

Lucas

Letter of History

THE
HITLER
OF
HISTORY

John Lukacs



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Hitler revived around 1960, and aphy too. The 1960 publication *Var* by the self-confident mav-P. Taylor (1906–1990), must be was not a biographer of Hitler. s been wrongly stated—a stun- hat Taylor attempted to assert

was that Hitler was not so different (if different at all) from other ambitious German statesmen of the past; that during the 1930s he knew how to take advantage of the weakness of his opponents and of the opportunities they made possible for him; that, in short, Hitler was more of a short-term opportunist and less of a long-range ideologue than it was assumed. On occasion, Taylor presented his evidence on the sudden development of some of Hitler's decisions convincingly; at other times, with considerable legerdemain.* His book had an effect on the diplomatic history of the period, but practically none on the evolving historical portrait of Hitler.

In the early 1960s, there appeared three biographical studies of Hitler, by Heiber, Gisevius, and Schramm—in ascending order of their importance.† Of these, Helmut Heiber's (1924–) portrait was the most conventional, though not devoid of insightful passages. Hans Bernd Gisevius (1904–1974) had been connected to the 1944 conspirators against Hitler; he worked for a while for Allen Dulles and the OSS in Switzerland. Valuable elements in his biography were his analysis of the Hitler-Papen and Hitler-Hindenburg relationships, and his treatment generally of Hitler in the early 1930s; noteworthy, too, was his shrewd recognition of Hitler's duality, suggesting that Hitler often incarnated diverse personalities, even in his photographs.‡ At the same time, his presentation of Hitler's world of ideas was somewhat superficial: While Gisevius (as did many others) tended to rely heavily on *Mein Kampf*, he also wrote that Hitler's ideas were not at all original.

Percy Ernst Schramm (1894–1970) was a truly exceptional—and first-rate—German historian, whose relatively short study of Hitler reflected the personal qualities of its author. The son of an old Hamburg patrician family (his father was once the city's mayor), Schramm

*See especially pp. 18–20, 31, and 44 in my *The Last European War, 1939–1941*, NY, 1976 (hereafter: LEW).

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‡See especially the introduction of GI, p. 6.

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often felt the need to speak.) That is, for example, why his table con-
versations show the "public" rather than the "private" Hitler. In
their private table talk, Churchill, Napoleon, and even Stalin often
appear to be more human and varied than in their public and
recordable utterances. This was not so with Hitler, who, relatively
late—at the age of thirty—suddenly discovered his ability to in-
fluence people through his speaking. The year 1919 was a decisive
milestone, indeed a turning point in his life; but no human being
changes entirely; with all his speaking talent,* Hitler remained a
secretive man in many ways, keeping many of his most important
thoughts to himself.†

One of the problems of the historiography of Hitler is the scarcity
of written documents he left behind—among them, the absence of any
written instructions that connect him to the awful decision to carry
out the mass liquidation of Jews—though the decision was made. (See
chapter 6.) At the same time, there is more and more evidence that
he read much (his retention capacity was phenomenal): books and all
kinds of papers (including speeches by Goebbels); even during the
war, he wrote in the margins and made corrections in these books.‡

*Before his crucial political campaigns in 1932, he took voice lessons from the
tenor Paul Devrient in Munich.

†Bullock interview in the *FAZ Magazin Woche*, 6 December 1991: "Hitler was
always quite open, by and large he said what he wanted to do." Not so. Speer, *SP*,
p. 121: "Once in 1938 we sat in the Deutsches Hof in Munich. Hitler spoke of the
duty to express only such things that are meant for the ears of the public." Fest cites
Hitler in *F*, p. 710: For a Führer, "it is exceptionally important that nothing that
one may discuss should be written down, never!" And: "Too much is being written
down. . . some of that can always become troublesome." Fest's concluding remark:
"He was constantly observing himself. . . never spoke an unconsidered word. . . the
widespread image of the emotionally uncontrolled, wildly gesticulating Hitler [was
seldom correct]; his was a most concentrated existence, self-disciplined to the
extent of rigidity."

‡Schroeder (see above, p. 48), p. 225: "He himself corrected very often." *SP*,
p. 179, quotes Hitler in the summer of 1939: ". . . the drafts of the Foreign Ministry
are, again, useless. I better draft them myself." Many other instances in *SP*, e.g.,
p. 569: "I heard from Below that Hitler read this and also other memoranda of
mine very carefully, even making marginal remarks and other corrections." Maser
in *M/HB*, p. 153, noted this and claimed that after 1933 Hitler's style improved. In
M/A, p. 178, Maser wrote that Schramm had underestimated the young Hitler's
book-buying habit.

He also wrote or dictated many weekly articles (especially between 1928 and 1931) for his party newspaper (the *Illustrierte Beobachter*); their importance was first noted and evaluated by Deuerlein and then by Zitelmann.

But his secretiveness is only one element within the larger issue. We shall never know everything (and perhaps we shall never know enough) about him. That is not a reason for despair. It is not given to human beings to know everything—as Kierkegaard said, the pure truth is for God alone; what is given to us is the pursuit of truth.* As a matter of fact—or, rather, condition—the understanding of the limits of our knowledge, instead of impoverishing us, may actually enrich us. Or, as Pascal said, we understand more than we know, which is not a paradox; it suggests that it is not necessarily the amassing of knowledge that eventually leads to understanding but that understanding may actually precede the accumulation of knowledge. On the first page of this book I wrote that the purpose of historical knowledge may be understanding, even more than accuracy—though of course not deliberately at the expense of the latter—and a recognition of this condition may be even more applicable to the analysis and description of historical “problems” than of “periods.”

And Hitler Was, Is and Remains a Problem. Everything has its history, including memory: fluctuating and fallible human memory that may be obscured or clarified by distance, strengthened or weakened by perspective. It is not only the tremendous accumulation of materials, research, and writings about Hitler but a certain perspective that allows me to make a shocking statement: He may have been the most popular revolutionary leader in the history of the modern world. The emphasis is on the word *popular*, because Hitler belongs to the democratic, not the aristocratic, age of history. He is not properly comparable to a Caesar, a Cromwell, a Napoleon. Utterly different from them, he was, more than any of them, able to ener-

*Here again is the profound Heer in HR, p. 11: “In the heart of every human person there remains something that no human being—not even that person himself—may entirely grasp, discover, or unravel. That untouchableness of his deepest kernel Adolf Hitler shares with every other human being.”

gize the majority of a great people of the world, convincing them believe that what they did was evil. He led them to prosperity with which they could not see German hegemony soon in Reich, which was to have been yet he had an enormous influence in this century than any other. That is why his place in the main subject of this book is time to come. We are not

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Hitler's mother, wrote both before and after his emigration from Austria, in nearly forty years of his career as a doctor he had never seen a young man as broken with grief as Adolf Hitler at the death of his mother. He was an exemplary son during his mother's final illness. Of course, he was the male head of the family then, his father having died three years earlier; but there was more to it than that. He loved his mother; and he feared (and possibly hated) his father. This is not a mere psychoanalytic speculation; there is enough evidence of it. He mentioned the matter, often late at night, to some of his closest circle—for instance, to General Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau (by coincidence, also born in Braunau), who found this significant enough to record it in his posthumously published memoirs; and also to Speer.^{*} Hitler's father was domineering and crude: he drank; he mistreated his wife; he beat his young son. Yet in *Mein Kampf* Hitler wrote about his father in reverent and respectful phrases, emphasizing only one, rather natural, disagreement between father and son: His father wanted him to choose the career of an Austrian civil servant (which had been the father's special achievement, against many difficulties), when his young son wished to become an artist. Of that disagreement, too, Hitler wrote in a wistful and pleasant tone. Yet to a few insightful observers, throughout his adult life he gave the impression that he had been a deeply humiliated child.[†]

Hitler lived in Vienna for six years after his mother's death, from the eighteenth to the twenty-fourth year of his life. Those are formative years in any man's life, and they were undoubtedly so for Hitler, too—except that, according to *Mein Kampf*, they were formative not only partially or largely but categorically and definitively. We know much about these years, from many sources, but first among them is *Mein Kampf*, in which Hitler described them at length. Yet we now know that his account of his years in Vienna

^{*}To Glaise-Horstenau (in April 1939): "I feared my father, but I loved him not at all." SP, p. 139: "My father often beat me severely. . . ."

[†]See above, p. 20 (George Bernanos). GQ, p. 29: "His childhood reminiscences must have left a deep [and lasting] impression on his soul, but it is also characteristic of him that he conceals that impression from others very carefully."

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"decadent" Vienna before 1914). It is unquestionable that for the formation of Hitler's mind the Vienna chapter of his life was important, perhaps even decisive. But was it definitive? In other words, did his ideas finally crystallize in Vienna? We know that the most important turning point in Hitler's life occurred in Munich, in 1919. Of course, crystallization and turning point are not identical (save perhaps chemically speaking), but they are not separable either. So, with all of the reservations due to such a metaphor, was it, then, in Vienna or Munich that the crystallization—if not of his personal destiny, then at least of his worldview—occurred? There are contradictory evidences of this, to which I must now turn.*

IT IS AT LEAST POSSIBLE—and I am inclined in that direction—that this crystallization occurred not in Vienna but in Munich, and surprisingly late, during the thirty-first year of Hitler's life—perhaps exactly around his thirtieth birthday, which fell on 20 April 1919.

Ten days after Hitler's thirtieth birthday, the Munich Soviet Republic collapsed. Regiments of the German army, along with volunteer corps, were marching into Munich, where what was to be called the White Terror began. The president of the Soviet Republic was beaten to death by the soldiers; in the following days and weeks, more people were executed than during the months of the Munich Soviet rule. Yet the White Terror was popular, whereas the Red Terror had not been. I write "the Munich Soviet Republic" because the authority of that "government" had hardly extended beyond the city of Munich. Of the few episodic Communist regimes in Europe after World War I, it was the most incompetent. In Munich a revolution in November 1918 preceded the proclamation of the German Republic in Berlin; during the following months the regime slid more and more to the Left. In late February its head, Kurt Eisner, was assassinated by a counterrevolutionary; thereafter the Munich Soviet regime ensued. Its members were Communists,

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*The important work on this is A. Joachimsthaler, *Adolf Hitler 1908-1920: Korrektur einer Biographie*, M., 1989 (hereafter: JO), and now Hamann (see footnote, p. 56). Joachimsthaler is very critical of Maser, but very respectful of Deuerlein.

intellectuals, bohemians, many of them Jewish, and here and there men who had been certified insane. (Its composition and its ideas were not dissimilar to those of some of the American crazies of the 1960s, except, of course, that the latter never had the slightest chance of even coming close to the exercise of power.) Thereafter the city of Munich, traditionally Catholic and more easygoing than many other German cities of the north, became the principal seat of radical rightists (members of the National Socialist Party among them).

