

**Casting Light on Vanittartism: Unveiling Robert Vansittart's *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* (1941)**

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March 15th

**Abstract:**

This source exploration regarding Robert G. Vansittart's book *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* serves to explain the concept of Vansittartism or Germany's propensity towards militarism and expansionism in regard to the historical academic literature. The source exploration looks at a multitude of reactions, both positive and negative, from the date of his book's publication in 1941 to the 1980s in order to create a nuanced depiction of his theory that soon became known as Vansittartism. Additionally, this exploration is prefaced with both important biographical information regarding Lord Vansittart's life as it pertains to the publication of his book, followed by a condensed summary of the key concepts derived from his book such as German militarism.

**Biographical Information:**

Robert G. Vansittart (or Sir Robert Vansittart), born in 1888 in Surrey, England, hailed from Dutch descent. Vansittart's family had notable involvement in British politics, with his most distinguished ancestor being Arthur Vansittart, who served as member of Parliament for Windsor.<sup>1</sup> Robert Vansittart began his diplomatic career working as a bureaucrat in the British Foreign Office in Paris (1903), Tehran (1907), and Cairo (1911).<sup>2</sup> Vansittart then became a senior level British diplomat during the interwar period (1918-1938). Vansittart's prominent diplomatic service unfolded across several key roles. Notably, Vansittart was first secretary at the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920), later serving as primary private secretary to Prime Ministers Stanley Baldwin (1928-1929) and Ramsay MacDonald (1929-1930).<sup>3</sup> Vansittart's most significant role, his tenure as Permanent Under-Secretary of State (1930-1938), focused mainly on the escalating threat posed by a rising Nazi Germany.

During Vansittart's tenure as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he collaborated with his French counterpart, Foreign Minister Pierre Laval, in an effort to halt Nazi Germany's expansionist ambitions (e.g. Anschluss). Vansittart's strategy involved creating a rift between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Vansittart, who worked actively as a British diplomat in France, was considered by many of his peers to have a deep affinity for the French (Francophilia).<sup>4</sup> The aforementioned sentiment was underscored by Secretary of State for War Anthony Eden's caution to Foreign Secretary Samuel Hoare regarding Vansittart's desire to

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<sup>1</sup> "Robert Vansittart," (Wikipedia: 2020), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Vansittart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Vansittart).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "Robert Gilbert Vansittart," (Britannica: 2024), <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Gilbert-Vansittart-Baron-Vansittart>.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

promote the proposed Hoare-Laval Pact: “Remember that in Paris, he [Vansittart] can be more French than the French.”<sup>5</sup> The Hoare-Laval pact aimed to end the Second Italo-Ethiopian War through a negotiated settlement by conceding Ethiopia as an Italian colony in exchange for further diplomatic concessions to Fascist Italy regarding Nazi Germany.<sup>6</sup> Vansittart’s significant influence on the proposed Hoare-Laval pact, alongside its condemnation by both the British and French public, led to its failure and also tarnished Vansittart’s reputation with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain which aided in Chamberlain’s depiction of Vansittart’s position as Germanophobia.

While Robert Vansittart still was a diplomatic adviser during the years 1938-1941, serving as Chief Diplomatic Adviser to Foreign Secretary, his new position as described in a letter by Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain was a “more prestigious but meaningless job.”<sup>7</sup> Vansittart’s diminishing influence on British Foreign Policy during his tenure as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (1930-1938) and his subsequent ‘demotion’ to the role of Chief Diplomatic Adviser to Foreign Secretary, stemmed from Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s concerns regarding Vansittart’s perceived Germanophobia. Moreover, Vansittart openly advocated for the British to stop Nazi Germany’s Anschluss plan and against Neville Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement in the 1938 Munich Agreement between Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, France, and Britain.

