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Some Psychological Lessons from Leaflet Propaganda in World War II

BY MARTIN F. HERZ

All those who attempt to influence opinion through the media of information are faced with the problem of evaluating the effects of their communications. The wartime propagandist is in a particularly difficult position, since his audience is usually inaccessible to him. On the basis of experience in the past war, however, certain generalizations can be made regarding principles which should guide the combat psychological warrior: his material must be credible as well as truthful; he must learn how to address potential waverers on the enemy side; he must concentrate his fire; he must not try to export domestic propaganda; he must find some limited area of agreement with his audience; and he must determine which activities would benefit both his audience and his own cause. Certain implications for peacetime propaganda can also be drawn from wartime experience.

The author was Chief Leaflet Writer for Psychological Warfare Division, SHAEF, and before that was in charge of leaflet writing and interrogation of prisoners for the combat propaganda team of the Fifth Army in Italy. Mr. Herz (then Major Herz) is now a Foreign Service Officer on duty with the Department of State.

The effectiveness of leaflets which were used in combat propaganda during the past war could be gauged to a much larger extent than was possible in the case of most other forms of propaganda. Continuous prisoner interrogation about the impact of combat leaflets, for instance, permitted the elaboration of certain principles, and their confirmation and subsequent refinement, whereas with respect to the effectiveness of strategic propaganda it has been possible to make only broad and very general observations. Our mistakes in combat propaganda were often readily apparent, while correct psychological judgments

could be confirmed by observing the behavior of enemy troops. It is the purpose of this article to set forth some conclusions about leaflet writing and propaganda in general which resulted from this experience.

The Insufficiency of Truth

During the early days of combat leafletting, the psychological warfare field team with the Fifth Army in Italy was partially dependent on shipments of propaganda material from governmental agencies in Britain and the United States. One leaflet sent to Italy seemed a first-rate job. It described, with many

pictures and a brief text, the life in "British, American and Canadian Prisoner-of-War Camps." It showed, for instance, a Canadian base camp that had formerly been a hotel, a camp orchestra, a well-groomed prisoner (an officer) sitting in an overstuffed chair, and other prisoners playing billiards or sitting on a porch listening to the radio. Everything this leaflet said or depicted was true. It was thought best, however, to test it first on some of the prisoners in the Aversa P/W enclosure.

As a result of those tests, the entire shipment had to be discarded. The prisoners were by no means uncooperative—in fact, many of them stated that if only they had known that treatment would be as good as it was in Aversa, they would have surrendered earlier. Nevertheless, they simply refused to believe that conditions in P/W camps in America could be as shown on the leaflet.

Although it was true that prisoners in American P/W camps received eggs for breakfast, further testing showed us that this notion was so preposterous to the Germans on the other side of the firing line that they simply laughed at the idea. Since this discredited the balance of our message, it became another favorable truth which we learned to suppress. The same, incidentally, applied to an important strategic propaganda theme, that of war production. We had to refrain from telling the Germans that Henry Kaiser put ships together in five days. Although this spectacular fact was true, we had to stress the less spectacular and more general fact that we were building several times the tonnage sunk by the U-boats. Intelligence on what the Germans believed, and what they could be expected to believe, forced us to do this.

Eventually, as the result of extensive prisoner interrogations, a basic theme on P/W treatment was worked out, which found its widest application on the Western Front. Instead of picturing captivity in the U.S. as the outrageous idyll which it really was, we used the slogan: "*It's no fun being a prisoner-of-war!*" and went on to show that it was a grim but tolerable fate for anyone who had fought hard but who nevertheless had been unable to evade capture. We did point out, however, that being a prisoner had certain redeeming features. The punch line to this type of appeal was: "*Better Free Than a Prisoner-of-War, Better a Prisoner-of-War Than Dead.*" That line proved highly effective. Understatement, in this instance, was probably the only viable means of communicating with the enemy.

How Can Effectiveness Be Judged?

At this point, the question may legitimately be asked just how it was known, during the last war, whether a combat leaflet was more, or less, successful. After all, the psychological warfare intelligence officer could only in the rarest instances observe the behavior in battle of those enemy units which had been subjected to a specific leaflet message. Since this question is important to consideration of the following case material, we will dwell on it briefly.

Evidence of effectiveness, or of lack of effectiveness, was obtained chiefly from the following sources: (a) quantity of leaflets found on the persons of prisoners; (b) recollection of leaflets by prisoners, and comments about them; (c) favorable mention, and detailed discussion by soldiers behind the German lines, as reported by cooperative

prisoners; (d) detailed description of their surrender by prisoners; (e) pre-occupation of German counter-propaganda with specific Allied leaflets, including plagiarism by German combat propagandists; (f) comments by the enemy command, as learned from captured documents on troop morale.

In some cases, where continued dissemination of one special leaflet was deemed desirable, prisoner reactions could even be used to sharpen its effectiveness, as in the case of the well-known SHAEF Safe-Conduct leaflet. The first edition of that leaflet, produced in the early days of the Normandy invasion (see Exhibit 1*), showed merely the seal of the U.S. and the British royal crest, together with a standard text in English and German which called upon the Allied front-line soldier to accord his prisoner good treatment. By the time the Safe-Conduct leaflet went into its sixth printing (see Exhibit 2), the following changes had been made as the result of P/W interviews: (a) the German text had been placed above the English; (b) a note had been inserted, stating specifically that the English text was a translation of the German; (c) General Eisenhower's signature had been added; (d) his name had been spelled out, because it was learned that Germans did not recognize the written signature as Eisenhower's; (e) the leaflet was printed in red rather than in green, which made it more conspicuous on the ground; and (f) a note had been added under the word "Safe Conduct," pointing out that the document was valid for "one or several bearers." These improvements resulted from continuous testing of the leaflet's effectiveness.

In planning for propaganda exploitation of our landing at Anzio and

Nettuno in January 1944, we provided for dissemination of a leaflet on the main (Cassino) front as soon as we knew that our troops were ashore. In this leaflet we committed the mistake of making specific predictions, speaking of the German retreat being blocked and of a "battle of encirclement" that would commence with the landing operation. When the beachhead was subsequently contained, the Germans were so elated about the falsity of our prediction that they disseminated replicas of our (German-language) leaflet to the American soldiers at the front, jeering at us and delighting in proving us wrong. (See Exhibit 3.) It need hardly be pointed out that this was rather foolish on their part: our soldiers had never seen our German-language leaflet and did not care what it said. What the Germans might have done, but failed to do, was to disseminate the leaflet *to their own troops*, thus demonstrating the falsity of our propaganda.

The Handling of Propaganda Defeats

The lesson to be learned from this experience would seem to be that it is highly risky to make predictions about a forthcoming operation, and also quite unnecessary. The argument was advanced during the planning stage before Anzio that we "owed it to our boys to assume that they would be successful," since "if they fail, the incidental propaganda defeat won't matter." In other words, it was contended that the propaganda risk was part of the major military risk. Experience proved this attitude to be wrong. While it is necessary to take military (and political) risks, it does not appear to be necessary

* For this, and Exhibits 2, 3, 6, and 10, see plate opposite page 485.

to take propaganda risks. If facts go against us, we can still salvage some propaganda honor from them by admitting that the facts are against us. If we make false predictions, however, subsequent admissions have much less value because our whole credit has been undermined. Victories, after defeats in battle, may restore the enemy's fear of our weapons; but truth, after falsity, does not necessarily restore the belief in our truthfulness.

