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JOACHIM C. FEST

1937
Hitler

Translated from the German
by Richard and Clara Winston

A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book

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1937

Neither blindness nor ignorance corrupts people and governments. They soon realize where the path they have taken is leading them. But there is an impulse within them, favored by their natures and reinforced by their habits, which they do not resist; it continues to propel them forward as long as they have a remnant of strength. He who overcomes himself is divine. Most see their ruin before their eyes; but they go on into it.¹

Leopold von Ranke

History records no phenomenon like him. Ought we to call him "great"? No one evoked so much rejoicing, hysteria, and expectation of salvation as he; no one so much hate. No one else produced, in a solitary course lasting only a few years, such incredible accelerations in the pace of history. No one else so changed the state of the world and left behind such a wake of ruins as he did. It took a coalition of almost all the world powers to wipe him from the face of the earth in a war lasting nearly six years, to kill him—to quote an army officer of the German resistance—"like a mad dog."

Hitler's peculiar greatness is essentially linked to the quality of excess. It was a tremendous eruption of energy that shattered all existing standards. Granted, gigantic scale is not necessarily equivalent to historic greatness; there is power in triviality also. But he was not only gigantic and not only trivial. The eruption he unleashed was stamped throughout almost every one of its stages, down to the weeks of final collapse, by his guiding will. In many speeches, he recalled, with a distinctly rapturous note, the period of his beginnings, when he had "nothing at all to back (him), nothing, no name, no fortune, no press, nothing at all, nothing whatsoever," and how, entirely by his own efforts, he had risen from "poor devil" to rule over Germany and soon over part of the world as well. "That has been almost miraculous!"¹² In fact, to a virtually unprecedented degree, he created everything out of himself and was himself everything at once: his own teacher, organizer of a party and author of its ideology, tactician and demagogic

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③ Feb 24, 1937 M. Ulrich, Hofbrauhaus

1937, 1928

savior, leader, statesman, and for a decade the "axis" of the world. He refuted the dictum that all revolutions devour their children; for he was, as has been said, "the Rousseau, the Mirabeau, the Robespierre and the Napoleon of his revolution; he was its Marx, its Lenin, its Trotsky and its Stalin. By character and nature he may have been far inferior to most of these, but he nevertheless managed to achieve what all of them could not: he dominated his revolution in every phase, even in the moment of defeat. That argues a considerable understanding of the forces he evoked."³

He also had an amazing instinct for what forces could be mobilized at all and did not allow prevailing trends to deceive him. The period of his entry into politics was wholly dominated by the liberal bourgeois system. But he grasped the latent oppositions to it and by bold and wayward combinations seized upon these factors and incorporated them into his program. His conduct seemed foolish to political minds, and for years the arrogant *Zeitgeist* did not take him seriously. The mockery he earned was justified by his appearance, his rhetorical flights, and the theatrical atmosphere he deliberately created. Yet in a manner difficult to describe he always stood above his banal and dull-witted aspects. One particular source of his strength lay in his ability to build castles in the air with an intrepid and acute rationality.

In 1923 Hitler had been sitting in a furnished room in Munich, a failed Bavarian local politician, drawing his sketches of imaginary arches of triumph and domed halls. In spite of the collapse of all his hopes after the attempted putsch of November, 1923, he did not take back a single one of his words, did not mute his battle cry, and refused to modify any of his plans for domination of the world. In those days, he later remarked, everyone had branded him a visionary. "They always said I was crazy." But only a few years later everything he had wanted was reality, or at any rate a realizable project, and those institutions that had recently seemed to be permanent and unchallenged were on their way out: democracy and political-party government, unions, international workers' solidarity, the European system of alliances, and the League of Nations. "Who was right?" Hitler triumphantly demanded. "The visionary or the others?—I was right."⁴

In this ability to uncover the deeper spirit and tendencies of the age, and to represent those tendencies, there certainly is an element of historic greatness. "It appears to be the destiny of greatness," Jacob Burckhardt wrote in his famous essay on historical greatness, in *Reflections on History*, "that it executes a will going beyond individual desires." Burckhardt speaks of "the mysterious coincidence between the egoism of the individual and the communal will." In general terms and at times in specific details, Hitler's career seems like a classic illustration of this tenet. The following chapters contain a wealth of

evidence of that. The same in Burckhardt's view constitute history leads a people from one state not only for the program and aim." He manifests the ability the capacity of simplification illusory powers, and finally atmosphere of fascination. "impossible. Anyone desiring reach of the man, with his battlefield."⁵

And yet we hesitate to call it not so much the criminal of world history is not played out ity," and Burckhardt has all the ordinary moral code" with individuals.⁶ We may surely extermination planned and different nature, overstepping it by both Hegel and Burckhardt also spring from another face primarily aesthetic, very rare prepared to make allowances not. An ancient tenet of ancient markable traits is a repulsive be—and evidence will be of well. His many opaque, instinct, his lack of generosity, was the only motive he would table companions to join him and in general his unmistakable cast of repugnant ordinary traditional concept of greatness Bismarck in a letter, "is always but without peace, great in proud and sad." If this is true measurable.

It may be that the concept one of the pessimistically tone exile, he used the terms "great triumphant Hitler, but he spoiled stage of genius.⁷ In such case Perhaps this idea of greatness:

* D.T. Indeed!

evidence of that. The same is true for the other elements that in Burckhardt's view constitute historical greatness. Irreplaceability is one; "he leads a people from one stage of cultivation to another." He "stands not only for the program and the fury of a party, but for a more general aim." He manifests the ability "to jump boldly across the abyss"; he has the capacity of simplification, the gift of distinguishing between real and illusory powers, and finally the exceptional will power that creates an atmosphere of fascination. "Contest at close quarters becomes utterly impossible. Anyone desiring to oppose him must live outside of the reach of the man, with his enemies, and can meet him only on the battlefield."⁵

And yet we hesitate to call Hitler "great." Perhaps what gives us pause is not so much the criminal features in this man's psychopathic face. For world history is not played out in the area that is "the true site of morality," and Burckhardt has also spoken of the "strange exemption from the ordinary moral code" which we tend to grant in our minds to great individuals.⁶ We may surely ask whether the absolute crime of mass extermination planned and committed by Hitler is not of an utterly different nature, overstepping the bounds of the moral context recognized by both Hegel and Burckhardt. Our doubts of Hitler's historic greatness also spring from another factor. The phenomenon of the great man is primarily aesthetic, very rarely moral in nature; and even if we were prepared to make allowances in the latter realm, in the former we could not. An ancient tenet of aesthetics holds that one who for all his remarkable traits is a repulsive human being, is unfit to be a hero. It may be—and evidence will be offered—that this description fits Hitler very well. His many opaque, instinctual traits, his intolerance and vindictiveness, his lack of generosity, his banal and naked materialism—power was the only motive he would recognize, and he repeatedly forced his table companions to join him in his scorn of anything else as "bosh"—and in general his unmistakably vulgar characteristics give his image a cast of repugnant ordinariness that simply will not square with the traditional concept of greatness. "Impressiveness in this world," wrote Bismarck in a letter, "is always akin to the fallen angel who is beautiful but without peace, great in his plans and efforts, but without success, proud and sad." If this is true greatness, Hitler's distance from it is immeasurable.

It may be that the concept of greatness has become problematical. In one of the pessimistically toned political essays Thomas Mann wrote in exile, he used the terms "greatness" and "genius" in regard to a then triumphant Hitler, but he spoke of "botched greatness" and of a debased stage of genius.⁷ In such contradictions a concept takes leave of itself. Perhaps this idea of greatness also springs from the historical conscious-

"unperson," as he is defined in one of the following chapters, that was not already present; but whatever did enter acquired a tremendous dynamic. Hitler's biography is the story of an incessant, intensive process of interchange.

We are still asking, however, whether historical greatness can be associated with a hollow individuality. It is challenging to imagine what Hitler's fate would have been had history not produced the circumstances that first awakened him and made him the mouthpiece of millions of defense complexes. It is easy to picture his ignored existence on the fringes of society, to see him embittered and misanthropic, longing for a great destiny and unable to forgive life for having refused him the heroic role he craved. "For the oppressive thing was . . . the complete lack of attention we found in those days from which I suffered most," Hitler wrote concerning the period of his entry into politics.¹¹ The collapse of order, the age's anxieties and climate of change, played into his hands by giving him the chance to emerge from the shadow of anonymity. Great men, in Burckhardt's judgment, are needed specifically in times of terror.¹²

The phenomenon of Hitler demonstrates, to an extent surpassing all previous experience, that historical greatness can be linked with paltriness on the part of the individual concerned. For considerable periods his personality seemed disintegrated, as if it had evaporated into unreality; and it was this seemingly fictitious character of the man that misled so many conservative politicians and Marxist historians—in curious agreement—to regard Hitler as the instrument for the ends of others. Far from possessing any greatness and any political, let alone historical, stature, he seemed to embody the very type of the "agent," one who acts for others. But both the conservatives and the Marxists were deceiving themselves. It was actually an ingredient in Hitler's recipe for tactical success that he made political capital out of this mistake, in which class resentment against the petty bourgeois was then, and still is, expressed. His biography includes, among other things, the story of a gradual disillusionment. In his day he excited a good deal of ironic contempt, and that attitude persists, though kept in check by the memory of the toll of lives he took. But it was, and still is, a misreading of his character.

The course of this life, and the pattern of events themselves, will throw light upon the whole matter. Yet here we may well ask ourselves a few pertinent questions. If Hitler had succumbed to an assassination or an accident at the end of 1938, few would hesitate to call him one of the greatest of German statesmen, the consummator of Germany's history. The aggressive speeches and *Mein Kampf*, the anti-Semitism and the design for world dominion, would presumably have fallen into oblivion, dismissed as the man's youthful fantasies, and only occasion-

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Chapter 1

The need to magnify themselves, to bestir themselves, is characteristic of all illegitimates.

Jacob Burckhardt

BACKGROUND AND DEPARTURE

All through his life he made the strongest efforts to conceal as well as to glorify his own personality. Hardly any other prominent figure in history so covered his tracks, as far as his personal life was concerned. With a carefulness verging on pedantry, he stylized his persona. The concept he had of himself was more like a monument than like a man. From the start he endeavored to hide behind it. Rigid in expression, early conscious of his calling, at the age of thirty-five he had already withdrawn into the concentrated, frozen inapproachability of the Great Leader. In obscurity legends form; in obscurity the aura of being one of the elect can grow. But that obscurity which cloaks the early history of his life also accounted for the anxieties, the secrecy, and the curiously histrionic character of his existence.

Even as leader of the struggling young NSDAP (National Socialist Workers' Party) he regarded interest in his private life as insulting. As Chancellor he forbade all publicity about it.¹ The statements of all those who knew him more than casually, from a friend of his youth to the members of his intimate dinner circle, stress how he liked to keep his distance and preserve his privacy. "Throughout his life he had an indescribable aloofness about him."² He spent several years in a "home for men"; but of all the many people who met him there, few could recall him later. He moved about among them as a permanent stranger, attracting no attention. At the beginning of his political career he jealously took care that no pictures of him were published. Some have explained this obsession as the strategy of a born propagandist; it has

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been argued that as a man of mystery he deliberately aroused interest in himself.

But even if this is so, his efforts at concealment did not spring entirely from the desire to introduce a note of allure into his portrait. Rather, we have here the anxieties of a constricted nature overwhelmed by a sense of its own ambiguousness. He was forever bent on muddying still further the opaque background of his origins and family. When, in 1942, he was informed that a plaque had been set up for him in the village of Spital, he flew into one of his violent rages. He transformed his ancestors into "poor cottagers." He falsified his father's occupation, changing him from a customs official to a postal official. He curtly repulsed the relatives who tried to approach him. For a time his younger sister Paula ran his household at Obersalzberg, but he made her take another name. After the invasion of Austria he forbade Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels to publish; he owed some vague, early suggestions to this man, the eccentric exponent of a racist philosophy. Reinhold Hanisch was his onetime chum from his days in the home for men; he had Hanisch murdered. He insisted that he was no one's disciple. All knowledge had come to him from his own inspiration, by the grace of Providence and out of his dialogues with the Spirit. Similarly, he would be no one's son. The picture of his parents emerges in the dimmest of outlines from the autobiographical chapters of his book, *Mein Kampf*, and only to the extent that it supported the legend of his life.

His efforts to muddy the waters were favored by the fact that he came from across the border. Like many of the revolutionaries and conquerors of history, from Alexander to Napoleon to Stalin, he was a foreigner among his countrymen. There is surely a psychological link between this sense of being an outsider and the readiness to employ a whole nation as material for wild and expansive projects, even to the point of destroying the nation. At the turning point of the war, during one of the bloody battles of attrition, when his attention was called to the tremendous losses among newly commissioned officers, he replied with surprised incomprehension: "But that's what the young men are there for."

But foreignness did not sufficiently conceal him. His feeling for order, rules, and respectability was always at variance with his rather unsavory family history, and evidently he never lost a sense of the distance between his origins and his claims on the world. His own past always stirred his anxieties. In 1930, when rumors arose that his enemies were preparing to throw light on his family background, Hitler appeared very upset: "These people must not be allowed to find out who I am. They must not know where I come from and who my family is."

On both his father's and his mother's side, his family came from a remote and poverty-stricken area in the Dual Monarchy, the Waldvier-

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tel between the Danub population, with invol- breeding, occupied the ancestral history: Dö These are all small, so wooded landscape. Tl of Czech origin (Hidla variants in the 1430's. the name of small fari social framework.

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BACKGROUND AND DEPARTURE 15

tel between the Danube and the Bohemian border. A wholly peasant population, with involved kinship ties resulting from generations of in-breeding, occupied the villages whose names repeatedly recur in Hitler's ancestral history: Döllersheim, Strones, Weitra, Spital, Waltersschlag. These are all small, scattered settlements in a rather wretched, heavily wooded landscape. The name Hitler, Hiedler, or Hüttler is probably of Czech origin (Hidlar, Hidlarcek); it first crops up in one of its many variants in the 1430's. Through the generations, however, it remained the name of small farmers; none of them broke out of the pre-existing social framework. *

At House No. 13 in Strones, the home of Johann Trummelschlager, an unmarried servant girl by the name of Maria Anna Schicklgruber gave birth to a child on June 7, 1837. That same day the child was baptized Alois. In the registry of births in Döllersheim parish the space for the name of the child's father was left blank. Nor was this changed five years later when the mother married the unemployed journeyman miller Johann Georg Hiedler. That same year she turned her son over to her husband's brother, Johann Nepomuk Hüttler, a Spital farmer—presumably because she thought she could not raise the child properly. At any rate the Hiedlers, the story has it, were so impoverished that "ultimately they did not even have a bed left and slept in a cattle trough."

These two brothers are two of the presumptive fathers of Alois Schicklgruber. The third possibility, according to a rather wild story that nevertheless comes from one of Hitler's closer associates, is a Graz Jew named Frankenberger in whose household Maria Anna Schicklgruber is said to have been working when she became pregnant. Such, at any rate, is the testimony of Hans Frank, for many years Hitler's lawyer, later Governor General of Poland. In the course of his trial at Nuremberg Frank reported that in 1930 Hitler had received a letter from a son of his half-brother Alois. Possibly the intention of the letter was blackmail. It indulged in dark hints about "very odd circumstances in our family history." Frank was assigned to look into the matter confidentially. He found some indications to support the idea that Frankenberger had been Hitler's grandfather. The lack of hard evidence, however, makes this thesis appear exceedingly dubious—for all that we may also wonder what had prompted Frank at Nuremberg to ascribe a Jewish ancestor to Hitler. Recent researches have further shaken the credibility of his statement, so that the whole notion can scarcely stand serious investigation. In any case, its real significance is independent of its being true or false. What is psychologically of crucial importance is the fact that Frank's findings forced Hitler to doubt his own descent. A renewed investigation undertaken in August, 1942, by the Gestapo, on orders from Heinrich Himmler, produced no tangible results. All the other theories about Hitler's grandfather are also full of holes, although some ambitious combinational ingenuity has gone into the version that

* Dr. T. An exposition of the theme of intensified genes.

1871, 1885?

traces Alois Schicklgruber's paternity "with a degree of probability bordering on absolute certainty" to Johann Nepomuk Hüttler.³ Both arguments peter out in the obscurity of confused relationships marked by meanness, dullness, and rustic bigotry. The long and short of it is that Adolf Hitler did not know who his grandfather was.

Twenty-nine years later, after Maria Anna Schicklgruber had died of "consumption in consequence of thoracic dropsy" in Klein-Motten near Strones, and nineteen years after the death of her husband, the brother Johann Nepomuk Hüttler appeared before parish priest Zahnschirm in Döllersheim, accompanied by three acquaintances. He asked for the legitimation of his "foster son," the customs official Alois Schicklgruber, now nearly forty years of age. Not he himself but his deceased brother Johann Georg was the father, he said; Johann had avowed this, and his companions could witness the facts.

1881 The parish priest allowed himself to be deceived or persuaded. In the old registry, under the entry of June 7, 1837, he altered the item "illegitimate" to "legitimate," filled in the space for the name of the father as requested, and inserted a false marginal note: "The undersigned confirm that Georg Hitler, registered as the father, who is well known to the undersigned witnesses, admits to being the father of the child Alois as stated by the child's mother, Anna Schicklgruber, and has requested the entry of his name in the present baptismal register. XXX Josef Romeder, witness; XXX Johann Breiteneder, witness; XXX Engelbert Paukh." Since the three witnesses could not write, they signed with three crosses, and the priest put in their names. But he neglected to insert the date. His own signature was also missing, as well as that of the (long-since deceased) parents. Though scarcely legal, the legitimation took effect: from January, 1877, on Alois Schicklgruber called himself Alois Hitler.

1885 This rustic intrigue may very well have been set in motion by Alois himself. For he was an enterprising man who in the interval had made quite a career for himself. He may therefore have felt the need to provide himself with security and a firm footing by obtaining an "honorable" name. At the age of thirteen he had been apprenticed to a shoemaker in Vienna. But, by and by, he decided against being an artisan and instead entered the Austrian Finance Office. He advanced rapidly as a customs official and was ultimately promoted to the highest civil service rank open to a man of his education. He was fond of appearing as the representative of constituted authority on public occasions and made a point of being addressed by his correct title. One of his associates in the customs office called him "strict, precise, even pedantic," and he himself told a relation who asked his advice about a son's choice of occupation that working for the treasury demanded absolute obedience and sense of duty, and that it was not for "drinkers, borrowers, card

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Adolf Hitler, born April 20, 1889, in Braunau am Inn, in the suburban house numbered 219, was the fourth child of this marriage. Three older children, born 1885, 1886, and 1887, had died in infancy; of the two younger, only the sister, Paula, survived. The family also included the children of Alois's second marriage, Alois and Angela. The small border town had no influence on Adolf's development, for the following year his father was transferred to Gross-Schönau in Lower Austria. Adolf was three years old when the family moved again to Passau, and five when his father was transferred to Linz. In 1895 his father bought a farm of nearly ten acres in the vicinity of Lambach, site of a famous old Benedictine monastery where the six-year-old boy served as choir boy and acolyte. There, according to his own account, he often had the opportunity "to intoxicate myself with the solemn splendor of the brilliant church festivals."⁴ But his father soon sold the farm again. That same year he retired on pension, at the age of only fifty-eight.

*D.T. Not worth the outlay to
find out.

1908 1902

port card of September, 1905, noted "unsatisfactory" in German, mathematics, and stenography. Even in geography and history, which he himself called his favorite subjects and maintained that he "led the class,"¹⁶ he received only failing grades. On the whole, his record was so poor that he left the school.

This debacle is unquestionably due to a complex of reasons. One significant factor must have been humiliation. If we are to believe Hitler's story that in the peasant village of Leonding he was the uncontested leader of his playmates—not altogether improbable for the son of a civil servant, given the self-esteem of officialdom in Imperial Austria—his sense of status must have suffered a blow in urban Linz. For here he found himself a rough-hewn rustic, a despised outsider among the sons of academics, businessmen, and persons of quality. It is true that at the turn of the century Linz, in spite of its 50,000 inhabitants, was still pretty much of a provincial town with all the dreariness and somnolence the term connotes. Nevertheless, the city certainly impressed upon Hitler a sense of class distinctions. He made "no friends and pals" at the *Realschule*. Nor was the situation any better at the home of ugly old Frau Sekira, where for a time he boarded with five other schoolmates his age during the school week. He remained stiff, aloof, a stranger. One of the former boarders recalls: "None of the five other boys made friends with him. Whereas we schoolmates naturally called one another *du*, he addressed us as *Sie*, and we also said *Sie* to him and did not even think there was anything odd about it." Significantly, Hitler himself at this time first began making those assertions about coming from a good family which in the future unmistakably stamped his style and his manner. The adolescent fop in Linz, as well as the subsequent proletarian in Vienna, would seem to have acquired a tenacious "class consciousness" and a determination to succeed.

Hitler later represented his failure at secondary school as a way of defying his father, who wanted to steer him into the civil service where the father himself had had so successful a career. In after years Hitler told a vivid story about being taken to the main customs office in Linz; his father hoped the visit would fill him with enthusiasm for the profession, while he himself was filled with "repugnance and hatred" and could see the place only as a "government cage" in which "the old men sat crouching on top of one another, as close as monkeys." But the description of the allegedly prolonged conflict, which Hitler dramatized as a grim struggle between two men of iron will, has since been exposed as pure fantasy.

In fact, we must rather assume that his father paid little attention to his son's vocational future. Certainly he did not insist upon any one course. That is apparent if only because attendance at the *Gymnasium* would have been much more to the point for a civil service career, given

1904

the structure of the Austrian school system. But what Hitler does describe accurately is the mood of persistent tension that sprang partly from the difference in temperament between father and son, partly from the father's realizing his long-cherished dream of early retirement—a dream that we may see curiously recurring in the son. When, in the summer of 1895, Alois Hitler retired and was liberated at last from the stringent duties of his vocation, he began living for his leisure and his inclinations. For young Adolf his father's retirement meant an abrupt reduction in his freedom of movement. Suddenly he was continually running into the powerful figure of his father, who insisted on respect and discipline, and who translated his pride in his own achievement into inflexible demands for obedience. The reasons for the conflict are evidently to be sought in this general situation, rather than in any specific differences of opinion over the son's uncertain future.

Moreover, the father saw only the beginning of Adolf's years in the *Realschule*. For, in January, 1903, he took a first sip from a glass of wine in the Wiesinger tavern in Leonding and fell over to one side. He was carried into an adjoining room, where he died immediately, before a doctor and a priest could be sent for. The liberal Linz *Tagespost* gave him a lengthy obituary, referring to his progressive ideas, his sturdy cheerfulness, and his energetic civic sense. It praised him as a "friend of song," an authority on beekeeping, and a temperate family man. By the time his son gave up school out of disgust and capriciousness, Alois Hitler had already been dead for two and a half years. Nor could Adolf's sickly mother have tried to force the boy into a civil servant's career.

Although she seems to have held out for a while against her son's demand that he be allowed to leave school, she soon could find nothing to pit against his self-willed temperament. After losing so many children, her anxiety about the two who remained constantly manifested itself as weakness and indulgence, which her son had quickly learned to exploit. When, in September, 1904, he was promoted only on condition that he leave school, his mother made one last attempt. She sent him to the *Realschule* in Steyr. But there, too, his work continued to be unsatisfactory. His first report card was so bad that Hitler, as he himself relates, got drunk and used the document for toilet paper; he then had to request a duplicate. When his report for the autumn of 1905 likewise showed no improvement, his mother at last gave in and allowed him to leave school. However, the decision was not entirely her own. For, as Hitler involuntarily confessed in *Mein Kampf*, he was "aided by a sudden illness." There is, however, no evidence for such an illness; the principal reason seems to have been that he had again not been promoted.

Hitler left the school "with an elemental hatred," and in spite of all his efforts to explain away his failure by references to his artistic voca-

tion, he never commands of school to art." He was by his talent for from the provincial life. Quite early boarder in his mother would sometime obsessiveness dare be sure, such an art to escape the soar instead into which he threw dreams, forgetting light on this path would have none of a livelihood.

It would seem as well. Behind the overpowering eccentric passion pursuit of the "mother had sold in Linz. Here the mother's adequacy for the future accounted very heavily in her promenade. He joined a club, and became Popular Education him, as he related. And around the near the Südbahn lanky, pallid, shy sported an ivory-student. His father what the son regarded far higher. In the the expectations:

He visibly retraced time failed to meet his early experienced teachers. There antagonists; and anathema against

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m. But what Hitler does deny is the tension that sprang partly from the father and son, partly from the dream of early retirement—a dream in the son. When, in the end, he was liberated at last from the living for his leisure and his retirement meant an abrupt change. Suddenly he was continually other, who insisted on respect for his own achievement and the reasons for the conflict are uncertain, rather than in any speculative future.

During Adolf's years in the end, he took a first sip from a glass of life and fell over to one side. He died immediately, before the liberal Linz *Tagespost* gave progressive ideas, his sturdy father praised him as a "friend of a temperate family man. By his just and capriciousness, Alois had half years. Nor could Adolf's be a civil servant's career.

For a while against her son's wishes she soon could find nothing after losing so many children, she constantly manifested itself. Her son had quickly learned to be promoted only on condition of one last attempt. She sent him too, his work continued to be so bad that Hitler, as he commented for toilet paper; he reported for the autumn of 1905 that at last gave in and allowed that he was not entirely her own. In *mein Kampf*, he was "aided by evidence for such an illness—between that he had again not

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tion, he never entirely recovered from the smart. Free from the demands of schooling, he was now determined to dedicate his life "wholly to art." He wanted to be a painter. This choice was prompted equally by his talent for sketching and the rather florid notion an official's son from the provinces must have had of the free and untrammelled artist's life. Quite early he showed a bent for attitudinizing. A onetime boarder in his mother's house later described the way the young Adolf would sometimes abruptly begin to draw at meals and with seeming obsessiveness dash down sketches of buildings, archways, or pillars. To be sure, such behavior can be explained as a legitimate way of using art to escape the coercions and confinements of the bourgeois world, and soar instead into realms of the ideal. It is only the manic fervor with which he threw himself into his painting exercises, or into music and dreams, forgetting and rejecting everything else, that casts a disturbing light on this passion. Arrogantly, the young Adolf declared that he would have none of any definite work, any sordid vocation for the sake of a livelihood.

It would seem that he sought elevation through art in a social sense as well. Behind all the whims and decisions of his formative years lay the overpowering desire to be or to become something "higher." His eccentric passion for art was tangibly related to his notion that art was a pursuit of the "better class of society." After his father's death his mother had sold the house in Leonding and moved into an apartment in Linz. Here the sixteen-year-old boy sat idly around. Thanks to his mother's adequate pension, he was in a position to suspend all plans for the future and to assume that appearance of privileged leisure which counted very heavily in his mind. He would take a daily stroll on the promenade. He regularly attended the local theater, joined the musical club, and became a member of the library run by the Association for Popular Education. An awakening interest in sexual questions impelled him, as he related later, to visit the adult section of a wax museum. And around the same time he saw his first film in a small movie house near the Südbahnhof. According to the descriptions we have, he was lanky, pallid, shy, and always dressed with extreme care. Usually he sported an ivory-tipped black cane and tried to look like a university student. His father had been driven by social ambition but had achieved what the son regarded as a paltry career. His own goals were pitched far higher. In the dream world that he set up for himself, he cultivated the expectations and the egotism of a genius.

He visibly retreated into this fantasy world after he had for the first time failed to meet a challenge. In his own world he compensated for his early experiences of helplessness vis-à-vis his father and his teachers. There he celebrated his solitary triumphs over defenseless antagonists; and from this secret realm he hurled his first bolts of anathema against the ill-wishers he believed surrounded him. Every-

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one who knew him at this time later recalled his low-keyed, withdrawn, "anxious" nature. Unoccupied as he was, everything preoccupied him. The world, he decided, must be "changed thoroughly and in all its parts." Until the late hours of the night, he sat feverishly over clumsy projects for the total rebuilding of the city of Linz. He drew sketches for theaters, mansions, museums, or for that bridge over the Danube which he triumphantly ordered built thirty-five years later on the basis of his own adolescent plans.

He was still incapable of any systematic work. Constantly, he sought new occupations, new stimuli, new goals. For a short while he took piano lessons; then boredom set in and he abandoned them. For a while he had a single boyhood friend, August Kubizek, the son of a Linz decorator, with whom he shared a sentimental passion for music. On August's birthday he made a present to his friend of a villa in the Italian Renaissance style: a gift out of his large stock of delusions. "It made no difference whether he was talking about something finished or something planned."⁸ When he bought a lottery ticket, he was at once transported into a future where he occupied the third floor of a fine house on the bank of the Danube. He spent weeks deciding on the *décor*, choosing furniture and fabrics, making sketches, and unfolding to his friend his plans for a life of leisure and devotion to art. The household would be managed by an "elderly, already somewhat gray-haired but extremely elegant lady." He could already see her receiving "their guests on the festively illuminated landing," guests who belonged "to the choice, spirited circle of friends." The daydream seemed to him already a fact, and when the lottery drawing shattered that dream, he flew into a fit of rage. Significantly, it was not only his own bad luck at which he stormed; he denounced human credulity, the state lottery organization, and finally condemned the cheating government itself.

Quite accurately, he described himself as he was during this period as a "loner." In a concentrated and obstinate manner, he lived only for himself. Aside from his mother and "Gustl," who naively admired him and served him as an audience, not another human soul occupies the scene during the most important years of his boyhood. In leaving school, he had effectively left society also. On his daily stroll through the center of the city, he would regularly meet a girl accompanied by her mother, who would be passing the Schmiedtoreck at the same time he was going by. He conceived an interest in this girl, whose name was Stefanie, which quickly developed into an intense romantic feeling that lasted for years. At the same time, he consistently refused to speak to her. There is reason to think that his refusal was based not on normal shyness but on a desire to protect his imaginary relationship from the breath of insipid reality. If we may believe the account of his friend, Hitler wrote "innumerable love poems" to this girl. In one of them she appeared

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"as a damsel of high degree, dressed in a dark-blue, flowing velvet robe and riding upon a white palfrey over flower-strewn meadows, her loose tresses falling over her shoulders like a golden flood. A bright spring sky overhung the scene. All was pure, radiant happiness."⁹

He also succumbed to the music of Richard Wagner and often went to the opera night after night. The charged emotionality of this music seemed to have served him as a means for self-hypnosis, while he found in its lush air of bourgeois luxury the necessary ingredients for escapist fantasy. Significantly, at this period he loved the kind of painting that corresponded to this music: the luscious pomp of Rubens and, among the moderns, Hans Makart. Kubizek has described Hitler's powerful reaction to a performance of Wagner's *Rienzi*, which they attended together. Overwhelmed by the resplendent, dramatic musicality of the work, Hitler was also stirred by the fate of the late medieval rebel and tribune of the people, Cola di Rienzi, alienated from his fellow men and destroyed by their incomprehension. After the opera the two young men went on the Freinberg. There, with nocturnal Linz lying in darkness below them, Hitler began to orate. "Words burst from him like a backed-up flood breaking through crumbling dams. In grandiose, compelling images, he sketched for me his future and that of his people." When these boyhood friends met again thirty years later in Bayreuth, Hitler remarked: "It began at that hour!"¹⁰

In May, 1905, Adolf Hitler went to Vienna for the first time. He stayed two weeks and was dazzled by the brilliance of the capital, by the splendor of Ringstrasse, which affected him "like magic from the Arabian Nights," by the museums and, as he wrote on a postcard, by the "mighty majesty" of the Opera. He went to the Burgtheater and attended performances of *Tristan* and *The Flying Dutchman*. "When the mighty waves of sound flooded through the room and the whine of the wind gave way before the fearful rush of billows of music, one feels sublimity," he wrote to Kubizek.

It is unclear, however, why after his return to Linz he waited for a year and a half before once more setting out for the city to apply for a place in the Academy of Fine Arts. His mother's qualms may have played a part, but there would also have been his own unwillingness to take a step that would end his existence of ideal drifting and once again subject him to the routines of schooling. In fact, Hitler repeatedly called the years in Linz the happiest time of his life, "a lovely dream." Only the memory of his failure at school somewhat darkened its brightness.

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler described how his father once set out for the city vowing "not to return to his beloved native village until he had made something of himself."¹¹ With a similar resolve, Hitler left Linz in September, 1907. And however far he diverged from his youthful fantasies,

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the central craving remained alive: to see the city lying at his feet in fear, shame, and admiration, to transform the "lovely dream" of the past into present reality. During the war he frequently spoke, wearily and impatiently, of his plan to retire to Linz in his old age, to build a museum there, listen to music, read, write, pursue his thoughts. All this was nothing but the ancient daydream of the lordly house with the "extremely elegant lady" and the "spirited circle of friends," still capable of stirring him after all the intervening years. In March, 1945, when the Red Army was at the gates of Berlin, he had the plans for the rebuilding of Linz brought to him in the bunker under the chancellory and for a long time stood dreamily over them.¹²

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the age had lost its vital force, that only a lovely semblance still survived. Weariness, defeats, anxieties, the more and more embittered quarrels among the nations of the empire, and the shortsightedness of the ruling groups were eroding the unwieldy structure. Nowhere else in old Europe was the atmosphere of termination and exhaustion so palpable. The end of the bourgeois era was nowhere experienced so resplendently and so elegantly as in Vienna.

1867

By the end of the nineteenth century the inner contradictions of the multinational state were emerging with increasing sharpness. For generations that state had been ruled with highhanded indolence. Problems were evaded, crises ignored. The point was to keep all the nationalities "in equal, well-tempered dissatisfaction." That was how the onetime Premier Count Eduard Taaffe ironically defined the art of rule in Austria, and on the whole it was not unsuccessful.

But the precarious equilibrium of the empire had been visibly shaken after 1867, when Hungary wrested special rights for herself in the famous *Ausgleich*. Soon it was being said that the Dual Monarchy was nothing but a pot cracked in many places and held together by a piece of old wire. For the Czechs demanded that their language be given equal status with German. Conflicts erupted in Croatia and Slovenia. And in the year of Hitler's birth Crown Prince Rudolf escaped from a net of political and personal entanglements by his suicide in Mayerling. In Lemberg (Lvov), at the beginning of the century, the Governor of Galicia was assassinated in the street. The number of military draft evaders rose from year to year. At Vienna University there were student demonstrations by national minorities. Columns of workers staged enormous parades down the Ring under bedraggled red banners. From all these symptoms of unrest and weakness it was easy to predict that Austria was on the point of falling apart. It could be expected that the denouement would come when the old Emperor died. In 1905 it was rumored in the German and Russian newspapers that there had been feelers between Berlin and St. Petersburg concerning the future of the Dual Monarchy. Supposedly, inquiries had been made whether it would not be well to agree beforehand on what parts of territory neighbors and other interested parties might count when the empire collapsed. The rumors became so rife that on November 29, 1905, the Foreign Office in Berlin felt compelled to arrange a special meeting with the Austrian ambassador and reassure him.

Naturally, the currents of the period—nationalism and racial consciousness, socialism and parliamentarism—made themselves felt with particular force in this precariously balanced political entity. For a long time it had been impossible to pass a law in the country's Parliament unless the government made outright concessions to various groups in

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In addition, the empire was no longer assured German leadership. Had seized the ruling time that Austria was the little of Königsgrätz had the Balkans and forced their "own" state. The and began to grumble themselves compensate of their own breed. "G cast, carrying strong n imperiously and preter

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the virtually inextricable tangle of crisscrossing interests. The Germans, approximately a quarter of the population, were ahead of all the other peoples of the empire in education, prosperity, and general development; but their influence was disproportionately smaller. The policy of makeshift concessions worked against them precisely because they were expected to be loyal, whereas efforts had to be made to satisfy the unreliable nationalities.

In addition, the surging nationalism of the various peoples of the empire was no longer countered by the traditional calmness of a self-assured German leadership. Rather, the epidemic spread of nationalism had seized the ruling class of Germans with special intensity from the time that Austria was excluded from German politics in 1866. The Battle of Königgrätz had turned Austria's face away from Germany toward the Balkans and forced the Germans into the role of a minority within their "own" state. They felt themselves being swamped by alien races and began to grumble at the monarchy for ignoring that danger. They themselves compensated by a more and more immoderate glorification of their own breed. "German" became a word with a virtually moralistic cast, carrying strong missionary overtones. It developed into a concept imperiously and pretentiously opposed to everything foreign.

The anxiety underlying such reactions can be fully understood only against the broader background of a general crisis. In the course of a creeping revolution "old, cosmopolitan, feudal and peasant Europe"—which had anachronistically survived in the territory of the Dual Monarchy—was going down to destruction. No class was spared the shocks and conflicts connected with its death. The bourgeois and petty bourgeois in particular felt threatened on all sides by progress, by the abnormal growth of the cities, by technology, mass production, and economic concentration. The future, which for so long had been imagined in hopeful terms, in the form of pleasant private or societal utopias, became associated for greater and greater numbers of people with uneasiness and dread. In Vienna alone, in the thirty years after the abolition of guild regulations in 1859, some 40,000 artisans' shops went bankrupt.

Such troubles naturally gave rise to many contrary movements that reflected the increasing craving for an escape from reality. These were chiefly defensive ideologies with nationalistic and racist overtones, offered by their advocates as panaceas for a threatened world. Such doctrines gave concrete form to vague anxieties, expressing these in familiar, hence manageable, images. One of the most extreme of these complexes was anti-Semitism, which drew together a variety of rival parties and leagues, from the Pan-Germans under the leadership of Georg Ritter von Schönerer to the Christian Socialists under Karl Lueger. There had been an outbreak of anti-Jewish feeling at the time

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of the depression at the beginning of the 1870's. This emerged afresh when the stream of immigrants from Galicia, Hungary, and Bukovina increased. In the temperate atmosphere of the Hapsburg metropolis, Jews had made considerable progress toward emancipation. But for that very reason the Jews in the East flocked in greater numbers to the more liberal zones of the West. In the interval from 1857 to 1910 their proportion of the population of Vienna rose from 2 per cent to more than 8.5 per cent, higher than in any other city of Central Europe. There were some districts of Vienna where Jews formed about a third of the population. The new immigrants retained both their customs and their style of dress. In long black caftans, tall hats on their heads, their odd and alien-seeming presence strikingly affected the street scene in the capital.

1910

Historical circumstances had confined the Jews to specific roles and specific economic activities. These same circumstances had also bred in them a freedom from bias, an uncommon flexibility and mobility. Representatives of the old bourgeois Europe were still caught up in their traditions, their sentiments and their despairs, and hence were far more apprehensive about the future. The type of personality the Jews had developed corresponded better to the urban, rationalistic style of the age. That, as much as the fact that they had thronged into the academic professions in disproportionate numbers, exerted a dominant influence upon the press, and controlled virtually all the major banks in Vienna and a considerable portion of local industry¹³—produced in the Germans a sense of danger and of being overwhelmed. Generalized anxiety condensed into the charge that the Jews were rootless, seditious, revolutionary, that nothing was sacred to them, that their "cold" intellectuality was opposed to German "inwardness" and German sentiment. In support of this idea anti-Semites could point to the many Jewish intellectuals prominent in the working-class movement. It is characteristic of a minority outcast for generations that it will incline toward rebellion and dreaming of utopias. Thus Jewish intellectuals had indeed flung themselves into the socialist movement and become its leaders. Thus there arose that fateful picture of a grand conspiracy with parts carefully assigned, some to work within capitalism, some within the coming revolution. The small tradesman confusedly feared that both his business and his bourgeois status were being menaced by the Jews in a kind of two-pronged attack. And his racial uniqueness was under assault as well. In the 1890's one Hermann Ahlwardt wrote a book with the significant title, *Der Verzweiflungskampf der arischen Völker mit dem Judentum* ("The Desperate Struggle of the Aryan Peoples with Jewry"). Ahlwardt drew the materials for its "documentation" from events and conditions in Germany. Yet, in the Berlin of the nineties, despite all the fashionable currents of anti-Semitism, this book sounded like the

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In this city of Vienna, : next six years. He had cc impressions and intendir more brilliant, more urba port. Nor did he have any himself wrote, full of "c he applied for the drawin tion list contains the eni satisfactory drawings or Adolf Hitler, Braunau a. civil servant, upper rank, drawing unsatisfactory."

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came to an end—except one later emotional tie, again linked to a close relative.

Possibly his mother's death reinforced his intention to return to Vienna. The eighteen-year-old boy's decision to go back to the city that had rejected him, to try again to find his way and his opportunities there, testifies equally to his determination and to his desire to escape into anonymity from the inquiring looks and admonitions of his relatives in Linz. Moreover, in order to qualify for his orphan's pension he had to give the impression that he was engaged on a formal course of studies. Consequently, as soon as the formalities and legal questions were settled, he called on his guardian, Mayor Mayrhofer, and declared —"almost defiantly," as the mayor afterward reported—"Sir, I am going to Vienna." A few days later, in the middle of February, 1908, he left Linz for good.

A letter of recommendation gave him new hope. Magdalena Hanisch, the owner of the house in which his mother had lived until her death, had connections with Alfred Roller, one of the best-known stage designers of the period, who worked at the Hofoper and also taught at the Vienna Academy of Arts and Crafts. In a letter dated February 4, 1908, she asked her mother, who was living in Vienna, to arrange for Hitler to meet Roller. "He is an earnest, aspiring young man," she wrote, "nineteen years old, more mature and sedate than his years warrant, pleasant and steady, from a very honorable family. . . . He has the firm intention of learning something substantial. As far as I know him now, he will not 'loaf,' since he has in mind a serious goal. I trust you will not be interceding for someone unworthy. And you may well be doing a good deed."

Only a few days later the answer came that Roller was prepared to receive Hitler, and the Linz landlady thanked her mother in a second letter: "You would be rewarded for your pains if you could have seen the young man's happy face when I had him summoned here. . . . I gave him your card and let him read Director Roller's letter! Slowly, word for word, as though he wanted to learn the letter by heart, as if in reverence, with a happy smile on his face, he read the letter quietly to himself. Then, with fervent gratitude, he laid it down in front of me. He asked me whether he might write you to express his thanks."

Hitler's own letter, dated two days later, has also been preserved. It is composed in labored imitation of the elaborate style of Imperial Austrian bureaucrats:

Herewith, esteemed and gracious lady, I wish to express my sincerest gratitude for your efforts in obtaining access for me to the great master of stage decoration, Prof. Roller. It was no doubt somewhat overbold of me, Madam, to make such excessive demands upon your kindness, since you after all had to act in behalf of a perfect stranger. All the more, therefore, must I ask

you to accept my sincerest thanks, accompanied by such success, my disposal. I shall at again my deepest grati

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you to accept my sincerest thanks for your undertakings, which were accompanied by such success, as well as for the card which you so kindly placed at my disposal. I shall at once make use of this fortunate opportunity. Once again my deepest gratitude. I respectfully kiss your hand.

Sincerely yours,
Adolf Hitler.¹⁷

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The recommendation seemed to open the way for him to enter his dream world: the free life of an artist; music and painting combined in the grand pseudo-world of opera. But there is no indication of how the meeting with Roller came out. The sources are silent. Hitler himself never said a word about it. It seems most likely that the famous man advised him to work, to learn, and in the autumn to apply once more for admission to the Academy.

Hitler afterward called the following five years the worst of his life. In some respects they were also the most important. For the crisis of those years formed his character and provided him with those formulas for mastering fate to which he clung forever after. They became, in fact, so calcified within his mind that they account for the impression his life gives, despite his mania for mobility, of utmost rigidity.

Among the persisting elements of the legend that Hitler himself constructed over the carefully obscured trail of his life is the allegation that "necessity and harsh reality" formed the great and unforgettable experience of those years in Vienna: "For me the name of this Phoenician city represents five years of hardship and misery. Five years in which I was forced to earn a living, first as a day laborer, then as a small painter; a truly meager living which never sufficed to appease even my daily hunger. Hunger was then my faithful bodyguard; he never left me for a moment. . . ."¹⁸ However, careful calculation of his income has since shown that during the first period of his stay in Vienna, thanks to his share in his father's inheritance, his mother's legacy, the orphan pension, and without counting any earnings of his own, he had at his disposal between eighty and one hundred crowns a month.¹⁹ This was the monthly earnings of a junior magistrate at that time.

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In the latter half of February August Kubizek came to Vienna, on Hitler's urging, to study at the Conservatory of Music. Thereafter the two friends lived together in the rear wing of Stumpergasse 29, occupying a "dreary and wretched" room let to them by an old Polish woman named Maria Zakreys. But while Kubizek pursued his studies, Hitler continued the aimless idler's life he had already become accustomed to. He was master of his own time, as he cockily stressed. Usually it was almost noon before he got up, sauntered in the streets or in the park at Schönbrunn, visited the museums, and at night went to the opera. There, during those years alone, he blissfully heard *Tristan und Isolde* thirty to forty times, as he afterward averred. Then again he would bury him-

(1908) carefully, still went to the opera, the theater, and the coffeehouses of the city; and, as he himself remarks, he continued, by careful speech and restrained bearing, to keep up his sense of bourgeois superiority to the working class. If we are to believe a somewhat dubious source on those years, he always carried with him an envelope of photographs showing his father in parade uniform and would smugly inform people that his late father had "retired as a higher official in his Imperial Majesty's Customs Service."²³

In spite of the occasional rebellious gestures, such behavior reveals the young Hitler's intrinsic craving for approval and for a sense of belonging, which is basic to the bourgeois personality. It is in this light that we must evaluate his remark that from early on he was a "revolutionary" in both artistic and political matters. In fact, the twenty-year-old Hitler never questioned the bourgeois world and its values. Rather, he moved toward it with undisguised respect, dazzled by its brilliance and its wealth. He remained a civil servant's son from Linz, full of sentimental admiration for the bourgeois world. He craved a share in it. His response to his rejection by the bourgeois world was an intensified longing for acceptance and recognition—and this, perhaps, is one of the more remarkable aspects of a youth unusual in many other respects. Europe, after all, had been ringing with denunciations of bourgeois sham for nearly twenty years, so that he could easily have picked up arguments enough to rationalize his own humiliation, and exonerate himself by passing judgment on the age. Instead, worsted and submissive, he held silently aloof from any of that. The rage for total unmasking had no appeal for him. Indeed, all the artistic excitement and clash of ideas so characteristic of the era were lost on him—as well as its intellectual daring.

(1908) Vienna in those years shortly after the turn of the century was one of the centers of ferment, but Hitler, astonishingly, remained unaware of this. A sensitive young man with many reasons for protest, for whom music had been among the great liberating experiences of his youth, knew nothing about Schönberg. No reverberations of the "greatest appear . . . in Vienna's concert halls in the memory of man" which Schönberg and his pupils, Anton von Webern and Alban Berg, had unleashed at that very time seemed to have reached his ears. Nor did he pay any attention to Gustav Mahler or Richard Strauss, whose work seemed to a contemporary critic in 1907 the "hurricane center of the musical world." Instead, the young man from Linz relived in Wagner and Bruckner the raptures of his parents' generation. Kubizek had reported that names like Rilke, whose *Book of Hours* had been published in 1905, or Hofmannsthal, had "never reached" either of them. And although Hitler had applied to the Academy of Fine Arts, he took no part in the affairs of the Secessionists and was in no way

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stirred by the sensations that Gustav Klimt, Egon Schiele or Oskar Kokoschka were provoking. Instead, he batted on the works of the mid-nineteenth century, venerating Anselm Feuerbach, Ferdinand Waldmüller, Karl Rottmann or Rudolf von Alt. And this future architect with his soaring visions stood enthralled before the classicistic façades of the Ringstrasse, unaware of the proximity of the revolutionary leaders of a new architecture: Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffman, and Adolf Loos. In 1911 a heated controversy had flared over the flat unornamented façade of Loos's commercial building on Michaeler Platz, directly opposite one of the baroque portals of the Hofburg. Moreover, Loos had written an article maintaining that there was an inner link between "ornament and crime"—a scandalous thing to say. But Hitler consistently directed his naïve enthusiasm toward the fulsome style accepted by Viennese salons and respectable society. Here, too, he proved himself reactionary. In everything new he seemed to sense a tendency toward the debasement of sublimity, the emergence of something alien and unknown. And with his bourgeois instincts he shrank back from anything of that sort.

His first brush with political reality took a similar course. Once again, despite his feelings of alienation, revolutionary ideas had no attraction for him. Instead he once again revealed himself a partisan of the establishment, paradoxically defending a reality that he simultaneously repudiated. Rejected himself, he seemingly canceled the humiliation by taking over the cause of the society that had rejected him. Beneath this psychological mechanism was concealed one of the lines of fracture in Hitler's character. He himself has related how as a construction worker he would go off to one side during the noon lunch break to drink his bottle of milk and eat his piece of bread. And whatever we may or may not believe in this story, his "extremely" irritated reaction to the attitude of his fellow workers was consonant with a basic element in his personality: "They rejected everything: the nation as an invention of the 'capitalistic' . . . classes; the Fatherland as an instrument of the bourgeoisie for the exploitation of the working class; the authority of the law as a means for the repression of the proletariat; school as an institution for breeding slave material, but also for training the slave-drivers; religion as a means for stupefying the people intended for exploitation; morality as a sign of stupid, sheeplike patience, etc. There was absolutely nothing at all that was not dragged through the mire of horrible depths."²⁴

Significantly, the series of ideas that he defended against the construction workers—nation, fatherland, authority of the law, school, religion, and morality—contains virtually the complete catalogue of standards for bourgeois society, against which he himself was at this time conceiving

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his first resentments. It is precisely this divided relationship that will come to the fore repeatedly on the most diverse planes throughout his life. It will reappear in the political tactics of constantly seeking alliances with the despised bourgeois, and in the ritualistic formality—verging on the ridiculous—that prompted him to greet his secretaries by kissing their hands, or at the afternoon teas in the Führer's headquarters to serve them personally their cream cake. In all vulgarity he cultivated the airs of a "gentleman of the old school." His manners were his way of demonstrating that he had achieved a desired social affinity; and if there is anything in the picture of young Hitler that betrays specifically Austrian traits, it must be this special status consciousness with which he defended the privilege of being bourgeois. In a society whose craze for titles tended to assign a social ranking to every activity, he wanted at least to be a *Herr*, a gentleman. It did not matter that his life was narrow and gloomy as long as he could claim this distinction. This was why he stayed away from the artistic and political oppositions of the period. Much of his outward behavior, his language and his clothing, and his ideological and aesthetic choices as well can be most plausibly explained as the effort to conform to the bourgeois world, which he admired uncritically, even to its presumptions. Social disdain he felt to be far more painful than social wretchedness; and if he despaired, it was not from the flawed order of the world, but from the insufficient part granted to him to play in it. He was therefore very careful to avoid any dispute with society; he wanted only to be reconciled to it. Staggered by the grandeur and glamour of the metropolis, wistfully standing outside locked gates, he was not revolutionary. He was merely lonely. No one seemed less destined to be a rebel than he.

THE GRANT

Near his room on Felber periodicals, including one anthropology. Its title page you are a creator and pres are threatened by perils. R Male Rights."* Its editor name of Jörg Lanz von Li Ostara after the Germanic deranged as it was danger he called Asings or Held Affings or Schrättings. So possible for Lanz von Li Lower Austria. From this a heroic Aryan league that and blue-eyed master race inferior mixed races. Unc raised over his castle in class struggle by race st Thus early he called for a nation: "For the extirpati the higher new man." Al measures, his platform in jungle," and liquidations l Frauja, you sons of the g

* *Mannesrechtler*—a coinage might be "Men's Lib."—TRAN

1905
up as the symbol of Germanic, *völkisch* (i.e., racial and nationalistic), attitudes. In the magazine, however, it was still described as the "fire-whisk" which, according to Germanic myth, had twirled the primal substance at the creation of the universe. Hitler also seems to have read—both during his schooldays and in the following aimless years—the Pan-German and aggressively anti-Semitic sheet *Linzer Fliegende Blätter*. For it was not only in Vienna that anti-Semitism formed a component of political and social ideology—as the author of *Mein Kampf* would have had his readers believe. It was just as strong in the provinces.

1905
In *Mein Kampf* Hitler speaks of an "inner struggle" lasting two years, in the course of which his emotions resisted the inexorable commands of his reason "a thousand times" before he completed his metamorphosis from "a weak-kneed cosmopolitan" to a "fanatical anti-Semite." In fact, what he calls his "greatest spiritual upheaval" was merely development from a groundless and almost elusive dislike to fixed hostility, from mere mood to ideology. The anti-Semitism of Linz had been of a dreamy sort, tending toward neighborly compromises; now it took on the sharpness of principle. It focused on a well-defined enemy. At the beginning of his stay in Vienna Hitler had sent "respectfully grateful" regards to Dr. Eduard Bloch, his parents' Jewish family doctor. Dr. Josef Feingold, the lawyer, and Morgenstern, the picture framer, had encouraged the would-be artist by buying his small water colors. Toward Neumann, his Jewish companion at the home for men, Hitler had felt an exaggerated sense of obligation. Now, during the process of change that continued for several years, all these marginal figures of his youth started to recede into the background. Their place was taken by a vision that steadily acquired an almost mythological power, the "apparition in a long caftan and black hair locks" which once struck him "as I was strolling through the Inner City." He forcefully described how this chance impression "twisted" in his brain and gradually began to become an obsession that dominated all his thinking:

Since I had begun to concern myself with this question and to take cognizance of the Jews, Vienna appeared to me in a different light than before. Wherever I went, I began to see Jews, and the more I saw the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity. Particularly the Inner City and the districts north of the Danube Canal swarmed with a people which even outwardly had lost all resemblance to Germans. . . . All this could scarcely be called very attractive, but it became positively repulsive when, in addition to their physical uncleanness, you discovered the moral stains on this "chosen people." . . . Was there any form of filth or profligacy, particularly in cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it? If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you found, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light—a kike! . . . Gradually I began to hate them.²⁰

* Dr. T. ~~He~~ and he would continue to see it that way.

We can probably no longer hate, which lasted later: his dubious cronies of the on the part of a dropout from an incident involving a half-Jewish rival, and an she was posing. The story The theory that Hitler's sexual fixations is support ideas about sexual relation bly between strained idea ported likewise by the lan wherever the figure of a which can be detected in tempts to deal with his re and superficial character: pamphlets and periodicals tions" of his youth. Rath the inner nature of his re:

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We can probably no longer plumb the real cause of this ever-growing hatred, which lasted literally to the last hour of Hitler's life. One of his dubious cronies of those years attributed the hatred to sexual envy on the part of a dropout from the middle class. This crony has described an incident involving a model, the essence of Germanic femininity, a half-Jewish rival, and an attempt on Hitler's part to rape the girl while she was posing. The story is as grotesque as it is stupidly plausible.²⁷ The theory that Hitler's anti-Semitism was connected with pathological sexual fixations is supported by the whole uneven pattern of Hitler's ideas about sexual relations, which from his boyhood oscillated remarkably between strained idealism and obscure anxiety feelings. It is supported likewise by the language and argumentation of his own account wherever the figure of a Jew enters the story. The scent of obscenity, which can be detected in all the pages of *Mein Kampf* in which he attempts to deal with his repugnance for Jews, is surely not an accidental and superficial characteristic. Nor is it merely an echo of the trashy pamphlets and periodicals to which he owed the unforgettable "illuminations" of his youth. Rather, in that obscenity his own personality and the inner nature of his resentment is revealed.

After the war a member of the dictator's entourage published an extensive list of the women in Adolf Hitler's life. Characteristically, the beautiful Jewish girl from a wealthy family figures in the list. It is far more likely that he had no "actual encounter with the girl," either in Linz or in Vienna. Or, if so, the affair would have been lacking the kind of passion that might have liberated the young man from his theatrical egocentrism.

Contrasting with this lack is a significant dream, the—in his own words—"nightmare vision of the seduction of hundreds and thousands of girls by repulsive, bandy-legged Jew bastards." Lanz, too, had been tormented by the recurrent bugbear of blonde noblewomen in the arms of dark, hairy seducers. His race theory was permeated by sexual-envy complexes and deep-seated antifemale emotions; woman, he maintained, had brought sin into the world, and her susceptibility to the lecherous wiles of bestial submen was the chief cause for the infection of Nordic blood. The same obsession, expressing the toils of a delayed and inhibited masculinity, emerges in a similar vision of Hitler's: "With satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her people." In both cases we have the fetid, insipid imagery of the sex-starved daydreamer; and it may well be that the peculiarly nasty vapors that rise from large tracts of National Socialist ideology derive from the phenomenon of repressed sexuality within the bourgeois world.²⁸

Kubizek, Hitler's boyhood friend, and other companions from the dim

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 * twilight of underground Vienna, have pointed out that Hitler had early on fallen out with everybody, that his hatred lashed out in all directions. It is conceivable, therefore, that his anti-Semitism was merely the concentrated form of his hitherto general and undirected hatred, which finally found its object in the Jews. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler argued that the masses must never be shown more than one enemy, because to be aware of several enemies would only arouse doubts. This principle, a number of writers have pointed out, applied to him even more than to the masses. He always concentrated his feelings with undivided intensity upon a single phenomenon as the presumptive cause of the evils in the world. And that phenomenon was always a specifically imaginable figure, never any elusive cluster of causes.

1909 Perhaps we may never be able to trace Hitler's overwhelming Jewish phobia down to its roots. But on the whole we may say that an ambitious and desperate loner was finding a formula for politicizing his personal problems. For he saw himself bit by bit going downhill and was forced to fend off his terror of being declassed. The apparition of the Jew helped to support his self-esteem; he could draw the conclusion that he had the laws of history and of nature on his side. Hitler's own account, incidentally, sustains the view that he became a full-fledged anti-Semite at the time he had used up his inheritance. Although he never suffered the utter destitution he later described, he was under some financial pressure, and at any rate had socially fallen much lower than he could bear, given his dreams of being an artist, a genius, the object of public adulation.

Vienna, the German bourgeois Vienna of the turn of the century, may be regarded as under the aegis of three men. Politically, it was the city of Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Karl Lueger. But in that peculiarly iridescent area where politics and art meet—that border region that so significantly determined Hitler's career—the overwhelmingly dominant figure was Richard Wagner. Ideologically, these three were the key personalities of his formative years.

