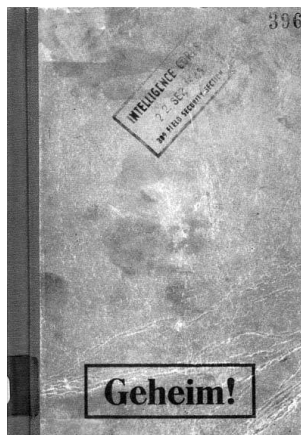


# THE BLACK BOOK

Britons on the Nazi Hit List

SYBIL OLDFIELD



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In memory of my husband Derek Oldfield, 1924–2008  
and my companion Gwen Shaw, 1923–2018 – two rare spirits.

We are adult because we have behind us  
the silent presence of the dead.

Natalia Ginzburg, 'Human Relations', in *The Little Virtues*

## *Contents*

Acknowledgements	x
<b>Part One – Why Care About What Did Not Happen?</b>	<b>1</b>
Introduction: Why Resurrect These Dead?	3
1. The Black Book in Context: Nazi Plans for the Invasion 1939–40	14
2. What was Wrong with Britain in Nazi Eyes? – The <i>Informationsheft GB</i>	27
<b>Part Two – Gunning for the Kindest</b>	<b>45</b>
3. Medical Men and Women	47
4. Pacifists	59
5. Refugee Rescuers	76
6. Social Reformers	89
<b>Part Three – Gunning for the Cultured</b>	<b>97</b>
7. Some ‘Degenerate Artists’	99
8. Punishing the Publishers	106
9. Targeting Creative Writers	113
10. Shooting the Messenger – Blacklisted Journalists	132
<b>Part Four – Targeting the British Establishment</b>	<b>157</b>
11. The Secret Service	159
12. The Army	178

13. Business and Industry – Friend or Foe to Nazi Germany?	185
14. The Church	200
<b>Part Five – Eliminating Brilliant Minds in the Humanities</b>	213
15. Art Historians and Musicologists	215
16. Attacking Ancient Classicists	225
17. Economists of all Kinds – but not all Economists	232
18. Down with Humane Educationists	241
19. Erasing Historians	247
20. Masters of the Word – Some Linguists and Literary Critics	255
21. Philosophers and Socio-Political Theorists	263
<b>Part Six – Eliminating Brilliant Minds in the Sciences</b>	271
22. Some Mathematicians	273
23. Jewish Inventors in the Material Sciences	279
24. Biochemists and Other Medical Researchers	281
25. Biologists – including Physiologists, Geneticists and Zoologists	293
26. Chemists	300
27. Physicists, Astro-physicists, Crystallographers, Geo-physicists and Nuclear Physicists	306
<b>Part Seven – Political Targets</b>	323
28. The Most Dangerous British anti-Nazis in Gestapo Eyes	325
<b>Conclusion: ‘We Can Fight with the Mind’</b>	372
<b>Appendices</b>	375
1. Émigré Organisations Supporting Refugees Listed in the <i>Informationsheft GB</i>	375
2. Jewish Organisations of Anglo-Jewry Listed in the <i>Informationsheft GB</i>	377
3. British Peace Organisations Listed in the <i>Sonderfahndungsliste</i>	380
4. British Refugee-supporting Organisations Listed in the <i>Sonderfahndungsliste</i>	382

5. British Political Institutions, Associations, Campaigns Listed in the <i>Sonderfahndungsliste</i>	384
Notes	386
List of Illustrations	417
Names Index	419

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Thank you all.

# **PART ONE**

**WHY CARE ABOUT  
WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN?**



## Introduction: Why Resurrect These Dead?

Few people nowadays know very much about the Gestapo's 'Black Book' and its implications. Even fewer know of more than a dozen of the most famous English names that it included. Anonymous, with no publisher, and stamped *GEHEIM!* (SECRET!), it was compiled in German by the Gestapo and their informants at some time between 1936–7 and July 1940, in readiness for a German invasion of Britain.

This is the first serious attempt to identify, classify and analyse a significant sample of the hundreds of anti-Nazi men and women, both British-born and refugee, targeted by the Nazi secret police in the Black Book.<sup>1</sup> I deliberately include as 'Britons' those Jewish refugees who, stripped of their German or Austrian citizenship, would become 'naturalised' British and who comprise the majority of those on the List. I also include those of them who contributed indispensably to the British war effort but who did not become permanent British citizens after the war. Some would go to West or East Germany, others to the United States or Palestine.