The second instance of an Allied propaganda defeat also contains food for thought. We had achieved considerable success with a leaflet which factually and in pictures described the first day in the life of German P/W's captured on the Cotentin peninsula. The leaflet was widely disseminated all over the Western front. When we broke out of the beachhead and captured Paris, the last picture on the leaflet (which showed P/W's being embarked on an LST) was overprinted in red to show that henceforth prisoners would no longer be shipped to America but would remain in enclosures in Western France. This was a correct decision based on interrogations which showed that many Germans, feeling that the war was about to end, were fearful of being shipped to America, from where it would presumably take longer to get home after the armistice.

German counter-propaganda selected this widely disseminated leaflet to "prove" that since "prisoners are no longer sent to America"—they were being shipped to Siberia instead. The accusation was substantiated in no other way. It was very widely made, however, and eventually expanded into the general slogan *Sieg oder Sibirien!* (victory or Siberia) which tied in with

Goebbels' brilliant "strength through fear" propaganda on the home front. This confronted us with the problem of how to meet a preposterous falsehood that apparently was having some success in bolstering German troop morale.

After careful discussion, it was decided not to respond directly, because (a) any reply could be picked up by the Germans as similarly spurious "proof" of the correctness of their contention; and (b) we did not wish to give additional currency to the idea of Siberia. It was assumed that every denial of a flagrant lie lends it a certain dignity that it did not possess before. The word "Siberia" was consequently never mentioned in our output, and the German campaign eventually died a natural death. During the entire period, we continued our regular output on P/W treatment, ignoring the question of shipment but playing up somewhat more heavily the guarantee, under the Geneva Convention, that prisoners would be returned home "as soon as possible after the war."

In general, to deny a lie disseminated by the enemy is in most cases merely to give it additional circulation. (The Soviets are experts at picking up a denial and using it to revitalize the original falsehood.) Disputing a specific point with an opponent usually means descending to his level. When the enemy has scored, it is usually best to chalk up the score in his column and then to hit him somewhere else.¹ If we dispute a point with him, we meet him

¹ In certain cases, of course, denial of an enemy falsehood cannot be avoided. In such instances, the denial will be best made by implication, and without reference to the original lie.

on ground which he has chosen and engage in defensive propaganda. Later it will be demonstrated that defensive propaganda is—at least in combat propaganda—a virtual impossibility. Propaganda is essentially an offensive weapon.

Target: the Marginal Man

The marginal man in propaganda is the man who does not believe everything we say, but who is interested in our message because he does not believe everything our opponents say either. In war, he is the man who distrusts us and has reasons for fighting, but who also has good reasons for not fighting. He is the *potential waverer*. (Real waverers are presumably already convinced, and thus are not strictly marginal targets.) In our combat propaganda we always tried to address ourselves to potential waverers, to the men who despaired of victory but were reluctant to draw the consequences, the men who were still willing to fight but who fought without determination, who would “never surrender” but who might submit to capture “if the situation were hopeless.” To address the out-and-out fanatics would have been a waste of time, and would have harmed us with our other listeners and friends. On the other hand, to address directly the defeatists and those waiting to desert harmed us with the potential waverers.

The concept of the marginal propaganda man may be a useful one for peacetime propaganda also. Too much output may be addressed to persons who already agree with us. With battle lines fairly clearly drawn, communications which meet the approval of completely pro-American elements are less important than those which appeal

to potential waverers on both sides of the ideological front (i.e., we must not forget potential waverers in our own democratic ranks). That is why public opinion polling on the effectiveness of our peacetime propaganda, if it does not weight its samples in favor of the critical strata of the population, may be misleading. If, for instance, a theme of ours elicits exceptional enthusiasm on the part of extreme rightist elements abroad, while intensifying doubts about us on the part of potential waverers among the democratic left, then such a theme has done us more harm than good.

The reasoning behind this conclusion is similar to that which made us forego outright appeals to the German soldier to desert, on the assumption that the desertion-minded would in any event receive our message warmly, whereas a blunt appeal for desertion would have harmed us with the potential waverers. For the potential waverer needs more than “just one little push” to make him topple. To address him with overly partisan, overly direct, overly anti-enemy propaganda might sour him on us completely. Similarly, if propaganda favoring American “rugged individualism” is directed to potential waverers abroad who are convinced that they want economic security most, but who are not yet convinced that it is worthwhile to surrender freedom for it, equally adverse results might be expected.

Necessity of Concentrating Propaganda Fire

During the war, demands were continuously made upon our propagandists to “tell the enemy” a large number of things, to attack him on a variety of

fronts and to undermine his credit in numerous ways. These demands tended to lead to output which devoted a small amount of attention to a large number of subjects.

The dispersion of themes in some of our combat propaganda may also have been caused in part by the advertising and journalism background of many of our propagandists. Yet combat propaganda and other propaganda addressed to enemy populations in wartime posed quite different problems than domestic advertising. The advertising man need only imagine that he is charged with publicizing *Fleetfoot* automobiles in publications which contain anti-*Fleetfoot* material, both editorial and advertising, in about twenty-five times the lineage that he has at his disposal. Let him imagine that the publications on which he must rely to communicate with his public will contain material such as the following:

A news item describing how a certain individual sat down at the wheel of his *Fleetfoot*, switched on the ignition, stepped on the starter, and was blown to smithereens by gasoline fumes which had accumulated under the hood, due to imperfections of the carburetor. . . . Pictures of the man's funeral. . . . Resolutions of the bereaved of other families similarly stricken to boycott *Fleetfoots*. . . . A news item about another *Fleetfoot* driver who dizzily careened down a steep incline when his brakes failed to function, and a picture of the resulting smashup and carnage. . . . Reports of protest meetings against the slipshod manufacturing methods and repressive labor policies of *Fleetfoot*. . . . Pictures of disorders at the

Fleetfoot plant, and articles describing the disorganization of the production line, which resulted in rejected parts being inadvertently built into cars on the assembly line. . . . Stories about the cost-cutting policies of the *Fleetfoot* management which brought the elimination of many safety features ordinarily present in other cars. . . . Statistics proving the falling-off of *Fleetfoot* sales and production, and the increase in complaints and fatalities. . . .

To appreciate the situation of the wartime propagandist one need only imagine such items appearing in all newspapers and other media of a country, in a volume many times that of any message that the *Fleetfoot* advertiser can bring to bear. For in a totalitarian country, the mass and insistence of domestic propaganda is altogether out of proportion to what the enemy can offer. Only an occasional leaflet and snatches of radio programs, and often only messages passed on at second hand, can be brought to the attention of the average enemy target. Under such circumstances, it would be idle to speak of the beauty, low price, popularity, engineering advances, etc. of the latest model—as one would do in domestic advertising. There is only one thing, under such circumstances, that can and should be pounded home: namely, that *Fleetfoots work*.