We are told that in Vienna Hitler appeared as a disciple of Georg von Schönerer, that he had framed mottos by this man hanging over his bed: *Ohne Juda, ohne Rom/ wird gebaut Germaniens Dom. Heil!** And: *Wir schauen frei und offen, wir schauen unverwandt,/ wir schauen froh hinüber ins deutsche Vaterland. Heil!*†

These rhymed maxims gave the gist of von Schönerer's program. His Pan-German movement, unlike the association of the same name in Ger-

* We will build Germania's cathedral without the Jews and without Rome. *Heil!*

† We gaze frank and freely, we gaze steadily, we gaze cheerfully across the border into the German Fatherland. *Heil!*

* R.T.; He yearning about himself. He could change any tactical opinion in an instant, but he

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many, did not pursue expansionist imperialistic goals but worked instead for the union of all Germans in one national state. In marked contrast to the Pan-German Association of Germany, it was for giving up the non-German lands of the Danube Monarchy. In general it opposed the existence of the multinational state. The founder and leader of this movement, Georg von Schönerer was a landowner of the frontier Waldviertel, which was also the native soil of Hitler's family. He had begun his career as a radical democrat, but subsequently more and more subordinated ideas of political and social reform to extreme nationalism. Obsessed by fears of drowning in a sea of foreignness, he saw deadly threats to his Germanism all around him: from the Jews and equally from Roman Catholicism, from Slavs and Socialists, from the Hapsburg monarchy and every type of internationalism. He signed his letters "with German greetings"; he launched all sorts of proposals for reviving ancient Germanic customs; he recommended that German chronology begin with 113 B.C., date of the Battle of Noreia at which the Cimbri and the Teutons won a decisive victory over the Roman legions.

Schönerer was a difficult personality, deeply embittered, rigid in his principles. He organized the Away-from-Rome Movement, incurring the hostility of the Catholic Church. He was the first to give European hatred for the Jews, hitherto mostly religious and economic in its motivations, the twist that turned it into formal anti-Semitism with a political, social, and above all, biological basis. A demagogue with a keen sense for the effectiveness of primitive emotions, he led a general fight against the trend toward Jewish assimilation. "Religion's only a disguise, in the blood the foulness lies," ran one of his slogans. In the monomania with which he regarded the Jews as agents of all the evils and troubles of the world, and in the radicality of his declaration of war on them, he can be recognized as Hitler's forerunner. Within the tepid and tolerant atmosphere of old Austria, he was the first to demonstrate the possibilities inherent in organizing racial and national fears. Anxiously, he saw the day coming when the German minority would be overwhelmed and "slaughtered." To ward off that day, he demanded special anti-Jewish laws. His followers wore on their watch chains the insigne of the anti-Semite: a hanged Jew. There were some who spoke up in the Parliament at Vienna, calling for bounties to be awarded for every murdered Jew, either as a set payment or a portion of the victim's property.

Dr. Karl Lueger, the other spokesman for petty bourgeois anti-Semitism, evidently made an even more lasting impression upon Hitler. Lueger was the mayor of Vienna and the eloquent leader of the Christian Social Party. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler expressed his unequivocal admiration for Lueger, hailing him as "truly gifted," "the greatest German mayor of all times," and "the last great German to be born in . . . the Ostmark."²⁰ It is true that Hitler sharply criticized his program,

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especially his casual and opportunistic anti-Semitism and his faith in the multinational state. But Lueger's demagogic talent impressed him all the more, as did the mayor's adeptness at making use, for his own purposes, of the prevailing socialistic, Christian, and anti-Jewish impulses of the people.

Unlike Schönerer, whose arrogance and fixation aroused strong opposition and thus condemned him to ineffectiveness, Lueger was conciliatory, skillful, and popular. He merely exploited ideologies; privately, he despised them. His thinking was tactical and pragmatic; accomplishment meant more to him than ideas. In his fifteen years in office the transportation network of Vienna was modernized, the educational system extended, social welfare improved, green belts laid out, and almost a million jobs created. Lueger based his power on the Catholic working class and the petty bourgeoisie: white-collar workers and lower-rank government officials, small shopkeepers, the concierges and lower clergy, all of whom industrialization and changing times threatened with social downgrading or poverty. He, too—in this resembling Schönerer—profited by the widespread feelings of anxiety, but he exploited these feelings only against select and defeatable opponents. Moreover, he did not arouse more anxiety by painting the future in gloomy colors. Instead, he won support with infallibly effective humanitarian platitudes, vividly expressed in his recurrent phrase: "We must do something for the little man!"

1910

BUT Hitler admired Lueger for more than his Machiavellian qualities. He believed he had discovered a deeper concord between the mayor and himself. Certainly Lueger had things to teach him; but beyond that, Hitler regarded the man as a kindred soul. Like himself the son of simple folk, Lueger had made his way against all obstacles, all slurs and social disparagement. He had prevailed over even the objections of the Emperor, who three times refused to confirm him as mayor, and had won that recognition from society which Hitler, too, was bent on having. While Schönerer scotched his chances by making enemies, Lueger had worked his way up by continuously seeking and cementing alliances with the ruling groups. He had known how—as Hitler in his homage described the well-remembered lesson—"to make use of all existing implements of power, to incline mighty existing institutions in his favor, drawing from these old sources of power the greatest possible profit for his own movement."

The mass party Lueger formed with the aid of emotional slogans was living proof that anxiety was—as happiness had been a century before—a new idea in Europe, powerful enough to bridge even class interests. For the time being, the idea of a nationalistic socialism took much the same course. The Bohemian and Moravian regions of the Danube Monarchy were rapidly becoming industrialized. In 1904 a congress in

Trautenau founded the Arbeiterpartei). Its aim was against cheap Czech side and frequently there would be others—toward meeting a 1 to overcome national and humanitarian slogans. In the struggle for the German. In fact, the adherents largely from among them. They had turned away from concern that the political Czech majority in the Reich formulated it, was "mans of Central Europe."

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ance from his father, however, as well as his share in the sale of his parents' home—which for so long had provided him with the means for a carefree and untrammelled existence—appear to have been used up by the end of 1909. At any rate, he gave up the room on Simon Denk Gasse which he had sublet from September to November. Konrad Heiden, the author of the first important biography of Hitler, relates that at this time Hitler "sank into bitterest misery" and spent a few nights without shelter, sleeping on park benches and in cafés, until the advanced season forced him to seek shelter. November, 1908, was unusually cold; there was much rain, often mixed with snow.³² Sometime during this month Hitler queued up in front of the home for men in Meidling, a Vienna suburb. Here he met a vagabond named Reinhold Hanisch, who in an account he wrote in later years described how "after long wanderings on the roads of Germany and Austria I came to the Refuge for the Homeless in Meidling. On the wire cot to my left was a gaunt young man whose feet were quite sore from tramping the streets. Since I still had some bread that peasants had given me, I shared it with him. At that time I spoke a heavy Berlin dialect; he was enthusiastic about Germany. I had passed through his home town of Braunau on the Inn, so I could easily follow his stories."

For about seven months, until the summer of 1910, Hitler and Hanisch spent their time together in close friendship and joint business affairs. To be sure, this witness is not much more credible than all the others from this early phase of Hitler's life. Nevertheless, there are bits of Hanisch's story which ring true: that Hitler had the tendency to sit idly brooding, and that nothing would persuade him to go job hunting with his pal Hanisch. The contradiction between Hitler's longing for middle-class respectability and his real situation certainly never appeared more plainly than during those weeks in the flophouse, surrounded by broken-down derelicts, befriended by no one but the crudely cunning Reinhold Hanisch. In 1938, when he could do so, he had Hanisch tracked down and killed. At the height of his career, still needing to drown out the humiliating memory of those years, he insisted: "But in imagination I lived in palaces!"

The enterprising Hanisch, wise in the ways of the world, familiar with all the miseries and shifts open to his class, one day asked Hitler his occupation. Hitler replied that he was a painter. Assuming that Hitler meant a house painter, Hanisch said that he certainly should be able to earn money at such a trade. And, despite all our suspicions of Hanisch's reliability, we cannot help recognizing the young Hitler in the phrases that follow: "He was insulted and replied that he was not that kind of painter, but an academician and an artist." The two men eventually went into partnership—the idea seems to have come from Hanisch. Shortly before Christmas they moved into a kind of hostel, the

1910 home for men on Meldemann Strasse, in the Twentieth District of Vienna. By day, when regulations forbade staying in the tiny bedrooms, Hitler sat in the reading room perusing the newspapers or popular-science journals, or else copying postcards and lithographs of Viennese scenes. Hanisch sold these careful water colors to picture dealers, framers, and sometimes to upholsterers who, in the fashion of the day, "worked them into the high backs of easy chairs or sofas." The proceeds were shared on a fifty-fifty basis. Hitler himself felt that he would not be able to sell his works since he "could not be seen in his bedraggled clothes." Hanisch, however, maintains that he managed "sometimes to get a very good order, so that we could live fairly well."

1910 The inhabitants of the home for men came from all classes; the largest group consisted of young workers, both blue- and white-collar, with jobs in nearby factories and shops. In addition there were some solid, industrious small craftsmen. Hanisch mentions music copyists, sign painters, and monogram carvers. But more characteristic of the place and the neighborhood were the shipwrecked of various kinds, adventurers, bankrupt businessmen, gamblers, beggars, moneylenders, discharged army officers—flotsam and jetsam from all provinces of the multinational state. There were also the Jews from the eastern regions of the monarchy who, as door-to-door salesmen, peddlers, or knitware dealers were trying to rise. What linked them all was common wretchedness; what separated them was the desperate determination to escape from that world, to scramble out even at the expense of all others. "The lack of solidarity is the supreme characteristic of the great class of the declassed."³³

1910 Again, in the home for men Hitler had no friends aside from Hanisch. Those who knew him there remembered him as a fanatic; on the other hand, he himself spoke of his dislike for the Viennese personality, which he felt to be "obnoxious." Possibly he avoided friendships; intimacies of any kind irritated and exhausted him. What he became acquainted with, on the other hand, was that sort of camaraderie among ordinary people which simultaneously affords contact and anonymity, and offers a kind of loyalty that can be canceled at any time. This was an experience he was never to forget, and in the following years he repeatedly renewed it on the most varied social planes, with virtually unchanging personnel: in the trenches during the war; in the midst of his orderlies and chauffeurs, whose company he preferred as a party leader and later as Chancellor; and finally in the underground bunker of the Führer's headquarters. He always seemed to be repeating the life style of the home for men, which provided only distant forms of social life and in general neatly fitted into his concept of human relations. The management of the home considered him difficult, a political troublemaker.

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Hitler evidently argued Vienna years he was in contrast to the famous light keeping with the temper and Slavs, hated the He Party, and envisioned home for men did not sh

Radical alternatives, thinking. His hate-filled events of minor importance on only grandiose themes the reasons for his naïveté the nobly decorative, the gigantic aspirations, or helped to mask the ban Wagner brought him to vividly. Hitler himself late sketching his first plans grandiose projects fits instruction company instant and after a few experiments as the owner of a great air

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"Temper often rose," Hanisch later recalled. "The exchanges of hostile looks made the atmosphere distinctly uncomfortable."

Hitler evidently argued his views sharply and consistently. During the Vienna years he was in a constant state of perturbation, in strong contrast to the famous lightheartedness of the city but in fact far more in keeping with the temper of the times. He was obsessed by fears of Jews and Slavs, hated the House of Hapsburg and the Social Democratic Party, and envisioned the doom of Germanism. His fellows in the home for men did not share his paranoid emotions.

Radical alternatives, wild exaggerations formed the pattern of his thinking. His hate-filled mind pushed everything to extremes, magnified events of minor importance into metaphysical catastrophes. From early on only grandiose themes had attracted him. This tendency was one of the reasons for his naïve and reactionary leaning toward the heroic, the nobly decorative, the idealizing elements in art. Gods and heroes, gigantic aspirations, or horrendous superlatives stimulated him and helped to mask the banality of his circumstances. "In music Richard Wagner brought him to bright flames," Hanisch writes clumsily but vividly. Hitler himself later claimed that as far back as this he began sketching his first plans for the reconstruction of Berlin. His bent for grandiose projects fits into this context. A job in the office of a construction company instantly awoke his old dreams of being an architect; and after a few experiments with model planes he already saw himself as the owner of a great airplane factory and "rich, very rich."

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Meanwhile, reputedly through Greiner's mediation, he produced a poster advertising a hair tonic, another poster for a bed-feathers shop, another for an antiperspirant sold under the brand name "Teddy." A copy of this last poster, with Hitler's signature in a corner, has been found. It shows two rather stiff, clumsily drawn figures of letter carriers; one has sat down in exhaustion wringing heavy blue drops of sweat out of his sock; the other is informing his "dear brother" that 10,000 steps a day are "a pleasure with Teddy powder." In another poster that has come down to us the tower of St. Stephan's cathedral rises majestically above a mountain of soap. What Hitler himself considered noteworthy about this period of his life was that he was at last master of his own time. During the long hours he spent over the newspapers in cheap little cafés, he read by preference the anti-Semitic *Deutsches Volksblatt*.

If we were to define the characteristic quality of that period in the life of this eccentric, solitary twenty-year-old (Hitler, too, spoke of himself as having been "eccentric" at this time),³⁴ we should have to stress the essentially unpolitical nature of his interests. Richard Wagner was his idol during those years, not only "in music." In fact, Hitler saw Wagner's early disappointments, lack of recognition, and obstinate faith in his own vocation, a "life flowing into the glory of world fame,"³⁵ as a prototype

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of his own destiny. Hitler was not the only victim to be seduced by that romantic concept of genius whose merits and failings Richard Wagner embodied. Because of Wagner a whole generation was confused, misguided, and alienated from the bourgeois world.

The boy who fled the disciplines of school and then fell prey to the delusive promises of the big city found his idol in the Master of Bayreuth. Many young men of his generation followed the same course, and with similarly exalted expectations. It was a way with great appeal to gifted "outsiders" who otherwise would have no choice but to sink into mediocrity. It may surprise us to find that this unprepossessing son of a Linz customs official represents so typical a phenomenon. With the turn of the century legions of these sons of the nineteenth-century middle class made their appearance. In 1906 Hermann Hesse, in *Under the Wheel*, vividly described the sufferings of one such youth under contemporary conditions and gave a dismal forecast of his future. Robert Musil, in *Young Törless*, and Frank Wedekind, in *The Awakening of Spring*, were among the many writers who dealt with the same theme. Whether these heroes sought escape from the toils of the world or went down to destruction, all of them opposed to the bourgeois world a wild enthusiasm for the arts. They despised their fathers' mean accomplishments and felt only contempt for their values. By contrast, an artist's existence was noble, precisely because it was socially unfruitful. Everything that stood for order, duty, endurance, they dismissed as "bourgeois." The bourgeois mentality, they maintained, promoted efficiency but did not tolerate the extraordinary. The tremendous intensifications of true culture, on the other hand, the glories of the "spirit," could be achieved only in isolation, in extreme human and social aloofness. The artist, the genius, the complex personality in general, was bound to be utterly out of place in the bourgeois world. His true locale was far out on the fringes of society, where the morgue for suicides and the pantheon for immortals were both situated—as Henri Murger, the first analyst of this type bathetically observed. Though the lodging-houses to which Hitler betook himself were squalid, though his notion of being an artist was ridiculously highflown; though no one so far had acknowledged his talent; though his actual life in the home for men was marked by deceit, parasitism, and asociality—all this could be secretly justified in terms of the prevailing concept of genius. And Richard Wagner was the supreme example of the validity of that concept.

Hitler himself, in fact, later declared that with the exception of Richard Wagner he had "no forerunners," and by Wagner he meant not only the composer, but Wagner the personality, "the greatest prophetic figure the German people has had." One of his favorite ideas, to which he returned frequently, concerned Wagner's towering importance "for

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the development of German man." He admired the courage and energy with which Wagner exerted political influence "without really wishing to be political," and on one occasion admitted that a "literally hysterical excitement" overcame him when he recognized his own psychological kinship with this great man.³⁶

The parallels are, in fact, not at all hard to detect. The points of contact between the two temperaments—all the more marked because the young postcard painter consciously modeled himself after his hero—produce a curious sense of family resemblance, which Thomas Mann first pointed out in his disturbing essay *Brother Hitler*. In 1938, when Hitler was at the height of his peacetime triumphs, Mann wrote:

Must we not, even against our will, recognize in this phenomenon an aspect of the artist's character? We are ashamed to admit it, but the whole pattern is there: the recalcitrance, sluggishness and miserable indefiniteness of his youth; the dimness of purpose, the what-do-you-really-want-to-be, the vegetating like a semi-idiot in the lowest social and psychological bohemianism, the arrogant rejection of any sensible and honorable occupation because of the basic feeling that he is too good for that sort of thing. On what is this feeling based? On a vague sense of being reserved for something entirely indefinable. To name it, if it could be named, would make people burst out laughing. Along with that, the uneasy conscience, the sense of guilt, the rage at the world, the revolutionary instinct, the subconscious storing up of explosive cravings for compensation, the churning determination to justify oneself, to prove oneself. . . . It is a thoroughly embarrassing kinship. Still and all, I would not want to close my eyes to it.³⁷

But there are other striking parallels between Hitler and Wagner: the uncertainty about ancestry, the failure at school, the flight from military service, the morbid hatred of Jews, even the vegetarianism, which in Wagner ultimately developed into the ludicrous delusion that humanity must be saved by vegetarian diet. Also common to both was the violent quality of their moods: the abrupt alternation of depressions and exaltations, triumphs and disasters. In many of Richard Wagner's operas the theme is the classic conflict between the outsider, subject only to his own laws, and a rigid social order governed by tradition. In *Rienzi* or *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*, Hitler, the rejected Academy candidate sitting over his water colors in the reading room of the home for men, recognized magnified aspects of his own confrontation with the world. Both Wagner and Hitler, moreover, possessed a furious will to power, a basically despotic tendency. All of Richard Wagner's art has never been able to conceal to what extent its underlying urge was the boundless need to dominate. From this impulse sprang the taste for massive effects, for pomposity, for overwhelming hugeness. Wagner's first major composition after *Rienzi* was a choral work for 1,200 male voices and an orchestra of one hundred. This blatant reliance on mass effects, em-

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ployed to cover up basic weaknesses, this medley of pagan, ritual and music-hall elements anticipated the era of mass hypnosis. The style of public ceremonies in the Third Reich is inconceivable without this operatic tradition, without the essentially demagogical art of Richard Wagner.

Another point in common was a kind of cunning knowledge of the popular mind along with a remarkable insensitivity to banality. This combination resulted in an air of plebeian pretentiousness in which again they were remarkably similar. Gottfried Keller once called the composer a "barber and charlatan"; similarly, a contemporary observer described Hitler, with the acuteness born of hatred, as having "the aura of a head-waiter"; another spoke of him as a speechmaking sex murderer.³⁸ The element of vulgarity and unsavoriness that phrases of this sort tried to catch was present in both Hitler and Wagner. They were masters of the art of brilliant fraudulence, of inspired swindling. And just as Richard Wagner could call himself a revolutionary yet pride himself on his friendship with a king ("Wagner, the government bandleader," *misc* Karl Marx said scornfully), so Hitler, in his vague dreams of mounting the social ladder, reconciled his hatred of society with his opportunistic instincts. Wagner dismissed the patent contradictions in his views by declaring that art was the goal of life and that the artist made the ultimate decisions. It was the artist who would intervene to save the situation wherever "the statesman despairs, the politician gives up, the socialist vexes himself with fruitless systems, and even the philosopher can only interpret but cannot prophesy." His doctrine then was that of the aesthetician who would subordinate life entirely to the dictates of the artist. The state was to be raised to the heights of a work of art; politics would be renewed and perfected by the spirit inherent in art. Elements of this program are clearly visible in the theatricalization of public life in the Third Reich, the regime's passion for histrionics, the staginess of its practical politics—a staginess that often appeared to be the sole end of the politics.

There are still other parallels. The innate tendency toward "dilettantism," which Friedrich Nietzsche noted even while Wagner was still his admired friend, was likewise a trait of Hitler's. In both men there was the same striking need to intervene officiously in all sorts of spheres; both had to be forever proving themselves, dazzling the world with their many talents. Yesterday's glory rapidly turned stale for both of them; they had constantly to be surpassing themselves. In both cases we find an outrageous pettiness side by side with far-ranging inspiration; this very conjunction seems to have defined their peculiar mentality.

Hitler, to be sure, entirely lacked the self-discipline and the artist's capacity for taking pains that distinguished Wagner. Hitler's lethargy, his almost narcotized dullness, are his alone. But at bottom we find in

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Hitler's theatrical, essen the vein of Richard Wagner. Once, after days of "demonstration of Viennese recollected fifteen years those "endless columns for hours, he says, he stood "a dragon slowly winding b anxiety" and went home. ances, was the theatrical el a word about the backgro onstration. Evidently these of how to achieve such brooded on theatrical prot politician were matters of the importance his friend, i to "the most magnificent admirer of Hitler could not he never forgot the "enor anything Richard Wagner pletely in the shade."³⁹

In retrospect, Hitler laid During the approximately 1 he read "enormously and visiting the opera, he wro would probably be more a phase of his life stemmed from that of demagogy an a declassed bourgeois fille fear of intimacy, he kept c their lunch. Nevertheless wrangles. When his fellow: him off the scaffolding, h later put it, with an under simple method existed to c anybody who dared to op

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with his political awakening are extremely scanty on theory; they do not suggest that grappling with the ideas of the time which he claims to have engaged in. Rather, he uncritically followed the existing, widespread ideology of the German bourgeoisie. On the other hand, questions of the manipulation of ideas, of their power over the masses, aroused his eager interest and produced his first flashes of insight.

In the Vienna period we can already see those themes emerging which haunt many of his later utterances: the persistent search for "those who are behind it," the "secret wirepuller" who makes a dupe of the masses. Hanisch tells how one day Hitler emerged "altogether overwhelmed" from a movie based on the novel *The Tunnel* (*Der Tunnel*), by Bernhard Kellermann, in which one of the chief characters was a popular orator. "Henceforth there were eloquent speeches in the Home for Men," Hanisch reports. And Josef Greiner tells of having once referred Hitler to a woman named Anna Csillag who sold a hair-growing lotion by means of false testimonials. For almost an hour, Greiner's story goes, Hitler waxed enthusiastic about the woman's skill and the vast potentialities of psychological persuasion. "Propaganda, propaganda!" he is supposed to have raved. "You must keep it up until it creates a faith and people no longer know what is imagination and what reality." Propaganda, he is quoted as saying, is "the fundamental essence of every religion . . . whether of heaven or hair tonic."

These accounts are dubious. We are on firmer ground when we read what Hitler himself had to say about his study of Social Democratic practice: its propaganda, its demonstrations, and its speeches. The lessons he derived were to shape his own approach:

The psyche of the great masses is not receptive to anything that is half-hearted or weak.

Like a woman, whose psychic state is determined less by grounds of abstract reason than by an indefinable emotional longing for a force which will complement her nature, and who, consequently, would rather bow to a strong man than dominate a weakling, likewise the masses love a commander more than a petitioner and feel inwardly more satisfied by a doctrine tolerating no other beside itself than by the granting of liberalistic freedom with which, as a rule, they can do little, and are prone to feel that they have been abandoned. They are equally unaware of their shameless spiritual terrorization and the hidden abuse of their human freedom, for they absolutely fail to suspect the inner insanity of the whole doctrine. All they see is the ruthless force and brutality of its calculated manifestations, to which they always submit in the end. . . . I achieved an equal understanding of the importance of physical terror toward the individual and the masses.

Here, too, the psychological effect can be calculated with precision.

*Terror at the place of employment, in the factory, in the meeting hall, and on the occasion of mass demonstrations will always be successful unless opposed by equal terror.*⁴⁰

At the beginning of August spent several days painting a in the style of a classical temple piece on German soil." His at self. At any rate, he thought Hanisch claimed he had sold his partner then stayed away arrested and instituted legal (1910) Hanisch was sentenced that the court was preterred at the home for men u buyer's widow subsequently d only about ten crowns for the witness.

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At the beginning of August Hitler and Hanisch quarreled. Hitler had spent several days painting a view of the Vienna Parliament, a building in the style of a classical temple, which he had called "a Hellenic masterpiece on German soil." His admiration evidently led him to outdo himself. At any rate, he thought the picture was worth fifty crowns, but Hanisch claimed he had sold it for only ten. They quarreled, and when his partner then stayed away for some time, Hitler abruptly had him arrested and instituted legal proceedings. At the trial, on August 11, 1910, Hanisch was sentenced to seven days in jail. He subsequently asserted that the court was prejudiced against him because he was registered at the home for men under the false name of Fritz Walter. The buyer's widow subsequently declared that her husband had indeed paid only about ten crowns for the picture; but Hanisch did not call him as a witness.

Subsequently, a Jewish companion named Neumann, who also lived in the home for men hawked Hitler's pictures, and on occasion even Hitler himself conquered his embarrassment and went after his customers himself.

Hitler spent three and a half of his formative years in this setting. We can well understand how repellent it would all have been to an artistically inclined young man full of high-flown ambitions. Even years later, by his own testimony, he shuddered with horror at the memory of the "sordid scenes of garbage, repulsive filth, and worse." Characteristically, he felt no compassion.

His experiences and circumstances during this phase of his life helped Hitler arrive at that philosophy of struggle that became the central core of his view of the world, its "granite foundation," as he stressed, which he had no need of ever again changing. The views he formed from his contacts with the inmates in the home for men came to the fore again and again in later years, whenever he professed his belief in brutal struggle, in harshness, cruelty, destruction, the rights of the stronger—as he did in countless speeches and discussions, in the pages of his book, and in his table talk at the Führer's headquarters during the war. He never forgot the lessons he had learned in that school for meanness in Vienna.

Nevertheless, the component of Social Darwinism in Hitler's thought cannot be attributed solely to his personal experiences in the home for men. He was really reflecting the tendency of the age. Science had become the one truly unchallenged authority. As the laws of evolution and selection put forth by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer were popularized in numerous pseudoscientific publications, the average man soon came to know that the "struggle for existence" was the fundamental principle of life, the "survival of the fittest" the basic law govern-

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underlay his racial theory of history from the Hapsburg multinational state. In his best known work, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899), he interpreted European history—in a series of bold hypotheses—as the history of racial struggle. He regarded the decline of the Roman Empire as the classical model of historical decadence resulting from contamination of blood lines. Like declining Rome, he posited, the Dual Monarchy was being swamped by the admixture of Oriental races; the “disease” was advancing at a furious pace. In both cases “not one specific nation, not just one people or one race” was causing disintegration, but “a motley agglomeration” of races who in their turn were the consequence of multiple mixings. “Easy talents, and also, peculiar beauty, what the French call *un charme troublant*, is frequently characteristic of bastards. Nowadays this can daily be observed in cities where, as in Vienna, a wide variety of races meet. But at the same time one can also perceive the peculiar spinelessness, the low resistance, the lack of character, in short, the moral degeneration of such people.”⁴¹

Chamberlain carried the parallel even further, comparing the Teutons thronging to the gates of Rome with the noble race of Prussians who had rightly been victorious in their clash with the racially chaotic Austro-Hungarian monarchy. But the mood of this elitist individualist was far from being cocky, was rather one of anxiety and defensiveness. In recurrent pessimistic visions he saw the Teutons “on the brink of the racial abyss,” engaged “in a mute life-and-death struggle.” He was tormented by fantasies of bastardization: “It is still morning, but again and again the powers of darkness stretch out their octopus arms, fasten their sucking cups on us in a hundred places and try to draw us back into the darkness.”

Hitler's Social Darwinist views, therefore, were not simply the “philosophy of the doss-house.”⁴² Rather, they show him once again in harmony with the bourgeois age, whose product and destroyer he was. He merely picked up the kind of ideas current in the newspapers he found in cheap cafés, in the books and pamphlets on newsstands, in operas, and in the speechifying of cynical politicians. His experiences in the home for men were reflected only in the whiff of corruption that rises like a penetrating stench from his theories. Of similar origin was the ugly vocabulary that came to his lips, even when he was a statesman and master of a continent, so that he would speak of the “filthy trash from the East,” the “swinish pack of parsons,” the “crippled dung art,” or would characterize Churchill as a “hopeless square-snout,” and the Jews as “this vilest sow's brood that ought to be beaten to a pulp.”⁴³

Hitler absorbed the complex notions that gave his period its mood and peculiar coloration, absorbed them with that heightened sensitivity which was in fact the only quality he shared with the artist. Along with anti-Semitism and Social Darwinism, the age passed on to him the

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nationalistic missionary faith that was the obverse of pessimistic anxiety dreams. His views, highly confused and haphazardly arranged, also contained scraps drawn from the broader intellectual fads of the turn of the century: skepticism about reason and humanity, romantic glorification of blood and instinct. Oversimplified interpretations of Nietzsche's sermons about the strength and radiant amorality of the superman also formed part of this stock of ideas. It is worth noting, however, that it was Nietzsche who remarked that the nineteenth century took over from Schopenhauer not his desire for clarity and rationality, or his doctrine of the intellectual nature of intuition, but—"determined to be barbarously fascinated and seduced"—his unprovable doctrine of the will, his denial of the individual, his ravings about genius, his hatred of the Jews, and his hostility to science.

Once again Richard Wagner enters the picture—Nietzsche used the example of Wagner to illustrate this misunderstanding of Schopenhauer. For the Master of Bayreuth was not only Hitler's great exemplar; he was also the young man's ideological mentor. Wagner's political writings were Hitler's favorite reading, and the sprawling pomposity of his style unmistakably influenced Hitler's own grammar and syntax. Those political writings, together with the operas, form the entire framework for Hitler's ideology: Darwinism and anti-Semitism ("I hold the Jewish race to be the born enemy of pure humanity and everything noble in man"), the adoration of barbarism and Germanic might, the mystique of blood purification expressed in *Parsifal*, and the general histrionic view in which good and evil, purity and corruption, rulers and the ruled, stand opposed in black and white contrasts. The curse of gold, the inferior race grubbing underground, the conflict between Siegfried and Hagen, the tragic genius of Wotan—this strange brew compounded of bloody vapors, dragon slaying, mania for domination, treachery, sexuality, elitism, paganism, and ultimately salvation and tolling bells on a theatrical Good Friday were the perfect ideological match for Hitler's anxieties and needs. Here he found the "granite foundations" for his view of the world.

Hitler called the Vienna years "the hardest, though most thorough school of my life"; when he left it, he declared, he had "grown quiet and serious." He hated the city ever after for the rejection and insults he had suffered there—in this, too, resembling his model, Richard Wagner, who never overcame his grudge against Paris for the disappointments of his youth and had visions of the city going down to destruction in smoke and flames.⁴⁴ It is not far-fetched to suspect that Hitler's subsequent plans for turning Linz into a cultural metropolis on the Danube were inspired by resentment toward Vienna. Although he may not have gone so far as to wish the city burned to the ground, the fact is that in Decem-

ber, 1944, he refused to leave the city, remarking that that was like.

His uncertainty at the end of 1910 and the considerable sum of additional funds for a new beginning passed by." He still went on cherishing his dreams, but did nothing to make them ambitious with which he continued his life, confers upon him. He avoided being put in his relationships tentatively being identified as a son to his claim to mine in the home for men own promise of genius.

His principal fear in his dream. He was at declared, he had "in pilgrimage, which period 'of law and order' fate."⁴⁵ This much upheaval could close to his dreams, he was to a life of disillusion.

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ber, 1944, he refused a request for additional anti-aircraft units for the city, remarking that Vienna might just as well find out what bomb warfare was like.

His uncertainty about his future increasingly depressed him. At the end of 1910 and the beginning of 1911 he appears to have received a considerable sum of money from his aunt, Johanna Pölzl. But these additional funds produced in him no initiative, no effort to make a serious new beginning. He continued to drift aimlessly: "So the weeks passed by." He still pretended that he was a student, painter, or writer. He went on cherishing vague hopes of a career in architecture. But he did nothing to make a reality of any of these pretensions. Only his dreams were ambitious, directed toward a great destiny. The persistence with which he continued to dream in the face of the actual conditions of his life, confers upon this period a striking note of inner consistency. He avoided being pinned down by anything, persisted in keeping all his relationships tentative. His refusal to enter the union saved him from being identified as a member of the proletariat and allowed him to hang on to his claim to middle-class status. Similarly, as long as he remained in the home for men and did nothing in particular, he could believe his own promise of genius and future fame.

His principal fear was that the circumstances of the times might block his dream. He was afraid of an uneventful era. Even as a boy, he later declared, he had "indulged in angry thoughts concerning my earthly pilgrimage, which . . . had begun too late" and had "regarded the period 'of law and order' ahead . . . as a mean and undeserved trick of fate."⁴⁶ This much he sensed: that only a chaotic future and social upheaval could close the gap that separated him from reality. Wedded to his dreams, he was one of those who would prefer a life of disaster to a life of disillusionment.

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Chapter 4

1913

I had to get out into the great Reich,
the land of my dreams and my longing.

Adolf Hitler

THE FLIGHT TO MUNICH

On May 24, 1913, Hitler left Vienna and moved to Munich. He was twenty-four years old, a despondent young man who gazed out upon an uncomprehending world with a mixture of yearning and bitterness. The disappointments of the preceding years had reinforced the brooding, withdrawn strain in his nature. He left no friends behind. In keeping with his antirealistic temperament, he tended to feel closest to those who were beyond reach: Richard Wagner, Ritter von Schönerer, Lueger. That "foundation" of his "personal views," acquired "under the pressure of fate," consisted of an assortment of prejudices which from time to time, after periods of vague brooding, were discharged in passionate outbursts. He left Vienna, as he later remarked, "a confirmed anti-Semite, a deadly foe of the whole Marxist world outlook, and pan-German."

Like all such self-descriptions, this one has plainly been tailored so that Hitler can pretend to early judgment in political matters. He practiced the same kind of tailoring in writing *Mein Kampf*. In fact, his moving to Munich, rather than Berlin, the capital of the Reich, is rather plain proof of his continuing unpolitical disposition. Or perhaps we should say that he was guided by romantic and artistic impulses far more than political motives. For prewar Munich had the reputation of being a city of the Muses, a charming, humanely sensual, lighthearted center of art and science. The "life style of the painter was regarded here as the most legitimate of all."⁴⁰ This picture of the city stemmed precisely from the contrast it made to noisily modern, proletarian Berlin. The latter city was a Babylon, in which social questions took precedence over aesthetics, ideologies over culture—or, in sum, politics over art. The atmosphere of Munich was more like that of Vienna, which again suggests that Hitler was drawn there by a general feeling rather than by

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any specific reasons that would have made him choose it in preference to Berlin—if, indeed, he felt confronted with any choice at all. In the *Reich Handbook of German Society* (a kind of *Who's Who*) for 1931 he explained that he had moved to Munich to find "a wider field for political activity." He would have found, however, better conditions in the capital of the Reich.

The same torpor and friendlessness that had marked the years in Vienna continued in Munich. It rather seems as if he spent his youth in a great hollow space. He made no contacts with parties or political factions; and ideologically, too, he remained solitary. Munich was an intellectually restive city, whose whole aura favored human relationships. Here even obsessions were highly thought of, for they betokened originality. Yet even here the young Hitler formed ties with nobody. He could have found his way to those who shared his racist notions, for even the most bizarre variants of *völkisch* ideas had their place in the city. Anti-Semitism also flourished, especially in the economically dislocated petty bourgeoisie. There were also radical leftist movements of widely differing character. It is true that all these tendencies were softened by the climate of Munich and usually expressed in sociable, rhetorical, neighborly forms. In the then suburb of Schwabing anarchists, bohemians, reformers, artists, and various apostles of new principles mingled easily. Pale young geniuses dreamed of an elitist renewal of the world, of redemptions, cataclysmic purgations, and barbarous rejuvenation cures for degenerate mankind.

At the center of one of the most important of those circles that formed at café tables around individuals or ideas was the poet Stefan George. He had gathered around him a band of highly talented disciples who imitated him in his contempt for bourgeois morality, glorification of youth and of instinct, faith in the superman, and an austere ideal of life as art and the life of the artist. One of his disciples, Alfred Schuler, had rediscovered the forgotten swastika. Ludwig Klages, who for a time was close to George, proclaimed "mind as the antagonist of the soul."

Oswald Spengler, at that period, was setting out to proclaim the decline of the West and announcing a line of new Caesars who would, for a time, stem the tide. Lenin had lived at 106 Schleissheimer Strasse, and at number 34 on the same street, only a few blocks away, Adolf Hitler now took a room as a tenant in the apartment of a tailor named Popp.

The intellectual ferment, like the artistic experimentation of the period, passed Hitler by in Munich as it had in Vienna. Vassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, or Paul Klee, who also lived in the Schwabing neighborhood and were opening new dimensions in painting, meant nothing to Hitler. Throughout all the months he lived in Munich he remained the modest postcard copyist who had his visions, his nightmares, and his

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the large or small scale which Fate would allot me, to dedicate my sincere services to the nation.

But finally I wanted to enjoy the happiness of living and working in the place which some day would inevitably bring about the fulfillment of my most ardent and heartfelt wish: the union of my beloved homeland with the common fatherland, the German Reich.⁴⁷

It is possible that he did have some such yearnings. Other factors of greater or lesser weight conceivably contributed to the decision. He himself later confessed that he had never been able "to learn the Viennese jargon." He had also decided that the city and Austria as a whole "in the field of cultural and artistic matters . . . showed all symptoms of degeneration." Thus there were no opportunities for him as an aspiring architect, and he was simply wasting his time. "The new architecture could achieve no special successes in Austria, if for no other reason because since the completion of the Ring its tasks, in Vienna at least, had become insignificant. . . ."⁴⁸

But all these reasons were not the decisive ones. What actuated him was once again his repugnance toward normality, his horror of the rules and obligations to which everyone else was subject. In the 1950's the military records pertaining to Adolf Hitler came to light again; in March, 1938, immediately after the invasion of Austria, he had ordered a feverish search for these papers. The documents make it plain beyond a doubt that in moving to Munich he was determined to escape his military obligations. In order to conceal the facts, he registered with the police in Munich as stateless. In *Mein Kampf* he also falsified the date of his departure from Vienna. Actually he left the city not in the spring of 1912, as he maintained, but in May of the following year.

For a time the Austrian authorities searched for him fruitlessly. On August 22, 1913, a Constable Zauner of Linz, who was conducting the investigation, noted: "Adolf Hietler [sic] appears to be registered with the police neither in this city nor in Urfahr, nor can he be located in other places." Hitler's former guardian, Josef Mayrhofer, could provide no information about his whereabouts; and the two sisters, Angela and Paula, when queried about their brother, declared that they had "known nothing about him since 1908." Inquiries in Vienna, however, disclosed that he had moved to Munich and was registered there at 34 Schleissheimer Strasse. On the afternoon of January 18, 1914, an official of the criminal police suddenly turned up at this address, arrested the wanted man, and the following day took him to the Austrian consulate.

The charge he faced was serious, and Hitler, after having imagined himself quite safe, was in imminent danger of a prison sentence. This was one of those prosaic incidents which, like so many later ones, might have changed the whole direction of his career. For with the disgrace of draft dodging on his record it was scarcely likely that Hitler could

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have mobilized a following of millions and created his paramilitary forces.

But again, as was to happen repeatedly, chance came to his aid. The Linz authorities had given him so little time to report that it was impossible for him to obey the summons. A postponement afforded him the opportunity to draw up a carefully calculated written statement. In a letter of several pages to the Linz Magistracy, Section II—the most voluminous and important document of his youth—he attempted to justify his conduct. The letter shows that his spelling and command of German were still deficient. Beyond that, it reveals that his life in Munich had remained as irregular and aimless as it was during his Vienna years.

In the summons I am called an artist. Although I am rightly accorded this title, it is nevertheless only conditionally correct. It is true that I earn my living as a free-lance painter, but only, since I am entirely without property (my father was a government official), in order to further my education. I am able to devote only a fraction of my time to earning a living, since I am still training myself as an architectural painter. Therefore my income is a very modest one, just large enough for me to get along.

I submit as evidence of this my tax statement and request you kindly to return this document to me. My income is estimated as 1200 marks, rather too much than too little, and does not mean that I make exactly 100 marks a month. Oh no. My monthly income is extremely variable, but certainly very bad right now, since the art trade sort of goes into its winter sleep around this time in Munich . . .

The explanation he offered for his conduct was extremely flimsy. He had missed his first notice to report but shortly afterward had reported of his own accord, only to have his documents lost in the bureaucratic channels. In lachrymose accents, full of self-pity and a servile cunning, he attempted to excuse the omission on the grounds of his desperate circumstances during his years in Vienna:

As far as my sin of omission in the autumn of 1909 is concerned, this was a terribly bitter time for me. I was an inexperienced young man, without any financial aid and also too proud to accept any from anyone, let alone to ask for it. Without any support, dependent on myself alone, the few crowns or often coppers I earned from my works were scarcely sufficient to provide me with a bed. For two years I had no other friend but care and need, no other companion but eternally gnawing hunger. I never knew the beautiful word youth. Today, even after five years, I have the mementos in the form of chilblain sores on my fingers, hands and feet. And yet I cannot recall this period without a certain rejoicing, now that I am after all over the worst. In spite of the greatest misery, in the midst of often more than dubious surroundings, I have always preserved my name unsullied, am altogether blameless before the law, and pure before my own conscience. . . .

Some two weeks later, on February 5, 1914, Hitler appeared before

the draft board in Salzburg which the candidate had "Unfit for military and arms."⁴⁰ He immediately

By all indications, Hitler later spoke of the "heart" his first moment there. That in his vocabulary. He spoke of rustic strength and fit Hofbräuhaus to the Odeon. Significantly, he does not mention perfection. He continued to be but he seems to have been relationships. Actually, he his landlord, the tailor Po and engaged in a certain with them. For the rest, where origins and status acceptable—the kind of his stand because it afforded the loose, chance acquaint and easily lost. These were he was considered "educated" encountered more agreeable the shakiness of the German-Austrian Alliance Hapsburgs, the Jews, or favored outsiders and as a sign of genius, such view him, he frequently began excessively he behaved, so to predict political developments.

Later, he declared that come a painter and that that he would be able to newspapers in cafés or irritated. Sometimes, amid of the scene around him, he carried with him Munich at that time and in the future. Hitler answered shortly in any case so to a profession beforehand, no more important than

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the draft board in Salzburg. The record of his physical examination, which the candidate had to sign, and which bears his signature, read: "Unfit for military and auxiliary service; too weak. Incapable of bearing arms."⁴⁰ He immediately returned to Munich.

By all indications, Hitler was not altogether unhappy in Munich. He later spoke of the "heartfelt love" this city had inspired in him from his first moment there. This was a phrase that did not normally occur in his vocabulary. He applied it above all to "the wonderful marriage of rustic strength and fine artistic mood, this unique line from the Hofbräuhaus to the Odeon, from the October Fest to the Pinakothek." Significantly, he does not adduce any political motive to explain his affection. He continued to be solitary, holing up on Schleissheimer Strasse; but he seems to have been as unaware as ever of his lack of human relationships. Actually, he did form a rather tenuous connection with his landlord, the tailor Popp, and with the latter's neighbors and friends, and engaged in a certain amount of socializing and political discussion with them. For the rest, he evidently found in the Schwabing taverns—where origins and status counted for nothing and everyone was socially acceptable—the kind of human contact that was the only kind he could stand because it afforded him closeness and strangeness simultaneously: the loose, chance acquaintanceships over a glass of beer, easily formed and easily lost. These were those "small circles" he later spoke of, where he was considered "educated." Here, for the first time, he apparently encountered more agreement than disagreement when he expatiated on the shakiness of the Dual Monarchy, the dire potentialities of the German-Austrian Alliance, the anti-German, pro-Slavic policy of the Hapsburgs, the Jews, or the salvation of the nation. In a milieu that favored outsiders and assumed that eccentric opinions and manners were a sign of genius, such views did not seem peculiar. If a question excited him, he frequently began to shout; but what he said, no matter how excessively he behaved, struck his listeners as consistent. He also liked to predict political developments in prophetic tones.

Later, he declared that by this time he had given up all plans to become a painter and that he painted only enough to earn a living so that he would be able to pursue his studies. For hours he sat over the newspapers in cafés or in the Hofbräuhaus, brooding, sallow, easily irritated. Sometimes, amid the fumes of beer, he dashed down vignettes of the scene around him, or a rendering of an interior in the sketch pad he carried with him. Josef Greiner claims to have met him in Munich at that time and to have asked what he had in mind to do in the future. Hitler answered, Greiner says, "that there would be a war shortly in any case so that it did not matter whether or not he had a profession beforehand, because in the army a corporation director was no more important than a dog barber."

Hitler's premonition—if Greiner has reported it accurately—was not mistaken. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler has impressively described the earthquake atmosphere of the prewar years, the intangible, almost unendurable feeling of tension on the verge of discharge. It is surely not accidental that these sentences stand out as among the most successful passages in the book, as writing:

As early as my Vienna period, the Balkans were immersed in that vivid sultriness which customarily announces the hurricane, and from time to time a beam of brighter light flared up, only to vanish again in the spectral darkness. But then came the Balkan War and with it the first gust of wind swept across a Europe grown nervous. The time which now followed lay on the chests of men like a heavy nightmare, sultry as feverish tropic heat, so that due to constant anxiety the sense of the approaching catastrophe turned at last to longing: let Heaven at last give free rein to the fate which could no longer be thwarted. And then the first mighty lightning flash struck the earth; the storm was unleashed and with the thunder of Heaven there mingled the roar of the World War batteries.⁵⁰

By chance a photograph has been preserved in which Adolf Hitler can be seen in the cheering crowd on the Odeonsplatz in Munich when the state of war was proclaimed on August 1, 1914. His face is plainly recognizable: the half-open mouth, the burning eyes, which at last have a goal and see a future. For this day liberated him from all the embarrassments, the perplexities, and the loneliness of failure. Describing his own emotions in *Mein Kampf*, he wrote:

To me those hours seemed like a release from the painful feelings of my youth. Even today I am not ashamed to say that, overpowered by stormy enthusiasm, I fell down on my knees and thanked Heaven from an overflowing heart.

Virtually the whole era shared this emotion; seldom had Europe seemed more unified than it was in the martial frenzy of those August days in 1914. One did not have to be an artistic wastrel with no prospects to regard the day on which the war "broke out and swept away the peace" . . . as "beautiful for a sacred moment" and even to feel that it satisfied an "ethical yearning."⁵¹ The whole European world, including Germany, was suffering from profound ennui. The war seemed an opportunity to escape from the miseries of normality. Here again we may see Hitler's intense attunement to his time. He shared its needs and longings, but more sharply, more radically; whereas his contemporaries felt mere discontent, he felt desperation. He hoped that the war would overturn all relationships, all starting points. And wherever the resort to arms was cheered, people sensed, at bottom, that an age was at last coming to its end and a new one was in the making. *Fin de siècle*—that was the formula in which the bourgeois age, with more than

He was right
* D.F. The century did not end in
1914 but in 1918

a touch of melancholy. In keeping with this, viewed as a purification, weariness with in "sacred hymns" creating chaos and Sir Edward Grey, of the war that the ing at the end of exulted at this end

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a touch of melancholy complacency, summed up this mood of farewell. In keeping with the romanticizing tendencies of the age, the war was viewed as a purification process, the great hope of liberation from mediocrity, weariness with life, and self-disgust. And so the war was hailed in "sacred hymns"; it was described as "the orgasm of universal life," creating chaos and fructifying it so that the new might be born.⁵² When Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, declared at the outbreak of the war that the lights were going out all over Europe, he was sorrowing at the end of civilization as he knew it. But there were many who exulted at this end.

Photographs taken during those early days of August, 1914, have preserved the hectic air of festivity, the gay expectancy, with which Europe entered the phase of its decline: mobilizing soldiers pelted with flowers, cheering crowds on the sidewalks, ladies in bright summer dresses on the balconies. It was as though fate were mixing the cards afresh in a game that had grown monotonous. The nations of Europe hailed victories they would never win.

In Germany those days brought an unparalleled sense of community experience, almost religious in its nature. The expression of it, struck up spontaneously in the streets and squares, was the song "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles," which had been written by a long, controversial, liberal revolutionary of 1848 and only now became the real national anthem. On the evening of August 1 Kaiser Wilhelm II proclaimed to tens of thousands assembled in the palace square in Berlin that he no longer recognized "parties or denominations" but "only German brothers." Those were undoubtedly the most popular words he ever spoke. In a traditionally deeply divided nation that statement swept away, for one unforgettable moment, a multitude of barriers. German unity, attained barely fifty years before, seemed only now to have become a reality.

This feeling of unity was an illusion. The old contradictions survived behind the image of a nation reconciled. A welter of motives underlay the surge of rejoicing: personal and patriotic wishful thinking, revolutionary impulses, antisocial rebellions, dreams of hegemony, and, always, the yearning of adventurous spirits to break out of the routine of the bourgeois order. But for that one sublime moment it all combined into a storm of self-sacrifice on behalf of the threatened fatherland.

Hitler's own feelings had their quota of spurious elements: "Thus my heart, like that of a million others, overflowed with proud joy. . . ." he wrote and attributed his enthusiasm to the fact that he would now have a chance to prove by deeds the strength of his nationalistic convictions. On August 3 he addressed a petition directly to the King of Bavaria requesting permission, in spite of his Austrian citizenship, to volunteer for a Bavarian regiment. The contradiction between his draft

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evasion and this step is not a real one. For peacetime military service would have subjected him to a coercion he regarded as pointless. The war, on the other hand, meant liberation from the conflicts and miseries of his chaotic emotions, from the aimless emptiness of his life. In his boyhood two popular books about the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 had fired his enthusiasm for the powerful German army. Now he was entering that army with its nimbus of childhood reading. The past few days had vouchsafed him these feelings of belonging and union with his fellow men that he had lacked for so long. Now, for the first time in his life, he saw his chance to share in the prestige of a great and feared institution.

The very day after he had submitted the petition, the answer arrived. "With trembling hands I opened the document," he relates. It summoned him to report to the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment, also known by its commander's name as the List Regiment. There now began for Hitler "the greatest and most unforgettable time of my earthly existence."⁶³

* D.T.: This gave me pause. Did
we know more of other forms
of existence than I had
perceived. Was he one of my?
The O.D. had said nothing about this,
but the question is always there.
For on rare occasions
we see as ~~but~~ ^{fuller} to
men or women when the
O.D. (the ~~other~~ ^{other} ~~one~~ ^{one})
sees as one of his, as a
creature at whose conception
the ~~the~~ ^{the} was present.

REDEMPTION

In the second half of October, the List Regiment waited impatiently for ship before he saw action. But on October 29, in the first of the first phase of the war, the units on this section of the massive German efforts to the man General Staff regarded. For four days the fighting raged. The landlord, reported that in the first from 3,500 to about 1,700. Bevelaere, it lost its command stupid orders, a "mournful

The description given by Kampf will not stand close care he devoted to the little poetic elevation, show how

And then came a damp, cool in silence, and when the day iron greeting came whizzing sent the little pellets flying before the little cloud. The hurrah rose to meet the first roaring, a singing and a howl was drawn forward, faster a

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Chapter 5

Without the army we would all not be here; all of us once came out of that school.

Adolf Hitler

REDEMPTION BY WAR

In the second half of October, after a training period of barely ten weeks, the List Regiment was sent to the Western front. Hitler had waited impatiently for shipment; he was afraid the war might be over before he saw action. But what was then called the baptism of fire—October 29, in the first battle of Ypres, one of the bloodiest clashes of the first phase of the war—made him aware of the realities. The Brit- units on this section doggedly and at last successfully opposed the massive German efforts to break through to the Channel coast. The Ger- man General Staff regarded this breakthrough as vital to its war plans. Four days the fighting raged. Hitler himself, in a letter to his Munich friend, reported that in this battle the regiment was reduced by half, from 3,500 to about 1,700 men. Shortly afterward, near the village of elaeere, it lost its commander; it acquired, partly as the result of old orders, a "mournful popularity."

The description given by Hitler of his first war experience in *Mein Kampf* will not stand close examination of the details. But the unusual he devoted to the literary shaping of this passage, his efforts at its elevation, show how much the experience meant to him:

It then came a damp, cold night in Flanders, through which we marched in silence, and when the day began to emerge from the mists, suddenly an greeting came whizzing at us over our heads, and with a sharp report the little pellets flying between our ranks, ripping up the wet ground; but before the little cloud had passed, from two hundred throats the first rose to meet the first messenger of death. Then a crackling and a ring, a singing and a howling began, and with feverish eyes each one of us drawn forward, faster and faster, until suddenly past turnip fields and

hedges the fight began, the fight of man against man. And from the distance the strains of a song reached our ears, coming closer and closer, leaping from company to company, and just as Death plunged a busy hand into our ranks, the song reached us too and we passed it along: *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles, über Alles in der Welt!*¹⁵⁴

Throughout the war Hitler served as a courier between the regimental staff and the advanced positions. This mission, in which he was dependent on no one but himself, suited his solitary temperament. One of his superiors remembered him as a "quiet, rather unmilitary looking man who appeared to differ in no way from his fellows." He was reliable, obedient, and according to the same source, of rather sober disposition. Even in the army he was considered eccentric; the members of his company almost all agreed in calling him a "pipe-dreamer." He often sat "helmet on his head, in a corner, lost in thought, and none of us were able to get him out of his slump." Although impressions of Hitler the soldier are fairly plentiful and date from different periods in nearly four years, they all sound much the same. None of them really brings him to life; but their colorlessness evidently is in keeping with the subject.

Even the eccentric qualities he displayed have an oddly impersonal character. There would be times when he would break out of his broodings into wild monologue. But this would not be the normal soldier's griping, revolving around all the bothers of a soldier's life. Rather, he would express his fears that victory would be lost, his suspicions of betrayal, his anxieties over invisible foes. Not a single episode brings him out as an individual. The only anecdote that was told about him—one that later found its way into German school readers—is in fact nothing but a school-reader anecdote. While carrying dispatches, the story goes, Hitler came upon a squad of fifteen Frenchmen in a trench near Montdidier. Due to his presence of mind, his courage, and his skillful surprise tactics, he succeeded in overpowering the enemy soldiers and leading them captive back to his commander.

His exemplary zeal concealed the man behind a picture cut out of a patriotic calendar; it was another way of escaping from the world, escaping into clichés. On a patrol, enemy machine guns suddenly began to fire; Hitler swept his commander out of the way, took up "a protective position in front of him," and begged the officer "to preserve the regiment from losing its commander twice in so short a time."

Without a doubt, he was a brave soldier; the charges of cowardice raised later were politically motivated. As early as December, 1914, he received the Iron Cross Second Class; in May, 1918, he was awarded a regimental certificate for bravery in the face of the enemy; and on August 4 of the same year he received the Iron Cross First Class, seldom awarded to enlisted men.

However, to this day it has been impossible to discover the specific

grounds for these decorations. because he had been proposed for mental adjutant Hugo Gutmann mention them; the accounts that apparently on the basis of the above a fifteen-man English patrol capture of ten, twelve, and even to even endow Hitler with a know Still another account claims that fire to an artillery unit and in this of his regiment's position. But with decorations proved of inestimable him, although an Austrian, a knight of Germany. Thus they provided a career. They lent a degree of legitimacy to German politics and to his demands.

In the field, however, among his responsibilities, his anxiety over the war was appreciated. "We all used to yell at him," Others said, "That fellow is bucking the system; he's always looked under some sort of distinctly unpopular. Rather, he separated him from them. In contrast he scarcely received or wrote letters. monplace worries, amusements, and as that trash," he later recalled. deal on the problems of life, and the future. The war did for him what he had done, he alleged. He thought about, and from his isolation he emerged. Strictly speaking, what he was doing in the country he was proud of. The plot suggest something of his peculiar isolation. Hitler sits beside them without at all in their viewpoint.

This complex incapacity for his own life in four years at the front he of private, first class. At the Neu Regiments recounted that the queue of noncommissioned officers had decided in the negative "because of his isolation in him." Moreover, he had wanted to be proposed for promotion.

What Hitler found in the billet:

(\$) D. T. K. Now, he
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against man. And from the distance coming closer and closer, leaping death plunged a busy hand into our ve passed it along: *Deutschland, r Welt!*¹⁵⁴

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grounds for these decorations. Hitler himself gives no clues, possibly because he had been proposed for the decorations by the Jewish regimental adjutant Hugo Gutmann. The history of the regiment does not mention them; the accounts that exist differ sharply. They report, apparently on the basis of the above-mentioned anecdote, that Hitler took a fifteen-man English patrol captive, or they describe the dramatic capture of ten, twelve, and even twenty Frenchmen. Some of the stories even endow Hitler with a knowledge of French that he did not have. Still another account claims that he fought his way through the heaviest fire to an artillery unit and in this way prevented the threatening shelling of his regiment's position. But whatever he won them for, those wartime decorations proved of inestimable value for Hitler's future. They gave him, although an Austrian, a kind of spiritual claim to citizenship in Germany. Thus they provided a prerequisite for the beginning of his career. They lent a degree of legitimacy to his claim to participate in German politics and to his demand for loyalty from his followers.

In the field, however, among his fellow soldiers, his exalted sense of responsibility, his anxiety over the total military picture were not appreciated. "We all used to yell at him," one of his fellows later recalled. Others said, "That fellow is bucking for stripes." Others noted that he always looked under some sort of strain. Yet he was, apparently, not distinctly unpopular. Rather, he merely let them see the distance that separated him from them. In contrast to the others, he had no family; he scarcely received or wrote letters, and he did not share in their commonplace worries, amusements, and laughter. "I hated nothing so much as that trash," he later recalled. Instead, he said, he meditated a great deal on the problems of life, and read Homer, the Gospels, and Schopenhauer. The war did for him what thirty years at the university might have done, he alleged. He thought he alone knew what the war was about, and from his isolation he derived a sense of being specially elect. Strictly speaking, what he was defending was not his homeland but the country he was proud of. The photographs taken of Hitler as a soldier suggest something of his peculiarly alienated relationship toward his fellows. Hitler sits beside them with a fixed expression, obviously sharing not at all in their viewpoint.