This book is not a comprehensive study of the Gestapo. Nor is it a survey of all refugees in Britain from 1933 to 1945, nor of British anti-fascist organisations and activity from 1925 on. Rather, it is a study of the Nazis' plan to perpetrate '*selective terror*' in an occupied Britain.<sup>2</sup>

How did I come to embark on this project? From July to October 2014 an exhibition of portraits, 'Virginia Woolf, Art, Life and Vision', curated by Frances Spalding, was shown at the National Portrait Gallery in London. In its last room was the facsimile of a page from the 'Black Book – the List of Britons Most Wanted for Arrest by the Gestapo' which said:

**Woolf, Leonhard** (sic), 1880 geb. (born), *Schriftsteller* (male writer)

**Woolf, Virginia**, *Schriftstellerin* (woman writer) (accompanied by the relevant Gestapo dept. ref. no. RSHA [*Reich Sicherheit Haupt Amt* – State Security Head Department], V1G [Foreign Intelligence North-West – including Great Britain]).

Why ever, I wondered, had the Gestapo targeted Virginia Woolf, the modernist novelist? And whose were the names above and below her on that page? To my surprise I recognised very few of them, though it was clear that almost all were foreign. Who were they and why were they listed there with the Woolfs? It was sheer curiosity that first made me try to trace the Gestapo's 'Most Wanted' people in Britain in 1939–40.

I had little idea what I would discover. Very soon, however, I realised that almost every one of the Gestapo's targets about whom I was now learning – whether British-born or refugee – had been a hero of humanity. 'Great ones have been among us ...' as Wordsworth wrote. I am resurrecting them so that they may become once more an essential part of our collective memory, exemplifying at least part of what it can mean to be 'British'. Nationalism in every country is always appropriated by the far right – but patriotism need not be. I have come to understand that these British anti-Nazis made a collective, indispensable contribution to victory in the Battle of Britain.

By April 1934 the Gestapo had already been handed over by Goering to Himmler, the head of the SS. Himmler had appointed Wilhelm Mueller, whose subordinate was Eichmann, to direct the Gestapo. Mueller answered only to Heydrich, who answered only to Himmler, who answered only to Hitler.

The Nazis idealised themselves as the only good Germans – brave, patriotic crusaders whose thousand-year Reich would save not only Germany but also Britain and the whole world from international Jewish-capitalist/Bolshevik/Masonic domination. The Nazis would not trouble any Briton who cooperated – but they would be forced to hunt down everyone in occupied Britain who threatened their project. As the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz had

## Introduction: Why Resurrect These Dead?

taught in *On War* (1832), the object of war is to render the enemy incapable of further resistance and resistance is constituted by the values that are antipathetic to those of the conqueror. However, the Gestapo hardly ever labelled their enemy prey ‘anti-Nazi’; instead they accused them of being *deutschfeindlich* – ‘enemies of Germany’ – out to encircle the Fatherland.

The bitter irony is that it was they themselves who were the true ‘enemies of Germany’. For it was the Nazis who made the word ‘German’ stink for generations, synonymous with torture and sickening massacres, including the deliberate murder of more than a million Jewish children. And it was the Nazis’ unleashing of a hubristic world war that led to Germany’s nemesis – her own beautiful old towns and cities reduced to smoking rubble just four years after the secret publication of this Black Book. It is currently estimated that over 5 million German soldiers and civilians were killed in the Second World War. But even that was not enough for Hitler. After his scorched earth ‘Nero Order’ of 19 March 1945, he demanded the forced evacuation of *all* Germans west of the Rhine, without food, without trains, without shelter – and with all males aged between 14 and 45 to be enlisted for a last, suicidal armed stand – or else face summary execution. ‘German industry, infrastructure, culture and lives were all to end in an orgy of destruction.’<sup>3</sup> It was Hitler who decreed the destruction of defeated Germany as the Germans’ only fitting punishment for having been defeated, proving themselves unworthy of their Führer – and not the *Herrenvolk* after all. In a contrasting irony, many of the alleged ‘enemies of Germany’ in the Black Book were being excoriated in Britain for *not* being ‘enemies of Germany’ – because they urged the cessation of the bombing of German civilians, the feeding of starving Germans after the war, and support for a new, revived, democratic and humane Germany. For example **Arthur Ponsonby**, **Vera Brittain**, **Bishop Bell**, **Richard Stokes**, **Eleanor Rathbone**, **Victor Gollancz** and **Professor E. R. Dodds**. (Names in **bold** throughout are of those individuals and organisations on the *Sonderfahndungsliste GB*.)

Death-bringing Nazism, as well as being the true enemy of Germany, was also of course the enemy of the peoples of Austria,

## The Black Book

Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Romania, Hungary, the Soviet Union, European Jewry – and Britain. Nazi Germany was accountable for well over 40 million violent non-German deaths – at the very least – as well as for innumerable blighted lives. And wherever they waged war they tried to destroy each resistant civil society.

