

1938

HITLER'S YOUTH

Done

to be left in
that it
or
unfamiliar
*

there could have been only one possible reaction: hatred of his blood relations, particularly of his father, and an intensification of his already pathological hatred and persecution of the Jews, with the personal element reinforcing the political. Hermann Rauschning, whose *Hitler Speaks* was published some years later, gave it as his opinion that Hitler's hatred of the Jews had a personal foundation.

Finally, there is a curious fact which may be interpreted as bearing out Frank's story. Not two months after Hitler invaded Austria, in May 1938, an order was issued to the Land Registries concerned to carry out a survey of Döllersheim (Alois Hitler's birthplace) and neighbourhood with a view to their suitability as a battle training area for the Wehrmacht. In the following year the inhabitants of Döllersheim were forcibly evacuated and the village together with the surrounding countryside was blasted and withered by German artillery and infantry weapons. The birthplace of Hitler's father and the site of his grandmother's grave were alike rendered unrecognizable, and today this whole tract of what was once fertile and flourishing country is an arid desert sown with unexploded shells. But an area so closely associated with Hitler's family could not have been used for battle training without his knowledge and permission. Then why did he give it? Or did Hitler himself initiate the order for the destruction of Döllersheim out of insane hatred of his father and the desire to erase the 'shame' of his Jewish blood?

Alois Schicklgruber's stepfather (Johann Georg Hiedler)

We have seen that Alois Hitler was the natural son of Marianne Schicklgruber and that his father was possibly a Jew. He was born in 1837. After a while Marianne's father relented, and his daughter and infant grandson went to live with him in his home.

Five years later, in 1842, Marianne married. The entry in the marriage register at Döllersheim reads:

1842. Married by Johann Oppolzer, incumbent; the bridegroom, Georg Hiedler, Journeyman-miller lodging in Dürnthal, parish of Fels, born Spital in parish

* H also sees this as an attempt to discredit Hitler's anti-Semitism.

D

Marriage

left marriage

1842

1847

HITLER'S GENEALOGY

of Spital, at present residing at Strones No. 22 in this parish, legitimate son of Martin Hiedler, farmer in Spital, Catholic, aged 50, bachelor.

The bride: Anna Schicklgruber, residing in her parents' home, legitimate daughter of Johann Schicklgruber still living, retired, of Strones No. 22 in the manor of Waldreich in this parish, and of Theresia Pfeisinger of Dietrichs, Catholic, aged 47, spinster. Witnesses: Franz Prinz, school master in Döllersheim, and Josef Zauner, householder, in Döllersheim.

Johann Georg Hiedler, to give him his full name, thus became Alois Schicklgruber's stepfather. He was not a good match for many reasons. Firstly, he had falsely claimed to be a bachelor. In fact he was a widower, having been previously married for three years to a woman named Anna Maria Bauer. Though he had learnt the trade of miller, he was neither working nor had he a permanent place of abode at the time of his marriage. That he was 'at present residing' with the bride's father shows that he had lost no time in drawing solid benefits from his alliance with the Schicklgrubers.

From his marriage until his death, fifteen years later, there is no evidence in any way that Alois' stepfather worked for the living. Throughout the five years of her married life Marianne became steadily more impoverished until finally it is said that she and her husband no longer even possessed a bed and had to sleep in a feeding trough for cattle.

Alois Schicklgruber's foster-father

But meanwhile, Johann Georg's farmer brother, Johann Nepomuk Hiedler, who was fifteen years younger than he, had come from his home in Spital to visit the newly married couple in Döllersheim. His chief concern seems to have been for the five-year-old Alois, for rather than leave him with his feckless brother, Johann Nepomuk took the child with him when he returned to Spital and from then on acted as his foster-father. For Alois this was an unmitigated blessing. He grew up at the farmhouse with Johann Nepomuk's daughters, who were about the same age as himself, and no doubt came to think of Nepomuk as his real father. Five years later the death of his mother perhaps hardly touched him.