We do not know where Hitler celebrated his thirtieth birthday, if he celebrated it at all. Of his entire life, the spring months in Munich in 1919 are the most obscure. In October 1918, the soldier Hitler was gassed at the front. At the time of the German collapse he was in a hospital in the town of Pasewalk, in Pomerania. In December he made his way back to Bavaria and rejoined an army unit there. We know very little about his activities from February to May 1 of 1919, when the Red Terror, though not omnipresent, was murderous and stalked the streets of Munich. In *Mein Kampf*, he wrote that he returned to Munich in March. Yet Joachimsthaler proves that he was already there in late January.* There is some evidence that Hitler wore the red armband required of soldiers at that time; in any event, he lay low. What is undoubtable is that his political activities began immediately after the collapse of the Reds: he volunteered as a propaganda speaker for the army; he attended the university lectures of a noted nationalist professor; and he began to speak up in public, perhaps as early as June 1919 (the first direct documentary evidence of his public speaking dates from August of that year). Thereafter the evidence multiplies rapidly, and the story is well known. Even before he joined the party from which his own National Socialist German Workers' Party would grow, his speeches contained all the recognizable features of extreme nationalism, Judeophobia, fanaticism; the very ideas that would make him famous were there, to be repeated over and over again.

The question of *when* the crystallization of Hitler's ideas occurred is not merely a question of chronological curiosity. According to him,

*JO, p. 191. Also p. 189: "What did Hitler do [in the spring of 1919 in Munich]? Nothing!"

not only did his first realization Vienna, but it was there that through: "I left Vienna as an enemy of the entire Marxist acquaintances, perhaps even friends; some of them helped to them. In at least one instance I married a Jewish family for an even He also admired the musical art. We have no evidence of anti-Semitism by Hitler before his thirty-first year. The Jewish problem, is probably expressed in these sentiments while they had crystallized into a categorical statement at least possible (in my opinion) these ideas—crystallized them in a void—were his experiences during 1918–19: the German collapse, ridiculous and sordid episode of its Jewish and lumpen intellectual.

Sustaining this thesis is a mass of *zeichnungen 1905–1924*, a documentary of surviving writings and speeches from 1980 by Eberhard Jäckel and a collection of every postcard, every note, every draft for a speech from Hitler's private life. This collection of primary documents (1,300 pages); the items before and after (items, not pages—they do not have colors). There is a drastic change in these personal documents in 1919. One receives of the younger Hitler a German idealist—an impression of those who knew him from notes, letters, and postcards to his front or while on leave, the expression

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not only did his first realization of the Jewish "menace" take place in Vienna, but it was there that he thought the Jewish "problem" through: "I left Vienna as an absolute Anti-Semite, as a mortal enemy of the entire Marxist world view." Yet he had Jewish acquaintances, perhaps even friends, in the youth hostel where he lived; some of them helped to sell his watercolors, others framed them. In at least one instance he enjoyed the hospitality of a cultured Jewish family for an evening of chamber music in their home. He also admired the musical ability of (the Jewish) Gustav Mahler.* We have no evidence of anti-Semitic utterances (private or public) by Hitler before his thirty-first year. That he was struggling with the Jewish problem, is probable. But it seems that he felt no need to express these sentiments while they were still inchoate, before they had crystallized into a categorical idea or a powerful obsession. It is at least possible (in my opinion, probable) that what crystallized these ideas—crystallized them rather than produced them out of the void—were his experiences during the winter and the spring of 1918-19: the German collapse, but, even more, his witnessing of the ridiculous and sordid episode of the Munich Soviet Republic, with its Jewish and lumpen intellectuals, et al.

Sustaining this thesis is a massive volume, *Hitler: Sämtliche Aufzeichnungen 1905-1924*, a documentary collection of all of Hitler's surviving writings and speeches from 1905 to 1924, published in 1980 by Eberhard Jäckel and Axel Kuhn. It contains every letter, every postcard, every note, every poem that could be found, every draft for a speech from Hitler's pen, from his sixteenth year onward. This collection of primary sources is substantial (more than 1,300 pages); the items before 1919 amount to more than seventy (items, not pages—they do not include Hitler's drawings and watercolors). There is a drastic change in both the content and the tone of these personal documents in 1919, but not before. The impression one receives of the younger Hitler is that of a loner, a dreamer, a German idealist—an impression that accords with the reminiscences of those who knew him during the war. In Hitler's extant notes, letters, and postcards to his friends, whether sent from the front or while on leave, the expressions are often childlike, showing

*Fest's statement (F, p. 56) that he knew nothing of Mahler is incorrect.

a doglike loyalty and deference to his officers and his country. With one exception—a letter to an older Munich acquaintance in February 1915, to which I shall return—they are also apolitical. Typical is a postcard to a friend, in October 1917, from Berlin, where he was on a short leave: “Arrived here only Tuesday. The A. family is very kind. I could not have wanted anything better. The city is magnificent. A real cosmopolitan capital (Weltstadt). The traffic even now is enormous. I am walking around all day. At last I have the chance to study the museums even more. In sum, everything is fine” [“Es fehlt mir nichts”]. Then there are poems. (Except for a poem in a guest book dated 1906, there are none before 1915 or after 1919.) So this is the young Hitler: drawing sketches, painting watercolors, writing poetry in the trenches. The poems are inspirational; their principal theme is patriotic loyalty. Of course, Hitler was no Rupert Brooke, but the poems are not laughable. They express the fervent sentiments of a German idealist. They are nationalistic, youthful, lonely, and sad. They are not exactly doggerel because of the pathetic touch they carry; they are expressions of devotion to the fatherland. In spite of the masculine gender of that word, it is as if the fatherland were a feminine entity; these are expressions of devotion to a great, adored, and now endangered mother.

After the publication of the above-mentioned volume, its editors were alerted by two letters that drew attention to the questionable authenticity of some of the documents. After a thorough examination, the editors concluded that these doubts were justified; they published a short notice accordingly in the *VRZ* (April 1981, p. 304). Jäckel and Kuhn were not to blame—a fair number of the documents had come to them from a private owner who did not wish to have his name published. The questionable items are a very small portion of the entire documentary collection: sixteen or seventeen out of a total of nearly seven hundred documents. What they have in common is that most are accompanied by a note from the Reichsleitung, the high directorate of the National Socialist Party, and these notes are typed on Reichsleitung stationery. What is interesting is that the questionable documents include some of Hitler's poems during the war and poems and jottings from the early months of the year 1919 in Munich. In the introduction to the Jäckel-Kuhn volume, the scholars indicated that some of these

poems may not have been Hitler's. Until 1980, we did not copy out, poems. (There is a short poem included that was war; Hitler could not have copied are dated January and February

It is unlikely that these insert without Hitler's knowledge. As it have been to show that the cry earlier than the collapse of the included the autobiographical part that it was in November 1918, it experienced the defeat and the where his gas-injured eyes opened politician.”* It is at least possible that he did not resolve to become after the bloody collapse of the

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poems may not have been Hitler's but were instead copied out by Hitler. Until 1980, we did not know that Hitler wrote, or that he copied out, poems. (There is at least one additional falsification: A short poem is included that was written and published well after the war; Hitler could not have copied it.) Six of these questionable items are dated January and February of 1919.

It is unlikely that these insertions in the Party archives were made without Hitler's knowledge. As in *Mein Kampf*, his intention may well have been to show that the crystallization of his ideology occurred earlier than the collapse of the Munich Soviet Republic. He concluded the autobiographical part of *Mein Kampf* with the statement that it was in November 1918, in that hospital in Pomerania, that he experienced the defeat and the collapse of the German empire, and where his gas-injured eyes opened: "I now resolved to become a politician."² It is at least possible that he did not resolve his doubts, that he did not resolve to become a politician, until six months later, after the bloody collapse of the ridiculous Munich Soviet Republic.

But my main question is not whether it was Pasewalk or Munich but whether it was Vienna or Munich. And this is not an either/or question but, rather, an and/or one. There is evidence on both sides—evidence to be considered seriously—as long as one does not exclude the other, and as long as we accept what "crystallization" may mean.

²One man who understood the searing experiences of Hitler in that hospital, and saw in it a turning point of his interior life, was Churchill. In the first volume of his memoirs of the Second World War, Churchill began a chapter with the description of Hitler in that hospital. Written in 1948, it is still a most penetrating summary description. I wrote in *DL*, p. 41: "On the first page of that short chapter, which he dictated walking up and down in his room in Chartwell, Churchill described Hitler's career and his personality astonishingly well. The remarkable quality of those passages was not only the result of Churchill's rhetorical and literary mastery. It was the result of his insight. He recognized, for example, how the decisive element in the formation of Hitler's mind—and not only in his career—came in 1918–19, and not before the war; in Munich, not in Vienna. Yet Hitler in *Mein Kampf* had insisted—and most historians even now accept the thesis—that while his life took a sudden turn in late 1918 and then in Munich, his political ideology had already crystallized in Vienna. Many professional historians, bombarding in their airless circles, tend to ignore or dismiss Churchill the historian. Yet in these pages Churchill's understanding of Hitler is phenomenal."