### **Source Description:**

In 1941, Robert Vansittart retired from public service, allowing him the opportunity to write his book *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* which was published by Hamish Hamilton, London. In addition to the publication of *Black Record*, Vansittart delivered broadcasts through the B.B.C. Overseas Programme and wrote in the press regarding the German people.<sup>8</sup> During the B.B.C. broadcasts, Vansittart described himself as “a working diplomat with his coat off.”<sup>9</sup> Vansittart’s book presents a harsh critique of German society and culture, portraying Germans as inherently militaristic and expansionist, and serving to rally support for the Allies in World War II. For instance, in the introduction Vansittart claims that Germans “have made five wars in the last seventy-five years, besides four near misses.”<sup>10</sup> While Vansittart doesn’t explicitly mention what the five wars in the last seventy-five years were, it can be inferred that

<sup>5</sup> Aaron Goldman, “Sir Robert Vansittart’s Search for Italian Cooperation against Hitler, 1933-36,” (Journal of Contemporary History: 1974), 121-122.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> “Letter from Anthony Eden to Neville Chamberlain,” (The National Archives: 1937), <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/edens-last-stand/source-1/>.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Gilbert Vansittart, “Black Record: German’s Past and Present,” (Rare Books and Manuscripts: 1941), 58.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, VII.

they are the following conflicts: German-Danish War (1864), Austro-Prussian War (1866), Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), World War I (1914-1918), and World War II (1939-1945).<sup>11</sup> Likewise, the four near misses likely were in reference to the Moroccan Crisis (1905-1906, 1911), the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the Sudetenland Crisis (1938), and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, Vansittart makes three special prefaced considerations about Germans in the introduction of his book. The first consideration is that the discussions in his book will revolve around factual observations regarding Germany's behavior towards its neighbors. Vansittart argues that this narrow focus on this aspect—the conduct of Germans towards their neighbors—allows for a streamlined narrative depicting the notion that Germany has a 'natural inclination' towards war.<sup>13</sup> The second consideration Vansittart makes is a criticism of the theory that generalizes all Germans as "inherently bad."<sup>14</sup> Vansittart acknowledges the presence of virtuous German individuals but maintains that they had limited impact in comparison to detrimental Germans. Furthermore, Vansittart uses this perspective of virtuous Germans to make an optimistic argument that there is room for the potential transformation of Germans toward a 'good' disposition. Correspondingly, Vansittart mentions that Christianity once served as the historical medium to subdue Germans but that their "primitive instincts of war" were always present.<sup>15</sup> The third consideration Vansittart discusses is that Germans showcase a prioritization of military efficiency over humanitarian considerations. As an extension, Vansittart points to the authoritative German War Manual, "Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege," which was compiled by the German General Staff in 1902 and dismissed the humane principles outlined in The Hague Conventions as "sentimentalism and flabby emotionalism."<sup>16</sup>

Throughout this book Vansittart uses a combination of historical and anecdotal evidence to demonstrate that Germany is a nation that is inclined to use force (e.g. wanting more living space—Lebensraum) and fraud (e.g. inability to abide by diplomatic treaties—Ems dispatch).<sup>17</sup> For instance, Vansittart uses a recurring motif that 'history repeats itself' to illuminate how German society/culture follows a cyclical pattern of militarism and expansionism. As an extension, Vansittart points to the fact that 'German barbarism' can be traced back to the

<sup>11</sup> "List of Wars Involving Germany," (Wikipedia: 2020), [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_wars\\_involving\\_Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_involving_Germany).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Vansittart, "Black Record: German's Past and Present," viii-ix.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

Germanic peoples who pillaged and destroyed the Roman Empire. Similarly, in illustrating ‘German barbarism’ as a repetitive theme, Vansittart draws a historical parallel by referencing how Frederick the Great of Prussia partitioned Poland with Catherine the Great of Russia much like Adolf Hitler partitioned Poland with Joseph Stalin of Russia.<sup>18</sup> For anecdotal evidence, Vansittart describes an instance where he visited Germany as a child to participate in a tennis tournament. In this tennis tournament, Vansittart claims that in the middle of the match his opponent, a German kid, felt disrespected and challenged him to a duel with a sword or pistol.<sup>19</sup>