This complex incapacity for human relationships may be the reason why in four years at the front he never won promotion beyond the rank of private, first class. At the Nuremberg trial the adjutant of the List Regiment recounted that the question of promoting Hitler to the rank of noncommissioned officer had occasionally arisen but had always been decided in the negative "because we could discover no leadership qualities in him." Moreover, the adjutant added, Hitler himself had not wanted to be proposed for promotion.

What Hitler found in the billets and dugouts of wartime was the kind

① D. T. Now, it was a man, a real man, could be a man

of human relationship that suited his nature. In its impersonality it was the life style of the home for men, but with the difference that the army satisfied his cravings for prestige, his inner restiveness, and his sense of solemnity. Here was the social framework that corresponded both to his misanthropic withdrawnness and his longing for contact. On the battlefield Hitler found the native land he did not possess. In no man's land he felt at home.

One of his former superiors has said this very thing and in much the same language: "For Pfc. Hitler the List Regiment was his homeland." When we understand this, we need no longer be puzzled by the contradiction between his determined desire for subordination in wartime and his lone-wolf asociality in the preceding years. Not since his mother's death had he felt as much at home anywhere, and never afterward was his simultaneous need for adventurousness and order, for unconstraint and discipline fulfilled as it was in the command headquarters, the trenches, and the dugouts at the front. In contrast to the humiliations of the preceding years, the war was Adolf Hitler's great affirmative educational experience, the one to which he exuberantly applied such phrases as "mighty impression," "overwhelming," "so happy."

Hitler himself declared that the war had transformed him. It hardened his touchy and sentimental young man and gave him a sense of his own worth. Caught up in the machinery of war, he learned toughness, the uses of solidarity, and self-discipline. He acquired that belief in fate which was one component of his generation's high-flown irrationality. The coolness with which he moved in the fiercest fire earned him, among his fellows, a reputation for invulnerability. If Hitler was around, they told one another, "nothing will happen." His luck seems to have made the deepest impression on Hitler himself and to have reinforced his faith in his special mission. Through all the years of failure and misery he had clung and continued obstinately to cling to that faith.

But the war also magnified Hitler's tendency to brooding. Like many of his fellow soldiers, he became convinced that the old leadership of society had failed, that the very social order he had marched to war to defend was perishing of internal exhaustion. "I would make the leaders responsible for these men who have fallen," he once declared to an astonished comrade. Hitler's generation, obsessed with its own idiosyncrasies and wrestling with its problems in a literary output of vast dimensions, was searching for a new meaning to life. Basically, this signified, it was searching for a meaningful social order. Hitler himself decided that he wanted "to know nothing about politics at that time." But his need to communicate, his unquenchable craving for speculative thinking, ran counter to such resolves. Soon he was attracting attention by "philosophizing about political and ideological questions in the crude manner of ordinary folk." From the early phase of the war we have

a twelve-page letter of his to a Mu out. After giving a detailed description participated, Hitler concludes the letter

"I think about Munich so often, and the final settlement with that gang will be a relief, no matter what the cost, and the time to see our homeland again will be a triumph, so that by the sacrifices and the thousands of us are undergoing daily, being out here day after day against an invincible Germany's enemies outside will be a triumph. That would be worth more than it will turn out as I have always said."

Politically, this letter carries on the Vienna years: the fear of overwhelm together with a defensive reaction against the borrowings, also, from the Pan-German to his thesis of the primacy of domestic and racial unity took precedence over many was first to be German and on.

At the beginning of October, 1916, he was wounded in the left thigh and sent to a hospital in Germany until March, 1917, when there arose in him the first, "ing" which two years later prompted

August, 1914, and his experience pressed upon him the inner unity of the world, basking in this new-found sense of togetherness could affect. Having no family, whatsoever, he had renounced his right to a home, troubled, he stayed on in his unreal world of the old, glorious army of heroes," he felt the shock was all the harsher when, in 1918, in Berlin, he encountered the political, social, and economic chaos of the past. With deep distress he realized that the early phase of the war had drained away the exalted sense of sharing in a common future, his future resentment toward the city of his experience. He saw discontent, hunger, and rage at meeting slackers who boasted of their hypocrisy, egotism, war profiteering, and dated back to his days in Vienna, the deceptions was the work of the Jew.

It was the same when, nearly cured,

* P.P. we certainly had our role in that. "Bel-blias ears"

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a twelve-page letter of his to a Munich acquaintance which bears this out. After giving a detailed description of a frontal attack in which he participated, Hitler concludes the letter:⁵⁵

I think about Munich so often, and each of us has only this one wish, that the final settlement with that gang will soon come, that we'll be able to go at them, no matter what the cost, and that those of us who have the good fortune to see our homeland again will find it purer and more purified of foreignism, so that by the sacrifices and sufferings which so many hundreds of thousands of us are undergoing daily, by the torrent of blood which is pouring out here day after day against an international world of enemies, not only Germany's enemies outside will be shattered, but also our inner internationalism. That would be worth more than all territorial gains. With Austria it will turn out as I have always said.

Politically, this letter carries on the ideological obsessions of Hitler's Vienna years: the fear of overwhelming foreign elements in the nation, together with a defensive reaction against a world of enemies. There were borrowings, also, from the Pan-German teachings, which later led to his thesis of the primacy of domestic over foreign affairs. National and racial unity took precedence over territorial expansion. Greater Germany was first to be German and only subsequently great.

At the beginning of October, 1916, at Le Barqué, Hitler was lightly wounded in the left thigh and sent to Beelitz Hospital near Berlin. He stayed in Germany until March, 1917, and it would appear that this was when there arose in him the first, still unclear signs of that "awakening" which two years later prompted him to enter politics.

August, 1914, and his experiences at the front had above all impressed upon him the inner unity of the nation. For two years he had basked in this new-found sense of togetherness, which he was sure nothing could affect. Having no family, no home address, no destination whatsoever, he had renounced his right to furloughs. His superzeal untroubled, he stayed on in his unreal world. "It was still the front of the old, glorious army of heroes," he later nostalgically recalled.⁵⁶ The shock was all the harsher when, in Beelitz and during a first visit to Berlin, he encountered the political, social, and national contradictions of the past. With deep distress he realized that the enthusiasm of the early phase of the war had drained away. Parties and factionalism had replaced that exalted sense of sharing a common destiny. It may be that his future resentment toward the city of Berlin had its origins in this experience. He saw discontent, hunger, and resignation. He was outraged at meeting slackers who boasted of their shrewdness; he noted hypocrisy, egotism, war profiteering, and, faithful to the obsession that dated back to his days in Vienna, he decided that behind all these manifestations was the work of the Jew.

It was the same when, nearly cured, he was sent to a reserve battalion

*"I had our
flies ears"*

in Munich. "I thought I could no longer recognize the city." He turned his resentment against those who had robbed him of his illusions and destroyed the lovely dream of German unity—the first positive social experience he had had since the days of his childhood. He was filled with fury against the "Hebrew corruptors of the people" on the one hand—12,000 or 15,000 of them should be held "under poison gas"—and against the politicians and journalists on the other hand. "Jabbers," "vermin," "perjuring criminals of the Revolution," they deserved nothing but annihilation. "All the implements of military power should have been ruthlessly used for the extermination of this pestilence."⁶¹ He still longed hysterically for victory; no prophetic sense or strategic instinct told him that defeat would serve him far better as a basis for his rise from namelessness.

Returning to the front in the spring of 1917, he felt once more exalted and still more alienated from the civilian world to which he had never been able to adjust. Military documents indicate that he participated in the positional battles in French Flanders, in the spring Battle of Arras, and in the fierce autumnal conflict of Chemin des Dames. Apprehensively he noted the "senseless letters of thoughtless females" which helped infect that front with the mood of resignation that prevailed back home. At this time he frequently discussed his prospects for a future vocation with a fellow soldier, the painter Ernst Schmidt. Schmidt related that even then Hitler had begun to consider whether he ought not to try politics, but that he had never really decided. There are other indications that he still believed he could make a career as an artist. When he came to Berlin, the political heart of the country, in October, 1917—shortly after the Reichstag's controversial peace resolution and shortly before the German military triumph in the East—Hitler wrote in a postcard to Schmidt: "Now at last have opportunity to study the museums somewhat better." Later he declared that in those days he used to tell a small circle of his friends that when the war was over he meant to be active politically in addition to taking up his profession as an architect. According to his own account, he also knew what form that activity was going to take: he wanted to become a political speaker.

Such an aspiration sprang from the notion he had cherished since his Vienna days, that all modes of human reactions are the calculable result of guidance and background influences. The idea of hidden wirepullers, so disturbing and at the same time so fascinating to him, took on new and seductive colors as soon as he imagined himself as some day being one of the wirepullers. His view of humanity excluded all spontaneity. Everything could be produced by manipulation—"remendous, almost incomprehensible results," as he noted with a touch of astonishment—if only the right players moved the right members at the

right moment. He preposterously the rise and decline of a nation of differing propagandist of *Mein Kampf* he expatiated the difference between Germ.

According to his argument was inadequate, the substantiation of German war propaganda. Because Germany's leaders, as weapons, they were incapable. Instead, Germany propaganda could never "fire men's spirit." "the most brilliant psychological task, the Germans employed with the result that the country actual harm from its propaganda.

The enemy, Hitler argued, propaganda, "as ruthless as it was upon Hitler, and he repeated boldness. He admired the "rationality" of the enemy lies, from them. In general, Hitler believed in the effectiveness of enemy propaganda of the ever, that a large part of the enemy's superiority in psychology more of those legends with which attempted to explain on non-inexplicable: that after so many so many efforts and sacrifices. But Hitler, with that character made him wise in his mistake: the starting point for his views propaganda must above all be toward the intelligentsia but "at its level" must be adjusted to it is addressed to." Furthermore on a few plausible points and slogans. It must always appear and must eschew any attempt a doubt in the rightness of one must present "love or hate, right way and half that way." Against

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right moment. He preposterously considered the movements of history, the rise and decline of nations, classes, or parties largely as the consequence of differing propagandistic abilities. In the famous sixth chapter of *Mein Kampf* he expatiated upon this view, illustrating his points by the difference between German and Allied propaganda.

According to his argument, Germany lost the war because "the form was inadequate, the substance was psychologically wrong: a careful examination of German war propaganda can lead to no other diagnosis." Because Germany's leaders did not recognize the true power of this weapon, they were incapable of creating propaganda worthy of the name. Instead, Germany produced only "insipid pacifistic bilge" that could never "fire men's spirits till they were willing to die." Although "the most brilliant psychologists would have been none too good" for this task, the Germans employed aesthetes and half-hearted failures, with the result that the country derived no advantage and sometimes actual harm from its propaganda.

The enemy, Hitler argued, had done it differently. Their atrocity propaganda, "as ruthless as it was brilliant," had made a deep impression upon Hitler, and he repeatedly extolled its psychological acumen and boldness. He admired the "rabid, impudent bias" and "indefatigable persistence" of the enemy lies⁶⁸ and said that he "learned enormously" from them. In general, Hitler tended to illustrate his own ideas by pointing to what the enemy had done. There is no doubt that he drew his belief in the effectiveness of psychological influence from the example of enemy propaganda of the World War. It must be recognized, however, that a large part of the German public was convinced of the enemy's superiority in psychological warfare. This was actually just one more of those legends with which a nation proud of its military strength attempted to explain on nonmilitary grounds what otherwise seemed inexplicable: that after so many victories on all the battlefields and after so many efforts and sacrifices Germany had nevertheless lost the war. But Hitler, with that characteristic mixture of insight and vapidity that made him wise in his mistakes, used this transparent rationalization as the starting point for his views on the nature and power of propaganda. Propaganda must above all be popular, he argued; it must not be aimed toward the intelligentsia but "always and exclusively to the masses," and its level "must be adjusted to the most limited intelligence among those it is addressed to." Furthermore, effective propaganda must concentrate on a few plausible points and hammer away at these in the form of slogans. It must always appeal to the emotions, never to the intellect, and must eschew any attempt at objectivity. Not even the shadow of a doubt in the rightness of one's own cause is permissible; propaganda must present "love or hate, right or wrong, truth or lie, never half this way and half that way." Again these were not original ideas. But the

energy with which Hitler framed them and the frankness with which he viewed the masses—without contempt but recognizing their limitations, their apathy and resistance to change—would soon put him far ahead of every rival for the favor of those same masses.

Even now he began to have intimations of this superiority. For he regarded his experiences in this late phase of the war as confirmation of the opinion he had formed during his Vienna years: that without the masses, without knowledge of their weaknesses, virtues and sensitivities, politics was no longer possible. In his mind the great democratic demagogues, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, joined his idol Karl Lueger. Later he added to these President Wilson—even though the American President was sicklied over by the pale cast of thought. One of the principal reasons for the ever more obvious German inferiority was, Hitler believed, that there was no convincing opponent in the Reich to these Allied populist leaders. Isolated from the common people and incapable of recognizing their growing importance, the German ruling class remained frozen in stubborn conservatism. Arrogant and unimaginative, it clung to its traditional positions. Recognition of its failures was one of the major perceptions Hitler drew from this period in German history. Free of those class prejudices and the self-centeredness that was the characteristic sign of weakness in an abdicating ruling class. Hitler thought only in terms of effects. Hence he admired the stale fables of enemy propaganda when it portrayed German soldiers as butchers hacking off the hands of children or slitting the bellies of pregnant women. For such images exploited the special spell of fear, the mechanism by which atrocities are magnified in the fantasies of the masses.

Again he was deeply struck by the mobilizing power of ideas. He appreciated the crusading formulas with which the Allies decked their cause and made it seem that they were defending the world and its most sacred values against the onslaught of barbarism. The German side had scarcely anything to oppose to this missionary *elan*. The Allied line proved to be all the more telling because the Germans, in the pride of their early military successes, had abandoned the thesis that they were fighting a purely defensive war. More and more boldly they had been announcing the aim of a peace with victory and wholesale annexations—failing to realize that the world might look askance on such ambitions. Some better reason would have had to be found than what Germany offered: that she had come too late to the distribution of the world's lands and so had to make up for it now by territorial aggrandizement. Meanwhile, at the end of 1917, defeated Russia in the fervor of social redemptionism was calling for a "just and democratic peace without annexations based on the right of self-determination of peoples, such as the exhausted and tormented classes of the workers and laborers of all countries long for." And, on the other side, Woodrow Wilson, at the

beginning of 1918, presented a peace that was to refashion held out the promise of an order of self-determination, of a world table that these proposals, co by the Reich, should have had try. A significant anecdote of General Staff officer who in hand to his brow and exclaimed to fight against and that we anything about these ideas!"

To this extent, then, there i causes for the German defeat complex of a nation that pre cunning and treachery than in tions, later became a staple it contained a kernel of truth. Fo on fields other than the battlef spokesmen did not mean. An had proved itself inferior to a the needs of the age. For Hilt by the thought that an idea can force but only with the aid of attempt to combat a philosophy the end, unless the fight takes attitude. Only in the struggle b of brutal force, persistently ar for the sake of the side it sup reflections, set down in *Mein I* at the time of the war. But, e from the war years.

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beginning of 1918, presented to the Congress a comprehensive draft of a peace that was to refashion the world on new and better lines. He held out the promise of an order based on justice, of political and moral self-determination, of a world without force and aggression. It was inevitable that these proposals, contrasting with the assertion of sheer might by the Reich, should have had a strong effect upon the exhausted country. A significant anecdote of the autumn of 1918 tells of a German General Staff officer who in a moment of sudden insight clapped his hand to his brow and exclaimed, "To think that there are ideas we have to fight against and that we are losing the war because we didn't know anything about these ideas!"

To this extent, then, there is something to the thesis of extramilitary causes for the German defeat. It cannot be laid solely to the Siegfried complex of a nation that preferred to think it had been defeated by cunning and treachery than in open battle. That thesis, in endless variations, later became a staple item in the repertory of the Right. But it contained a kernel of truth. For in fact Germany had also been defeated on fields other than the battlefields, although in a sense the nationalistic spokesmen did not mean. An outmoded, anachronistic political system had proved itself inferior to a democratic order more in keeping with the needs of the age. For Hitler's part, he was for the first time seized by the thought that an idea can never be successfully combatted by sheer force but only with the aid of another and more suggestive idea. "Any attempt to combat a philosophy with methods of violence will fail in the end, unless the fight takes the form of attack for a new spiritual attitude. Only in the struggle between two philosophies can the weapon of brutal force, persistently and ruthlessly applied, lead to a decision for the sake of the side it supports."⁵⁰ It may very well be that these reflections, set down in *Mein Kampf*, were still vague in Hitler's mind at the time of the war. But, even so, they represent his lasting profit from the war years.

In the summer of 1918, however, a German victory seemed once more within grasp. A few months earlier the Reich had won a resounding success, not just one more of those temporary victories in battles that were bleeding it to death. Early in March Germany had imposed upon Russia the peace of Brest-Litovsk, and a month or so later had demonstrated to Rumania, in the Treaty of Bucharest, that its power was still formidable. The two-front war had come to an end, and the German army of the West, with 200 divisions and approximately 3.5 million men had been brought up to the manpower of the Allied armies. In equipment and arms, however, it remained distinctly inferior; to the enemy's 18,000 artillery pieces the Germans had only 14,000. But the High Command, supported by a new although not entirely wholehearted feeling of public confidence, had at the end of March launched the first

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of five offensives intended to force a decision before American troops could arrive. Now the German people had only the choice between victory or doom, Ludendorff declared in a statement that rang with the same passion for a great gamble that in later years possessed Hitler.

Throwing their last remaining forces into the fight, determined after so many fruitless successes and vain exertions to win victory at last by breaking through on a broad front, the German units went over to the attack. Hitler participated in these battles as a soldier in the List Regiment; he was in the pursuit after the breakthrough at Montdidier-Noyons and later took part in the battles of Soissons and Reims. During the early part of the summer the German formations actually succeeded in throwing the British and French armies back to within nearly forty miles of Paris.

But then the offensive ground to a halt. Once again the German armies had displayed that fatefully limited power which enabled them to win only sham victories. The toll of lives that their gains had cost, the desperate shortage of reserves, the effectiveness of the enemy in stabilizing the front after each of the German breakthroughs—all this was in part concealed from the German public, in part repressed by that public as it exulted over the good news from the front. The German operations came to a standstill, and the Allies passed over to counterattack on a broad front. Yet Hindenburg and Ludendorff continued their policy of systematic deception. A Privy Council meeting was held at army headquarters on August 14, long after the German lines had broken. The army leaders presented such an illusory picture of the military situation to Chancellor Hertling and Foreign Minister Hintze that both men went away completely unaware of the gravity of the military collapse. To be sure, Hertling himself was largely responsible for the policy of bowing to the military authorities. But since the High Command itself had staked everything on the radical alternative of victory or defeat, it was obliged by its own premise to admit defeat, since victory had not been won. Instead, it continued its deceptions into September—purportedly in order not to dishearten the people. It took into account the obvious hopelessness of the situation only by sounding its claims of German invulnerability in a somewhat more muted key.

The consequence was that the German public regarded victory and the longed-for end of the war as closer than ever before—in this summer of 1918 when the country was on the verge of defeat. This state of affairs completely refutes Hitler's arguments about the weakness of German propaganda—although he drew accurate conclusions from his inaccurate premises. Even responsible politicians, even high army officers with a broad view of conditions, were prone to the most amazing delusions. Very few among those who should have known better were able to find their way in the fog of misguided hopes.

The majority were then plunge into reality. On September 26, 1918, he summoned the political leaders for an armistice. His nerve of any tactical safeguards. For or doom he had launched into the possible consequences even developed a clear strategy. Prince questioned him on the "We're going to chop a head when the new Chancellor, I would happen in case of failure is done for, that's all."

As things stood, the last offensive in the spring of 1918 counterattack had had a disastrous result. The men were exhausted, reported. For the operation, the Allies had used up the soldiers, summed their remaining psychological resources. Winston Churchill's remark that of the Allies, that devoured the front. Ludendorff, that is, the Germans. Nevertheless, the triumph in an amazing fashion. The defeat of military and human terms, the war, and paradoxically, victory. Once again Ludendorff, the breakthrough by the Allies.

Unprepared politically, a contemporary phrase had been in a gospel," was plunged most unbelievable remark of illusion died. Immediately lost, old Hindenburg in a do everything possible in the direction of the mines of Lorraine, trick of denying reality to throughout the postwar years. They continued to Spring, 1933. The shock of victory to the dirge of defeat, so much so that we may say out, taking that disenchant

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The majority were therefore all the more stunned by the sudden
plunge into reality. On September 29, 1918, Ludendorff hastily sum-
moned the political leaders and demanded that they immediately ask
for an armistice. His nerves were at breaking point; he would not hear
of any tactical safeguards. Significantly, in spite of his talk about victory
or doom he had launched the new offensive without giving any thought
to the possible consequences of its failure. He does not seem to have
even developed a clear strategic goal. At any rate, when the Crown
Prince questioned him on that, he replied, with characteristic irritability:
"We're going to chop a hole. Then we'll see what comes next." And
when the new Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, wanted to know what
would happen in case of failure, Ludendorff snarled: "Then Germany
is done for, that's all."

As things stood, the last card had actually been played with the great
offensive in the spring of 1918. The increasingly vigorous Allied
counterattack had had a daunting effect on German troops everywhere.
The men were exhausted, "dull and apathetic," as an army commander
reported. For the operations of the spring months, with their heavy casu-
alties, had used up the soldiers' last physical strength. Failure had consumed their remaining psychological reserves. There is much truth in
Winston Churchill's remark that it was the Germans' own offensive, not
that of the Allies, that devoured the forces of the army on the Western
front. Ludendorff, that is, not Joffre or Haig, brought defeat to the Ger-
mans. Nevertheless, the troops held their ground on the whole in an
amazing fashion. The defensive battles of that final phase were, in both
military and human terms, among the most impressive achievements of
the war, and paradoxically they added to the myth of the German army.
Once again Ludendorff, who had daily expected a vast catastrophic
breakthrough by the Allies, found that he was mistaken.

Unprepared politically and psychologically, the nation, which in
a contemporary phrase had believed in the superiority of its arms "as
in a gospel," was plunged into an abyss. An illuminating although al-
most unbelievable remark of Hindenburg's shows how hard the national
illusion died. Immediately after Ludendorff's admission that the war was
lost, old Hindenburg in all seriousness asked the Foreign Minister to
do everything possible in the impending negotiations to obtain annex-
ation of the mines of Lorraine. Here was a first example of that peculiar
trick of denying reality to which growing numbers of Germans resorted
throughout the postwar years to help them through the misery of the
times. They continued to do so right up to the intoxicating days of
Spring, 1933. The shock effect of this alternation "from the fanfare of
victory to the dirge of defeat" strongly colored the history of the period—
so much so that we may say the period can scarcely be understood with-
out taking that disenchantment into consideration.

It was a particular shock to the brooding, overtense private, first class of the List Regiment who had surveyed the war in the sweeping terms of a general. His regiment had been thrown into the defensive battle in Flanders in October, 1918. On the night of October 13, south of Ypres, the British launched a gas attack. On a hill near Wervick, Hitler came into several hours of drumfire with gas shells. Toward morning he felt violent pain, and when he arrived at the regimental command post around seven o'clock, he could barely see. A few hours later he went blind: "My eyes had turned into glowing coals," he afterward wrote. He was shipped back to the Pasewalk hospital in Pomerania.⁶⁰

In the hospital a curious excitement prevailed. Confusing rumors went the rounds—that the monarchy was about to fall, that the war would soon be over. Hitler—characteristically as if he bore larger responsibilities—feared local unrest, strikes, insubordination, even though these rumors seemed to him more the product of the imagination of individual soundrels; strangely, he noticed nothing of the discontent and exhaustion so widespread among the people. At the beginning of November the condition of his eyes began to improve, but he still could not read newspapers and expressed his fears to fellow patients that he would never be able to draw again. The revolution came, for him, "suddenly and unexpectedly"; it was led, he thought, by "a few Jewish youths" who had "not been at the front" but had come "by way of a so-called 'clap hospital' and 'raised the red rag.'" Hitler believed that what he was seeing was "a more or less local affair."⁶¹

On November 10, 1918, however, the truth was brought home to him, "the most terrible certainty of my life." Summoned to a meeting by the hospital pastor, the patients learned that a revolution had broken out, that the House of Hohenzollern had fallen and a republic had been proclaimed in Germany. Sobbing gently to himself—thus Hitler described the "old gentleman"—the pastor recalled the merits of the ruling house, and "not an eye was able to restrain its tears." But when the pastor began to tell them that the war was now lost and that the Reich was throwing itself unconditionally upon the mercy of its previous enemies—"I could stand it no longer. It became impossible for me to sit still one minute more. Again everything went black before my eyes; I tottered and groped my way back to the dormitory, threw myself on my bunk, and dug my burning head into my blanket and pillow. Since the day I had stood at my mother's grave, I had not wept. . . . But now I could not help it."⁶²

To Hitler the disillusionment was as sudden and incomprehensible as had been his failure to win acceptance into the Academy. He magnified it into a legend and made it one of the basic themes of his career. Later he ascribed his resolve to enter politics to this moment. In virtually every major speech Hitler would ritualistically refer to the November

revolution. He would speak of this obsession has led to triggered the great political aggested that his going blind i hysterical symptom, precipiti change in the course of the some support for such theoretic candidates in February 1942 he had faced of going complet nothing if all one could see v slaved. "In that case what c of 1944, faced with approach that he had reason to fear th First World War, he would g

Similarly, there is a passage Hitler had been roused from l ble summons resounding in hi

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We may assume, however, explain the transition betwee apathy, and vague reveries an the November days had numl knew that everything was lost. bourgeois world, those require were confronting him once m the problems of vocation and e no work, no goal, no place to spair, when he wept into his revolution, he was expressing of loss.

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revolution. He would speak of it as if his whole life dated from that
 event. This obsession has led some analysts to suggest that the revolution
 triggered the great political awakening of his life. It has also been sug-
 gested that his going blind in October, 1918, was to some extent a
 hysterical symptom, precipitated by the shock he felt at the abrupt
 change in the course of the war. Hitler himself occasionally furnished
 some support for such theories. In a speech to army officers and officer
 candidates in February 1942, for example, he referred to the danger
 he had faced of going completely blind, and declared that eyesight meant
 nothing if all one could see was a world in which the nation was en-
 slaved. "In that case what can I see worth seeing?" And at the end
 of 1944, faced with approaching defeat, he gloomily told Albert Speer
 that he had reason to fear that once again, as toward the end of the
 First World War, he would go blind.⁶²

Similarly, there is a passage in *Mein Kampf* confirming the idea that
 Hitler had been roused from his inconspicuous existence by an inexora-
 ble summons resounding in his ears:

In daily life the so-called genius requires a special cause, indeed, often a
 positive impetus, to make him shine. . . . In the monotony of everyday life
 even significant men often seem insignificant, hardly rising above the aver-
 age of their environment; as soon, however, as they are approached by a
 situation in which others lose hope or go astray, the genius rises manifestly
 from the inconspicuous average child, not seldom to the amazement of all
 those who had hitherto seen him in the pettiness of bourgeois life. . . . If
 this hour of trial had not come, hardly anyone would ever have guessed that
 a young hero was hidden in this beardless boy. . . . The hammer-stroke of
 Fate which throws one man to the ground suddenly strikes steel in an-
 other.⁶³

We may assume, however, that such remarks were merely meant to
 explain the transition between the preceding years of bohemianism,
 apathy, and vague reveries and the phase of revealed genius. In reality,
 the November days had numbed him and left him in a quandary. "I
 knew that everything was lost." The requirements imposed by the hated
 bourgeois world, those requirements that four years of war had set aside,
 were confronting him once more. He was no further along in meeting
 the problems of vocation and earning his livelihood. He had no training,
 no work, no goal, no place to stay, no friends. In that outburst of de-
 spair, when he wept into his pillow at the news of the defeat and the
 revolution, he was expressing more of a personal than a national sense
 of loss.

For the end of the war deprived the sergeant Hitler of a role he had
 found at the front, and he lost his homeland at the moment he was
 dismissed for home. In shocked surprise he noted that at the home front
 the much-vaunted discipline of the German army collapsed as if on cue.

1942

1944

Increasing numbers of soldiers had only one remaining desire: to throw off the suddenly unbearable burden of four years, to make an end of it and go home. They could no longer conceal the fears and humiliations of existence at the front behind patriotic formulas or warrior poses. An overwhelming sense of the vanity of it all became the general sentiment: "And so it had all been in vain. In vain all the sacrifices and privations; in vain the hunger and thirst of months which were often endless; in vain the hours in which, with mortal fear clutching at our hearts, we nevertheless did our duty; and in vain the death of two millions who died."⁶⁶

It was the defeat rather than the revolutionary events that so deeply affected him, for his attachment to the ruling house was as slight as his respect for the leadership of the Reich.

The force of this unrevolutionary revolution was spent chiefly in gestures that suggest a curiously helpless perplexity. From the early days of November on, deserters marched through the streets all over Germany, hunting down officers. Groups of enlisted men lay in wait for the officers, seized them, and with scornful and insulting comments ripped off their decorations, epaulets, and cockades. This was an act of revolt after the fact against the overthrown regime and was as pointless as it was understandable. In the case of the officers it bred a permanent ire that was to have far-reaching consequences, a deep-seated antipathy for the revolution and hence for the regime which had begun under such circumstances. That antipathy was shared by all the advocates of law and order.

The whim of history had robbed the revolution of that emotional verve which might otherwise have made it memorable in the mind of the nation. As early as October, 1918, the Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, had met the demands both of President Wilson and his own public by instituting a number of domestic political reforms. Germany was given a parliamentary government. Finally, on the morning of November 9, the Chancellor, acting to a considerable extent on his own initiative, had announced the Kaiser's abdication. The revolution had reached its goal before it had even broken out; it had at any rate missed the chance to define itself by any concrete act. Abruptly, it had been cheated of its storming of the Bastille and its Boston Tea Party.

Given these discouraging circumstances, there was only one way the quasi revolution might have become a real one—by exploiting the attraction of novelty. But the new holders of power, Friedrich Ebert and the Social Democrats, were hard-working, sober-sided men. They thought they had done pretty well to eliminate right at the start a whole slew of honorary titles, decorations, and medals. The peculiar pedantry and lack of psychological flair that marked all their behavior explain why

they could not fire the masses or was "a revolution entirely lack through it recognized."⁶⁶ Certain needs of a defeated and disillusioned was discussed during the first year on August 11, fell far short strictly speaking, merely as a technical power system, but it revealed ends of power.

Indecision and lack of courage regime. The new men could of nation and to the fear of what the multitudinous needs of a defeated reasons for restraining the desire simultaneously springing up on the events had prepared the nation. That readiness was not on the Right, and "socialism" a of the magic formulas for solving intellectuals. But in fact its sole order, and the new leaders their alliance with the traditional power socialization was attempted. The touched; the civil servants were With the exception of the ducal had hitherto wielded decisive in a new form of government virtugency Hitler could later ask of November from setting up a to do it."⁶⁷

In the confusion and perplexity was capable of drafting a revolution had neither a following nor, "Catharine energy." On January thousands of persons in a revolution in Berlin and waited in vain endlessly debating revolutionary or disappointed, the crowd dispersed was as insurmountable as ever. specially up to the assassination of emburg and Karl Liebknecht, with counterrevolutionary soldier conflicts. What remained historical consequences.

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they could not fire the masses or draft any major social changes. Theirs
 was "a revolution entirely lacking in ideas," as one man who lived
 through it recognized.⁶⁶ Certainly they had no answer to the emotional
 needs of a defeated and disillusioned nation. The Constitution, which
 was discussed during the first half of 1919 and went into force in Wei-
 mar on August 11, fell far short of what was needed. It was intended,
 strictly speaking, merely as a technical instrument for installing a demo-
 cratic power system, but it revealed scarcely any understanding of the
 ends of power.

Indecision and lack of courage early sapped the strength of the new
 regime. The new men could of course point to the exhaustion of the
 nation and to the fear of what had happened in Russia. Faced with
 the multitudinous needs of a defeated country, they might well cite many
 reasons for restraining the desire for political innovation that was spon-
 taneously springing up on the workers' and soldiers' councils. But the
 events had prepared the nation for the abandonment of traditional atti-
 tudes. That readiness was not exploited. The revolution was hailed even
 on the Right, and "socialism" as well as "socialization" constituted one
 of the magic formulas for solving the situation even among conservative
 intellectuals. But in fact its sole program was the restoration of law and
 order, and the new leaders thought they could accomplish this only in
 alliance with the traditional powers. Not even a timid approach toward
 socialization was attempted. The great feudal landholders remained un-
 touched; the civil servants were prematurely guaranteed their positions.
 With the exception of the ducal and royal houses, the social groups that
 had hitherto wielded decisive influence emerged from the transition to
 a new form of government virtually without loss of power. With some
 cogency Hitler could later ask scornfully who had prevented the men
 of November from setting up a socialist state, since they had the power
 to do it.⁶⁷

In the confusion and perplexity of those weeks, only the radical Left
 was capable of drafting a revolutionary program for the future. But it
 had neither a following nor, in Max Weber's phrase, the spark of
 "Catilinarian energy." On January 6, 1919, a crowd numbering tens of
 thousands of persons in a revolutionary mood gathered in the Siegesallee
 in Berlin and waited in vain until evening for some sign from the end-
 lessly debating revolutionary committee. Finally, freezing, weary, and
 disappointed, the crowd dispersed. The gap between thought and deed
 was as insurmountable as ever. Nevertheless, the revolutionary Left, es-
 pecially up to the assassination of its two outstanding leaders, Rosa Lux-
 emburg and Karl Liebknecht, engaged in sufficiently violent struggles
 with counterrevolutionary soldiery to produce turmoil and internecine
 conflicts. What remained historically unsuccessful was not without its
 consequences.

1919

For the bedeviled and directionless public soon blamed the battles and controversies of that period on the republic, which was only defending itself. Everything was equated with "the revolution," and the political form that finally emerged from these troubled times was in the common mind obscurely connected with mutiny, defeat, national humiliation, street battles, chaos, and public disorder. Nothing so damaged the prospects of the republic as the fact that the public associated its very beginnings with a "dirty" revolution. Much of the population, including even the political moderates, remembered the inception of the republic with shame, sorrow, and disgust.

The terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty increased the resentment. The public statements of President Wilson had fostered the illusion that overthrow of the monarchy and the adoption of Western constitutional principles would soften the wrath of the victors and cause them to adopt a milder tone toward men who, after all, were only acting as executors of the legacy of a deceased regime. Many Germans also believed that the "order of world peace," for which the discussions at Versailles were ostensibly laying the groundwork, excluded punishment, injustices, and any kind of coercion. This period of understandable but unrealistic hopes has been called "the dreamland of the Armistice period." The country's reaction at the beginning of May, 1919, when the peace terms were presented to it, was all the more dumfounded. There was a great outcry. The public consternation was expressed politically by the resignations of Chancellor Philipp Scheidemann and of Foreign Minister Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau.

One thing is certain: the victorious powers arranged the surrounding circumstances with deliberate desire to harass and insult the Germans. They had opened the peace conference on January 18, 1919, the anniversary of the day the German Empire had been proclaimed barely fifty years before; and they chose as the place for signing the treaty the same Hall of Mirrors in which that proclamation had been issued. Perhaps that could be borne with. But their choosing for the signing date June 28, the fifth anniversary of the assassination of Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo, stood in what was felt to be cynical contrast to the altruism of Wilsonian pledges.

In general, the psychological affronts rather than the material exactions were what produced the extraordinarily traumatic effects of the Treaty of Versailles, so that from Right to Left, running across all factions and parties, it produced a sense of unforgettable humiliation. The territorial demands, the requirements for compensation and reparations, which at first dominated public discussion, certainly did not have that "Carthaginian harshness" which was so much talked about. The terms in fact could stand comparison with the conditions Germany had imposed on Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and on Rumania in the

Treaty of Bucharest. But certain it soon figured in rightist agitation as were the clauses that struck at Germany which provided for the handing over by Allied military tribunals, placed sole moral guilt for the outbreak.

The contradictions and hypocrisy were all too evident. The victors as on the Germans' confessing their share purely material. The pointless and much hatred and ridicule. Even in criticism of this hypocritical tone, example, which in President Wilson the height of a sacred principle, we have worked to the advantage of of the German remnant of the share of the Reich. Supranationalism triumphantly confirmed; but, paradoxical, whose essence was the de-

The treaty solved scarcely any recent hostilities. Instead, it all but solidarity and common tradition to wars and angry passions of centuries peace treaty did little to restore the Germany remained excluded, see community. This discrimination to European co-operation. In challenge on this feeling. Actually, a in foreign affairs were gained by his row Wilson's principles and the motto Treaty with regard to the self-determining groups. "A terrible time is dawning on the day the peace treaty before the storm which will probably be more than the World War."⁶⁸

Within Germany, the bitterness increased the resentment against the people of sparing the country the disaster dictated peace." How unwanted became evident. It had been mere chance, craving for peace, and we have already lost it much added its weakness in foreign affairs the very term "republic" seemed

* D.F. I was not part of the activity but I know that the O.C. had a

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Treaty of Bucharest. But certain clauses seemed intolerably insulting and soon figured in rightist agitation as the "disgrace" of Versailles. These were the clauses that struck at German honor: above all Article 228, which provided for the handing over of certain German officers for judgment by Allied military tribunals, and the celebrated Article 231, which placed sole moral guilt for the outbreak of the war upon Germany.

The contradictions and hypocrisies in the 440 articles of the treaty were all too evident. The victors assumed the pose of judges and insisted on the Germans' confessing their sins, where in fact their interests were purely material. The pointless vengeful moralism was what awoke so much hatred and ridicule. Even in the Allied countries there was strong criticism of this hypocritical tone. The right of self-determination, for example, which in President Wilson's proclamations had been raised to the height of a sacred principle, was quietly dropped whenever it might have worked to the advantage of the Germans. There was no question of the German remnant of the shattered Hapsburg monarchy becoming part of the Reich. Supranational states were destroyed and nationalism triumphantly confirmed; but, paradoxically, the League of Nations was created, whose essence was the denial of nationalism.

The treaty solved scarcely any of the problems that had led to the recent hostilities. Instead, it all but destroyed the sense of European solidarity and common tradition that had survived so long, despite the wars and angry passions of centuries. The new order imposed by the peace treaty did little to restore this sense. For all intents and purposes, Germany remained excluded, seemingly forever, from the European community. This discrimination turned the Germans decisively against European co-operation. In challenging the victors, Hitler was able to build on this feeling. Actually, a large part of Hitler's early successes in foreign affairs were gained by his posing as a firm adherent of Woodrow Wilson's principles and the maxims posited by the Versailles Peace Treaty with regard to the self-determination of national and ethnic groups. "A terrible time is dawning for Europe," wrote one clear-sighted observer on the day the peace treaty was ratified in Paris, "a sultriness before the storm which will probably end in an even more terrible explosion than the World War."⁶⁸

Within Germany, the bitterness over the terms of the peace treaty increased the resentment against the republic, for it had proved incapable of sparing the country the distresses and privations of this "shameful dictated peace." How unwanted the republic really had been now became evident. It had been merely the product of embarrassment, chance, craving for peace, and weariness. Its impotence in domestic affairs had already lost it much credit. To this bad record was now added its weakness in foreign affairs. To a growing number of Germans the very term "republic" seemed synonymous with disgrace, dishonor,

→ people working overtime
 on the punitive reparations
 of the Allied leaders.

and powerlessness. The feeling persisted that the republic had been imposed on the Germans by deception and coercion, that it was something altogether alien to their nature. It is true that in spite of all its drawbacks it held a certain promise; but even in its few fortunate years it was "unable to arouse either the loyalty or the political imagination of the people."⁹⁹

These developments led to a surge of political consciousness. Large segments of the population, who previously had lived in a political limbo, abruptly and violently found themselves caught up in events that aroused in them political passions, hopes, and despairs.

Adolf Hitler, now some thirty years old, was seized by this general mood in the hospital at Pasewalk. A vague but furious sense of misfortune and betrayal swept over him. It brought him a step closer to politics, but his decision to go actively into politics, which in *Mein Kampf* is linked to the events of November, 1918, actually was made a year later, when he discovered his oratorical gifts. The overwhelming moment came to him in the haze of a small meeting; in a burst of rapture he suddenly saw a way out of a hopelessly blocked life and found that he had prospects for a future.

Certainly his behavior during the following months suggests this interpretation. For when he was discharged from Pasewalk hospital at the end of November, he went to Munich and reported to the reserve battalion of his regiment. Munich had played an important part in the November events and had led the way in the overthrow of the German ruling houses. But although the city was vibrating with political excitement, Hitler remained indifferent. In spite of his alleged decision to go into politics, he neither joined nor opposed the political currents. Rather tersely, he comments that Red rule was repugnant to him. But since by his own contention the "Reds" were in power basically throughout the period of the republic, such an observation scarcely justifies the meager interest he took in politics at this period.

At the beginning of February, craving something to do, he volunteered for guard duty in a prisoner-of-war camp at Traunstein, near the Austrian border. But about a month later the few hundred French and Russian soldiers were released, and both camp and guard detail were dissolved. Once more, Hitler was left at loose ends. He returned to Munich.

Since he did not know where else to go, he took up quarters in the barracks in Oberwiesenfeld. Presumably, the decision did not come easily to him, for it meant he had to subordinate himself to the dominant Red Army and don its red armband. Nevertheless, he put up with taking orders from the revolutionary Left at a time when he might have joined units of the Right, a fact revelatory of his underdeveloped political instincts and lack of discrimination at the time. Later, the mere mention

of the word "Bolshevism" would vision of the facts to the contrary was obviously stronger than any counted a soldier of the world re

It is true that he also had no framework in which he could feel to the realm of the shipwrecked. I lessness of his personal predicament one another through my head. For but the end of every meditation v less as I was, did not possess th Plainly, he was as far as ever from and achieving bourgeois status. his insignificance. According to time had incurred "the disapproval soviet government in Munich, so to arrest him. "Faced with my l the necessary courage and march the Central Council was no longer

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of the word "Bolshevism" would drive him wild. But all subsequent re-
 vision of the facts to the contrary, at this stage his political indolence
 was obviously stronger than any horror he might have had at being
 counted a soldier of the world revolution.

It is true that he also had no choice. The army was the only social
 framework in which he could feel sheltered. To leave it meant returning
 to the realm of the shipwrecked. Hitler was distinctly aware of the hope-
 lessness of his personal predicament: "At that time endless plans chased
 one another through my head. For days I wondered what could be done,
 but the end of every meditation was the sober realization that I, name-
 less as I was, did not possess the least basis for any useful action."⁷⁰
 Plainly, he was as far as ever from thinking of a job, of earning a living,
 and achieving bourgeois status. Instead, he was agonizingly aware of
 his insignificance. According to his story, his political activity at that
 time had incurred "the disapproval of the Central Council" of the new
 soviet government in Munich, so that at the end of April they came
 to arrest him. "Faced with my leveled carbine, the scoundrels lacked
 the necessary courage and marched off as they had come." But in reality
 the Central Council was no longer in existence at the time he gives.

It is much more likely that his behavior at this time was a mixture
 of embarrassment, passivity, and opportunistic adjustment. He took no
 noticeable part even in the turbulent events of early May, when the
 troops of Colonel von Epp's Free Corps, a paramilitary organization,
 together with other formations, overthrew the soviet government in Mun-
 ich. Otto Strasser, who for a time was one of his followers, later asked
 publicly: "Where was Hitler on that day? In what corner of Munich
 was the soldier hiding who ought to have fought in our ranks?" In fact
 Red Army man Adolf Hitler was arrested and questioned by the invad-
 ing troops; some officers who knew him intervened, and he was released
 again. Possibly the story of the attempted arrest by the Central Council
 is the retouched version of this incident.

Afterward, a commission was set up to look into events during the
 soviet rule, and there has been much speculation on the role Hitler may
 have played in conjunction with these investigations. All that is certain,
 however, is that he offered his services to the board of inquiry estab-
 lished by the Second Infantry Regiment. He supplied information for
 the tribunals, which often handed down very harsh sentences reflecting
 the bitterness of the recent struggle. He located fellow soldiers who had
 taken part in the soviet regime, and seems to have carried out his assign-
 ment so well that he was soon sent to a training course in "civic
 thinking."

Now for the first time he was beginning to attract attention, to emerge
 from the anonymity that had so long concealed and depressed him. He

* He was learning, as you can see from
 the letters, he came to the point of joining
 a position to join the German army.

himself called his work for the investigating commission his "first more or less purely political activity."⁷¹ He was still letting himself drift; but the direction in which he now floated rapidly brought him to the end of his formative years, which were compounded of asocial apathy and a messianic sense of vocation.

Looking back over this period, it is astonishing to see that Adolf Hitler, who was to become the century's political phenomenon, did not feel tempted by politics until his thirtieth year. At a comparable age, Napoleon was already First Consul, Lenin in exile after years of persecution, Mussolini editor in chief of the socialist paper *Avanti*. Hitler, however, had not been impelled to take a single step in behalf of any of those ideas that would soon send him forth on a mission of world conquest. He had not entered a single party, had not joined any of the numerous associations of the period, with the exception of the Viennese League of Anti-Semites. There is nothing betokening any impulse toward political action, no sign of anything more than a stammering participation in the platitudes of the era.

On November 23, 1939, when his faith in his own power was at its height, he himself made the astonishing remark to his military commanders that in 1919 he had entered politics only after a long struggle with himself. That had been, he said, "the most difficult decision of all." And although this was said to emphasize that beginnings are always the hardest part of a venture, it also reveals his strong inner reservations about a political career. One element may have been the traditional German contempt for politics as something by nature lower than creative activity. He would have thought a political career demeaning by comparison with his unattainable youthful dream of becoming "one of the foremost architects of Germany, if not the foremost architect." Even at the climax of the war he remarked that he would far sooner have gone to Italy as an "unknown painter" and that only the deadly menace to his own race had forced him on to the road of politics, which was fundamentally alien to him.

If this was so, we can understand why not even the revolution drove him to enter the fray on one side or the other. The November events, the collapse of all authority, the downfall of the dynasties and the prevailing chaos had certainly challenged his conservative instincts. But even these violent changes did not rouse him to active protest. Even stronger than his contempt for political affairs was his repugnance for riot and rebellion. Bourgeois that he was, he was not one to go into the streets. Even twenty-five years later, he told his dinner companions, referring to his experiences at the time of the November revolution, that rebels were no more or less than criminals. He could see in them nothing but an "asocial lot"; the best thing to do with them was to kill them.

Only when he discovered his own oratorical powers did he overcome

his qualms against the politics of public order. Even so, when personality, he became, as I trial before the Munich People's Court. But was he any the personality whom the peculiar with a monstrous special gift was never intended? The question this biography, and repeats politics ever meant more to it: rhetorical overpowering trionics of processions, paid military force applied in war.

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his qualms against the political life and his fear of odium as a disturber of public order. Even so, when he leaped on the stage as a revolutionary personality, he became, as he justified himself four years later in his trial before the Munich People's Court, a revolutionary against the revolution. But was he any the less an unsociable, easily depressed artist personality whom the peculiar circumstances of the times, together with a monstrous special gift, had propelled into a realm for which he was never intended? The question will arise repeatedly in the course of this biography, and repeatedly we will be tempted to ask whether politics ever meant more to him than the means he employed to practice it: rhetorical overpowering of his enemies, for example; the histrionics of processions, parades, and Party Days; the spectacle of military force applied in war.

There is no denying that the collapse of the old order opened the way for him to enter politics. As long as the bourgeois world persisted and politics was a bourgeois career, he had few prospects of winning a name in it. The formal strictures of that sphere would all have operated against him.

The year 1918 brought down the barriers. "I could not help but laugh at the thought of my own future which only a short time ago had given me such bitter concern," Hitler wrote.⁷²

And so he set foot on the political stage.

* D. T. I was an integral part of this "monstrous" special gift

ed betrayed deep insecurity. It com-
reams of being a Rienzi with touches
off; the result was something prepos-
be interpreted in a number of ways.
s trying to exploit his insecurity and,
is a means of self-dramatization. At
s with making his appearance attrac-
le.

a can be seen in the following thumb-
Alexander von Müller, who met Hitler
igl's, Ernst's sister. Also present was
s curious to meet the rising politician.
ie decor. The four of us were already
table by the window when the bell
ould see him in the narrow hallway
ing our hostess, laying aside riding;
finally unbuckling his cartridge belt,
e hanging it on the clothes hook. It
f Karl May's American Indian now
w precisely each of these trivialities
then calculated for effect, as were
he, which was narrower than the un-
The look in his eyes already ex-
c. success; but something curiously
one had the uneasy feeling that he
ticing it. His face, too, was still thin-
expression of suffering. But the pro-
stared with inflexible hardness, and
en the curve of the thick eyebrows,
will. This time, too, he spoke very
ith marked attentiveness."²⁰ and
ion, women began to take an interest
ladies who sensed problems behind
he magnetic young orator, tensions
uld release. Hitler himself later com-
ose women who thronged so eagerly
ew one, he remarked, "whose voice
ver I exchanged so much as a few
of them, Carola Hoffmann, widow
lived in the Munich suburb of Solln,
earned herself the title of "Hitler-
nature stories highly popular among young
or in the Orient.—TRANS.

Mutti"—Hitler's Mom. Frau Bruckmann, wife of the publisher of
Houston Stewart Chamberlain and a lady descended from an ancient
noble line, also took him under her wing. So did the wife of Bechstein,
the piano manufacturer. "I wished he were my son," she said, and later,
in order to be allowed to visit him in prison, she alleged that she was
his adoptive mother. All of them taken together, their houses, their
parties, widened the area around him and helped to make his name
known.

Within the party, on the other hand, he continued to remain within
a circle comprising middle-class philistines and semicriminal bullies who
answered his need for aggression and physical violence. Among his rare
close friends were Emil Maurice, a typical barroom and meeting-hall
brawler, and Christian Weber, a hulking, paunchy former horse dealer
who had worked as a bouncer in a notorious taproom and regularly
carried a riding whip, as Hitler did. Ulrich Graf, a butcher's apprentice,
also belonged to his immediate following, which served as a kind of
bodyguard. So also did Max Amann, Hitler's former sergeant, a blunt,
capable businessman, who became business manager for the party and
the party's publishing house. Noisy and sedulously attentive, these men
surrounded Hitler all the time. Evenings after meetings the troop of
them would drop in at the Osteria Bavaria or the Bratwurstglöckl near
the Frauenkirche, or talk for hours over coffee and cake at the Café
Heck on Galeriestrasse, where a table was permanently reserved for
Hitler in the dusky back of the room, from which he could watch what
went on in the restaurant without being observed himself. He was al-
ready beginning to find solitude painful; he constantly needed people
around him—audience, guards, servants, drivers, but also entertainers,
art lovers and storytellers like the photographer Heinrich Hoffmann or
Ernst Hanfstaengl. These were the people who gave to his "court" its
special coloration compounded of "the bohemian world and the condot-
tiere style." He was not averse to having himself referred to as the "King
of Munich." It would be the small hours of the morning before he would
return to his furnished room on Thierschstrasse.

The dominant figure in the entourage that formed so early around
Hitler was young Hermann Esser. He had done some newspaper work
and been a press secretary for the Reichswehr District Headquarters.
Aside from Hitler, he was the only person in the party at that time
with a talent for demagoguery. He was "a noisemaker who is almost better
at that business than Hitler . . . a demon speechmaker, though from
a lower circle of hell." He was intelligent, cunning, with a knack for
vivid and popular phrases. As a yellow journalist he could invent endless
stories about Jews and profiteers. The decent petty bourgeois members
of the party were soon objecting to the "swineherd tone" of his publicity
campaigns. But he clung to his simple-minded radicalism; while still a

Chapter 1

They had better realize that we see events
in terms of a historical vision.

Adolf Hitler

THE VISION

The laurel wreath Hitler hung on his wall in the Landsberg fortress-prison was more than a token that his spirit was unbroken. The forced isolation from political activity was of benefit to him politically and personally. For one thing, it permitted him to escape the aftermath of the disaster of November 9. He could follow the wrangles of his embittered and scattered adherents from the sidelines, while remaining the untarnished martyr of the nationalist cause. It also gave him time for introspection after years of almost mindless unrest and excitement. He recovered his faith in himself and in his mission. And, as his turbulent emotions died down, he felt himself strengthened in his role as leader of the *völkisch* right wing. He had at first claimed this role hesitantly, but in the course of the trial he became more confident, and finally he boldly came forth as the divinely appointed one and only Führer. Filled with this consciousness, Hitler managed to impress this image of himself upon his fellow prisoners. From this time on, the sense of mission never left him. It froze his features in that mask which no smile, no altruistic gesture, no moment of spontaneity ever softened. Even before the November putsch Dietrich Eckart had complained of Hitler's delusions of grandeur, his "messiah complex." Now Hitler hardened more and more into the monument that corresponded to his notions of what a great man and a Führer would be like.

Thus his imprisonment in no way hampered the process of self-stylization. In a subsequent trial some forty more participants in the putsch were convicted and sent to Landsberg. They included members of the "Hitler shock troop," Berchtold, Haug, Maurice, Amann, Hess, Heines, Schreck, and the student Walter Hewel. Hitler now had what amounted to an entourage. The prison authorities were highly accom-

many might for the second time arrive too late for the world's goods. When he considered the possibilities for Germany for future mastery, his thoughts turned to Russia. Racial, political, geographic, and historical considerations everything pointed to the East.²⁰

With this sentiment, Hitler had begun as a revisionist of the Versailles Treaty, restoration of the borders of Germany, and the joining of all Germans in a Greater Germany. This school of thought the main enemy of the German people lay in exploiting the difficulties France was having with Italy and England. But Hitler's bent for thinking in larger terms of the Continent as a whole, and replacing the Versailles politics.

It was that Germany, in her militarily, politically weakened middle position, could survive "only by politics in the foreground." In an earlier of his foreign policy in the age of Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler should either have renounced sea trade in England against Russia or, alternatively, if she had trade, she should have joined Russia against England. Hitler favored the second course. He was the "principal" opponents of the Reich, and the marked pro-Russian bias. Under the influence of Scheubner-Richter and Rosenberg, Hitler was with a "nationalistic" Russia, one "restored from the Jewish-Bolshevik yoke." Teamed with the West. Neither the concept of the superiority of the Slavic race—which later was the revisionist Eastern policy—seems to have entered Hitler's mind until the beginning of 1923, probably in the Soviet regime, that he began to think of forming a pact with England against Russia. To suggest that Hitler weighed this idea for its ramifications, its consequences, and its fruit of this thinking appears in the *Mein Kampf*, where he speaks of a war for Russia.

But Hitler certainly had not abandoned the idea. That remained one of the primary points in his own to the last monologues in the bunker. Just as Italy was to be placated, South Tyrol and England was to be wooed, and dropping all colonial demands, war with

Russia became simply another step that would allow Germany a free hand in the East. By the time he was writing the second volume of *Mein Kampf* in the course of 1925, Hitler forcefully assailed the revisionist approach; it aimed, he argued, at the restoration of wholly illogical, accidental, far too constricted borders, which, moreover, made no sense in terms of military geography. Worse still, such demands would stir up all of Germany's former wartime foes and lead them to revive their unholy alliance. "The demand for restoration of the frontiers of 1914 is a political absurdity of such proportions and consequences as to make it seem a crime," Hitler declared in italics. National Socialism, on the contrary, aimed at securing land and soil for the German people. This action is the only one which, before God and our German posterity, would make any sacrifice of blood seem justified." Such broad gains could "some day acquit the responsible statesmen of blood-guilt and sacrifice of the people."²¹

Henceforth, the idea of attacking Russia, of a mighty Teutonic expedition to establish a vast continental empire in the old "German area of command in the East," became the central tenet of Hitler's foreign policy. He assigned it epoch-making importance:

And so we National Socialists consciously draw a line beneath the foreign policy tendency of our pre-War period. We take up where we broke off a hundred years ago. We stop the endless German movement to the south and west, and turn our gaze toward the land in the east. At long last we break off the colonial and commercial policy of the pre-War period and turn to the soil policy of the future.²²

How he arrived at this concept, as logical as it was monstrous, really does not matter. Some of it was original, some of it an extension of existing theories. The notion of living space seems to have been a borrowing from Rudolf Hess. Thanks to his adulation of "the man," as he called Hitler, Hess had gradually won himself an important place among the group at the Landsberg prison. In particular, he replaced Emil Maurice in the position of Hitler's secretary. Hess also brought Hitler into personal contact with his teacher, Karl Haushofer, who had taken the highly suggestive subject of political geography, the "geopolitics" introduced by Sir Halford Mackinder, and shaped it into a philosophy of imperialistic expansion.

Mackinder had already drawn attention to the basic strength of what he called "the heartland": Eastern Europe and European Russia, protected by huge land masses, were destined to be the "citadel of world power." The founder of geopolitics had decreed: "Whoever rules the heartland rules the world." As we have seen, such pseudoscientific formulas had a special appeal to Hitler's mind. But with all due credit to outside influences, Hitler's version of these ideas was distinctively his own.

That Hitler could speak again did not remove the difficulties of the party. Yet Hitler himself, it now appeared, had gained rather than lost by the ban. For he had been tided over the period of general amused indifference, when meeting halls would have remained empty and his name and message would have only become a bore. He soon realized this and behaved accordingly. In 1927 he spoke in public fifty-six times; two years later he had reduced his public appearances to twenty-nine. There are indications that at this period he began to see the advantages of living in semidivine remoteness. The moment he returned to the masses, he was competing with the overpowering force of unfavorable circumstances. Failures began to pile up, and with this came criticism from within the party. It was directed equally against his style of leadership and against the stringently maintained policy of legality. Even Goebbels, so embarrassingly subservient to Hitler and one of the prophets of the Führer cult, assailed the strictly legal course in his 1927 pamphlet, *Der Nazi-Sozi*. Answering the question of what the party should do if its efforts to obtain a majority failed, Goebbels broke out with: "What then? Then we'll clench our teeth and get ready. Then we'll march against this government; then we'll dare the last great coup for Germany; then revolutionaries of the word will become revolutionaries of the deed. Then we'll make a revolution!"

