

Besides bombs which kill the body, his airmen throw down leaflets which are intended to kill the soul. . . . Unsuspectingly many thousands consume the poison. Lloyd George rubs his hands."

This is what Hitler said about leaflets:—

"This persistent propaganda began to have a real influence on our soldiers in 1915. The feeling against Prussia grew quite noticeable amongst Bavarian troops. . . . In this direction the enemy propaganda began to achieve undoubted success from 1916 onwards."

And now, in this war, the value of leaflets is being proved in the same way.

During the British offensive in Libya their effectiveness was spectacular. At Bardia, for example, prior to an assault, seven thousand Italians, complete with their General, came out and surrendered within a few hours of a leaflet raid.

In Somaliland and Abyssinia, too, results exceeded expectation. The Army, both native and white, surrendered in thousands without putting up any resistance at all.

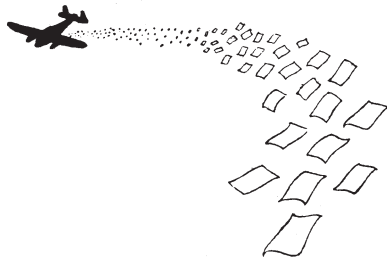
This year, since the beginning of July, about 30 million nickels weighing approxi-

mately 100 tons were dropped by the Royal Air Force on Germany and Occupied Territory—and this despite an acute paper shortage. That gives some idea of what Mr. Churchill, the War Cabinet and the Air Council think.

Today our leaflets, scattered in their millions throughout Europe, bring truth, hope and comfort to the oppressed—as well as doubt and consternation to the oppressor. In occupied territory the spirit of rebellion is being fanned; passive resistance and active sabotage increase with each succeeding day. The output of the factories suffers as surely as if they had been struck by bombs. And in Germany itself, long after *material* damage has been cleared up and repaired, these small pieces of paper keep steadily on with their work—implanting doubt, destroying confidence, sowing mistrust—eating into and undermining that most vital of all things in Total War—the morale of the people.

In *your* hands rests the responsibility, the privilege of ensuring the success of this leaflet warfare.

And remember this—that *Hitler and his gang fear the ultimate effect of your leaflets even more than they fear your bombs.*



"Hitler and his gang fear the ultimate effect of your leaflets even more than they fear your bombs"

A LECTURE ON THE VALUE OF LEAFLET OPERATIONS

issued by the Air Ministry
to all Operational Stations
in Bomber and Coastal Commands

“IN YOUR HANDS RESTS THE RESPONSIBILITY . . . THE PRIVILEGE OF ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF THIS LEAFLET WARFARE”

WHATEVER else may be said about Adolf Hitler, he certainly knows what he is talking about in the matter of propaganda. He has made a cult of it. He has developed it into a science. He has done things with it that nobody, in the past, would have believed possible.

With propaganda he raised himself from an obscure house painter to the supreme head of the most powerful autocracy the world has ever seen—and incidentally, in the process, changed his nationality and got rid of the name of Schickelgrüber—no mean feat in itself.

With propaganda he whipped his seventy-odd million Germans into an hysterical frenzy of fanaticism which—for the time being anyway—stabilised his power.

With propaganda he won Austria and Czechoslovakia without the loss of a man.

With propaganda he spread doubt, mistrust, fear, treachery and confusion throughout one nation after another; and by such means brought about his supreme achievement—the collapse of France.

All this he has done, and there is a good deal more, no doubt, which he *hopes* to do. There may, indeed, be a lot more that he *will* do. That is to say—if we let him.

Here is something which Hitler said some years ago in a best-seller which he wrote, called *Mein Kampf*:—

“It was during the war however, that we had the best chance of estimating the tremendous results which could be obtained by a propagandist system properly carried out. Here again, unfortunately, everything was left to the other side, the work done on our side being worse than insignificant.”

This is interesting because it implies Hitler's realisation that the eventual German collapse in 1918 was due in some considerable measure to British propaganda. It implies, too, his *respect* for British propaganda in the last war, and his determination that we should hold no such advantage in the next—his own, personal, private war.