### Source Exploration:

Responses to Robert Vansittart’s *Black Record* offer nuanced viewpoints illustrating acceptance and also rejection of his assertion that Germany has historically and inherently been a militaristic and expansionist society/culture. Vansittart’s depiction of Germany as historically militaristic has been coined as Vansittartism in literary circles. According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Vansittartism is a “doctrine holding that the conduct of German war leaders from the Franco-Prussian war on has had the wholehearted support of the majority of Germans and that Germany must be demilitarized during a protracted period of occupation.”<sup>20</sup> The concept of Vansittartism encompasses the idea of German militarism (or Prussian militarism) that had been intellectually discussed since the 18th century. For example, English journalist Norman Angell made a notable observation in 1900 regarding Germany’s unique propensity for aggressive warfare. Angell argued that while militarism wasn’t exclusive to Germany, citing Napoleon’s expansionist ambitions in the early 19th century, there was a fundamental difference in the nature of militarism between the two.<sup>21</sup> While Napoleon’s militarism was characterized by a “democratic fervor,” Germany’s militarism under the Kaiser was condemned as the “death of the free human spirit.”<sup>22</sup>

As a rebuttal to Vansittart’s book, German WWII exile Heinrich Fraenkel wrote a piece in the British Fabian Society (a socialist organization) in 1941 titled “Vansittart’s Gift for Goebbels: A German Exile’s Answer to Black Record,” where he challenged Vansittartism. Fraenkel contended that the perspective of Vansittartism was historically flawed and warned that Vansittart’s B.B.C. broadcasts about his book would inflict significant harm on Germany in the post-war order. In regard to historical inaccuracies, Fraenkel asserted that Vansittartism provided

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-43.

<sup>20</sup> Merriam-Webster.com, “Vansittartism,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Vansittartism>.

<sup>21</sup> Norman Angell, “Shall This War End German Militarism?,” (London: Union of Democratic Control, 1915), 1.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

an incomplete historical picture of Germany. To support his argument Fraenkel highlights Britain's financial support for Frederick the Great's "rape of Silesia."<sup>23</sup> Additionally, he claims that attributing the downfall of the Roman Empire solely to the Germanic people oversimplifies the complexity of Rome's collapse.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Fraenkel portrays Vansittartism as a propagandist measure, asserting that it is the responsibility of historians to present a balanced perspective that encompasses both positive and negative aspects of a nation's history. In contrast, Fraenkel argues, propagandists (like Vansittart and Goebbels) selectively emphasize either the good or the bad, avoiding the expected nuance of historians.<sup>25</sup> Another component of Vansittartism that Fraenkel targets is that the majority of German people were proponents of militarism/expansionism. Fraenkel counters this argument by emphasizing electoral data from the Reichstag. He points out that Hitler only secured 13 million votes in the July 1932 Reichstag election. Furthermore, he highlights that in the 1932 November Reichstag election the Nazi party lost 2 million votes.<sup>26</sup> Correspondingly, Fraenkel argues that this decline in Nazi vote share illustrates that Hitler did not achieve power by the popular will of the German people but rather his election as Chancellor was pushed by the Junker elites and Big Business.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, Fraenkel asserts that Vansittartism serves as a propagandist tool for the Nazis because it echoes Goebbels' claim that Nazism was a 'National Socialist Revolution,' when in reality it was a revolution imposed from the top-down.

Fraenkel's rebuttal against Vansittartism, which depicted all Germans as inherently militaristic, found resonance with others, for example H.R.L., an anonymous British citizen, who wrote an op-ed in 1941 for the Manchester Guardian. According to H.R.L. Vansittartism as described in *Black Record* was devoid of historical facts and filled with "fantasies."<sup>28</sup> In particular, H.R.L. highlights the perspective from Louis P. Lochner, a U.S. political journalist who spent two years stationed in Nazi Germany. Lochner, whom H.R.L. describes as "one of the best foreign correspondents" in Nazi Germany, described in his book "What about Germany?" that the majority of the German people held anti-Nazi sentiments but were unable to express their opinions due to the looming threat of "Nazi terror."<sup>29</sup> Additionally, H.R.L. notes that if Lord Vansittart were to ask any troop from the British Army of Occupation post-World War I about