Hitler's personal conduct also met with criticism, particularly his arrogance toward tried-and-true party comrades. One old party man objected to "the much-discussed wall around Herr Hitler." There were murmurings about Hitler's negligent conduct of party business and his jealousy complex in regard to his niece. In the early summer of 1928, when his chauffeur Emil Maurice surprised him in Geli Raubal's room, Hitler raised his riding whip in such threatening fury that Maurice saved himself only by leaping out the window. With "unconditional devotion" the chairman of the Investigation and Mediation Committee, Walter Buch finally felt compelled to express his view "that you, Herr Hitler, are gradually falling into a degree of misanthropy that causes me worry."³⁸

Faced with these rumblings within the party, Hitler canceled the planned party rally for 1928 and instead convoked a meeting of the leaders in Munich. He forbade all preparatory local meetings, and when he opened the session on August 31 he delivered a highly charged speech in praise of obedience and discipline. Only totally committed elites could constitute a "historic minority," he declared, and thus shape history. To remain operative, the NSDAP must have at most 100,000 members: "That is a number to work with!" All the rest must be followers, rallying around and serving the purposes of the party only in specific cases. Scornfully, he dismissed a motion to elect a "senate" to aid him. He did not think much of advisers, he said. The motion had

been offered by Gauleiter moved from his post and had, it is true, been some Hitler had previously had which he announced that "had the blind faith that make history."

Shortly afterward, a rized in the form by th which Hitler simply iss silent, with a markedly ing such a sense of part end in general resignat that Hitler had permitte how his indifference cov

Hitler felt his chance rigorously organized par ment, for in establishing progress. Henceforth, th the "Hitler movement," patrons and powerful in if it could not win, it coul

On May 20, 1928, a ninth, with 2.6 per cent deputies were Gregor S Hermann Göring, who i bringing with him a wea self, being "stateless," markable capacity for advantage, he used this leader who refused to m tary system and stood f daily life. If he had dec —a decision taken only the desire to get a shar enough, a week after th quite another light on th ber of the Reichstag. I z A Holder of a Railroad have been elected again date in the interests of a dungheap a dunghea as 'government.'" Goel "This startles you. doe

ological, and aesthetic evaluations and held on to them for a long time. But in the meantime that world had declared its bankruptcy, and Hitler—unlike the representatives of the bourgeois world—never forgot that fact. In Hugenberg he was meeting a replica of the cunning, arrogant, and feeble Bavarian Prime Minister, Herr von Kahr, who had for him become the prototype of bourgeois notables. He now regarded them as a group who claimed to rule, yet had the souls of lackeys. "Cowardly," "stupid," "idiotic," and "rotten," were the adjectives he now attached to the mention of any member of this group. "No class of the population is stupider in political matters than this so-called bourgeoisie," he would often remark. Once he said that he had for a long time deliberately tried, by strident propaganda and improper manners, to keep bourgeois people from joining the party.

In May, 1931, Richard Breiting, editor in chief of the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, asked Hitler for an interview. Hitler began the conversation by remarking, "You are a representative of the bourgeoisie which we are fighting." He stressed that he had no intention of rescuing the dying bourgeoisie; on the contrary, he would eliminate it and would, at any rate, find it much easier to handle than Marxism. Hitler openly flaunted his present aloofness from bourgeois culture: "If a proletarian brutally tells me what he thinks, I can cherish the hope that some day this brutality can be turned toward the enemy. When a bourgeois indulges in daydreams of culture, civilization and aesthetic joys for the world, I say to him: 'You are lost to the German nation! You belong in Berlin's West End! Go there, dance your nigger dances till you're worn out, and croak!'"

He occasionally referred to himself as a "proletarian," but with an emphasis that made it appear as though he were talking not so much of his social status but of a social renunciation. "I can never be understood in terms of the bourgeoisie," he declared. Even in his hope of winning over the working class—to which he referred occasionally as a class of "true nobility"—he seemed to be agitated not so much by any fondness for the workers than by his abiding hatred of the bourgeoisie, which had rejected him. There was an incestuous element in his hatred of the bourgeoisie, with the resentment of a would-be bourgeois who had been first rejected, then deceived, constantly erupting. The type of low-class bully he preferred for his immediate personal entourage, the crude "chauffeur types" like Schaub, Schreck, Graf, and Maurice, reflected in an extreme fashion this prejudice, which could be overcome only temporarily by a few individuals: by Ernst Hanfstaengl, for example, or by Albert Speer, or by Carl Jacob Burckhardt, League of Nations commissioner for Danzig, to whom Hitler said "sadly" in 1939: "You come from a world that is foreign to me."¹⁷

No genuine bond with this foreign world was possible; as the meeting

at Harzburg had demonstrated, it could be established. Nothing came of the previously agreed-on a common candidate election.

Much has been made of the see history in terms of conspiracy, convenient proof of their thesis finance capital. However, a close opposite. Far from lending himself manipulators, Hitler treated these their hopes. It might be more cooler's independence of these inter

Undeniably, there did exist a leader of the Nazi party and a party actually obtained consideration from these connections. But it had gone earlier, and in consideration the Center. Neither the gains in of the Center parties can be a wealthy patronage. As late as 1929, the shrunken Deutsche Volk receiving larger sums from inc Walther Funk, toward the end of the Ruhr district, all he came back 20,000 marks. The total of such high. Some 6 million marks is industry's gifts to the Nazi party consider such a figure too low that sum could not have financed local groups, with a large corps of half a million men, and twelve e in 1932. In fact, the annual budget discovered, amounted at this time marks. Conscious that he was a would sometimes refer to himself as man captains of industry.¹⁸

It suits the purposes of pseudo-precision concerning the links between According to this school of thought related and dearly paid political interest that needed him for "public relations." But the very categories are not

at work: "Our whole life is now a frantic chase after success and after power."

For long stretches of his life, therefore, the personality of this man, elusive in any case, evaporates, slips from the biographer's grasp. Hitler's entourage tried in vain to give color, individuality, and a human aura to the phenomenon. Even the masters of propaganda, who could command almost any effect, found themselves at a loss here. The diaries and accounts of Goebbels or Otto Dietrich are prime examples of that failure. The anecdotes his publicists endlessly circulated about Hitler the lover of children, the navigator with an infallible sense of direction in the lost airplane, the "dead shot" with a pistol, the hero with remarkable presence of mind in the midst of the "Red rabble"—all these tales sounded strained and added to the impression they were trying to dispel; remoteness from real life. Only the props he had gradually acquired gave him a certain individual outline: the raincoat, the felt hat or leather cap, the snapping whip, the intensely black mustache, and the way his hair was brushed down over his forehead. But because these items always remained the same, they, too, depersonalized him.

Goebbels has vividly described the restiveness that gripped the leading members of the party at this time:

This endless traveling begins again. Work must be taken care of standing, walking, driving and flying. You hold your most important conversations on stairs, in hallways, at the door, or on the drive to the railroad station. You scarcely have time to think. By train, car and plane you're carried back and forth across Germany. You turn up in a city a half hour before your speech is scheduled, sometimes with even less time to spare; you climb to the speaker's platform and speak. . . . By the time you're done you're in a state as if you'd just been pulled out of a hot bath fully dressed. Then you get into the car and drive another two hours. . . .²⁷

Only a few times during this year and a half of nonstop electioneering did circumstances jolt Hitler out of his impersonality and for brief moments offer a glimpse of his real character.

On September 18, 1931, just as the frantic chase across Germany was beginning and while he was setting out on an election campaign visit to Hamburg, word reached him that his niece Geli Raubal had committed suicide in the apartment they shared on Prinzregentenstrasse in Munich. According to the accounts, Hitler, stunned and horrified, abruptly turned about; and unless all the indications are deceptive, no other event in his personal life affected him as strongly as did this one. For weeks he seemed close to a nervous breakdown and repeatedly swore to give up politics. In his fits of gloom he spoke of suicide; this was, once again, the mood of total capitulation into which he recurrently fell when mis-

fortune struck. This mela of his life, demanding con wanted to seem to be. Th exuberance of a vigorous keeping with his belief th away for several days in According to his intimate spoke of his niece in later he might mention her na of cult. Her room at the of her was set up in the r her body had been found her death, Hitler would l for hours.²⁸

There was a strangely Hitler's reactions to his coldness and inability to he was not putting on a p the key events in his pe relationship to the opposi

If our evidence is to l death, women had played men's home, chance acqu the barracks, the male circ world. The realm that c which; however, he four but these were not easy fr The shy inhibited attitude his youthful crush on Stef him a "woman hater." Th social relationships, alwa raphy is eerily empty, of attitudes included, accord constant anxiety about "h

His complexes seemed with her sentimental and "Uncle Alf." It may be th his own blood. In fact, h very incestuous factor. family. His father had tak and made her his mistr Hitler's path—from Jenn Helena Hanfstaengl, th Riefenstahl, and all thos

is now a frantic chase after success.

is life, therefore, the personality of the subject, slips from the biographer's grasp. To give color, individuality, and a human touch to the masters of propaganda, who could not find themselves at a loss here. The biographer or Otto Dietrich are prime examples. The publicists endlessly circulated about Hitler, the dictator with an infallible sense of direction, the "shot" with a pistol, the hero with remnants of the "Red rabble"—all these things led to the impression they were trying to create.

Only the props he had gradually accumulated: the raincoat, the felt hat or the intensely black mustache, and the way he scratched his forehead. But because these things were too, depersonalized him. He described the restiveness that gripped the masses at this time:

is again. Work must be taken care of. You hold your most important conversation in the door, or on the drive to the railroad station. By train, car and plane you're carried along. You turn up in a city a half hour before you have even less time to spare; you cannot speak. . . . By the time you're done you are pulled out of a hot bath fully dressed. . . . It takes another two hours. . . .²⁷

s year and a half of nonstop electioneering, out of his impersonality and for brief glimpses of his real character. . . . Just as the frantic chase across Germany, setting out on an election campaign, was the fact that his niece Geli Raubal had committed suicide, shared on Prinzregentenstrasse in Munich. Hitler, stunned and horrified, abruptly terminated his public relations. His public relations are deceptive, no other event in his life so strongly as did this one. For weeks he broke down and repeatedly swore to give up politics. He spoke of suicide; this was, once again, the theme into which he recurrently fell when alone.

He struck. This melancholia testified to the highly charged quality of his life, demanding constant effort of will in order to be the person he wanted to seem to be. The energy that emanated from him was not the spontaneity of a vigorous man but the forced product of neurosis. In connection with his belief that the great man must have no feelings, he hid away for several days in a house on the Tegernsee, in southern Bavaria. According to his intimates, tears would come to his eyes whenever he thought of his niece in later years; it was an unwritten rule that no one but Hitler might mention her name. Her memory was surrounded with a "kind of cult." Her room at the Berghof was kept just as she had left it; a bust of her was set up in the room at Prinzregentenstrasse in Munich, where her body had been found. There, year after year, on the anniversary of her death, Hitler would lock himself in for a meditation that might last 24 hours.²⁸

There was a strangely exaggerated, idolizing quality about all of Hitler's reactions to his niece's death—in strong contrast to his usual reserve and inability to relate to others. We have reason to think that Hitler was not putting on a performance, that in fact the incident was one of the key events in his personal life. It seems to have fixed forever his relationship to the opposite sex, which was curious enough in any case. All our evidence is to be believed, for some time after his mother's death, women had played only the most peripheral part in his life. The women of his home, chance acquaintanceships in Munich beer halls, the dugout, the barracks, the male circles of politics and the party—these had been his world. The realm that complemented them tended to be the brothel, which, however, he found despicable, or light, casual relationships—these were not easy for him to form, with his stiff unyielding nature. His inhibited attitude he had toward women was early expressed in his youthful crush on Stefanie. His fellow soldiers in the field considered him a "woman hater." Though later on he was always involved in close personal relationships, always surrounded by a host of people, his biography is eerily empty of other human beings. His fear of all undignified intimacies included, according to a remark by a member of his entourage, a constant anxiety about "having his name linked with a woman."

His complexes seemed to loosen up only after Geli Raubal appeared in his life. Her sentimental and at first, evidently, half-childish fondness for "Uncle Alf." It may be that he could be more relaxed with someone of his own blood. In fact, his feelings for Geli may have sprung from this very incestuous factor. There is a precedent in his own immediate family. His father had taken a niece into his house when she was sixteen and made her his mistress. Among the many women who crossed Hitler's path—from Jenny Haug, the sister of his first chauffeur, to Helen Hanfstaengl, the first wife of Ernst Hanfstaengl, Leni Riefenstahl, and all those he addressed or referred to in the Austrian

intimate style as "*Mein Prinzesschen*," "*Meine kleine Gräfin*," "*Tschaperl*," or "*Flieischerl*," and up to Eva Braun—none meant as much to him as Geli Raubal. She was, oddly inappropriate though the phrase sounds, his great love, a tabooed love of Tristan moods and tragic sentimentality.

One must wonder at Hitler's obtuseness in regard to Geli, for he could be acute enough psychologically where others were concerned. Did he not see that the situation was becoming impossible for this impulsive and unbalanced girl? It has never been established that she was Hitler's mistress. Some informants claim to know she was, and explain the suicide as a desperate escape from what had become the unendurably oppressive relationship with her uncle. Another story is that certain abnormal acts demanded of her by a perverted Hitler drove the girl to suicide. Still a third version denies that there was any sexual relation between the two, but lays stress on Geli Raubal's promiscuity with the men of Hitler's uniformed staff.²⁰

It is fairly certain that she enjoyed her uncle's fame and naïvely participated in his celebrity. But the relationship, which for years had been sustained by joint enthusiasms, by love for the opera and the pleasures of coffeehouses and country outings, had gradually developed oppressive aspects. Hitler's shadow fell heavily upon his niece. He was given to furious jealousy, and to making inordinate demands upon her. Though she had only a moderate gift and scarcely any ambition, he insisted on sending her to famous singing teachers so that she could be trained as a Wagnerian heroine. And his tyranny cut her off from any opportunity to lead a life of her own. Members of his entourage reported that immediately before his departure for Hamburg there had been a loud, violent scene between them, triggered by the girl's wish to go to Vienna for a while. It seems probable that all these complex and seemingly hopeless circumstances finally sent her over the brink. Less plausible is the story popular among his political enemies that the girl shot herself because she was expecting a child by Hitler. Still others held that Hitler himself ordered her murdered, or purported to know that the SS had passed a *Feme* (vigilante) sentence on Geli because she had distracted her uncle from his historic mission. Hitler himself occasionally grumbled that all this "terrible filth" was killing him. He also declared darkly that he would never forgive his enemies for the nasty gossip of those weeks.²⁰

As soon as he had recovered his composure, he continued on to Hamburg after all. There, amid the cheers of thousands, he delivered one of his passionate speeches that whipped the audience into a kind of collective orgy, all waiting tensely for the moment of release, the orgasm that manifested itself in a wild outcry. The parallel is too patent to be passed

over; it lets us see Hitler's churning sexuality unable to meaning to Hitler's frequent. And we need only look at at the wholly erotic fervor aroused in him, to see what platform high above the mass unable to make contact, he n. In a revealing turn of phrase called the masses his "only instinctual, and his audience reduced to a few elemental length. The sound recording obscene, copulatory character, beginning, as of a whole many yappings; the minor climax of the crowd; finally the released by the finally unbl Schickele once spoke of Hitler. And many other contemporary sensually charged liquescence of diabolism.

Nevertheless, anyone who as an orator lay in this making a serious mistake. R of delirium and rationality in the glare of spotlights, parades, and outbursts of his emotions. For all his dealing here with the same and was one of the basic facts was as tangibly marked by methodology of his conquest policy. The very regime actually been defined as a. In fact, the triumphs of earlier years by the greater well as the elaborated stage depended upon his always more radical not only in the long ago as August, 1920, "to arouse and whip up an sober understanding. He these basic principles right

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over; it lets us see Hitler's oratorical triumphs as surrogate actions of a
churning sexuality unable to find its object. No doubt there was a deeper
meaning to Hitler's frequent comparison of the masses to "woman."
And we need only look at the corresponding pages in *Mein Kampf*,
at the wholly erotic fervor that the idea and the image of the masses
aroused in him, to see what he sought and found as he stood on the
platform high above the masses filling the arena—his masses. Solitary,
unable to make contact, he more and more craved such collective unions.
In a revealing turn of phrase (if we may believe the source) he once
called the masses his "only bride." His oratorical discharges were largely
instinctual, and his audience, unnerved by prolonged distress and re-
duced to a few elemental needs, reacted on the same instinctual wave
length. The sound recordings of the period clearly convey the peculiarly
obscene, copulatory character of mass meetings: the silence at the be-
ginning, as of a whole multitude holding its breath; the short, shrill
yappings; the minor climaxes and first sounds of liberation on the part
of the crowd; finally the frenzy, more climaxes, and then the ecstasies
released by the finally unblocked oratorical orgasms. The writer René
Schickele once spoke of Hitler's speeches as being "like sex murders."
And many other contemporary observers have tried to describe the
sensually charged liquescence of these demonstrations in the language
of diabolism.

Nevertheless, anyone who thought the entire secret of Hitler's success
as an orator lay in this use of speech as a sexual surrogate would be
making a serious mistake. Rather, once again it was the curious coupling
of delirium and rationality that characterized his oratory. Gesticulating
in the glare of spotlights, pale, his voice hoarse as he hurled his charges,
tirades, and outbursts of hatred, he remained always the alert master of
his emotions. For all his seeming abandon, he never lost control. We are
dealing here with the same ambiguity that governed his entire behavior
and was one of the basic facts of his character. His oratorical technique
was as tangibly marked by it as his tactic of legality and later the
methodology of his conquest of power or his maneuvers in foreign
policy. The very regime he set up assumed this character and has
actually been defined as a "dual state."²¹

In fact, the triumphs of this phase were distinguished from those of
earlier years by the greater planning that went into his performances, as
well as the elaborated stagecraft. Essentially, Hitler's effectiveness still
depended upon his always going to the utmost extreme; but he was now
more radical not only in his emotions but also in his calculations. As
long ago as August, 1920, he had, in a speech, described his task as
"to arouse and whip up and incite . . . the instinctive" on the basis of
sober understanding. He had, it would seem, a fairly good grasp of
these basic principles right from the start. But only now, under the im-

ne process of social impoverishment. Either Hitler or all the others listened, or all the others talked and, apathetic, locked away from the world around us, "picking at his teeth in a frightful way," as he did it. "Or else he paced restlessly. He did not speak; he interrupted one constantly; he jumped from one subject to another."⁴⁸ His infatuation that he could not even follow the speeches on the radio; having lost the habit of being contravenient-minded or indulged in monologues. Since anger and tolerated only yes men or admirers aged into an intellectual isolation that deepened his mind became fixed on his early convictions, these he neither expanded nor modified, but uttering edge.

of these, as if intoxicated by his own voice. The very Hermann Rauschning, from the early thirties, of the self-important intonation of a man in tirades. There is a similar note, though with concentration, in the table talk recorded in the "The word," Hitler declared, could build regions." When Mussolini was in Germany on led him with a one-and-a-half-hour monologue once giving his impatient guest the opportunity visitors and associates had similar experiences, or, when the torrent of words stretched on into growing more excessive as the hour advanced. He, desperately struggling with their sleepiness, led to "solemn cosmic blather" about art, philosophy or history, and had to listen with defenseless and listeners, although they, too, were only extras, presence he could whip up the excitement that keen observer commented that he would dismiss her of "a person who has just given himself a of his interlocutor managed an occasional objection a stimulus to further, boundlessly wild association without order, without end.

he, which isolated him humanly, benefited him sized only pieces in a game. No one could cross and those who approached most closely to him what reduced distance. Characteristically, his reserved for a few dead persons. In his private here hung a portrait of his mother, and one of offfeur, who died in 1936. None of his father. apparently closer to him than the living girl had

ever been. "In a sense Hitler is simply not human—unreachable and untouchable," Magda Goebbels had already said in the early thirties. While still at the peak of his power, the cynosure of millions, he yet had something about him that belonged to the forgotten young man of the Vienna or early Munich years; he was a stranger even to his closest relatives. Albert Speer, whom for a time he regarded with some sentimentality as the embodiment of his youthful dream of brilliance and distinction, told the Nuremberg tribunal: "If Hitler had had any friends, I would have been his friend." But he, too, did not cross the gulf. In spite of many days and nights of joint planning, when both men would lose themselves in their colossal projects, Speer was never more than Hitler's preferred architect. It is true that Hitler, in an unusual tribute, spoke of his "genius," but the dictator did not trust him in matters that went beyond technical problems.

What was lacking from this one relationship with traces of an erotic element was also lacking in the other: in contrast to Geli Raubal, Eva Braun was merely Hitler's mistress, with all the anxieties, secrecies, and humiliations involved in such a position. She related that at a dinner in the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Munich Hitler sat beside her for three hours, not allowing her to address him; shortly before everyone rose from the table he thrust into her hand "an envelope with money." He had met her at the end of the twenties in Heinrich Hoffmann's photographic studio, and possibly this acquaintanceship was one of the factors that drove Geli Raubal to suicide. Some time after his niece's death Hitler made Eva his mistress. She was a simple, moderately attractive girl with unpretentious dreams and thoughts that were dominated by love, fashion, movies, and gossip, by the constant fear of being thrown over, and by Hitler's egocentric whims and his manner of a petty domestic tyrant. With his craving for regimentation he had forbidden her sun-bathing, dancing, and smoking. ("If I were ever to see Eva smoking, I'd break off at once.") He was quite jealous, and yet he neglected her in an offensive way. In order "not to be so alone" she had several times asked him for a dog ("that would be lovely"), but Hitler had simply passed over the request without comment. For a long time he kept her in almost insultingly mean circumstances. Her diary has been found, and the notes illuminate her unhappy situation. A characteristic passage runs:

There's only one thing I wish, to get very sick and know no more about him for at least a week. Why is nothing happening to me, why must I go through all this? If only I'd never seen him. I'm in despair. Now I'll buy sleeping powder again, then I'll be in a half trance and stop thinking so much about it.

Why doesn't the devil come and take me. It's certainly better with him than it is here. *

For three hours I waited in front of the Carlton and had to watch him

D. T. Soften people would speak of me as if I were not real, but merely a premeditation.

buying flowers for Ondra [Annie Ondra, a film actress] and inviting her to dinner. He needs me only for certain purposes, it isn't possible otherwise.

When he says he's fond of me he means it only at that moment. Just like his promises which he never keeps. Why does he torment me so and not put an end to it right away?

In the middle of 1935 Hitler said "not a kind word" to her for three months, and in addition she learned that recently a "Valkyrie" had been his constant female companion ("he's fond of such dimensions"). She obtained an overdose of sleeping pills and wrote a letter demanding some word from Hitler, even if it came through some outsider. "God, I'm afraid he won't answer today," the last entry of this period reads. "I've decided on 35 pills this time it's going to really be a 'dead certain' business. If only he would have somebody call."

Eva Braun made two attempts at suicide, the first as early as November, 1932, by shooting herself in the neck, the second on the night of May 28, 1935. Evidently Hitler was considerably irritated by these attempts, all the more so since he had not forgotten Geli's fate. In 1936 Hitler's half-sister, Frau Raubal (Geli's mother), at last left the Berghof, and Hitler let Eva Braun take her place. Only after that did the tension between the two relax. Eva continued to be kept in semiconcealment, stealing in by side entrances and using rear staircases, contenting herself with a photograph of Hitler when he left her alone at mealtimes. She was hardly ever permitted to appear in Berlin, and as soon as guests arrived, Hitler almost invariably banished her to her room. But as she felt more secure, Hitler also lost some of his apprehensions, and soon she became a member of that innermost circle of persons before whom he dropped the airs of the great man and at teatime fell asleep in his armchair, or in the evening, with unbuttoned coat, invited his guests to watch movies or chat by the fireplace. But this more relaxed atmosphere also brought out his crude, unfeeling traits. Thus he said to Albert Speer in his mistress's presence: "A highly intelligent man should take a primitive and stupid woman. Imagine if on top of everything else I had a woman who interfered with my work! In my leisure time I want to have peace."⁶⁰ There are some amateur 8-millimeter film shots showing Eva Braun in Hitler's company on the Berghof terrace, always in that mood of high spirits that is somewhat too ebullient to be believed.

The course of one of Hitler's ordinary days has been described by a number of persons. He would open the door of his bedroom, which he regularly locked, a crack in the morning, and his hand would mechanically reach out for the newspapers that were lying ready at hand on a hassock beside the door; then he vanished again. Walks, traveling, conferences on building, receptions, automobile rides did not give the day an exterior framework but merely split it up into a series of distractions. Though Hitler knew so well how to impose an unmistakable style

upon public display, he could of a day into a personal style.

The entourage continued its feurs, and orderlies. "Part of server wrote, 'men with curled gestures.'" As in the past he people to which he had been he was at Obersalzberg he in an unchangingly monotonous declared: "What remains in my a curious vacuity."⁶¹ The eve of movies. Hitler preferred sentimental endings. He also liked not allowed to be shown in the ber of his favorites as many. Warily, with leaden limbs, to place. As at the big dining apart for purposes of display himself had a paralyzing effect ever felt comfortable in his remarked years before. For tediously along, repeatedly Hitler sat silently staring into the circle remained mute out of great self-control to attend the ing setting of the leaping flame.

Between two and three in Eva Braun, and shortly after company, as if liberated, revisited Berlin followed a similar cold atmosphere less intimate. All routine broke down against the ness of these hours he tried to when he was prisoner of his.

How sharp the contrast of the tarian myth of the solitary light, until six or seven in the from his window." And a recit

Full many a night
That we may sleep
For many a night
And there is no
Until, clear-eyed

- Hallgarten also stresses the differing attitudes among various branches of industry; see his *Hitler*; also his *Dämonen oder Retter*, pp. 215f.; also Fletcher, "Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus: Zur Kritik des sowjet-marxistischen Faschismusbegriffs," *Politische Vierteljahrshefte*, 1962:1, p. 55.
21. R. Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland*, p. 64. Dahrendorf argues—and he is surely right about the motives—that the big businessmen supported Hitler in the same way that they granted financial aid to every right-wing party that had prospects of coming to power, not at all as part of a plot. Their attitude, that is, was largely defensive; they were thinking only of reinsurance or, to quote a famous remark by Hugo Stinnes in 1919, they were paying "a social-insurance premium against uprisings." Hallgarten, too, concludes that although Hitler was vigorously supported by industry's funds, this by no means signified that he was "made" by industry; Hallgarten, cf. *Dämonen*, p. 113. We might say, then, that although "industry" did not put Hitler in power, he would scarcely have attained power against its declared will.
 22. The full text of the speech is given in Domarus, pp. 68 ff.
 23. Speech to the Hamburg Nationalist Club in the ballroom of the Hotel Atlantic, February 28, 1926. The transcript notes at this point "tempestuous applause"; cf. Werner Jochmann, *Im Kampf um die Macht*, pp. 103, 114.
 24. Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939, 2nd series, vol. I, p. 512, n. 2.
 25. Arnold Brecht, *Vorspiel zum Schweigen*, p. 180, points out that the authors of the Constitution deliberately renounced taking over the provision in the American Constitution that only native-born citizens can become candidates for the highest office in the land. Ironically, they did so in order not to exclude their Austrian brothers. Incidentally, the efforts to obtain citizenship for Hitler began as early as the autumn of 1929. At that time Frick unsuccessfully attempted to have him naturalized in Munich. Six months later, by which time Frick had advanced to the position of a Minister in Thuringia, Frick tried to obtain German citizenship for Hitler by appointing him to a civil-service post. The post Frick had in mind was that of a police inspector in Hildburghausen, which happened to be vacant. But the situation seemed a bit ludicrous, and Hitler called off the effort. Next Klagges tried to have Hitler appointed to a teaching post at the technical college in Brunswick, but this too failed. A solution was finally found: Hitler was appointed Regierungsrat with the Berlin delegation from Brunswick.
 26. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, pp. 22 ff.
 27. *Ibid.*, pp. 120 f.
 28. On this whole subject cf. Frank, pp. 90 f.; Hanfstaengl, pp. 231 ff. The reference to the unwritten law that no one must mention his niece's name in Hitler's presence is based on information from Albert Speer.
 29. For the different versions cf. Hanfstaengl, pp. 231 ff.; Heiden, *Hitler I*, p. 371; Görlitz and Quint, pp. 322 ff.; Frank, p. 90. The complaints by Gauleiter Mun-
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31. *The Dual Sta*
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32. *Mein Kampf*,
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 478
34. Krebs, *Fende*
35. *Mein Kampf*,
36. H. R. Knicke
37. Heinrich Brü
38. Harry Graf
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Goebbels, p.
39. Preiss, p. 175
40. Harold Nicol
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41. Goebbels, *Ka*
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42. For details
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differing attitudes among various branches also his *Dämonen oder Retter*, pp. 215f.; und Nationalsozialismus: Zur Kritik des smusbegriffs," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*,

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ck, pp. 90 f.: Hanfstaengl, pp. 231 ff. The that no one must mention his niece's name information from Albert Speer. Hanfstaengl, pp. 231 ff.: Heiden, *Hitler I*, 322 ff.: Frank, p. 90. The complaints by

Gauleiter Munder of Württemberg that Hitler was being excessively di- verted by the company of his niece from his political duties were cer- tainly a significant factor in Munder's removal.

30. Cf. on this and what followed: Frank, p. 90. Ernst Hanfstaengl (p. 242) relates a story that he alleges was bandied about in the Hitler family, to the effect that Geli had been made pregnant by a Jewish drawing master from Linz. Hanfstaengl also reports that Geli's body was found with a broken nose, but he gives no supporting evidence. In response to an inquiry Hanfstaengl informed the author that this had been generally known at the time, but so far as I know the fact appears nowhere in the scholarly literature.
31. *The Dual State* is the title of a study by Ernst Fraenkel (London and New York, 1941).
32. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 474 ff.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 478 f.
34. Krebs, *Tendenzen*, p. 154; also Preiss, pp. 45 f.
35. *Mein Kampf*, p. 473.
36. H. R. Knickerbocker, *The German Crisis*, p. 227.
37. Heinrich Brüning, *Memoiren 1918–1934*, p. 195.
38. Harry Graf Kessler, *In the Twenties*, p. 426; also Werner Jochmann, *Nationalsozialismus und Revolution*, p. 405; and Helmut Heiber, *Joseph Goebbels*, p. 65.
39. Preiss, p. 179 (speech of March 7, 1932).
40. Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters 1930–1939*, English ed., entry for January 24, 1932.
41. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 87. The make-up of the Nazi Reichstag faction after the July elections is quite interesting. There were 230 Nazi deputies altogether. Of these, fifty-five were blue-collar and white-collar workers, fifty peasants, forty-three independent representatives of commerce, the crafts and industry, twenty-nine functionaries, twenty civil servants, twelve teachers, and nine former army officers. Cf. *Reichstags-Handbuch*, 6. Wahlperiode, Berlin, 1932, p. 270.
42. For details cf. Bracher, *Auflösung*, pp. 522 ff.; also W. Conze, "Zum Sturz Brünnings," in *VJHfZ* 1952:3, p. 261 ff.; also H. Brüning, *Memoiren*, pp. 273 and 597 ff. The importance of the information on the favorable turn in the disarmament negotiations has been challenged by historians; there are indications that Brüning overestimated it. For a characterization of the pressures on Hindenburg at Gut Neudeck cf. Theodor Eschenburg, "The Role of the Personality in the Crisis of the German Republic" in Holborn, ed., *Republic to Reich*, pp. 43 f.
43. The statistics on the dead and wounded in the bloody weeks after the lifting of the ban on the SA differ greatly. Cf., for example, Wilhelm Hoegner, *Die verratene Republik*, pp. 312 f.; also Friedrich Stampfer, *Die vierzehn Jahre der ersten deutschen Republik*, p. 629, and Bullock, pp. 213 f., who refers to the account given by Albert Grzesinski. Reliable figures on the victims have not been drawn up to this day. The "Roll of Honor of Those Killed for the Movement," which was later published

* Her life was built upon her beauty

Joachim Fest

Hitler

1cc

JOACHIM C. FEST

Hitler

Translated from the German
by Richard and Clara Winston

A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., New York

1974

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→ Emil Maurion Goli Raulson
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26-28, 30-31, 34-36, 40-44, 47-52,
54-55, 57-61

2001, 1987

1937

Neither blindness nor ignorance corrupts people and governments. They soon realize where the path they have taken is leading them. But there is an impulse within them, favored by their natures and reinforced by their habits, which they do not resist; it continues to propel them forward as long as they have a remnant of strength. He who overcomes himself is divine. Most see their ruin before their eyes; but they go on into it.¹

Leopold von Ranke

History records no phenomenon like him. Ought we to call him "great"? No one evoked so much rejoicing, hysteria, and expectation of salvation as he; no one so much hate. No one else produced, in a solitary course lasting only a few years, such incredible accelerations in the pace of history. No one else so changed the state of the world and left behind such a wake of ruins as he did. It took a coalition of almost all the world powers to wipe him from the face of the earth in a war lasting nearly six years, to kill him—to quote an army officer of the German resistance—"like a mad dog."

Hitler's peculiar greatness is essentially linked to the quality of excess. It was a tremendous eruption of energy that shattered all existing standards. Granted, gigantic scale is not necessarily equivalent to historic greatness; there is power in triviality also. But he was not only gigantic and not only trivial. The eruption he unleashed was stamped throughout almost every one of its stages, down to the weeks of final collapse, by his guiding will. In many speeches, he recalled, with a distinctly rapturous note, the period of his beginnings, when he had "nothing at all to back (him), nothing, no name, no fortune, no press, nothing at all, nothing whatsoever," and how, entirely by his own efforts, he had risen from "poor devil" to rule over Germany and soon over part of the world as well. "That has been almost miraculous!"² In fact, to a virtually unprecedented degree, he created everything out of himself and was himself everything at once: his own teacher, organizer of a party and author of its ideology, tactician and demagogic

1937

② Feb 24, 1937 M. Winkler, Hofbräuhaus

1937, 1928

savior, leader, statesman, and for a decade the "axis" of the world. He refuted the dictum that all revolutions devour their children; for he was, as has been said, "the Rousseau, the Mirabeau, the Robespierre and the Napoleon of his revolution; he was its Marx, its Lenin, its Trotsky and its Stalin. By character and nature he may have been far inferior to most of these, but he nevertheless managed to achieve what all of them could not: he dominated his revolution in every phase, even in the moment of defeat. That argues a considerable understanding of the forces he evoked."¹³

He also had an amazing instinct for what forces could be mobilized at all and did not allow prevailing trends to deceive him. The period of his entry into politics was wholly dominated by the liberal bourgeois system. But he grasped the latent oppositions to it and by bold and wayward combinations seized upon these factors and incorporated them into his program. His conduct seemed foolish to political minds, and for years the arrogant *Zeitgeist* did not take him seriously. The mockery he earned was justified by his appearance, his rhetorical flights, and the theatrical atmosphere he deliberately created. Yet in a manner difficult to describe he always stood above his banal and dull-witted aspects. One particular source of his strength lay in his ability to build castles in the air with an intrepid and acute rationality.

In 1923, Hitler had been sitting in a furnished room in Munich, a failed Bavarian local politician, drawing his sketches of imaginary arches of triumph and domed halls. In spite of the collapse of all his hopes after the attempted putsch of November, 1923, he did not take back a single one of his words, did not mute his battle cry, and refused to modify any of his plans for domination of the world. In those days, he later remarked, everyone had branded him a visionary. "They always said I was crazy." But only a few years later everything he had wanted was reality, or at any rate a realizable project, and those institutions that had recently seemed to be permanent and unchallenged were on their way out: democracy and political-party government, unions, international workers' solidarity, the European system of alliances, and the League of Nations. "Who was right?" Hitler triumphantly demanded. "The visionary or the others?—I was right."¹⁴

In this ability to uncover the deeper spirit and tendencies of the age, and to represent those tendencies, there certainly is an element of historic greatness. "It appears to be the destiny of greatness." Jacob Burckhardt wrote in his famous essay on historical greatness, in *Reflections on History*, "that it executes a will going beyond individual desires." Burckhardt speaks of "the mysterious coincidence between the egoism of the individual and the communal will." In general terms and at times in specific details, Hitler's career seems like a classic illustration of this tenet. The following chapters contain a wealth of

evidence of that. The same is true for hardt's view constitute historical greatness leads a people from one stage of cul not only for the program and the fury aim." He manifests the ability "to jump the capacity of simplification, the gift of illusory powers, and finally the exact atmosphere of fascination. "Contest impossible. Anyone desiring to oppose reach of the man, with his enemies, battlefield."¹⁵

And yet we hesitate to call Hitler "great" is not so much the criminal features in world history is not played out in the a ity," and Burckhardt has also spoken the ordinary moral code" which we treat individuals.¹⁶ We may surely ask where extermination planned and committed ferent nature, overstepping the bounds by both Hegel and Burckhardt. Our debt also spring from another factor. The primarily aesthetic, very rarely moral prepared to make allowances in the last not. An ancient tenet of aesthetics holds markable traits is a repulsive human being—and evidence will be offered—that well. His many opaque, instinctual traits, his lack of generosity, his banality was the only motive he would recognize table companions to join him in his success and in general his unmistakably vulgar cast of repugnant ordinariness that contradicts traditional concept of greatness. "Imperial Bismarck in a letter, "is always akin to but without peace, great in his plans proud and sad." If this is true greatness measurable.

It may be that the concept of greatness one of the pessimistically toned political exile, he used the terms "greatness" a triumphant Hitler, but he spoke of "both stage of genius." In such contradiction Perhaps this idea of greatness also springs

* D.T. Deleted!

mise

evidence of that. The same is true for the other elements that in Burckhardt's view constitute historical greatness. Irreplaceability is one; "he leads a people from one stage of cultivation to another." He "stands not only for the program and the fury of a party, but for a more general aim." He manifests the ability "to jump boldly across the abyss"; he has the capacity of simplification, the gift of distinguishing between real and illusory powers, and finally the exceptional will power that creates an atmosphere of fascination. "Contest at close quarters becomes utterly impossible. Anyone desiring to oppose him must live outside of the reach of the man, with his enemies, and can meet him only on the battlefield."⁶

And yet we hesitate to call Hitler "great." Perhaps what gives us pause is not so much the criminal features in this man's psychopathic face. For world history is not played out in the area that is "the true site of morality," and Burckhardt has also spoken of the "strange exemption from the ordinary moral code" which we tend to grant in our minds to great individuals.⁶ We may surely ask whether the absolute crime of mass extermination planned and committed by Hitler is not of an utterly different nature, overstepping the bounds of the moral context recognized by both Hegel and Burckhardt. Our doubts of Hitler's historic greatness also spring from another factor. The phenomenon of the great man is primarily aesthetic, very rarely moral in nature; and even if we were prepared to make allowances in the latter realm, in the former we could not. An ancient tenet of aesthetics holds that one who for all his remarkable traits is a repulsive human being, is unfit to be a hero. It may be—and evidence will be offered—that this description fits Hitler very well. His many opaque, instinctual traits, his intolerance and vindictiveness, his lack of generosity, his banal and naked materialism—power was the only motive he would recognize, and he repeatedly forced his table companions to join him in his scorn of anything else as "bosh"—and in general his unmistakably vulgar characteristics give his image a cast of repugnant ordinariness that simply will not square with the traditional concept of greatness. "Impressiveness in this world," wrote Bismarck in a letter, "is always akin to the fallen angel who is beautiful but without peace, great in his plans and efforts, but without success, proud and sad." If this is true greatness, Hitler's distance from it is immeasurable.

mise

It may be that the concept of greatness has become problematical. In one of the pessimistically toned political essays Thomas Mann wrote in exile, he used the terms "greatness" and "genius" in regard to a then triumphant Hitler, but he spoke of "botched greatness" and of a debased stage of genius.⁷ In such contradictions a concept takes leave of itself. Perhaps this idea of greatness also springs from the historical conscious-

37, 1925

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and following. But it would very ical grouping within the context of pon it was that unique mixture of t, as we shall see, to a large extent t of Gregor Strasser or Goebbels raction of the existing rules of the validity of those rules by the very alism, on the other hand, annulled ed a novel element into the game. s of the period would have led to never have come to those inten- all witness. From the first party ast few days of April, 1945, when tler held a wholly unchallenged y principle, any doctrine, to hold ade history with a highhandedness hronistic. It is unimaginable that ite the same fashion—a succession surprising coups and veerings, -betrayals, but with a tenaciously mething of his singular character, ed upon the course of history, "favored by Marxist theoreticians Socialism has quite rightly been

Hitler was not the last politician ight of conditions and interests; ns has not grown visibly stronger, ossibility of a great doer has not bly, historical rank is dependent acts maintains in the face of cir- ed in the early summer of 1939, ceptance of the principle of evade- ment to circumstances. Rather, o requirements."¹⁰ Following this an *imitatio* of the great man; the st extreme, and ultimately failed. ended with him—just as so much

y that traditional hero-worshiping aller extent, Hitler certainly made but at the same time history made egree. Nothing entered into this

"unperson," as he is defined in one of the following chapters, that was not already present; but whatever did enter acquired a tremendous dynamic. Hitler's biography is the story of an incessant, intensive process of interchange.

We are still asking, however, whether historical greatness can be associated with a hollow individuality. It is challenging to imagine what Hitler's fate would have been had history not produced the circumstances that first awakened him and made him the mouthpiece of millions of defense complexes. It is easy to picture his ignored existence on the fringes of society, to see him embittered and misanthropic, longing for a great destiny and unable to forgive life for having refused him the heroic role he craved. "For the oppressive thing was . . . the complete lack of attention we found in those days from which I suffered most," Hitler wrote concerning the period of his entry into politics.¹¹ The collapse of order, the age's anxieties and climate of change, played into his hands by giving him the chance to emerge from the shadow of anonymity. Great men, in Burckhardt's judgment, are needed specifically in times of terror.¹²

1919

The phenomenon of Hitler demonstrates, to an extent surpassing all previous experience, that historical greatness can be linked with paltriness on the part of the individual concerned. For considerable periods his personality seemed disintegrated, as if it had evaporated into unreality; and it was this seemingly fictitious character of the man that misled so many conservative politicians and Marxist historians—in curious agreement—to regard Hitler as the instrument for the ends of others. Far from possessing any greatness and any political, let alone historical, stature, he seemed to embody the very type of the "agent," one who acts for others. But both the conservatives and the Marxists were deceiving themselves. It was actually an ingredient in Hitler's recipe for tactical success that he made political capital out of this mistake, in which class resentment against the petty bourgeois was then, and still is, expressed. His biography includes, among other things, the story of a gradual disillusionment. In his day he excited a good deal of ironic contempt, and that attitude persists, though kept in check by the memory of the toll of lives he took. But it was, and still is, a misreading of his character.

The course of this life, and the pattern of events themselves, will throw light upon the whole matter. Yet here we may well ask ourselves a few pertinent questions. If Hitler had succumbed to an assassination or an accident at the end of 1938, few would hesitate to call him one of the greatest of German statesmen, the consummator of Germany's history. The aggressive speeches and *Mein Kampf*, the anti-Semitism and the design for world dominion, would presumably have fallen into oblivion, dismissed as the man's youthful fantasies, and only occasion-

Chapter 1

The need to magnify themselves, to bestir themselves, is characteristic of all illegitimates.

Jacob Burckhardt

BACKGROUND AND
DEPARTURE

All through his life he made the strongest efforts to conceal as well as to glorify his own personality. Hardly any other prominent figure in history so covered his tracks, as far as his personal life was concerned. With a carefulness verging on pedantry, he stylized his persona. The concept he had of himself was more like a monument than like a man. From the start he endeavored to hide behind it. Rigid in expression, early conscious of his calling, at the age of thirty-five he had already withdrawn into the concentrated, frozen inapproachability of the Great Leader. In obscurity legends form; in obscurity the aura of being one of the elect can grow. But that obscurity which cloaks the early history of his life also accounted for the anxieties, the secrecy, and the curiously histrionic character of his existence.

Even as leader of the struggling young NSDAP (National Socialist Workers' Party) he regarded interest in his private life as insulting. As Chancellor he forbade all publicity about it.¹ The statements of all those who knew him more than casually, from a friend of his youth to the members of his intimate dinner circle, stress how he liked to keep his distance and preserve his privacy. "Throughout his life he had an indescribable aloofness about him."² He spent several years in a "home for men"; but of all the many people who met him there, few could recall him later. He moved about among them as a permanent stranger, attracting no attention. At the beginning of his political career he jealously took care that no pictures of him were published. Some have explained this obsession as the strategy of a born propagandist; it has

DOTT'S coaching

been argued that as a man of mystery he deliberately aroused interest in himself.

But even if this is so, his efforts at concealment did not spring entirely from the desire to introduce a note of allure into his portrait. Rather, we have here the anxieties of a constricted nature overwhelmed by a sense of its own ambiguousness. He was forever bent on muddying still further the opaque background of his origins and family. When, in 1942, he was informed that a plaque had been set up for him in the village of Spital, he flew into one of his violent rages. He transformed his ancestors into "poor cottagers." He falsified his father's occupation, changing him from a customs official to a postal official. He curtly repulsed the relatives who tried to approach him. For a time his younger sister Paula ran his household at Obersalzberg, but he made her take another name. After the invasion of Austria he forbade Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels to publish; he owed some vague, early suggestions to this man, the eccentric exponent of a racist philosophy. Reinhold Hanisch was his onetime chum from his days in the home for men; he had Hanisch murdered. He insisted that he was no one's disciple. All knowledge had come to him from his own inspiration, by the grace of Providence and out of his dialogues with the Spirit. Similarly, he would be no one's son. The picture of his parents emerges in the dimmest of outlines from the autobiographical chapters of his book, *Mein Kampf*, and only to the extent that it supported the legend of his life.

His efforts to muddy the waters were favored by the fact that he came from across the border. Like many of the revolutionaries and conquerors of history, from Alexander to Napoleon to Stalin, he was a foreigner among his countrymen. There is surely a psychological link between this sense of being an outsider and the readiness to employ a whole nation as material for wild and expansive projects, even to the point of destroying the nation. At the turning point of the war, during one of the bloody battles of attrition, when his attention was called to the tremendous losses among newly commissioned officers, he replied with surprised incomprehension: "But that's what the young men are there for."

But foreignness did not sufficiently conceal him. His feeling for order, rules, and respectability was always at variance with his rather unsavory family history, and evidently he never lost a sense of the distance between his origins and his claims on the world. His own past always stirred his anxieties. In 1930, when rumors arose that his enemies were preparing to throw light on his family background, Hitler appeared very upset: "These people must not be allowed to find out who I am. They must not know where I come from and who my family is."

On both his father's and his mother's side, his family came from a remote and poverty-stricken area in the Dual Monarchy, the Waldvier-

tel between the Danube and the population, with involved kinship breeding, occupied the villages wh ancestral history: Döllersheim, & These are all small, scattered sett wooded landscape. The name H of Czech origin (Hidlar, Hidlarcel variants in the 1430's. Through the name of small farmers; none social framework.

At House No. 13 in Strones, d an unmarried servant girl by the gave birth to a child on June 7, 18 tized Alois. In the registry of birl the name of the child's father was years later when the mother marri Johann Georg Hiedler. That sam husband's brother, Johann Nep sumably because she thought she any rate the Hiedlers, the story h mately they did not even have a be

These two brothers are two Schicklgruber. The third possibl that nevertheless comes from one Jew named Frankenberger in w gruber is said to have been work at any rate, is the testimony of lawyer, later Governor General o Nuremberg Frank reported that from a son of his half-brother Al was blackmail. It indulged in darl in our family history." Frank was fidentially. He found some indicat berger had been Hitler's grand however, makes this thesis appea may also wonder what had prom Jewish ancestor to Hitler. Recen credibility of his statement, so th serious investigation. In any case, its being true or false. What is p the fact that Frank's findings forc renewed investigation undertaken orders from Heinrich Himmler, other theories about Hitler's gran some ambitious combinational in

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BACKGROUND AND DEPARTURE

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Pre-birth in 1999

tel between the Danube and the Bohemian border. A wholly peasant population, with involved kinship ties resulting from generations of in-breeding, occupied the villages whose names repeatedly recur in Hitler's ancestral history: Döllersheim, Strones, Weittra, Spital, Walterschlag. These are all small, scattered settlements in a rather wretched, heavily wooded landscape. The name Hitler, Hiedler, or Hüttler is probably of Czech origin (Hidlar, Hidlarcek); it first crops up in one of its many variants in the 1430's. Through the generations, however, it remained the name of small farmers; none of them broke out of the pre-existing social framework.

At House No. 13 in Strones, the home of Johann Trummelschlager, an unmarried servant girl by the name of Maria Anna Schicklgruber gave birth to a child on June 7, 1837. That same day the child was baptized Alois. In the registry of births in Döllersheim parish the space for the name of the child's father was left blank. Nor was this changed five years later when the mother married the unemployed journeyman miller Johann Georg Hiedler. That same year she turned her son over to her husband's brother, Johann Nepomuk Hüttler, a Spital farmer—presumably because she thought she could not raise the child properly. At any rate the Hiedlers, the story has it, were so impoverished that "ultimately they did not even have a bed left and slept in a cattle trough."

These two brothers are two of the presumptive fathers of Alois Schicklgruber. The third possibility, according to a rather wild story that nevertheless comes from one of Hitler's closer associates, is a Graz Jew named Frankenberger in whose household Maria Anna Schicklgruber is said to have been working when she became pregnant. Such, at any rate, is the testimony of Hans Frank, for many years Hitler's lawyer, later Governor General of Poland. In the course of his trial at Nuremberg Frank reported that in 1930 Hitler had received a letter from a son of his half-brother Alois. Possibly the intention of the letter was blackmail. It indulged in dark hints about "very odd circumstances in our family history." Frank was assigned to look into the matter confidentially. He found some indications to support the idea that Frankenberger had been Hitler's grandfather. The lack of hard evidence, however, makes this thesis appear exceedingly dubious—for all that we may also wonder what had prompted Frank at Nuremberg to ascribe a Jewish ancestor to Hitler. Recent researches have further shaken the credibility of his statement, so that the whole notion can scarcely stand serious investigation. In any case, its real significance is independent of its being true or false. What is psychologically of crucial importance is the fact that Frank's findings forced Hitler to doubt his own descent. A renewed investigation undertaken in August, 1942, by the Gestapo on orders from Heinrich Himmler, produced no tangible results. All the other theories about Hitler's grandfather are also full of holes, although some, ambitious combinational ingenuity has gone into the version that

* Dr. T. I. An exposition of the threat of intermixed genes.

traces Alois Schicklgruber's paternity "with a degree of probability bordering on absolute certainty" to Johann Nepomuk Hüttler.³ Both arguments peter out in the obscurity of confused relationships marked by meanness, dullness, and rustic bigotry. The long and short of it is that Adolf Hitler did not know who his grandfather was.

Twenty-nine years later, after Maria Anna Schicklgruber had died of "consumption in consequence of thoracic dropsy" in Klein-Motten near Strones, and nineteen years after the death of her husband, the brother Johann Nepomuk Hüttler appeared before parish priest Zahnschirm in Döllersheim, accompanied by three acquaintances. He asked for the legitimation of his "foster son," the customs official Alois Schicklgruber, now nearly forty years of age. Not he himself but his deceased brother Johann Georg was the father, he said; Johann had avowed this, and his companions could witness the facts.

The parish priest allowed himself to be deceived or persuaded. In the old registry, under the entry of June 7, 1837, he altered the item "illegitimate" to "legitimate," filled in the space for the name of the father as requested, and inserted a false marginal note: "The undersigned confirm that Georg Hitler, registered as the father, who is well known to the undersigned witnesses, admits to being the father of the child Alois as stated by the child's mother, Anna Schicklgruber, and has requested the entry of his name in the present baptismal register. XXX Josef Romeder, witness; XXX Johann Breiteneder, witness; XXX Engelbert Paukh." Since the three witnesses could not write, they signed with three crosses, and the priest put in their names. But he neglected to insert the date. His own signature was also missing, as well as that of the (long-since deceased) parents. Though scarcely legal, the legitimation took effect: from January, 1877, on Alois Schicklgruber called himself Alois Hitler.

This rustic intrigue may very well have been set in motion by Alois himself. For he was an enterprising man who in the interval had made quite a career for himself. He may therefore have felt the need to provide himself with security and a firm footing by obtaining an "honorable" name. At the age of thirteen he had been apprenticed to a shoemaker in Vienna. But, by and by, he decided against being an artisan and instead entered the Austrian Finance Office. He advanced rapidly as a customs official and was ultimately promoted to the highest civil service rank open to a man of his education. He was fond of appearing as the representative of constituted authority on public occasions and made a point of being addressed by his correct title. One of his associates in the customs office called him "strict, precise, even pedantic," and he himself told a relation who asked his advice about a son's choice of occupation that working for the treasury demanded absolute obedience and sense of duty, and that it was not for "drinkers, borrowers, card

1895

BACKGI

players, and other people who go in graphs that he usually had made on a portly man with the wary face of a mask, bourgeois competence and be can be discerned. He presents himself dignity and complacency, his uniform

But this respectability overlaid and marked by a propensity for impulsiveness his frequent changes of residence and practical work of the customs service least eleven times in barely twenty moves were connected with his job. His first wife was still alive, his subordinate by him, and the same was true for life of the second. His first wife, Anna senior; his last, Klara Pölzl, twenty entered his household as a maid. I came from Spital; and after his character least legally, so that a dispensation for them to marry. The question of him by blood remains as unanswered Hitler's father was. She quietly and domestic tasks, regularly attended church band's wishes—and was never quite housemaid and bedmate. For many years herself as the customs official's wife, as "Uncle Alois." Her picture shows earnest, impassive, with a trace of de

Adolf Hitler, born April 20, 1889 urban house numbered 219, was the first older children, born 1885, 1886, and the two younger, only the sister, Pauline. The children of Alois's second small border town had no influence following year his father was transferred to Austria. Adolf was three years old in Passau, and five when his father was transferred to a farm of nearly ten acres of a famous old Benedictine monastery served as choir boy and acolyte. There he often had the opportunity "to intoxicate" of the brilliant church festivals.¹⁴ again. That same year he retired on pay

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1895

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a portly man with the wary face of an official. Underneath that official
mask, bourgeois competence and bourgeois pleasure in public display
can be discerned. He presents himself to the viewer with considerable
dignity and complacency, his uniform aglitter with buttons.

But this respectability overlaid an obviously unstable temperament
marked by a propensity for impulsive decisions. Among other things,
his frequent changes of residence suggest a restiveness that the sober
practical work of the customs service could not satisfy. He moved at
least eleven times in barely twenty-five years—although some of these
moves were connected with his job. He also married three times. While
his first wife was still alive, his subsequent second wife expected a child
by him, and the same was true for the subsequent third during the
life of the second. His first wife, Anna Glassl, was fourteen years his
senior; his last, Klara Pölzl, twenty-three years younger. She had first
entered his household as a maid. Like the Hiedlers or Hüttlers, she
came from Spital; and after his change of name she was his niece, at
least legally, so that a dispensation from the church had to be obtained
for them to marry. The question of whether she was indeed related to
him by blood remains as unanswerable as the question of who Alois
Hitler's father was. She quietly and conscientiously carried out her do-
mestic tasks, regularly attended church—in accordance with her hus-
band's wishes—and was never quite able to rise above the status of
housemaid and bedmate. For many years she had difficulty in regarding
herself as the customs official's wife, and used to address her husband
as "Uncle Alois." Her picture shows the face of a modest village girl,
earnest, impassive, with a trace of despondency.

Adolf Hitler, born April 20, 1889, in Braunau am Inn, in the sub-
urban house numbered 219, was the fourth child of this marriage. Three
older children, born 1885, 1886, and 1887, had died in infancy; of
the two younger, only the sister, Paula, survived. The family also in-
cluded the children of Alois's second marriage, Alois and Angela. The
small border town had no influence on Adolf's development, for the
following year his father was transferred to Gross-Schönau in Lower
Austria. Adolf was three years old when the family moved again to
Passau, and five when his father was transferred to Linz. In 1895 his
father bought a farm of nearly ten acres in the vicinity of Lambach, site
of a famous old Benedictine monastery where the six-year-old boy
served as choir boy and acolyte. There, according to his own account,
he often had the opportunity "to intoxicate myself with the solemn splen-
dor of the brilliant church festivals."⁴ But his father soon sold the farm
again. That same year he retired on pension, at the age of only fifty-eight.

* D.T. Not worth the outlay to
find out

1888

1902 1902

Leonding, a small community just
its retirement years.

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Twice he had to repeat a grade,
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in all other subjects he scarcely
dequate" or "adequate." His re-

Adolf Hitler
Donausching

port card of September, 1905, noted "unsatisfactory" in German,
mathematics, and stenography. Even in geography and history, which
he himself called his favorite subjects and maintained that he "led the
class,"¹⁰ he received only failing grades. On the whole, his record was
so poor that he left the school.

This debacle is unquestionably due to a complex of reasons. One
significant factor must have been humiliation. If we are to believe
Hitler's story that in the peasant village of Leonding he was the un-
contested leader of his playmates—not altogether improbable for the
son of a civil servant, given the self-esteem of officialdom in Imperial
Austria—his sense of status must have suffered a blow in urban Linz.
For here he found himself a rough-hewn rustic, a despised outsider
among the sons of academics, businessmen, and persons of quality. It
is true that at the turn of the century Linz, in spite of its 50,000 in-
habitants, was still pretty much of a provincial town with all the
dreariness and somnolence the term connotes. Nevertheless, the city
certainly impressed upon Hitler a sense of class distinctions. He made
"no friends and pals" at the *Realschule*. Nor was the situation any better
at the home of ugly old Frau Sekira, where for a time he boarded with
five other schoolmates his age during the school week. He remained
stiff, aloof, a stranger. One of the former boarders recalls: "None of
the five other boys made friends with him. Whereas we schoolmates
naturally called one another *du*, he addressed us as *Sie*, and we also
said *Sie* to him and did not even think there was anything odd about it."
Significantly, Hitler himself at this time first began making those asser-
tions about coming from a good family which in the future unmistakably
stamped his style and his manner. The adolescent fop in Linz, as well
as the subsequent proletarian in Vienna, would seem to have acquired
a tenacious "class consciousness" and a determination to succeed.