1847

+ in 6'

Alois that, under his will, the latter was due to receive a legacy on the condition that he changed his name to Hiedler. The old man had three daughters, but no sons, and it is said that he was afraid the name Hiedler might otherwise die out. Firstly, this explanation is the wrong one and secondly, it is in any case specious, for there was, in fact, no danger whatever of the family becoming extinct. There were at least a dozen Hiedlers alive and young enough to beget children at that time, and even if there had not been, Alois Schicklgruber was then married to a woman fourteen years older than himself and, as they were childless, there was obviously small prospect of her bearing her first child at the age of fifty-four. The only point which is correct in this story is that Alois Schicklgruber's change of name was instigated by his foster-father.

The true facts

Some time in the late autumn of 1876 Johann Nepomuk Hiedler, accompanied by his son-in-law and two other relatives, all of them residents of Spital, called on the incumbent of Döllersheim, Zahnschirm by name, and informed him that Alois Schicklgruber had been begotten by Nepomuk's brother, Johann Georg Hiedler, prior to his marriage with Marianne Schicklgruber. The three men accompanying Nepomuk said they could testify to the fact and the priest was asked, therefore, to amend the baptismal register, making the birth legitimate.

The aged priest—he was incumbent of Döllersheim from 1867 to 1886—allowed himself to be persuaded and altered the register as follows: in 'Alois Schicklgruber', he crossed out the surname 'Schicklgruber', but did not substitute any other name. He crossed out the word 'illegitimate' and substituted the word 'legitimate'. In the blank space opposite the word 'Father' he wrote: 'Georg Hitler, Cath. rel., lodger in Spital', and beneath it the note: 'According to Marriage Register of this parish the parents of the child were joined in matrimony on 10th May 1842.' In the blank space opposite the word 'Remarks', Father Zahnschirm wrote: 'It is confirmed by the undersigned that Georg Hitler, whose name is here entered as Father, being well known

*Johann Nepomuk intended to
send in Georg to cover his payment
of money to Marianne*

Legitimate

INSERT
1876

to the undersigned, did accept paternity of the child, Alois, according to the statement of the child's mother, Anna Schicklgruber, and did desire his name to be entered in the register of baptisms of this parish. Below this note the three 'witnesses' made their marks (consisting in each case of three crosses) against which the priest wrote their names: Josef Komeder, Johann Breiteneder, Engelbert Paukh. There is no date to show when these amendments were made in the register, nor did the priest append his signature.

The evidence for this procedure is clear for all to see—namely the baptismal register itself, with, first, the entry under 'Remarks' made in a different hand than the original entries, for example that under 'Mother'; then in the same handwriting as under 'Remarks' the name of the father; and then the rest of the alterations as listed above.

Before considering Johann Nepomuk's motive in procuring these alterations, and the question of their legality, it must be emphasized that there can be no truth in them whatsoever. First of all, the ages of the three 'witnesses' at the time they testified—all of them in their forties—makes it unlikely that they would be aware of Johann Georg's 'desire' to have his name officially entered as Alois' father, for Johann Georg had at this time been dead twenty years. And even assuming he had expressed the wish, and they had been aware of it, how was it that the parish priest who had been incumbent during Georg's lifetime had not made the necessary changes in the register? The witnesses—all, incidentally, relatives of Johann Nepomuk—made their statements, Johann Georg 'being known to them', whereas they should have said, 'having been known'. They may, therefore, have alleged that he was still alive. However that may be, even supposing Georg had 'accepted' paternity and had 'desired' his name to be entered in the register, that still did not mean that he *was* the father. But why should he accept the responsibility if it was not his? For a very good reason, perhaps: in order that Alois' real father, who as we have seen probably paid maintenance, should continue to pay the money, and pay it to him.

*Seems J.G. married Marianne because
of the money from Georg
Alois gets his legitimacy from his
mother, it is better known from case, carnality*

is even coming from the mother

The Motive

Johann Nepomuk must have known that Alois was not the son of his brother Georg and probably also knew the identity of the real father. For close on thirty-five years he had acted as Alois' parent, bringing him up with his own children and providing for his needs out of his own pocket. What more natural than that, before he died, Nepomuk should have wished to see Alois bear his own name, particularly as he had every reason to be proud of him? And who had set Alois the example in hard work, honesty and ambition from which he was now profiting? Certainly not the Schicklgrubers. This in itself would have been an adequate motive for Nepomuk's action, but there may have been others: the desire, for example, to 'legitimize' Alois for the sake of his social standing and career, a strong motive if his father had been a Jew.

