser's claims and the British strategy of liberation of the occupied peoples by themselves, including revolt in Germany, proved to be hollow. The British remained unable to see where the real opposition to Hitler lay, namely among the more conservative military who still held some power in Germany and - too late - proved to have been the only effective source of resistance within Germany. Only those groups, which to a considerable extent had shared or misread Nazi aims could have survived long enough finally to oppose them.<sup>86</sup> The British analysis of the German situation under Hitler led them to the false, if perhaps understandable, conclusion that the war was merely a continuation of the previous war against the old Prussian elements in Germany. The Nazi state seemed to be at best a partnership between these Prussian groups and Hitler, and at worst a truly radical Prussian state for which Hitler functioned only as a facade and junior partner. As a result, much of WWI's vocabulary about the evil Huns and Prussians was revived and impressed itself on the domestic British mind.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps this explains why such great hopes were put into the postwar destruction of the Prussian landed estates, industry and of the Prussian state itself as a necessary basis for a secure Europe. This misanalysis of the German situation and misunderstanding of Nazism, which seems naive today, made it difficult for the British to know just to whom inside of Germany they were to appeal for revolt against Hitler. If there were two Germanies, the "good" and the "bad", who comprised each? As a result, British domestic opinion soon lumped together all Germans as a single race, even if in the political warfare

group's propaganda to Germany attempts were made to keep up the distinction.

Not only was it difficult for the British to visualize who the "good" or "alternate" Germany was during the war, but they were unable to develop any real peace policy for Germany, which might appeal to Germans. This silence on more specific war aims stemmed as much from a fear of offending the allies, especially those conquered or attacked by Germany such as Russia. These political and ideological differences were never truly resolved before 1945.<sup>88</sup> The British were aware of this in so far as their propaganda was concerned, so the government preferred to continue along the line of postwar demilitarization of Germany, punishment for war crimes, and membership in a future economic association of European states. PWE was aware that this vagueness, which was based largely on the generalities of the Atlantic Charter, was unlikely to spark revolt in Germany. In December 1940 the Canadian Department of External Affairs agreed with this judgement. "This propaganda (to Germany), if continued, will inevitably lead us to repeat the same fatal mistake of treating our friends, the German liberals and democrats, as if they were our enemies, and to sow the seeds of endless wars."<sup>89</sup> The fact was that no concrete policies were offered the Germans, except to appeal to their dislike of Hitler. But, as the *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent in Berlin noted in early 1941 in his paper, "They [the Germans] cannot be expected to turn against it [the Nazi regime] or actively undermine the war effort without a vision of something which seems better. No such vision has yet been given them." Because defeat would only result in death, destruction, impoverishment and fragmentation of Germany, "You would not find one German in a thousand who would prefer defeat with such a prospect to a Nazi victory regardless of their hatred of Nazism."<sup>90</sup>

Perhaps more than offers of a moderate peace would have been necessary to incite internal revolt in Germany, although there exists some discussion on this point. The fact is, that this vacuum made PWE's task of early political warfare most difficult. An early 1943 PWE Special Issues Committee was still unable to discern what allied policy towards Germany was, despite long study of the matter and a thirteen-page collection of statements on the subject made by major allied leaders. It realized that when it suggested a liberal solution for postwar Germany, this was rather its own suggestion than a reflection of allied policy.<sup>91</sup> Once it was decided in late 1942 to offer no concessions to Germany, a policy reflected in the January 1943 Unconditional Surrender statement, British propagandists were left no leeway to employ political warfare to induce German overthrow of Hitler.<sup>92</sup>

At first this vacuum was exploited by a personally ambitious dreamer like Otto Strasser; in late 1944 US Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau stepped into the breach with his plan for the radical de-industrialization of postwar Germany. There is little reason therefore to contradict the statement made by Michael Balfour in his recent book on British wartime propaganda to Germany, namely that "it... must be said to have failed."<sup>93</sup> Both the British and Strasser had dealt in illusions, which had kept up their spirits during dark and lonely days of the war, but had little or no effect on the course of the war itself.

## NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was read at the 1981 meetings of the Central and East European Studies Association of Canada during the sessions of the Learned Societies at Dalhousie University. Advice is gratefully acknowledged from Mrs. de Planelles, Mrs. Barbara Forbes and Senator Henry Hicks, all of whom knew Strasser well during his Canadian period. This article's main sources are: RCMP newspaper files on Strasser released to the author; Strasser's censored correspondence, opened for the first time at the author's request to study in the Public Archives of Canada (PAC), Ottawa; the Canadian Department of External Affairs (DEA) files on Otto Strasser - Free Germany Movement (44-GK-40, 100-EW-65); the Strasser Papers in the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte, Munich, Germany; British Foreign Office (FO) files on propaganda to Germany and Otto Strasser; the National Archives' State Department files (NA); and Franklin D. Roosevelt's papers in Hyde Park, NY. Special Operations and Political Warfare Executive papers in Britain are still closed to research.

1. Douglas Reed, *The Prisoner of Ottawa. Otto Strasser* (London, 1953).
2. W. Churchill, *Their Finest Hour* (New York, 1962), 217. Hugh Dalton, *Hitler's War: Before and After* (London, March 1940), 52-3. shows the distinction made between Germans and Nazis. See also W.N. Medlicott, *The Economic Blockade* (London, 1952), H. Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy* (London, 1968) and D. Stottora, *Britain and European Resistance. A survey of the Special Operations Executive* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1980).
3. D. Stafford, "The Detonator Concept: British Strategy, SOE and European Resistance After the Fall of France," *Journal of Contemporary History* (April, 1975), 185-218. See also his "Britain Looks at Europe 1940," *Canadian Journal of History*, 10.2. (August, 1975), 231ff.
4. D. Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 2, 187, 200ff.
5. Political Warfare Executive (PWE), "German Propaganda and Policy, September 1941." British Foreign Office (FO) 371. 898.181. See Also "Blockade Policy 1941." FO371.24376/7852.
6. H. Dalton, *Fateful Years: Memoires 1931-45* (London, 1974). Stafford, "Britain Looks at Europe", 231ff.
7. "The Progress of Political Warfare". *United States Memoranda and Economic Notes*, Nr. 137, 1.10.1942. Also a British Paper "Political Warfare Executive. The Meaning, Techniques and Methods of Political Warfare", 1942. Department of External Affairs (DEA) 5404-40C. Also, Most Secret Paper, Air Commodore P. R. Groves, on political warfare, 30.4.1943, *ibid*.
8. J. Wheeler-Bennett and A. Nicholls, *The Semblance of Peace* (London, 1942), 14. D. Allen minute, 6.1.1943. FO. 371.30928/10433. Also Most Secret and Person memo from Lord Cranborne to the Canadian Prime Minister, 9.10.1940. Public Archives of Canada (PAC). RG.25.D1.,v.772.
9. British Chiefs-of-Staff first directive to SOE, 25.11.1940, quoted in full as document 2 in Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance*, 222.
10. *Great Britain. House of Commons* (Hansard), Chamberlain speech of 12.10.1939, columns 563-66.