<sup>23</sup> Heinrich Fraenkel, "Vansittart's Gift for Goebbels: A German Exile's Answer to Black Record," (London: Fabian Society, 1941), 4.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> H.R.L., "Vansittartism," The Manchester Guardian, August 22, 1943, <https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.ucsb.edu/historical-newspapers/vansittartism/docview/485252604/se-2>.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

their views of the German people, they would likely attest that a typical German was an ordinary workman striving to care of his family and was “no less peace-loving than his counterpart in Britain.”<sup>30</sup>

While many intellectuals and public figures criticized Vansittart for his generalizations of German history, there were many others who agreed with his viewpoint, especially in the context of World War II. This sentiment of agreement with Vansittartism was prominent after the fall of France that left Britain as the last remaining Western democracy in Europe. To bolster this assertion, both British Ambassador to the United States Lord Halifax and Prime Minister Winston Churchill provided British government approval of the publication of *Black Record*.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, in the British Parliament in 1941, Prime Minister Churchill was questioned by Viscountess Astor, an opposition member of parliament (MP), about the objectivity of Vansittartism, in which Churchill emphasized that Vansittart had a right to free speech. Additionally, MPs Mr. Ellis Smith and Mr. H. Strauss supported Vansittart’s arguments by citing his prominent status as a British civil servant and noted that Vansittartism had been confirmed through the atrocities committed by the Nazis.<sup>32</sup> Support for Vansittartism extended beyond the British government as can be seen through a survey of British newspapers during World War II that revealed numerous opinion pieces expressing endorsement for Vansittart’s views. These newspaper opinion pieces often served as a ‘rallying cry’ to help bolster support in the public for the British war effort. For instance, in a February 1<sup>st</sup> 1941 letter addressed to the editor of the British newspaper *The Daily Record*, British citizen ‘J.Adam’ voiced his support for Vansittartism over ex-Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s policy of ‘appeasement.’<sup>33</sup> Adam asserts that Germany has historically wanted to destroy England for the past fifty years and that Vansittartism is synonymous with democratic values.<sup>34</sup>

Even during the Cold War Vansittartism was still being discussed in relation to Germany’s proposed rearmament. Specifically, in 1971 in the British newspaper published by the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), a transcript of a speech by Willy Brandt, the Chancellor of West Germany from the Social Democratic Party from 1969-1974, illustrates Brandt’s balanced assessment of Vansittartism as stated in the *Black Record*. Brandt claimed that Vansittart’s arguments were “worthy of more serious attention,” especially because Fascism

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Donald Robert Christensen, “Lord Vansittart and the German problem-the war years, 1939-1945,” (1967), [https://repository.arizona.edu/bitstream/handle/10150/317998/AZU\\_TD\\_BOX37\\_E9791\\_1967\\_309.pdf?sequence=1](https://repository.arizona.edu/bitstream/handle/10150/317998/AZU_TD_BOX37_E9791_1967_309.pdf?sequence=1), 79.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>33</sup> “Daily Record,” (British Newspaper Archive, February 1, 1941), <https://britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000728/19410201/057/0006>.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