At any rate, the Vienna/Munich question has not been raised to the point where it became a matter of argument among historians. Most (though not all) of them have—properly—dismissed assertions connecting Hitler with some of the bizarre and extreme racist and anti-Semitic groups and pamphleteers during his Vienna period—for example with Jörg Lanz-Liebenfels, set forth in a 1958 book (H. Daim, *Der Mann der Hitler die Ideen gab* ("The Man Who Gave Hitler His Ideas"). At the same time, serious consideration is due to Heer, who in 1938 produced the richest mass of material about Hitler's "Austrianness." Heer went so far as to claim that Hitler's character had been fully formed between 1905 and 1908 in Linz; that is, before his move to Vienna. This is debatable, but what is not debatable is the mass of Heer's kaleidoscopic and encyclopedic evidence of the Austrian—and Austrian-Catholic—elements in Hitler's thinking. Besides Hitler's "Austrian" mannerisms, gestures, and habits, remarked by many people (very much including his secretaries), this evidence accumulated again during the war, when, in that last chapter of his life, Hitler talked more and more about his memories of Vienna, often in a mood of nostalgia, praising (this was quite unlike his mood in *Mein Kampf*) many things about Vienna's atmosphere, culture, theaters, actors, and so forth. However, we must keep in mind that Heer's main interest was not the "Viennese" but the Austrian Hitler. In Heer's view it was the Austrianness, not the Viennese years, that had been formative. His most telling statements and quotes include startling, and at times shocking, proof of how certain conservative Austrian Catholics and their institutions not only welcomed Hitler in 1938 but expressed themselves both before and after 1938 in truly Hitlerian terms.* Heer's tremendous

*One example: Carl Freiherr v. Bardolff, a conservative and before 1914 the Archduke Franz Ferdinand's close adviser, greeted (as had also other high officers of the old Austrian army) Hitler enthusiastically in March 1938. In his subsequent book Bardolff described World War I as "the great war of the world against Germanness." The archduke and his close advisers never allowed "the representatives of the Jewish press to enter the Belvedere" (the archduke's palace). "It was Franz Ferdinand's absolute conviction that Freemasonry, Materialism, Liberalism, Marxism and Jewish world capitalism" were enemies. He ended his book (*Soldat im alten Österreich*) "with a full homage to Adolf Hitler, springing from my heart."

knowledge of Austrian history, his own religious and psychology into Hitler's career and character, and the Vienna/Munich question seems to suggest that the acquaintance, written from the Hitler speaks of the "inevitable Germany."† There is also some with his comrades in the dug

Together with such contradictions among Hitler's principles, most decisive questions of the years in Vienna on his development, German historians more than authors wrote in the same book ("Weltbild" and "Weltanschauung" selves very early in Vienna."‡

*In another book by Heer (*Land in Hitler*, highly talented with many gifts from his Austrian background: his knowledge of that knowledge, and Hitler's lay in his understanding of human we

Interesting, too, is Heer's argument about Austrian emperor Joseph II as much as the Great. Also telling: Hitler's decision to be a Catholic and Nazi Seyss-Inquart Reich government: "That, too, was on Hitler to Austria."

†Letter to Ernst Hepp, cited in his volume: "Those of us who will be blessed: homeland cleansed of aliens . . . by thousands, their blood spilled every day not only of [foreign] but domestic one nationalism, to be destroyed. That was territory." These sentiments accord with

‡GQ, pp. 43 and 61: "Weltbild" and that these two words are not necessarily argument was made by GQ. Jäckel did purposes it is unnecessary.

tion has not been raised to argument among historians. Properly—dismissed assertions re and extreme racialist and during his Vienna period—set forth in a 1958 book *Gab* ("The Man Who Gave serious consideration is due est mass of material about ar as to claim that Hitler's in 1905 and 1908 in Linz; is debatable, but what is not topic and encyclopedic evi-holic—elements in Hitler's mannerisms, gestures, and much including his secre—during the war, when, in more and more about his nostalgia, praising (this was many things about Vienna's and so forth. However, we est was not the "Viennese" it was the Austrianness, not tive. His most telling state—at times shocking, proof of olics and their institutions expressed themselves both terms.* Heer's tremendous

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knowledge of Austrian history, culture, and literature, together with his own religious and psychological beliefs, gives us deep insights into Hitler's career and character,* rather than relating directly to the Vienna/Munich question. There is at least one document that seems to suggest that the crystallization of Hitler's ideas had occurred before Munich: his (above-mentioned) letter to a Munich acquaintance, written from the front in February 1915. In this letter Hitler speaks of the "inevitable" struggle against the enemy within Germany.† There is also some evidence that he talked about politics with his comrades in the dugouts.

Together with such contradictory evidence, contradictory statements among Hitler's principal biographers remain. "One of the most decisive questions of Hitler's life [remains] the effects of the years in Vienna on his development," wrote his earliest postwar German historians more than forty-four years ago. Yet these same authors wrote in the same book: "His world-view and his ideology ["Weltbild" and "Weltanschauung"] undoubtedly formed themselves very early in Vienna."‡ Or consider Fest on Vienna and *Mein*

*In another book by Heer (*Land im Strom der Zeit*, Vienna, 1958, p. 266): "Adolf Hitler, highly talented with many gifts, possessed an outstanding talent, springing from his Austrian background: his knowledge of human nature. But there are two kinds of that knowledge, and Hitler's came from the bottom, not the top: his genius lay in his understanding of human weaknesses." ←

Interesting, too, is Heer's argument in *HR*: that Hitler was influenced by the Austrian emperor Joseph II as much as, if not more than, by the Prussian Frederick the Great. Also telling: Hitler's decision on the last day of his life, naming the Austrian Catholic and Nazi Seyss-Inquart as foreign minister of the next, and last, Reich government: "That, too, was one—the last—return of the prodigal son Adolf Hitler to Austria."

†Letter to Ernst Hepp, cited in *MHB*, p. 100; also printed in the Jäckel-Kuhn volume: "Those of us who will be blessed by fortune to see our homeland again, a homeland cleansed of aliens . . . by the sacrifices and the suffering of hundreds of thousands, their blood spilled every day against an international world of enemies, not only of [foreign] but domestic ones, against the dangers of our domestic internationalism, to be destroyed. That would be worth more than all of the gain of new territory." These sentiments accord entirely with Hitler's beliefs in 1919 and after.

‡GQ, pp. 43 and 61: "Weltbild" and "Weltanschauung". In *JHW*, Jäckel stated that these two words are not necessarily identical, though they do overlap. A similar argument was made by GQ. Jäckel did not pursue this distinction further. For our purposes it is unnecessary.

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Kampf: "Wearisome and difficult as its reading is, it nonetheless gives a remarkably accurate picture of its author. . . . In effect Hitler's world-view, as he had insisted, had not changed." Yet in the same biography we find: "In Vienna he was not inclined to be a revolutionary; he was only lonely."^{*} Jäckel gave a convincing statement in JHW: "Historical research of his youth . . . has proved in many instances that the autobiographical passages of *Mein Kampf* gave a very free and also overly simplified and false picture of the circumstances of the period of his youth." Also: "The only evidence about his Vienna years are almost exclusively his own statements, thus resting on uncertain source material." And: "The definite finalization [i.e., crystallization?] of his ideology occurred only after his writing of the autobiography in *Mein Kampf*"[†] According to Jäckel, the development of Hitler's ideology was gradual (p. 158): "It is an important fact that the final completion [Ausbildung], contrary to Hitler's own statements, in 1919 had only begun." Perhaps significant but of uncertain validity: "Hitler had apparently earlier discussed with one of his comrades at the front whether after the war he would become an architect or a politician."[‡] Zitellmann in ZIT/A, p. 15, admitted that Hitler's own Viennese account "certainly includes particulars that were not proven or cannot be proven," while they remain important; but Zitellmann did not deal with either the Vienna/Munich question or the problem of the origins and development of Hitler's Judeophobia. Görlitz and Quint wrote that Hitler's thudding sentence about his decision to become a politician was more of a rhetorical device than the memory of the lightning conversion when Hitler the fledgling artist turned to become a politician. During that cold, dreary, and dreadful winter, he was still

dependent on external circumstances ingful than his private daily life. mulation of a phase in the life of himself to be capable of affecting his own ideas. Speer recorded tion that while "his political, have a unity," they were formed twenty and thirty,"[†] which is Munich years.

It is significant that It of his move from Vienna to that it occurred in 1912, where the error was unintentional, ordinary memory. In that ser (endgültig) move to Munich, w to that city. There he found hi identify himself with Germany from the beginning of his life, desire led to a non-native's becoming obvious (as was the case with the gian Stalin), while perhaps one tion remains: could he ever be a politician?

In any event, in the life of t setting and his settling in Munich—nate—for a variety of reasons already seen that public opinion in Bavaria turned out to be overwhelming, anticosmopolitan, anticapitalist, by May 1919, and that thereafter

^{*}F, p. 292, but also p. 58. It is very questionable (F, p. 60) that Hitler had met the previously mentioned Lanz-Liebenfels in Vienna (cf. F, pp. 60–61; also p. 1051), or that he had joined an "Antisemitenbund."

[†]JHW, pp. 18, 147, 154. In my opinion he puts the date of "crystallization" too late.

[‡]KER, p. 21, note 147: Here Kershaw quoted M/A, p. 194, where the reference comes from a statement made to Maser by a wartime comrade of Hitler more than fifty years after that event.

^{*}60, pp. 65, 103; also 174: ". . . his really made in Pasewalk but only with 1919." (In my opinion, this puts it a little

[†]SP, p. 134.

reading is, it nonetheless gives author. . . . In effect Hitler's changed." Yet in the same is not inclined to be a revogave a convincing statement with . . . has proved in many passages of *Mein Kampf* gave a false picture of the circumstance: "The only evidence about by his own statements, thus And: "The definite finalization occurred only after his *Kampf*."† According to Jäckel, was gradual (p. 158): "It is an on [Ausbildung], contrary to only begun." Perhaps significant had apparently earlier disfront whether after the war politician."‡ Zitelmann in ZIT/A, Chinese account "certainly in or cannot be proven," while did not deal with either the m of the origins and development and Quint wrote that Hitler's to become a politician was memory of the lightning con- st turned to become a political-dreadful winter, he was still

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dependent on external circumstances that were "much more meaningful than his private daily life in those months"—a plausible formulation of a phase in the life of a man who thereafter showed himself to be capable of affecting circumstances by the expression of his own ideas. Speer recorded how Hitler often stated in conversation that while "his political, artistic, and military world of ideas have a unity," they were formed "in their details between the ages of twenty and thirty,"† which includes both the Vienna and the Munich years.

IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT HITLER himself misdated the time of his move from Vienna to Munich in *Mein Kampf*. He wrote that it occurred in 1912, whereas it was in 1913. It is unlikely that the error was unintentional, because Hitler possessed an extraordinary memory. In that sentence he also wrote of his "final" (endgültig) move to Munich, when, in reality, that was his first visit to that city. There he found himself largely at home. His desire to identify himself with Germany and not with Austria was obvious from the beginning of his life, and remains indisputable. That this desire led to a non-native's becoming a great national leader is also obvious (as was the case with the Corsican Napoleon and the Georgian Stalin), while perhaps one unanswerable and intriguing question remains: could he ever have become a successful *Austrian* politician?