11. Most Secret Paper, Air Commodore P. R. Groves, 30.4.1943. DEA 5404-40C.
12. C. O'Neill of the German Section, PWE, April 1941 and the Joint Planning Staff's "Fundamental Plan of Propaganda to Germany", April 1941. FO. 898.181.
13. R. Makins minute, 30.5.1941. FO.371.2654A/10433.
14. F. Roberts to S. Ritchie, 7.11.1942. FO.371.30920/10433.
15. Alfred Werner, "The Trotsky of the Nazi Party", *Journal of Central and East European Affairs*, 10.1 (1951), 39-46. For a positive view of Strasser, see Kurt O. Paetel, "Otto Strasser und die Schwarze Front", *Politische Studien*, (1957), 269ff.
16. R. (Makins) minute 30.5.1941 FO.371.2654A/10433.
17. O. Strasser, *Aufgaben des deutschen Sozialismus* (Prague, 1936), *Germany's Tomorrow and Hitler and I* (London, 1940) He continued to re-write his life and aims in *Prussian Eagles Over Germany* (Montreal, 1942), *Flight From Terror* (New York, 1943), *Exile* (Muenchen, 1958), *Le Front Noir Contre Hitler* (with V. Alexandrov, Paris, 1968). He also wrote a *History of My Time* (London, 1941).
18. D. Reed, *Nemesis?* (London, 1940).
19. The King-Hall - Strasser correspondence is in PAC, RG.24, 2274-77. Also A. Goldman, "Stephen King-Hall and the Newsletter Controversy of 1940", *Canadian Journal of History*, 10.2. (1975), 209-30. For a King-Hall question to the government in the British House of Commons in March 1942, see FO.371.30928/10433.
20. K. Singer to Strasser, 7.8.1941. DEA
21. "There seems to be no record on the 1940 files of what actually passed at the time." D. Allen minute, 5.12.1944. FO.371.39120/10240. See also a plaintive request to Sir R. Vansittart for information on Strasser and his vague answer of May 1941. FO.371.2654A/10433.
22. Grey minute, 16.5.1941. FO.371.26596B/10433.
23. H. H. Wrong to Miller, 6.7.1941. *Ibid.* Wrong had been called to Vansittart in September 1941. Vincent Massey to DEA, London 26.9.1940, and H. H. Hemming to O. D. Skelton, 30.9.1940. DEA.
24. O. D. Skelton to N. A. Robertson, 27.9.1940. F. C. Blair, Director of Immigration, to Skelton, 27.9./1940. *Ibid.*
25. DEA to H. M. Ambassador, Lisbon, 27.9.1940. *Ibid.*
26. O. Strasser, *Exile*, 5-6, for the complete programme. Also M.I.5 to FO. 1.1.1941. FO.371.2654A/10433.
27. BUP press story datelined 13.12.1940. DEA.
28. See Kimber DO to Roberts, 9.8.1940, and ensuing discussion. It was so unclear to some FO officials how Strasser got to Canada that some felt the Canadians, not the British, had taken that decision. This was denied by other officials. FO.371.26546B/10433.
29. "Ex-friend of Hitler Would Come Here", *Ottawa Journal* 1.3.1941. "Canada Won't Let Strasser Form Exile Ministry Here". *Toronto Daily Star* 22. & 24.3.1941.
30. "Would Organize German Prisoners Against Hitler", *Toronto Daily Star* 22.3.1941. "To Fight Hitler in Canada", *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 24.3.1941.
31. "Former Friend of Hitler Foresees Doom of Nazis", *Toronto Telegram* 22.4.1941.
32. N. A. Robertson to Prime Minister, 21.6.1941. PAC. MG.26.J4.358. Strasser's British secret service control and RCMP protection is alluded to several times elsewhere. See also Strasser, *Exile*, 163.
33. See for instance, Strasser's regular column for the *Montreal Gazette*, especially "Strasser Sees Rift of Army and Party", 13.5.1941.
34. "Second Front: How Strong Are the Nazis?", *Christian Science Monitor* 5.10.1942.
35. N. A. Robertson to J. W. Holmes, 20.10.1941, and to the Prime Minister, 10.1941. H. D. C. Crerar to Robertson, 28.10.1941. DEA.
36. N. A. Robertson to H. Colman, U/Sec. of State, 18.10.1941. *Ibid.*
37. "Memorandum on the Attitude Which Might Be Adopted Towards the Free German Movements in Particular and Towards the German People in General", 15.7.1941. DEA 5568-40C.
38. "Organization and Status of the Free Movements in Canada" by S. F. Rae, 8.7.1941. *Ibid.*
39. N. A. Robertson to Prime Minister enclosing a British Secret Service report on Strasser. PAC.MG.26 J4.358.
40. N. A. Robertson to Prime Minister, 14.8.1941. *Ibid.*, 348.
41. "Review of External Affairs", 7.11.1941. *Ibid.*, 252.
42. N. A. Robertson to Prime Minister 21.6 & 1.10.1941, *Ibid.*, 358. Strasser publicly adhered to the 1942 United Nations declaration in the name of his FGM, which threw the British into some confusion. "Adhering to Allies", *Ottawa Citizen*, 5.1.1942. See also Polish government's protest to the Foreign Office, 12.1.1942. FO.371.30929/10433.