The legality of the change

But whatever Nepomuk's motives, there was only one effective means of getting Alois' surname changed from Schicklgruber to Hitler, and that was by alleging that his father had been Johann Georg Hiedler, and persuading the parish priest to amend the baptismal register accordingly. But though Nepomuk succeeded in so doing and in due course Alois received a new certificate of baptism and sent it to his administrative superiors, who accepted the change of name, this procedure was, in fact, legally null and void. Firstly, the legal principle had long been in force that a man could not be officially recognized as father after his death, except by legal proceedings, and secondly, in proceedings for legitimization of a child through the subsequent marriage of the parents, the word of the husband alone was not enough to secure his acceptance as father, but had to be corroborated by the wife. In this case, neither of these requirements was fulfilled.

Why the aged priest at Döllersheim nevertheless amended the parish register forty years after the original entries had been made must, for lack of any obvious reason, remain an open question.

the poor parish priest - he died as he was handing all his life - he certified the paper in such a way that it was not possible to see

Legitimizing

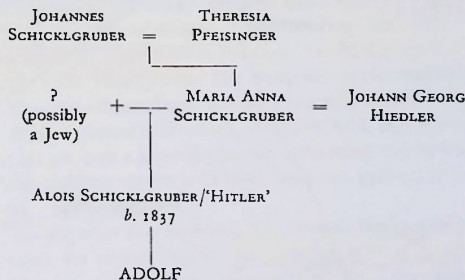
The fact that he neither dated nor signed the alterations shows that he realized he had acted improperly.

If the Döllersheim register were the sole evidence, the date when the fraud was perpetrated would, of course, be unknown to us. But fortunately there still exists a copy of an entry in the register of population for Braunau, which at that time was Alois' 'place of domicile' owing to the fact that he was stationed there. The copy was made in 1938 by a school-mistress named Pernstein and reads:

Entry No. 196. Schicklgruber Alois changed name to Hitler, see note from Board of Administration, Mistelbach, dated 6.1.1877. Z.112.

(This has led some biographers to believe that the change of name was initiated by the Board of Administration in Mistelbach, but that is incorrect. The Board merely passed on the information they had received from the incumbent of Döllersheim.)

So far, then, in this chapter on Adolf Hitler's genealogy, we have established the following:

*The name Hitler*

The above tree shows clearly that, although Adolf's father's name was changed from Schicklgruber to Hitler, he had, in fact, no Hitler blood in him. Adolf's mother, however, was descended

through the certificate in 1938 of the schoolmistress

1873-78

1876

Alois 436

BONE

38

HITLER'S YOUTH

that the wedding took place on 31st October 1873, but as it was not held in Braunau the official record cannot be traced and the exact date is therefore unknown.

Apart from the difference in age between Alois and his fifty-year-old bride, subsequent events indicate that it was never a love-match. Some biographers have foolishly suggested that Alois hoped to further his career by the marriage, on the grounds that Anna had been adopted as a child by a senior Customs officer by the name of Hören. But even if that were true—and there is no evidence to prove it—Alois plainly never had need of such stratagems in order to gain promotion. It seems more likely that his motive was a financial one, for an entry in the marriage register at Braunau shows that in 1874, the first year of their marriage, the Schicklgrubers employed a maid-servant in their home, a girl by the name of Antonia Mayr. This seems to indicate that Alois' wife had money of her own, for he could never have afforded the luxury of a maid-servant on his salary alone.

Three years later, in 1876, Alois went to visit his foster-father, Johann Nepomuk, at Spital in connection with his change of name from Schicklgruber to Hitler. The old man, now aged seventy, was living in retirement with his second daughter, Walburga, to whom he had already made over part of his estate. Next door to Nepomuk, his eldest daughter, Johanna, lived with her husband, Johann Pözl, and their three children: Klara, Johanna and Theresia, aged sixteen, thirteen and eight respectively. Perhaps it was some time since Alois had seen the children; at any rate, he must have been struck by his slim, dark-haired 'cousin' Klara, for soon afterwards we find her installed as domestic help in the Hitler (until latterly Schicklgruber) home in Braunau, in which town she became generally known as 'das Hicker-Klarl'.