The two parts of the Gestapo's Black Book that I focus on consist of:

1. The Gestapo's *Sonderfahndungsliste GB*, i.e. 'Most Wanted List for Arrest in Great Britain' compiled c.1937–c.September 1939, popularly known ever since as the 'Black Book', which is in turn divided into two sections: first, the alphabetical listing of some 2,619 names of men and women, mostly with their addresses, to be arrested and interned in camps or placed under house arrest at once, if not executed; and second, the more or less alphabetical listing of the names and addresses of nearly 400 British '*Behörden*', '*Firmen*' and '*Vereinigungen*' (institutions, businesses, organisations and associations) – all of which were to be proscribed, their papers seized and their mostly British-born leaders arrested.<sup>4</sup>

2. The Gestapo's *Informationsheft GB*, compiled May to July 1940 as an introductory handbook on Britain for the occupation troops, including the SS, and mentioning many additional leading individuals who would require surveillance and probable arrest.

Compiling alphabetical lists of suspects to be arrested, interrogated and imprisoned in special 'camps' was what the Gestapo spent much of their time doing:

[Producing] or updating index cards, working through the flood of instructions and regulations, filing documents ... collecting and working through information was the normal sense of affairs ... At the beginning of 1939, the central records office of the Gestapo is said to have comprised around two million personal index cards.<sup>5</sup>

33. Weber, Editha, 27.10.05 Düsseldorf, Erzieherin, vermutl. England, RSHA IV E 4.
34. Weber, Ludwig, 22.5.02 Pfulgstadt/Darmstadt, RSHA IV A 1, IV A 2.
35. Wechselmann, Kurt, 3.2.88 Mieskobitz, Kaufmann, zuletzt: Den Haag, vermutl. England, RSHA IV E 4, Stapoleit Breslau.
36. Weck, Kurt, 20.11.92 Werdau/Sa., vermutl. England, RSHA IV A 1 b.
37. Wecker, Kurt, 15.3.77 Schedewitz, Volksschullehrer, RSHA IV A 1 b.
38. Wedgwood, Josiah Clement, 1872, brit. Oberst, RSHA VI G 1.
39. van Weegen, Wilhelm, 1.2.04 Uden/Holland, zuletzt: Renkum b. Arnhem, vermutl. England, RSHA IV E 4.
40. Weidmann, Friedrich Wilhelm, 8.11.02 Erlangen, Arbeiter, London, RSHA III B 3, Stapo Nürnberg.
41. Weil, Hans, Dr., 1905 geb., Assistent, Emigrant, Newcastle-on-Tyne, RSHA III A 1.
42. Weiler, Gerhard, Dr., 1899 geb., Emigrant, Oxford, RSHA III A 1.
43. Weinberger, Martin, Dr., 1893, verh., Emigrant, London, Dozent a. d. Universität, RSHA III A 1.
44. Weinhart, Josef, 17.6.97 Gfell, Glan Y Mor, Y.M.G.A., Barry i. Glam., RSHA IV A 1 b.
45. Weinmann, Fritz, Emigrant (Jude), London, RSHA III D 4.
46. Weinmann, Hans, Hauptaktionär d. Westböhmischem Bergbauaktienvereins, London, RSHA III D.
47. Weinstein, Alexander, Dr., geb. 1897, London, Privatdozent a. d. Universität, Emigrant, RSHA III A 1.
48. Weisenfeld, Nathan, Arzt, London, RSHA IV A 2.
49. Weiß, Bernhard, 30.7.80 Berlin, ehem. Pol.-Vize-Präs., RSHA IV A 1, VI G 1.
50. Weiß, Harry, Dr., 1906 geb., Emigrant, London, RSHA III A 1.
51. Weiß, Joseph, Dr., 1905 geb., London, Emigrant, Assistent an der Universität, RSHA III A 1.
52. Weissenberg, Karl, Dr., 1893 geb., Emigrant, a. o. Professor, Southampton, RSHA III A 1.
53. Weizmann, Chaim, 1873 oder 1874 in Motyli bei Pinks, Professor für Chemie, Führer der gesamten Judenvereine Englands, London S.W.1, 104 Pall Mall, Reform-Club, RSHA II B 2, VI G 1.
54. Welker, Helene, 18.12.04 Berlin, RSHA IV A 2.
55. Wells, Herbert George, 1866 geb., Schriftsteller, London N.W.1, Regents Park 13, Hanover Terrace, RSHA VI G 1, III A 5, II B 4.
- 55a. Welsh, brit. N.-Agent, zuletzt: Kopenhagen, vermutl. England, RSHA IV E 4.
56. Welter, Charles Joseph Ignace Marie, 6.4.80 Den Haag, ehem. holl. Kolonialminister, zuletzt: Den Haag, Statenplein 10, RSHA III B.
57. de Werdestuyn, de Wijkersloot, Robert, 31.9.12 Utrecht, Student, zuletzt: Nymwegen, vermutl. England, RSHA IV E 4, Stapoleit Düsseldorf.
58. Wenzel, Johann, Deckname: Hermann und Bergmann, 9.3.02 Niedau, Schlosser, Schmied, RSHA IV A 2.
59. Werner, Heinz, Dr., 1890 geb., Cambridge, Emigrant, a. o. Prof. an der Universität, RSHA III A 1.
60. Werner, Hermann, 27.9.93 Buckwa, vermutl. England, RSHA IV A 1 b.
61. Werner, Paul Robert, 16.5.15 Scheidechwitz, Gefreiter, RSHA IV E 5, Stapoleit Breslau.
62. Wertheimer, Lydia, Mitarbeiterin d. Merton, London, RSHA III D.
63. West, Rebecca, 1692 geb., Journalistin, RSHA VI G 1.