In peacetime, preparatory to possible hostilities, the basic desideratum of propaganda addressed to potential enemy populations is that it should contain proof of our veracity. Praising the excellence of our product is not only secondary but rather beside the point. As we have seen, it would be difficult to sell the beauty and stylishness and

engineering advances of *Fleetfoots* to potential customers who are day in, day out, told that *Fleetfoots* are a danger and a menace.

During the last war, many well-meaning critics of our propaganda effort thought that we should have re-educated the Germans while trying to make them surrender. To this day there are some who do not understand why our propaganda to German soldiers did not characterize Hitler as the villain he indubitably was. To convince German soldiers of the iniquity of the Nazi system, however, would have been a task infinitely more difficult and time-consuming than merely to convince them *that they were being defeated and that it was sensible to give up*. Re-education is not a task of psychological warfare, but of postwar reconstruction.

Many men surrendered during the last war who had been convinced by our combat propaganda that to fight on was hopeless and that they would be well treated if they gave up. To convince them of the falsity of Nazism and of Hitler's iniquity might have taken many months and perhaps years longer.

The correctness of this finding is well demonstrated by the failures of Soviet Russia's initial combat propaganda effort against Germany during the last war.

Making Excessive Demands Upon the Enemy

All through the bitter winter of 1941 in front of Moscow, when the Soviets might have had an excellent opportunity to appeal to the frustrated attacking troops, German morale was perceptibly stiffened by injudicious, doctrinaire Soviet propaganda. Conversations with Austrian Communists who participated in that propaganda effort reveal that a bitter fight raged between Soviet propa-

² Translation of Exhibit 4:

**IF YOU WANT TO SAVE GERMANY,
THEN OVERTHROW HITLER!**

German soldiers! On May 26, 1942 the Soviet-British treaty of alliance was concluded. On June 11, 1942, the Soviet-American agreement was signed.

These treaties mean that all of Hitler's plans to sow disunity among the anti-Hitler coalition have **FAILED**.

That means a firm military alliance of the three greatest powers in the world and shows their unshakable will to carry the war to a complete victory over Hitler.

Among the USA, England, and the Soviet Union complete agreement was reached concerning the opening of a second front this very year, 1942.

**HITLER'S FATE IS SEALED:
HITLER'S DEFEAT IS UNAVOIDABLE!**

It is up to you, German soldiers, to see that Hitler's defeat is not Germany's defeat also.

Lesen und an die Kameraden weitergeben!

WOLLT IHR DEUTSCHLAND RETTEN, SO STÜRZT HITLER! DEUTSCHE SOLDATEN!

Am 26. Mai 1942 wurde der sowjetisch-englische Bündnisvertrag abgeschlossen. Am 11. Juni 1942 wurde das sowjetisch-amerikanische Abkommen unterzeichnet.

Diese Verträge bedeuten, dass alle Pläne Hitlers, Zwietracht unter den Staaten der hitlerfeindlichen Koalition zu sät. GESCHEITERT sind.

Das bedeutet die Festigung des Militärbündnisses der drei grössten Mächte der Welt und beweist ihren unerschütterlichen Willen, den Krieg bis zum vollen Sieg über Hitler zu führen.

Zwischen den USA, England und der Sowjetunion wurde ein volles Einvernehmen erzielt über die Schaffung einer zweiten Front noch in diesem Jahre, 1942.

**HITLERS SCHICKSAL IST BESIEGELT.
HITLERS NIEDERLAGE IST UNABWENDBAR!**

**Von Euch hängt es ab,
deutsche Soldaten, dass
Hitlers Niederlage nicht
Deutschlands Niederlage wird.**

EXHIBIT 4²

gandists and political officers, with the latter insisting that Soviet combat propaganda be "revolutionary." (See Exhibit 4.) Soviet leaflets thus initially called upon German soldiers in the front-line to "overthrow Hitler in order to save Germany."

It is a well-established principle of psychology that if pressure is put on a person to perform an act of which he is incapable, serious internal strains and disturbances are set up which may even culminate in hostility toward the person who is making the demands. To call on people who are completely incapable of "overthrowing Hitler" to do so in order to attain their salvation, only means that such people will either despair of their salvation or will turn their backs altogether on the message and its source.

The Soviets eventually learned their lesson and strictly divorced their ideological propaganda from their combat propaganda, but only after caricatures of Hitler, messages exalting the bravery of the Soviet Army and denouncing fascism, etc., had done them immeasurable harm. Even after the break had been made, however, the spilling-over of Communist concepts and nomenclature (including occasional domestic propaganda caricatures and words such as "bankruptcy," "lackeys," "cliques") continued to give their propaganda an outlandish flavor, in spite of their brilliant use of captured German generals for combat psychological warfare purposes. It is an axiom of all propaganda of the written word, of course, that the language must be truly that of the recipient—and that any queerness of idiom severely detracts from the effectiveness of the message. This is so obvious that we may forego the pleasure

of offering Japanese exhibits which convincingly demonstrate the point.

"Exporting" Domestic Propaganda

Generally speaking, it can be said that domestic propaganda and propaganda addressed to the enemy simply do not mix. It follows that exceptional loathing and hatred of the enemy, perhaps derived from personal humiliation, persecution, and other on-the-spot experiences, do not by any means constitute good qualifications for combat propagandists. Thus persons who returned from Germany and Japan shortly before the war, and considered their primary mission to be spreading knowledge in America about the iniquity and menace of the systems there, found it extremely difficult to achieve the necessary adjustments that would make them useful for propaganda directed toward the enemy civilian populations. Similarly, in combat propaganda, the propagandist's exultation over the enemy's discomfitures should not be too apparent in his output. Leaflets gleefully pointing at weaknesses and absurdities of the enemy, jibing and jeering at his travails, (the "We hear you have a one-legged man in your company" type) generally proved unsuccessful during the last war.³ It was difficult to prevent the production and dissemination of such material, however, since intelligence officers, for whom propaganda inevitably means capitalizing on all weaknesses and mistakes of the enemy, frequently pressed very strongly for leaflets of this type.

The above point is by no means as obvious as it seems, for while in theory

³ There are some exceptions, however, especially in the case of unusually low-morale enemy formations.

many might agree, in practice it seemed unreasonable to some that we did not fight "ideologically" in our combat propaganda. To clinch this point, therefore, it is well to observe the effect on ourselves of enemy propaganda which incorporated domestic propaganda elements.

One example may be found in German anti-Semitic propaganda. The Nazis, to whom it seemed obvious that the Jews were behind America's entry into the war, found it impossible to contain themselves on that score. As a result, leaflets and radio programs which otherwise might have had a measure of success became even queerer and stranger to the American soldiers—for instance, the Axis-Sally programs with their reference to the "Jewnited States," or leaflets about wartime profiteers (see Exhibit 5) which pictured a character named Sam Levy who had been helped up the ladder to fame and fortune by Mr. Mordecai Ezekiel. To the Nazis, the

name of a real-life figure such as Mr. Ezekiel seemed a God-given propaganda asset which the propagandist simply could not pass up. After all, did not that name clearly convey the idea of an untrustworthy, scheming and grasping individual? To Germans who had been steeped in Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda it undoubtedly had such a connotation. To American GI's, however, such leaflets looked more like "propaganda" than they would have otherwise, and the entire venture acquired a fatally alien and unreasonable quality.