In 1878 Alois acquired a lifelong friend in Carl Wessely, a man of partly Czech origin who at that time was serving at the Austrian Customs post at Simbach, on the Bavarian side of the frontier opposite Braunau. Wessely had entered the Customs Service from the army, where he had ended his engagement with

the dubious life of the mean town. They all did it they all judged others.

ALOIS SCHICKLGRUBER HITLER AND HIS FAMILY 39

1880-83

the rank of Band-Sergeant in the 14th Infantry Regiment. Conscientious and efficient at his job, and not averse to sitting over a half-litre in the evenings, Wessely had much in common with Alois and they became close friends.

Meanwhile, Alois, his wife, Anna, and Klara Pözl were living at an inn in Braunau, the Gasthaus Streif. Working there, either as waitress or in the kitchen, was a nineteen-year-old farmer's daughter, Franziska Matzelsberger, commonly called Fanni. Becoming aware of her husband's misconduct with this girl, Frau Hitler left him and instituted proceedings for divorce, obtaining her decree on 7th November 1880.

Alois then took Fanni to live with him, but first, at her insistence, Klara Pözl, now aged twenty, had to leave the house. It is said that she went to Vienna. At that time Braunau comprised only 332 houses and 3000 inhabitants and these events quickly became the scandal of the town, giving Alois a bad name which he never lived down as long as he was there.

On 13th January 1882 Fanni gave birth to an illegitimate son, who was named Alois. In the following year, on 6th April, Frau Anna Hitler died. The death certificate reveals that her former husband was not present at the funeral, and also that the cause of death was unknown. Six weeks later, on 22nd May 1883, Alois married Franziska Matzelsberger. The wedding was held in Ranshofen, about four miles from Braunau. The bridegroom was forty-six, the bride twenty-two. The witnesses at the ceremony were two Customs officers from Simbach, one of whom was Carl Wessely. Being a farmer's daughter, the bride had, of course, a handsome dowry, and a later document concerning the heritage of the Hitler children shows it to have been 100 gulden, a little under £100.

Two months after the wedding, Fanni gave birth to a girl who received the name Angela—an unusual one in Austria. Though Alois was still stationed in Braunau, the child, for reasons unknown, was born in Vienna. Meanwhile, the marriage was not proving a happy one. Alois seems to have abandoned none of his former promiscuous habits and he even tried to get Klara Pözl to rejoin the marriage but his wife would not permit it.

1 guilder = 1 Austrian pound
or is it 10 gulden? It is a
10 to 1 ratio.

b' up to Klara & Fanni
had been friends
Klara confessed her feelings
for Alois

SUICIDE - she was a very ill woman but not a sane one

she has
died
and was
buried
here.

b

*

4 years
? with
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→ her
own
illegit
marriage.

she's
staying
of Klara

d

1883

40

HITLER'S YOUTH

D.T.

to rejoin the ménage, but his wife, understandably enough, refused to allow it. Then, in the autumn of that same year 1883, Fanni's health began to deteriorate. During the winter she grew steadily worse and in the spring of 1884 she went to stay in the small village of Lach, in the hope that the forest air of the adjoining Lachwald might give her some relief. But she was suffering from tuberculosis and on 10th August 1884, while still in Lach, and only seven months after her twenty-third birthday, she died. It was said in Braunau that Alois had already ordered his wife's coffin, and though the story is probably untrue, the mere fact that it could gain credence shows that his reputation could hardly have been worse. No doubt for that reason his wife was not buried in the cemetery in Braunau but in Ranshofen, where she had been married little over a year previously.

His third marriage

Meanwhile, no sooner was his wife, Franziska, safely in Lach than Alois persuaded Klara Pölzl to return to him. His feelings for her seem to have bordered on affection, and now that he was a widower with two small children (Alois aged two and Angela only twelve months old), he would no doubt have married her immediately, regardless of public opinion in Braunau, had he been free to do so. But according to the birth certificate issued to him in 1876, his father and Klara Pölzl's grandfather had been brothers and he and his intended bride came therefore within the degree of consanguinity prohibited by the Catholic Church. But even assuming Alois knew the true state of affairs, namely that his birth certificate was both legally invalid and factually untrue, he still could not have disclaimed it and expressed the wish to return to the name of Schicklgruber, with paternity unknown. The grotesque situation therefore now arose that, thanks to his foster-father's all too successful perjury, Alois had to apply for a special dispensation from Rome in order to marry a girl to whom, in fact, he was not even distantly related.