In any event, in the life of this deeply unhappy young man the setting and his settling in Munich in 1919 turned out to be fortunate—for a variety of reasons and on different levels. We have already seen that public opinion as well as popular sentiment in Bavaria turned out to be overwhelmingly radical, nationalist, populist, antic cosmopolitan, anticapitalist, anti-Marxist, and anti-Jewish by May 1919, and that thereafter Munich and Bavaria, even more

*60, pp. 65, 103; also 174: "... his decision to become a politician . . . was not really made in Pasewalk but only with his stepping forth as a speaker in the fall of 1919." (In my opinion, this puts it a little too late.)

†SF, p. 134.

than other cities in Germany, were centers of such political activities and organizations. There was the proximity—geographic, racial, and linguistic—of Lower Bavaria with Austria. Elsewhere in Germany Hitler's Austrianness (including his diction) may have been a political handicap, but in Munich it was not a disadvantage. These circumstances were important and helpful, but what was really decisive was Hitler's self-discovery: his ability as a speaker. That may have occurred as early as late April 1919,* and thereafter developed quickly. It was not entirely independent of its circumstances: The extreme and hyperbolic character of his oratory echoed better in the raucous atmosphere of Munich than in the tighter-lipped north: the rough and beery, jocular South German virility summed up in the untranslatable Bavarian-German word "Gaudi."[†]

Consequent to his ability to impress people with his speaking came the discovery of his ability (and the exercise of his will) to influence them: a less ephemeral and more enduring task, amounting to the truly political portion of his genius. His confidence in that ability grew gradually. Where Demosthenes failed, this modern demagogue succeeded: he became the leader of a party, then the leader of *his* party, and finally the leader of a national movement. That does not concern us in this chapter; what should concern us here is the change or development in Hitler's public and private *persona*. It was in Munich that this odd (and odd-looking) young man

*Possibly the first consequential event: Hitler haranguing (and convincing) his fellow soldiers in the barracks not to follow the Red leader Egelhofer into the streets. (This happened on 29 or 30 April 1919, the day of his suicide twenty-six years later.) *See for 1945, April 30*

[†]Closest English suggestion: a rough feasting—in our case, rejoicing in hearing something brutally exclaimed. The Old English word "gaudy" (OED) also meant rejoicing, but without the element of brutality; at most, a prank (Oxford Oriol College gaudies: annual college dinner events).

Fest is very good about this in *F*, p. 212: "... Hitler's party could profit, too, from the specific Bavarian crudeness ["Grobianismus"], in accord with its political rules of the game. The beer-hall battles with their crashing chairs and flying beer steins, the songs calling for 'murder,' the big thrashings; it was all a tremendous Gaudi." He adds that it was then that the word "Nazi" first appeared: "to Bavarian ears an abbreviation of the name 'Ignaz' [but] thereby a familiar sound, evidently a help in the widely spreading awareness of the Party."

became not only a political figure at least to some people, and in his respectable women. In Munich—was eventually introduced to even patrician families, acquiring coming, as the Germans say, "sa admissible, an assistance in the reliability. As some of Hitler's friends (Strasser) said at the time, the ve bachelor made him appealing—sexual: The ladies Bechstein, Remann, Hanfstaengl,* saw him with young man in need of affection (once-humiliated child?).[†] None Munich there occurred a *complete*. Many of his personal habits did not for economics, continued; it stood out his career many of his close Bavarians and Austrians, ex-Catholics (or, at least, the most satisfactory mid-1930s: the national leader's that small restaurant or café in circle. It was not by accident that house (which was more than a remained grateful to Munich that he mentioned to the architect in Munich. (Later, he changed that

*Helene Bechstein: "I wished he'd like Frau Carola Hoffman, Christmas 1925 my beloved true little mother [Mütterchen, p. 112].

[†]The adoration that so many German sexual characteristics. (So had the fren unmarried Mayor Karl Lueger, who was Hitler.) That Hitler was unmarried was motherliness in the trust and hope with shocking or unpleasant events: "If only

respectable.) That complexity was noticed by others. Peter Kleist, one of Ribbentrop's satellites, wrote in his memoirs: "I had the opportunity to study his face carefully. It has always amazed me because of the multiplicity of expressions it contained. . . . Photography, by selecting only a single moment out of context, could show only one aspect, thereby giving a false impression of the duplicity or multiplicity of being which lay behind this image." He added: "I tried to find some explanation for the hypnotic effect of those eyes without arriving at any explanation."^{*}

Hitler was extraordinarily aware of his pictorial image. We have already noted his assiduous interest in his photographic portraits. When at the age of forty-eight (a normal time) he found it necessary to use glasses, he ordered that no picture should be taken showing him wearing spectacles. To Speer he once said that his disciplined eating habits were also the result of his decision to keep his weight down: "Just imagine if I went around with a belly. That would be a political disaster!"[†] One (if not the best) physical description extant was written by the patrician Schramm: "The man's head seemed to dominate his entire body; torso, arms, legs—all seemed to hang down from it." He also noted Hitler's extreme mania for cleanliness. "Yet he never achieved elegance. His jacket hung about him like a sack; his trousers did not sit well. . . ."[‡] More important than these doubtless accurate observations by a Hamburg patrician are Schramm's remarks about the ambivalence of Hitler's expressions:

^{*}Peter Kleist, *Die europäische Tragödie*, Göttingen, 1951, p. 199. About Hitler's physical appearance see Günther Scholdt, *Autoren über Hitler*, Bonn, 1993 (hereafter: *SCHO*), pp. 199–209.

[†]*SP*, p. 314. One exception to his ascetic habits: his extraordinary fondness for creamy Viennese cakes.

[‡]*SCH*, pp. 17–18. One important item of Hitler's physiognomy that is rarely noted—and is obscured by the trademarks of his famous mustache and the strand of hair over his forehead—was his nose. It was a very large, almost brutal, perfectly triangular, pyramidlike nose, but this impression of its size was somewhat reduced by the mustache. Whether that mustache was cultivated because of Hitler's consciousness of his nose is questionable; what is not questionable is the existence of this consciousness. In Irving (*I/W*, p. 71), there is one of Hitler's sketches of himself in the 1920s: The emphasis is on that large triangular nose, and not on the determined chin ("from an original in the author's [i.e., Irving's] possession").

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the hate of our enemies, whom we in turn hate from the bottom of our hearts.'"

Hitler was a desperate man, while at the same time, he was a visionary of a new, heroic, pagan, and scientific world. He was an unhappy child and an unhappy adolescent, spurred by shame and resentment, surely after 1918. That his hatred issued from the sad and painful memories of a humiliated child is plausible; that, as happens to many people, he compensated for certain feelings of inferiority is plausible, too.* But not too much should be made of this; there were and are millions of humiliated children who turn out to be neither desperate nor brutal. As Schramm put it, "Hitler can be explained neither in terms of his social origins nor in terms of the influences of early environment, and not on the basis of the fact that he originated among a particular people."†

He was a strong man; and a fundamental source of his strength was hatred. Yet his hatreds did not coagulate until he was thirty years old. Before that he remained a boy; at thirty, he became a man suffused with vengeance. And what is vengeance but the idea of causing suffering in order to heal one's own suffering? The German word for vengeance is "Rache." There are few more threatening guttural words in the German language.‡

*One example: his frequent statements, indeed, exclamations: "I have never had a feeling of inferiority!" (On one of these significant exclamations, carefully noted by Churchill, see DL, p. 38.) In the 1920s, Hitler liked to carry a whip of water-buffalo leather. As a boy, he was a rambunctious leader in war games. Yet the only instance when Hitler physically attacked someone (an editor of the party newspaper) occurred in 1927.

†SCH, p. 125. Also: "Hitler broke loose from the social level from which he came without settling into another. He belonged to no 'class' or 'estate.' Social history, therefore, cannot provide us with the sort of essential insight we need in order to understand Hitler." SCHAB, p. 124: "A still more serious mistake would be to try to derive Hitler's way of thinking from the Catholic Church." Yet the Catholic Heer (HR, p. 406) wrote: "Especially the falling away of the remains of his Christianity shows, from decade to decade, the specific Catholic structures of his psychic mentality, as his anticlericalism, too, is specifically Catholic in its origins and formulations."

‡The German word "Hass," too, is more declaratory than the English "hatred."

OF THE FOUR—POSSIBLY 1919 in Munich was the n about the others, we must a turning point is not i person's life—a milestone takes place in a person's Hitler's life, however, it but perhaps equally impo the importance—by whic ideas. There is a very wise Allen, in his *Sixteenth-Cen* about, and used, often: "A whole highly successful, ef and also in an effort, very stances to their ideas."* Pe ment was his ability to achi heroes and villains), it was but the reverse (which is re It was most probably in M his principal ideas: They be

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OF THE FOUR—POSSIBLY FIVE—great turning points in Hitler's life,
 1919 in Munich was the most important. But before saying anything
 about the others, we must consider two conditions. The first is that
 a turning point is not identical to a milestone, surely not in a
 person's life—a milestone is a visible event, whereas a turning point
 takes place in a person's mind; in the case of Munich 1919 in
 Hitler's life, however, it was both. The second, more complex
 but perhaps equally important, condition is a matter of mind, too:
 the importance—by which we mean the consequences—of his
 ideas. There is a very wise sentence by an English historian, H. C.
 Allen, in his *Sixteenth-Century Political Thought* that I have thought
 about, and used, often: "Men are constantly engaged in an, on the
 whole highly successful, effort to adjust their ideas to circumstances
 and also in an effort, very much less successful, to adjust circum-
 stances to their ideas."* Perhaps Hitler's most astonishing achieve-
 ment was his ability to achieve the latter. And (unlike Dostoyevsky's
 heroes and villains), it was not so much ideas that led to his thoughts
 but the reverse (which is relevant to the Vienna/Munich question).
 It was most probably in Munich that his thoughts crystallized into
 his principal ideas: They became, by and large, the same.