A second example is afforded by German and Japanese anti-Roosevelt propaganda. Let it not be said that the average American was more loyal to his President or more convinced of Roosevelt's essential honesty than the average German was of Hitler's. Many a German who considered the war a mistake, and perhaps even a crime, nevertheless resented slurs on Hitler, especially when made by the enemy. The same, *mutatis mutandis*, was true of many American soldiers. Exhibit 6, an anti-Roosevelt leaflet, had a decidedly adverse (i.e., anti-enemy and morale-strengthening) effect on our troops.

The third, and most recent, example may be taken from the propaganda now being directed to Europe. In this the Soviets, whose propagandists appear to have their hands tied by directives, have without question sinned and failed the most: in Austria, for instance, the Soviet newspaper *Oesterreichische Zeitung*, with its alien make-up, its queer wording ("over-fulfilled the norm," "miasmas of capitalism," etc.) and its preponderance of outlandish news items, has lost nearly all reader interest—although the Austrian Communist paper, which is written by Austrians, is quite

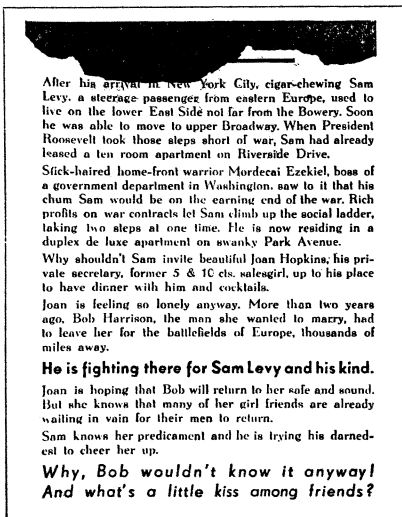


EXHIBIT 5

another story. War films of all nations, in which enemy soldiers are shown, have met with unfavorable receptions in ex-enemy territory. Plays, such as the eminently successful "Watch on the Rhine," which packed them in on Broadway, elicited general astonishment and dismay over what German and Austrian theatergoers (including violent anti-Nazis) considered to be inaccuracies and "patent propaganda."

Doctrine of Limited Agreement

Thus it can be said that in combat propaganda it would be fatal to expect the enemy to identify himself with our side. Totalitarian enemies do not revolt because they cannot, and they do not change sides because they rarely understand the truth until it is too late. Consequently, we cannot expect an in-

dividual enemy to agree with us on more than one point at a time.

In order to find any common ground at all, to find a point of departure for the psychological manipulation of the enemy, it may even be necessary to select a point of his own creed on which to register agreement. During the last war, the elements of the German propaganda position which we used as such "points of departure" were (a) the belief in the excellence of the soldierly qualities of the German infantryman; and (b) the belief that he was being crushed by Allied superiority of materiel, rather than out-fought man for man. No propaganda to enemy targets can be successful unless some such common ground which can be used as a point of departure for the message is found.

As an example of the validity of this

EINE MINUTE

die Dir das Leben retten kann

Lies die folgenden 6 Punkte gründlich und aufmerksam! Sie können für Dich den Unterschied zwischen Tod und Leben bedeuten.

1. Tapferkeit allein kann in diesen Materialschlachten den Mangel an Panzern, Flugzeugen und Artillerie nicht wettmachen.
2. Weiterer Widerstand auf deutschem Boden kann die Entscheidung des vergangenen Sommers nicht mehr ändern: Der Krieg ist verloren.
3. Du stehst keinen Barbaren gegenüber, die am Töten etwa Vergnügen finden, sondern Soldaten, die Dein Leben schonen wollen.
4. Wir können aber nur diejenigen schonen, die uns nicht durch nutzlosen Widerstand zwingen, unsere Waffen gegen sie einzusetzen.
5. Es liegt an Dir, uns durch Hochheben der Hände, Schwenken eines Taschentuchs, usw. deutlich Deine Absicht zu verstehen zu geben.
6. Kriegsgefangene werden fair und anständig behandelt, ohne Schikane — wie es Soldaten gebührt, die tapfer gekämpft haben.

Die Entscheidung musst Du selber treffen. Stellst Du aber in eine verzweifelte Lage geraten, so erwäge, was Du gelesen hast.

ZG 72 K

ONE MINUTE

which may save your life

Read the following six points carefully and thoroughly. They may mean for you the difference between life and death.

1. In a battle of material, valour alone cannot offset the inferiority in tanks, planes and artillery.
2. With the breaching of the Atlantic Wall and of the Eastern Front, the decision has fallen; Germany has lost the war.
3. You are not facing barbarians who delight in killing, but soldiers who would spare your life if possible.
4. But we can only spare those who do not force us, by senseless resistance, to use our weapons against them.
5. It is up to you to show us your intention by raising your arms, waving a handkerchief, etc., in an unmistakable manner.
6. Prisoners-of-war are treated decently, in a fair manner, as becomes soldiers who have fought bravely.

You must decide for yourself. But, in the event that you should find yourself in a desperate situation, remember what you have read.

doctrine, there is featured (as Exhibit 7) what was probably the most successful combat leaflet of the last war. This leaflet is usually passed over by chroniclers of our combat propaganda record because of its seeming lack of originality or insidiousness. Yet it was again and again adjudged the most successful venture of this type (next to the SHAEF Safe-Conduct leaflet). It was found in large numbers on the persons of prisoners, was republished in many variants at various stages of the campaign in the West, and was also reprinted and used with good success by combat propagandists in the Mediterranean Theater. It salved the feelings of the enemy by crediting him, by implication, with great soldierly virtue; it accommodated his alibi of material inferiority; it described him in soldierly (non-political)

terms, avoiding any political arguments; it did not overly praise captivity; and it "left the decision to the reader," seemingly not urging him to desert. Also, on its reverse side, along with a dry, curt summary of the essential facts about captivity, it spelled out the behavior necessary to effect surrender.

Propaganda to non-enemy targets is governed by the opposite considerations. In addressing ourselves to an enemy-occupied country, for instance, the audience's identification with our side must obviously be *taken for granted*—even if it does not completely obtain. It must always be assumed that citizens of occupied countries will greet us as liberators when we redeem them. (This assumption also immeasurably lightens the task of consolidation and post-war reorientation propaganda in occupied

Was ist zu tun?

Lies die nachstehenden Anweisungen genau. Der moderne Krieg rollt manchmal so schnell vorwärts, dass Stellungen vernichtet werden, ehe Du Gelegenheit hast, zu überlegen. Versuche daher, alle Einzelheiten der nachstehenden Anordnungen möglichst genau im Kopf zu behalten:

EINZELÜBERGABE: Einzelne Soldaten oder kleine Gruppen ergeben sich, indem sie Waffen, Helm und Koppel ablegen, die Hände hochheben und entweder ein Taschentuch oder ein Flugbleit schwenken. Sind alliierte Soldaten in unmittelbarer Nähe, so sind diese anzurufen. Passierscheine, wenngleich nützlich, sind nicht unbedingt erforderlich. Sammelplätze für Kriegsgefangene befinden sich entlang den Haupt- und Durchgangsstrassen.