Accordingly, Alois made his request for dispensation to the incumbent of Braunau, Father Köstler. Alois and Klara being

CHURCH DISPENSATION

ALOIS SCHICKLGRUBER/HITLER AND HIS FAMILY 41

officially second cousins and related in the third degree, the dispensation could not be granted by the Bishop of Linz, but only by the Pope. Father Köstler would appear to have weighed anxiously the advantage of providing a mother for Alois' two small children against the undoubted danger to any further children that might issue from the intermarriage, for it was not until November 1884 that he passed on the request to his bishop and then only on receiving the news that Klara Pölzl was pregnant.

Having been translated into Latin by the diocesan scholars in Linz, the request was dispatched to Rome. Three weeks later the Dispensation arrived, without charge to Alois Hitler, who had signed a *Testimonium Paupertatis*, pleading poverty.¹

On 7th January 1885, the first day on which marriages could be solemnized after Christmas, Alois Hitler married Klara Pölzl, he being forty-eight and she twenty-five. We know that her sister Johanna's marriage-portion was 800 gulden and her own would not have been less.

In later years Frau Klara was wont to say with melancholy resignation, 'We were married in the Parish Church at Braunau at six in the morning and by seven my husband was already on duty again.' (According to another Customs officer whom I consulted, this was not unusual. He himself had married on a Sunday, otherwise his fate would have been the same.) Alois' foster-father, Johann Nepomuk Hiedler, lived to attend his grand-daughter's wedding, dying three years later in Spital at the age of eighty-one.

→ He had a magnificent the ceremony before

The descendants of Alois Schicklgruber [Hitler]
Before considering the family environment in which Adolf Hitler grew up, it will be convenient if we anticipate chronologically and present the details of Alois Hitler's children by his second and third marriages, together with their descendants:

¹ In 1938 the Dispensation was removed from the Parish archives in Braunau by the Gestapo, but was later returned undamaged to the Bishop of Linz in whose files it lies today under the number 6911/V1/2.

→ Initially he found her exceptionally attractive.

* Reason: widow. Never pay a debt because of the law unless it is

1884

* You pay when you are not a widow. You are not a widow.

* is accomplished by fraudulent demands.

1883
beginning

the court requested
Dressmaking shop

a full set
of his, no
more he's now
and what at 14.

D.T. In truth, he did not know and so happened to find his situation without the full burden of guilt. He can accompany true & antinatural

1883

40

repeated

HITLER'S YOUTH

RPT

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P.T. In truth, he did not know and so he applied to him for instructions without the full burden of guilt that can accompany true perjury.

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1884
* You pay what you are asked for it. You are not asked for it.

J: 'You don't look as if beer drinking had ever been your favourite pastime!'

13
Lugert: 'No, it hasn't! But there was nothing else to do in a God-forsaken spot like that. Besides, I used to get my meals at the inn and Alois wouldn't hear of me staying away. Once, the night before my medical examination for military training, I was not too keen to go drinking and I locked myself in my room. So Alois fetched a ladder and harangued me through the window until I gave in! He was always cheerful, and good company; interested in anything to do with agriculture—bee-keeping was his speciality. He was supposed to have contributed to some technical journal, but I've never read his articles myself. He got on well with everyone, the priest included; he used to enjoy talking to him. Alois was always saying, 'wanted a house of his own with a little livestock-raising in a small way—by that, of course, he meant bees.'

J: 'Wasn't he very fond of laying down the law?' *farm*

Lugert: 'Well, the farmers looked up to him because of his position, and I was too much his junior to take umbrage at that.'

J: 'Did you talk politics much?' *Tavern*

Lugert: 'No. You know yourself, people didn't in those days, not in the country, anyway. I read somewhere later that Alois Hitler had been a supporter of Schönerer, in other words, an ultra-Nationalist, but he couldn't have been—his greatest friend was a Czech!'