210. Quarrymen's Group, Leiter R. W. Williams Carnarvon, gewerkschaftl. marx. Organisationen, Sitz: London, Westminster Smith Square, RSHA IV A 1, Stapo Bremen.
211. Record Dept., Leiter J. Gill, Sekretariate der General-Worker Union, Sitz: London, Westminster Smith Square, Ort: London, RSHA IV A 1, Stapo Bremen.
212. Relief Committee for the victims of German and Austria Fascism, kommunistisch eingestellt, Ort: London (Marxismus), RSHA IIB 4.
213. Relief Committee of Victims of Fascism, RSHA VI G 1.
214. Rotary-Club, International, London W. C. 1, Tavistock Sq., RSHA IVE 4, VI G 1.
215. Royal Institute of International Affairs, internat. Auskunftsbüro im brit. Sinne, deutschfeindl. Material, steht in enger Zusammenarb. mit d. Foreign Office u. d. Informationsmin., Sitz: London, RSHA IVE 4, III A 1, IV A 5.
216. Royal Society of Arts, Internationale Tätigkeit gegen Deutschland gerichtet, Ort: London, 18 and 19, John St. Adelphi, W. C. 2, RSHA III A.
217. Scottish Farm Servants — Union Dalnacouther, Airdrie, Lanarkshire, engl. Gewerkschaften auf marx. Grundlage, RSHA IV A 1.
218. Scottish Headquarter, Sekretary Boy Scout, Sitz: Edinburgh, 44 Charlotte Square, Ort: Edinburgh, RSHA III A (ZB).
219. Scottish Unionist Association, Ort: Edinburgh, 9 Atholl Crescent, RSHA VI G 1.
220. Smith Square, Unterstützungsorg. f. Emigranten, Sitz: Transport House, Ort: London S. W. 1, RSHA IVE 4.
221. National Worker's Sport Association, britische Sektion der brit. Street, RSHA VI G 1.
222. Socialist League (S. L.), sozialistische Organisation, Sitz: London S. W. 1, Victoria Street (Marxismus), RSHA IIB 4.
223. Socialist Party of Great Britain (S. P. G. B.), sozialistische Organisation, Ort: London S. W. 1, 42 Gr. Dover Str. (Marxismus), RSHA IIB 4, VI G 1.
224. Society for Cultural Relations between the British Commonwealth and the USSR, Ort: London W. C. 1, 98 Gower Str., RSHA VI G 1.
225. Society for the Protection of Science and Learning, betreut Akademiker, Ort: London W. C. 1, 6 Gordon Square, RSHA IV A 6.
226. Society of Friends, Quäker, Ort: London N. I., RSHA IVE 4.
227. Society of Jews and Christians, Ort: London W. 8, 31 Phillimore Gardens, RSHA VI G 1.
228. Schriftsteller-Internationale (Britische Sektion), kommunistisch eingestellt, Ort: London (Marxismus), RSHA IIB 4.
229. Studentische Bewegung, kommunistisch eingestellt, Ort: London (Marxismus), RSHA IIB 4.
230. Talmud Torah Trust, London E 1, 9 Mulberry Street, The Jewish Institute, RSHA IIB 2 (jüdisch).
231. The Academic Assistance Council, bringt emigrierte Wissenschaftler aus Deutschland unter, London W. C. 2, 12 Clement's Inn Passage Clare Market, RSHA III A 1.
232. The British Council, Britische Auslandspropaganda, London, Hannover Str., RSHA III A 1.
233. The British Music Society, Internationale Tätigkeit gegen Deutschland gerichtet, London, 18 Great Marlborough Street, RSHA III A 42.