Hitler later represented his failure at secondary school as a way of
defying his father, who wanted to steer him into the civil service where
the father himself had had so successful a career. In after years Hitler
told a vivid story about being taken to the main customs office in Linz;
his father hoped the visit would fill him with enthusiasm for the profes-
sion, while he himself was filled with "repugnance and hatred" and
could see the place only as a "government cage" in which "the old men
sat crouching on top of one another, as close as monkeys." But the
description of the allegedly prolonged conflict, which Hitler dramatized
as a grim struggle between two men of iron will, has since been ex-
posed as pure fantasy.

In fact, we must rather assume that his father paid little attention to
his son's vocational future. Certainly he did not insist upon any one
course. That is apparent if only because attendance at the *Gymnasium*
would have been much more to the point for a civil service career, given

1902

1904

the structure of the Austrian school system. But what Hitler does describe accurately is the mood of persistent tension that sprang partly from the difference in temperament between father and son, partly from the father's realizing his long-cherished dream of early retirement—a dream that we may see curiously recurring in the son. When, in the summer of 1895, Alois Hitler retired and was liberated at last from the stringent duties of his vocation, he began living for his leisure and his inclinations. For young Adolf his father's retirement meant an abrupt reduction in his freedom of movement. Suddenly he was continually running into the powerful figure of his father, who insisted on respect and discipline, and who translated his pride in his own achievement into inflexible demands for obedience. The reasons for the conflict are evidently to be sought in this general situation, rather than in any specific differences of opinion over the son's uncertain future.

Moreover, the father saw only the beginning of Adolf's years in the *Realschule*. For, in January, 1903, he took a first sip from a glass of wine in the Wiesinger tavern in Leonding and fell over to one side. He was carried into an adjoining room, where he died immediately, before a doctor and a priest could be sent for. The liberal Linz *Tagespost* gave him a lengthy obituary, referring to his progressive ideas, his sturdy cheerfulness, and his energetic civic sense. It praised him as a "friend of song," an authority on beekeeping, and a temperate family man. By the time his son gave up school out of disgust and capriciousness, Alois Hitler had already been dead for two and a half years. Nor could Adolf's sickly mother have tried to force the boy into a civil servant's career.

Although she seems to have held out for a while against her son's demand that he be allowed to leave school, she soon could find nothing to pit against his self-willed temperament. After losing so many children, her anxiety about the two who remained constantly manifested itself as weakness and indulgence, which her son had quickly learned to exploit. When, in September, 1904, he was promoted only on condition that he leave school, his mother made one last attempt. She sent him to the *Realschule* in Steyr. But there, too, his work continued to be unsatisfactory. His first report card was so bad that Hitler, as he himself relates, got drunk and used the document for toilet paper; he then had to request a duplicate. When his report for the autumn of 1905 likewise showed no improvement, his mother at last gave in and allowed him to leave school. However, the decision was not entirely her own. For, as Hitler involuntarily confessed in *Mein Kampf*, he was "aided by a sudden illness." There is, however, no evidence for such an illness; the principal reason seems to have been that he had again not been promoted.

Hitler left the school "with an elemental hatred," and in spite of all his efforts to explain away his failure by references to his artistic voca-

tion, he never entirely recovered from. mands of schooling, he was now determi to art." He wanted to be a painter. Thi by his talent for sketching and the rather from the provinces must have had of the life. Quite early he showed a bent boarder in his mother's house later desc would sometimes abruptly begin to dra obsessiveness dash down sketches of bui be sure, such behavior can be explaine art to escape the coercions and confineme soar instead into realms of the ideal. It which he threw himself into his paintin dreams, forgetting and rejecting everyth light on this passion. Arrogantly, the would have none of any definite work, a of a livelihood.

It would seem that he sought elevatic as well. Behind all the whims and decis the overpowering desire to be or to be eccentric passion for art was tangibly rel pursuit of the "better class of society. mother had sold the house in Leonding in Linz. Here the sixteen-year-old boy mother's adequate pension, he was in : for the future and to assume that appear counted very heavily in his mind. He w promenade. He regularly attended the l club, and became a member of the libr Popular Education. An awakening inter him, as he related later, to visit the ac And around the same time he saw his f near the Südbahnhof. According to the lanky, pallid, shy, and always dressed sported an ivory-tipped black cane and student. His father had been driven by s what the son regarded as a paltry care far higher. In the dream world that he : the expectations and the egotism of a g

He visibly retreated into this fantasy time failed to meet a challenge. In his his early experiences of helplessness teachers. There he celebrated his soli antagonists; and from this secret real anathema against the ill-wishers he be

1904

system. But what Hitler does describe is a persistent tension that sprang partly from the conflict between father and son, partly from the father's dream of early retirement—a dream that was curbing in the son. When, in the end, the son was liberated at last from the father's reign, the son began living for his leisure and his father's retirement meant an abrupt end. Suddenly he was continually in the presence of his father, who insisted on respect for his pride in his own achievement. The reasons for the conflict are not clear, rather than in any specific situation, rather than in any specific person's uncertain future.

At the beginning of Adolf's years in the family, he took a first sip from a glass of freedom and fell over to one side. He was here he died immediately, before the family. The liberal Linz *Tagespost* gave him his progressive ideas, his sturdy physique. It praised him as a "friend and a temperate family man. By his disgust and capriciousness, Alois died a half years. Nor could Adolf's father be promoted into a civil servant's career.

But for a while against her son's wishes, she soon could find nothing to do. After losing so many children, she had constantly manifested herself to her son had quickly learned to be promoted only on condition of one last attempt. She sent her son, too, his work continued to be so bad that Hitler, as he wrote in a document for toilet paper; he wrote a report for the autumn of 1905 which at last gave in and allowed the son was not entirely her own. In *Mein Kampf*, he was "aided and abetted," no evidence for such an illness had been that he had again not

tal hatred," and in spite of all references to his artistic voca-

1905

tion, he never entirely recovered from the smart. Free from the demands of schooling, he was now determined to dedicate his life "wholly to art." He wanted to be a painter. This choice was prompted equally by his talent for sketching and the rather florid notion an official's son from the provinces must have had of the free and untrammelled artist's life. Quite early he showed a bent for attitudinizing. A onetime boarder in his mother's house later described the way the young Adolf would sometimes abruptly begin to draw at meals and with seeming obsessiveness dash down sketches of buildings, archways, or pillars. To be sure, such behavior can be explained as a legitimate way of using art to escape the coercions and confinements of the bourgeois world, and to soar instead into realms of the ideal. It is only the manic fervor with which he threw himself into his painting exercises, or into music and dreams, forgetting and rejecting everything else, that casts a disturbing light on this passion. Arrogantly, the young Adolf declared that he would have none of any definite work, any sordid vocation for the sake of a livelihood.

It would seem that he sought elevation through art in a social sense as well. Behind all the whims and decisions of his formative years lay the overpowering desire to be or to become something "higher." His eccentric passion for art was tangibly related to his notion that art was a pursuit of the "better class of society." After his father's death his mother had sold the house in Leonding and moved into an apartment in Linz. Here the sixteen-year-old boy sat idly around. Thanks to his mother's adequate pension, he was in a position to suspend all plans for the future and to assume that appearance of privileged leisure which counted very heavily in his mind. He would take a daily stroll on the promenade. He regularly attended the local theater, joined the musical club, and became a member of the library run by the Association for Popular Education. An awakening interest in sexual questions impelled him, as he related later, to visit the adult section of a wax museum. And around the same time he saw his first film in a small movie house near the Südbahnhof. According to the descriptions we have, he was lanky, pallid, shy, and always dressed with extreme care. Usually he sported an ivory-tipped black cane and tried to look like a university student. His father had been driven by social ambition but had achieved what the son regarded as a paltry career. His own goals were pitched far higher. In the dream world that he set up for himself, he cultivated the expectations and the egotism of a genius.

He visibly retreated into this fantasy world after he had for the first time failed to meet a challenge. In his own world he compensated for his early experiences of helplessness vis-à-vis his father and his teachers. There he celebrated his solitary triumphs over defenseless antagonists; and from this secret realm he hurled his first bolts of anathema against the ill-wishers he believed surrounded him. Every-

1905

1906

one who knew him at this time later recalled his low-keyed, withdrawn, "anxious" nature. Unoccupied as he was, everything preoccupied him. The world, he decided, must be "changed thoroughly and in all its parts." Until the late hours of the night, he sat feverishly over clumsy projects for the total rebuilding of the city of Linz. He drew sketches for theaters, mansions, museums, or for that bridge over the Danube which he triumphantly ordered built thirty-five years later on the basis of his own adolescent plans.

He was still incapable of any systematic work. Constantly, he sought new occupations, new stimuli, new goals. For a short while he took piano lessons; then boredom set in and he abandoned them. For a while he had a single boyhood friend, August Kubizek, the son of a Linz decorator, with whom he shared a sentimental passion for music. On August's birthday he made a present to his friend of a villa in the Italian Renaissance style: a gift out of his large stock of delusions. "It made no difference whether he was talking about something finished or something planned."⁸ When he bought a lottery ticket, he was at once transported into a future where he occupied the third floor of a fine house on the bank of the Danube. He spent weeks deciding on the *décor*, choosing furniture and fabrics, making sketches, and unfolding to his friend his plans for a life of leisure and devotion to art. The household would be managed by an "elderly, already somewhat gray-haired but extremely elegant lady." He could already see her receiving "their guests on the festively illuminated landing," guests who belonged "to the choice, spirited circle of friends." The daydream seemed to him already a fact, and when the lottery drawing shattered that dream, he flew into a fit of rage. Significantly, it was not only his own bad luck at which he stormed; he denounced human credulity, the state lottery organization, and finally condemned the cheating government itself.

Quite accurately, he described himself as he was during this period as a "loner." In a concentrated and obstinate manner, he lived only for himself. Aside from his mother and "Gustl," who naïvely admired him and served him as an audience, not another human soul occupies the scene during the most important years of his boyhood. In leaving school, he had effectively left society also. On his daily stroll through the center of the city, he would regularly meet a girl accompanied by her mother, who would be passing the Schmiedtoreck at the same time he was going by. He conceived an interest in this girl, whose name was Stefanie, which quickly developed into an intense romantic feeling that lasted for years. At the same time, he consistently refused to speak to her. There is reason to think that his refusal was based not on normal shyness but on a desire to protect his imaginary relationship from the breath of insipid reality. If we may believe the account of his friend, Hitler wrote "innumerable love poems" to this girl. In one of them she appeared

1906

"as a damsel of high degree, dressed and riding upon a white palfrey loose tresses falling over her shoulder spring sky overhung the scene. All was

He also succumbed to the music to the opera night after night. The seemed to have served him as a means in its lush air of bourgeois luxury the fantasy. Significantly, at this period corresponded to this music: the lush the moderns, Hans Makart. Kubizek's reaction to a performance of Wagner together. Overwhelmed by the resplendent work, Hitler was also stirred by the tribune of the people, Cola di Rienzo and destroyed by their incomprehension. men went on the Freinberg. There, nestled below them, Hitler began to organize the backed-up flood breaking through compelling images, he sketched for months. When these boyhood friends met again Hitler remarked: "It began at that time

In May, 1905, Adolf Hitler went to stay two weeks and was dazzled by the splendor of Ringstrasse, which he saw in "Arabian Nights," by the museums and the "mighty majesty" of the Opera. He attended performances of *Tristan und Isolde* at the mighty waves of sound flooded the wind gave way before the fearful sublimity," he wrote to Kubizek.

It is unclear, however, why after a year and a half before once more set place in the Academy of Fine Arts he played a part, but there would also be a step that would end his existence subject him to the routines of school for the years in Linz the happiest time of the memory of his failure at school.

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler described his city vowing "not to return to his beloved something of himself."¹¹ With a similar sentiment, 1907. And however far he did

WCP1 1945

the central craving remained alive; to see the city lying at his feet in fear, shame, and admiration, to transform the "lovely dream" of the past into present reality. During the war he frequently spoke, wearily and impatiently, of his plan to retire to Linz in his old age, to build a museum there, listen to music, read, write, pursue his thoughts. All this was nothing but the ancient daydream of the lordly house with the "extremely elegant lady" and the "spirited circle of friends," still capable of stirring him after all the intervening years. In March, 1945, when the Red Army was at the gates of Berlin, he had the plans for the rebuilding of Linz brought to him in the bunker under the chancellery and for a long time stood dreamily over them.¹²

1945

THE SHATTER

Vienna at the turn of the century, the scintillating imperial of centuries. Brilliant, self-assured that extended into what is now 8 million people, members of more were ruled from Vienna and held Poles, Jews, Slovenes, Croats, Romanians, and Ruthenians. Such able to modulate all the discords tensions and make them fruitful.

At that point, the empire still peror Franz Joseph, who had reigned in 1898, had become virtuous: dignity, its continuity, and its aristocracy likewise seemed unshaken down by traditions, it dominated. The bourgeoisie had attained universal suffrage did not yet exist. panding feverishly, and the petty being increasingly courted by par

Nevertheless, for all its content ready a "world of yesterday"—fueled doubts about itself. As the displayed in its theaters, its bow was overhung by this eschatological the city celebrated in fact and fiction.

1905

the age had lost its vital force, that only a lovely semblance still survived. Weariness, defeats, anxieties, the more and more embittered quarrels among the nations of the empire, and the shortsightedness of the ruling groups were eroding the unwieldy structure. Nowhere else in old Europe was the atmosphere of termination and exhaustion so palpable. The end of the bourgeois era was nowhere experienced so resplendently and so elegantly as in Vienna.

1866 By the end of the nineteenth century the inner contradictions of the multinational state were emerging with increasing sharpness. For generations that state had been ruled with highhanded indolence. Problems were evaded, crises ignored. The point was to keep all the nationalities "in equal, well-tempered dissatisfaction." That was how the onetime Premier Count Eduard Taaffe ironically defined the art of rule in Austria, and on the whole it was not unsuccessful.

But the precarious equilibrium of the empire had been visibly shaken after 1867, when Hungary wrested special rights for herself in the famous *Ausgleich*. Soon it was being said that the Dual Monarchy was nothing but a pot cracked in many places and held together by a piece of old wire. For the Czechs demanded that their language be given equal status with German. Conflicts erupted in Croatia and Slovenia. And in the year of Hitler's birth Crown Prince Rudolf escaped from a net of political and personal entanglements by his suicide in Mayerling. In Lemberg (Lvov), at the beginning of the century, the Governor of Galicia was assassinated in the street. The number of military draft evaders rose from year to year. At Vienna University there were student demonstrations by national minorities. Columns of workers staged enormous parades down the Ring under bedraggled red banners. From all these symptoms of unrest and weakness it was easy to predict that Austria was on the point of falling apart. It could be expected that the denouement would come when the old Emperor died. In 1905 it was rumored in the German and Russian newspapers that there had been feelers between Berlin and St. Petersburg concerning the future of the Dual Monarchy. Supposedly, inquiries had been made whether it would not be well to agree beforehand on what parts of territory neighbors and other interested parties might count when the empire collapsed. The rumors became so rife that on November 29, 1905, the Foreign Office in Berlin felt compelled to arrange a special meeting with the Austrian ambassador and reassure him.

Naturally, the currents of the period—nationalism and racial consciousness, socialism and parliamentarism—made themselves felt with particular force in this precariously balanced political entity. For a long time it had been impossible to pass a law in the country's Parliament unless the government made outright concessions to various groups in

the virtually inextricable tanglings, approximately a quarter of the other peoples of the empire in development; but their influence on policy of makeshift concessions they were expected to be loyal; satisfy the unreliable nationalities.

In addition, the surging national empire was no longer content to assure German leadership. Russia had seized the ruling class of the time that Austria was excluded from the Balkans and forced the German their "own" state. They felt threatened and began to grumble at the Germans themselves compensated by a part of their own breed. "German" imperialism, carrying strong missionary imperiously and pretentiously.

The anxiety underlying such against the broader background of creeping revolution "old, cosmopolitan" which had anachronistically survived—was going down to destruction and conflicts connected with bourgeois in particular felt the abnormal growth of the cities economic concentration. The imagined in hopeful terms, in utopias, became associated for with uneasiness and dread. In the abolition of guild regulation went bankrupt.

Such troubles naturally gave reflected the increasing craving chiefly defensive ideologies were offered by their advocates as doctrines gave concrete form familiar, hence manageable, in complexes was anti-Semitism, parties and leagues, from the Georg Ritter von Schönerer. Lueger. There had been an out-

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the virtually inextricable tangle of crisscrossing interests. The Ger-
 mans, approximately a quarter of the population, were ahead of all the
 other peoples of the empire in education, prosperity, and general de-
 velopment; but their influence was disproportionately smaller. The
 policy of makeshift concessions worked against them precisely because
 they were expected to be loyal, whereas efforts had to be made to
 satisfy the unreliable nationalities.

In addition, the surging nationalism of the various peoples of the
 empire was no longer countered by the traditional calmness of a self-
 assured German leadership. Rather, the epidemic spread of nationalism
 had seized the ruling class of Germans with special intensity from the
 time that Austria was excluded from German politics in 1866. The Bat-
 tle of Königgrätz had turned Austria's face away from Germany toward
 the Balkans and forced the Germans into the role of a minority within
 their "own" state. They felt themselves being swamped by alien races
 and began to grumble at the monarchy for ignoring that danger. They
 themselves compensated by a more and more immoderate glorification
 of their own breed. "German" became a word with a virtually moralistic
 cast, carrying strong missionary overtones. It developed into a concept
 imperiously and pretentiously opposed to everything foreign.

The anxiety underlying such reactions can be fully understood only
 against the broader background of a general crisis. In the course of a
 creeping revolution "old, cosmopolitan, feudal and peasant Europe"—
 which had anachronistically survived in the territory of the Dual Mon-
 archy—was going down to destruction. No class was spared the shocks
 and conflicts connected with its death. The bourgeois and petty
 bourgeois in particular felt threatened on all sides by progress, by the
 abnormal growth of the cities, by technology, mass production, and
 economic concentration. The future, which for so long had been
 imagined in hopeful terms, in the form of pleasant private or societal
 utopias, became associated for greater and greater numbers of people
 with uneasiness and dread. In Vienna alone, in the thirty years after
 the abolition of guild regulations in 1859, some 40,000 artisans' shops
 went bankrupt.

Such troubles naturally gave rise to many contrary movements that
 reflected the increasing craving for an escape from reality. These were
 chiefly defensive ideologies with nationalistic and racist overtones, of-
 fered by their advocates as panaceas for a threatened world. Such
 doctrines gave concrete form to vague anxieties, expressing these in
 familiar, hence manageable, images. One of the most extreme of these
 complexes was anti-Semitism, which drew together a variety of rival
 parties and leagues, from the Pan-Germans under the leadership of
 Georg Ritter von Schönerer to the Christian Socialists under Karl
 Lueger. There had been an outbreak of anti-Jewish feeling at the time

190 of the depression at the beginning of the 1870's. This emerged afresh when the stream of immigrants from Galicia, Hungary, and Bukovina increased. In the temperate atmosphere of the Hapsburg metropolis, Jews had made considerable progress toward emancipation. But for that very reason the Jews in the East flocked in greater numbers to the more liberal zones of the West. In the interval from 1857 to 1910 their proportion of the population of Vienna rose from 2 per cent to more than 8.5 per cent, higher than in any other city of Central Europe. There were some districts of Vienna where Jews formed about a third of the population. The new immigrants retained both their customs and their style of dress. In long black caftans, tall hats on their heads, their odd and alien-seeming presence strikingly affected the street scene in the capital.

Historical circumstances had confined the Jews to specific roles and specific economic activities. These same circumstances had also bred in them a freedom from bias, an uncommon flexibility and mobility. Representatives of the old bourgeois Europe were still caught up in their traditions, their sentiments and their despairs, and hence were far more apprehensive about the future. The type of personality the Jews had developed corresponded better to the urban, rationalistic style of the age. That, as much as the fact that they had thronged into the academic professions in disproportionate numbers, exerted a dominant influence upon the press, and controlled virtually all the major banks in Vienna and a considerable portion of local industry¹³—produced in the Germans a sense of danger and of being overwhelmed. Generalized anxiety condensed into the charge that the Jews were rootless, seditious, revolutionary, that nothing was sacred to them, that their "cold" intellectuality was opposed to German "inwardness" and German sentiment. In support of this idea anti-Semites could point to the many Jewish intellectuals prominent in the working-class movement. It is characteristic of a minority outcast for generations that it will incline toward rebellion and dreaming of utopias. Thus Jewish intellectuals had indeed flung themselves into the socialist movement and become its leaders. Thus there arose that fateful picture of a grand conspiracy with parts carefully assigned, some to work within capitalism, some within the coming revolution. The small tradesman confidently feared that both his business and his bourgeois status were being menaced by the Jews in a kind of two-pronged attack. And his racial uniqueness was under assault as well. In the 1890's one Hermann Ahlwardt wrote a book with the significant title, *Der Verzweiflungskampf der arischen Völker mit dem Judentum* ("The Desperate Struggle of the Aryan Peoples with Jewry"). Ahlwardt drew the materials for its "documentation" from events and conditions in Germany. Yet, in the Berlin of the nineties, despite all the fashionable currents of anti-Semitism, this book sounded like the

crotchets of a pathological crank. In imagination of wide strata of the popu

In this city of Vienna, against this b next six years. He had come to Vienn impressions and intending to continue more brilliant, more urban setting, the port. Nor did he have any doubts of himself wrote, full of "confident self-he applied for the drawing examination list contains the entry: "The fo satisfactory drawings or were not ad Adolf Hitler, Braunau a. Inn, April 20 civil servant, upper rank, four grades drawing unsatisfactory."

It was a cruel shock. In his con director of the Academy, who suggested architecture, at the same time repeat veritably showed my unfitness for pain experience as an "abrupt blow," a he was being punished for having qui have needed to have passed the fina in a school of architecture. But his regular study was so great that it did make up for this omission by working a grown man he called this requirement education "incredibly difficult" and rer judgment, then, fulfillment of my dream possible."¹⁰

It is probable that after such a humiliation of going home to Linz, former school, the scene of his previous in Vienna for the present and evide about his not being accepted. Even and lay dying, he did not venture to r until after his mother's death on December who had treated his mother in her "never seen a young man so crushed According to his own testimony, he hopes shattered, but he had now to fi of disenchantment. The experience i tendency to keep to himself and to ir of his mother whatever affection he b

1908

came to an end—except one later emotional tie, again linked to a close relative.

Possibly his mother's death reinforced his intention to return to Vienna. The eighteen-year-old boy's decision to go back to the city that had rejected him, to try again to find his way and his opportunities there, testifies equally to his determination and to his desire to escape into anonymity from the inquiring looks and admonitions of his relatives in Linz. Moreover, in order to qualify for his orphan's pension he had to give the impression that he was engaged on a formal course of studies. Consequently, as soon as the formalities and legal questions were settled, he called on his guardian, Mayor Mayrhofer, and declared —“almost defiantly,” as the mayor afterward reported—“Sir, I am going to Vienna.” A few days later, in the middle of February, 1908, he left Linz for good.

A letter of recommendation gave him new hope. Magdalena Hanisch, the owner of the house in which his mother had lived until her death, had connections with Alfred Roller, one of the best-known stage designers of the period, who worked at the Hofoper and also taught at the Vienna Academy of Arts and Crafts. In a letter dated February 4, 1908, she asked her mother, who was living in Vienna, to arrange for Hitler to meet Roller. “He is an earnest, aspiring young man,” she wrote, “nineteen years old, more mature and sedate than his years warrant, pleasant and steady, from a very honorable family. . . . He has the firm intention of learning something substantial. As far as I know him now, he will not ‘loaf,’ since he has in mind a serious goal. I trust you will not be interceding for someone unworthy. And you may well be doing a good deed.”

Only a few days later the answer came that Roller was prepared to receive Hitler, and the Linz landlady thanked her mother in a second letter: “You would be rewarded for your pains if you could have seen the young man's happy face when I had him summoned here. . . . I gave him your card and let him read Director Roller's letter! Slowly, word for word, as though he wanted to learn the letter by heart, as if in reverence, with a happy smile on his face, he read the letter quietly to himself. Then, with fervent gratitude, he laid it down in front of me. He asked me whether he might write you to express his thanks.”

Hitler's own letter, dated two days later, has also been preserved. It is composed in labored imitation of the elaborate style of Imperial Austrian bureaucrats:

Herewith, esteemed and gracious lady, I wish to express my sincerest gratitude for your efforts in obtaining access for me to the great master of stage decoration, Prof. Roller. It was no doubt somewhat overbold of me, Madam, to make such excessive demands upon your kindness, since you after all had to act in behalf of a perfect stranger. All the more, therefore, must I ask

you to accept my sincerest thanks for: . . .
panied by such success, as well as for i
my disposal. I shall at once make us
again my deepest gratitude. I respectf

The recommendation seemed to . . .
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Hitler afterward called the followi
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In the latter half of February Au
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you to accept my sincerest thanks for your undertakings, which were accom-
panied by such success, as well as for the card which you so kindly placed at
my disposal. I shall at once make use of this fortunate opportunity. Once
again my deepest gratitude. I respectfully kiss your hand.

Sincerely yours,
Adolf Hitler.¹⁷

The recommendation seemed to open the way for him to enter his
dream world: the free life of an artist; music and painting combined in
the grand pseudo-world of opera. But there is no indication of how the
meeting with Roller came out. The sources are silent. Hitler himself
never said a word about it. It seems most likely that the famous man
advised him to work, to learn, and in the autumn to apply once more
for admission to the Academy.

Hitler afterward called the following five years the worst of his life. In
some respects they were also the most important. For the crisis of
those years formed his character and provided him with those formulas
for mastering fate to which he clung forever after. They became, in fact,
so calcified within his mind that they account for the impression his
life gives, despite his mania for mobility, of utmost rigidity.

Among the persisting elements of the legend that Hitler himself
constructed over the carefully obscured trail of his life is the allegation
that "necessity and harsh reality" formed the great and unforgettable
experience of those years in Vienna: "For me the name of this
Phaeacian city represents five years of hardship and misery. Five years
in which I was forced to earn a living, first as a day laborer, then as a
small painter; a truly meager living which never sufficed to appease even
my daily hunger. Hunger was then my faithful bodyguard; he never left
me for a moment. . . ."¹⁸ However, careful calculation of his income
has since shown that during the first period of his stay in Vienna, thanks
to his share in his father's inheritance, his mother's legacy, the orphan
pension, and without counting any earnings of his own, he had at his
disposal between eighty and one hundred crowns a month.¹⁹ This was
the monthly earnings of a junior magistrate at that time.

In the latter half of February August Kubizek came to Vienna, on
Hitler's urging, to study at the Conservatory of Music. Thereafter the
two friends lived together in the rear wing of Stumpergasse 29, occupy-
ing a "dreary and wretched" room let to them by an old Polish woman
named Maria Zakreys. But while Kubizek pursued his studies, Hitler
continued the aimless idler's life he had already become accustomed to.
He was master of his own time, as he cockily stressed. Usually it was
almost noon before he got up, sauntered in the streets or in the park at
Schönbrunn, visited the museums, and at night went to the opera. There,
during those years alone, he blissfully heard *Tristan und Isolde* thirty
to forty times, as he afterward averred. Then again he would bury him-

carefully, still went to the opera, the theater, and the coffeehouses of the city; and, as he himself remarks, he continued, by careful speech and restrained bearing, to keep up his sense of bourgeois superiority to the working class. If we are to believe a somewhat dubious source on those years, he always carried with him an envelope of photographs showing his father in parade uniform and would smugly inform people that his late father had "retired as a higher official in his Imperial Majesty's Customs Service."²³

In spite of the occasional rebellious gestures, such behavior reveals the young Hitler's intrinsic craving for approval and for a sense of belonging, which is basic to the bourgeois personality. It is in this light that we must evaluate his remark that from early on he was a "revolutionary" in both artistic and political matters. In fact, the twenty-year-old Hitler never questioned the bourgeois world and its values. Rather, he moved toward it with undisguised respect, dazzled by its brilliance and its wealth. He remained a civil servant's son from Linz, full of sentimental admiration for the bourgeois world. He craved a share in it. His response to his rejection by the bourgeois world was an intensified longing for acceptance and recognition—and this, perhaps, is one of the more remarkable aspects of a youth unusual in many other respects. Europe, after all, had been ringing with denunciations of bourgeois sham for nearly twenty years, so that he could easily have picked up arguments enough to rationalize his own humiliation, and exonerate himself by passing judgment on the age. Instead, worsted and submissive, he held silently aloof from any of that. The rage for total unmasking had no appeal for him. Indeed, all the artistic excitement and clash of ideas so characteristic of the era were lost on him—as well as its intellectual daring.

Vienna in those years shortly after the turn of the century was one of the centers of ferment, but Hitler, astonishingly, remained unaware of this. A sensitive young man with many reasons for protest, for whom music had been among the great liberating experiences of his youth, knew nothing about Schönberg. No reverberations of the "greatest uproar . . . in Vienna's concert halls in the memory of man" which Schönberg and his pupils, Anton von Webern and Alban Berg, had unleashed at that very time seemed to have reached his ears. Nor did he pay any attention to Gustav Mahler or Richard Strauss, whose work seemed to a contemporary critic in 1907 the "hurricane center of the musical world." Instead, the young man from Linz relished in Wagner and Bruckner the raptures of his parents' generation. Kubizek had reported that names like Rilke, whose *Book of Hours* had been published in 1905, or Hofmannsthal, had "never reached" either of them. And although Hitler had applied to the Academy of Fine Arts, he took no part in the affairs of the Secessionists and was in no way

stirred by the sensations that Gustav Kokoschka were provoking. Instead, the mid-nineteenth century, venerated Waldmüller, Karl Rottmann or Rudolf von Alt, with his soaring visions stood faades of the Ringstrasse, unaware of the leaders of a new architecture: Carl Mosdorf. In 1911 a heated controversy over the ornate facade of Loos's commercial building directly opposite one of the baroque palaces. Loos had written an article maintaining that "ornament and crime"—a theme consistently directed his naive enthusiasm by Viennese salons and respected himself reactionary. In everything new toward the debasement of sublimity, and unknown. And with his bourgeois anything of that sort.

His first brush with political reality despite his feelings of alienation, revulsion for him. Instead he once again revealed his establishment, paradoxically defending himself repudiated. Rejected himself, he seceded taking over the cause of the society's psychological mechanism was concealed Hitler's character. He himself has revealed he would go off to one side during the bottle of milk and eat his piece of bread not believe in this story, his "extremism" of his fellow workers was consonant with his personality: "They rejected everything: 'capitalistic' . . . classes; the Father bourgeoisie for the exploitation of the law as a means for the repressive institution for breeding slave material; religion as a means for social exploitation; morality as a sign of status was absolutely nothing at all that of horrible depths."²⁴

Significantly, the series of ideas that Hitler rejected—nation, fatherland, and morality—contains virtually the whole of bourgeois society, against which he

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tect with his soaring visions stood enthralled before the classicistic
façades of the Ringstrasse, unaware of the proximity of the revolution-
ary leaders of a new architecture: Otto Wagner, Josef Hoffman, and
Adolf Loos. In 1911 a heated controversy had flared over the flat un-
ornamented façade of Loos's commercial building on Michaeler Platz,
directly opposite one of the baroque portals of the Hofburg. Moreover,
Loos had written an article maintaining that there was an inner link
between "ornament and crime"—a scandalous thing to say. But Hitler
consistently directed his naive enthusiasm toward the fulsome style ac-
cepted by Viennese salons and respectable society. Here, too, he proved
himself reactionary. In everything new he seemed to sense a tendency
toward the debasement of sublimity, the emergence of something alien
and unknown. And with his bourgeois instincts he shrank back from
anything of that sort.

His first brush with political reality took a similar course. Once again,
despite his feelings of alienation, revolutionary ideas had no attraction
for him. Instead he once again revealed himself a partisan of the es-
tablishment, paradoxically defending a reality that he simultaneously
repudiated. Rejected himself, he seemingly canceled the humiliation by
taking over the cause of the society that had rejected him. Beneath this
psychological mechanism was concealed one of the lines of fracture in
Hitler's character. He himself has related how as a construction worker
he would go off to one side during the noon lunch break to drink his
bottle of milk and eat his piece of bread. And whatever we may or may
not believe in this story, his "extremely" irritated reaction to the attitude
of his fellow workers was consonant with a basic element in his per-
sonality: "They rejected everything: the nation as an invention of the
'capitalistic' . . . classes; the Fatherland as an instrument of the
bourgeoisie for the exploitation of the working class; the authority of
the law as a means for the repression of the proletariat; school as an
institution for breeding slave material, but also for training the slave-
drivers; religion as a means for stupefying the people intended for
exploitation; morality as a sign of stupid, sheeplike patience, etc. There
was absolutely nothing at all that was not dragged through the mire
of horrible depths."²⁴

Significantly, the series of ideas that he defended against the construc-
tion workers—nation, fatherland, authority of the law, school, religion,
and morality—contains virtually the complete catalogue of standards for
bourgeois society, against which he himself was at this time conceiving

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his first resentments. It is precisely this divided relationship that will come to the fore repeatedly on the most diverse planes throughout his life. It will reappear in the political tactics of constantly seeking alliances with the despised bourgeois, and in the ritualistic formality—verging on the ridiculous—that prompted him to greet his secretaries by kissing their hands, or at the afternoon teas in the Führer's headquarters to serve them personally their cream cake. In all vulgarity he cultivated the airs of a "gentleman of the old school." His manners were his way of demonstrating that he had achieved a desired social affinity; and if there is anything in the picture of young Hitler that betrays specifically Austrian traits, it must be this special status consciousness with which he defended the privilege of being bourgeois. In a society whose craze for titles tended to assign a social ranking to every activity, he wanted at least to be a *Herr*, a gentleman. It did not matter that his life was narrow and gloomy as long as he could claim this distinction. This was why he stayed away from the artistic and political oppositions of the period. Much of his outward behavior, his language and his clothing, and his ideological and aesthetic choices as well can be most plausibly explained as the effort to conform to the bourgeois world, which he admired uncritically, even to its presumptions. Social disdain he felt to be far more painful than social wretchedness; and if he despaired, it was not from the flawed order of the world, but from the insufficient part granted to him to play in it. He was therefore very careful to avoid any dispute with society; he wanted only to be reconciled to it. Staggered by the grandeur and glamour of the metropolis, wistfully standing outside locked gates, he was not revolutionary. He was merely lonely. No one seemed less destined to be a rebel than he.

THE GRANITE FO

Near his room on Felberstrasse ther periodicals, including one highly pop anthropology. Its title page carried the you are a creator and preserver of civil are threatened by perils. Read the Lil Male Rights."* Its editor was a def name of Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels. TI *Ostara* after the Germanic goddess of deranged as it was dangerous, of the s he called Asings or Heldings, and c Afflings or Schrättings. Some wealthy possible for Lanz von Liebenfels to Lower Austria. From this headquart a heroic Aryan league that was to fon and blue-eyed master race in the com inferior mixed races. Under the swa raised over his castle in 1907, he pi class struggle by race struggle "to t Thus early he called for a systematic nation: "For the extirpation of the ar the higher new man." Along with ger measures, his platform included sterl jungle," and liquidations by forced lat Frauja, you sons of the gods!" he wr

* *Mannesrechtler*—a coinage based on *Fr* might be "Men's Lib."—TRANS.

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up as the symbol of Germanic, *völkisch* (i.e., racial and nationalistic), attitudes. In the magazine, however, it was still described as the "fire-whisk" which, according to Germanic myth, had twirled the primal substance at the creation of the universe. Hitler also seems to have read both during his schooldays and in the following aimless years—the Pan-German and aggressively anti-Semitic sheet *Linzer Fliegende Blätter*. For it was not only in Vienna that anti-Semitism formed a component of political and social ideology—as the author of *Mein Kampf* would have had his readers believe. It was just as strong in the provinces.

1905
In *Mein Kampf* Hitler speaks of an "inner struggle" lasting two years, in the course of which his emotions resisted the inexorable commands of his reason "a thousand times" before he completed his metamorphosis from "a weak-kneed cosmopolitan" to a "fanatical anti-Semite." In fact, what he calls his "greatest spiritual upheaval" was merely development from a groundless and almost elusive dislike to fixed hostility, from mere mood to ideology. The anti-Semitism of Linz had been of a dreamy sort, tending toward neighborly compromises; now it took on the sharpness of principle. It focused on a well-defined enemy. At the beginning of his stay in Vienna Hitler had sent "respectfully grateful" regards to Dr. Eduard Bloch, his parents' Jewish family doctor. Dr. Josef Feingold, the lawyer, and Morgenstern, the picture framer, had encouraged the would-be artist by buying his small water colors. Toward Neumann, his Jewish companion at the home for men, Hitler had felt an exaggerated sense of obligation. Now, during the process of change that continued for several years, all these marginal figures of his youth started to recede into the background. Their place was taken by a vision that steadily acquired an almost mythological power, the "apparition in a long caftan and black hair locks" which once struck him "as I was strolling through the Inner City." He forcefully described how this chance impression "twisted" in his brain and gradually began to become an obsession that dominated all his thinking:

Since I had begun to concern myself with this question and to take cognizance of the Jews, Vienna appeared to me in a different light than before. Wherever I went, I began to see Jews, and the more I saw the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity. Particularly the Inner City and the districts north of the Danube Canal swarmed with a people which even outwardly had lost all resemblance to Germans. . . . All this could scarcely be called very attractive, but it became positively repulsive when, in addition to their physical uncleanness, you discovered the moral stains on this "chosen people." . . . Was there any form of filth or profligacy, particularly in cultural life, without at least one Jew involved in it? If you cut even cautiously into such an abscess, you found, like a maggot in a rotting body, often dazzled by the sudden light—a kike! . . . Gradually I began to hate them.²⁰

* Dr. Feingold and he would continue to see it that way.

We can probably no longer plumb the real hatred, which lasted literally to the last in his dubious cronies of those years attribute on the part of a dropout from the middle class an incident involving a model, the essence half-Jewish rival, and an attempt on Hitler's she was posing. The story is as grotesque. The theory that Hitler's anti-Semitism was sexual fixations is supported by the whole ideas about sexual relations, which from his bly between strained idealism and obscure ported likewise by the language and argument wherever the figure of a Jew enters the story which can be detected in all the pages of his attempts to deal with his repugnance for Jews and superficial characteristic. Nor is it in pamphlets and periodicals to which he owes "visions" of his youth. Rather, in that obscure the inner nature of his resentment is revealed.

After the war a member of the dictator's extensive list of the women in Adolf Hitler's beautiful Jewish girl from a wealthy family more likely that he had no "actual encounter" in Linz or in Vienna. Or, if so, the affair was kind of passion that might have liberated it from a trivial egocentrism.

Contrasting with this lack is a significant words—"nightmare vision of the seduction of girls by repulsive, bandy-legged Jew boys tormented by the recurrent bugbear of blood of dark, hairy seducers. His race theory was complexes and deep-seated antifemale emotion had brought sin into the world, and her sins of bestial submen was the chief cause of blood. The same obsession, expressing this inhibited masculinity, emerges in a similar vision in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth suspecting girl whom he defiles with his inferior people." In both cases we have the sex-starved daydreamer; and it may well vapors that rise from large tracts of Nazi from the phenomenon of repressed sexual world.²⁸

Kubizek, Hitler's boyhood friend, and o

(i.e., racial and nationalistic), was still described as the "fire youth, had twirled the primal sub-Hitler also seems to have read following aimless years—the Pan-sheet *Linzler Fliegende Blätter*. Semitism formed a component of honor of *Mein Kampf* would have long in the provinces.

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We can probably no longer plumb the real cause of this ever-growing hatred, which lasted literally to the last hour of Hitler's life. One of his dubious cronies of those years attributed the hatred to sexual envy on the part of a dropout from the middle class. This crony has described an incident involving a model, the essence of Germanic femininity, a half-Jewish rival, and an attempt on Hitler's part to rape the girl while she was posing. The story is as grotesque as it is stupidly plausible.²⁷ The theory that Hitler's anti-Semitism was connected with pathological sexual fixations is supported by the whole uneven pattern of Hitler's ideas about sexual relations, which from his boyhood oscillated remarkably between strained idealism and obscure anxiety feelings. It is supported likewise by the language and argumentation of his own account wherever the figure of a Jew enters the story. The scent of obscenity, which can be detected in all the pages of *Mein Kampf* in which he attempts to deal with his repugnance for Jews, is surely not an accidental and superficial characteristic. Nor is it merely an echo of the trashy pamphlets and periodicals to which he owed the unforgotten "illuminations" of his youth. Rather, in that obscenity his own personality and the inner nature of his resentment is revealed.

After the war a member of the dictator's entourage published an extensive list of the women in Adolf Hitler's life. Characteristically, the beautiful Jewish girl from a wealthy family figures in the list. It is far more likely that he had no "actual encounter with the girl," either in Linz or in Vienna. Or, if so, the affair would have been lacking the kind of passion that might have liberated the young man from his theatrical egocentrism.

Contrasting with this lack is a significant dream, the—in his own words—"nightmare vision of the seduction of hundreds and thousands of girls by repulsive, bandy-legged Jew bastards." Lanz, too, had been tormented by the recurrent bugbear of blonde noblewomen in the arms of dark, hairy seducers. His race theory was permeated by sexual-envy complexes and deep-seated antifemale emotions; woman, he maintained, had brought sin into the world, and her susceptibility to the lecherous wiles of bestial submen was the chief cause for the infection of Nordic blood. The same obsession, expressing the toils of a delayed and inhibited masculinity, emerges in a similar vision of Hitler's: "With satanic joy in his face, the black-haired Jewish youth lurks in wait for the unsuspecting girl whom he defiles with his blood, thus stealing her from her people." In both cases we have the fetid, insipid imagery of the sex-starved daydreamer; and it may well be that the peculiarly nasty vapors that rise from large tracts of National Socialist ideology derive from the phenomenon of repressed sexuality within the bourgeois world.²⁸

Kubizek, Hitler's boyhood friend, and other companions from the dim

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 twilight of underground Vienna, have pointed out that Hitler had early on fallen out with everybody, that his hatred lashed out in all directions. It is conceivable, therefore, that his anti-Semitism was merely the concentrated form of his hitherto general and undirected hatred, which finally found its object in the Jews. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler argued that the masses must never be shown more than one enemy, because to be aware of several enemies would only arouse doubts. This principle, a number of writers have pointed out, applied to him even more than to the masses. He always concentrated his feelings with undivided intensity upon a single phenomenon as the presumptive cause of the evils in the world. And that phenomenon was always a specifically imaginable figure, never any elusive cluster of causes.

1909
 Perhaps we may never be able to trace Hitler's overwhelming Jewish phobia down to its roots. But on the whole we may say that an ambitious and desperate loner was finding a formula for politicizing his personal problems. For he saw himself bit by bit going downhill and was forced to fend off his terror of being declassed. The apparition of the Jew helped to support his self-esteem; he could draw the conclusion that he had the laws of history and of nature on his side. Hitler's own account, incidentally, sustains the view that he became a full-fledged anti-Semite at the time he had used up his inheritance. Although he never suffered the utter destitution he later described, he was under some financial pressure, and at any rate had socially fallen much lower than he could bear, given his dreams of being an artist, a genius, the object of public adulation.

Vienna, the German bourgeois Vienna of the turn of the century, may be regarded as under the aegis of three men. Politically, it was the city of Georg Ritter von Schönerer and Karl Lueger. But in that peculiarly iridescent area where politics and art meet—that border region that so significantly determined Hitler's career—the overwhelmingly dominant figure was Richard Wagner. Ideologically, these three were the key personalities of his formative years.

We are told that in Vienna Hitler appeared as a disciple of Georg von Schönerer, that he had framed mottos by this man hanging over his bed: *Ohne Juda, ohne Rom! wird gebaut Germaniens Dom. Heil!** And: *Wir schauen frei und offen, wir schauen unverwandt, wir schauen froh hinüber ins deutsche Vaterland. Heil!*†

These rhymed maxims gave the gist of von Schönerer's program. His Pan-German movement, unlike the association of the same name in Ger-

* We will build Germania's cathedral without the Jews and without Rome. *Heil!*

† We gaze frank and freely, we gaze steadily, we gaze cheerfully across the border into the German Fatherland. *Heil!*

many, did not pursue expansionist imperialism for the union of all Germans in one national to the Pan-German Association of Germany non-German lands of the Danube Monarchy existence of the multinational state. The movement, Georg von Schönerer was a Waldviertel, which was also the native soil begun his career as a radical democrat, but subordinated ideas of political and social reform Obsessed by fears of drowning in a sea of threats to his Germanism all around him: from Roman Catholicism, from Slavs and So monarchy and every type of internationalism German greetings"; he launched all sorts of cient Germanic customs; he recommended t gin with 113 B.C., date of the Battle of N and the Teutons won a decisive victory over t

Schönerer was a difficult personality, deep principles. He organized the Away-from-Rom hostility of the Catholic Church. He was hated for the Jews, hitherto mostly religious variations, the twist that turned it into formal social, and above all, biological basis. A desire for the effectiveness of primitive emotions, the trend toward Jewish assimilation. "Religion blood the foulness lies," ran one of his slogans which he regarded the Jews as agents of the world, and in the radicality of his declaration can be recognized as Hitler's forerunner. V atmosphere of old Austria, he was the firm abilities inherent in organizing racial and new saw the day coming when the German mind and "slaughtered." To ward off that day, Jewish laws. His followers wore on their the anti-Semite: a hanged Jew. There were Parliament at Vienna, calling for bounties to dered Jew, either as a set payment or a poison Dr. Karl Lueger, the other spokesman Semitism, evidently made an even more last: Lueger was the mayor of Vienna and the tian Social Party. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler e miration for Lueger, hailing him as "truly the mayor of all times," and "the last great the Ostmark."²⁰ It is true that Hitler sh

He was writing about
 himself - he could change any tactical
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many, did not pursue expansionist imperialistic goals but worked instead for the union of all Germans in one national state. In marked contrast to the Pan-German Association of Germany, it was for giving up the non-German lands of the Danube Monarchy. In general it opposed the existence of the multinational state. The founder and leader of this movement, Georg von Schönerer was a landowner of the frontier Waldviertel, which was also the native soil of Hitler's family. He had begun his career as a radical democrat, but subsequently more and more subordinated ideas of political and social reform to extreme nationalism. Obsessed by fears of drowning in a sea of foreignness, he saw deadly threats to his Germanism all around him: from the Jews and equally from Roman Catholicism, from Slavs and Socialists, from the Hapsburg monarchy and every type of internationalism. He signed his letters "with German greetings"; he launched all sorts of proposals for reviving ancient Germanic customs; he recommended that German chronology begin with 113 B.C., date of the Battle of Noreia at which the Cimbri and the Teutons won a decisive victory over the Roman legions.

Schönerer was a difficult personality, deeply embittered, rigid in his principles. He organized the Away-from-Rome Movement, incurring the hostility of the Catholic Church. He was the first to give European hatred for the Jews, hitherto mostly religious and economic in its motivations, the twist that turned it into formal anti-Semitism with a political, social, and above all, biological basis. A demagogue with a keen sense for the effectiveness of primitive emotions, he led a general fight against the trend toward Jewish assimilation. "Religion's only a disguise, in the blood the foulness lies," ran one of his slogans. In the monomania with which he regarded the Jews as agents of all the evils and troubles of the world, and in the radicality of his declaration of war on them, he can be recognized as Hitler's forerunner. Within the tepid and tolerant atmosphere of old Austria, he was the first to demonstrate the possibilities inherent in organizing racial and national fears. Anxiously, he saw the day coming when the German minority would be overwhelmed and "slaughtered." To ward off that day, he demanded special anti-Jewish laws. His followers wore on their watch chains the insignie of the anti-Semite: a hanged Jew. There were some who spoke up in the Parliament at Vienna, calling for bounties to be awarded for every murdered Jew, either as a set payment or a portion of the victim's property.

Dr. Karl Lueger, the other spokesman for petty bourgeois anti-Semitism, evidently made an even more lasting impression upon Hitler. Lueger was the mayor of Vienna and the eloquent leader of the Christian Social Party. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler expressed his unequivocal admiration for Lueger, hailing him as "truly gifted," "the greatest German mayor of all times," and "the last great German to be born in . . . the Ostmark."²⁰ It is true that Hitler sharply criticized his program,

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especially his casual and opportunistic anti-Semitism and his faith in the multinational state. But Lueger's demagogic talent impressed him all the more, as did the mayor's adeptness at making use, for his own purposes, of the prevailing socialistic, Christian, and anti-Jewish impulses of the people.

Unlike Schönerer, whose arrogance and fixation aroused strong opposition and thus condemned him to ineffectiveness, Lueger was conciliatory, skillful, and popular. He merely exploited ideologies; privately, he despised them. His thinking was tactical and pragmatic; accomplishment meant more to him than ideas. In his fifteen years in office the transportation network of Vienna was modernized, the educational system extended, social welfare improved, green belts laid out, and almost a million jobs created. Lueger based his power on the Catholic working class and the petty bourgeoisie: white-collar workers and lower-rank government officials, small shopkeepers, the concierges and lower clergy, all of whom industrialization and changing times threatened with social downgrading or poverty. He, too—in this resembling Schönerer—profited by the widespread feelings of anxiety, but he exploited these feelings only against select and defeatable opponents. Moreover, he did not arouse more anxiety by painting the future in gloomy colors. Instead, he won support with infallibly effective humanitarian platitudes, vividly expressed in his recurrent phrase: "We must do something for the little man!"

But Hitler admired Lueger for more than his Machiavellian qualities. He believed he had discovered a deeper concord between the mayor and himself. Certainly Lueger had things to teach him; but beyond that, Hitler regarded the man as a kindred soul. Like himself the son of simple folk, Lueger had made his way against all obstacles, all slurs and social disparagement. He had prevailed over even the objections of the Emperor, who three times refused to confirm him as mayor, and had won that recognition from society which Hitler, too, was bent on having. While Schönerer scotched his chances by making enemies, Lueger had worked his way up by continuously seeking and cementing alliances with the ruling groups. He had known how—as Hitler in his homage described the well-remembered lesson—"to make use of all existing implements of power, to incline mighty existing institutions in his favor, drawing from these old sources of power the greatest possible profit for his own movement."

The mass party Lueger formed with the aid of emotional slogans was living proof that anxiety was—as happiness had been a century before—a new idea in Europe, powerful enough to bridge even class interests. For the time being, the idea of a nationalistic socialism took much the same course. The Bohemian and Moravian regions of the Danube Monarchy were rapidly becoming industrialized. In 1904 a congress in

Trautenuau founded the German Workers' (Arbeiterpartei). Its aim was to defend the interests of the workers against cheap Czech labor pouring into the country from the east side and frequently acting as strikebreaker there would be others throughout Europe until toward meeting a key weakness of Marx—to overcome national antagonisms and to give humanitarian slogans. For there was no room for struggle for the German worker's sense of justice. In fact, the adherents of the new German Workers' Party largely from among former members of the Social Democratic Party. They had turned away from their previous concern that the policy of proletarian solidarity was impracticable in the Czech majority in the region. That policy, formulated it, was "misguided and immeasurable for the peoples of Central Europe."

To these Germans the inseparability of interests seemed to be an obvious and universal truth. They turned to the high-flown and imprecise internationalism thought they would find the reconciliation in the idea of a "national community"—Yugoslavia. The program of their party united, in somewhat concrete ideas answered their craving for self-defense. The goals of the party were predominantly anti-liberal, anti-libertarian, and democratic; but from the beginning with authoritarian and irrational notions, a hostility toward Czechs, Jews, and other so-called "foreigners." The followers of the party were workers from small towns and industry; there were also some railroad workers who regarded themselves as closer to the German Workers' Party, the industrialist, the high official, or the unskilled Czech workers. Soon they took to the streets.

In later life Hitler did not like to recall his ties with them, especially in the immediate pre-World War, were for a time very close. The workers obviously cast doubt upon his claim, as a Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), to that was to determine the fate of the century. He attempted to derive this idea from his comparison with Schönerer, and to represent it as his personal conviction.

If, in addition to its enlightened knowledge of the German Social Party had had a correct idea of the

movement had achieved; and if, finally, it had the Pan-German movement, in addition to its Jewish question, had adopted the practical Social Party, especially in its attitude towards the movement which even then in Germany intervened in German destiny.³⁰

He refrained from joining either of these movements. But it would be more accurate to say that he had no independently thought-out position, filled with inchoate emotions of hatred and which Schönerer appealed. Alongside his prejudices against Jews and other minorities, he had a general interest in some way. He grasped what was at stake and he more by instinct than by reason. His interest in public affairs at this time was political. Rather, he was still being "politically" interested in public affairs at this time. He was only "incidentally" interested in politics. Proof of this is the tale of his childhood worker deeply disliked by his father. His way into all German schoolbooks was to find out. But, for us, the significant detail is that he refused, giving as his reason "it was not my matter." It would seem that for a long time he had been principally a means for unburdening his mind on the world, to explain his system, and finally, also, to find specific organization he joined was the League

movement on Felberstrasse that he had joined. Up to November, 1909, he changed his occupation as "writer." He wanted to avoid registering for military service and to throw the authorities off his trail. His constant moving reflected both his restlessness and aimlessness of his life. His period have described him as pale, thin, with a furrow over his forehead, his movements were awkward. That that stage of his life he had been prepared to approach a great man or person.

which he continued to draw by attending the Academy. His inherit-

ance from his father, however, as well as his share in the sale of his parents' home—which for so long had provided him with the means for a carefree and untrammelled existence—appear to have been used up by the end of 1909. At any rate, he gave up the room on Simon Denk Gasse which he had sublet from September to November. Konrad Heiden, the author of the first important biography of Hitler, relates that at this time Hitler "sank into bitterest misery" and spent a few nights without shelter, sleeping on park benches and in cafés, until the advanced season forced him to seek shelter. November, 1908, was unusually cold; there was much rain, often mixed with snow.³² Sometime during this month Hitler queued up in front of the home for men in Meidling, a Vienna suburb. Here he met a vagabond named Reinhold Hanisch, who in an account he wrote in later years described how "after long wanderings on the roads of Germany and Austria I came to the Refuge for the Homeless in Meidling. On the wire cot to my left was a gaunt young man whose feet were quite sore from tramping the streets. Since I still had some bread that peasants had given me, I shared it with him. At that time I spoke a heavy Berlin dialect; he was enthusiastic about Germany. I had passed through his home town of Braunau on the Inn, so I could easily follow his stories."

For about seven months, until the summer of 1910, Hitler and Hanisch spent their time together in close friendship and joint business affairs. To be sure, this witness is not much more credible than all the others from this early phase of Hitler's life. Nevertheless, there are bits of Hanisch's story which ring true: that Hitler had the tendency to sit idly brooding, and that nothing would persuade him to go job hunting with his pal Hanisch. The contradiction between Hitler's longing for middle-class respectability and his real situation certainly never appeared more plainly than during those weeks in the flophouse, surrounded by broken-down derelicts, befriended by no one but the crudely cunning Reinhold Hanisch. In 1938, when he could do so, he had Hanisch tracked down and killed. At the height of his career, still needing to drown out the humiliating memory of those years, he insisted: "But in imagination I lived in palaces!"

The enterprising Hanisch, wise in the ways of the world, familiar with all the miseries and shifts open to his class, one day asked Hitler his occupation. Hitler replied that he was a painter. Assuming that Hitler meant a house painter, Hanisch said that he certainly should be able to earn money at such a trade. And, despite all our suspicions of Hanisch's reliability, we cannot help recognizing the young Hitler in the phrases that follow: "He was insulted and replied that he was not that kind of painter, but an academician and an artist." The two men eventually went into partnership—the idea seems to have come from Hanisch. Shortly before Christmas they moved into a kind of hostel, the

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home for men on Meldemann Strasse, in the Twentieth District of Vienna. By day, when regulations forbade staying in the tiny bedrooms, Hitler sat in the reading room perusing the newspapers or popular-science journals, or else copying postcards and lithographs of Viennese scenes. Hanisch sold these careful water colors to picture dealers, framers, and sometimes to upholsterers who, in the fashion of the day, "worked them into the high backs of easy chairs or sofas." The proceeds were shared on a fifty-fifty basis. Hitler himself felt that he would not be able to sell his works since he "could not be seen in his bedraggled clothes." Hanisch, however, maintains that he managed "sometimes to get a very good order, so that we could live fairly well."

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The inhabitants of the home for men came from all classes; the largest group consisted of young workers, both blue- and white-collar, with jobs in nearby factories and shops. In addition there were some solid, industrious small craftsmen. Hanisch mentions music copyists, sign painters, and monogram carvers. But more characteristic of the place and the neighborhood were the shipwrecked of various kinds, adventurers, bankrupt businessmen, gamblers, beggars, moneylenders, discharged army officers—flotsam and jetsam from all provinces of the multinational state. There were also the Jews from the eastern regions of the monarchy who, as door-to-door salesmen, peddlers, or knitware dealers were trying to rise. What linked them all was common wretchedness; what separated them was the desperate determination to escape from that world, to scramble out even at the expense of all others. "The lack of solidarity is the supreme characteristic of the great class of the declassed."³³

1910
* D.I.
Again, in the home for men Hitler had no friends aside from Hanisch. Those who knew him there remembered him as a fanatic; on the other hand, he himself spoke of his dislike for the Viennese personality, which he felt to be "obnoxious." Possibly he avoided friendships; intimacies of any kind irritated and exhausted him. What he became acquainted with, on the other hand, was that sort of camaraderie among ordinary people which simultaneously affords contact and anonymity, and offers a kind of loyalty that can be canceled at any time. This was an experience he was never to forget, and in the following years he repeatedly renewed it on the most varied social planes, with virtually unchanging personnel: in the trenches during the war; in the midst of his orderlies and chauffeurs, whose company he preferred as a party leader and later as Chancellor; and finally in the underground bunker of the Führer's headquarters. He always seemed to be repeating the life style of the home for men, which provided only distant forms of social life and in general neatly fitted into his concept of human relations. The management of the home considered him difficult, a political troublemaker.

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Conversations with newspaper left him feeling and he never was in place with a heavy bag on his back.

"Temper often rose," Hanisch later recalls looks made the atmosphere distinctly uncomfortable.

Hitler evidently argued his views sharply. Vienna years he was in a constant state of contrast to the famous lightheartedness of the keeping with the temper of the times. He and Slavs, hated the House of Hapsburg Party, and envisioned the doom of Germany for men did not share his paranoia.