“acquired its strongest and most dangerous exponents in Germany.”<sup>35</sup> Brandt also states that “German Fascist terror” was unequaled in modern times—further giving credibility to Vansittartism.<sup>36</sup> After World War II Vansittart continued to push for a harsh peace with Germany supported by his doctrine of Vansittartism, but the rise of the Soviet Union placed a halt on his attacks on Germany. As stated in *Black Record*, Vansittart wanted a strict Allied occupation of Germany with an emphasis on a reeducation campaign to cleanse the Germans from their militarism. In the subsequent debates in the House of Lords over British occupied territories in regard to their policies of German university reform, Vansittart supported an Allied reeducation according to Western democratic principles. Albeit, in the end, Vansittart supported a policy for an “Allied occupation that should encourage all German aspirations or attempts at self-government.”<sup>37</sup> Vansittart’s reason for eventually supporting a more lenient policy towards post-WWII Germany stemmed from his perception that the Soviet Union and Communism were a greater threat.<sup>38</sup> As a response, Soviet Social Scientist P.N. Fedoseev in 1962 published a philosophical research article that mentioned Vansittart’s *Black Record* and asserted that Vansittartism was a “race-theory bounded by British and American imperialism.”<sup>39</sup> Moreover, Fedoseev claimed that the concept of Vansittartism derives from the British capitalist mindset that seeks to conceal Marxist-Leninist ideas that explain the actual cause of warfare.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Arthur Prinz and Pa Carlisle, “Information Issued by the Association of Jewish Refugees in Great Britain, [https://ajr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1971\\_may.pdf](https://ajr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1971_may.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> D.G. Philips, “The British and University Reform Policy in Germany, 1945-1949,” (University of Oxford: 1984), 33.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> P.N. Fedoseev, “Contemporary Sociological Theories Concerning War and Peace,” (Soviet Studies in Philosophy: 1962), 11.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*



## Annotated Bibliography

Angell, Norman. *Shall This War End German Militarism?* London: Union of Democratic Control, 1915.

Angell discusses how while the concept of militarism is not exclusive to Germany (e.g. France under Napoleon); German militarism exhibits a difference because Germany has a unique propensity for aggressive despotic warfare. In contrast, nations such as France with Napoleon, while exhibiting militarism, contained a spirit of democracy. Norman specifies that it is impossible to suppress German militarism and that it must be crushed in the post-World War I order. Norman specifically pleads that the Allied forces should occupy Germany for an extended period of time or else Germany would once again rise and start another major conflict. This source is used in my exploration to discuss and contextualize how the concept of German militarism is embedded in Vansittartism.

“Letter from Anthony Eden to Neville Chamberlain.” 1937. The National Archives. 1937.

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/edens-last-stand/source-1c/>.

This letter describes Neville Chamberlain’s movement of Robert Vansittart from Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office to the more prestigious but also more meaningless job of Chief Diplomatic Adviser in 1938. Robert Vansittart’s ‘demotion’ to the role of Chief Diplomatic Adviser stemmed from his opposition to Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement towards Germany and his search to circumvent British foreign policy, as seen in his desire to make an alliance with Fascist Italy, in order to stop Germany’s expansionist desires. Additionally, this letter is significant because it highlights Vansittart’s persistent efforts to curb

the influence of Nazi Germany, while also shedding light on Chamberlain's portrayal of him as being overly fearful of Germany.

Vansittart, Robert Gilbert, *Black Record: German's Past and Present* (1941). Available online at: <https://digital.kenyon.edu/rarebooks/3>.

Robert Vansittart's *Black Record: German's Past and Present* is the original source for the exploration which was found online and published by Kenyon College as a PDF document. Moreover, the source was extracted from the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), that is a division of the American Library Association (ALA). The original source was used to describe and give background to the main tenets of Robert Vansittart's theory of Vansittartism, including the assertion that Germany has been historically militaristic and expansionist. Vansittart uses both historical and anecdotal evidence to prove Germany's problem.

Fraenkel, Heinrich. *Vansittart's Gift for Goebbels: A German Exile's Answer to Black Record*. London: Fabian Society, 1941.

Fraenkel, a German exile from Nazi Germany, argues that Vansittart makes generalizations and falsifications about Germany's historical record. For instance, Fraenkel points out that the British financially supported Prussian leader Frederick the Great, which allowed him to continue his oppressive campaigns. Furthermore, Fraenkel highlights that Vansittart's inaccuracies about Germany's history only give more fuel to the German Minister of Propaganda Goebbels because Vansittart depicts all Germans as complicit with Nazi Germany, claiming that Nazism came to power as a popular revolution when it did not. Since Fraenkel's

piece was written in 1941 as a direct response to *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* it illustrates one of the earliest rebuttals to Vansittartism.

“Daily Record.” 1941. Britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk. February 1, 1941.