By and large: because, after all, thoughts and ideas are not exactly
 the same things—or, rather, they do not always remain the same.
 (Behind Hitler's discovery of his ability as a speaker is another, at
 least partly unanswerable question: What made him speak?) But let
 us not spin this out further. The first important turning point of his
life was his coming to Vienna, in 1908. The second was his return to
Munich, in 1919. The third, in 1924, was in Munich, too, when he
was released from prison. His putsch, his attempt to spearhead a revo-
 lution, had failed, but had brought him to recognize something else:

*To which I would like to add: "of which two processes the first has been, by and
 large, ignored by Dostoyevsky and by many modern intellectuals." Consider, too,
 Heiden's startling generalization concerning the difference between talent and
 genius (HD, p. 44): The former fits himself propitiously into the world; the latter
 transforms the world in accordance with his needs—or, I should say, ideas.

respectability among the conservative nationalists, the army—indeed, among a mass of the German people. But he never denied—either to himself or to others—his view of himself and his conviction of his destiny in the history of Germany as the fulfiller of a national revolution. In any event, a reactionary he was not. As he himself said on many an occasion: reactionaries, as well as Communists or Marxists or Jews, were his main enemies, within Germany as well as abroad. Indeed (he said this often), within Germany the reactionaries were his most dangerous enemies. The well-known line in the "Horst-Wessel-Lied," the National Socialist fighting and marching song, expressed his own views: *Avenge "Kameraden, die Redfront und Reaktion erschossen"*—comrades killed by the Red Front and by the Reactionaries.

We must accept his word in order to understand him. At the same time, we must direct some attention to its meaning. A revolutionary does not only wish to change the direction of the ship of state; he wishes to remake its society. We have no evidence that before 1919 Hitler showed any deep dissatisfaction with the order of German society, except perhaps for his desire to see certain elements (Socialists, Jews, internationalists) excluded from influential positions within it. But when his resentments and desires for revenge erupted in 1919, these were not directed primarily against the enemies of Germany abroad but against those he thought were within: not only, and not even primarily, against the Versailles Treaty but against a political and social order in Germany that he saw as destructive, corrupt, hopeless, and weak. Soon he found that he had many potential allies, many of them from the nationalist and conservative middle classes.

To "nationalist" and "conservative" we must add "counter-revolutionary." That was a very acceptable and logical term then, and for some time thereafter. Whatever the deeper roots of nationalism, and conservatism, and anti-Marxism, and anti-Semitism in the minds of these people were, their then-present convictions were the result of their experience and their reactions against the leftist revolutionaries in Munich and elsewhere in Germany in 1918-19. Between 1910 and 1923 the term "counterrevolutionary" in Bavaria and Germany, as well as many other places in Europe, was almost

identical with the Radical Right we saw in chapter 2, knew that the counterrevolutionaries, and circles in Munich. But soon—reservations; indeed, he began to even some of his actual) allies. The putsch in November 1923: a first reluctant, then, in the last the counterrevolutionary and German state and social order of a national revolution. At of his life and career: his decision through an armed revolution but sense of the word, democratic) against the state and the social of the German people, reminding would know that he was right.

He achieved this. As many studies of the 1928-33 period Socialist Party did not reside in propaganda. Unlike all other political National Socialists were a true they gained adherents across the man society. They were neither predominantly Protestant or Catholic (the latter, the explication of Marxists, was insubstantial and has in fact, the general tendency any years at least indicate that, surely toward the Hitler camp came. Hitler realized this long before

*Within Germany (and Austria), the had largely disappeared by 1933; in some the Baltics), it lingered on until about after 1930), the main struggle developed conservative and a populist one, between

nationalists, the army—indeed, But he never denied—either himself and his conviction of his the fulfiller of a national revolution was not. As he himself said on all as Communists or Marxists in Germany as well as abroad. Germany the reactionaries were well-known line in the “Horst-fighting and marching song, Kameraden, die Redfront und led by the Red Front and by the

to understand him. At the same in its meaning. A revolutionary section of the ship of state; he is no evidence that before 1919 on with the order of German to see certain elements (Social- from influential positions within desires for revenge erupted in tly against the enemies of Ger- thought were within: not only, Versailles Treaty but against a ny that he saw as destructive, he found that he had many the nationalist and conservative

ive” we must add “counter-ceptable and logical term then, ver the deeper roots of nation-Marxism, and anti-Semitism in e then-present convictions were their reactions against the leftist here in Germany in 1918–19. counterrevolutionary” in Bavaria r places in Europe, was almost

identical with the Radical Right. Almost: but not quite.* Hitler, as we saw in chapter 2, knew that he could profit from his alliance with the counterrevolutionaries, and from his acceptance by certain social circles in Munich. But soon—latest after 1920—he began to have reservations; indeed, he began to despise many of his potential (and even some of his actual) allies. This happened even before his failed putsch in November 1923: a rising that failed because of the—at first reluctant, then, in the last moment, determined—decision of the counterrevolutionary and the traditionalist elements of the German state and social order to reject him. Or, rather: his leadership of a national revolution. After that came the next turning point of his life and career: his decision to achieve power in Germany not through an armed revolution but by acceptable (and, in the broadest sense of the word, democratic) means; not by a dramatic uprising against the state and the social order but by convincing the masses of the German people, reminding them that in their hearts they would know that he was right.

He achieved this. As many of the electoral and sociographical studies of the 1928–33 period show, the novelty of his National Socialist Party did not reside only in its organization and propaganda. Unlike all other political parties in Weimar Germany, the National Socialists were a true people's party, a Volkspartei, since they gained adherents across the board, from all elements of German society. They were neither a typically lower-middle-class nor a predominantly Protestant or decisively capitalist-supported party (the latter, the explication of Marxist historians and political scientists, was insubstantial and has largely been disproved). As a matter of fact, the general tendency and result of research of the last fifteen years at least indicate that, surely after 1928, a significant movement toward the Hitler camp came from the German working classes. Hitler realized this long before 1930. More important: true to him-

*Within Germany (and Austria), the positive meaning of “counterrevolutionary” had largely disappeared by 1933; in some other European nations (Hungary, Spain, the Baltics), it lingered on until about 1938. But there, too (as indeed in Austria after 1930), the main struggle developed between the two “Rights”—between a conservative and a populist one, between a traditionalist and a radical Right.

self as a revolutionary, his main sympathies and loyalties were directed to the German workers. There are historians who describe Hitler as a typical man of the lower middle classes, a petit bourgeois turned fanatic. That picture is largely wrong. There *were* a few petit-bourgeois elements in his preferences and in his manners (how could there not be: no one can shed his origins or his childhood entirely). But much more significant was his loathing of the bourgeoisie, of the traditional German *Bürgertum*, of their "reactionary" values.

This he discovered early, well before the "counterrevolutionaries" deserted him on that bloody morning in November 1923. He had become repelled by the traditionalist values of the German bourgeoisie. He was contemptuous of their caution, of their thrift, of their respect for the monarchy, of their social aspirations, of their desire for safety, of their class-consciousness, of an entire range of their characteristics, from bourgeois "Gemütlichkeit" to the old-fashioned standards of patricianism.*

These were antiquated remnants of a time now long past. Instances of this from Hitler's very statements are too numerous to detail here. As early as 1920, he was impressed by the revolutionary antibourgeois hero of a play by Hanns Johst (one of the few prominent German writers who became an admirer of Hitler) entitled *Der König*, where the protagonist hero revolts against the traditionalist

*Here I must draw attention to another, now unfortunately confusing, terminology. This is the still extant (though now somewhat fading) identification of "bourgeois" with "middle class." The two terms are not the same. On the one hand, the inflation of "middle class" has been such that it has become increasingly devoid of its once meaning. On the other hand, "bourgeois" has lately begun to lose the pejorative meaning attributed to it not only by Marxists but by bohemians, artists, and aristocrats (or by their admirers) in the nineteenth century. (See a discussion of this in my essay "The Bourgeois Interior" in *The American Scholar*, September 1970; also in *The Passing of the Modern Age*, NY, 1970.) To this we must add the specifically German meaning of "Bürger," suggesting not only "middle-class" or "bourgeois" but also "citizen," "townsman," "freeman of a city"—the latter with a patrician tinge. Hitler's ideal was "Völkisch"—that is, populist: a largely (though perhaps not entirely) classless Germany, resting on the strength of the National Socialist convictions of its people. That the German *Bürgertum* shared some of the "Völkisch" ideology did not mean that they were "populists," surely not in Hitler's sense.

classes, coming to a tragic end: reactionaries and the bourgeois. When Hitler first met Johst and his friends the Bruckmanns in 1920, he had seen *Der König* seventeen (!) times. It was his favorite drama, and that was his way.* Whatever the significant remark, there can be no doubt that the bourgeoisie Hitler remained contemptuous of, for example, from one of his table talks: "The cowardice and the stupidity of him with such revulsion in the *Bürgertum* run after him because of them. Had he not despised people he would have despaired to this than rhetoric; it was an aversion. According to Zitelmeyer's criticisms against the older bourgeoisie they had a rational fundament that after his failure in 1923, Hitler had to bring both German workers and side. He needed—at least for "not despite his understanding but because of it."***

AT LEAST DURING the ten years he was consciously willing and able to use revolutionary rhetoric—even a workers and his rejection of the bourgeoisie. The Sorcerer's mastery

*SCHO, p. 734.

†Koeppen notes, p. 2 of the manuscript.

‡ZIT/A, p. 146. Cf. HD, p. 11, in which he wrote: "Hitler's entire life is his singing [guten bürgerlichen] society."

**ZIT/A, p. 84.

sional intonation of the "conservative" side of his ideology. The most important—and effective—element here was his anticommunism; but there were, too, more than occasional presentations of himself and of National Socialism as being antirevolutionary, and even many positive declarations in favor of Christianity.