Radical alternatives, wild exaggerations, thinking. His hate-filled mind pushed every events of minor importance into metaphysical on only grandiose themes had attracted him the reasons for his naive and reactionary the nobly decorative, the idealizing elements, gigantic aspirations, or horrendous super helped to mask the banality of his circumscribed Wagner brought him to bright flames," vividly. Hitler himself later claimed that a sketching his first plans for the reconstruction grandiose projects fits into this context. A construction company instantly awoke his old and after a few experiments with model planes as the owner of a great airplane factory and

Meanwhile, reputedly through Greiner's poster advertising a hair tonic, another poster for an antiperspirant sold under the copy of this last poster, with Hitler's signature found. It shows two rather stiff, clumsily drawn one has sat down in exhaustion wringing the of his sock; the other is informing his "dear a day are "a pleasure with Teddy powder." come down to us the tower of St. Stephen's above a mountain of soap. What Hitler himself about this period of his life was that he was time. During the long hours he spent over the cafés, he read by preference the anti-Semitic

If we were to define the characteristic quality of this eccentric, solitary twenty-year-old (as having been "eccentric" at this time),³⁴ essentially unpolitical nature of his interest: idol during those years, not only "in music." early disappointments, lack of recognition, and vocation, a "life flowing into the glory of war

"Temper often rose," Hanisch later recalled. "The exchanges of hostile looks made the atmosphere distinctly uncomfortable."

Hitler evidently argued his views sharply and consistently. During the Vienna years he was in a constant state of perturbation, in strong contrast to the famous lightheartedness of the city but in fact far more in keeping with the temper of the times. He was obsessed by fears of Jews and Slavs, hated the House of Hapsburg and the Social Democratic Party, and envisioned the doom of Germanism. His fellows in the home for men did not share his paranoid emotions.

Radical alternatives, wild exaggerations formed the pattern of his thinking. His hate-filled mind pushed everything to extremes, magnified events of minor importance into metaphysical catastrophes. From early on only grandiose themes had attracted him. This tendency was one of the reasons for his naïve and reactionary leaning toward the heroic, the nobly decorative, the idealizing elements in art. Gods and heroes, gigantic aspirations, or horrendous superlatives stimulated him and helped to mask the banality of his circumstances. "In music Richard Wagner brought him to bright flames," Hanisch writes clumsily but vividly. Hitler himself later claimed that as far back as this he began sketching his first plans for the reconstruction of Berlin. His bent for grandiose projects fits into this context. A job in the office of a construction company instantly awoke his old dreams of being an architect; and after a few experiments with model planes he already saw himself as the owner of a great airplane factory and "rich, very rich."

Meanwhile, reputedly through Greiner's mediation, he produced a poster advertising a hair tonic, another poster for a bed-feathers shop, another for an antiperspirant sold under the brand name "Teddy." A copy of this last poster, with Hitler's signature in a corner, has been found. It shows two rather stiff, clumsily drawn figures of letter carriers; one has sat down in exhaustion wringing heavy blue drops of sweat out of his sock; the other is informing his "dear brother" that 10,000 steps a day are "a pleasure with Teddy powder." In another poster that has come down to us the tower of St. Stephan's cathedral rises majestically above a mountain of soap. What Hitler himself considered noteworthy about this period of his life was that he was at last master of his own time. During the long hours he spent over the newspapers in cheap little cafés, he read by preference the anti-Semitic *Deutsches Volksblatt*.

If we were to define the characteristic quality of that period in the life of this eccentric, solitary twenty-year-old (Hitler, too, spoke of himself as having been "eccentric" at this time),⁸⁴ we should have to stress the essentially unpolitical nature of his interests. Richard Wagner was his idol during those years, not only "in music." In fact, Hitler saw Wagner's early disappointments, lack of recognition, and obstinate faith in his own vocation, a "life flowing into the glory of world fame,"⁸⁵ as a prototype

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of his own destiny. Hitler was not the only victim to be seduced by that romantic concept of genius whose merits and failings Richard Wagner embodied. Because of Wagner a whole generation was confused, misguided, and alienated from the bourgeois world.

The boy who fled the disciplines of school and then fell prey to the delusive promises of the big city found his idol in the Master of Bayreuth. Many young men of his generation followed the same course, and with similarly exalted expectations. It was a way with great appeal to gifted "outsiders" who otherwise would have no choice but to sink into mediocrity. It may surprise us to find that this unprepossessing son of a Linz customs official represents so typical a phenomenon. With the turn of the century legions of these sons of the nineteenth-century middle class made their appearance. In 1906 Hermann Hesse, in *Under the Wheel*, vividly described the sufferings of one such youth under contemporary conditions and gave a dismal forecast of his future. Robert Musil, in *Young Törless*, and Frank Wedekind, in *The Awakening of Spring*, were among the many writers who dealt with the same theme. Whether these heroes sought escape from the toils of the world or went down to destruction, all of them opposed to the bourgeois world a wild enthusiasm for the arts. They despised their fathers' mean accomplishments and felt only contempt for their values. By contrast, an artist's existence was noble, precisely because it was socially unfruitful. Everything that stood for order, duty, endurance, they dismissed as "bourgeois." The bourgeois mentality, they maintained, promoted efficiency but did not tolerate the extraordinary. The tremendous intensifications of true culture, on the other hand, the glories of the "spirit," could be achieved only in isolation, in extreme human and social aloofness. The artist, the genius, the complex personality in general, was bound to be utterly out of place in the bourgeois world. His true locale was far out on the fringes of society, where the morgue for suicides and the pantheon for immortals were both situated—as Henri Murger, the first analyst of this type bathetically observed. Though the lodging-houses to which Hitler betook himself were squalid, though his notion of being an artist was ridiculously highflown; though no one so far had acknowledged his talent; though his actual life in the home for men was marked by deceit, parasitism, and asociality—all this could be secretly justified in terms of the prevailing concept of genius. And Richard Wagner was the supreme example of the validity of that concept.

Hitler himself, in fact, later declared that with the exception of Richard Wagner he had "no forerunners," and by Wagner he meant not only the composer, but Wagner the personality, "the greatest prophetic figure the German people has had." One of his favorite ideas, to which he returned frequently, concerned Wagner's towering importance "for

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the development of German man." He : with which Wagner exerted political influence political," and on one occasion adm excitement" overcame him when he relationship with this great man.³⁰

The parallels are, in fact, not at all hazy. The contact between the two temperaments—all young postcard painter consciously must produce a curious sense of family resemblance first pointed out in his disturbing essay Hitler was at the height of his peacetime

Must we not, even against our will, recognize the artist's character? We are ashamed : is there: the recalcitrance, sluggishness at youth; the dimness of purpose, the what-dating like a semi-idiot in the lowest social the arrogant rejection of any sensible and the basic feeling that he is too good for the feeling based? On a vague sense of being indefinable. To name it, if it could be named laughing. Along with that, the uneasy constant at the world, the revolutionary instinct, the plosive cravings for compensation, the church self, to prove oneself. . . . It is a thorough all, I would not want to close my eyes to

But there are other striking parallels between uncertainty about ancestry, the failure at service, the morbid hatred of Jews, even Wagner ultimately developed into the lunatic must be saved by vegetarian diet. Also a quality of their moods: the abrupt alternations, triumphs and disasters. In many cases the theme is the classic conflict between the laws, and a rigid social order govern Lohengrin or Tannhäuser, Hitler, the sitting over his water colors in the readily recognized magnified aspects of his own Both Wagner and Hitler, moreover, possess a basically despotic tendency. All of Richard Wagner has been able to conceal to what extent it is a less need to dominate. From this impulse, effects, for pomposity, for overwhelming composition after *Rienzi* was a choral work an orchestra of one hundred. This blatant

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the development of German man." He admired the courage and energy with which Wagner exerted political influence "without really wishing to be political," and on one occasion admitted that a "literally hysterical excitement" overcame him when he recognized his own psychological kinship with this great man.⁸⁰

The parallels are, in fact, not at all hard to detect. The points of contact between the two temperaments—all the more marked because the young postcard painter consciously modeled himself after his hero—produce a curious sense of family resemblance, which Thomas Mann first pointed out in his disturbing essay *Brother Hitler*. In 1938, when Hitler was at the height of his peacetime triumphs, Mann wrote:

Must we not, even against our will, recognize in this phenomenon an aspect of the artist's character? We are ashamed to admit it, but the whole pattern is there: the recalcitrance, sluggishness and miserable indefiniteness of his youth; the dimness of purpose, the what-do-you-really-want-to-be, the vegetating like a semi-idiot in the lowest social and psychological bohemianism, the arrogant rejection of any sensible and honorable occupation because of the basic feeling that he is too good for that sort of thing. On what is this feeling based? On a vague sense of being reserved for something entirely indefinable. To name it, if it could be named, would make people burst out laughing. Along with that, the uneasy conscience, the sense of guilt, the rage at the world, the revolutionary instinct, the subconscious storing up of explosive cravings for compensation, the churning determination to justify oneself, to prove oneself. . . . It is a thoroughly embarrassing kinship. Still and all, I would not want to close my eyes to it.⁸⁷

But there are other striking parallels between Hitler and Wagner: the uncertainty about ancestry, the failure at school, the flight from military service, the morbid hatred of Jews, even the vegetarianism, which in Wagner ultimately developed into the ludicrous delusion that humanity must be saved by vegetarian diet. Also common to both was the violent quality of their moods; the abrupt alternation of depressions and exaltations, triumphs and disasters. In many of Richard Wagner's operas the theme is the classic conflict between the outsider, subject only to his own laws, and a rigid social order governed by tradition. In *Rienzi* or *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*, Hitler, the rejected Academy candidate sitting over his water colors in the reading room of the home for men, recognized magnified aspects of his own confrontation with the world. Both Wagner and Hitler, moreover, possessed a furious will to power, a basically despotic tendency. All of Richard Wagner's art has never been able to conceal to what extent its underlying urge was the boundless need to dominate. From this impulse sprang the taste for massive effects, for pomposity, for overwhelming hugeness. Wagner's first major composition after *Rienzi* was a choral work for 1,000 male voices and an orchestra of one hundred. This blatant reliance on mass effects, em-

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ployed to cover up basic weaknesses, this medley of pagan, ritual and music-hall elements anticipated the era of mass hypnosis. The style of public ceremonies in the Third Reich is inconceivable without this operatic tradition, without the essentially demagogical art of Richard Wagner.

Another point in common was a kind of cunning knowledge of the popular mind along with a remarkable insensitivity to banality. This combination resulted in an air of plebeian pretentiousness in which again they were remarkably similar. Gottfried Keller once called the composer a "barber and charlatan"; similarly, a contemporary observer described Hitler, with the acuteness born of hatred, as having "the aura of a head-waiter"; another spoke of him as a speechmaking sex murderer.³⁸ The element of vulgarity and unsavoriness that phrases of this sort tried to catch was present in both Hitler and Wagner. They were masters of the art of brilliant fraudulence, of inspired swindling. And just as Richard Wagner could call himself a revolutionary yet pride himself on his friendship with a king ("Wagner, the government bandleader," *Karl Marx said scornfully*), so Hitler, in his vague dreams of mounting the social ladder, reconciled his hatred of society with his opportunistic instincts. Wagner dismissed the patent contradictions in his views by declaring that art was the goal of life and that the artist made the ultimate decisions. It was the artist who would intervene to save the situation wherever "the statesman despairs, the politician gives up, the socialist vexes himself with fruitless systems, and even the philosopher can only interpret but cannot prophesy." His doctrine then was that of the aesthete who would subordinate life entirely to the dictates of the artist. The state was to be raised to the heights of a work of art; politics would be renewed and perfected by the spirit inherent in art. Elements of this program are clearly visible in the theatricalization of public life in the Third Reich, the regime's passion for histrionics, the staginess of its practical politics—a staginess that often appeared to be the sole end of the politics.

There are still other parallels. The innate tendency toward "dilettantism," which Friedrich Nietzsche noted even while Wagner was still his admired friend, was likewise a trait of Hitler's. In both men there was the same striking need to intervene officiously in all sorts of spheres; both had to be forever proving themselves, dazzling the world with their many talents. Yesterday's glory rapidly turned stale for both of them; they had constantly to be surpassing themselves. In both cases we find an outrageous pettiness side by side with far-ranging inspiration; this very conjunction seems to have defined their peculiar mentality.

Hitler, to be sure, entirely lacked the self-discipline and the artist's capacity for taking pains that distinguished Wagner. Hitler's lethargy, his almost narcotized dullness, are his alone. But at bottom we find in

both men a horror of proletarianization, fend off at any cost. Their struggle to reach the heights to which they felt themselves destined represented the will. That sense of destiny was by their premonitions that some time it would change for them, and all the humiliating wretchedness of years in the lower depths

Hitler's theatrical, essentially unpolitical vein of Richard Wagner, emerges for the first time. Once, after days of "musing and brooding" on the demonstration of Viennese workers. His recollection fifteen years later, still vibrant, was that those "endless columns four abreast" made him, he says, he stood "watching with a dragon slowly winding by," before he felt "anxiety" and went home. What had characterized the theatrical effect of the parade, a word about the background or the political demonstration. Evidently these concerns him of how to achieve such effects upon a stage, brooded on theatrical problems; as he said, "the most magnificent possible staging" were matters of staging. Kubiz's importance his friend, in his occasional admiration of Hitler could not recall afterward he never forgot the "enormous pomp" of anything Richard Wagner had ever depicted in the shade.³⁹

In retrospect, Hitler laid claim to an interest in the arts. During the approximately five years he spent in Vienna, he read "enormously and thoroughly." Visiting the opera, he wrote, he "had but one aim: to be more accurate to say, in the phase of his life stemmed not so much from that of demagoguery and political tactics as from that of a bourgeois filled equally with fear of intimacy, he kept carefully to one side of their lunch. Nevertheless, he eventually wrangles. When his fellows threatened, as he himself off the scaffolding, he learned something. Later put it, with an undertone of admiration, the simple method existed to deal with argument anybody who dared to oppose." The page

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with his political awakening are extremely scanty on theory; they do not suggest that grappling with the ideas of the time which he claims to have engaged in. Rather, he uncritically followed the existing, widespread ideology of the German bourgeoisie. On the other hand, questions of the manipulation of ideas, of their power over the masses, aroused his eager interest and produced his first flashes of insight.

In the Vienna period we can already see those themes emerging which haunt many of his later utterances: the persistent search for "those who are behind it," the "secret wirepuller" who makes a dupe of the masses. Hanisch tells how one day Hitler emerged "altogether overwhelmed" from a movie based on the novel *The Tunnel* (*Der Tunnel*), by Bernhard Kellermann, in which one of the chief characters was a popular orator. "Henceforth there were eloquent speeches in the Home for Men," Hanisch reports. And Josef Greiner tells of having once referred Hitler to a woman named Anna Csillag who sold a hair-growing lotion by means of false testimonials. For almost an hour, Greiner's story goes, Hitler waxed enthusiastic about the woman's skill and the vast potentialities of psychological persuasion. "Propaganda, propaganda!" he is supposed to have raved. "You must keep it up until it creates a faith and people no longer know what is imagination and what reality." Propaganda, he is quoted as saying, is "the fundamental essence of every religion . . . whether of heaven or hair tonic."

These accounts are dubious. We are on firmer ground when we read what Hitler himself had to say about his study of Social Democratic practice: its propaganda, its demonstrations, and its speeches. The lessons he derived were to shape his own approach:

The psyche of the great masses is not receptive to anything that is half-hearted or weak.

Like a woman, whose psychic state is determined less by grounds of abstract reason than by an indefinable emotional longing for a force which will complement her nature, and who, consequently, would rather bow to a strong man than dominate a weakling, likewise the masses love a commander more than a petitioner and feel inwardly more satisfied by a doctrine tolerating no other beside itself than by the granting of liberalistic freedom with which, as a rule, they can do little, and are prone to feel that they have been abandoned. They are equally unaware of their shameless spiritual terrorization and the hidden abuse of their human freedom, for they absolutely fail to suspect the inner insanity of the whole doctrine. All they see is the ruthless force and brutality of its calculated manifestations, to which they always submit in the end. . . . I achieved an equal understanding of the importance of physical terror toward the individual and the masses.

Here, too, the psychological effect can be calculated with precision.

Terror at the place of employment, in the factory, in the meeting hall, and on the occasion of mass demonstrations will always be successful unless opposed by equal terror.⁴⁰

At the beginning of August Hitler and I spent several days painting a view of the Vienna in the style of a classical temple, which he called "a piece on German soil." His admiration evinced itself. At any rate, he thought the picture. Hanisch claimed he had sold it for only ten shillings; his partner then stayed away for some time and instituted legal proceedings. (1910) Hanisch was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment; that the court was prejudiced against Hitler at the home for men under the false buyer's widow subsequently declared that I had only about ten crowns for the picture; but I was a witness.

Subsequently, a Jewish companion named [unclear] in the home for men hawked Hitler's picture. Hitler himself conquered his embarrassment himself.

Hitler spent three and a half of his formative years in the home for men. He can well understand how repellent it would be to an inclined young man full of high-flown ambition. In his own testimony, he shuddered with horror at the scenes of garbage, repulsive filth, and worse, and with no compassion.

His experiences and circumstances during his formative years arrive at that philosophy of struggle, of his view of the world, its "granite foundation." He had no need of ever again changing. His contacts with the inmates in the home for men, and again in later years, whenever he participated in struggle, in harshness, cruelty, destruction, as he did in countless speeches and discussions, and in his table talk at the Führer's head, never forgot the lessons he had learned in Vienna.

Nevertheless, the component of Social Darwinism cannot be attributed solely to his personal experiences. He was really reflecting the tendency toward selection put forth by Charles Darwin's theory, popularized in numerous pseudoscientific papers. He soon came to know that the "struggle for survival" was the mental principle of life, the "survival of the fittest."

1910

1910

extremely scanty on theory; they do not measure the time which he claims to have actually followed the existing, widespread mischiefs. On the other hand, questions of their power over the masses, aroused his first flashes of insight.

He already see those themes emerging in utterances: the persistent search for a secret wirepuller" who makes a dupe of one day Hitler emerged "altogether based on the novel *The Tunnel* (*Der Tunnel*), in which one of the chief characters there were eloquent speeches in the name of Josef Greiner tells of having named Anna Csillag who sold a hair-dresser's testimonials. For almost an hour, he was enthusiastic about the woman's skill in psychological persuasion. "Propaganda," he have raved. "You must keep it up, you no longer know what is imagination," he is quoted as saying, is "the foundation, whether of heaven or hair tonic." He is on firmer ground when we read about his study of Social Democratic demonstrations, and its speeches. The man's own approach:

not receptive to anything that is half-

is determined less by grounds of abstract, emotional longing for a force which will consequently, would rather bow to a man, likewise the masses love a commander more satisfied by a doctrine tolerating the granting of liberalistic freedom with are prone to feel that they have been of their shameless spiritual terrorization of freedom, for they absolutely fail to understand the doctrine. All they see is the ruthless manifestations, to which they always have an equal understanding of the importance and the masses.

He calculated with precision. . . .
the factory, in the meeting hall, and
will always be successful unless op-

At the beginning of August Hitler and Hanisch quarreled. Hitler had spent several days painting a view of the Vienna Parliament, a building in the style of a classical temple, which he had called "a Hellenic masterpiece on German soil." His admiration evidently led him to outdo himself. At any rate, he thought the picture was worth fifty crowns, but Hanisch claimed he had sold it for only ten. They quarreled, and when his partner then stayed away for some time, Hitler abruptly had him arrested and instituted legal proceedings. At the trial, on August 11, 1910, Hanisch was sentenced to seven days in jail. He subsequently asserted that the court was prejudiced against him because he was registered at the home for men under the false name of Fritz Walter. The buyer's widow subsequently declared that her husband had indeed paid only about ten crowns for the picture; but Hanisch did not call him as a witness.

Subsequently, a Jewish companion named Neumann, who also lived in the home for men hawked Hitler's pictures, and on occasion even Hitler himself conquered his embarrassment and went after his customers himself.

Hitler spent three and a half of his formative years in this setting. We can well understand how repellent it would all have been to an artistically inclined young man full of high-flown ambitions. Even years later, by his own testimony, he shuddered with horror at the memory of the "sordid scenes of garbage, repulsive filth, and worse." Characteristically, he felt no compassion.

His experiences and circumstances during this phase of his life helped Hitler arrive at that philosophy of struggle that became the central core of his view of the world, its "granite foundation," as he stressed, which he had no need of ever again changing. The views he formed from his contacts with the inmates in the home for men came to the fore again and again in later years, whenever he professed his belief in brutal struggle, in harshness, cruelty, destruction, the rights of the stronger—as he did in countless speeches and discussions, in the pages of his book, and in his table talk at the Führer's headquarters during the war. He never forgot the lessons he had learned in that school for meanness in Vienna.

Nevertheless, the component of Social Darwinism in Hitler's thought cannot be attributed solely to his personal experiences in the home for men. He was really reflecting the tendency of the age. Science had become the one truly unchallenged authority. As the laws of evolution and selection put forth by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer were popularized in numerous pseudoscientific publications, the average man soon came to know that the "struggle for existence" was the fundamental principle of life, the "survival of the fittest" the basic law govern-

and nations. The so-called while at least, all camps, fac- nineteenth century. It became before the Right took up the unnaturalness of democratic winist principles.

untrammelled nature, social determined by biological tion, involving both exter- ent faulty lines of evolution; thers. Writers like Georges wig Gumpowicz, and Otto arized in their turn by lesser whole sinister program: the niques of deliberate popu- on and sterilization of the by the size of the head, the Often these views were ac- n morality, tolerance, and argued, favored the weak ure, Social Darwinism was m, and some of its advo- ot diminish its widespread a was one of the classical istic practices and robust d be justified as part and

Darwinism and the anti- to the condemnation of and internationalism as enery due to racial mix- portant racial ideologist), became the spokesman e denounced democracy, he contemptuously called

an middle class was con- became a German citizen. on of a noted family of e, nervous constitution, and the work of Richard e to Vienna, and instead y for twenty years. At many of the ideas that

underlay his racial theory of history from the Hapsburg multinational state. In his best known work, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899), he interpreted European history—in a series of bold hypotheses—as the history of racial struggle. He regarded the decline of the Roman Empire as the classical model of historical decadence resulting from contamination of blood lines. Like declining Rome, he posited, the Dual Monarchy was being swamped by the admixture of Oriental races; the “disease” was advancing at a furious pace. In both cases “not one specific nation, not just one people or one race” was causing disintegration, but “a motley agglomeration” of races who in their turn were the consequence of multiple mixings. “Easy talents, and also, peculiar beauty, what the French call *un charme troublant*, is frequently characteristic of bastards. Nowadays this can daily be observed in cities where, as in Vienna, a wide variety of races meet. But at the same time one can also perceive the peculiar spinelessness, the low resistance, the lack of character, in short, the moral degeneration of such people.”⁴¹

Chamberlain carried the parallel even further, comparing the Teutons thronging to the gates of Rome with the noble race of Prussians who had rightly been victorious in their clash with the racially chaotic Austro-Hungarian monarchy. But the mood of this elitist individualist was far from being cocky, was rather one of anxiety and defensiveness. In recurrent pessimistic visions he saw the Teutons “on the brink of the racial abyss,” engaged “in a mute life-and-death struggle.” He was tormented by fantasies of bastardization: “It is still morning, but again and again the powers of darkness stretch out their octopus arms, fasten their sucking cups on us in a hundred places and try to draw us back into the darkness.”

Hitler's Social Darwinist views, therefore, were not simply the “philosophy of the doss-house.”⁴² Rather, they show him once again in harmony with the bourgeois age, whose product and destroyer he was. He merely picked up the kind of ideas current in the newspapers he found in cheap cafés, in the books and pamphlets on newsstands, in operas, and in the speechifying of cynical politicians. His experiences in the home for men were reflected only in the whiff of corruption that rises like a penetrating stench from his theories. Of similar origin was the ugly vocabulary that came to his lips, even when he was a statesman and master of a continent, so that he would speak of the “filthy trash from the East,” the “swinish pack of parsons,” the “crippled dung art,” or would characterize Churchill as a “hopeless square-snout,” and the Jews as “this vilest sow's brood that ought to be beaten to a pulp.”⁴³

Hitler absorbed the complex notions that gave his period its mood and peculiar coloration, absorbed them with that heightened sensitivity which was in fact the only quality he shared with the artist. Along with anti-Semitism and Social Darwinism, the age passed on to him the

nationalistic missionary faith that was the obverse of pessimistic anxiety dreams. His views, highly confused and haphazardly arranged, also contained scraps drawn from the broader intellectual fads of the turn of the century: skepticism about reason and humanity, romantic glorification of blood and instinct. Oversimplified interpretations of Nietzsche's sermons about the strength and radiant amorality of the superman also formed part of this stock of ideas. It is worth noting, however, that it was Nietzsche who remarked that the nineteenth century took over from Schopenhauer not his desire for clarity and rationality, or his doctrine of the intellectual nature of intuition, but—"determined to be barbarously fascinated and seduced"—his unprovable doctrine of the will, his denial of the individual, his ravings about genius, his hatred of the Jews, and his hostility to science.

Once again Richard Wagner enters the picture—Nietzsche used the example of Wagner to illustrate this misunderstanding of Schopenhauer. For the Master of Bayreuth was not only Hitler's great exemplar; he was also the young man's ideological mentor. Wagner's political writings were Hitler's favorite reading, and the sprawling pomposity of his style unmistakably influenced Hitler's own grammar and syntax. Those political writings, together with the operas, form the entire framework for Hitler's ideology: Darwinism and anti-Semitism ("I hold the Jewish race to be the born enemy of pure humanity and everything noble in man"), the adoration of barbarism and Germanic might, the mystique of blood purification expressed in *Parsifal*, and the general histrionic view in which good and evil, purity and corruption, rulers and the ruled, stand opposed in black and white contrasts. The curse of gold, the inferior race grubbing underground, the conflict between Siegfried and Hagen, the tragic genius of Wotan—this strange brew compounded of bloody vapors, dragon slaying, mania for domination, treachery, sexuality, elitism, paganism, and ultimately salvation and tolling bells on a theatrical Good Friday were the perfect ideological match for Hitler's anxieties and needs. Here he found the "granite foundations" for his view of the world.

Hitler called the Vienna years "the hardest, though most thorough school of my life"; when he left it, he declared, he had "grown quiet and serious." He hated the city ever after for the rejection and insults he had suffered there—in this, too, resembling his model, Richard Wagner, who never overcame his grudge against Paris for the disappointments of his youth and had visions of the city going down to destruction in smoke and flames.⁴⁴ It is not far-fetched to suspect that Hitler's subsequent plans for turning Linz into a cultural metropolis on the Danube were inspired by resentment toward Vienna. Although he may not have gone so far as to wish the city burned to the ground, the fact is that in Decem-

ber, 1944, he refused a request for addition to the city, remarking that Vienna might just as well have been like.

His uncertainty about his future increased in 1910 and the beginning of 1911. A considerable sum of money from his additional funds produced in him no immediate new beginning. He continued to dream of the future, but it passed by. He still pretended that he was waiting for a new beginning. He went on cherishing vague hopes of a better future, but he did nothing to make a reality of any of his dreams were ambitious, directed toward a better future, with which he continued to dream in the last years of his life, confers upon this period a striking character. He avoided being pinned down by anything, his relationships tentative. His refusal to be identified as a member of the proletariat was based on his claim to middle-class status. Similarly, he did nothing in the home for men and did nothing in his own promise of genius and future fame.

His principal fear was that the circumstances of his dream. He was afraid of an uneventful future, declared, he had "indulged in angry thoughts of a pilgrimage, which . . . had begun too late. . . . period 'of law and order' ahead . . . as a fate."⁴⁶ This much he sensed: that only upheaval could close the gap that separated his dreams, he was one of those who were to a life of disillusionment.

the obverse of pessimistic anxiety haphazardly arranged, also con- intellectual fads of the turn of the humanity, romantic glorifica- d interpretations of Nietzsche's amorality of the superman also worth noting, however, that in the nineteenth century took over from id rationality, or his doctrine of "determined to be barbarously doctrine of the will, his denial us, his hatred of the Jews, and

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ber, 1944, he refused a request for additional anti-aircraft units for the city, remarking that Vienna might just as well find out what bomb warfare was like.

His uncertainty about his future increasingly depressed him. At the end of 1910 and the beginning of 1911 he appears to have received a considerable sum of money from his aunt, Johanna Pölzl. But these additional funds produced in him no initiative, no effort to make a serious new beginning. He continued to drift aimlessly: "So the weeks passed by." He still pretended that he was a student, painter, or writer. He went on cherishing vague hopes of a career in architecture. But he did nothing to make a reality of any of these pretensions. Only his dreams were ambitious, directed toward a great destiny. The persistence with which he continued to dream in the face of the actual conditions of his life, confers upon this period a striking note of inner consistency. He avoided being pinned down by anything, persisted in keeping all his relationships tentative. His refusal to enter the union saved him from being identified as a member of the proletariat and allowed him to hang on to his claim to middle-class status. Similarly, as long as he remained in the home for men and did nothing in particular, he could believe his own promise of genius and future fame.

His principal fear was that the circumstances of the times might block his dream. He was afraid of an uneventful era. Even as a boy, he later declared, he had "indulged in angry thoughts concerning my earthly pilgrimage, which . . . had begun too late" and had "regarded the period 'of law and order' ahead . . . as a mean and undeserved trick of fate."¹⁰ This much he sensed: that only a chaotic future and social upheaval could close the gap that separated him from reality. Wedded to his dreams, he was one of those who would prefer a life of disaster to a life of disillusionment.

Chapter 4

1913

I had to get out into the great Reich,
the land of my dreams and my longing.

Adolf Hitler

THE FLIGHT TO MUNICH

On May 24, 1913, Hitler left Vienna and moved to Munich. He was twenty-four years old, a despondent young man who gazed out upon an uncomprehending world with a mixture of yearning and bitterness. The disappointments of the preceding years had reinforced the brooding, withdrawn strain in his nature. He left no friends behind. In keeping with his antirealistic temperament, he tended to feel closest to those who were beyond reach: Richard Wagner, Ritter von Schönerer, Lueger. That "foundation" of his "personal views," acquired "under the pressure of fate," consisted of an assortment of prejudices which from time to time, after periods of vague brooding, were discharged in passionate outbursts. He left Vienna, as he later remarked, "a confirmed anti-Semite, a deadly foe of the whole Marxist world outlook, and pan-German."

Like all such self-descriptions, this one has plainly been tailored so that Hitler can pretend to early judgment in political matters. He practiced the same kind of tailoring in writing *Mein Kampf*. In fact, his moving to Munich, rather than Berlin, the capital of the Reich, is rather plain proof of his continuing unpolitical disposition. Or perhaps we should say that he was guided by romantic and artistic impulses far more than political motives. For prewar Munich had the reputation of being a city of the Muses, a charming, humanely sensual, lighthearted center of art and science. The "life style of the painter was regarded here as the most legitimate of all."⁴⁰ This picture of the city stemmed precisely from the contrast it made to noisily modern, proletarian Berlin. The latter city was a Babylon, in which social questions took precedence over aesthetics, ideologies over culture—or, in sum, politics over art. The atmosphere of Munich was more like that of Vienna, which again suggests that Hitler was drawn there by a general feeling rather than by

any specific reasons that would have made it more merence to Berlin—if, indeed, he felt confor In the *Reich Handbook of German Societ* for 1931 he explained that he had moved field for political activity." He would have ct tions in the capital of the Reich.

The same torpor and friendlessness that Vienna continued in Munich. It rather seer in a great hollow space. He made no conta factions; and ideologically, too, he remaine intellectually restive city, whose whole aur ships. Here even obsessions were highly tho originality. Yet even here the young Hitler He could have found his way to those who for even the most bizarre variants of *völkis* the city. Anti-Semitism also flourished, esp dislocated petty bourgeoisie. There were als of widely differing character. It is true tha softened by the climate of Munich and usu rhetorical, neighborly forms. In the then s chists, bohemians, reformers, artists, and va ciples mingled easily. Pale young geniuses dr of the world, of redemptions, cataclysmic pu juvenation cures for degenerate mankind.

At the center of one of the most important at café tables around individuals or ideas w He had gathered around him a band of chi, imitated him in his contempt for bourgeois youth and of instinct, faith in the superma life as art and the life of the artist. One of h had rediscovered the forgotten swastika. Lud was close to George, proclaimed "mind as t

Oswald Spengler, at that period, was setti cline of the West and announcing a line, of for a time, stem the tide. Lenin had lived at and at number 34 on the same street, only. Hitler now took a room as a tenant in the a Popp.

The intellectual ferment, like the artistic riod, passed Hitler by in Munich as it had in Franz Marc, or Paul Klee, who also lived i hood and were opening new dimensions in Hitler. Throughout all the months he lived i modest postcard copyist who had his vision

Chapter 4

I had to get out into the great Reich,
the land of my dreams and my longing.

Adolf Hitler

TO MUNICH

Vienna and moved to Munich. He was a young man who gazed out upon a mixture of yearning and bitterness, ending years had reinforced the brooding. He left no friends behind. In keeping it, he tended to feel closest to those who Wagner, Ritter von Schönerer, Lueger. "naïve views," acquired "under the pressure of prejudices which from time to time, were discharged in passionate outbursts," remarked, "a confirmed anti-Semite, a racist world outlook, and pan-German." This one has plainly been tailored so for judgment in political matters. He practiced in writing *Mein Kampf*. In fact, his Berlin, the capital of the Reich, is rather unpolitical disposition. Or perhaps we romantic and artistic impulses far more than Munich had the reputation of being humanely sensual, lighthearted center of the painter was regarded here as a picture of the city stemmed precisely from its modern, proletarian Berlin. The which social questions took precedence of culture—or, in sum, politics over art. The is like that of Vienna, which again suggested by a general feeling rather than by

any specific reasons that would have made him choose it in preference to Berlin—if, indeed, he felt confronted with any choice at all. In the *Reich Handbook of German Society* (a kind of *Who's Who*) for 1931 he explained that he had moved to Munich to find "a wider field for political activity." He would have found, however, better conditions in the capital of the Reich.

The same torpor and friendlessness that had marked the years in Vienna continued in Munich. It rather seems as if he spent his youth in a great hollow space. He made no contacts with parties or political factions; and ideologically, too, he remained solitary. Munich was an intellectually restive city, whose whole aura favored human relationships. Here even obsessions were highly thought of, for they betokened originality. Yet even here the young Hitler formed ties with nobody. He could have found his way to those who shared his racist notions, for even the most bizarre variants of *völkisch* ideas had their place in the city. Anti-Semitism also flourished, especially in the economically dislocated petty bourgeoisie. There were also radical leftist movements of widely differing character. It is true that all these tendencies were softened by the climate of Munich and usually expressed in sociable, rhetorical, neighborly forms. In the then suburb of Schwabing anarchists, bohemians, reformers, artists, and various apostles of new principles mingled easily. Pale young geniuses dreamed of an elitist renewal of the world, of redemptions, cataclysmic purgations, and barbarous rejuvenation cures for degenerate mankind.

At the center of one of the most important of those circles that formed at café tables around individuals or ideas was the poet Stefan George. He had gathered around him a band of highly talented disciples who imitated him in his contempt for bourgeois morality, glorification of youth and of instinct, faith in the superman, and an austere ideal of life as art and the life of the artist. One of his disciples, Alfred Schuler, had rediscovered the forgotten swastika. Ludwig Klages, who for a time was close to George, proclaimed "mind as the antagonist of the soul."

Oswald Spengler, at that period, was setting out to proclaim the decline of the West and announcing a line of new Caesars who would, for a time, stem the tide. Lenin had lived at 106 Schleissheimer Strasse, and at number 34 on the same street, only a few blocks away, Adolf Hitler now took a room as a tenant in the apartment of a tailor named Popp.

The intellectual ferment, like the artistic experimentation of the period, passed Hitler by in Munich as it had in Vienna. Vassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, or Paul Klee, who also lived in the Schwabing neighborhood and were opening new dimensions in painting, meant nothing to Hitler. Throughout all the months he lived in Munich he remained the modest postcard copyist who had his visions, his nightmares, and his

translate them into art. The pedantic
every blade of grass, every stone
shows his intimate craving for whole-
phantom world of his complexes and
expressed.

step within himself, of his insufficient
ral failure, the more he had to find
urity. He thought himself highly de-
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ar purpose that he saw all around
ork: corruption, the scheming for
was essential for him to blame his
identification also helped to raise
he was different and better than
zechs who had crossed his path;
essively as ever, the fear of sinking
from the down-and-outs, the anti-
of life" had taught him to think
e overwhelming experience of his
ill be seen, the impulse behind the
lis apparently consistent views of
and inhumanity, were preponder-
ensation for that "frightened man-
is early years observed in him,
but symptoms of exhaustion, dis-
is of blood-poisoning, racial sub-
this, it is true, he shared the
it was one of the deeper strains
shadow over the faith in progress
t of the age. But in the radical
g, in the thoroughness with which
unmistakably his own.

his explanation of why, after years
left Vienna. His reasons are a
d sentimentality, but he leads off

of races which the capital showed
chs, Poles, Hungarians, Ruthenians,
eternal parasitic fungi of humanity

dimment of racial desecration. . . .
onger and stronger in me, to go at
ires and secret love had drawn me.
myself as an architect and thus, on

the large or small scale which Fate would allot me, to dedicate my sincere
services to the nation.

But finally I wanted to enjoy the happiness of living and working in the
place which some day would inevitably bring about the fulfillment of my most
ardent and heartfelt wish: the union of my beloved homeland with the com-
mon fatherland, the German Reich.⁴⁷

It is possible that he did have some such yearnings. Other factors
of greater or lesser weight conceivably contributed to the decision. He
himself later confessed that he had never been able "to learn the Vien-
nese jargon." He had also decided that the city and Austria as a whole
"in the field of cultural and artistic matters . . . showed all symptoms
of degeneration." Thus there were no opportunities for him as an aspir-
ing architect, and he was simply wasting his time. "The new architecture
could achieve no special successes in Austria, if for no other reason
because since the completion of the Ring its tasks, in Vienna at least,
had become insignificant. . . ."⁴⁸

But all these reasons were not the decisive ones. What actuated him
was once again his repugnance toward normality, his horror of the rules
and obligations to which everyone else was subject. In the 1950's the
military records pertaining to Adolf Hitler came to light again; in March,
1938, immediately after the invasion of Austria, he had ordered a fever-
ish search for these papers. The documents make it plain beyond a doubt
that in moving to Munich he was determined to escape his military ob-
ligations. In order to conceal the facts, he registered with the police
in Munich as stateless. In *Mein Kampf* he also falsified the date of his
departure from Vienna. Actually he left the city not in the spring of
1912, as he maintained, but in May of the following year.

For a time the Austrian authorities searched for him fruitlessly. On
August 22, 1913, a Constable Zauner of Linz, who was conducting the
investigation, noted: "Adolf Hietler [sic] appears to be registered with
the police neither in this city nor in Urfahr, nor can he be located in
other places." Hitler's former guardian, Josef Mayrhofer, could provide
no information about his whereabouts; and the two sisters, Angela and
Paula, when queried about their brother, declared that they had "known
nothing about him since 1908." Inquiries in Vienna, however, disclosed
that he had moved to Munich and was registered there at 34 Schleiss-
heimer Strasse. On the afternoon of January 18, 1914, an official of
the criminal police suddenly turned up at this address, arrested the
wanted man, and the following day took him to the Austrian consulate.

The charge he faced was serious, and Hitler, after having imagined
himself quite safe, was in imminent danger of a prison sentence. This
was one of those prosaic incidents which, like so many later ones, might
have changed the whole direction of his career. For with the disgrace
of draft dodging on his record it was scarcely likely that Hitler could

had mobilized a following of millions and created his paramilitary forces.

But again, as was to happen repeatedly, chance came to his aid. The Linz authorities had given him so little time to report that it was impossible for him to obey the summons. A postponement afforded him the opportunity to draw up a carefully calculated written statement. In a letter of several pages to the Linz Magistracy, Section II—the most voluminous and important document of his youth—he attempted to justify his conduct. The letter shows that his spelling and command of German were still deficient. Beyond that, it reveals that his life in Munich had remained as irregular and aimless as it was during his Vienna years.

In the summons I am called an artist. Although I am rightly accorded this title, it is nevertheless only conditionally correct. It is true that I earn my living as a free-lance painter, but only, since I am entirely without property (my father was a government official), in order to further my education. I am able to devote only a fraction of my time to earning a living, since I am still training myself as an architectural painter. Therefore my income is a very modest one, just large enough for me to get along.

I submit as evidence of this my tax statement and request you kindly to return this document to me. My income is estimated as 1200 marks, rather too much than too little, and does not mean that I make exactly 100 marks a month. Oh no. My monthly income is extremely variable, but certainly very bad right now, since the art trade sort of goes into its winter sleep around this time in Munich.

The explanation he offered for his conduct was extremely flimsy. He had missed his first notice to report but shortly afterward had reported of his own accord, only to have his documents lost in the bureaucratic channels. In lachrymose accents, full of self-pity and a servile cunning, he attempted to excuse the omission on the grounds of his desperate circumstances during his years in Vienna:

As far as my sin of omission in the autumn of 1909 is concerned, this was a terribly bitter time for me. I was an inexperienced young man, without any financial aid and also too proud to accept any from anyone, let alone to ask for it. Without any support, dependent on myself alone; the few crowns or often coppers I earned from my works were scarcely sufficient to provide me with a bed. For two years I had no other friend but care and need, no other companion but eternally gnawing hunger. I never knew the beautiful word youth. Today, even after five years, I have the mementos in the form of chilblain sores on my fingers, hands and feet. And yet I cannot recall this period without a certain rejoicing, now that I am after all over the worst. In spite of the greatest misery, in the midst of often more than dubious surroundings, I have always preserved my name unsullied, am altogether blameless before the law, and pure before my own conscience.

Some two weeks later, on February 5, 1914, Hitler appeared before

the draft board in Salzburg. The record of which the candidate had to sign, and which "Unfit for military and auxiliary service; too arms."⁴⁹ He immediately returned to Munich.

By all indications, Hitler was not altogether later spoke of the "heartfelt love" this city his first moment there. This was a phrase th in his vocabulary. He applied it above all to of rustic strength and fine artistic mood, Hofbräuhaus to the Odeon, from the October. Significantly, he does not adduce any political fection. He continued to be solitary, holing up but he seems to have been as unaware as e relationships. Actually, he did form a rather his landlord, the tailor Popp, and with the latt and engaged in a certain amount of socializi with them. For the rest, he evidently found i where origins and status counted for nothing. acceptable—the kind of human contact that w stand because it afforded him closeness and st the loose, chance acquaintanceships over a gl and easily lost. These were those "small circles he was considered "educated." Here, for the encountered more agreement than disagreee the shakiness of the Dual Monarchy, the German-Austrian Alliance, the anti-German, Hapsburgs, the Jews, or 'the salvation of the favored outsiders and assumed that eccentric o) a sign of genius, such views did not seem pecu him, he frequently began to shout; but what excessively he behaved, struck his listeners as to predict political developments in prophetic. Later, he declared that by this time he had come a painter and that he painted only en that he would be able to pursue his studies. F newspapers in cafés or in the Hofbräuhaus, b ritated. Sometimes, amid the fumes of beer, h of the scene around him, or a rendering of i pad he carried with him. Josef Greiner clau Munich at that time and to have asked what in the future. Hitler answered, Greiner says, "I shortly in any case so that it did not matter a profession beforehand, because in the army a no more important than a dog barber."

1914
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reveals that his life in Munich had
as it was during his Vienna years.

st. Although I am rightly accorded this
ally correct. It is true that I earn my
, since I am entirely without property
, in order to further my education. I
ny time to earning a living, since I am
al painter. Therefore my income is a
or me to get along.

c statement and request you kindly to
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mean that I make exactly 100 marks a
extremely variable, but certainly very
t of goes into its winter sleep around

s conduct was extremely flimsy. He
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utumn of 1909 is concerned, this was
n inexperienced young man, without
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dent on myself alone, the few crowns
rks were scarcely sufficient to provide
o other friend but care and need, no
g hunger. I never knew the beautiful
rs, I have the mementos in the form
and feet. And yet I cannot recall this
that I am after all over the worst. In
dst of often more than dubious sur-
name unsullied, am altogether blame-
y own conscience. . . .

cy 5, 1914, Hitler appeared before

he draft board in Salzburg. The record of his physical examination,
which the candidate had to sign, and which bears his signature, read:
"Unfit for military and auxiliary service; too weak. Incapable of bearing
arms."⁴⁹ He immediately returned to Munich.

By all indications, Hitler was not altogether unhappy in Munich. He
later spoke of the "heartfelt love" this city had inspired in him from
his first moment there. This was a phrase that did not normally occur
in his vocabulary. He applied it above all to "the wonderful marriage
of rustic strength and fine artistic mood, this unique line from the
Hofbräuhaus to the Odeon, from the October Fest to the Pinakothek."
Significantly, he does not adduce any political motive to explain his af-
fection. He continued to be solitary, holing up on Schleissheimer Strasse;
but he seems to have been as unaware as ever of his lack of human
relationships. Actually, he did form a rather tenuous connection with
his landlord, the tailor Popp, and with the latter's neighbors and friends,
and engaged in a certain amount of socializing and political discussion
with them. For the rest, he evidently found in the Schwabing taverns—
where origins and status counted for nothing and everyone was socially
acceptable—the kind of human contact that was the only kind he could
stand because it afforded him closeness and strangeness simultaneously:
the loose, chance acquaintanceships over a glass of beer, easily formed
and easily lost. These were those "small circles" he later spoke of, where
he was considered "educated." Here, for the first time, he apparently
encountered more agreement than disagreement when he expatiated on
the shakiness of the Dual Monarchy, the dire potentialities of the
German-Austrian Alliance, the anti-German, pro-Slavic policy of the
Hapsburgs, the Jews, or the salvation of the nation: In a milieu that
favored outsiders and assumed that eccentric opinions and manners were
a sign of genius, such views did not seem peculiar. If a question excited
him, he frequently began to shout; but what he said, no matter how
excessively he behaved, struck his listeners as consistent. He also liked
to predict political developments in prophetic tones.

Later, he declared that by this time he had given up all plans to be-
come a painter and that he painted only enough to earn a living so
that he would be able to pursue his studies. For hours he sat over the
newspapers in cafés or in the Hofbräuhaus, brooding, sallow, easily ir-
ritated. Sometimes, amid the fumes of beer, he dashed down vignettes
of the scene around him, or a rendering of an interior in the sketch
pad he carried with him. Josef Greiner claims to have met him in
Munich at that time and to have asked what he had in mind to do
in the future. Hitler answered, Greiner says, "that there would be a war,
shortly in any case so that it did not matter whether or not he had
a profession beforehand, because in the army a corporation director was
no more important than a dog barber."

Hitler's premonition—if Greiner has reported it accurately—was not mistaken. In *Mein Kampf* Hitler has impressively described the earthquake atmosphere of the prewar years, the intangible, almost unendurable feeling of tension on the verge of discharge. It is surely not accidental that these sentences stand out as among the most successful passages in the book, as writing:

As early as my Vienna period, the Balkans were immersed in that livid sultriness which customarily announces the hurricane, and from time to time a beam of brighter light flared up, only to vanish again in the spectral darkness. But then came the Balkan War and with it the first gust of wind swept across a Europe grown nervous. The time which now followed lay on the chests of men like a heavy nightmare, sultry as feverish tropic heat, so that due to constant anxiety the sense of the approaching catastrophe turned at last to longing: let Heaven at last give free rein to the fate which could no longer be thwarted. And then the first mighty lightning flash struck the earth; the storm was unleashed and with the thunder of Heaven there mingled the roar of the World War batteries.⁶⁰

By chance a photograph has been preserved in which Adolf Hitler can be seen in the cheering crowd on the Odeonsplatz in Munich when the state of war was proclaimed on August 1, 1914. His face is plainly recognizable: the half-open mouth, the burning eyes, which at last have a goal and see a future. For this day liberated him from all the embarrassments, the perplexities, and the loneliness of failure. Describing his own emotions in *Mein Kampf*, he wrote:

To me those hours seemed like a release from the painful feelings of my youth. Even today I am not ashamed to say that, overpowered by stormy enthusiasm, I fell down on my knees and thanked Heaven from an overflowing heart.

Virtually the whole era shared this emotion; seldom had Europe seemed more unified than it was in the martial frenzy of those August days in 1914. One did not have to be an artistic wastrel with no prospects to regard the day on which the war "broke out and swept away the peace" . . . as "beautiful for a sacred moment" and even to feel that it satisfied an "ethical yearning."⁶¹ The whole European world, including Germany, was suffering from profound ennui. The war seemed an opportunity to escape from the miseries of normality. Here again we may see Hitler's intense attunement to his time. He shared its needs and longings, but more sharply, more radically; whereas his contemporaries felt mere discontent, he felt desperation. He hoped that the war would overturn all relationships, all starting points. And wherever the resort to arms was cheered, people sensed, at bottom, that an age was at last coming to its end and a new one was in the making. *Fin de siècle*—that was the formula in which the bourgeois age, with more than

a touch of melancholy complacency. In keeping with the romanticizing viewed as a purification process, the ocidity, weariness with life, and self in "sacred hymns"; it was described creating chaos and fructifying it so. Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign of the war that the lights were going ing at the end of civilization as he exulted at this end.

Photographs taken during those served the hectic air of festivity, the entered the phase of its decline: cheering crowds on the sidewalks, the balconies. It was as though fat a game that had grown monotonous. tories they would never win.

In Germany those days brought a experience, almost religious in its n. up spontaneously in the streets and s Deutschland über Alles," which, controversial, liberal revolutionary o real national anthem. On the evening proclaimed to tens of thousands assen that he no longer recognized "part German brothers." Those were undon ever spoke. In a traditionally deeply away, for one unforgettable moment unity, attained barely fifty years bef come a reality.

This feeling of unity was an illusion behind the image of a nation reconc the surge of rejoicing: personal and tionary impulses, antisocial rebellion ways, the yearning of adventurous s of the bourgeois order. But for that on into a storm of self-sacrifice on behalf c

Hitler's own feelings had their quot heart, like that of a million others; c he wrote and attributed his enthusias have a chance to prove by deeds the victions. On August 3 he addressed: Bavaria requesting permission, in spi volunteer for a Bavarian regiment. Th

He was right
* D.T. The century did not end
1900 but in 1914

Freiner has reported it accurately—was not Hitler has impressively described the earth, the years, the intangible, almost unendurable verge of discharge. It is surely not as among the most successful ending:

And, the Balkans were immersed in that livid announces the hurricane, and from time to time it up, only to vanish again in the spectral darkness of War and with it the first gust of wind swept us. The time which now followed lay on the ghastly, sultry as feverish tropic heat, so that the onset of the approaching catastrophe turned, at the last give free rein to the fate which could, when the first mighty lightning flash struck the earth and with the thunder of Heaven there mingled the batteries.⁶⁰

has been preserved in which Adolf Hitler stood on the Odeonsplatz in Munich when it was on August 1, 1914. His face is plainly youth, the burning eyes, which at last have in this day liberated him from all the emblems, and the loneliness of failure. Describing, *ampf*, he wrote:

like a release from the painful feelings of my shame, to say that, overpowered by stormy knees and thanked Heaven from an overflow-

shared this emotion; seldom had Europe been in the martial frenzy of those August days to be an artistic wastrel with no prospect, which the war "broke out and swept away all for a sacred moment" and even to feel yearning.⁶¹ The whole European world, living from profound ennui. The war seemed to be the miseries of normality. Here again tunement to his time. He shared its needs, more radically; whereas his contemporaries felt desperation. He hoped that the war was, all starting points. And wherever the people sensed, at bottom, that an age was to a new one was in the making. Fin de siècle which the bourgeois age, with more than

del not bounded
1914

touch of melancholy complacency, summed up this mood of farewell. In keeping with the romanticizing tendencies of the age, the war was viewed as a purification process, the great hope of liberation from mediocrity, weariness with life, and self-disgust. And so the war was hailed in "sacred hymns"; it was described as "the orgasm of universal life," treating chaos and fructifying it so that the new might be born.⁶² When Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Minister, declared at the outbreak of the war that the lights were going out all over Europe, he was sorrowing at the end of civilization as he knew it. But there were many who grieved at this end.

Photographs taken during those early days of August, 1914, have preserved the hectic air of festivity, the gay expectancy, with which Europe entered the phase of its decline: mobilizing soldiers pelted with flowers, cheering crowds on the sidewalks, ladies in bright summer dresses on the balconies. It was as though fate were mixing the cards afresh in a game that had grown monotonous. The nations of Europe hailed victories they would never win.

In Germany those days brought an unparalleled sense of community experience, almost religious in its nature. The expression of it, struck up spontaneously in the streets and squares, was the song "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles," which had been written by a long, controversial, liberal revolutionary of 1848 and only now became the real national anthem. On the evening of August 1 Kaiser Wilhelm II proclaimed to tens of thousands assembled in the palace square in Berlin that he no longer recognized "parties or denominations" but "only German brothers." Those were undoubtedly the most popular words he ever spoke. In a traditionally deeply divided nation that statement swept away, for one unforgettable moment, a multitude of barriers. German unity, attained barely fifty years before, seemed only now to have become a reality.

This feeling of unity was an illusion. The old contradictions survived behind the image of a nation reconciled. A welter of motives underlay the surge of rejoicing: personal and patriotic wishful thinking, revolutionary impulses, antisocial rebellions, dreams of hegemony, and, always, the yearning of adventurous spirits to break out of the routine of the bourgeois order. But for that one sublime moment it all combined into a storm of self-sacrifice on behalf of the threatened fatherland.

Hitler's own feelings had their quota of spurious elements: "Thus my heart, like that of a million others, overflowed with proud joy. . . ." he wrote and attributed his enthusiasm to the fact that he would now have a chance to prove by deeds the strength of his nationalistic convictions. On August 3 he addressed a petition directly to the King of Bavaria requesting permission, in spite of his Austrian citizenship, to volunteer for a Bavarian regiment. The contradiction between his draft

a real one. For peacetime military service a coercion he regarded as pointless. The liberation from the conflicts and miseries of the aimless emptiness of his life. In his about the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, the powerful German army. Now he was imbued of childhood reading. The past few feelings of belonging and union with lacked for so long. Now, for the first time to share in the prestige of a great and submitted the petition, the answer arrived, "enrolled the document," he relates. It summed up the 6th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment, "his name as the List Regiment. There now and most unforgettable time of my earthly

come sooner than of other forms than I had as he one of my? said nothing about this is always there, mark occasions, but to follow a man when the during following of this, as a whose conception result

Chapter 5

REDEMPTION BY WAR

In the second half of October, after a training period of barely ten weeks, the List Regiment was sent to the Western front. Hitler had waited impatiently for shipment; he was afraid the war might be over before he saw action. But what was then called the baptism of fire—on October 29, in the first battle of Ypres, one of the bloodiest clashes of the first phase of the war—made him aware of the realities. The British units on this section doggedly and at last successfully opposed the massive German efforts to break through to the Channel coast. The German General Staff regarded this breakthrough as vital to its war plans. For four days the fighting raged. Hitler himself, in a letter to his Munich landlord, reported that in this battle the regiment was reduced by half, from 3,500 to about 1,700 men. Shortly afterward, near the village of Becelaere, it lost its commandery; it acquired, partly as the result of stupid orders, a "mournful popularity."

The description given by Hitler of his first war experience in *Mein Kampf* will not stand close examination of the details. But the unusual care he devoted to the literary shaping of this passage, his efforts at poetic elevation, show how much the experience meant to him:

And then came a damp, cold night in Flanders, through which we marched in silence, and when the day began to emerge from the mists, suddenly an iron greeting came whizzing at us over our heads, and with a sharp report sent the little pellets flying between our ranks, ripping up the wet ground; but even before the little cloud had passed, from two hundred throats the first hurrah rose to meet the first messenger of death. Then a crackling and a roaring, a singing and a howling began, and with feverish eyes each one of us was drawn forward, faster and faster, until suddenly past turnip fields and

hedges the fight began, the fight of man against man. And from the distance the strains of a song reached our ears, coming closer and closer, leaping from company to company, and just as Death plunged a busy hand into our ranks, the song reached us too and we passed it along: *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles, über Alles in der Welt!*⁵⁴

Throughout the war Hitler served as a courier between the regimental staff and the advanced positions. This mission, in which he was dependent on no one but himself, suited his solitary temperament. One of his superiors remembered him as a "quiet, rather unmilitary looking man who appeared to differ in no way from his fellows." He was reliable, obedient, and according to the same source, of rather sober disposition. Even in the army he was considered eccentric; the members of his company almost all agreed in calling him a "pipe-dreamer." He often sat "helmet on his head, in a corner, lost in thought, and none of us were able to get him out of his slump." Although impressions of Hitler the soldier are fairly plentiful and date from different periods in nearly four years, they all sound much the same. None of them really brings him to life; but their colorlessness evidently is in keeping with the subject.

Even the eccentric qualities he displayed have an oddly impersonal character. There would be times when he would break out of his broodings into wild monologue. But this would not be the normal soldier's griping, revolving around all the bothers of a soldier's life. Rather, he would express his fears that victory would be lost, his suspicions of betrayal, his anxieties over invisible foes. Not a single episode brings him out as an individual. The only anecdote that was told about him—one that later found its way into German school readers—is in fact nothing but a school-reader anecdote. While carrying dispatches, the story goes, Hitler came upon a squad of fifteen Frenchmen in a trench near Montdidier. Due to his presence of mind, his courage, and his skillful surprise tactics, he succeeded in overpowering the enemy soldiers and leading them captive back to his commander.

His exemplary zeal concealed the man behind a picture cut out of a patriotic calendar; it was another way of escaping from the world, escaping into clichés. On a patrol, enemy machine guns suddenly began to fire; Hitler swept his commander out of the way, took up "a protective position in front of him," and begged the officer "to preserve the regiment from losing its commander twice in so short a time."

Without a doubt, he was a brave soldier; the charges of cowardice raised later were politically motivated. As early as December, 1914, he received the Iron Cross Second Class; in May, 1918, he was awarded a regimental certificate for bravery in the face of the enemy; and on August 4 of the same year he received the Iron Cross First Class, seldom awarded to enlisted men.