## Introduction: Why Resurrect These Dead?

Black Books were compiled not just for Britain but first of course for Germany itself and then for Austria, the Sudetenland, Czechoslovakia and Poland – in the case of Poland with 60,000 names.

The plan to Nazify the whole of Britain is clear from the Gestapo's list of proscribed '*Vereinigungen*' ('Associations') in Part Two of their 'Most Wanted' list, the *Sonderfahndungsliste GB*. How British would Britain still have been without any of her political parties or trade unions – from the **Amalgamated Societies of Bakers and Confectioners to Boot and Shoemakers, Ship Builders and the Transport and General Workers' Union?** And without any of the following – the Boy Scouts, the Co-operative Movement, the Fabian Society, the Society of Friends (Quakers), Esperantists, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Jewish Board of Guardians, the National Council of Civil Liberties, the National Council of Women, the Navy League, the Public Record Office, Rotary International, the British Council, the British Music Society, the Museums Association, the PEN Club, the Student Christian Movement, the United Grand Lodge of Freemasons, War Resisters International, the Waterways Group, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the World Fellowship of Faiths, the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), the World Union of Progressive Judaism, and the YMCA? To name but a few. (Names of Blacklisted associations and institutions listed in the *Sonderfahndungsliste GB* are also in **bold** throughout.) Some of these Gestapo-targeted British organisations were tiny and looked upon as cranks, others were massive and mainstream, but together they had helped to weave the social fabric of Britain over generations. Wherever they were on the political or religious – or non-religious – spectrum, all these associations shared a basic humanism that was the antithesis of Nazism.

Similarly, almost all the named individuals in Part One of the *Sonderfahndungsliste GB* and in the *Informationsheft GB*, were, without being plaster saints, compassionate altruists who totally rejected the Nazi doctrine of righteous cruelty – '*Haerte*' ('hardness'). Here we find, cheek by jowl, anti-communists and pro-communists, Conservatives and East End activists, secularists haranguing passers-by at Speakers'

## The Black Book

Corner as well as eminent churchmen. We discover the passport officers as well as diplomats who defied the Foreign Office's orders by issuing thousands of illegal visas to desperate Jews; we see aristocrats and poor men's lawyers, indefatigable Quakers, dissident pastors and atheist philosophers, trade union leaders who had left school at 10 and refugees who were some of the most eminent scholars and academic researchers in the world.

As for the influence of the mass media, we should not overlook the BBC's 14 million listeners to **J. B. Priestley**, or the million buyers of Penguin Specials or the 50,000 **Left Book Club** subscribers to millions of anti-fascist books, pamphlets and leaflets by 1940, let alone the readers of the weekly anti-fascist ***Picture Post***, estimated as comprising almost half the adult population. All these people, no matter how different from one another, were united in their commitment to anti-authoritarianism, anti-racism, anti-militarism and, above all, to fellowship with persecuted fellow humans. 'To me, anti-Semitism is now the most shocking of all things', **E. M. Forster** said in his BBC talk 'On Jew-consciousness' in 1939. Ironically, some of the British anti-Nazis were so committed to left-wing activism that they were simultaneously under the surveillance of both the Gestapo and MI5. For example **Harry Pollitt**, **Sylvia Pankhurst**, **Ivor Montagu** and **Sidney Bernstein**. As for anti-Nazi German and Austrian refugees, they were not particularly popular for trying to warn their hosts that Hitler definitely meant another war, and many of them in 1940 were even arrested as 'enemy aliens' and interned indefinitely without trial behind barbed wire by a reluctant fiat of the British Home Secretary at the behest of the British military and media. It would need an **Eleanor Rathbone** and a **George Bell** and a Maynard Keynes, among others, to have most of them released.

But the refugees won out. For refugees carry with them their years of past experience, their knowledge of another culture, language and education, their areas of expertise, their natural gifts and their determination to start again. Their situation demands immense courage, perseverance, adaptability, and responsiveness to the positives in a new, unfriendly world. The wealth of intellectual gifts that



## Introduction: Why Resurrect These Dead?

the German, Austrian, Czech, Hungarian and Polish, mostly Jewish, refugees from Nazism brought with them to Britain after 1933 is attested in the rest of this book.

Why resurrect the contribution of British anti-Nazism from 1933 to 1940 now? Immediately after the defeat of Nazism and the unspeakable revelations of the exterminatory concentration camps in 1945, anti-fascist resistance was claimed to be an *essential* part of British DNA, ignoring the fact that it had also had to combat some ‘appeasing’ pro-fascists in 1930s’ Britain.