The psychology of anticommunism (more precisely, the history of its appeal) still awaits treatment by a master historian. Its appeal was not restricted to those who, no matter how briefly, experienced brutalities and misdeeds of a Soviet-like rule (as had the people of Munich in the spring of 1919). Nor was it restricted to the upper or to the property-owning classes, who had much to fear from the expropriations of a Marxist revolution. The main appeal of anti-communism has seldom been economic. There was the fear of revolution, yes; but even when and where the prospects of a Communist revolution were minimal, the stronger current was the respectability of nationalism, including the rejection of an internationalist doctrine, and of people who seemed to be among its proponents.*

Hitler was, of course, a *National Socialist*; of the two adjectives, the former was more important, and decisive, than the latter. But he was an opponent of *international* capitalism, as well as of *international* socialism. As a matter of fact, he had more of an appreciation of Communists and even of certain Socialists than of capitalists and reactionaries. There are many statements of his in that regard. Not many of them were made in public. He knew that in order to come to power, he had to appeal to the anticommunism of the German conservatives. In November 1932, he told Hindenburg: "The Bolshevization of the masses proceeds rapidly." He knew that this was not true. He also knew that this kind of argument would impress Hindenburg and the conservatives. Unlike nine years before, when

*Hence, for example, the frequent anti-Marxism among the working classes in many parts of the world: a thorough refutation of Marx. It may also be of interest to notice that anticommunism was often most popular not when the power of the Soviet Union or when the local Communists or Marxists were strongest but when they were weakest: thus in many European countries in the 1930s and in the United States in the 1950s—for instance, during the McCarthy years.

his revolutionary attempt he would become the rule democratically, and not agreeable people in German anticommunism. It is significant even after he became champion that finally led to his death in 1933 (and in a speech at the League of Nations), he said across Germany like wildfire been waging a heroic struggle people. . . ." (This at a time when they had been annihilated, their leadership in 1934 (three days before his death in the "Long Knives"), he received Hindenburg declared: "The defense of Germany in the next two or three hundred years.")

He knew how to appeal. In *Kampf* he praised the Christ how to use the existing structure such older elements and institutions movement." We saw that he had won the five circles in Munich as early as 1925 against the radical Gregor Strasser to vote in favor of a restoration of the old German princes that had been taken away from the older German conservatism. It is a wish to be torn away from this.

*Cited by Klaus Scholder, *Die Kirchen und die Politik*, would, of course, return to such arguments in June 1941, but at that time he would have been in politics but as an instrument of his strategy (privately), he often expressed his admiring and intense hatred of the reactionary capitalist details about this, see chapter 5.

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side of his ideology. The most here was his anticommunism; occasional presentations of himself as antirevolutionary, and even Christianity.

ism (more precisely, the his- ment by a master historian. Its ho, no matter how briefly, ex- of a Soviet-like rule (as had the 1919). Nor was it restricted to classes, who had much to fear revolution. The main appeal of economic. There was the fear and where the prospects of a al, the stronger current was nding the rejection of an inter- who seemed to be among its

socialist; of the two adjectives, decisive, than the latter. But he alism, as well as of international ad more of an appreciation of icalists than of capitalists and ents of his in that regard. Not He knew that in order to come anticommunism of the German e told Hindenburg: "The Bol- ipidly." He knew that this was d of argument would impress Unlike nine years before, when

his revolutionary attempt was shot down in the Munich streets, he would become the ruler of Germany legally, constitutionally, democratically, and not against but with the support of the most respectable people in Germany—at least in part because of their anticommunism. It is significant that he continued using this theme even after he became chancellor, and even after the election campaign that finally led to his consolidation of power. On 14 October 1933 (and in a speech justifying Germany's departure from the League of Nations), he said: "The Red revolt could have spread across Germany like wildfire. . . . For eight months now we have been waging a heroic struggle against the Communist threat to our people. . . ." (This at a time when the Communists in Germany had been annihilated, their leaders in prison or in exile.) On 27 June 1934 (three days before his move against Röhm, the "Night of the Long Knives"), he received three Catholic bishops, to whom he declared: "The defense of Europe against Bolshevism is our task for the next two or three hundred years."*

He knew how to appeal to the conservatives. Already in *Mein Kampf* he praised the Christian-populist Karl Lueger, "who knew how to use the existing structures of power and authority, using such older elements and institutions to the advantage of his own movement." We saw that he sought, and gained, entry to conservative circles in Munich as early as 1920–21. In 1926, he fought and won against the radical Gregor Strasser within the party, agreeing to vote in favor of a restitution of properties to the former German princes that had been taken from them in 1918—a cause dear to the older German conservatives. In 1930, he said: "Against us stands an older Germany. It is no longer our world, but we do not wish to be torn away from this older Germany, because to it belong

anism among the working classes in of Marx. It may also be of interest to popular not when the power of the or Marxists were strongest but when tries in the 1930s and in the United McCarthy years.

*Cited by Klaus Scholder, *Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich*, 8, 1985, 1, p. 246. He would, of course, return to such arguments after his invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, but at that time he would no longer do so in the service of domestic politics but as an instrument of his statesmanship; while at the same time (again, privately), he often expressed his admiration for Stalin, together with his contemptuous hatred of the reactionary capitalists Churchill and Roosevelt. For more details about this, see chapter 5.

millions of most decent people. . . .”* As late as 1934, Hitler said that “the agitated age of the nineteenth century is finally over with us. In the next one thousand years there will be no more revolutions in Germany.”† It was because of such statements—and not only because of opportunistic political calculations—that this Sorcerer gained the support of his older and old-fashioned Apprentices, men such as Papen, fellow travelers whose inclinations mirrored those of fellow travelers of Communists (“No enemy on the Left”). For the former, there would be no enemy on the “Right”; and they saw Hitler as a man of the Right, which is how *he* wanted them to see him.

Just so did the antireligious and anti-Catholic Hitler know how to gain the—at least partial, and at least temporary—support of the German Catholic hierarchy, and the partial support of the German Catholic masses. While Friedrich Heer was wrong in overstressing the importance of the residual Catholic elements in Hitler’s mind, what remains true is Hitler’s conscious appreciation of—and his appeal to—the religious factor in ideology and in politics. In *Mein Kampf*, he wrote in detail about his admiration for George von Schönerer, the anticlerical leader of the Austrian pan-German movement; but he wrote that Schönerer, unlike the Catholic Lueger, had made the mistake of being outspokenly antireligious. In this respect, too, Hitler’s searing experience in November 1923 marked a turning point. He turned away from the anti-Catholic Ludendorff (and, indirectly, against a memory of the Bismarck period): In the future, there must be no “Kulturkampf” in Germany. In *Mein Kampf*, there are many passages that warn against a campaign against religious believers in Germany. A political leader must not touch the reli-

*Cited by Heiden, HD, p. 228. To this add Heiden’s remarkable insight: “What is certain: Hitler as speaker gives the impression of an honest man. At the highest moments of his speeches he may be deceiving himself, and whether he says true things or the thickest lies, he is still what he says, [they are] fully the expressions of his own self. . . . The unity of man and his words is the [second] secret of his success.” (HD, pp. 101–2) Also: “No matter how contemptible his ideas may be, his achievement is a proof of the old adage: genius results from diligence [*das Genie fleiss ist*]. Through his indefatigability Hitler defeated his opponents.” (HD, p. 103)

†Cited by Heer, HR, p. 273.

gious teachings of his people: ‘but a religious reformer, if he ranks of our movement there: sitting next to the believing C of their respective consciences. Speer recalled that when in 19 lowlers had dropped their church party and SS leaders, he forbade Göring and Goebbels, to do so the absolute necessity to maintain sharply the struggle against the of the people: to substitute a T

This Hitlerian politic explanation and later consenting support Catholic Papen but by the Catholic the only party, Hitler later said feared; the only party where among the National Socialists in the national election in March 19 assumption of the chancellorship national government “will pres

“HD, p. 135. Also pp. 110–11. “Really very significant: Adolf Hitler takes his tian, Catholic, clerical, Bavarian, conservative much in *Mein Kampf* could be unquestionably Lutheran, Catholic and conservative I democracy, the call for the destruction against France.” And: “In *Mein Kampf* the . . . neo-Pagan, ‘Germanic religion’ *Mein Kampf* gives the impression of his followers.”

‡SP, p. 109. “No doubt, the Church’s cal purposes of National Socialism in so through its history. A new Party mysticism of the Middle Ages. That is unreadable *The Myth of the Twentieth*

‡Hitler in one of his table talks, “Brüning, a man of some talent . . . in the Center Party.”

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which the strength of our nation rests. It will be the strong protector of Christianity as the basis of our common moral order, and of the family as the basic cell of the people and body of our nation."^{*} And on 15 February 1933, in Stuttgart: "They say today that Christendom is imperiled, that the Catholic faith is in danger. To this I answer: 'Finally there are Christians and not international atheists who are in charge in Germany.' " After his electoral empowerment Hitler went on with this theme. He spoke of the "Christian fundament of the state." On 1 May 1933: "We do not ask the Almighty: 'Lord, make us free!' We want to work, in brotherly understanding, struggling together, so that the hour comes when we may face the Lord and say: 'Lord, we have changed!' "† It was thus that Papen—perhaps sincerely but wrongly—could say that the Third Reich was "the Christian countermovement to 1789"; that is, the counter-revolution to the French Enlightenment.

This is not the place to detail the complicated and melancholy history of Hitler's relationship with the leaders of the German churches. It has been studied often, and described at times carefully and well. What belong here are a few examples of Hitler's continued acknowledgment of the importance of that relationship. During the previously mentioned June 1934 meeting with three archbishops (Gröber of Freiburg, Berning of Osnabrück, Bares of Berlin), Hitler said, "Never in this life will I lead a Kulturkampf." He was even able to impress anti-Nazi princes of the Church. (Thus Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich, after meeting Hitler in 1936: "The Führer is a master of diplomatic and social manners, as if he were a born monarch, if not better.")‡ In August 1941, Hitler ordered that no move should be undertaken against Archbishop von Galen of Münster, who had openly attacked the euthanasia practices of the government during a Sunday sermon. In the same month Hitler threatened the Gauleiter of Bavaria with removal and imprisonment

^{*}Cited in ZIT/FR, p. 13.

†Cited in HR, pp. 250, 262.

‡D, p. 119. Cardinal Faulhaber in his sermon on New Year's Eve, 1938, praised Hitler's "example of a simple, sober way of life, free of alcohol and nicotine. . . ." Cited in Lothar Gruchmann, "Korruption im Dritten Reich," *vffz*, October 1994, p. 577.

because of the latter's stupidity: from Bavarian schoolrooms. tive, included a sentence: "C not reconcilable." Hitler ordered the instant cancellation of the often during the war, he told the churches to task would. Then they would be properly liberated from their influence.

He knew what he was doing: ever duality may have existed within the German people. Cardinal von Galen—still a Christian resistance against a sermon in August 1941, against Bolshevism. Here, however, including the religious ideas, the ideas (and the rhetoric) of

IN 1934, AFTER HIS EXPULSION FROM Germany, Otto Strasser proposed in order to avoid choosing Strasser's prophecy of Hitler's purpose: foreign policy was secondary in content with his primary and the kind of unity of the German people. From that of the great German people, wrote of "Das Primat der Politik in the histories of nations

^{*}FR, p. 33.