However, to this day it has been impossible to discover the specific

grounds for these decorations. Hitler because he had been proposed for the mental adjutant Hugo Gutmann. The mention them; the accounts that exist apparently on the basis of the above: a fifteen-man English patrol captive, capture of ten, twelve, and even twenty even endow Hitler with a knowledge. Still another account claims that he fired to an artillery unit and in this way of his regiment's position. But whatever decorations proved of inestimable value to him, although an Austrian, a kind of Germany. Thus they provided a proper career. They lent a degree of legitimacy to German politics and to his demand for

In the field, however, among his responsibilities, his anxiety over the troops was appreciated. "We all used to yell at him," Others said, "That fellow is bucking fate and always looked under some sort of distinctly unpopular. Rather, he merely separated him from them. In contrast he scarcely received or wrote letters, and lay on his stomach, worried, amusements, and lay as that trash," he later recalled. Instead of dealing with the problems of life, and reading Hitler's war diary for him what they have done, he alleged. He thought he about, and from his isolation he derived. Strictly speaking, what he was defending his country he was proud of. The photographs suggest something of his peculiarly alien loneliness. Hitler sits beside them with a fix not at all in their viewpoint.

This complex incapacity for human contact, why in four years at the front he never of private, first class. At the Nuremberg Tribunal, the 24th Infantry Regiment recounted that the question of a noncommissioned officer had occasionally decided in the negative "because we could not find anything in him." Moreover, the adjutant wanted to be proposed for promotion.

What Hitler found in the billets and

⑤ D. T. ...
near ...

of man against man. And from the distance in ears, coming closer and closer, leaping out as Death plunged a busy hand into our lives and we passed it along: *Deutschland, es in der Welt!*¹⁰⁴

erved as a courier between the regimental staff. This mission, in which he was dependent on his solitary temperament. One of his traits was a "quiet, rather unmilitary looking man" who "came from his fellows." He was reliable, a steady source, of rather sober disposition. He was eccentric; the members of his company called him a "pipe-dreamer." He often sat alone, lost in thought, and none of us were able to help him. Although impressions of Hitler that came from different periods in nearly four years. None of them really brings him vividly in in keeping with the subject. He displayed an oddly impersonal manner when he would break out of his brooding. This would not be the normal soldier's behavior bothers of a soldier's life. Rather, he would be lost, his suspicions of his fellow soldiers. Not a single episode brings him an anecdote that was told about him—one of the German school readers—is in fact nothing more than a tale carrying dispatches, the story goes, of fifteen Frenchmen in a trench near the front, of mind, his courage, and his skillful leadership in overpowering the enemy soldiers and in commanding them.

He hid the man behind a picture cut out of a magazine, another way of escaping from the world, and the enemy machine guns suddenly began firing out of the way, took up "a protective shield" for the officer "to preserve the regiment twice in so short a time." He was a brave soldier; the charges of cowardice were unfounded. As early as December, 1914, he was promoted to First Class; in May, 1918, he was awarded the Iron Cross First Class, seldom given to anyone.

It is impossible to discover the specific

grounds for these decorations. Hitler himself gives no clues, possibly because he had been proposed for the decorations by the Jewish regimental adjutant Hugo Gutmann. The history of the regiment does not mention them; the accounts that exist differ sharply. They report, apparently on the basis of the above-mentioned anecdote, that Hitler took a fifteen-man English patrol captive, or they describe the dramatic capture of ten, twelve, and even twenty Frenchmen. Some of the stories even endow Hitler with a knowledge of French that he did not have. Still another account claims that he fought his way through the heaviest fire to an artillery unit and in this way prevented the threatening shelling of his regiment's position. But whatever he won them for, those wartime decorations proved of inestimable value for Hitler's future. They gave him, although an Austrian, a kind of spiritual claim to citizenship in Germany. Thus they provided a prerequisite for the beginning of his career. They lent a degree of legitimacy to his claim to participate in German politics and to his demand for loyalty from his followers.

In the field, however, among his fellow soldiers, his exalted sense of responsibility, his anxiety over the total military picture were not appreciated. "We all used to yell at him," one of his fellows later recalled. Others said, "That fellow is bucking for stripes." Others noted that he was always looked under some sort of strain. Yet he was, apparently, not distinctly unpopular. Rather, he merely let them see the distance that separated him from them. In contrast to the others, he had no family; he scarcely received or wrote letters, and he did not share in their commonplace worries, amusements, and laughter. "I hated nothing so much as that trash," he later recalled. Instead, he said, he meditated a great deal on the problems of life, and read Homer, the Gospels, and Schopenhauer. The war did for him what thirty years at the university might have done, he alleged. He thought he alone knew what the war was about, and from his isolation he derived a sense of being specially elect. Strictly speaking, what he was defending was not his homeland but the country he was proud of. The photographs taken of Hitler as a soldier suggest something of his peculiarly alienated relationship toward his fellows. Hitler sits beside them with a fixed expression, obviously sharing not at all in their viewpoint.

This complex incapacity for human relationships may be the reason why in four years at the front he never won promotion beyond the rank of private, first class. At the Nuremberg trial the adjutant of the List Regiment recounted that the question of promoting Hitler to the rank of noncommissioned officer had occasionally arisen but had always been decided in the negative "because we could discover no leadership qualities in him." Moreover, the adjutant added, Hitler himself had not wanted to be proposed for promotion.

What Hitler found in the billets and dugouts of wartime was the kind

① D. H. Lawrence, *he was a man of a real career, could be a man*

of human relationship that suited his nature. In its impersonality it was the life style of the home for men, but with the difference that the army satisfied his cravings for prestige, his inner restiveness, and his sense of solemnity. Here was the social framework that corresponded both to his misanthropic withdrawnness and his longing for contact. On the battlefield Hitler found the native land he did not possess. In no man's land he felt at home.

One of his former superiors has said this very thing and in much the same language: "For Pfc. Hitler the List Regiment was his homeland." When we understand this, we need no longer be puzzled by the contradiction between his determined desire for subordination in wartime and his lone-wolf asociality in the preceding years. Not since his mother's death had he felt as much at home anywhere, and never afterward was his simultaneous need for adventurousness and order, for unconstraint and discipline fulfilled as it was in the command headquarters, the trenches, and the dugouts at the front. In contrast to the humiliations of the preceding years, the war was Adolf Hitler's great affirmative educational experience, the one to which he exuberantly applied such phrases as "mighty impression," "overwhelming," "so happy."

Hitler himself declared that the war had transformed him. It hardened this touchy and sentimental young man and gave him a sense of his own worth. Caught up in the machinery of war, he learned toughness, the uses of solidarity, and self-discipline. He acquired that belief in fate which was one component of his generation's high-flown irrationality. The coolness with which he moved in the fiercest fire earned him, among his fellows, a reputation for invulnerability. If Hitler was around, they told one another, "nothing will happen." His luck seems to have made the deepest impression on Hitler himself and to have reinforced his faith in his special mission. Through all the years of failure and misery he had clung and continued obstinately to cling to that faith.

But the war also magnified Hitler's tendency to brooding. Like many of his fellow soldiers, he became convinced that the old leadership of society had failed, that the very social order he had marched to war to defend was perishing of internal exhaustion. "I would make the leaders responsible for these men who have fallen," he once declared to an asocial comrade. Hitler's generation, obsessed with its own idiosyncrasies and wrestling with its problems in a literary output of vast dimensions, was searching for a new meaning to life. Basically, this signified, it was searching for a meaningful social order. Hitler himself decided that he wanted "to know nothing about politics at that time." But his need to communicate, his unquenchable craving for speculative thinking, ran counter to such resolves. Soon he was attracting attention by "philosophizing about political and ideological questions in the crude manner of ordinary folk." From the early phase of the war we have

* P.T. We certainly had our role in that. "But - blies ears"

a twelve-page letter of his to a Munich acquaintance. After giving a detailed description of participated, Hitler concludes the letter:⁵⁵

"I think about Munich so often, and each of the final settlement with that gang will soon cost them, no matter what the cost, and that those tune to see our homeland again will find it paignism, so that by the sacrifices and suffering thousands of us are undergoing daily, by the living out here day after day against an internatic Germany's enemies outside will be shattered tionalism. That would be worth more than all it will turn out as I have always said.

Politically, this letter carries on the ideas of the Vienna years: the fear of overwhelming forces together with a defensive reaction against them, borrowings, also, from the Pan-Germans to his thesis of the primacy of domestic order and racial unity took precedence over territorial claims. Many was first to be German and only subsequently to be a citizen of the world.

At the beginning of October, 1916, at Leoben, he was wounded in the left thigh and sent to Beelitz. He stayed in Germany until March, 1917, and it was when there arose in him the first, still unformed, idea of "my fate" which two years later prompted him to return to the front.

August, 1914, and his experiences at the front pressed upon him the inner unity of the nation. He basked in this new-found sense of togetherness which could affect. Having no family, no home, whatsoever, he had renounced his right to feel lonely. He stayed on in his unreal world of the old, glorious army of heroes," he later wrote. The shock was all the harsher when, in Beelitz, Berlin, he encountered the political, social, and economic life of the past. With deep distress he realized that the early phase of the war had drained away. It replaced that exalted sense of sharing a common future with resentment toward the city of Berlin. He saw discontent, hunger, and rage at meeting slackers who boasted of their hypocrisy, egotism, war profiteering, and, he decided, dated back to his days in Vienna; the decided festations was the work of the Jew.

It was the same when, nearly cured, he was

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twelve-page letter of his to a Munich acquaintance which bears this nt. After giving a detailed description of a frontal attack in which he anticipated, Hitler concludes the letter:⁶⁵

I think about Munich so often, and each of us has only this one wish, that the final settlement with that gang will soon come, that we'll be able to go at them, no matter what the cost, and that those of us who have the good fortune to see our homeland again will find it purer and more purified of foreignness, so that by the sacrifices and sufferings which so many hundreds of thousands of us are undergoing daily, by the torrent of blood which is pouring out here day after day against an international world of enemies, not only Germany's enemies outside will be shattered, but also our inner internationalism. That would be worth more than all territorial gains. With Austria it will turn out as I have always said.

Politically, this letter carries on the ideological obsessions of Hitler's Vienna years: the fear of overwhelming foreign elements in the nation, together with a defensive reaction against a world of enemies. There were borrowings, also, from the Pan-German teachings, which later led to his thesis of the primacy of domestic over foreign affairs. National and racial unity took precedence over territorial expansion. Greater Germany was first to be German and only subsequently great.

At the beginning of October, 1916, at Le Barqué, Hitler was lightly wounded in the left thigh and sent to Beelitz Hospital near Berlin. He stayed in Germany until March, 1917, and it would appear that this was when there arose in him the first, still unclear signs of that "awakening" which two years later prompted him to enter politics.

August, 1914, and his experiences at the front had above all impressed upon him the inner unity of the nation. For two years he had basked in this new-found sense of togetherness, which he was sure nothing could affect. Having no family, no home address, no destination whatsoever, he had renounced his right to furloughs. His superzeal untroubled, he stayed on in his unreal world. "It was still the front of the old, glorious army of heroes," he later nostalgically recalled.⁶⁶ The shock was all the harsher when, in Beelitz and during a first visit to Berlin, he encountered the political, social, and national contradictions of the past. With deep distress he realized that the enthusiasm of the early phase of the war had drained away. Parties and factionalism had replaced that exalted sense of sharing a common destiny. It may be that his future resentment toward the city of Berlin had its origins in this experience. He saw discontent, hunger, and resignation. He was outraged at meeting slackers who boasted of their shrewdness; he noted hypocrisy, egotism, war profiteering, and, faithful to the obsession that dated back to his days in Vienna, he decided that behind all these manifestations was the work of the Jew.

It was the same when, nearly cured, he was sent to a reserve battalion

they had our
- bliss cars"

nger recognize the city." He turned and robbed him of his illusions and man unity—the first positive social days of his childhood. He was filled raptors of the people" on the one ould be held "under poison gas"—nalists on the other hand. "Jabbers of the Revolution," they deserved nplements of military power should extermination of this pestilence."¹⁷ ry; no prophetic sense or strategic serve him far better as a basis for

ing of 1917, he felt once more ex- the civilian world to which he had documents indicate that he partici- ench Flanders, in the spring Battle conflict of Chemin des Dames. Ap- ss letters of thoughtless females" the mood of resignation that pre- frequently discussed his prospects soldier, the painter Ernst Schmidt. ler had begun to consider whether he had never really decided. There elieved he could make a career as the political heart of the country, Reichstag's controversial peace res- an military triumph in the East— dt: "Now at last have opportunity er." Later he declared that in those his friends that when the war was y in addition to taking up his pro- to his own account, he also knew to take: he wanted to become a

the notion he had cherished since human reactions are the calculable influences. The idea of hidden wire- ie time so fascinating to him, took n as he imagined himself as some his view of humanity excluded all duced by manipulation—"remen- its," as he noted with a touch of s moved the right members at the

right moment. He preposterously considered the movements of history, the rise and decline of nations, classes, or parties largely as the conse- quence of differing propagandistic abilities. In the famous sixth chapter of *Mein Kampf* he expatiated upon this view, illustrating his points by the difference between German and Allied propaganda.

According to his argument, Germany lost the war because "the form was inadequate, the substance was psychologically wrong: a careful ex- amination of German war propaganda can lead to no other diagnosis." Because Germany's leaders did not recognize the true power of this weapon, they were incapable of creating propaganda worthy of the name. Instead, Germany produced only "insipid pacifistic bilge" that could never "fire men's spirits till they were willing to die." Although "the most brilliant psychologists would have been none too good" for this task, the Germans employed aesthetes and half-hearted failures, with the result that the country derived no advantage and sometimes actual harm from its propaganda.

The enemy, Hitler argued, had done it differently. Their atrocity prop- aganda, "as ruthless as it was brilliant," had made a deep impression upon Hitler, and he repeatedly extolled its psychological acumen and boldness. He admired the "rabid, impudent bias" and "indefatigable per- sistence" of the enemy lies,¹⁸ and said that he "learned enormously" from them. In general, Hitler tended to illustrate his own ideas by point- ing to what the enemy had done. There is no doubt that he drew his belief in the effectiveness of psychological influence from the example of enemy propaganda of the World War. It must be recognized, how- ever, that a large part of the German public was convinced of the en- emy's superiority in psychological warfare. This was actually just one more of those legends with which a nation proud of its military strength attempted to explain on nonmilitary grounds what otherwise seemed inexplicable: that after so many victories on all the battlefields and after so many efforts and sacrifices Germany had nevertheless lost the war. But Hitler, with that characteristic mixture of insight and vapidity that made him wise in his mistakes, used this transparent rationalization as the starting point for his views on the nature and power of propaganda. Propaganda must above all be popular, he argued; it must not be aimed toward the intelligentsia but "always and exclusively to the masses," and its level "must be adjusted to the most limited intelligence among those it is addressed to." Furthermore, effective propaganda must concentrate on a few plausible points and hammer away at these in the form of slogans. It must always appeal to the emotions, never to the intellect, and must eschew any attempt at objectivity. Nor even the shadow of a doubt in the rightness of one's own cause is permissible; propaganda must present "love or hate, right or wrong, truth or lie, never half this way and half that way." Again these were not original ideas. But the

energy with which Hitler framed them and the frankness with which he viewed the masses—without contempt but recognizing their limitations, their apathy and resistance to change—would soon put him far ahead of every rival for the favor of those same masses.

Even now he began to have intimations of this superiority. For he regarded his experiences in this late phase of the war as confirmation of the opinion he had formed during his Vienna years: that without the masses, without knowledge of their weaknesses, virtues and sensitivities, politics was no longer possible. In his mind the great democratic demagogues, Lloyd George and Clemenceau, joined his idol Karl Lueger. Later he added to these President Wilson—even though the American President was sickled over by the pale cast of thought. One of the principal reasons for the ever more obvious German inferiority was, Hitler believed, that there was no convincing opponent in the Reich to these Allied populist leaders. Isolated from the common people and incapable of recognizing their growing importance, the German-ruling class remained frozen in stubborn conservatism. Arrogant and unimaginative, it clung to its traditional positions. Recognition of its failures was one of the major perceptions Hitler drew from this period in German history. Free of those class prejudices and the self-centeredness that was the characteristic sign of weakness in an abdicate ruling class, Hitler thought only in terms of effects. Hence he admired the stale fables of enemy propaganda when it portrayed German soldiers as butchers hacking off the hands of children or slitting the bellies of pregnant women. For such images exploited the special spell of fear, the mechanism by which atrocities are magnified in the fantasies of the masses.

Again he was deeply struck by the mobilizing power of ideas. He appreciated the crusading formulas with which the Allies decked their cause and made it seem that they were defending the world and its most sacred values against the onslaught of barbarism. The German side had scarcely anything to oppose to this missionary *elan*. The Allied line proved to be all the more telling because the Germans, in the pride of their early military successes, had abandoned the thesis that they were fighting a purely defensive war. More and more boldly they had been announcing the aim of a peace with victory and wholesale annexations—failing to realize that the world might look askance on such ambitions. Some better reason would have had to be found than what Germany offered: that she had come too late to the distribution of the world's lands and so had to make up for it now by territorial aggrandizement. Meanwhile, at the end of 1917, defeated Russia in the fervor of social redemptionism was calling for a "just and democratic peace without annexations based on the right of self-determination of peoples, such as the exhausted and tormented classes of the workers and laborers of all countries long for." And, on the other side, Woodrow Wilson, at the

beginning of 1918, presented to the Congress a peace that was to refashion the world on new held out the promise of an order based on justice self-determination, of a world without force and a table that these proposals, contrasting with the a by the Reich, should have had a strong effect up try. A significant anecdote of the autumn of 1917 General Staff officer who in a moment of sudden hand to his brow and exclaimed, "To think that to fight against and that we are losing the war is anything about these ideas!"

To this extent, then, there is something to the causes for the German defeat. It cannot be laid complex of a nation that preferred to think it cunning and treachery than in open battle. That tions, later became a staple item in the repertoire contained a kernel of truth. For in fact Germany on fields other than the battlefields, although in : spokesmen did not mean. An outmoded, anachronism had proved itself inferior to a democratic order the needs of the age. For Hitler's part, he was by the thought that an idea can never be successful force but only with the aid of another and more attempt to combat a philosophy with methods the end, unless the fight takes the form of attitude. Only in the struggle between two philosophies of brutal force, persistently and ruthlessly applied for the sake of the side it supports.¹⁵⁰ It may reflections, set down in *Mein Kampf*, were still at the time of the war. But, even so, they rep from the war years.

In the summer of 1918, however, a German more within grasp. A few months earlier the Reich success, not just one more of those tempors that were bleeding it to death. Early in March upon Russia the peace of Brest-Litovsk, and a demonstrated to Rumania, in the Treaty of Bucharest was still formidable. The two-front war had cc German army of the West, with 200 divisions million men had been brought up to the manpower In equipment and arms, however, it remained c enemy's 18,000 artillery pieces the Germans he High Command, supported by a new although n feeling of public confidence, had at the end of 1918

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beginning of 1918, presented to the Congress a comprehensive draft of peace that was to refashion the world on new and better lines. He held out the promise of an order based on justice, of political and moral self-determination, of a world without force and aggression. It was inevitable that these proposals, contrasting with the assertion of sheer might by the Reich, should have had a strong effect upon the exhausted country. A significant anecdote of the autumn of 1918 tells of a German General Staff officer who in a moment of sudden insight clapped his hand to his brow and exclaimed, "To think that there are ideas we have to fight against and that we are losing the war because we didn't know anything about these ideas!"

To this extent, then, there is something to the thesis of extramilitary causes for the German defeat. It cannot be laid solely to the Siegfried complex of a nation that preferred to think it had been defeated by cunning and treachery than in open battle. That thesis, in endless variations, later became a staple item in the repertory of the Right. But it contained a kernel of truth. For in fact Germany had also been defeated on fields other than the battlefields, although in a sense the nationalistic spokesmen did not mean. An outmoded, anachronistic political system had proved itself inferior to a democratic order more in keeping with the needs of the age. For Hitler's part, he was for the first time seized by the thought that an idea can never be successfully combatted by sheer force but only with the aid of another and more suggestive idea. "Any attempt to combat a philosophy with methods of violence will fail in the end, unless the fight takes the form of attack for a new spiritual attitude. Only in the struggle between two philosophies can the weapon of brutal force, persistently and ruthlessly applied, lead to a decision for the sake of the side it supports."⁵⁰ It may very well be that these reflections, set down in *Mein Kampf*, were still vague in Hitler's mind at the time of the war. But, even so, they represent his lasting profit from the war years.

In the summer of 1918, however, a German victory seemed once more within grasp. A few months earlier the Reich had won a resounding success, not just one more of those temporary victories in battles that were bleeding it to death. Early in March Germany had imposed upon Russia the peace of Brest-Litovsk, and a month or so later had demonstrated to Rumania, in the Treaty of Bucharest, that its power was still formidable. The two-front war had come to an end, and the German army of the West, with 200 divisions and approximately 3.5 million men had been brought up to the manpower of the Allied armies. In equipment and arms, however, it remained distinctly inferior; to the enemy's 18,000 artillery pieces the Germans had only 14,000. But the High Command, supported by a new although not entirely wholehearted feeling of public confidence, had at the end of March launched the first

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of five offensives intended to force a decision before American troops could arrive. Now the German people had only the choice between victory or doom, Ludendorff declared in a statement that rang with the same passion for a great gamble that in later years possessed Hitler.

Throwing their last remaining forces into the fight, determined after so many fruitless successes and vain exertions to win victory at last by breaking through on a broad front, the German units went over to the attack. Hitler participated in these battles as a soldier in the List Regiment; he was in the pursuit after the breakthrough at Montdidier-Nyons and later took part in the battles of Soissons and Reims. During the early part of the summer the German formations actually succeeded in throwing the British and French armies back to within nearly forty miles of Paris.

But then the offensive ground to a halt. Once again the German armies had displayed that fatefully limited power which enabled them to win only sham victories. The toll of lives that their gains had cost, the desperate shortage of reserves, the effectiveness of the enemy in stabilizing the front after each of the German breakthroughs—all this was in part concealed from the German public, in part repressed by that public as it exulted over the good news from the front. The German operations came to a standstill, and the Allies passed over to counterattack on a broad front. Yet Hindenburg and Ludendorff continued their policy of systematic deception. A Privy Council meeting was held at army headquarters on August 14, long after the German lines had broken. The army leaders presented such an illusory picture of the military situation to Chancellor Hertling and Foreign Minister Hintze that both men went away completely unaware of the gravity of the military collapse. To be sure, Hertling himself was largely responsible for the policy of bowing to the military authorities. But since the High Command itself had staked everything on the radical alternative of victory or defeat, it was obliged by its own premise to admit defeat, since victory had not been won. Instead, it continued its deceptions into September—purportedly in order not to dishearten the people. It took into account the obvious hopelessness of the situation only by sounding its claims of German invulnerability in a somewhat more muted key.

The consequence was that the German public regarded victory and the longed-for end of the war as closer than ever before—in this summer of 1918 when the country was on the verge of defeat. This state of affairs completely refutes Hitler's arguments about the weakness of German propaganda—although he drew accurate conclusions from his inaccurate premises. Even responsible politicians, even high army officers with a broad view of conditions, were prone to the most amazing delusions. Very few among those who should have known better were able to find their way in the fog of misguided hopes.

The majority were therefore all the more plunged into reality. On September 29, 1918, the political leaders demanded for an armistice. His nerves were at breaking point of any tactical safeguards. Significantly, in spite of or doom he had launched the new offensive to the possible consequences of its failure. I even developed a clear strategic goal. At a Prince questioned him on that, he replied, with "We're going to chop a hole. Then we'll see when the new Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden would happen in case of failure, Ludendorff is done for, that's all."

As things stood, the last card had actually been played in the spring of 1918. The incipient counterattack had had a daunting effect on the German. The men were exhausted, "dull and apathetic" was reported. For the operations of the spring months, had used up the soldiers' last physical reserves. Winston Churchill's remark that it was the German that of the Allies, that devoured the forces of the front. Ludendorff, that is, not Joffre or Haig, the Germans. Nevertheless, the troops held their ground in amazing fashion. The defensive battles of that military and human terms, among the most intense of the war, and paradoxically they added to the German. Once again Ludendorff, who had daily expected a breakthrough by the Allies, found that he was

Unprepared politically and psychologically a contemporary phrase had believed in the success in a gospel," was plunged into an abyss. An most unbelievable remark of Hindenburg's shock the illusion died. Immediately after Ludendorff's fall, the lost, old Hindenburg in all seriousness asked to do everything possible in the impending negotiation of the mines of Lorraine. Here was a first trick of denying reality to which growing numb throughout the postwar years to help them to times. They continued to do so right up to Spring, 1933. The shock effect of this alternative victory to the dirge of defeat" strongly colored so much so that we may say the period can scarcely be taken out taking that disenchantment into consideration.

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to force a decision before American troops. German people had only the choice between victory or defeat, declared in a statement that rang with the same note that in later years possessed Hitler. The German forces, joining forces into the fight, determined after a long and vain exertions to win victory at last. On the broad front, the German units went over to the offensive in these battles as a soldier in the List Division. The pursuit after the breakthrough at Montdidier in the battles of Soissons and Reims. During the German formations actually succeeded in driving French armies back to within nearly forty

miles to a halt. Once again the German army, with its fully limited power which enabled them to inflict a heavy toll of lives that their gains had cost, the Germans, the effectiveness of the enemy in stabilizing the German breakthroughs—all this was in the German public, in part repressed by that public opinion from the front. The German operations were passed over to counterattack on a broad front, and Ludendorff continued their policy of a general Council meeting was held at army headquarters after the German lines had broken. The German public, an illusory picture of the military situation, the Foreign Minister Hintze that both men went to the gravity of the military collapse. To be largely responsible for the policy of bowing out. But since the High Command itself had no real alternative of victory or defeat, it was to admit defeat, since victory had not been a success, a deception into September—purportedly for the people. It took into account the obvious only by sounding its claims of German in a more muted key.

the German public regarded victory and defeat as closer than ever before—in this summer as on the verge of defeat. This state of affairs, its arguments about the weakness of Germany, drew accurate conclusions from his irresponsible politicians, even high army officers, were prone to the most amazing delusions—who should have known better were able to misguide hopes.

The majority were therefore all the more stunned by the sudden plunge into reality. On September 29, 1918, Ludendorff hastily summoned the political leaders and demanded that they immediately ask for an armistice. His nerves were at breaking point; he would not hear of any tactical safeguards. Significantly, in spite of his talk about victory or doom he had launched the new offensive without giving any thought to the possible consequences of its failure. He does not seem to have even developed a clear strategic goal. At any rate, when the Crown Prince questioned him on that, he replied, with characteristic irritability: "We're going to chop a hole. Then we'll see what comes next." And when the new Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, wanted to know what would happen in case of failure, Ludendorff snarled: "Then Germany is done for, that's all."

As things stood, the last card had actually been played with the great offensive in the spring of 1918. The increasingly vigorous Allied counterattack had had a daunting effect on German troops everywhere. The men were exhausted, "dull and apathetic," as an army commander reported. For the operations of the spring months, with their heavy casualties, had used up the soldiers' last physical strength. Failure had consumed their remaining psychological reserves. There is much truth in Winston Churchill's remark that it was the Germans' own offensive, not that of the Allies, that devoured the forces of the army on the Western front. Ludendorff, that is, not Joffre or Haig, brought defeat to the Germans. Nevertheless, the troops held their ground on the whole in an amazing fashion. The defensive battles of that final phase were, in both military and human terms, among the most impressive achievements of the war, and paradoxically they added to the myth of the German army. Once again Ludendorff, who had daily expected a vast catastrophic breakthrough by the Allies, found that he was mistaken.

Unprepared politically and psychologically, the nation, which in a contemporary phrase had believed in the superiority of its arms "as in a gospel," was plunged into an abyss. An illuminating, although almost most unbelievable remark of Hindenburg's shows how hard the national illusion died. Immediately after Ludendorff's admission that the war was lost, old Hindenburg in all seriousness asked the Foreign Minister to do everything possible in the impending negotiations to obtain annexation of the mines of Lorraine. Here was a first example of that peculiar trick of denying reality to which growing numbers of Germans resorted throughout the postwar years to help them through the misery of the times. They continued to do so right up to the intoxicating days of Spring, 1933. The shock effect of this alternation "from the fanfare of victory to the dirge of defeat" strongly colored the history of the period—so much so that we may say the period can scarcely be understood without taking that disenchantment into consideration.

It was a particular shock to the brooding, overtense private, first class of the List Regiment who had surveyed the war in the sweeping terms of a general. His regiment had been thrown into the defensive battle in Flanders in October, 1918. On the night of October 13, south of Ypres, the British launched a gas attack. On a hill near Wervick, Hitler came into several hours of drumfire with gas shells. Toward morning he felt violent pain, and when he arrived at the regimental command post around seven o'clock, he could barely see. A few hours later he went blind: "My eyes had turned into glowing coals," he afterward wrote. He was shipped back to the Pasewalk hospital in Pomerania.⁶⁰

In the hospital a curious excitement prevailed. Confusing rumors went the rounds—that the monarchy was about to fall, that the war would soon be over. Hitler—characteristically as if he bore larger responsibilities—feared local unrest, strikes, insubordination, even though these rumors seemed to him "more the product of the imagination of individual scoundrels"; strangely, he noticed nothing of the discontent and exhaustion so widespread among the people. At the beginning of November the condition of his eyes began to improve, but he still could not read newspapers and expressed his fears to fellow patients that he would never be able to draw again. The revolution came, for him, "suddenly and unexpectedly"; it was led, he thought, by "a few Jewish youths" who had "not been at the front" but had come "by way of a so-called 'clap hospital' and 'raised the red rag.'" Hitler believed that what he was seeing was "a more or less local affair."⁶¹

On November 10, 1918, however, the truth was brought home to him, "the most terrible certainty of my life." Summoned to a meeting by the hospital pastor, the patients learned that a revolution had broken out, that the House of Hohenzollern had fallen and a republic had been proclaimed in Germany. Sobbing gently to himself—thus Hitler described the "old gentleman"—the pastor recalled the merits of the ruling house, and "not an eye was able to restrain its tears." But when the pastor began to tell them that the war was now lost and that the Reich was throwing itself unconditionally upon the mercy of its previous enemies—"I could stand it no longer. It became impossible for me to sit still one minute more. Again everything went black before my eyes; I tottered and groped my way back to the dormitory, threw myself on my bunk, and dug my burning head into my blanket and pillow. Since the day I had stood at my mother's grave, I had not wept. . . . But now I could not help it."⁶²

To Hitler the disillusionment was as sudden and incomprehensible as had been his failure to win acceptance into the Academy. He magnified it into a legend and made it one of the basic themes of his career. Later he ascribed his resolve to enter politics to this moment. In virtually every major speech Hitler would ritualistically refer to the November

revolution. He would speak of it as if his event. This obsession has led some analysts triggered the great political awakening of I gested that his going blind in October, 1 hysterical symptom, precipitated by the s change in the course of the war. Hitler hi some support for such theories. In a speech candidates in February, 1942, for example he had faced of going completely blind, and nothing if all one could see was a world i slayed. "In that case what can I see wort of 1944, faced with approaching defeat, he that he had reason to fear that once again First World War, he would go blind."⁶³

Similarly, there is a passage in *Mein Kampf*. Hitler had been roused from his inconspicuous summons resounding in his ears:

"In daily life the so-called genius requires a positive impetus, to make him shine. . . . In t even significant men often seem insignificant, age of their environment; as soon, however, t situation in which others lose hope or go astra from the inconspicuous average child, not selc those who had hitherto seen him in the pettin this hour of trial had not come, hardly anyone a young hero was hidden in this beardless boy. Fate which throws one man to the ground s other."⁶⁴

We may assume, however, that such rem explain the transition between the precedi apathy, and vague reveries and the phase of the November days had numbed him and I knew that everything was lost." The requiren [bourgeois world, those requirements that four were confronting him once more. He was n the problems of vocation and earning his livel no work, no goal, no place to stay, no frien spair, when he wept into his pillow at the n revolution, he was expressing more of a pers of loss.

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event. This obsession has led some analysts to suggest that the revolution
triggered the great political awakening of his life. It has also been sug-
gested that his going blind in October, 1918, was to some extent a
hysterical symptom, precipitated by the shock he felt at the abrupt
change in the course of the war. Hitler himself occasionally furnished
some support for such theories. In a speech to army officers and officer
candidates in February, 1942, for example, he referred to the danger
he had faced of going completely blind, and declared that eyesight meant
nothing if all one could see was a world in which the nation was en-
slaved. "In that case what can I see worth seeing?" And at the end
of 1944, faced with approaching defeat, he gloomily told Albert Speer
that he had reason to fear that once again, as toward the end of the
First World War, he would go blind.⁶³

Similarly, there is a passage in *Mein Kampf* confirming the idea that
Hitler had been roused from his inconspicuous existence by an inexora-
ble summons resounding in his ears:

In daily life the so-called genius requires a special cause, indeed, often a
positive impetus, to make him shine. . . . In the monotony of everyday life
even significant men often seem insignificant, hardly rising above the aver-
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situation in which others lose hope or go astray, the genius rises manifestly
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those who had hitherto seen him in the pettiness of bourgeois life. . . . If
this hour of trial had not come, hardly anyone would ever have guessed that
a young hero was hidden in this beardless boy. . . . The hammer-stroke of
Fate which throws one man to the ground suddenly strikes steel in an-
other.⁶⁴

We may assume, however, that such remarks were merely meant to
explain the transition between the preceding years of bohemianism,
apathy, and vague reveries and the phase of revealed genius. In reality,
the November days had numbed him and left him in a quandary. "I
knew that everything was lost." The requirements imposed by the hated
bourgeois world, those requirements that four years of war had set aside,
were confronting him once more. He was no further along in meeting
the problems of vocation and earning his livelihood. He had no training,
no work, no goal, no place to stay, no friends. In that outburst of de-
spair, when he wept into his pillow at the news of the defeat and the
revolution, he was expressing more of a personal than a national sense
of loss.

For the end of the war deprived the sergeant Hitler of a role he had
found at the front, and he lost his homeland at the moment he was
dismissed for home. In shocked surprise he noted that at the home front
the much-vaunted discipline of the German army collapsed as if on cue.

1942

1944

1919

For the bedeviled and directionless public soon blamed the battles and controversies of that period on the republic, which was only defending itself. Everything was equated with "the revolution," and the political form that finally emerged from these troubled times was in the common mind obscurely connected with mutiny, defeat, national humiliation, street battles, chaos, and public disorder. Nothing so damaged the prospects of the republic as the fact that the public associated its very beginnings with a "dirty" revolution. Much of the population, including even the political moderates, remembered the inception of the republic with shame, sorrow, and disgust.

The terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty increased the resentment. The public statements of President Wilson had fostered the illusion that overthrow of the monarchy and the adoption of Western constitutional principles would soften the wrath of the victors and cause them to adopt a milder tone toward men who, after all, were only acting as executors of the legacy of a deceased regime. Many Germans also believed that the "order of world peace," for which the discussions at Versailles were ostensibly laying the groundwork, excluded punishment, injustices, and any kind of coercion. This period of understandable but unrealistic hopes has been called "the dreamland of the Armistice period." The country's reaction at the beginning of May, 1919, when the peace terms were presented to it, was all the more dumfounded. There was a great outcry. The public consternation was expressed politically by the resignations of Chancellor Philipp Scheidemann and of Foreign Minister Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau.

One thing is certain: the victorious powers arranged the surrounding circumstances with deliberate desire to harass and insult the Germans. They had opened the peace conference on January 18, 1919, the anniversary of the day the German Empire had been proclaimed barely fifty years before; and they chose as the place for signing the treaty the same Hall of Mirrors in which that proclamation had been issued. Perhaps that could be borne with. But their choosing for the signing date June 28, the fifth anniversary of the assassination of Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo, stood in what was felt to be cynical contrast to the altruism of Wilsonian pledges.

In general, the psychological affronts rather than the material exactions were what produced the extraordinarily traumatic effects of the Treaty of Versailles, so that from Right to Left, running across all factions and parties, it produced a sense of unforgettable humiliation. The territorial demands, the requirements for compensation and reparations, which at first dominated public discussion, certainly did not have that "Carthaginian harshness" which was so much talked about. The terms in fact could stand comparison with the conditions Germany had imposed on Russia in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and on Rumania in the

* D.F. I was not part of the activity
but I know that the O.C. had an

Treaty of Bucharest. But certain clauses seen soon figured in rightist agitation as the "dirty" were the clauses that struck at German honor which provided for the handing over of certain by Allied military tribunals, and the placed sole moral guilt for the outbreak of the

The contradictions and hypocrisies in it were all too evident. The victors assumed that on the Germans' confessing their sins, when purely material. The pointless vengeful much hatred and ridicule. Even in the Allied criticism of this hypocritical tone. The right example, which in President Wilson's proclamation the height of a sacred principle, was quietly have worked to the advantage of the German of the German remnant of the shattered part of the Reich. Supranational states were triumphantly confirmed; but, paradoxically, created, whose essence was the denial of it

The treaty solved scarcely any of the recent hostilities. Instead, it all but destroyed solidarity and common tradition that had wars and angry passions of centuries. The peace treaty did little to restore this sense. Germany remained excluded, seemingly community. This discrimination turned the European co-operation. In challenging the build on this feeling. Actually, a large part in foreign affairs were gained by his posing row Wilson's principles and the maxims of the Treaty with regard to the self-determining groups. "A terrible time is dawning for Europe observer on the day the peace treaty was signed before the storm which will probably end in a sion than the World War."⁶⁸

Within Germany, the bitterness over it increased the resentment against the republicable of sparing the country the distresses of a full dictated peace." How unwanted the republic became evident. It had been merely the chance, craving for peace, and weariness. Affairs had already lost it much credit. It added its weakness in foreign affairs. To a the very term "republic" seemed synonymous

→ people working on the foundation of the Allied

actionless public soon blamed the battles on the republic, which was only defended with "the revolution," and the political from these troubled times was in the infected with mutiny, defeat, national humiliated public disorder. Nothing so damaged the fact that the public associated its very solution. Much of the population, including remembered the inception of the republic us.

Peace Treaty increased the resentment. President Wilson had fostered the illusion that and the adoption of Western constitutional path of the victors and cause them to adopt so, after all, were only acting as executors of regime. Many Germans also believed that or which the discussions at Versailles were work, excluded punishment, injustices, and period of understandable but unrealistic dreamland of the Armistice period." The ending of May, 1919, when the peace terms all the more dumounded. There was a ternation was expressed politically by the Ripp Scheidemann and of Foreign Minister Rantzaus.

ctorious powers arranged the surrounding desire to harass and insult the Germans. conference on January 18, 1919, the an-man Empire had been proclaimed barely chose as the place for signing the treaty which that proclamation had been issued. with. But their choosing for the signing sary of the assassination of Austrian Arch- djevo, stood in what was felt to be cynical isonian pledges.

al affronts rather than the material ex- ac- extraordinarily traumatic effects of the rom Right to Left, running across all fac- a sense of unforgettable humiliation. The ements for compensation and reparations, ic discussion, certainly did not have that ch was so much talked about. The terms on with the conditions Germany had im- of Brest-Litovsk and on Rumania in the

reaty of Bucharest. But certain clauses seemed intolerably insulting and 1 figured in rightist agitation as the "disgrace" of Versailles. These are the clauses that struck at German honor: above all Article 228, which provided for the handing over of certain German officers for judgment by Allied military tribunals, and the celebrated Article 231, which placed sole moral guilt for the outbreak of the war upon Germany.

The contradictions and hypocrisies in the 440 articles of the treaty were all too evident. The victors assumed the pose of judges and insisted on the Germans' confessing their sins, where in fact their interests were purely material. The pointless vengeful moralism was what awoke so much hatred and ridicule. Even in the Allied countries there was strong criticism of this hypocritical tone. The right of self-determination, for example, which in President Wilson's proclamations had been raised to the height of a sacred principle, was quietly dropped whenever it might have worked to the advantage of the Germans. There was no question of the German remnant of the shattered Hapsburg monarchy becoming part of the Reich. Supranational states were destroyed and nationalism triumphantly confirmed; but, paradoxically, the League of Nations was created, whose essence was the denial of nationalism.

The treaty solved scarcely any of the problems that had led to the recent hostilities. Instead, it all but destroyed the sense of European solidarity and common tradition that had survived so long, despite the wars and angry passions of centuries. The new order imposed by the peace treaty did little to restore this sense. For all intents and purposes, Germany remained excluded, seemingly forever, from the European community. This discrimination turned the Germans decisively against European co-operation. In challenging the victors, Hitler was able to build on this feeling. Actually, a large part of Hitler's early successes in foreign affairs were gained by his posing as a firm adherent of Woodrow Wilson's principles and the maxims posited by the Versailles Peace Treaty with regard to the self-determination of national and ethnic groups. "A terrible time is dawning for Europe," wrote one clear-sighted observer on the day the peace treaty was ratified in Paris, "a sultriness before the storm which will probably end in an even more terrible explosion than the World War."⁶⁸

Within Germany, the bitterness over the terms of the peace treaty increased the resentment against the republic, for it had proved incapable of sparing the country the distresses and privations of this "shameful dictated peace." How unwanted the republic really had been now became evident. It had been merely the product of embarrassment, chance, craving for peace, and weariness. Its impotence in domestic affairs had already lost it much credit. To this bad record was now added its weakness in foreign affairs. To a growing number of Germans the very term "republic" seemed synonymous with disgrace, dishonor,

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and had an

→ people working over time
on the functioning parliamentarism
the Allied leaders.

and powerlessness. The feeling persisted that the republic had been imposed on the Germans by deception and coercion, that it was something altogether alien to their nature. It is true that in spite of all its drawbacks it held a certain promise; but even in its few fortunate years it was "unable to arouse either the loyalty or the political imagination of the people."¹⁰

These developments led to a surge of political consciousness. Large segments of the population, who previously had lived in a political limbo, abruptly and violently found themselves caught up in events that aroused in them political passions, hopes, and despair.

Adolf Hitler, now some thirty years old, was seized by this general mood in the hospital at Pasewalk. A vague but furious sense of misfortune and betrayal swept over him. It brought him a step closer to politics, but his decision to go actively into politics, which in *Mein Kampf* is linked to the events of November, 1918, actually was made a year later, when he discovered his oratorical gifts. The overwhelming moment came to him in the haze of a small meeting; in a burst of rapture he suddenly saw a way out of a hopelessly blocked life and found that he had prospects for a future.

Certainly his behavior during the following months suggests this interpretation. For when he was discharged from Pasewalk hospital at the end of November, he went to Munich and reported to the reserve battalion of his regiment. Munich had played an important part in the November events and had led the way in the overthrow of the German ruling houses. But although the city was vibrating with political excitement, Hitler remained indifferent. In spite of his alleged decision to go into politics, he neither joined nor opposed the political currents. Rather tersely, he comments that Red rule was repugnant to him. But since by his own contention the "Reds" were in power basically throughout the period of the republic, such an observation scarcely justifies the meager interest he took in politics at this period.

At the beginning of February, craving something to do, he volunteered for guard duty in a prisoner-of-war camp at Traunstein, near the Austrian border. But about a month later the few hundred French and Russian soldiers were released, and both camp and guard detail were dissolved. Once more, Hitler was left at loose ends. He returned to Munich.

Since he did not know where else to go, he took up quarters in the barracks in Oberwiesendfeld. Presumably, the decision did not come easily to him, for it meant he had to subordinate himself to the dominant Red Army and don its red armband. Nevertheless, he put up with taking orders from the revolutionary Left at a time when he might have joined units of the Right, a fact revelatory of his underdeveloped political instincts and lack of discrimination at the time. Later, the mere mention

of the word "Bolshevism" would drive him into vision of the facts to the contrary, at this stage was obviously stronger than any horror he counted a soldier of the world revolution.

It is true that he also had no choice. The framework in which he could feel sheltered. To the realm of the shipwrecked. Hitler was dislessness of his personal predicament: "At that one another through my head. For days I wone but the end of every meditation was the sober less as I was, did not possess the least basis Plainly, he was as far as ever from thinking of and achieving bourgeois status. Instead, he his insignificance. According to his story, his time had incurred "the disapproval of the Central soviet government in Munich, so that at the to arrest him. "Faced with my leveled carb the necessary courage and marched off as they the Central Council was no longer in existence 2

It is much more likely that his behavior at of embarrassment, passivity, and opportunistic noticeable part even in the turbulent events troops of Colonel von Epp's Free Corps, a together with other formations, overthrew the nich. Otto Strasser, who for a time was one of publicly: "Where was Hitler on that day? Ir was the soldier hiding who ought to have fou Red Army man Adolf Hitler was arrested and ing troops; some officers who knew him interv again. Possibly the story of the attempted arre is the retouched version of this incident.

Afterward, a commission was set up to lo soviet rule, and there has been much speculati have played in conjunction with these investig however, is that he offered his services to th lished by the Second Infantry Regiment. He the tribunals, which often handed down very the bitterness of the recent struggle. He locate taken part in the soviet regime, and seems to h ment so well that he was soon sent to a thinking."

Now for the first time he was beginning to a from the anonymity that had so long conceale

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counted a soldier of the world revolution.

It is true that he also had no choice. The army was the only social
framework in which he could feel sheltered. To leave it meant returning
to the realm of the shipwrecked. Hitler was distinctly aware of the hope-
lessness of his personal predicament: "At that time endless plans chased
one another through my head. For days I wondered what could be done,
but the end of every meditation was the sober realization that I, name-
less as I was, did not possess the least basis for any useful action."⁷⁰
Plainly, he was as far as ever from thinking of a job, of earning a living,
and achieving bourgeois status. Instead, he was agonizingly aware of
his insignificance. According to his story, his political activity at that
time had incurred "the disapproval of the Central Council" of the new
soviet government in Munich, so that at the end of April they came
to arrest him. "Faced with my leveled carbine, the scoundrels lacked
the necessary courage and marched off as they had come." But in reality
the Central Council was no longer in existence at the time he gives.

It is much more likely that his behavior at this time was a mixture
of embarrassment, passivity, and opportunistic adjustment. He took no
noticeable part even in the turbulent events of early May, when the
troops of Colonel von Epp's Free Corps, a paramilitary organization,
together with other formations, overthrew the soviet government in Mun-
ich. Otto Strasser, who for a time was one of his followers, later asked
publicly: "Where was Hitler on that day? In what corner of Munich
was the soldier hiding who ought to have fought in our ranks?" In fact
Red Army man Adolf Hitler was arrested and questioned by the invad-
ing troops; some officers who knew him intervened, and he was released
again. Possibly the story of the attempted arrest by the Central Council
is the retouched version of this incident.

Afterward, a commission was set up to look into events during the
soviet rule, and there has been much speculation on the role Hitler may
have played in conjunction with these investigations. All that is certain,
however, is that he offered his services to the board of inquiry estab-
lished by the Second Infantry Regiment. He supplied information for
the tribunals, which often handed down very harsh sentences reflecting
the bitterness of the recent struggle. He located fellow soldiers who had
taken part in the soviet regime, and seems to have carried out his assign-
ment so well that he was soon sent to a training course in "civic
thinking."

Now for the first time he was beginning to attract attention, to emerge
from the anonymity that had so long concealed and depressed him. He

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himself called his work for the investigating commission his "first more or less purely political activity."⁷¹ He was still letting himself drift; but the direction in which he now floated rapidly brought him to the end of his formative years, which were compounded of asocial apathy and a messianic sense of vocation.

Looking back over this period, it is astonishing to see that Adolf Hitler, who was to become the century's political phenomenon, did not feel tempted by politics until his thirtieth year. At a comparable age, Napoleon was already First Consul, Lenin in exile after years of persecution, Mussolini editor in chief of the socialist paper *Avanti*. Hitler, however, had not been impelled to take a single step in behalf of any of those ideas that would soon send him forth on a mission of world conquest. He had not entered a single party, had not joined any of the numerous associations of the period, with the exception of the Viennese League of Anti-Semites. There is nothing betokening any impulse toward political action, no sign of anything more than a stammering participation in the platitudes of the era.

On November 23, 1939, when his faith in his own power was at its height, he himself made the astonishing remark to his military commanders that in 1919 he had entered politics only after a long struggle with himself. That had been, he said, "the most difficult decision of all." And although this was said to emphasize that beginnings are always the hardest part of a venture, it also reveals his strong inner reservations about a political career. One element may have been the traditional German contempt for politics as something by nature lower than creative activity. He would have thought a political career demeaning by comparison with his unattainable youthful dream of becoming "one of the foremost architects of Germany, if not the foremost architect." Even at the climax of the war he remarked that he would far sooner have gone to Italy as an "unknown painter" and that only the deadly menace to his own race had forced him on to the road of politics, which was fundamentally alien to him.

If this was so, we can understand why not even the revolution drove him to enter the fray on one side or the other. The November events, the collapse of all authority, the downfall of the dynasties and the prevailing chaos had certainly challenged his conservative instincts. But even these violent changes did not rouse him to active protest. Even stronger than his contempt for political affairs was his repugnance for riot and rebellion. Bourgeois that he was, he was not one to go into the streets. Even twenty-five years later, he told his dinner companions, referring to his experiences at the time of the November revolution, that rebels were no more or less than criminals. He could see in them nothing but an "asocial lot"; the best thing to do with them was to kill them.

Only when he discovered his own oratorical powers did he overcome

his qualms against the political life and his fear of public order. Even so, when he leaped on his personality, he became, as he justified himself before the Munich People's Court, a revolution. But was he any the less an unsocial personality whom the peculiar circumstance with a monstrous special gift, had propelled was never intended? The question will arise in this biography, and repeatedly we will be asking politics ever meant more to him than the matter it: rhetorical overpowering of his energetics of processions, parades, and Part military force applied in war.

There is no denying that the collapse of war for him to enter politics. As long as the and politics was a bourgeois career, he had a name in it. The formal strictures of that sphere against him.

The year 1918 brought down the barriers. At the thought of my own future which I given me such bitter concern," Hitler wrote.

And so he set foot on the political stage.

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qualms against the political life and his fear of odium as a disturber of public order. Even so, when he leaped on the stage as a revolutionary personality, he became, as he justified himself four years later in his speech before the Munich People's Court, a revolutionary against the revolution. But was he any the less an unsociable, easily depressed artist personality whom the peculiar circumstances of the times, together with a monstrous special gift, had propelled into a realm for which he never intended? The question will arise repeatedly in the course of his biography, and repeatedly we will be tempted to ask whether politics ever meant more to him than the means he employed to practice it: rhetorical overpowering of his enemies, for example; the histrionics of processions, parades, and Party Days; the spectacle of military force applied in war.

There is no denying that the collapse of the old order opened the way for him to enter politics. As long as the bourgeois world persisted and politics was a bourgeois career, he had few prospects of winning a name in it. The formal strictures of that sphere would all have operated against him.

The year 1918 brought down the barriers. "I could not help but laugh at the thought of my own future which only a short time ago had given me such bitter concern," Hitler wrote.⁷²

And so he set foot on the political stage.

* D. T. I was an integral part of this "monstrous" special gift

trayed deep insecurity. It com-
 of being a Rienzi with touches
 the result was something preposi-
 interpreted in a number of ways,
 to exploit his insecurity and
 means of self-dramatization. At
 making his appearance attrac-
 can be seen in the following thumb-
 rander von Müller, who met Hitler
 's Ernst's sister. Also present was
 curious to meet the rising politician.
 decor. The four of us were already
 ble by the window when the bell
 ld see him in the narrow hallway
 g our hostess, laying aside riding
 mally unbuckling his cartridge belt
 hanging it on the clothes hook. It
 Karl May's American Indian nov-
 precisely each of these trivialities
 then calculated for effect; as were
 which was narrower than the un-
 The look in his eyes already ex-
 success; but something curiously
 e had the uneasy feeling that he
 ing it. His face, too, was still thin
 pression of suffering. But the pro-
 nered with inflexible hardness, and
 the curve of the thick eyebrows,
 will. This time, too, he spoke very
 marked attentiveness."²⁰
 on, women began to take an interest
 ties who sensed problems behind
 magnetic young orator, tensions
 d release. Hitler himself later com-
 e women who thronged so eagerly
 y one, he remarked, "whose voice
 I exchanged so much as a few
 them; Carola Hoffmann, widow
 ed in the Munich suburb of Solln,
 earned herself the title of "Hitler-
 ure stories highly popular among young
 in the Orient.—TRANS.

"Mutti"—Hitler's Mom: Frau Bruckmann, wife of the publisher of
 Houston Stewart Chamberlain and a lady descended from an ancient
 noble line, also took him under her wing. So did the wife of Bechstein,
 the piano manufacturer, "I wished he were my son," she said, and later,
 in order to be allowed to visit him in prison, she alleged that she was
 his adoptive mother. All of them taken together, their houses, their
 parties, widened the area around him and helped to make his name
 known.

Within the party, on the other hand, he continued to remain within
 a circle comprising middle-class philistines and semicriminal bullies who
 answered his need for aggression and physical violence. Among his rare
 close friends were Emil Maurice, a typical barroom and meeting-hall
 brawler, and Christian Weber, a hulking, paunchy former horse dealer
 who had worked as a bouncer in a notorious taproom and regularly
 carried a riding whip, as Hitler did. Ulrich Graf, a butcher's apprentice,
 also belonged to his immediate following, which served as a kind of
 bodyguard. So also did Max Amann, Hitler's former sergeant, a blunt,
 capable businessman, who became business manager for the party and
 the party's publishing house. Noisy and sedulously attentive, these men
 surrounded Hitler all the time. Evenings after meetings the troop of
 them would drop in at the Osteria Bavaria or the Bratwurstglöckl near
 the Frauenkirche, or talk for hours over coffee and cake at the Café
 Heck on Galeriestrasse, where a table was permanently reserved for
 Hitler in the dusky back of the room, from which he could watch what
 went on in the restaurant without being observed himself. He was al-
 ready beginning to find solitude painful; he constantly needed people
 around him—audience, guards, servants, drivers, but also entertainers,
 art lovers and storytellers like the photographer Heinrich Hoffmann or
 Ernst Hanfstaengl. These were the people who gave to his "court" its
 special coloration compounded of "the bohemian world and the condot-
 tiere style." He was not averse to having himself referred to as the "King
 of Munich." It would be the small hours of the morning before he would
 return to his furnished room on Thierschstrasse.

The dominant figure in the entourage that formed so early around
 Hitler was young Hermann Esser. He had done some newspaper work
 and been a press secretary for the Reichswehr District Headquarters.
 Aside from Hitler, he was the only person in the party at that time
 with a talent for demagoguery. He was "a noisemaker who is almost better
 at that business than Hitler," a demon speechmaker, though from
 a lower circle of hell. He was intelligent, cunning, with a knack for
 vivid and popular phrases. As a yellow journalist he could invent endless
 stories about Jews and profiteers. The decent petty bourgeois members
 of the party were soon objecting to the "swineherd tone" of his publicity
 campaigns. But he clung to his simple-minded radicalism; while still a

Chapter 1

They had better realize that we see events in terms of a historical vision.

Adolf Hitler

THE VISION

The laurel wreath Hitler hung on his wall in the Landsberg fortress-prison was more than a token that his spirit was unbroken. The forced isolation from political activity was of benefit to him politically and personally. For one thing, it permitted him to escape the aftermath of the disaster of November 9. He could follow the wrangles of his embittered and scattered adherents from the sidelines, while remaining the untarnished martyr of the nationalist cause. It also gave him time for introspection after years of almost mindless unrest and excitement. He recovered his faith in himself and in his mission. And, as his turbulent emotions died down, he felt himself strengthened in his role as leader of the *völkisch* right wing. He had at first claimed this role hesitantly, but in the course of the trial he became more confident, and finally he boldly came forth as the divinely appointed one and only Führer. Filled with this consciousness, Hitler managed to impress this image of himself upon his fellow prisoners. From this time on, the sense of mission never left him. It froze his features in that mask which no smile, no altruistic gesture, no moment of spontaneity ever softened. Even before the November putsch Dietrich Eckart had complained of Hitler's delusions of grandeur, his "messiah complex." Now Hitler hardened more and more into the monument that corresponded to his notions of what a great man and a Führer would be like.

Thus his imprisonment in no way hampered the process of self-stylization. In a subsequent trial some forty more participants in the putsch were convicted and sent to Landsberg. They included members of the "Hitler shock troop," Berchtold, Haug, Maurice, Amann, Hess, Heines, Schreck, and the student Walter Hewel. Hitler now had what amounted to an entourage. The prison authorities were highly accom-

might for the second time arrive too late to take the spoils. When he considered the powers many for future mastery, his thoughts were racial, political, geographic, and historical and pointed to the East.²⁰

Hitler had begun as a revisionist, Versailles Treaty, restoration of the borders, and the joining of all Germans in one school of thought the main enemy was open lay in exploiting the difficulties France was having with Italy and England. But Hitler went to his bent for thinking in larger terms, the Continent as a whole, and replacing ties.

that Germany, in her militarily, politically, middle position, could survive "only by tactics in the foreground." In an earlier disposition in the age of Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler would either have renounced sea trade and against Russia or, alternatively, if she had, she should have joined Russia against the West. Hitler favored the second course. He saw "principal" opponents of the Reich, and a deep pro-Russian bias. Under the influence of Scheubner-Richter and Rosenberg, he took a "nationalistic" Russia, one "restored to a Jewish-Bolshevik yoke." Teamed with the East to confront the West. Neither the concept of the Slavic race—which later was to inform Eastern policy—seems to have entered Hitler's mind until the beginning of 1923, probably in the Soviet regime, that he began to think of forming a pact with England against France. Hitler weighed this idea for its ramifications, its consequences, and the fruit of this thinking appears in the *Mein Kampf*, where he speaks of a war for Russia.