[In] Britain anti-fascist attitudes became central to constructions of national identity, with animosity towards Nazi Germany and the heroic struggle against Hitler functioning as major sources of national loyalty and patriotic pride ... [This] fusion of anti-fascism with nationalism reinforced perceptions ... that fascism was essentially an alien creed inimical to British culture and traditions.<sup>6</sup>

However, all our anti-fascist forebears are dead and we cannot live off the moral fat of their endeavour. That self-serving myth of Britain as an eternally anti-fascist nation leaves our society blind to the danger of ultra-right extremism here and now. For the uphill struggle of anti-fascists to make Britain face the reality of Hitler between 1933 and 1940 is no longer common knowledge. The anti-fascists’ actions, speeches and writings are not taught in schools; their very names are forgotten – ‘[Anti]-fascism is a little studied area ... [even though] far more people supported the anti-fascist cause than ever supported fascist organisations.’<sup>7</sup>

And not only has the anti-fascists’ vital contribution to the Battle of Britain and to the subsequent war effort been erased or even denied; the huge contribution made by hundreds of thousands of ‘foreign’ Allied servicemen from all over the world has been largely forgotten, even though many of them perished in the struggle. The population of Britain had never been as diverse as it was between 1939 and 1945. ‘But when the war ended, awareness of the diverse

## The Black Book

wartime population in Britain was lost and has played little part in public memories of the war.’<sup>8</sup> The myth that Britain’s ‘finest hour’ was achieved by native British citizens *on our own* soon emerged and still wreaks great damage.

However hard it is to acknowledge it, nationalistic, xenophobic, militaristic and misogynistic populism – even leader-worship – have resurfaced today in Britain.<sup>9</sup> A dormant quasi-fascism is being resurrected that yet again demonises the outsider – whether migrant or Muslim or East European or Jewish.<sup>10</sup> But if fascism – in Rolf Dahrendorf’s words, ‘the authoritarianism of the threatened class’ – or classes – can re-emerge, so can anti-fascism. That is why I needed to write this book *now*.

\*

There is also a personal motive. I was born in London, half German, half English, in 1938. My parents would never have met had the Nazis not come to power. In spring 1933, my German grandparents, who were socialists and pacifists, told my then 18-year-old mother that she must leave the country for the good of the rest of the family. Skilled at languages, she would be able to acquire a work permit abroad and make a safe base for her young brother so that he would never have to kill for Hitler. They had already realised from *Mein Kampf* that the new German dictator would be determined to trigger an expansionist world war.

My mother met my father at the Bosch headquarters in London while she was working there as a trilingual personal assistant – to my grandmother’s delighted relief: ‘He’s an Englishman, a gentleman, a socialist, you’ll be safe! Marry him.’ In 1936 my father filled out the required form telling the Nazi authorities that, as a British citizen, he was exempt from having to prove Aryan descent in order to marry a German woman. On the day I was born, 23 April 1938, Viennese Jews were made to scrub the streets with their toothbrushes, taunted by laughing onlookers. In Britain, after the war broke out, my mother became ‘an enemy alien, naturalised by marriage’, while

## Introduction: Why Resurrect These Dead?

my 17-year-old uncle, whom she had got out to Britain, was interned by the British for the next six years in POW camps. And in Germany my grandparents became secret resisters. My grandmother kept a diary from 1940 to 1945, any page of which if discovered would have had her beheaded.<sup>11</sup> She survived to initiate West Germany's first law permitting its citizens, on conscience grounds, to refuse to bear arms. My grandmother's example of resistance helped to inspire this book and the many stories of courage it contains.

# 1

## The Black Book in Context: Nazi Plans for the Invasion 1939–40

On 14 September 1945 the *Manchester Guardian* announced:

NAZIS' BLACK LIST DISCOVERED IN BERLIN

Booklet of over 2,300 Names

GESTAPO'S FIRST VICTIMS IF BRITAIN HAD BEEN INVADED

There follows a hasty Associated Press report<sup>1</sup> on the discovery in the Gestapo's Berlin HQ, which, after naming some of the targeted British institutions and newspapers, focuses almost exclusively on English men and women on the list, from the worlds of politics, arts, literature and education – as well as members of the peerage and journalists. There is a reference to some of the listed members of the exiled governments operating in London in wartime, and to 'large numbers of refugees from Germany', 'too long to be published in full', who are neither classified nor named. The Associated Press report says, inaccurately, that '[The list] was originally compiled *after* [my italics] the fall of France', but, possibly more accurately, that it 'appeared to have been revised, probably yearly, thereafter'. It is therefore possible that this particular copy of the *Sonderfahndungsliste GB* found in Berlin is a different one from the one now held in the Imperial War Museum, London, which is used in this work and in which there is no evidence of subsequent revisions or additions. A selection of *almost exclusively English* names follows, with names beginning with A to S, which was complemented the following day by additional names beginning with P to Z.