J: 'No. I suppose he was a free-thinking Liberal, like most self-made men.'

Lugert: 'Yes, something of the kind, though we never discussed religion. . . . Alois Hitler was a restless individual, always taking something up and then dropping it again.'

J: 'Did he drink a lot?' *Went to the tavern after the performance the evening after.*

Lugert: 'A couple of pints—seldom more than three; three-and-a-half at the outside. And beer was strong in those days. But he had a good head. I never saw him tight, and he always started back home in good time for supper.'

✓ J: 'What about smoking?' *24a*

Lugert: 'Like a chimney! The thicker the atmosphere, the better, as far as he was concerned. But a pipe-smoker only, hardly ever a cigar.'

J: 'Would his total allowance of 200 gulden have covered his personal expenses, would you say—beer, tobacco and the rest?' *24a*

Lugert: 'I should think so.'

J: 'So that the whole of his salary would go to maintain his family?'

Lugert: 'Yes. Most men in the Customs Service used to manage it that way—those that set any store by proper domestic economy, that is.'

J: 'And was Alois Hitler one of them?'

Lugert: 'Definitely, though I remember thinking that when I got married, I should want more family life than he had. Alois hardly saw his family at all.'

J: 'Did you ever visit them in their lodgings?'

Lugert: 'Once or twice. Considering there were children, they were kept pretty tidy.'

J: 'What was his wife like?'

Lugert: 'Frau Klenz. She was about the same height as her husband, five foot six or seven, dark brown, almost black hair, blue eyes. . . . She was very quiet and subdued. She seemed a disappointed woman.'

Lugert went on to say that she was simply but neatly dressed, and her children had good, clean clothes. In a letter to me some time after our conversation, Lugert wrote: 'I must agree with you that Alois Hitler was not an exemplary "pater familias" and that it was his wife who had to bear the main burden. I knew that he had been married three times, but he never spoke about his wives. I remember him saying that his name had formerly been Schicklgruber. . . .'

After serving in Haibach, it so happened that Lugert was posted to Linz at the same time as Alois Hitler, in the spring of

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Lugert: 'I should think so.'

J: 'So that the whole of his salary would go to maintain his family?'

Lugert: 'Yes. Most men in the Customs Service used to manage it that way—those that set any store by proper domestic economy, that is.'

J: 'And was Alois Hitler one of them?'

Lugert: 'Definitely, though I remember thinking that when I got married, I should want more family life than he had. Alois hardly saw his family at all.'

J: 'Did you ever visit them in their lodgings?'

Lugert: 'Once or twice. Considering there were children, they were kept pretty tidy.'

J: 'What was his wife like?'

Lugert: 'Frau Klara? She was about the same height as her husband, five foot six or seven, dark-brown, almost black hair, blue eyes. . . . She was very quiet and subdued. She seemed a disappointed woman.'

Lugert went on to say that she was simply but neatly dressed, and her children had good, clean clothes. In a letter to me some time after our conversation, Lugert wrote: 'I must agree with you that Alois Hitler was not an exemplary "pater familias" and that it was his wife who had to bear the main burden. I knew that he had been married three times, but he never spoke about his wives. I remember him saying that his name had formerly been Schicklgruber. . . .'

After serving in Haibach, it so happened that Lugert was posted to Linz at the same time as Alois Hitler, in the spring of

13

Tavern

the father's house
1892

What he told the
about the father's
the 2nd son

24a

24a

25ad 1892-1895 (1893) 1891-92

46

HITLER'S YOUTH

1894. Lugert served under him for a while, and told me in later years that Alois had not allowed his staff to smoke while on duty: hence some of the younger men had escaped from the office occasionally to smoke a quick cigarette outside—but even that had met with Alois' disapproval.