<https://britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000728/19410201/057/0006>.

In the British newspaper *The Daily Record*, ‘J.Adam’ raises his support for Vansittartism and highlights his dissatisfaction for ex-Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement. J.Adam illuminates that Germany has been for decades trying to destroy England and out class them. Likewise, he emphasizes that Vansittartism is closely aligned with democratic values since it serves as a rallying cry against Nazi Germany as the embodiment of despotism. This source was used to explain how Vansittartism garnered a lot of support from the British public; especially as Britain was the last European democracy unoccupied by Nazi Germany at the time.

H, R. L. "VANSITTARTISM." *The Manchester Guardian* (1901-1959), Aug 06, 1943.

<https://www-proquest-com.proxy.library.ucsb.edu/historical-newspapers/vansittartism/docview/485252604/se-2>.

H.R.L.’s op-ed disagrees with ‘Vansittartism’ pointing to the fact that Vansittart should ask any British Occupation Force troop after World War I what their view of the German people was. H.R.L. contends that the German people are just as industrious and care for their family like the British; H.R.L. emphasizes that Nazism in Germany was not a popular revolution but rather imposed from the top down. This source was used as additional evidence to reinforce the point

that many intellectuals and public figures also spoke out against Vansittartism, especially its historical generalizations, even during World War II.

P. N. Fedoseev (1962) Contemporary Sociological Theories Concerning War and Peace, Soviet Studies in Philosophy, 1:3, 3-24, DOI: 10.2753/RSP1061-196701033.

Soviet Social Scientist P.N. Fedoseev in the USSR in 1962 mentions Vansittart's *Black Record* and describes Vansittartism as a race-theory bounded by British and American imperialism. This Soviet social scientist claimed that *Black Record: Germans Past and Present* was written in order to remove the imperialists' (e.g. British/American) responsibility for the war. Furthermore, the author claims that Vansittart is afraid of Marxist-Leninist ideas that actually explain the real causes of war. This source illustrates how during the Cold War there was a shift from mainly targeting Germany as the nation responsible for major wars and incidents. Now, rather, large conceptual frameworks such as Communism, Capitalism, and Imperialism and the countries based on them were largely criticized.

Christensen, Donald Robert. "Lord Vansittart and the German problem-the war years, 1939-1945. (1967).

Christensen's PhD thesis describes the opinions within the British government about the publication of *Black Record: Germans Past and Present*. Notably, it discusses that Prime Minister Winston Churchill was queried by opposition MP Viscountess Astor regarding whether the Prime Minister supported Vansittartism. Likewise, in the British Parliament MPs Mr. Ellis Smith and Mr. H. Strauss supported Vansittart's arguments by citing his prominent status as a British civil servant and noting that Vansittartism had been confirmed through the atrocities committed by the Nazis. This source illustrates the opinions of several British public officials

regarding Vansittartism and the debate about whether *Black Record* received government sanction upon publication.

Prinz, Arthur, and Pa Carlisle. 1971. "INFORMATION ISSUED by the ASSOCIATION of JEWISH REFUGEES in GREAT BRITAIN."

[https://ajr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1971\\_may.pdf](https://ajr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/1971_may.pdf).

This 1971 press release by the British Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) outlines the perspective of Willy Brandt's the Chancellor of West Germany from the SPD (Social Democratic Party) from 1969-1974 regarding Vansittartism. Chancellor Willy Brandt makes a balanced assessment of Vansittartism by claiming that Vansittart's arguments were worthy of more attention. Furthermore, he admits that various anti-vansittartists demonstrated an ignorance of facts as fascism acquired its strongest exponents in Germany. This source illustrates that even during the Cold War, Vansittartism was still being discussed in intellectual circles. Furthermore, the fact that a charismatic leader such as Willy Brandt lent some credibility to Vansittartism's logical foundations illustrates that even in the Cold War era there were doubts about its rearmament and integration into Western democracies.

Goldman, Aaron L. "Sir Robert Vansittart's Search for Italian Cooperation against Hitler, 1933-36." *Journal of Contemporary History* 9, no. 3 (1974): 93-130.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/260026>.