The *Manchester Guardian* commented on 15 September 1945, under the heading (with its echo of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado*) 'The Little List':

We are indebted to the Associated Press for its enterprise in letting the public have the Gestapo's little list for Britain. We can look at it now with amusement, but we may be sure that the handy booklet had no frivolous purpose. It was the fruits of Nazi research into pre-war Britain and was the invaders' guide to dangerous persons who should be put under lock and key or rather in the new concentration camps to be opened. Presumably the theory was that if the better-known anti-Fascists were safely put away, the rest of Britain would be docile.

Thus the *Manchester Guardian* initially shared the English reflex reaction of indulging in superior laughter – 'amusement' – but immediately retracted that reaction, given the hideous revelations from the recently liberated 'camps'. The *Manchester Guardian's* commentary continues:

[Here] the list is, the painstaking collection of names of men and women who during the years of the Hitler regime had spoken against it and for freedom ... How diligent the Nazi note-takers must have been searching through newspapers, listening to gossip, scrutinising German passport visas and keeping track of the poor exiles who had fled from persecution in their homeland.

Unlike the Associated Press, the *Manchester Guardian* *did* recognise right away that 'the larger part of the list is given up to German Jewish exiles. They were to be followed and exterminated.'

The Gestapo's selection of potential resisters is deeply revealing, since it tells us not only a good deal about the nature of Nazism but also much about who Britain's outstanding anti-Nazis were, as picked out by Nazi eyes. And to all the named individuals in the Black Book, I add many *unnamed* British-born men and women who were leading

figures in the hundreds of institutions and societies which *are* named, with their addresses, on the supplementary lists of ‘Vereinigungen’ – ‘associations’, whether in the Black Book or in the *Informationsheft GB*, and who would have been arrested in their offices or tracked to their homes by the SS. My principal aim is to understand *why* all those particular native Britons, and those particular Jewish refugees who became British, were singled out by the Gestapo as their ‘Most Wanted for Arrest’. Why were they suspected above all others of having the potential to obstruct the successful Nazification of Great Britain? The targeted men and women on the lists were to be arrested by the 20,000 members of the SS deployed in Britain, each issued with their own copy of the Black Book or Arrest List, and the Gestapo’s invasion Handbook, the *Informationsheft GB*. I can only suppose that the prisoners would then have been placed under surveillance and house arrest or, more often, taken into the new, purpose-built camps. “Protective detention” was ... an important feeder for [Himmler’s] concentration camp system.<sup>2</sup> For most, this would have meant mistreatment or disappearance into ‘*Nacht und Nebel*’ – otherwise known as death.

Some commentators consider the *Sonderfahndungsliste GB* to have been of little significance. Peter Fleming in his *Operation Sea Lion* (1957, 1975), wrote: ‘Men and women of every political persuasion are included and there is little to suggest that the list was a “Black List” or that any action was necessarily intended against the individuals whose names – freely misprinted – appeared on it’ (p. 195).

William Shirer in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960) maintained that ‘The Most Wanted (*die Sonderfahndungsliste GB*) was among the more amusing “invasion” documents found in the Himmler papers’ (p. 783); and Norman Longmate, in *If Britain had Fallen* (2004), is equally dismissive:

[The] Black List is ... a document of interest rather than importance, for no evidence exists that those on it were marked down for permanent detention, much less liquidation. The Jews and anti-Nazi refugees might indeed have been lucky to emerge

from the wine-cellars of the Reform Club, or wherever it was the Gestapo kept its prisoners, but most of those mentioned would either have gone underground before the occupation began or have been released once the Gestapo had satisfied itself they were not a potential threat. (p. 196)

But I believe that the opposite was true. ‘Most’ people on the Black List would not have had a chance to ‘go underground’ successfully in time, and both the refugees, who actually made up well over half of those on the list, *and* the British-born anti-Nazis, would certainly not have been released, for they were seen by the Gestapo and the SS as posing an ideological threat whose resistance and indeed existence would have to be neutralised immediately in September 1940 through ‘protective custody’.

Shirer and Longmate seem to have forgotten that the Nazi Reich had already shown criminally brutal ‘form’ when dealing with anyone whom they anticipated might resist. It is only necessary to remember what the Nazis had done to their own German opponents from the very outset. ‘The first official concentration camp in Nazi Germany [Dachau] opened its gates on 22 March 1933.’<sup>3</sup> Three hundred thousand non-Jewish Germans – communists, Social Democrats, trade unionists, pacifists, including Jehovah’s Witnesses – not to mention their wives – are now estimated to have been sent to concentration camps by 1939. And ever since 1922, many other opponents had of course been summarily killed, often assassinated or shot down in street battles.