GRUPPENÜBERGABE: Sofern die Übergabe in grösseren Gruppen erfolgt, hat sie unter Beachtung militärischer Disziplin durchgeführt zu werden. Der jeweils befehlhabende Unteroffizier ist verantwortlich für die ordnungsgemässe Durchführung. Offiziere übergeben ihre Einheiten geschlossen, wenn möglich an einen alliierten Offizier ebenbürtigen Ranges. Sind Besprechungen erforderlich, so können sich laut Haager Konvention beglaubigte Parlamentäre mit dem nächstgelegenen alliierten Gefechtsstand in persönliche Verbindung setzen.

ACHTUNG: Zur Vermeidung von folgenschweren Missverständnissen ist die weisse Fahne deutlich sichtbar zu schwenken.

Behandlung von Kriegsgefangenen

1. **SOFORTIGE ENTFERNUNG** aus der Kampfzone. Stammlager stehen in Westeuropa bereit.
2. **ANSTÄNDIGE BEHANDLUNG.** Auf Grund der Genfer Konvention werdest ihr wie Soldaten behandelt.
3. **GUTE VERPFLEGUNG.** Ihr erhaltet dieselbe Kost wie wir, das bestverpflegte Heer der Welt.
4. **LAZARETTBEHANDLUNG.** Eure Verwundeten und Kranken werden genau so behandelt wie die unsrigen.
5. **SCHREIBGELEGENHEIT.** Ihr könnt je Mann 4 Karten und 4 Briefe per Monat nach Hause schreiben.
6. **RÜCKKEHR.** Nach Kriegsende werdet ihr so bald wie möglich nach Hause zurückgeschickt.

What is to be done?

Individual surrender: Individuals or small groups surrender by putting away weapons, helmet and belt, raising their arms and waving either a handkerchief or a leaflet. If Allied soldiers are in the immediate vicinity they are to be called. Safe Conducts, though helpful, are not absolutely necessary. Collection points for PWs are to be found along the main highways and thoroughfares.

Group surrender: Where larger groups surrender, this has to be carried out while observing military discipline. The ranking non-commissioned officer is responsible for its orderly execution. Officers surrender their units in a body, if possible, to an Allied officer of equal rank. If parleys are required, authorised parlementaires may be sent according to the Hague Convention, to contact the nearest Allied Command Post.

Treatment of Prisoners

1. **IMMEDIATE REMOVAL** from the battle-zone. Base camps are ready for you.
2. **DECENT TREATMENT.** According to the Geneva Convention, you are treated like soldiers.
3. **GOOD FOOD.** You receive the same nourishment as we, the best-fed army in the world.
4. **HOSPITAL CARE.** Your wounded and sick are treated just like our own.
5. **MAIL CONNECTION.** You can write 4 postcards and 4 letters home per man per month.
6. **RETURN HOME.** After the war you are returned home as soon as possible.

territories.) To make concessions to the Quisling point-of-view in any particular would be quite out of place.

Wedge-Driving and Appeals to the Unconscious

To "widen the gulf" between two enemy nations, to "drive a wedge" between officers and enlisted men, or to "exploit the cleavage" between elite troops and combat infantry, or "between the party and the people," are ever-cherished objectives of the propaganda directive writer. As objectives they are of course entirely sound. Implementation may, however, involve so many psychological difficulties that more harm than good is done. For sometimes it will suffice for a latent dissatisfaction to be brought out into the open by the enemy, for it to disappear.

Witness the German propaganda at the Anzio beachhead in February 1944,

which reasoned quite correctly that British troops, who had borne the heaviest brunt of the German offensive at Aprilia (Carroceto), were apt to grumble about the seemingly less dangerous role played by the Americans. Several wedge-driving leaflets along such lines (see Exhibit 8) were disseminated, including some titillating ones showing British girls being undressed and fondled by Americans. The German approach, however, was so lacking in subtlety that according to British officers on the beachhead the comradeship-in-arms between British and Americans there was enhanced rather than diminished by the Nazi propaganda effort. Also—possibly through the projection of a theme that was vexing and frustrating to the reader without his being able to do anything about it—anti-German sentiment among British troops may even have increased.

The Japanese combat leaflet writers also attempted to capitalize on the known sex-frustration of American soldiers in the jungles of the South Pacific, but again the result was so crass and clumsy that if it lowered the morale of any American soldier reading such a leaflet, at the same time it quite likely made him want to vent his pent-up feelings upon the enemy. Although there were some abler attempts in the same direction, all suffered from the directness of the appeal: it simply is not for the enemy to remind us of our desire for women, or, for that matter, of our desire to get out of the battle alive. What goes for sex goes even more for cowardice. Enemy media can hardly appeal plainly and directly to the individual's unsoldierly, un-heroic desire for self-preservation. Perhaps it could if he were alone, but since powerful

BRITISH SOLDIERS!

What it means to be put under American command, your forces are finding out at Nettuno.

The "accomplishments" of this American leadership are indeed typically American: operations were insufficiently prepared and led to the most dreadful reverses for your troops. Your picked units were carelessly thrown into the battle.

Certainly, the Yanks played you a nasty turn.

They not only committed tactical mistakes, but their actions bordered on criminal folly.

In their arrogance they have underestimated the German strength.

*They have staked all on one card.
We shall see who has got the better trumps.*

AI 0276-2 44

EXHIBIT 8

group pressures work upon him, and feelings of duty, comradeship, fear and patriotism intervene, the overt appeal cannot run directly counter to them. German appeals to our GI's, slogans such as "Take it easy, you'll last longer," fall into this category.

Dangers of Black Propaganda

It may be said, in view of the above—and there are many other examples—that to bring out and nourish any subconscious feelings of resentment on the part of the enemy soldier may be beyond the capabilities of "white" propaganda (the source of which is admitted) and instead is a fitting subject for "black" or "gray" propaganda (ostensibly produced by dissident elements within the enemy population, or mentioning no source at all). The difficulty there, however, is that detection of the origin of such propaganda will not only result in heightened hatred against the actual originator for having thus invaded the most private recesses of the enemy's mind, but it will also redound emphatically to the detriment of all "white" propaganda from the same source.

As a good example of this danger, mention might be made of an Allied "black" or "gray" leaflet of the last war that was designed to fan the sex-starved German soldier's resentment against the alleged increased latitude given foreign laborers in Germany. The leaflet in question showed a swarthy foreign worker shamelessly disporting himself with a naked Teutonic maiden, and was decidedly apt to arouse the passions of a front-line soldier. Had it been possible to conceal the source completely, beyond the shadow of a doubt, this leaflet might well have been a smashing success in undermining German troop morale. As

it was, however—and this is a criticism of most of our naive "black" and "gray" activity of the last war—the enemy could easily see from the elaborateness of the leaflet (which in this case was printed in four colors) that this was Allied propaganda. Even though he might agree with the message, he would resent it since it was painful to him. Moreover, since at the same time all our "white" media were laboring hard and patiently to establish the essential honesty and forthrightness of our propaganda, some harm was probably done to the credit of our white media.