43. Confidential Bulletin of External Affairs, NR. 16, July 1942, 8-9. PAC.MG.26.J4.249. Also Prime Minister's memo regarding diplomatic staff to governments-in-exile, May 1943. *Ibid.* 250.
44. N. A. Robertson to Prime Minister, 5.6.1941, in *Canada. Documents on External Relations*, v.8, 903.
45. S. F. Rae, "Policy of the Canadian Government Towards Free Movements", 15.1.1942. DEA. 3241-40C.
46. F. Robert's minute, 17.8.1941. FO.371.26596B/10433.
47. Malcolm MacDonald to Sir Eric Machtig (DO), 28.7.1941. *Ibid.*
48. F. Roberts to G. Kimber (DO), 1.9.1941. *Ibid.*
49. Stafford, "Britain Looks At Europe 1940", 232-33. E. Barker, *British Policy in South-East Europe in the Second World War* (London, 1976), 38. M. R. D. Foot, "Was the SOE Any Good?", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 16 (1981), 170ff.
50. Anthony Eden, for instance, spoke publicly of Hitler as a "not unusual phenomenon in German history. He is a symptom." Eden quotes collected by the Foreign Office and O. Sargent minute of 24.11.1941, in FO.371.30928/10433.
51. W. Strang minute, 16.11.1941. *Ibid.* For King-Hall and other similar questioners in the House of Commons, see FO.371.34476/10433.
52. PWE's "Revised Plan of Political Warfare Against Germany", 3.2.1941. FO.371.30928/10433.
53. "Weekly Review of External Affairs", 24.5.1941. PAC.MG.26.J4.252.
54. Eden note to H.M. Representatives in America, 18.7.1941, "Germany. Confidential", section 1. *Ibid.* 358. Also his admonitions to his South American diplomatic representatives to stop sending Strasser material to governments requesting it. FO circular, 18.5.1942. FO.371.30929/10433
55. US Department of State report, 9.2.1942, and A. A. Berle Jr. to US diplomatic and consular officials, 1.3.1942. National Archives, Washington. RG.59. FW862.20235/715 and 800.01/160A. Also W. J. Donovan to President, 20.1.1942, F. D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park. Presidential Papers. Report Nr. 167.
56. "Dr. Strasser Under Scrutiny", *Ottawa Citizen*, 14.2.1942. ER memo, 19.2.1942. DEA. 3241-40C
57. *London Sunday Dispatch*, 24.1.1942 and Strasser's letter to the editor in answer to its reprint, in the *Montreal Gazette*. 27.1.1942. Also FO.371.30929/10433.
58. *Canada. House of Commons*. (Hansard), "Otto Strasser", 2.2.1941. "Data Sought About Strasser in Parliament", *Montreal Gazette*, 2.2.1942. "Strasser Not Raising Armed Forces in Canada", *Ottawa Citizen*, 3.3.1942. Also FO.371.30929/10433, G. Harrison minute, 7.2.1942.
59. M. McKenzie to Stone and de Glazebrook, 20.3.1942. DEA.
60. N. A. Robertson to H. H. Wrong, 2.2.1941. Also memo to U/Secretary of State, 23.3.1943. *Ibid.*
61. Reprinted in R. Vansittart, *Lessons of My Life* (London, 1943), xvi, 35.
62. *Ibid.* 71, 119-20. Also his *Black Record* (Toronto, 1941).
63. *Lessons of My Life*, 87,119.
64. G. Harrison minute, 30.3.1942. FO.371.30928/10433.
65. Censor report, end 1941. Also Strasser to the Minister of Justice Louis St. Laurent, 2.11.1943. DEA.
66. K. Singer to Strasser, 7.8.1941. PAC.
67. Treviranus to Strasser letters. *Ibid.* Also Treviranus to External Affairs, 16.9.1941. Copies of Treviranus' memos and discussion about them between the Canadian and British governments are in FO.371.30929 (October, 1942).
68. G. Shuster to Otto and Paul Strasser, 15.7.1941. For Canadian ethnic Germans, see Dojeck to Strasser, 5.7.1941. PAC.
69. H. Ripka to Strasser, 26.7.1941 and F. Pavlasek to Strasser, 24.2.1941. PAC. See also Treviranus report referred to in fnnt. 67 above. H. Rott to H. Heutter and H. Heutter from Strasser, 165.7.1941. PAC.
70. His New York agent was Jewish ex-Black Fronter, Kurt Singer, while his monk brother Paul in the western US also aided him. In South America his contact men were Bruno Fricke and Walter Trenkelbach (Buenos Aires), Leonard Schlossmacher (Brazil), Hugo Efferoth (Bolivia), Theo Fuchs (Chile) and Curt Kruse (Venezuela). Correspondence in PAC. See long censor reports for 1941 and 1942 on Strasser. *Ibid.* Also W. H. Beck, US Consul General, Hamilton, Bermuda, to US Secretary of State, 17.3.1941. NA. RG.59.862.20211.
71. N. A. Robertson to Prime Minister, 1.10.1942. DEA.