Moreover, in October 1938 the German annexation of the Sudetenland had been instantly accompanied by demands that the Czech government hand over for arrest all anti-Nazi Czechs named on lists supplied by the Gestapo. And already from September 1939 to 1940 in Poland, through *Operation Tannenberg* and *Intelligenzaktion*, the German *Einsatzgruppen* were brutally ‘eliminating’ much of the Polish intelligentsia, as well as the Polish officer elite, and members of the priesthood and the upper classes, working from a similar *Sonderfahndungsbuch Polen* – in that case with 61,000 names.

The genocidal policies of the Nazis resulted in the deaths of about as many Polish Gentiles as Polish Jews. [The methods included] execution, [or] forced labour and Germanisation. The German policy of destroying the Polish nation focused ... upon eliminating anyone with even the least political and cultural prominence. Hitler gave the green light, placing responsibility for this campaign on Himmler's SS and police forces.<sup>4</sup>

Shirer acknowledges that 'The Nazi German occupation of Britain would not have been a gentle affair ... [the] real terror was to be meted out by Himmler and the SS. For this the dreaded [*Reichssicherheitsdienst*/Gestapo] under Heydrich, was put in charge.'<sup>5</sup> Heydrich, when 'Reich Protector' of Bohemia, had already tried to eliminate all Czech opposition to Nazi occupation by suppressing Czech culture and deporting or shooting any resisters, using *Einsatzgruppen*, SS execution squads. The Gestapo was above the law and its interrogation methods included 'threats, blackmail, flattery, torture, [and] producing genuine or fake ... statements from other prisoners'.<sup>6</sup>

The late Professor John Erickson in his introduction to Walter Schellenberg in *Invasion 1940* (St Ermin's Press, 2000), concludes categorically that the Black Book '... was a manual for total occupation, for the ruthless elimination of any who stood in its way or who had shown any hint of a propensity to opposition, resistance to or revulsion at the sights and sounds of National Socialism, with a candidate list for the *Knickschuss* [bullet in the back of the neck]'.<sup>7</sup>

The Nazi invasion of Britain, of course, never took place. Britain was saved by the young fighter pilots (of many nationalities) in the 'Battle of Britain',<sup>7</sup> by the defeat of the U-boats in the Atlantic, by the decoding of German Ultra/Enigma signals at Bletchley, by the Land Army and the factory workers doing long overtime shifts in order to produce all the food, weaponry, planes, and defence infrastructure essential to win, by the merchant seamen bringing still more food to Britain across the submarine-infested Atlantic, *and*, as I shall try to show, by the 'mental fight' waged by anti-fascist Britons, both native and refugee. So why bother with what did not happen but only nearly



happened? Much speculative ‘alternative history’ is vitiated by the plethora of all the different might-have-beens that branch out from a great number of initial variables. But in this case we *do* know exactly what was intended to happen following a Nazi occupation of Britain. And from that evidence I am able to consider three questions:

1. What would a Nazi Britain have been like?
2. Who were the anti-Nazis most feared by the Nazis?
3. How did they contribute to Britain before, during and after the Second World War?

Attempting a statistical analysis of the individuals listed in the Black Book cannot be a scientific undertaking because of the Gestapo’s own ignorance and inconsistencies. The duplication and even triplification of some entries has been addressed, however, and brings the total of entries down from an earlier estimate of c.2,830 to 2,619. Of these 2,619, 2,353 were men and 266 were women – roughly 89 per cent to 11 per cent. Out of the total 2,619, at least 1,657, i.e. well over half, were refugees. And of those c.1,657 refugees, at least two-thirds, 1,072, were Jews – ‘at least’ because many Jews had altered or anglicised their names. (For instance **H. W. Wilson** was really H. Maurice Wilson, born Cohen, the producer of the film about a Welsh mining disaster, *The Stars Look Down*.) Although 1,657 seems like a lot of refugees to be promptly arrested, it must be remembered that they were only a selected few, roughly 1.1 per cent, out of the total number of refugees then in Britain. ‘[The] Home Office estimated that the total number of refugees in Britain in 1943 was around 150,000’<sup>8</sup> – 78,000 of them from Austria, Germany and Czechoslovakia, mostly Jews. The Jews from these countries listed in the Black Book comprised roughly 2 per cent of that number.

But all the above Gestapo figures can only be approximations because of the vagueness and unreliability of some of their data. In the case of Austrian and German *academic* Jewish refugees, the listing is usually detailed and precise, giving surname, full forenames, date and place of birth, occupation and current address in Britain – as well