No nation can talk out of two sides of its mouth at the same time: we cannot on the one hand speak nothing but the truth and then, with a changed voice and pretending to be someone else—but quite obviously still ourselves—say things which we don't dare to say straight out. Black propaganda must be like the voice of a master ventriloquist which really appears to come out of the mouth of an entirely different individual. In the case of the "gray" leaflet under discussion, the general make-up of the message and especially the elaborateness of its presentation, made it quite obvious that it was not the product of a clandestine printing press in Germany. Had it been possible to create such an impression, however, or had it been possible to make it seem an inadvertent German disclosure, it might have been the important adjunct to our overt program which it was originally intended to be.⁴

⁴ There are a few cases on record where black propaganda did succeed in "driving wedges"—notably the case of a counterfeit instruction to German officers to "save themselves (run away) in hopeless situations," an order which in any event succeeded in fooling a number of American intelligence officers.

On Threats and "Toughness" in Propaganda

There does not appear to be a single case on record in the last war when an ultimatum resulted in surrender of a surrounded enemy unit. On the other hand, we know of many cases when, in the face of a hopeless situation, commanders sent or received emissaries to discuss surrender. Because, in a sense, a totalitarian country at bay resembles a beleaguered fortress, the question of collective surrenders in the face of collective threats is all-important. First of all, it must be said that the threat of force is only effective if immediately followed by force—nothing is more damning than an empty propaganda threat. Second, as Exhibit 9 well demonstrates, a message written from the strength of one's position cannot be hedged or qualified, or couched in a defensive tone, and should not attempt

to answer imaginary counter-arguments. The German appeal to the American forces in Bastogne, in fact, might have been written by an American fifth columnist in the ranks of a German combat propaganda company, or by American black operators attempting to raise the morale of the defenders. Instead of emphasizing all factors of German strength, the writer attempted to answer all imaginable counter-arguments and thus practically created the impression that the Germans at Bastogne were the beleaguered ones and that the Americans "really had no reason to be as self-confident" as he imagined them to be. This is an excellent example of the general proposition that defensiveness has no place in combat propaganda and little place in any propaganda.

Threats, however, do occasionally have a place in propaganda. In order to describe the conditions under which

USE COMMONSENSE

To all members of the American Forces in the Bastogne area.

Americans.

1. Do you honestly believe the German Supreme Command started this drive into Luxemburg and Belgium in order to run into a trap?
2. Do you honestly believe we didn't reckon that General Eisenhower would rapidly draw all available and badly needed forces from other parts of the front, in order to check the German advance?
3. And if you have a look at your map, do you honestly believe that Fieldmarshal Model, commanding the German forces in this sector, didn't see that the best opportunity to trap the advanced German Panzer Armies offers itself in the Bastogne area?
4. Considering these facts, do you honestly believe that your counter offensive may have the slightest chance "to turn the successful German drive into the complete Allied Victory", as Eisenhower put it on Dec. 27th.?

Well, we don't mind your continuing this "yard by painful yard" offensive (acc. to an US war correspondent.)

But isn't it strange that at this fateful moment Fieldmarshal Montgomery took over the command of all US and British forces from the Dutch coast down to this area? (Yankees under the command of a Limey boy-oh-boy!)

Furthermore, all military commentators agree in one thing:

"The German counter blow has checked the Allied large scale winter offensive and will cause a prolongation of the war for at least half a year." (New York Times, Jan. 2nd.)

What about "Victory just around the corner"?

BUDDY - USE COMMONSENSE!

Believe it or not . . . Jerry isn't licked yet - not by a long shot. - War goes on, and you'll be surprised - how . . .

And by all means remember:

TAKE IT EASY - YOU'LL LAST LONGER

K 1 007 A

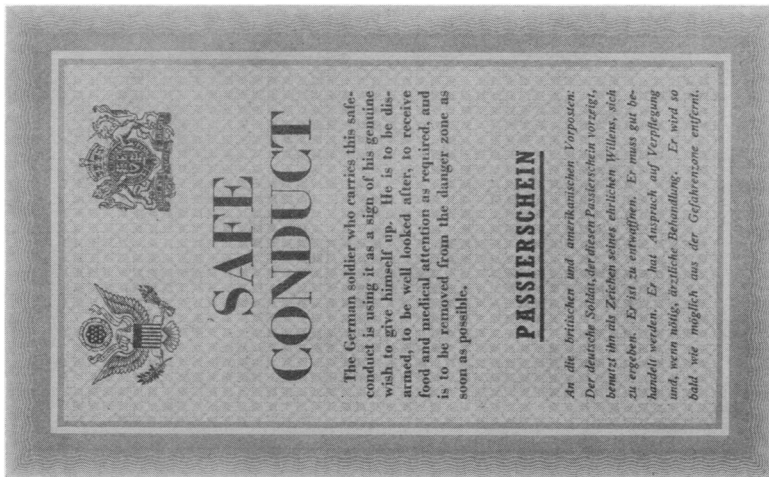


EXHIBIT 1

THE SHAEF SAFE CONDUCT: FIRST EDITION PRODUCED IN JULY 1944

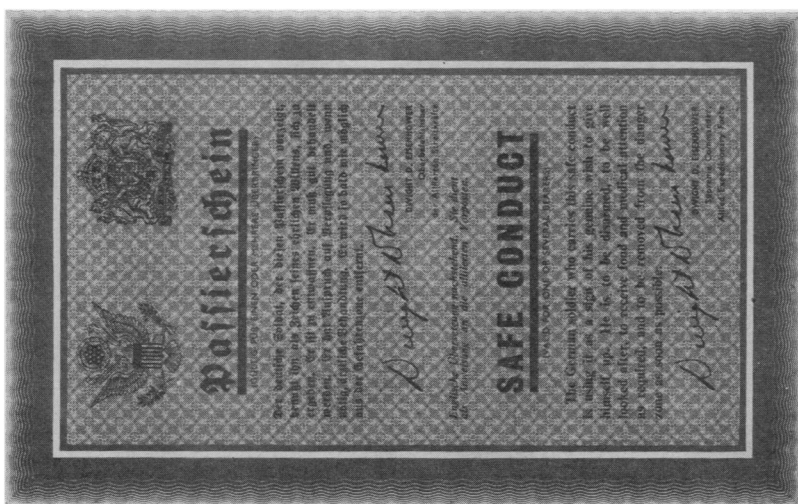


EXHIBIT 2

THE SHAEF SAFE CONDUCT: SIXTH EDITION PRODUCED IN MARCH 1945



EXHIBIT 3

German combat leaflet disseminated to U.S. troops on the Anzio beachhead, ridiculing a U.S. leaflet disseminated on the Cassino front.

EXHIBIT 3—Reverse

Note the futile attempt to discredit the leaflet writer with soldiers who were never his public, and whose confidence he did not need; also the derisive note which cut U.S. leaflet writers to the quick, but produced adverse reactions in actual recipients.

The leaflet which we are showing you in the original and in translation on the reverse side was dropped over our lines by order of your command.

Allied divisions landed near Rome ?