Finally, what was Alois Hitler's salary during the period under review? With his promotion to Higher Collector in 1892—when his son, Adolf, was three years old—his salary was increased to 1100 gulden. The local allowance for Passau was 200 gulden. While in Passau, therefore, his gross annual pay amounted to 1300 gulden, something over £100, and in Linz the allowance was rather larger—250 gulden. From 1907 onwards, when the salary-scale of State-appointed schoolteachers was raised, the headmaster of a *Bürgerschule*, or Elementary Continuation School, received precisely the same annual remuneration as Alois Hitler: before 1907, considerably less. Those biographers who persist in maintaining that Adolf was brought up 'in a pauper environment' stand convicted of crass ignorance.

Alois Hitler's life in retirement

It has been suggested that Alois Hitler retired from the Customs Service before he had served the statutory period of forty years. This erroneous belief is no doubt due to his son's confused statements in *Mein Kampf*. In the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter it will be remembered that Adolf wrote of his father resolving to become a civil servant and 'achieving the goal . . . after twenty-three years'. Adolf went on to say that the vow which his father had made as a boy now seemed capable of realization, namely 'not to return to the beloved village of his birth until he had made good'.

'Now the goal was achieved,' continued Adolf. 'But there was nobody left in the village who could recall that small boy

¹ It should be mentioned that through his posting to Linz, Alois Hitler automatically acquired the right of domicile there for himself and his family. This fact was later to have importance for Adolf.

ALLOIS SCHICKLGRUBER/HITLER AND HIS FAMILY 47

of long ago and even to him the village seemed strange. Now that he had finally retired at the age of fifty-six, he could not endure to spend a single day of his leisure in idleness. And so he bought and managed a small property near the small market-town of Lambach in Upper Austria, so completing the circle of a long and industrious life by returning to the labours of his forefathers.'

It is easy to see how this account might be construed as meaning that Alois Hitler retired after serving in the Customs for twenty-three years. But Adolf knew nothing precise about his father's career, and in any case was not concerned with accuracy, but solely with presenting his father, and hence himself, in the light most favourable to his own political career.

The true facts are that Alois Hitler retired on 21st June 1895, at the age of fifty-eight, after completing the

This is proved irrefutably by a Pensions Table, still in existence, which was sent to Alois Hitler's widow in reply to her application for pension in 1903. At the time of Alois' retirement Paula was not yet born. Alois junior was away from the family, attending the *Realschule*, i.e. Modern Secondary School, in Linz. Finally, Klara Hitler's younger sister, Johanna Pölzl, was living with the family as a domestic help.

A house and nine acres

On 4th February 1895 Alois Hitler concluded the purchase of the small property which Adolf mentioned in *Mein Kampf*. It consisted of a house built mainly of timber with a thatched roof and something over nine acres of land adjoining the hamlet of Hafeld in the Parish of Fischlam, about eight miles east of Lambach. Hafeld itself consisted at that time of twenty-four scattered houses and 120 inhabitants. The property, officially known as the *Schrottau-Gut*, but more popularly as the *Kauscher-Gut* was splendidly situated on elevated ground with a plentiful supply of fruit and walnut trees and a wonderful view of the nearby mountains of the Salzkammergut. It must have seemed like a

Willy
Pöschel
(Dresden
Angebot)

1938

paradise to the Hitler children, but one cannot help feeling surprised that a gregarious town-dweller like Alois Hitler should have chosen such solitude for his retirement. His longing for a house and some land of his own, noticed by Emanuel Lugert, must have been powerful indeed.

After some trouble I succeeded in obtaining a copy of the relevant extract from the Land Register and this reveals the date of purchase (already given), the place, namely Wels, and the fact that the property was registered in the joint names of Alois and Klara Hitler. The actual Deeds of Sale and Purchase were unfortunately unobtainable, having presumably been confiscated by the Nazis, and a rough idea of the purchase price must therefore be obtained from similar transactions concluded at that time. These suggest that Alois Hitler must have paid not less than 5000 gulden for the estate (about £440), of which four-fifths was probably in cash. How did he raise the money? Presumably from his wife's dowries. Carefully invested, these would have supplied almost the whole of the sum required.