†SCHRRB, p. 152.

‡The important element in the supreme importance of the state of the nation. (See chapter 4.)

whose main concern with a potential national disunity came after his great achievement of establishing a powerful German state. As early as 1923, Hitler decided (and instructed the party accordingly) that the struggle against the then French occupation of the Ruhr was secondary; the first task was to achieve the national revolution at home before driving out the foreign occupier—and not only because in 1923 Germany was too weak to risk a war with the French. His political realism, especially after 1923,* was apparent in his continued priority of "Innenpolitik." Reminiscing about the years 1930–32, he said that Chancellor Brüning was "a man of some talent; but his greatest mistake was to attempt successes in foreign policy and thereby increase his popularity, whereas he [the Führer] proceeded exactly in the opposite way, knowing that foreign policy can never be successful when the domestic political conditions for it are not at hand."†

Notwithstanding all of the necessary reservations about Rauschning's authenticity, his attribution of the following statement to Hitler sounds like a true and clear reflection of Hitler's mind. Upon the question of whether he was planning to nationalize German industry, Hitler is supposed to have said: "Why should I nationalize the industries? I will nationalize the people"—a trenchant expression of his political principles. To the assembled industrialists in Düsseldorf on 27 January 1932, he said: "It was not that German industry had triumphed world-wide, after which came the development of German state power [*Machtentwicklung*]; then, too, German power had achieved the main conditions for the later blossoming of German industry." And in a speech in 1937: "If the German industrialists were to tell me: 'We cannot do this,' then I would say to them: 'Good—so I will take this up, because it has to be done.' But

*Bullock (BU, p. 314) recognized Hitler's realism in 1923: His insistence that the first task was to overthrow the republic "rather than to waste German strength in a fight with the French which the Germans were bound to lose" was sound; but Bullock was wrong (p. 93, note 1) in drawing a parallel between Hitler and Lenin ("both wishing to achieve the revolution at home before driving the foreign invader out"). In F, p. 430, Fest remarked on the primacy of domestic policy, though he did not sufficiently emphasize Hitler's successful anti-Communist propaganda.

†Koeppen notes, 18 September 1941, p. 13.

when the industry tells me: 'I not to have to take it upon myself to difference whether Krupp is right when he wrote that Hitler's economics than people believed, as has been his wont: "Over Reich Cabinet came to regulate more convincingly, produced not ignorant of economics; and of German unemployment gigantic rearmament program clearly seen by Simone Weil, 1942: "If Hitler despises economics he understands nothing about the notions of simple common can be called inspired since the economy is not an independent have laws, since in economy is ruled by force. . . . It seems to deceive, and conceives clearly. . . He possesses an exact notion of

From the revolutionary drive to the head of the state and stages in Hitler's career. Maybe after his assumption to power because of the exigencies of government seen that he was willing to go

*The first quote by Heer, HR, p. 2. †1/w, p. 21.

†Haffner, HF/AN, pp. 28–29: "Was really Hitler's achievement? In spite of have to reply in the affirmative. It is, to 1933, had played virtually no part economic miracle was not simply due the Third Reich was producing guns.

**Quoted by Simone Pétrement, S also Peter Drucker, *The End of Economic* have been read by Churchill with inte

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when the industry tells me: ‘We can do that,’ then I am very pleased
not to have to take it upon myself.”* *Summa summarum*: It made no
difference whether Krupp was nationalized. Irving was probably
right when he wrote that Hitler “had a sounder appreciation of eco-
nomics than people believed,” though Irving added, exaggeratedly,
as has been his wont: “Over the first few months Schacht and the
Reich Cabinet came to regard Hitler as a genius.”† Zitelmann,
more convincingly, produced considerable evidence that Hitler was
not ignorant of economics; and that his amazingly rapid elimination
of German unemployment was made possible only through “a
gigantic rearmament program is only partly true.”‡ All of this was
clearly seen by Simone Weil, as stated in an unpublished paper, in
1942: “If Hitler despises economy, it is probably not simply because
he understands nothing about it. It is because he *knows* (it is one of
the notions of simple common sense that he clearly possesses and that
can be called inspired since such ideas are so little understood) that
economy is not an independent reality and as a result does not really
have laws, since in economy as in all other spheres human affairs are
ruled by force. . . . It seems to me difficult to deny that Hitler con-
ceives, and conceives clearly . . . a kind of physics of human matter. . . .
He possesses an exact notion of the power of force.”**

D.T.

From the revolutionary drummer to the political leader and then
to the head of the state and of its armed forces in war: these were
stages in Hitler's career. Many people thought, and hoped, that
after his assumption to power he would become more moderate
because of the exigencies of government and of statecraft. We have
seen that he was willing to grant some credence to such hopes and

*The first quote by Heer, *HR*, p. 247; the second by Zitelmann, *ZIT/A*, p. 118.

†*I/W*, p. 21.

‡Haffner, *HF/AN*, pp. 28–29: “Was the German economic miracle of the Thirties really Hitler's achievement? In spite of all conceivable objections one will probably have to reply in the affirmative. It is entirely true that . . . economic matters, prior to 1933, had played virtually no part in his plans or political thinking.” And the economic miracle was not simply due to rearmament. *HF/AN*, p. 31: “In actual fact, the Third Reich was producing guns and butter, and a great many other things.”

**Quoted by Simone Petrément, *Simone Weil: A Life*, NY, 1976, pp. 510–11. See also Peter Drucker, *The End of Economic Man*, L, 1939, a book that was supposed to have been read by Churchill with interest.

* D.T. The real secret in economics was
the increase or decrease of energy in the
working class, a question of moral, all
appreciation of economics must stem from that

beliefs; but none of this meant that he had changed his own radical and revolutionary views. He was more than a demagogue; he was a populist. Often Hitler insisted that he was not a dictator. Dictators were petty tyrants,* often dependent on small coterie supporting them by force. He saw himself as the leader not of a determined minority but of a majority. "We National Socialists are the better democrats," he said several times during the years 1933-1935.† He agreed with Goebbels when the latter pronounced (in 1934) the existence of a "new Germanic democracy." While he was contemptuous and dismissive of parliamentary democracy and of the democratic "pretensions" of Great Britain and the United States during the war, in his speech on 30 January 1941 he said that "the National Socialist Revolution defeated democracy through democracy!"

Shocked and stunned as he was in 1918 by witnessing and living through the collapse of the German empire, Hitler was not a monarchist—even though before 1918 we have no evidence of his hostility to the Hohenzollerns (as contrasted with his consistent hostility to the Habsburgs). Because of his need for conservative support there were few—if any—antimonarchical statements by Hitler during the period 1929-33, or until well after his assumption of the chancellorship. There were German (especially North German) conservatives who as late as 1934 hoped that Hitler would consent to a restoration of the monarchy in Germany. But after Hindenburg's death, with his consolidation of the chancellorship and the presidency, his dismissals of the—for him long-antiquated—hereditary idea and the monarchical principle (and not only in Germany) began to accumulate. A significant—and, for him, revelatory—event was his state visit to Italy in May 1938. He was repelled by what he saw as the creaking ceremonials of the Italian royal house, the precedences of court society, the corruptions of the Roman aristocracy, the personal weaknesses of the Italian king. By having

*"I am not a dictator and will never be one . . . any popinjay can rule as a dictator." Cited by Fest, *F*, p. 372.

†Zit/A gives many instances of such Hitler statements: p. 569, note 189. See also *BU*, p. 191, Hitler's "open letter" to Brüning, 13 December 1931: "You refuse, as a 'statesman', to admit that if we come to power legally we could then break through legality. Herr Chancellor, the fundamental thesis of democracy runs: 'All Power From The People.'"

allowed its continued existence, monarchy, his friend Mussolini what Hitler saw, and thought many of his confidants. The remnants of the surviving Soci period; it had, after all, beer Germany from the Hohenzollerns.

The Kaiser, William II, v when the German army in offered him refuge in England (or word) did he demonstrate under the German occupation sent a congratulatory telegram mental phrase that his *grau* Wendung durch Gottes Fügung by God!") Hitler was content to him?"† As far as he was Germany if he so wished. In a special train with the imperial Kaiser's funeral.

IN THE PREFACE OF HIS work speculated: had Hitler succeeded and would perhaps still be a man in history.‡ Such a statement but the reality of it would achievements—domestic rule of his leadership of Germany

**HR*, p. 417. In *1/w*, p. 65, Irvin: "chiefs are at most capable of having empires are won only by revolution."

†Hermann Giesler, *Ein anderer Kaiser*, p. 393.

‡*F*, p. 25.

**Especially by a German general mainly addressed, but also by a Frenchman (Deuerlein, and others); by Haffner

had changed his own radical than a demagogue; he was a was not a dictator. Dictators on small coteries supporting e leader not of a determined ional Socialists are the better ng the years 1933-1935.† He er pronounced (in 1934) the acy." While he was contemp- democracy and of the demo- and the United States during 941 he said that "the National cy through democracy!" 1918 by witnessing and liv- man empire, Hitler was not a 18 we have no evidence of contrasted with his consistent of his need for conservative timonarchical statements by until well after his assumption rman (especially North Ger- 934 hoped that Hitler would archy in Germany. But after idation of the chancellorship ie—for him long-antiquated— l principle (and not only in ificant—and, for him, revela- in May 1938. He was repelled nials of the Italian royal house, e corruptions of the Roman of the Italian king. By having

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er statements: p. 569, note 189. See ng, 13 December 1931: "You refuse, power legally we could then break neral thesis of democracy runs: 'All

allowed its continued existence, by sharing his rule of Italy with the monarchy, his friend Mussolini had made a grave mistake. That is what Hitler saw, and thought, and found it now proper to express to many of his confidants. Then he decided to raise the pension payments of the surviving Social Democratic ministers of the Weimar period; it had, after all, been their great merit, he said, to have freed Germany from the Hohenzollerns in 1918.*

The Kaiser, William II, was living in exile in Doorn, in Holland, when the German army invaded Holland in May 1940. Churchill offered him refuge in England, but William refused. Not by a single act (or word) did he demonstrate compassion for his Dutch hosts under the German occupation. When France capitulated, William sent a congratulatory telegram to Hitler, repeating the pious sentimental phrase that his grandfather had uttered in 1870: "Welche Wendung durch Gottes Fügung!" ("What a turn of events ordained by God!") Hitler was contemptuous: "Didn't anything newer occur to him?"† As far as he was concerned, the Kaiser could return to Germany if he so wished. In June 1941 William died. Hitler allowed a special train with the imperial relatives to travel to Doorn for the Kaiser's funeral.