"There are many roads that lead to Rome," but none for you.

German coastal positions broken through ?

Do you still think so to-day ?

Main fighting line outflanked ?

You don't mean by chance our lines ? Numerous of your units have been cut off from their lines of communication and taken prisoner.

Big encirclement battle is starting ?

Who is fighting with his back to the sea, surrounded on all sides by a powerful opponent ?

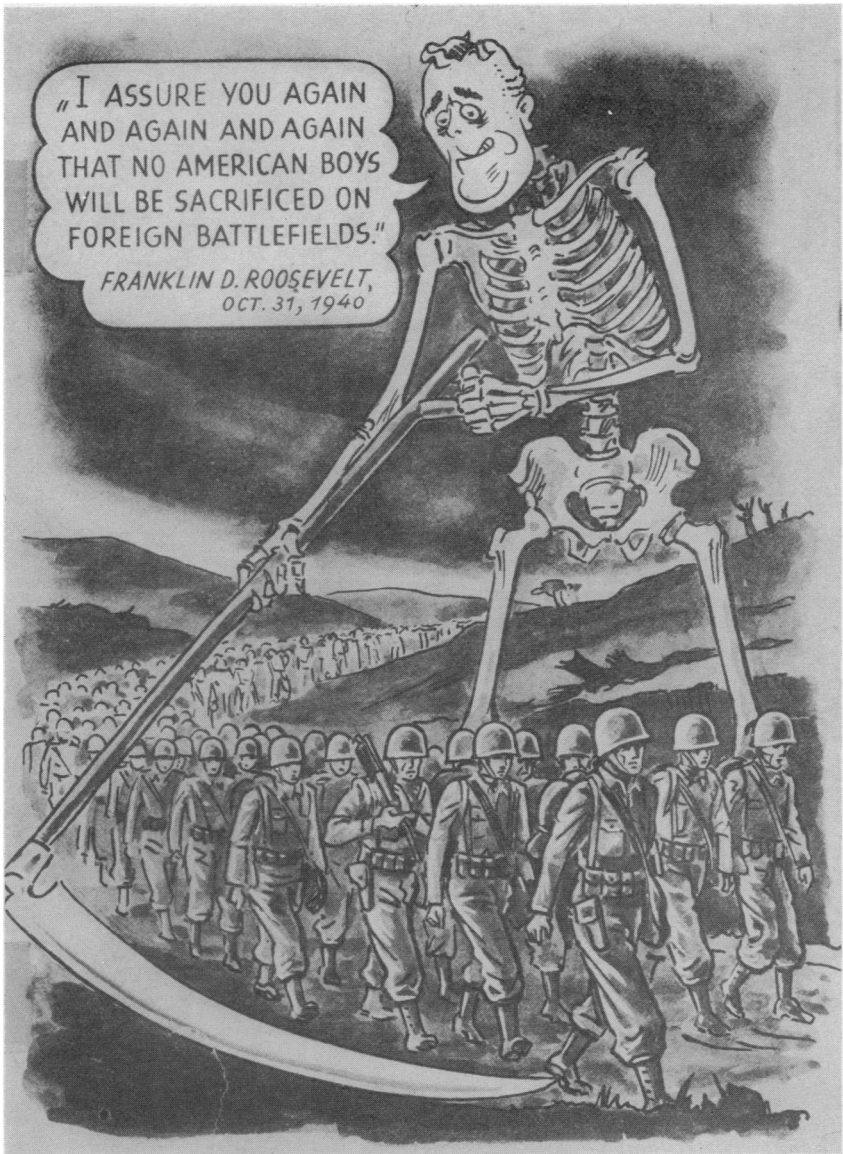
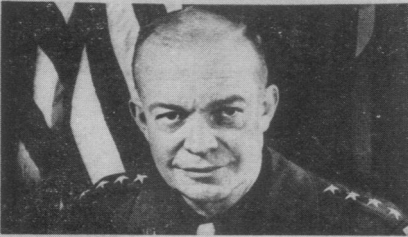


EXHIBIT 6

GERMAN LEAFLET FOR U.S. TROOPS

Eisenhower gegen Himmler!



GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
Oberbefehlshaber der Alliierten Streitkräfte

Zur Vermeidung nutzlosen Blutvergiessens und unnötigen Elends muss die Zivilbevölkerung zur Selbsthilfe greifen, durch Widerstand gegen Zwangsmobilisierung und Selbstmordkommandos, gegen den Arbeitszwang der Kriegsverlängerer, gegen den SS-Terror und gegen die unsinnige Greuelpropaganda der Kriegsverlängerer. Hunderttausenden Deutschen in den Westgebieten hat die Besetzung unter Eisenhower Frieden und endgültige Befreiung vom Parteiterror gebracht.



HIMMLER,

der von den Alliierten als regelrechter Massenmörder und typischer Kriegsverbrecher angesehen wird, befielt hingegen:

Arbeitszwang zur Verlängerung des Krieges, Terrorisierung der Zivilbevölkerung durch Parteispitzel, Parteigerichte und Gewaltmassnahmen; Massenselbstmord wehrfähiger und ungeschulter Opferkommandos; immer mehr Hunger, Terror und Elend unter dem verschärften Bombenkrieg; Ganz Deutschland ein Schlachtfeld, um das unabwendbare Ende der Kriegsverbrecher um ein paar Monate hinauszuschieben.

Himmler gegen Deutschland!

W.G.44

[Note: Since leaflets describing Military Government were deemed by some to be in conflict with the policy of Unconditional Surrender, SHAEF had to concentrate on messages which showed what the Nazis were for and what we were against, thus avoiding (temporarily) the necessity of saying what the Allies were for.]

EXHIBIT 10

Obverse of leaflet discussed in connection with mutual-interest situations (p. 486). There is no evidence that the juxtaposition of Eisenhower and Himmler was in itself a successful theme.

Eisenhower against Himmler!



GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER.
Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force

In order to avoid needless bloodshed and unnecessary misery, the civil population must resort to *self-help* by resistance against forced mobilization and suicide orders, against war-prolonging compulsory labor, against the SS-terror and against the preposterous atrocity propaganda of the war-prolongers. Hundreds of thousands of Germans in the Western territories have found that the occupation under Eisenhower means peace and final liberation from party terror.



HIMMLER,

whom the Allies consider a real mass murderer and typical war criminal, orders on the other hand:

Forced labor in order to prolong the war, terrorizing the civil population by party agents, party courts and strong-arm methods; mass suicide of physically sub-standard, untrained suicide units; more and more hunger, terror and misery under the intensified bombing war; all of Germany a battle-field, in order to stave off for a few months the inexorable end of the war criminals.

Himmler against Germany!

they may have a salutary effect, it is necessary to differentiate among four basic situations: (a) the situation of the enemy soldier—if he can do something about getting out of the fight, and (b) if he can do nothing about getting out of the fight; similarly (c) the situation of the civilian who is in a position to act, and (d) that of the civilian who can do nothing about the war. If these differentiations are not borne in mind, the effects of propaganda may be diametrically opposed to those which have been intended.