Hitler certainly had not abandoned the East. That remained one of the primary points in the last monologues in the bunker. His character. Just as Italy was to be placated and Tyrol and England was to be wooed by dropping all colonial demands, war with

France became simply another step that would allow Germany a free hand in the East. By the time he was writing the second volume of *Mein Kampf* in the course of 1925, Hitler forcefully assailed the revisionist approach; it aimed, he argued, at the restoration of wholly illogical, accidental, far too constricted borders, which, moreover, made no sense in terms of military geography. Worse still, such demands would stir up all of Germany's former wartime foes and lead them to revive their crumbling alliance. "*The demand for restoration of the frontiers of 1914 is a political absurdity of such proportions and consequences as to make it seem a crime.*" Hitler declared in italics. National Socialism, on the contrary, aimed at securing land and soil for the German people. "This action is the only one which, before God and our German posterity, would make any sacrifice of blood seem justified." Such broad gains would "some day acquit the responsible statesmen of blood-guilt and sacrifice of the people."²¹

Henceforth, the idea of attacking Russia, of a mighty Teutonic expedition to establish a vast continental empire in the old "German area of command in the East," became the central tenet of Hitler's foreign policy. He assigned it epoch-making importance:

And so we National Socialists consciously draw a line beneath the foreign policy tendency of our pre-War period. We take up where we broke off six hundred years ago. We stop the endless German movement to the south and west, and turn our gaze toward the land in the east. At long last we break off the colonial and commercial policy of the pre-War period and shift to the soil policy of the future.²²

How he arrived at this concept, as logical as it was monstrous, really does not matter. Some of it was original, some of it an extension of current theories. The notion of living space seems to have been a borrowing from Rudolf Hess. Thanks to his adulation of "the man," as he called Hitler, Hess had gradually won himself an important place among the group at the Landsberg prison. In particular, he replaced Emil Maurice in the position of Hitler's secretary. Hess also brought Hitler into personal contact with his teacher, Karl Haushofer, who had taken the highly suggestive subject of political geography, the "geopolitics" expounded by Sir Halford Mackinder, and shaped it into a philosophy of imperialistic expansion.

Mackinder had already drawn attention to the basic strength of what he called "the heartland": Eastern Europe and European Russia, protected by huge land masses, were destined to be the "citadel of world rule." The founder of geopolitics had decreed: "Whoever rules the heartland rules the world." As we have seen, such pseudoscientific formulas had a special appeal to Hitler's mind. But with all due credit to outside influences, Hitler's version of these ideas was distinctively his own.

That Hitler could speak again did not remove the difficulties of the party. Yet Hitler himself, it now appeared, had gained rather than lost by the ban. For he had been tided over the period of general amused indifference, when meeting halls would have remained empty and his name and message would have only become a bore. He soon realized this and behaved accordingly. In 1927 he spoke in public fifty-six times; two years later he had reduced his public appearances to twenty-nine. There are indications that at this period he began to see the advantages of living in semidivine remoteness. The moment he returned to the masses, he was competing with the overpowering force of unfavorable circumstances. Failures began to pile up, and with this came criticism from within the party. It was directed equally against his style of leadership and against the stringently maintained policy of legality. Even Goebbels, so embarrassingly subservient to Hitler and one of the prophets of the Führer cult, assailed the strictly legal course in his 1927 pamphlet, *Der Nazi-Sozi*. Answering the question of what the party should do if its efforts to obtain a majority failed, Goebbels broke out with: "What then? Then we'll clench our teeth and get ready. Then we'll march against this government; then we'll dare the last great coup for Germany; then revolutionaries of the word will become revolutionaries of the deed. Then we'll make a revolution!"

Hitler's personal conduct also met with criticism, particularly his arrogance toward tried-and-true party comrades. One old party man objected to "the much-discussed wall around Herr Hitler." There were murmurings about Hitler's negligent conduct of party business and his jealousy complex in regard to his niece. In the early summer of 1928, when his chauffeur Emil Maurice surprised him in Geli Raubal's room, Hitler raised his riding whip in such threatening fury that Maurice saved himself only by leaping out the window. With "unconditional devotion" the chairman of the Investigation and Mediation Committee, Walter Buch finally felt compelled to express his view "that you, Herr Hitler, are gradually falling into a degree of misanthropy that causes me worry."³⁸

Faced with these rumblings within the party, Hitler canceled the planned party rally for 1928 and instead convoked a meeting of the leaders in Munich. He forbade all preparatory local meetings, and when he opened the session on August 31 he delivered a highly charged speech in praise of obedience and discipline. Only totally committed elites could constitute a "historic minority," he declared, and thus shape history. To remain operative, the NSDAP must have at most 100,000 members: "That is a number to work with!" All the rest must be followers, rallying around and serving the purposes of the party only in specific cases. Scornfully, he dismissed a motion to elect a "senate" to aid him. He did not think much of advisers, he said. The motion had

been offered by Gauleiter Artur Din moved from his post and soon after had, it is true, been some background. Hitler had previously had a corse which he announced that as a polit "had the blind faith that he would make history."

Shortly afterward, a meeting was ized in the form by then becoming which Hitler simply issued commands silent, with a markedly bored or sa ing such a sense of paralysis and fu end in general resignation. One of that Hitler had permitted the meetin how his indifference could ruin it.

Hitler felt his chance would come rigorously organized party. Personall ment, for in establishing his hold ove progress. Henceforth, the party some the "Hitler movement." Without s patrons and powerful institutions, th if it could not win, it could at least sur

On May 20, 1928, a new Reichstag ninth, with 2.6 per cent of the vote: deputies were Gregor Strasser, Gott Hermann Göring, who in the interva bringing with him a wealthy wife and self, being "stateless," had not bea markable capacity for turning his t advantage, he used this circumstance leader who refused to make any conary system and stood far above the daily life. If he had decided to let th—a decision taken only after long va the desire to get a share in the priv enough, a week after the elections C quite another light on the party's pret ber of the Reichstag. I am an HOI. A Holder of a Railroad Pass. What d have been elected against the Reichs date in the interests of our employe a dungheap a dungheap and does i as 'government.'" Goebbels conclud "This startles you. does it? But do

ological, and aesthetic evaluations and held on to them for a long time. But in the meantime that world had declared its bankruptcy, and Hitler—unlike the representatives of the bourgeois world—never forgot that fact. In Hugenberg he was meeting a replica of the cunning, arrogant, and feeble Bavarian Prime Minister, Herr von Kahr, who had for him become the prototype of bourgeois notables. He now regarded them as a group who claimed to rule, yet had the souls of lackeys. "Cowardly," "stupid," "idiotic," and "rotten," were the adjectives he now attached to the mention of any member of this group. "No class of the population is stupider in political matters than this so-called bourgeoisie," he would often remark. Once he said that he had for a long time deliberately tried, by strident propaganda and improper manners, to keep bourgeois people from joining the party.

In May, 1931, Richard Breiting, editor in chief of the *Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten*, asked Hitler for an interview. Hitler began the conversation by remarking, "You are a representative of the bourgeoisie which we are fighting." He stressed that he had no intention of rescuing the dying bourgeoisie; on the contrary, he would eliminate it and would, at any rate, find it much easier to handle than Marxism. Hitler openly flaunted his present aloofness from bourgeois culture: "If a proletarian brutally tells me what he thinks, I can cherish the hope that some day this brutality can be turned toward the enemy. When a bourgeois indulges in daydreams of culture, civilization and aesthetic joys for the world, I say to him: 'You are lost to the German nation! You belong in Berlin's West End! Go there, dance your nigger dances till you're worn out, and croak!'"

He occasionally referred to himself as a "proletarian," but with an emphasis that made it appear as though he were talking not so much of his social status but of a social renunciation. "I can never be understood in terms of the bourgeoisie," he declared. Even in his hope of winning over the working class—to which he referred occasionally as a class of "true nobility"—he seemed to be agitated not so much by any fondness for the workers than by his abiding hatred of the bourgeoisie, which had rejected him. There was an incestuous element in his hatred of the bourgeoisie, with the resentment of a would-be bourgeois who had been first rejected, then deceived, constantly erupting. The type of low-class bully he preferred for his immediate personal entourage, the crude "chauffeur types" like Schaub, Schreck, Graf, and Maurice, reflected in an extreme fashion this prejudice, which could be overcome only temporarily by a few individuals: by Ernst Hanfstaengl, for example, or by Albert Speer, or by Carl Jacob Burckhardt, League of Nations commissioner for Danzig, to whom Hitler said "sadly" in 1939: "You come from a world that is foreign to me."¹⁷

No genuine bond with this foreign world was possible; as the meeting

at Harzburg had demonstrated, no could be established. Nothing came of the previously mentioned agreement on a common candid election.

Much has been made of the "I see history in terms of conspiracies convenient proof of their thesis of finance capital. However, a closer opposite. Far from lending himself to manipulators, Hitler treated these people as their hopes. It might be more correct to say the independence of these interests.

Undeniably, there did exist a leader of the Nazi party and a party actually obtained considerable from these connections. But it was had gone earlier, and in consideration of the Center. Neither the gains in view of the Center parties can be as wealthy patronage. As late as April 1932, the shrunken Deutsche Volk receiving larger sums from industry. Walther Funk, toward the end of the Ruhr district, all he came back with 20,000 marks. The total of such high. Some 6 million marks is provided by industry's gifts to the Nazi party up consider such a figure too low it that sum could not have financed local groups, with a large corps of half a million men, and twelve expended in 1932. In fact, the annual budget discovered, amounted at this time marks. Conscious that he was dead would sometimes refer to himself as man captains of industry.¹⁸

It suits the purposes of pseudo-precision concerning the links between. According to this school of thought, and dearly paid political influence that needed him for "public relations."

But the very categories are mis-

at work: "Our whole life is now a frantic chase after success and after power."

For long stretches of his life, therefore, the personality of this man, elusive in any case, evaporates, slips from the biographer's grasp. Hitler's entourage tried in vain to give color, individuality, and a human aura to the phenomenon. Even the masters of propaganda, who could command almost any effect, found themselves at a loss here. The diaries and accounts of Goebbels or Otto Dietrich are prime examples of that failure. The anecdotes his publicists endlessly circulated about Hitler the lover of children, the navigator with an infallible sense of direction in the lost airplane, the "dead shot" with a pistol, the hero with remarkable presence of mind in the midst of the "Red rabble"—all these tales sounded strained and added to the impression they were trying to dispel: remoteness from real life. Only the props he had gradually acquired gave him a certain individual outline: the raincoat, the felt hat or leather cap, the snapping whip, the intensely black mustache, and the way his hair was brushed down over his forehead. But because these items always remained the same, they, too, depersonalized him.

Goebbels has vividly described the restiveness that gripped the leading members of the party at this time:

This endless traveling begins again. Work must be taken care of standing, walking, driving and flying. You hold your most important conversations on stairs, in hallways, at the door, or on the drive to the railroad station. You scarcely have time to think. By train, car and plane you're carried back and forth across Germany. You turn up in a city a half hour before your speech is scheduled, sometimes with even less time to spare; you climb to the speaker's platform and speak. . . . By the time you're done you're in a state as if you'd just been pulled out of a hot bath fully dressed. Then you get into the car and drive another two hours. . . .²⁷

Only a few times during this year and a half of nonstop electioneering did circumstances jolt Hitler out of his impersonality and for brief moments offer a glimpse of his real character.

On September 18, 1931, just as the frantic chase across Germany was beginning and while he was setting out on an election campaign visit to Hamburg, word reached him that his niece Geli Raubal had committed suicide in the apartment they shared on Prinzregentenstrasse in Munich. According to the accounts, Hitler, stunned and horrified, abruptly turned about; and unless all the indications are deceptive, no other event in his personal life affected him as strongly as did this one. For weeks he seemed close to a nervous breakdown and repeatedly swore to give up politics. In his fits of gloom he spoke of suicide; this was, once again, the mood of total capitulation into which he recurrently fell when mis-

fortune struck. This melancholia testified of his life, demanding constant effort and wanted to seem to be. The energy that exuberance of a vigorous man but that keeping with his belief that the great was away for several days in a house on the. According to his intimates, tears would spoke of his niece in later years; it was he might mention her name. Her mother of cult. Her room at the Berghof was of her was set up in the room at Prinz her body had been found. There, years her death, Hitler would lock himself in for hours.²⁸

There was a strangely exaggerated Hitler's reactions to his niece's death coldness and inability to relate to others he was not putting on a performance, the key events in his personal life. His relationship to the opposite sex, which

If our evidence is to be believed, death, women had played only the men's home, chance acquaintanceships the barracks, the male circles of political world. The realm that complemented which, however, he found despicable but these were not easy for him to for. The shy inhibited attitude he had toward his youthful crush on Stefanie. His fell him a "woman hater." Though later of social relationships, always surrounded raphy is eerily empty of other human attitudes included, according to a remark: constant anxiety about "having his name

His complexes seemed to loosen up with her sentimental and at first, even "Uncle Alf." It may be that he could his own blood. In fact, his feelings for very incestuous factor. There is a family. His father had taken a niece in and made her his mistress. Among Hitler's path—from Jenny Haug, the Helena Hanfstaengl, the first wife Riefenstahl, and all those he addressed

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frantic chase across Germany was set on an election campaign visit to niece Geli Raubal had committed in Prinzregentenstrasse in Munich. Indignant and horrified, abruptly turned out to be deceptive, no other event in his life as did this one. For weeks he had repeatedly sworn to give up thought of suicide; this was, once again, which he recurrently fell when mis-

fortune struck. This melancholia testified to the highly charged quality of his life, demanding constant effort of will in order to be the person he wanted to seem to be. The energy that emanated from him was not the exuberance of a vigorous man but the forced product of neurosis. In keeping with his belief that the great man must have no feelings, he hid away for several days in a house on the Tegernsee, in southern Bavaria. According to his intimates, tears would come to his eyes whenever he spoke of his niece in later years; it was an unwritten rule that no one but he might mention her name. Her memory was surrounded with a kind of cult. Her room at the Berghof was kept just as she had left it; a bust of her was set up in the room at Prinzregentenstrasse in Munich, where her body had been found. There, year after year, on the anniversary of her death, Hitler would lock himself in for a meditation that might last for hours.²⁸

There was a strangely exaggerated, idolizing quality about all of Hitler's reactions to his niece's death—in strong contrast to his usual coldness and inability to relate to others. We have reason to think that he was not putting on a performance, that in fact the incident was one of the key events in his personal life. It seems to have fixed forever his relationship to the opposite sex, which was curious enough in any case.

If our evidence is to be believed, for some time after his mother's death, women had played only the most peripheral part in his life. The men's home, chance acquaintanceships in Munich beer halls, the dugout, the barracks, the male circles of politics and the party—these had been his world. The realm that complemented them tended to be the brothel, which, however, he found despicable, or light, casual relationships—but these were not easy for him to form, with his stiff unyielding nature. The shy inhibited attitude he had toward women was early expressed in his youthful crush on Stefanie. His fellow soldiers in the field considered him a "woman hater." Though later on he was always involved in close social relationships, always surrounded by a host of people, his biography is eerily empty of other human beings. His fear of all undignified attitudes included, according to a remark by a member of his entourage, constant anxiety about "having his name linked with a woman."

His complexes seemed to loosen up only after Geli Raubal appeared with her sentimental and at first, evidently, half-childish fondness for "Uncle Alf." It may be that he could be more relaxed with someone of his own blood. In fact, his feelings for Geli may have sprung from this very incestuous factor. There is a precedent in his own immediate family. His father had taken a niece into his house when she was sixteen and made her his mistress. Among the many women who crossed Hitler's path—from Jenny Haug, the sister of his first chauffeur, to Helena Hanfstaengl, the first wife of Ernst Hanfstaengl, Leni Riefenstahl, and all those he addressed or referred to in the Austrian

intimate style as "*Mein Prinzesschen*," "*Meine kleine Gräfin*," "*Tschapperl*," or "*Flietscherl*," and up to Eva Braun—none meant as much to him as Geli Raubal. She was, oddly inappropriate though the phrase sounds, his great love, a tabooed love of Tristan moods and tragic sentimentality.

One must wonder at Hitler's obtuseness in regard to Geli, for he could be acute enough psychologically where others were concerned. Did he not see that the situation was becoming impossible for this impulsive and unbalanced girl? It has never been established that she was Hitler's mistress. Some informants claim to know she was, and explain the suicide as a desperate escape from what had become the unendurably oppressive relationship with her uncle. Another story is that certain abnormal acts demanded of her by a perverted Hitler drove the girl to suicide. Still a third version denies that there was any sexual relation between the two, but lays stress on Geli Raubal's promiscuity with the men of Hitler's uniformed staff.²⁹

It is fairly certain that she enjoyed her uncle's fame and naively participated in his celebrity. But the relationship, which for years had been sustained by joint enthusiasms, by love for the opera and the pleasures of coffeehouses and country outings, had gradually developed oppressive aspects. Hitler's shadow fell heavily upon his niece. He was given to furious jealousy, and to making inordinate demands upon her. Though she had only a moderate gift and scarcely any ambition, he insisted on sending her to famous singing teachers so that she could be trained as a Wagnerian heroine. And his tyranny cut her off from any opportunity to lead a life of her own. Members of his entourage reported that immediately before his departure for Hamburg there had been a loud, violent scene between them, triggered by the girl's wish to go to Vienna for a while. It seems probable that all these complex and seemingly hopeless circumstances finally sent her over the brink. Less plausible is the story popular among his political enemies that the girl shot herself because she was expecting a child by Hitler. Still others held that Hitler himself ordered her murdered, or purported to know that the SS had passed a *Feme* (vigilante) sentence on Geli because she had distracted her uncle from his historic mission. Hitler himself occasionally grumbled that all this "terrible filth" was killing him. He also declared darkly that he would never forgive his enemies for the nasty gossip of those weeks.³⁰

As soon as he had recovered his composure, he continued on to Hamburg after all. There, amid the cheers of thousands, he delivered one of his passionate speeches that whipped the audience into a kind of collective orgy, all waiting tensely for the moment of release, the orgasm that manifested itself in a wild outcry. The parallel is too patent to be passed

over; it lets us see Hitler's oratorical tripping churning sexuality unable to find its object meaning to Hitler's frequent comparison. And we need only look at the correspondence at the wholly erotic fervor that the idea aroused in him, to see what he sought platform high above the masses filling it unable to make contact, he more and more. In a revealing turn of phrase (if we may call the masses his "only bride." His or instinctual, and his audience, unnerved by a few elemental needs, reacted length. The sound recordings of the peric obscene, copulatory character of mass r ginning, as of a whole multitude holding yappings; the minor climaxes and first of the crowd; finally the frenzy, more released by the finally unblocked orator Schickele once spoke of Hitler's speech. And many other contemporary observe sensually charged liquescence of these of diabolism.

Nevertheless, anyone who thought the as an orator lay in this use of speech a making a serious mistake. Rather, once of delirium and rationality that character in the glare of spotlights, pale, his voice b tirades, and outbursts of hatred, he remain his emotions. For all his seeming abandon dealing here with the same ambiguity that and was one of the basic facts of his character was as tangibly marked by it as his methodology of his conquest of power policy. The very regime he set up actually been defined as a "dual state."³¹

In fact, the triumphs of this phase were earlier years by the greater planning that well as the elaborated stagecraft. Essential depended upon his always going to the more radical not only in his emotions but long ago as August, 1920, he had, in a "to arouse and whip up and incite . . . sober understanding. He had, it would these basic principles right from the start

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churning sexuality unable to find its object. No doubt there was a deeper
meaning to Hitler's frequent comparison of the masses to "woman."
And we need only look at the corresponding pages in *Mein Kampf*,
at the wholly erotic fervor that the idea and the image of the masses
aroused in him, to see what he sought and found as he stood on the
platform high above the masses filling the arena—his masses. Solitary,
unable to make contact, he more and more craved such collective unions.
In a revealing turn of phrase (if we may believe the source) he once
called the masses his "only bride." His oratorical discharges were largely
instinctual, and his audience, unnerved by prolonged distress and re-
duced to a few elemental needs, reacted on the same instinctual wave
length. The sound recordings of the period clearly convey the peculiarly
obscene, copulatory character of mass meetings: the silence at the be-
ginning, as of a whole multitude holding its breath; the short, shrill
yappings; the minor climaxes and first sounds of liberation on the part
of the crowd; finally the frenzy, more climaxes, and then the ecstasies
released by the finally unblocked oratorical orgasms. The writer René
Schickele once spoke of Hitler's speeches as being "like sex murders."
And many other contemporary observers have tried to describe the
sensually charged liquescence of these demonstrations in the language
of diabolism.

Nevertheless, anyone who thought the entire secret of Hitler's success
as an orator lay in this use of speech as a sexual surrogate would be
making a serious mistake. Rather, once again it was the curious coupling
of delirium and rationality that characterized his oratory. Gesticulating
in the glare of spotlights, pale, his voice hoarse as he hurled his charges,
tirades, and outbursts of hatred, he remained always the alert master of
his emotions. For all his seeming abandon, he never lost control. We are
dealing here with the same ambiguity that governed his entire behavior
and was one of the basic facts of his character. His oratorical technique
was as tangibly marked by it as his tactic of legality and later the
methodology of his conquest of power or his maneuvers in foreign
policy. The very regime he set up assumed this character and has
actually been defined as a "dual state."³¹

In fact, the triumphs of this phase were distinguished from those of
earlier years by the greater planning that went into his performances, as
well as the elaborated stagecraft. Essentially, Hitler's effectiveness still
depended upon his always going to the utmost extreme; but he was now
more radical not only in his emotions but also in his calculations. As
long ago as August, 1920, he had, in a speech, described his task as
"to arouse and whip up and incite . . . the instinctive" on the basis of
sober understanding. He had, it would seem, a fairly good grasp of
these basic principles right from the start. But only now, under the im-

cess of social impoverishment. Either Hitler listened, or all the others talked and he, locked away from the world around him, looking at his teeth in a frightful way," as "Or else he paced restlessly. He did not get interrupted one constantly; he jumped from one subject to another."⁴⁸ His inability he could not even follow the speeches; having lost the habit of being contradicted or indulged in monologues. Since and tolerated only yes men or admirers into an intellectual isolation that deepened and became fixed on his early convictions, so he neither expanded nor modified, but edged.

se, as if intoxicated by his own voice. The man Rauschning, from the early thirties, the self-important intonation of a man des. There is a similar note, though with variation, in the table talk recorded in the "word," Hitler declared, could build us." When Mussolini was in Germany on a one-and-a-half-hour monologue giving his impatient guest the opportunity; and associates had similar experiences, in the torrent of words stretched on into more excessive as the hour advanced. desperately struggling with their sleepiness, solemn cosmic blather" about art, philosophy, and had to listen with defenseless ears, although they, too, were only extras, he could whip up the excitement that the server commented that he would dismiss "a person who has just given himself a terlocutor managed an occasional objection to further, boundlessly wild association, without end.

ch isolated him humanly, benefited him in pieces in a game. No one could cross the use who approached most closely to him reduced distance. Characteristically, his and for a few dead persons. In his private ing a portrait of his mother, and one of who died in 1936. None of his father. ly closer to him than the living girl had

ever been. "In a sense Hitler is simply not human—unreachable and untouchable," Magda Goebbels had already said in the early thirties. While still at the peak of his power, the cynosure of millions, he yet had something about him that belonged to the forgotten young man of the Vienna or early Munich years; he was a stranger even to his closest relatives. Albert Speer, whom for a time he regarded with some sentimentality as the embodiment of his youthful dream of brilliance and distinction, told the Nuremberg tribunal: "If Hitler had had any friends, I would have been his friend." But he, too, did not cross the gulf. In spite of many days and nights of joint planning, when both men would lose themselves in their colossal projects, Speer was never more than Hitler's preferred architect. It is true that Hitler, in an unusual tribute, spoke of his "genius," but the dictator did not trust him in matters that went beyond technical problems.

What was lacking from this one relationship with traces of an erotic element was also lacking in the other: in contrast to Geli Raubal, Eva Braun was merely Hitler's mistress, with all the anxieties, secretcies, and humiliations involved in such a position. She related that at a dinner in the Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten in Munich Hitler sat beside her for three hours, not allowing her to address him; shortly before everyone rose from the table he thrust into her hand "an envelope with money." He had met her at the end of the twenties in Heinrich Hoffmann's photographic studio, and possibly this acquaintanceship was one of the factors that drove Geli Raubal to suicide. Some time after his niece's death Hitler made Eva his mistress. She was a simple, moderately attractive girl with unpretentious dreams and thoughts that were dominated by love, fashion, movies, and gossip, by the constant fear of being thrown over, and by Hitler's egocentric whims and his manner of a petty domestic tyrant. With his craving for regimentation he had forbidden her sun-bathing, dancing, and smoking. ("If I were ever to see Eva smoking, I'd break off at once.") He was quite jealous, and yet he neglected her in an offensive way. In order "not to be so alone" she had several times asked him for a dog ("that would be lovely"), but Hitler had simply passed over the request without comment. For a long time he kept her in almost insultingly mean circumstances. Her diary has been found, and the notes illuminate her unhappy situation. A characteristic passage runs:

There's only one thing I wish, to get very sick and know no more about him for at least a week. Why is nothing happening to me, why must I go through all this? If only I'd never seen him. I'm in despair. Now I'll buy sleeping powder again, then I'll be in a half trance and stop thinking so much about it.

Why doesn't the devil come and take me. It's certainly better with him than it is here.

For three hours I waited in front of the Carlton and had to watch him

D. T. So often people would speak of me as if I were not real but merely a presence in a way.

ilarly, the center of the Belgian system of defense collapsed when Fort Eben Emael, the key to the system of fortifications guarding Liège, was eliminated by one such unit, which landed inside the fort area in gliders. Meanwhile, the advance through Luxembourg and the Ardennes, again a complete surprise to the enemy, made rapid progress. By May 13 the tank formations were able to cross the Meuse at Dinant and Sedan. On May 16 Laon fell, on May 20 Amiens; and that same night the first formations reached the Channel coast. At times the advance proceeded so rapidly that the main units lost contact with the vanguard, and Hitler, suspicious as always, distrusted his own triumph. "The Führer is frightfully nervous," Halder noted on May 17. "He is alarmed by his own success, doesn't want to risk anything, and consequently would prefer to stop us." And on the following day: "The Führer is unaccountably fearful about the southern flank. He rages and shouts that we are on the point of ruining the whole operation and exposing ourselves to the dangers of defeat."⁵

In fact there was no danger. When Britain's new Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, alarmed by the situation at the front, flew to Paris, General Gamelin admitted to him that the majority of his mobile forces had already fallen into the German trap. Gamelin, commander in chief of the Allied armies, tried to conjure up memories of past glories. In an Order of the Day for May 17 he repeated word for word General Joffre's proclamation before the first Battle of the Marne in September, 1914, calling upon the soldiers not to yield a foot of soil. But the Allied leaders did not succeed in collecting their retreating armies, building new lines, and organizing a counterattack. The Allied defeat would have been complete if General Guderian's tank spearhead had not received the order, on May 24, to stop in its tracks. It was at this time only a few miles south of Dunkirk and not in contact with the enemy. The German slowdown for forty-eight hours left the Allies a port and thus the chance to escape. Within a week, in one of the most daring improvisations of the war, with the aid of some 900 largely small ships, fishing boats, excursion steamers, and private yachts, nearly 340,000 men—the greater part of the Allied formations—were ferried to England.

The responsibility for the order to halt before Dunkirk has since been the object of extensive investigation. Some have held that Hitler himself deliberately let the majority of the British Expeditionary Corps escape in order to keep open the way for the compromise with England that he continued to hope for. But such a decision would have contradicted the war aim formulated in his memorandum. It would also have contradicted Directive Number 13 of May 24, which began: "Next goal of operations is the annihilation of the French, British and Belgian forces encircled in Artois and in Flanders by the concentric attack of our northern wing. . . . During this operation the task of the Air Force

is to break all enemy resistance to the escape of the British forces. The escape must be met with vehement opposition but was approved by General Group A. Its underlying intention: tank formations, exhausted by the advance, to recoup their strength for the next day's operations. The Luftwaffe was to use its sea of flames and sink every British ship in its decision. When the British reached the Channel coast, Guderian's reach ten days. On June 4, Halder noted tersely: "The French are gone."

Yet the superior operations of the German successes. When Hitler ordered the encirclement maneuver at Dunkirk, he was discouraged, broken enemy was the result of the debacle in the north. The formations that had already been dispersed, had deserted, or had been destroyed. As the end of May a British formation without the slightest discipline on the roads, dragging carts and heavy equipment, movements of their own troops overtaken by German tanks, the screams of the Stukas. Every soldier was submerged in the indescribable preparation for defeat but not for the future. In Briare there was only a sign of the outside world, and that was at two o'clock in the afternoon of May 26. This time. When General Broke's Expeditionary Force, asked about the "Fortress Brittany," General commander, shrugged resignedly. "Imagination." Many commands these were a blank wall. It was upon France.

Although the German planners for scarcely any reactions on the part of the British. Hitler was nevertheless surprised. On May 14 his troops marched through the tricolor from the Eiffel Tower.

* D.T.: I convinced him to stop. The order came to me from the command and suggested to me that my

pleading had to be about Hitler's own decision.

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is to break all enemy resistance in the encircled parts and to prevent the escape of the British forces across the Channel." Hitler's order to halt met with vehement opposition within the army High Command, but was approved by General von Rundstedt, the commander of Army Group A. Its underlying intention was rather to give a respite to the tank formations, exhausted by two weeks of fighting, and enable them to recoup their strength for the impending battle for France. Göring's boasts that his Luftwaffe would transform the port of Dunkirk into a sea of flames and sink every ship that tried to dock there reinforced Hitler in his decision. When the city, which had been undefended and within Guderian's reach ten days earlier, at last fell into German hands on June 4, Halder noted tersely: "Dunkirk taken, coast reached. Even the French are gone."

Yet the superior operational plan was not alone responsible for the German successes. When Hitler's armies turned south, after completing the encirclement maneuver at the Channel coast, they encountered a discouraged, broken enemy whose defeatism had been only magnified by the debacle in the north. The French command was operating with formations that had already been beaten, with divisions that had been dispersed, had deserted, or had simply passed into dissolution. As early as the end of May a British general called the French army a rabble without the slightest discipline.⁹ Millions of refugees aimlessly tramped the roads, dragging carts heaped high with possessions, blocking the movements of their own troops, carrying them along into the confusion, overtaken by German tanks, driven into panic by the bombs and the screams of the Stukas. Every step toward organized military resistance was submerged in the indescribable chaos. The country had been prepared for defeat but not for collapse. From the French headquarters in Briare there was only a single telephone link to the troops and to the outside world, and that was not in operation between twelve and two o'clock in the afternoon because the postmistress went to lunch at this time. When General Brooke, commander in chief of the British Expeditionary Force, asked about the divisions assigned for the defense of "Fortress Brittany," General Weygand, the newly appointed supreme commander, shrugged resignedly: "I know they're a pure figment of the imagination." Many commanding generals stared at their maps as if these were a blank wall. It was in fact as if the sky were falling down upon France.

Although the German planning for the Battle of France had provided for scarcely any reactions on the enemy's part, and although the directives seemed to suggest extensive marching drills rather than a campaign, Hitler was nevertheless surprised by the speed of the advance. On June 14 his troops marched through the Porte Maillot into Paris and lowered the tricolor from the Eiffel Tower. Three days later Rommel covered

in to stop. The French the morning to me that my

pleads had some mixed feelings about Hitler's decision to leave France and then appeal to Rome

how to fix matters up. . . . For five years I have been cut off from the outer world; I have not gone to the theater, not heard a concert, no longer see any movies. I live solely for the task of leading this struggle because I know that unless a person of iron will stands in the background, the struggle cannot be won." The question remains, however, whether the very sacrifices he imposed on himself in his maniacal insistence on the exercise of will, whether this single-minded concentration upon the war, did not constrict his mind and rob him of all inner freedom.

The tensions he underwent were discharged, more powerfully than ever before, in an unquenchable urge to launch into tirades. He found a new audience in his secretaries, for whom he tried in vain to provide a "congenial atmosphere" by offerings of cake and a fireplace fire. Sometimes he had his adjutants, his doctors, Bormann, or some chance guest join them. As his insomnia grew worse, he steadily extended his monologues. By 1944 the members of the circle would be desperately forcing their eyes to stay open until the graying dawn. Only then, as Guderian reports, would Hitler "lie down for a brief slumber, from which the pushing brooms of the scrubwomen at his bedroom door would awaken him by nine o'clock at the latest."

He continued to stick to the themes which had been part of the repertory of earlier years, and which are recorded in the table talk: his youth in Vienna, the First World War and the years of struggle, history, prehistory, nutrition, women, art, the fight for survival. He grew exercised over the "hopping around" of the dancer Gret Palucca, over the "stunted smears" of modern art, over Conductor Knappertsbusch's fortissimi, which forced opera singers to shriek so that they "looked like tadpoles." He spoke of his disgust with the "idiotic bourgeoisie," with the "herd of swine" in the Vatican or with the "insipid Christian heaven." Along with ruminations about the imperial racial state, Hannibal's elephants, Ice Age catastrophes, Caesar's wife, or "the gang of jurists" came recommendations for a vegetarian diet, a prospectus for a popular Sunday newspaper that would carry "lots of pictures," and serialized fiction "so that the gals can get something out of it."⁵⁶ Stunned by the unending torrent of words, the Italian Foreign Minister commented that Hitler was probably very happy to be Hitler because it permitted him to talk eternally.

More striking than the endless flow of his monologues was, at least in the recorded material, the crudity of expression, in which he unmistakably relapsed back to his origins. The ideas themselves, the anxieties, wishes and aims, were unchanged from his early days. What is more, he now laid aside all the disguises and statesmanlike poses, and fell back on the vehement and vulgar phrases of the beer-hall demagogue, not to say the denizen of the flophouse. With a good deal

of zest he discussed cannibalism in Leningrad. He called Roosevelt "a souse's bullshit," and irritably "strategist." He praised the Soviet "tarian blather," and imagined how by "shooting a batch of a few favorites, 'constantly repeated' m can no longer put up a fight."⁵⁶

Among those symptoms of de narrowing that threw him back to From the third winter on, he co that of a "seizure of power" e; "period of struggle," too, he c overwhelmingly superior forces—"a lowers." The war was nothing experiences. The record of one o the chief pointed out that this wa of the period of struggle. What t of parties in the domestic realm i nations in the foreign realm."⁵⁷

In keeping with the precipitate ally complained that the years v pleasure in taking risks. Intellect the past. The garrulous reviews filled his nocturnal monologues: nostalgias. In his military decision of the First World War, w more and more restricted to the t: grasped the crucial importance c nor the value of a heat-seeking e torpedo. He also blocked the l plane, the Messerschmitt 262. W fetched objections, reversed or c tourage with hastily reeled-off psychological generalizations. Wh of British experiments with jet i in 1944 to permit the manufactu ordering that the plane not be b raiders. Instead, contrary to the: played as a fast bomber. The p intolerable, he decided, and als really slower in air combat. In fac ment; and while Germany's citie

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of zest he discussed cannibalism among the partisans or in besieged Leningrad. He called Roosevelt a "cracked fool," Churchill's speeches "a souse's bullshit," and irritably denounced von Manstein as a "pisspot strategist." He praised the Soviet system for forgoing all the "humanitarian blather," and imagined how he would meet a mutiny in Germany by "shooting a batch of a few hundred thousand people." One of his favorite, "constantly repeated" maxims was the sentence: "A dead man can no longer put up a fight."⁵⁶

Among those symptoms of decline must be included the intellectual narrowing that threw him back to the viewpoint of a local party leader. From the third winter on, he could see the war in no other light than that of a "seizure of power" expanded to global dimensions. In the "period of struggle," too, he comforted himself, he had faced overwhelmingly superior forces—"a single man with a small band of followers." The war was nothing but a "gigantic repetition" of earlier experiences. The record of one of the table talks reads: "At lunch . . . the chief pointed out that this war was a faithful copy of the conditions of the period of struggle. What took place among us then as a struggle of parties in the domestic realm is taking place today as the struggle of nations in the foreign realm."⁵⁷

In keeping with the precipitate aging of his appearance, he occasionally complained that the years were robbing him of all his gambler's pleasure in taking risks. Intellectually, too, he more and more lived in the past. The garrulous reviews of matters long past, with which he filled his nocturnal monologues, had the sound of an old man's nostalgias. In his military decisions he frequently referred to the experiences of the First World War, while his interest in armaments became more and more restricted to the traditional weapons systems. He neither grasped the crucial importance of radar and the splitting of the atom nor the value of a heat-seeking ground-to-air rocket or a sound-guided torpedo. He also blocked the large-scale production of the first jet plane, the Messerschmitt 262. With senile obstinacy he insisted on far-fetched objections, reversed or changed decisions, confounded his entourage with hastily reeled-off statistics, or took refuge in broad psychological generalizations. When on the basis of a newspaper report of British experiments with jet planes he was at last persuaded early in 1944 to permit the manufacture of the Me 262, he tried to hedge by ordering that the plane not be built as a fighter against the Allied air raiders. Instead, contrary to the advice of the experts, it was to be employed as a fast bomber. The physical strain on the pilots would be intolerable, he decided, and also argued that the faster planes were really slower in air combat. In fact, he snatched at anything for an argument; and while Germany's cities were reduced to rubble, he refused

bizek was not in Vienna at the time of the second coming of Hitler again after he returned.

In much the same sense Stefan Zweig notes in *Die Welt*, 50, "the worst threat that existed in the bourgeois class was the threat of the proletariat." See also Heiden, *Geschichte*,

Shirer's memories of Hitler raise many questions. In fact, he has no proof of the close acquaintanceship that existed with Hitler. Nevertheless, his work does contain much that increase our knowledge. His evidence can be taken to the extent that it is supported by other accounts, and of similar behavior on Hitler's part.

Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab. Lanz considers; he named, among other disciples who had early knowledge of his doctrines, Lord Kitchener and Lenin! This is the light on Lanz himself and the pathological structure of his principal work, published in 1905, bore the title: *Die Sodomitische oder die Kunde von den Sodoms-Afflingen*. It is a *Rechtferdigung des Fürstentums und des Königtums* or the Lore of the Sodom-Apelings and the Election into the Oldest and Newest Philosophy of Royalty and Nobility. The blue-blondism in his view "masterpieces of the gods," equipped with even transmitters. By eugenic concentration and the Arioheroic race was to be redeveloped with the divine electromagnetic-radiological orad lost. The age's anxiety feelings, elitist leanings, fashionable idolization of Science by dabblers in together by a considerable dose of intellectual and used to shape this doctrine.

Estimates Lanz's influence on Hitler; it seems certain not extend beyond the limits described in the text. It is very different in regard to several other Nazi leaders above all Heinrich Himmler. Directly or indirectly catalogues of the SS Race and Settlement Office of exterminating "unfit" lives, or Jews, Slavs, and murderous notions of Lanz von Liebenfels

Bullock, *Hitler*, p. 39; but see also Shirer, *Rise*

the assurance, urged as "a certainty," that Hitler women in Linz or Vienna, comes from Kubizek only to the time Kubizek spent with Hitler (Kub-

30. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

31. Maser, *Frühgeschichte*, p. 92, has a different opinion; he maintains that Kubizek was in the right as against Hitler, but adduces no evidence to justify his view. For the cited phrases from Hitler see *Mein Kampf*, pp. 39 f., where Hitler also admits that his knowledge of union organization at the time he began work at the building site was still "practically nonexistent." There is no reason to doubt this assertion. Hitler's anti-Semitism at this time was not yet thoroughgoing or consistent. As late as 1936 Hanisch, his companion from the home for men, insisted that Hitler in Vienna had not been an anti-Semite. Hanisch presented an extensive list of Jews with whom Hitler had allegedly maintained cordial relations. Cf. Smith, p. 149.

32. Cf. *Jahrbuch der KK Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie*, 1909, pp. A 108, A 118, cited in Smith, p. 127. Werner Maser (*Frühgeschichte*, p. 77) has challenged Konrad Heiden and the historians deriving from him. Making downright assertions on a flimsy foundation, Maser argues that financial reasons would "with certainty" not have forced Hitler to seek shelter in a doss-house. But in calculating Hitler's financial situation Maser has assumed that Hitler's inheritance from his father was available to him as a permanent annuity. In reality it amounted to about 700 crowns and, depending on how quickly Hitler spent it, was bound to be used up sooner or later. Maser is so bent on showing that Hitler had financial security that he even suggests the possibility (and in a later passage terms it a probability) that Hitler lived in the doss-house "because he wanted to study the conditions there."

33. Heiden, *Hitler I*, p. 43. Some interesting details on the home for men are to be found in Jenks, pp. 26 ff. According to Jenks, the home was restricted to persons with an income of under 1,500 crowns per year. It had 544 beds and was the fourth project of this type built by a foundation committed to alleviating the housing shortage. From 1860 to 1900 the population of Vienna had risen by 259 per cent; after Berlin (281 per cent) this was the steepest increase in Europe. Paris, for example, showed a population increase of only 60 per cent during the same period. The statistics obtained by Jenks show that in the eight predominantly proletarian districts of Vienna there was an average of 4.0 to 5.2 persons per room.

34. *Mein Kampf*, p. 34.

35. Thomas Mann, "Sufferings and Greatness of Richard Wagner," in: *Essays of Three Decades*.

36. Rauschning, *Gespräche*, pp. 215 f. Also Albert Speer in a note to the author dated September 15, 1969.

37. Thomas Mann, *Gesammelte Werke* 12, pp. 775 f.

38. Friedrich Percyval Reck-Malleczewen, *Diary of a Man in Despair*, p. 24.

39. *Mein Kampf*, p. 41; also Kubizek, p. 220.

40. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 42 ff.

41. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, *Die Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts*, I, p. 352.

- Hallgarten also stresses the differing attitudes among various branches of industry; see his *Hitler*; also his *Dämonen oder Retter*, pp. 215f.; also Fetcher, "Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus: Zur Kritik des sowjet-marxistischen Faschismusbegriffs," *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 1962:1, p. 55.
21. R. Dahrendorf, *Gesellschaft und Demokratie in Deutschland*, p. 424. Dahrendorf argues—and he is surely right about the motives—that the big businessmen supported Hitler in the same way that they granted financial aid to every right-wing party that had prospects of coming to power, not at all as part of a plot. Their attitude, that is, was largely defensive; they were thinking only of reinsurance or, to quote a famous remark by Hugo Stinnes in 1919, they were paying "a social-insurance premium against uprisings." Hallgarten, too, concludes that although Hitler was vigorously supported by industry's funds, this by no means signified that he was "made" by industry; Hallgarten, cf. *Dämonen*, p. 113. We might say, then, that although "industry" did not put Hitler in power, he would scarcely have attained power against its declared will.
 22. The full text of the speech is given in Domarus, pp. 68 ff.
 23. Speech to the Hamburg Nationalist Club in the ballroom of the Hotel Atlantic, February 28, 1926. The transcript notes at this point "tempestuous applause"; cf. Werner Jochmann, *Im Kampf um die Macht*, pp. 103, 114.
 24. Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939, 2nd series, vol. I, p. 512, n. 2.
 25. Arnold Brecht, *Vorspiel zum Schweigen*, p. 180, points out that the authors of the Constitution deliberately renounced taking over the provision in the American Constitution that only native-born citizens can become candidates for the highest office in the land. Ironically, they did so in order not to exclude their Austrian brothers. Incidentally, the efforts to obtain citizenship for Hitler began as early as the autumn of 1929. At that time Frick unsuccessfully attempted to have him naturalized in Munich. Six months later, by which time Frick had advanced to the position of a Minister in Thuringia, Frick tried to obtain German citizenship for Hitler by appointing him to a civil-service post. The post Frick had in mind was that of a police inspector in Hildburghausen, which happened to be vacant. But the situation seemed a bit ludicrous, and Hitler called off the effort. Next Klagges tried to have Hitler appointed to a teaching post at the technical college in Brunswick, but this too failed. A solution was finally found: Hitler was appointed Regierungsrat with the Berlin delegation from Brunswick.
 26. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, pp. 22 ff.
 27. *Ibid.*, pp. 120 f.
 28. On this whole subject cf. Frank, pp. 90 f.; Hanfstaengl, pp. 231 ff. The reference to the unwritten law that no one must mention his niece's name in Hitler's presence is based on information from Albert Speer.
 29. For the different versions cf. Hanfstaengl, pp. 231 ff.; Heiden, *Hitler I*, p. 371; Görlitz and Quint, pp. 322 ff.; Frank, p. 90. The complaints by Gauleiter Munder of Württemberg that H verted by the company of his niece from tainly a significant factor in Munder's rer
 30. Cf. on this and what followed: Frank, p. 5 relates a story that he alleges was bandit to the effect that Geli had been made r master from Linz. Hanfstaengl also repo with a broken nose, but he gives no sup to an inquiry Hanfstaengl informed the: erally known at the time, but so far as I l in the scholarly literature.
 31. *The Dual State* is the title of a study by New York, 1941).
 32. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 474 ff.
 33. *Ibid.*, pp. 478 f.
 34. Krebs, *Tendenzen*, p. 154; also Preiss, p. 35.
 35. *Mein Kampf*, p. 473.
 36. H. R. Knickerbocker, *The German Crisis*.
 37. Heinrich Brüning, *Memoiren 1918–1934*.
 38. Harry Graf Kessler, *In the Twenties*, p. Nationalsozialismus und Revolution, p. 4 Goebbels, p. 65.
 39. Preiss, p. 179 (speech of March 7, 1934).
 40. Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters*, 19 January 24, 1932.
 41. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 87. The make-up after the July elections is quite interesting altogether. Of these, fifty-five were workers, fifty peasants, forty-three in the mercer, the crafts and industry, twenty-servants, twelve teachers, and nine from *Handbuch*, 6. Wahlperiode, Berlin, 1934.
 42. For details cf. Bracher, *Auflösung*, pp. Sturz Brüning's," in *VJHfZ* 1952:3, pp. 109, 110. The import favorable turn in the disarmament negotiations; there are indications that the characterization of the pressures on the Theodor Eschenburg, "The Role of the German Republic" in Holborn, ed., 1934.
 43. The statistics on the dead and wounded lifting of the ban on the SA differ greatly. Hoegner, *Die verratene Republik*, pp. 11–12. *Die vierzehn Jahre der ersten deutschen*, p. 213 f., who refers to the account giving figures on the victims have not been of Honor of Those Killed for the Movement

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30. Cf. on this and what followed: Frank, p. 90. Ernst Hanfstaengl (p. 242)
relates a story that he alleges was bandied about in the Hitler family,
to the effect that Geli had been made pregnant by a Jewish drawing
master from Linz. Hanfstaengl also reports that Geli's body was found
with a broken nose, but he gives no supporting evidence. In response
to an inquiry Hanfstaengl informed the author that this had been gen-
erally known at the time, but so far as I know the fact appears nowhere
in the scholarly literature.

31. *The Dual State* is the title of a study by Ernst Fraenkel (London and
New York, 1941).

32. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 474 ff.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 478 f.

34. Krebs, *Tendenzen*, p. 154; also Preiss, pp. 45 f.

35. *Mein Kampf*, p. 473.

36. H. R. Knickerbocker, *The German Crisis*, p. 227.

37. Heinrich Brüning, *Memoiren 1918-1934*, p. 195.

38. Harry Graf Kessler, *In the Twenties*, p. 426; also Werner Jochmann,
Nationalsozialismus und Revolution, p. 405; and Helmut Heiber, *Joseph
Goebbels*, p. 65.

39. Preiss, p. 179 (speech of March 7, 1932).

40. Harold Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters 1930-1939*, English ed., entry for
January 24, 1932.

41. Goebbels, *Kaiserhof*, p. 87. The make-up of the Nazi Reichstag faction
after the July elections is quite interesting. There were 230 Nazi depu-
ties altogether. Of these, fifty-five were blue-collar and white-collar
workers, fifty peasants, forty-three independent representatives of com-
merce, the crafts and industry, twenty-nine functionaries, twenty civil
servants, twelve teachers, and nine former army officers. Cf. *Reichstags-
Handbuch*, 6. Wahlperiode, Berlin, 1932, p. 270.

42. For details cf. Bracher, *Auflösung*, pp. 522 ff.; also W. Conze, "Zum
Sturz Brünings," in *VJHfZ* 1952:3, pp. 261 ff.; also H. Brüning, *Mem-
oires*, pp. 273 and 597 ff. The importance of the information on the
favorable turn in the disarmament negotiations has been challenged by
historians; there are indications that Brüning overestimated it. For a
characterization of the pressures on Hindenburg at Gut Neudeck cf.
Theodor Eschenburg, "The Role of the Personality in the Crisis of
the German Republic" in Holborn, ed., *Republic to Reich*, pp. 43 f.

43. The statistics on the dead and wounded in the bloody weeks after the
lifting of the ban on the SA differ greatly. Cf., for example, Wilhelm
Hoegner, *Die verratene Republik*, pp. 312 f.; also Friedrich Stampfer,
Die vierzehn Jahre der ersten deutschen Republik, p. 629, and Bullock,
pp. 213 f., who refers to the account given by Albert Grzesinski. Reliable
figures on the victims have not been drawn up to this day. The "Roll
of Honor of Those Killed for the Movement," which was later published

* Her life was built upon her beauty

ay that Mussolini let himself be photographed
ly great statesman would not do that."

28 f.

Severus Ziegler, *Hitler aus dem Erleben*
64, 67, 70, etc. All the remarks and behavior
e also been heard or observed by Albert Speer,
author.

Albert Speer, who usually sat on the other side
could not miss observing this little scene.

The reference to the symbolic meaning of the
based on information from Speer; cf. also *Inside*

h of June 27, 1937, in Würzburg).

he *Voice of Destruction*, p. 255. Chapter XVIII
a which this passage is taken was omitted in
he *Gespräche*; it has now been printed in The-
n Rauschnings "*Gespräche mit Hitler*" als
The passage is here retranslated from the orig-

p. 162. Elsewhere (p. 104) Rauschning com-
e seemed like a "physical excess."

further references to the relationship between
ee also p. 130.

Zoller, p. 21. The characterizations of the en-
er's personal physician, Professor Karl Brandt;
r.

mark cited above see Luedecke, p. 459. The
Hitler preferred I owe to Regierungsrat Bark-
oblentz, who was charged with providing the
e thirties. The catalogue containing some 2,000
e shown publicly in Germany can be seen at

n to the author; Hitler, Speer says, considered
"hell" to himself.

n to the author; Speer adds that Hitler's rejec-
cas Cranach, for example, was due to the fact
gures did not correspond to his own plumper
were "unaesthetic," Hitler said to Speer.

een pages 132 and 133.

ne Hildegard Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Na-*
ally the chapter headed "Der Führerauftrag

10.
he following remark *ibid.*, p. 171.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 446.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 159, 173; see also Speer, pp. 94 ff.

63. *Libres propos*, p. 253. In *Mein Kampf* he commented: Blood purity
"is a thing that the Jew preserves better than any other people on earth.
And so he advances on his fatal road until another force comes forth
to oppose him, and in a mighty struggle hurls the heaven-stormer back
to Lucifer." *Mein Kampf*, p. 662.

64. Klaus Dörner, "Nationalsozialismus und Lebensvernichtung," in:
VJHZ 1967:2, p. 131; also Domarus, p. 717, where Hitler declares
in the course of a party rally proclamation: "But Germany has experi-
enced her greatest revolution as a consequence of the first policy of racial
hygiene ever systematically undertaken in this country. The results of
this German racial policy will be more decisive for the future of our
nation than the effects of all other laws. For they create the new man."

65. *Mein Kampf*, p. 688. The speech to the officers is printed in Jacobsen
and Jochmann, under the date of January 25, 1939.

66. Speer, p. 138.

67. Domarus, p. 974.

68. Cf. Jacobsen, *Aussenpolitik*, p. 435. For Hitler's attacks on the intel-
lectuals cf. the speeches of April 29, 1937, and May 20, 1937, printed
in Kotze and Krausnick, pp. 149 f. and 241 f.

69. Nolte, *Faschismus*, p. 325.

70. Situation report by the district magistrate of Bad Kreuznach, quoted in
Heyen, pp. 290 f., with further such references.

71. Heiden, *Hitler II*, pp. 215, 251.

72. Italian Ambassador Attolico in conversation with Carl Jacob Burck-
hardt. See C. J. Burckhardt, p. 307. Cf. also Hitler's remark in
Tischgespräche, p. 341, that the Foreign Office was "a hodgepodge of
nobodies." For the remark on the generals cf. Fabian von Schlabren-
dorff, *Offiziere gegen Hitler*, p. 60; for the remark on the diplomats,
H. Rauschning, *Gespräche*, pp. 249 ff.

73. IMT XXXI, 2949-PS, pp. 368 ff.

74. Seyss-Inquart's memorandum of September 9, 1945, IMT XXXII, 3254-
PS, p. 70.

75. *Neue Basler Zeitung*, March 16, 1938, quoted in M. Domarus, p. 822.

76. Cf. Bracher, *Diktatur*, p. 338.

77. Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von gestern*, pp. 446 f.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 448.

79. C. J. Burckhardt, p. 157; for Chamberlain's remark see Bernd-Jürgen
Wandt, *München 1938*, p. 26.

80. *Ciano's Hidden Diary 1937-1938*, p. 114. See also Kirkpatrick, *Mus-*
solini.

81. Henderson to Ribbentrop on May 21, 1938, ADAP II, No. 184. Simi-
larly, on April 22, Undersecretary Butler told a representative of the
German Embassy in London that England was aware that Germany
would reach her next goal (he mentioned the Czechoslovak question);
ibid., I, No. 750.

82. IMT XXV, 388-PS, pp. 422, 434.

83. Cf. Gilbert and Gott, p. 99, also p. 89. Chamberlain made his remark in his radio address of September 27, 1938; London *Times* of September 28, 1938. At this time the Czech ambassador in Rome, F. K. Chvalkovsky, commented to Mussolini that "Bohemia is completely unknown in England. Once, when he was a student in London, he was given a violin to play at a party, simply because it was known that he was a Czech. There was a confusion of thought between Bohemians and gypsies." *Ciano's Hidden Diary 1937-1938*, p. 174.
84. Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget*, p. 229. The account of the meeting is based upon Paul Schmidt, *Statist*, pp. 395 ff., on the minutes of the meeting, and on a letter of Chamberlain's, both reprinted in Freund, *Weltgeschichte I*, pp. 133 ff.
85. Notes by Ivone Kirkpatrick, quoted in Bullock, p. 461.
86. Cf. Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, p. 398. Hitler's speech is printed in *My New Order*, pp. 517 ff.
87. Kirkpatrick's notes, quoted by Bullock, p. 461; see also Paul Schmidt, *Statist*, p. 409.
88. Shirer, *Rise and Fall*, p. 399. The same behavior has been recorded by many other observers; cf., for example, P. Schmidt, *Statist*, p. 410; Fritz Wiedemann, pp. 176 f.; Kordt, *Nicht aus den Akten*, pp. 259 f., 265 f. C. J. Burckhardt wrote to a friend at the end of August that it was impossible to imagine "the horror, the despair of the masses when the talk of war began again. . . . Never have I so keenly felt that the peoples are not responsible for the crimes of their leaders." *Meine Danziger Mission*, p. 155.
89. Cf. Peter Hoffmann, *Widerstand, Staatsstreich, Attentat*, p. 79. In Paris, in the course of his visits there that spring, Goerdeler met chiefly with Pierre Bertaux and Alexis Léger (who as a poet uses the pseudonym of St.-John Perse), then the highest-ranking official at the Quai d'Orsay.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 83. Beck would have considered a public statement of readiness to aid Czechoslovakia and a demonstration of military firmness "certain proof."
91. On Halder's relationship to Hitler cf. Helmut Krausnick, "Vorgeschichte und Beginn des militärischen Widerstandes gegen Hitler," in: *Die Vollmacht des Gewissens*, p. 338, and H. B. Gisevius, *To the Bitter End*, pp. 288 f. Gisevius's account carries special weight since he was among the sharpest critics of Halder. Also Gerhard Ritter, *Carl Goerdeler*, p. 184.
92. It appears that Canaris and Oster were informed of this plan and approved it—in large part on the grounds that only in this way could the problem of the oath of loyalty to Hitler personally be abruptly eliminated—that problem which had so fateful an effect right up to the twentieth of July.
93. Hans Rothfels, *Opposition gegen Hitler*, p. 68; also Helmut K. G. Rönnefarth, *Die Sudetenkrise I*, p. 506.
94. Ritter, *Goerdeler*, pp. 198 f. Shortly after the Munich conference Neville Henderson wrote to the same effect: "As things stand, by preserving peace we have saved Hitler and his regime." Klaus-Jürgen Müller, *Das*

- Heer und Hitler*, p. 378. Here once again, up on his success by promptly dismissing such as General Adam, who had emerged as important key positions from the Opp.
95. *Ciano's Hidden Diary 1937-1938*, p. 166.
 96. *Ibid.*, pp. 166-68. All the concomitant circumstances of the only question at issue was how to set existing agreement. Of course, in the eyes of the conference heads, the conference also aimed at making further expansion more difficult for all guarantees were merely set forth in a signed by all the participants.
 97. *Ibid.*, p. 167. For the course of the Munich conference, see Schmidt, *Statist*, pp. 415 f.; and Fra.
 98. *Ciano's Hidden Diary 1937-1938*, p. 168.
 99. Nolte, *Faschismus*, p. 281.
 100. *Le Testament politique de Hitler*, pp. 1 notes (the "Bormann Vermerke") published been made available. This, in part, may be and thought have a pithiness hardly can also consider that the manuscript under the passages cited here represent a concealment full of outbursts and digressions. Albeit the author, has argued that Goebbels modestly, and perhaps written some of it himself. Speer points out, is much more in keeping with Hitler's style than with Hitler's. For Shirer, p. 4. A similar remark of Hitler's is in the diaries of Helmuth Groscurth: "I was forced to draw back in September and would have to wage war during his lifetime again would a German enjoy such unlimited. War aims: a) Dominion in Europe for centuries to come. The war would have the others were rearming." Helmuth Abwehroffiziers 1938-1940, p. 166.
 101. Cf. the speech of August 22, 1939, Doc.
 102. IMT XX, p. 397. Keitel declared in his defensive capacity would not even have considered Czechoslovakia's border fortifications; IMT XX, p. 397.
 103. Cf. Gilbert and Gott, pp. 144 ff.
 104. See, for example, the report of the British Foreign Office, *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, quotation from *Das Schwarze Korps*, Details on reactions to the pogrom in Marlis Steinert, *Hitlers Krieg*, p. 75.
 105. The speech, a key document to the understanding of the Munich conference, is printed in: *VJHfZ* 1958:2, pp. 181