72. N. A. Robertson to H. H. Wrong, 2.2.1941. Also memo to U/Secretary of State, 7.1.1943 *Ibid.*
73. De Glazebrook memo to U/Secretary of State, 2.7.1942. DEA.
74. A. Eden to Fussian Ambassador J. Maisky, 16.2.1942. FO.371.30929/10433.
75. De Glazebrook to H. Allard, 25.11.1942. Memo on meeting with US intelligence at External Affairs, 9.1942. Letter from External to Strasser, 23.3.1943. DEA.
76. Foreign Office telegramme 6617 to Viscount Halifax, Washington, 16.9.1942. Secret Foreign Office circular, 16.11.1942. *Ibid.* Also Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London, to Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs, 2.11.1942. DEA 2915-40C.
77. O. Strasser (with M. Stern), *Flight From Terror* (New York, 1943). Review by W. R. Deuel in *New York Tribune* 14.2.1943. Also censor report 11.1942 to 3.1944, 17.3.1944. PAC.
78. N. A. Robertson to F. P. Varcoe, 30.6.1943 and answer 28.9.1943. Official restraining order of 17.8.1943. DEA.
79. The Americans supported the restraining of Strasser, and sympathized with the Canadian situation. A. A. Berle Jr. to US Secretary of State and US diplomatic officers, 23.3.1943. NA. RG.59.800.01/160A supplement.
80. Referred to in minute of May 30, 1941. FO.371.2659B/10433.
81. R. Makins minute 30.5.1941 and "C" letter 27.5.1941. FO.37126546A/10433
82. N. A. Robertson to L. B. Pearson, 12.11.1943. Dea. D. Allen minutes of 5. & 12.1944. FO.371.39123/10433.
83. Information on the "Friends of Otto Strasser" came from Senator Henry Hicks in conversation and Mrs. Barbara Forbes in various letters from 1979. She was secretary of the group, and still blamed mainly the Canadian government for Strasser's forced stay in Canada after the war. Also their circular "A Test Case for the West", n.d. PAC.MG.31.E4.
84. "Strasser Regrets Being Called Hitler's Henchman", *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 29.4.1950.
85. For an exaggerated view of Strasser's wartime and postwar importance within Germany, see K. P. Tauber, *Beyond Eagle and Swastika* (New Jersey, 1968), v.1, 109ff.
86. See the discussion on this point between D. Astor, "Why the Resistance Against Hitler Was Ignored", and C. Sykes, "Heroes and Suspects" in *Encounter*, June 1969 and December 1968. Also J. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power. The German Army in Politics 1918-45* (London, 1953,1964), 383. Wheeler-Bennett was head of the British political warfare office in New York, and demonstrated a deep distrust of the traditional, more conservative anti-Hitler Germans. For instance, Viscount Halifax to Eden, 28.3.1943, with attached Wheeler-Bennett report. DEA. 5568-40C.
87. See for instance, P. Stirk, *The Prussian Spirit. A Survey of German Literature and Politics 1914-18* (Oxford, 1941, 1969), 8, 18-19. Stirk predicted that Prussianism would continue to dominate Germany long after Hitler was gone. See also H. Kohn, *The Mind of Germany* (New York, 1960), 8, 11ff, 327, and L. L. Snyder, *German Nationalism. The Tragedy of a People* (New York, 1952, 1969), introduction, 287.
88. See the discussion about the difference between the Russians, who could easily use the distinction between Nazis and Germans in their policies, while the British were limited by such other factors as those mentioned in the text. FO.371.34476/10433. One tends to forget that three of the Soviets' leading agents in Britain were involved in political warfare and policies towards Germany; Donald Maclean at the Foreign Office, Guy Burgess and Kim Philby in SCE. K. Philby, *My Secret War* (New York, 1968), 65. I. Colvin, *Chief of Intelligence* (London, 1951). Stewart Menzies stated that "he was thwarted" in his attempt to build up German resistance by certain people in the Foreign Office "for fear of offending Russia." S. Menzies was head of the British intelligence dealing with the enemy. R. Deacon, *A History of the British Secret Service* (London, 1969), 60.
89. "Review of External Affairs" (typed), 28.12.1940. PAC. RG.26.J4.252.
90. J. Hirsch article, quoted at length in Sir R. Campbell to Eden, 27.2.1941. *Ibid.*, 358.
91. Secret PWE paper Nr. 25B, 29.3.1943. "Publicity Treatment of Our Future Policy Towards Germany". DEA 7-E-2 (s). Also PWE revised plan of political warfare against Germany, 3.2.1942, approved by the Standing Ministerial Committee. FO.371.30928/10433.
92. The Lord Chancellor, Viscount Simon, informed the House of Lords in March 1943 that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to Germany. "The Atlantic Charter is not a bargain or contract with the enemy." Quoted in PWE paper Nr.25B, 29.3.1943, appendix p. 2. DEA 7-E-2(s).
93. M. Balfour, *Propaganda in War 1939-1945. Organisation, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany* (London, 1979), 438-39.