Suitable though it was, no doubt, for apiculture, the nine-acre property could hardly thrive, or pay its way, on bee-keeping alone. In fact, to make a profit from the land, as he intended, Alois would have needed long experience of farming and a considerable capital. But he possessed neither, and so from the start lost money. Within two years, however, his business sense triumphed and, though it meant the end of his long-cherished dream of landed proprietorship, he decided to sell, finding a purchaser in the spring of 1897 and concluding the sale of the freehold on 21st June in that year. The Land Register records that the new owner was a Dr. Conrad Ritter von Zdekauer. Thereafter the estate changed hands no less than eleven times, in twenty years, until ultimately, in 1938, the ownership was vested in Martin Bormann as trustee of the National Socialist Party.

In a letter dated 29th December 1901, addressed to his former neighbour in Hafeld, a wood-pulp supplier by the name of Wührer, Alois Hitler wrote:

→ A mention in passing in 1938.
"You have no idea, my Führer, how much this means to me," said Bormann

'... I have heard that Frau von Zdekauer is proposing to sell the *Rauschergut* again—to yet another party from Vienna. It provides a pleasant change for such people for a year or two and they are the richer by one lesson at any rate, namely that everything has got to be learnt. But she will not find it easy to sell in the winter-time. Should the lady, as I believe, no longer be keeping bees, but still retain the empty hives, among them two three-tier hives which I made in Hafeld from poplar wood, you might buy them back for me, just as a memento of my activities there.'

In early July 1897 the Hitler family moved into lodgings in Lambach, at first to the *Schmiedmühle*, so called, and then, as soon as they could find better accommodation, to a flat in the centre of the town. In those pleasant and, at that time, prosperous surroundings, they lived for eighteen months. But Alois Hitler had not lost the desire for a house of his own, nor did he overlook the fact that real property was the safest form of investment.

The sole surviving documents in Alois Hitler's own hand

The following letter was addressed to the Board of Inland Revenue in Linz and dated 19th September 1895. The handwriting is even and accurate. The grammar, spelling and syntax of the German original are beyond reproach. A glance at the original, or a photostat copy, is enough to disprove the tenacious legend that Alois Hitler drank too much; obviously a man of fifty-eight who could write so neatly cannot have been a drunkard. The text reads:

'The most respectfully undersigned was transferred to permanent retirement by order Z 931/F.Pr. of 25th June 1895.

As the undersigned was not an official accountant, he takes the liberty of requesting approval for the release and return of his caution money which is the property of Johann Murauer, householder of No. 7, Theatergasse, Braunau-on-Inn.

~~1895~~

subordination to his authority. This demand for a combination of self-reliance and obedience was a common source of conflict in the middle class of half a century ago. The conflict was pronounced in Alois' case because of his early retirement and the immaturity of many of his children. He was especially vulnerable to pressures created by conflicts in his value system, and his resulting restlessness and moodiness compounded the difficulties of his seven-year-old son.

Nothing the old man attempted succeeded in making the situation more agreeable for himself or his dependents. The farm, the family, and his private goals all ran into unforeseen snags. Even as he was trying to adjust himself to play the required role, the world outside was changing in ways which further enraged and embittered him. His era and the people who stood for the things he believed in were passing from the scene, banished by powerful new forces. The non-German populations of the western empire were increasing their power and importance in parliament, while the German vote was splintered between the traditional parties and a host of new political organizations. In the increasing bitterness of nationality conflicts, German national consciousness also intensified, but no leader was able to provide a unifying organization or ideology. To strengthen their position and defend German interests, party leaders resorted to a wide range of tactical maneuvers. Two of these must have been

particularly offensive to Alois: the increase in Church influence personified by Lueger's Christian Socialists, and the Badeni language decrees which attempted to mollify the Czechs by permitting use of their language in the administration of Bohemia and Moravia. Alois' opposition to "clericalism" was intense, but not less so than his devotion to the ideal of a centralized imperial administration, exclusively German in language and largely German in personnel. The Badeni language decrees struck at the roots of the institution with which he most closely identified himself. They not only meant decentralization; they also hurt German interests, since most Czech civil servants were bilingual while few Germans spoke Czech.

The Badeni language decrees were ultimately revoked, but not before they had unleashed a storm of German national protest which shook many people out of their political apathy. Certainly, they made it difficult for a man like Alois to remain optimistically un-

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1895

Pre-adolescence
Pre-retirement

Retirement

One of the causes of Alois' retirement

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Simple

~~57a - of his bad luck with his family~~

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