This article highlights how Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and his cabinet had grown weary of Robert Vansittart's anti-German pronouncements in foreign policy. In this instance, Sir Robert Vansittart's attempts to bring Fascist Italy along the side of the British and

French to oppose Nazi Germany's desire to incorporate Austria (e.g. Anschluss) when he was the Permanent Under Secretary of State and head of the British Foreign Office from 1930 to 1938.

Vansittart was criticized for proposing this potential alliance with Fascist Italy and Neville Chamberlain considered him extremely Germanophobic and a threat to British Foreign Policy. Goldman says Vansittart's motives were to contain Nazi Germany's influence in international relations.

Phillips, D, and D. G. Phillips. 1984. "The British and University Reform Policy in Germany, 1945-49." PhD thesis, University of Oxford.

According to this PhD dissertation, after World War II Vansittart continued to push for a harsh peace with Germany based on his doctrine of Vansittartism but the rise of the Soviet Union placed a halt on his attacks on Germany. As stated in *Black Record*, Vansittart wanted an staunch Allied occupation of Germany with an emphasis on a Western-oriented reeducation campaign to cleanse the Germans from their militarism. In the subsequent debates in the House of Lords over British occupied territories in regard to their policies of German university reform; Vansittart supported an Allied reeducation alongside Western democratic principles. In the end, Vansittart agreed to support German rearmament and self-determination in Germany without Allied intervention because he perceived the Soviet Union and Communism as a larger threat.

"Robert Vansittart." 2020b. Wikipedia. April 18, 2020.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Vansittart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Vansittart).

This Wikipedia article gives background information on Vansittart's biography prior to World War II. For instance, Vansittart began his diplomatic career working as an administrative bureaucrat in the British Foreign Office in Paris (1903), Tehran (1907), and Cairo (1911).

Vansittart then became a senior level British diplomat during the interwar period (1918-1938) between World War I and World War II. Likewise, it described how Vansittart had a personal affinity for the French and their culture while having a distaste for the Germans. Vansittart's prominent diplomatic service unfolded across several key roles.

"List of Wars Involving Germany." 2020. Wikipedia. July 9, 2020.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_wars\\_involving\\_Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_involving_Germany).

This Wikipedia article details the history of wars involving Germany that are mentioned in *Black Record*. The five wars Vansittart alludes to are the following conflicts: German-Danish War (1864), Austro-Prussian War (1866), Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), World War I (1914-1918), and World War II (1939-1945). Likewise, the four near were in reference to the Moroccan Crisis (1905-1906, 1911), the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), the Sudetenland Crisis (1938), and the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). The list of wars involving Germany is used to bolster Vansittart's argument of how the history of Germany has frequently revolved around armed conflict with other nations.

Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, s.v. "Vansittartism," accessed February 8, 2024,

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Vansittartism>.

The dictionary definition of Vansittartism was only mentioned briefly in the source exploration with the goal of serving as a contemporary illustration of Vansittartism. Similarly, Merriam-Webster Dictionary directly attributes the origin of Vansittartism to Robert Vansittart. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Vansittartism is a doctrine holding that the conduct of German war leaders from the Franco-Prussian war on had the wholehearted support of the

majority of Germans and that Germany must be demilitarized during a protracted period of occupation.

“Robert Gilbert Vansittart, Baron Vansittart | Diplomat, Author, Historian | Britannica.” 2024.

Www.britannica.com. February 10, 2024.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Robert-Gilbert-Vansittart-Baron-Vansittart>.

This Britannica web-entry about Vansittart highlights his tenure as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, where collaborated with his French counterpart, Foreign Minister Pierre Laval, in an effort to halt Nazi Germany’s expansionist ambitions (e.g. Anschluss). Vansittart, who worked actively as a British diplomat in France, was considered by many of his peers to have a deep affinity for the French (e.g. Francophilia). Moreover, this web-entry describes Vansittart’s early diplomatic career as first secretary in the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920) and as personal private secretary to both Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay McDonald.