The passage also suggests that it was *we* who taught the Germans the value of propaganda—just as we taught them the value of tanks. For tanks, remember, were a British invention, and the Allied superiority in their development contributed very largely to the final disruption of the German Army in 1918.

So Hitler took these lessons very earnestly to heart. He mechanised his Army on a scale hitherto undreamt of, and he built up a vast organisation for the scientific mass production of propaganda, whilst we—as might be expected—sat complacently by and refused to believe that anybody could be so wicked. The result is that we are now faced with the necessity of catching up. If we are to win this war we must acquire as many or more tanks than Hitler has, and we must build up a propaganda system as good or better than his. For it comes to this—that propaganda is as vital an element of modern total warfare as are tanks, guns, aircraft and men.

And one of the most valuable means at our disposal for the dissemination of propaganda—is leaflets—*nickels*.

During the first year of the war—before the Royal Air Force started dropping more unpleasant things on the Hun—large numbers of leaflets were released over Germany. Many people in this country—even a few amongst aircrews of the Air Force itself—regarded this as nothing much more than an excuse for flying over Germany and getting in a bit of practice for the real

thing—as a harmless way of keeping the ‘boys’ employed.

But the Hun didn't regard it as harmless, because he *knew* the value of leaflet raids. He hated and feared leaflets. Indeed he threatened, cajoled, punished, and generally went to a great deal of trouble to try and prevent them from being read. And why? Because he knew that one single leaflet, falling into the right hands, *may* do more damage than a thousand pound bomb.

So what did he do? He set his propaganda machine in motion to counteract our policy. He poured scorn on leaflet raids. He laughed at them. He said that they were a ladies' way of making war. He sneered and jeered at the idea of grown up men fooling around with bits of paper. He drew comparisons between the methods of the Royal Air Force and those of the Luftwaffe—who *blasted* their way to victory with high explosive.

And because propaganda is insidious; because it gets under your skin without your noticing it; because it is *always* effective in *some* measure—a little of it stuck.

A faint, secret feeling came into being—even in the Royal Air Force—that there was something rather ‘pansy’ about leaflet raids. Nothing more, perhaps, than a sub-conscious feeling in most cases, but enough to damp a little enthusiasm and to give rise to a tendency in some quarters to regard nickels as a nuisance. And that, of course, is exactly what the Hun wanted, because it isn't in human nature to give proper care to *anything* which is regarded as a nuisance or suspected of being of secondary importance.

But the dissemination of leaflets is *not* of secondary importance—and there is nothing ladylike about it. It is one of the most important single elements in

the prosecution of this war, and as much care should be taken with leaflets as with bombs to insure that they fall in the right places.

Let us take a quick glance at the history of leaflet dropping and see what it has already achieved for us.

During 1918 leaflets were released in broad daylight over Vienna. The effect was immediate. Here is an extract from an official account of these operations:—

“Unrest at once became manifest among the Austro-Hungarian forces. Deserters belonging to the subject races came over to the Allied lines. This was one of the chief causes contributing to the postponements of the Austrian offensive carefully planned for April 1918. Among the deserters were numbers of junior officers. These men were all led to come over by the prospect of liberation which the propaganda held out to them. It was noticeable that nearly all the deserters brought with them copies of the leaflets. . . . So great was the effect of this propaganda . . . that by July 1918 machine-gun sections had to be detailed by the Austro-Hungarian Army to deal with attempts at desertion en masse. . . . In September the Austrian Empire fell to pieces.”

This is what Ludendorf said about leaflets:—

“The Army was literally drenched with enemy propaganda leaflets. Their great danger to us was clearly recognised. The Supreme Command offered rewards for such as were handed over to us, but we could not prevent them from poisoning the heart of our soldiers.”

This is what Hindenburg said about leaflets:—

“They bombard our front, not only with the drum-fire of artillery, but also with the drum-fire of printed paper.