As to the enemy soldier, if he is in any position to surrender, a threat followed up with a display of strength (e.g., overwhelming artillery superiority) may make him ripe at least for capture. If he is in no position to surrender, however—and most members of beleaguered garrisons belong in this category—he is quite likely to be galvanized into especially fanatical resistance by the threat, because of the psychological mechanism of frustration which has been mentioned above.

As to civilians, those who are in no position to do anything about the war—and these constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of all totalitarian countries—will quite likely be embittered by threatening propaganda. Occasionally, however, such bitterness can be exploited for tactical purposes. The Germans are said to have used terror propaganda during their Blitzkrieg in 1940 specifically in order to create panic and encourage civilians to take flight and thus clog the roads. They also attempted to use scare tactics during their Ardennes offensive, when they cynically advised unfortunate French civilians in the Strasbourg-Mulhouse area (where they had temporarily re-

crossed the Rhine) to “save yourselves—for we will treat you just as well as we have treated your comrades during the last four years!” The Western Allies also used such tactics when, at the behest of Prime Minister Churchill, they unfolded a propaganda effort early in 1945 which was designed to start large numbers of Germans trekking from certain specified “danger areas.” These are the only known instances in the last war when threatening propaganda to civilians had the intended effect.

The “Helpless Civilian” Target

By far the most important category of targets, however—in point of numbers, at least—is the civilian population (category “d”) that can do nothing to end the war, consisting as it does of persons who cannot even remove themselves from the impact of bombing attacks. To threaten them—however gratifying it may be to the enemy-hating propagandist—is psychologically unsound. Rather, the propagandist must seek, by continuous analysis of the patterns of life in the enemy country, to discover those actions which the enemy civilian can reasonably take in his own interest, and where his own interest coincides with ours. To find such actions may afford the key to propaganda to enemy civilians. In the absence of that key, most propaganda directed to enemy civilians will have little concrete effect on the course of a war. In fact, when it is considered that military defeats in any event constitute psychological blows of the first magnitude against the enemy civilian, it would seem that, prior to the time when mutual-interest situations begin to obtain, little can be gained from propaganda directed toward enemy civilians

TRANSLATION OF WG.44

WHAT CAN ONE DO?

Nearly everyone in Germany knows that the war is lost — and that it is up to Germany herself to hasten the end. Many ask themselves, however, what one can do. One can do quite a lot:

- ▶ One can band together — link up with like-minded neighbors and as worker with other German and foreign worker comrades.
- ▶ One can carefully watch the Nazis and remember the names of war-prolongers and especially of persons who are guilty of atrocities, whether they be committed against Germans or foreigners.
- ▶ One can spread the truth by remaining informed about the true state of affairs and by courageously countering the Nazi phrase-mongers and rumor makers.
- ▶ One can speak with the soldiers and make it clear to them that their loyal sacrifices only prolong the war and thus lengthen the suffering of the country.
- ▶ One can evade the forced labour by moving oneself and one's family in time to safety, out of the danger zone.
- ▶ One can give refuge to the slaughter-candidates of the Volkssturm, to foreign workers and to compatriots who courageously work against the Nazi terror system from underground.*
- ▶ One can retain food stocks when the party fanatics want to drag them deeper into the Reich. What remains back, will help feed the community.
- ▶ One can evade the Volkssturm and help other to do the same. To fight as a Volkssturm man means: To prolong the war by committing suicide.

One can actually fight for peace. Courage is needed for that — and tight organization against Gestapo and SS. Orders and instructions emanate from the leaders of resistance groups.

Thousands of Germans in the East and West have acted in this way. They are already now living in peace. They refused to help Himmler to prolong the war. They had recognized that

ONE CAN HASTEN THE PEACE!

* Whoever puts up Wehrmacht members in his house, must report this to the authorities as soon as the Allies have taken over.

WAS KANN MAN TUN?

Fast jeder Deutsche weiss, dass der Krieg verloren ist — und dass es an Deutschland selbst liegt, das Ende zu beschleunigen. Viele fragen sich aber, was man unternehmen kann. Man kann allerhand:

Man kann sich zusammenschliessen — mit gleichgesinnten Nachbarn und als Arbeiter mit anderen deutschen und fremden Arbeitskameraden.

Man kann die Nazis genau beobachten und sich die Namen von Kriegsverlängern merken — und insbesondere Personen, die sich Gräueltaten, ob gegen Deutsche oder Ausländer, zuschulden kommen lassen.

Man kann die Wahrheit verbreiten, indem man sich über den tatsächlichen Stand der Dinge unterrichtet und mutig den Nazi-Phrasendreschern und Gerüchtemachern entgegentritt.

Man kann mit den Soldaten sprechen und ihnen klarmachen, dass ihr Opfermut den Krieg und damit die Leiden der Heimat jetzt nur noch verlängert.

Man kann sich dem Arbeitszwang entziehen indem man sich und seine Familie rechtzeitig aus der Gefahrenzone in Sicherheit bringt.

Man kann Unterschlupf gewähren den Todeskandidaten des Volkssturms, den Fremdarbeitern und den Volksgenossen, die imgeheim mutig gegen das nationalsozialistische Terror-System arbeiten.*

Man kann Lebensmittel zurückbehalten, wenn die Parteifanatiker Bestände ins Reichsinnere verschleppen wollen. Was zurückbleibt, wird der Gemeinschaft helfen.

Man kann sich dem Volkssturm entziehen und anderen helfen, dasselbe zu tun. Volkssturm-Einsatz bedeutet Kriegsverlängerung durch Selbstmord.

Man kann selbst für den Frieden kämpfen. Dazu ist Mut erforderlich — und straffes Zusammenhalten gegen Gestapo und SS. Aufträge und Befehle kommen von den Führern der Widerstandsgruppen.

Tausende Deutsche im Osten und Westen haben so gehandelt. Sie leben jetzt bereits im Frieden. Sie haben sich geweigert, mit Himmler den Krieg zu verlängern. Sie hatten erkannt:

MAN KANN DEN FRIEDEN BESCHLEUNIGEN!

Wer Mitglieder der Wehrmacht beherbergt, hat dies sofort nach Entlassung der Militärs den Militärbehörden zu melden.

EXHIBIT 10—Reverse

in wartime, except by way of building up credibility. Thus our enormous leaflet output which was dropped on Germany during the war, on which so little evidence of effectiveness has been obtained, can really be judged only in terms of whether it built up belief in our essential honesty. This confidence was needed in the final months of the war when we were in a position to exploit mutual-interest situations.

This—the seeking of mutual-interest situations—constituted by far the most difficult and delicate psychological warfare research project of the last war. Whereas at the beginning of the war, “tough” propaganda from the West was received with derisiveness; whereas dur-

ing the invasion period it produced sullenness and frustration; at the end of the war our propaganda was all too often greeted by German civilians with the remark: “I agree with everything you say, but what am I to do?” The leaflet featured as Exhibit 10 illustrates an attempt to develop concrete mutual-interest instructions to enemy civilians. In a war against a different country, entirely different mutual-interest situations may obtain. The important lesson, is that the earlier such instructions can be formulated and the better they can be presented as being of mutual interest and as being *feasible*, the more successful will propaganda against enemy civilians be.