IN THE PREFACE OF HIS great biography in 1973, Joachim Fest speculated: had Hitler suddenly died in 1938, he would have been—and would perhaps still be—regarded as one of the greatest Germans in history.‡ Such a statement may have shocked some readers, but the reality of it would be recognized by others.** For Hitler's achievements—domestic rather than foreign—during the six years of his leadership of Germany were extraordinary. Not only did he

*HR, p. 417. In *1/w*, p. 65, Irving cites Hitler on 23 November 1937: "Monarchies are at most capable of hanging on to what has been conquered. World empires are won only by revolutionary movements."

†Hermann Giesler, *Ein anderer Hitler*, Leoni am Starnberger See, 1977 (hereafter: GR), p. 393.

‡F, p. 25.

**Especially by a German generation to whom, of course, Fest's *Hitler* was mainly addressed, but also by many biographers who preceded Fest (Heiber, Deuerlein, and others); by Haffner later; and, more recently, by Zitelmann.

make Germany the greatest—and the most respected and feared—power in Europe; not only did he bring the Germans of Austria and Bohemia and Moravia, most of them enthusiastically willing, into a Greater Germany—surpassing the achievements of Bismarck, and all of this without a single shot fired, without a war. He brought prosperity and confidence to the Germans, the kind of prosperity that is a result of confidence. The thirties, after 1933, were sunny years for most Germans: something that remained in the memories of an entire generation among them. The concentration camps, the suppression of German Jews, the raucous vulgarity of Nazi propaganda were there, painfully sharp in the minds of an embittered minority; but how could they stack up against Hitler's creation of Prosperity, Greatness, Unity? After the war, shortly before he was hanged, Hans Frank wrote of the thirties in his memoir: "Über alles lagen Sonne, Glück, Jubel und Freude."* ("Above everything there was sunshine, happiness, rejoicing, cheer.") A sentimental exaggeration: but not without some substance.

This is neither a history of the Third Reich nor a biography of Hitler, and this particular chapter is directed to the question of whether he really was a revolutionary; that is, to the character of his ideas and how they have been seen by historians. But ideas do not exist in the abstract; they are incarnated by human beings (contrary not only to the views of many intellectuals but contrary, too, to Hegel or Dostoyevsky, what men do to ideas is more important than what ideas do to men). Hegel's famous "Zeitgeist" may have assisted Hitler's coming to power; but in the end he created his own Zeitgeist, and pragmatically indeed. That was already true of his achievement of power.†

*FR, p. 320.

†Fest (F, p. 370): "Hitler's extraordinary ability to recognize situations, to see through conflicting interests, to realize weaknesses . . . his tactical sense [was at least as important] as were his rhetorical powers, to convince people. . . ." I find this more convincing than the otherwise judicious Kershaw, KER, p. 37: [In 1930-33] "the personal role played by Hitler is greatly overshadowed by matters and events beyond his control." Also KER, pp. 38, 45, 52: "External events—the Young Plan to adjust reparation payments, the Wall Street crash, and Brüning's entirely unnecessary decision to have an election in the summer of 1930—put

Thereafter he could boast the replacing his erstwhile opponent mann wrote (about Hitler's decisive day for German labor): "Not for the first time [were] realizing demands had fought for long and in vain." various social matters National Socialism for example in the improvement of others, and of social security."*

The optimism and the confidence in Germany in 1932, three were born in 1939, the highest marriage rates in Germany, superseding even those of Eastern Europe. The phenomenon of the thirties was even steeper than unreasonable to slur over these figures. populationist policies. Of course, the Nazis offered social and financial benefits

the Nazis on the political map." And: "The economic crisis from 1929" the extreme Right support . . . might have remained so." would have continued to be an insignificant part of the fixity of basic points of dogma with no varying. . . ." And 112: ". . . far from revealing would have made him putty in the hands of the rapidly have rendered him dispensable, he of the realities of governmental power."

*ZIT/1, pp. 87, 122. What remains [Hitler's] social policy, unlike National Socialism researched [studied] well enough." This Zitellmann, at least suggests some special features, example, 10, p. 405: "Tuberculosis and other diseases. The criminal courts never had so little to do with the occupants. It is a pleasure to observe the Even the poorest persons are better clothed cheerful faces testify to the psychological within them." Not entirely untrue—but a propaganda book in 1938, used by "Sir Arthur Wilson was a notorious British Nazi

expected and feared—Germans of Austria and instinctively willing, into a war. He brought the kind of prosperity after 1933, were sunny in the memories of concentration camps, the gaudy of Nazi propaganda of an embittered Hitler's creation of shortly before he was in his memoir: "Über alles andere steht die deutsche Sache." He wrote above everything there is a sentimental exaggeration.

nor a biography of Hitler. He did not get to the question of Hitler's character of his ideas. But ideas do not make men (contrary to what is said but contrary, too, to what is more important than ideas) may have assisted Hitler in his own Zeitgeist. He was true of his achievement.

to recognize situations, to see Hitler's tactical sense [was at times] at the service of the people. . . . I find Kershaw, *KER*, p. 37: [In the shadow of] matters of: "External events—the great crash, and Brüning's fall in the summer of 1930—put

Thereafter he could boast that his "Socialism of Action" was replacing his erstwhile opponents' "Socialism of Words." As Zitellmann wrote (about Hitler's decision to make May 1 a national holiday for German labor): "Not for the last time the National Socialists were [actually] realizing demands for which the workers' movement had fought for long and in vain." Also: "It is not debatable that in various social matters National Socialism made remarkable advances, for example in the improvement of the protection of the young, of others, and of social security."*

The optimism and the confidence: For every two children born in Germany in 1932, three were born four years later. In 1938 and 1939, the highest marriage rates in *all* of Europe were registered in Germany, superseding even those among the prolific peoples of Eastern Europe. The phenomenal rise of the German birthrate in the thirties was even steeper than the rise of the marriage rate. It is unreasonable to slur over these figures by simply referring to Hitler's populationist policies. Of course he encouraged large families, and offered social and financial benefits to them. But no national leader

the Nazis on the political map." And: ". . . without the onset of the world economic crisis from 1929" the extreme Right "reduced to a tiny rump of electoral support . . . might have remained so." Also: "Without the Depression [Hitler] would have continued to be an insignificant minority on the lunatic fringe." I do not believe this was so. But Kershaw is right in *KER*, pp. 46-47: "Hitler combined the fixity of basic points of dogma with maximum pragmatism in political maneuvering. . . ." And 112: ". . . far from revealing a naïveté and an incapacity which would have made him putty in the hands of the traditional power groups and would rapidly have rendered him dispensable, he showed a quick and sharp appreciation of the realities of governmental power."

*ZIT/A, pp. 87, 122. What remains debatable: "Unfortunately the area of [Hitler's] social policy, unlike National Socialist foreign policy, has not yet been researched [studied] well enough." This, not unlike some other statements by Zitellmann, at least suggests some special pleading; though less so than Toland. For example, *TO*, p. 405: "Tuberculosis and other diseases have noticeably diminished. The criminal courts never had so little to do and the prisons have never had so few occupants. It is a pleasure to observe the physical aptitude of the German youth. Even the poorest persons are better clothed than was formerly the case, and their cheerful faces testify to the psychological improvement that has been wrought within them." Not entirely untrue—but note that this is a quote from a German propaganda book in 1938, used by "Sir Arnold Wilson, M.P." Toland failed to say that Wilson was a notorious British Naziphile.

can force fathers to beget children (or mothers to bear them); and confidence in the future had much more to do with national perspectives than with economics. Social conditions are not material conditions, just as social history is not economic history.* From 1932 to 1939, the number of suicides committed by Germans under twenty dropped 80 percent during the first six years of the Hitler regime (from 1,212 in 1932 to 290 in 1939). Consider, too, not only Hitler's autobahns but his agricultural reforms, the extraordinary popular outpouring of support for the "Winterhilfe" ("No German must be hungry or cold"), Hitler's special interest in providing inexpensive vacations for German workers.† Hitler's National Socialist Germany demonstrated that it was possible to achieve a high standard of living under a rigid dictatorship.

It may be argued that many of these achievements were not "revolutionary"; but they were surely modern. Hitler's interest in and respect for technology were considerable. Schramm cited Hitler: "Just as the bird represents, in comparison to the flying fish, a higher stage of development, the ship is a preliminary stage of the airplane. The future belongs to the airplane." Hitler on 3 October 1941: "[He] thinks that the automobile is the most beautiful invention of man, as long as he really uses it for his pleasure. The automobile opened up the landscape for people. . . ." Of Hitler's city planning, Toland wrote: ". . . there would be automated underground parking, a traffic-free center, numerous parks and green areas, and strict pollution control."‡ Some of this is imprecise; it was developed in better detail by Zitellmann, with evidence culled from Hitler's written and spoken statements of the 1926-30 period. In the ZIT/PR volume of collected studies, Hans-Dietrich Schäfer

*LEW, pp. 175, 176, 177. Also 177, note 5: "It is perhaps significant, too, that in 1939 among German cities, Danzig and Gleiwitz, on the Polish border, registered phenomenally high birthrates, over 24 per thousand (the average of German cities of comparable size was 17.5 per thousand); even more phenomenal was the marriage rate in Linz, this then prototypically Nazi town, the cradle of Hitler as well as of Eichmann, with 25.8 marriages per 1,000 inhabitants, more than twice the national average."

†There's a good general summary in HB, pp. 96-97.

‡SCH, p. 86; TO, p. 405; also Koepfen notes, p. 41.

presented two interesting historical continuities: "In having achieved more than the social there was a levelling of class society which earlier research 'Economic Miracle' of the [Westmann's and Schäfer's press Zitellmann: "Hitler did not [that is, reactionary] visions ways his model was the Unitalist economics and the denetheless admired its technology often saw as a model for German methods of advertisement. So lated the wishes and anxieties psyche of people without the attract and lead Germans free. Some of this had been noted prior effects of Nazi marches German Communists before the popular effect of the cult "he was certainly the most in his time."† Earlier the philologist Socialist preference for the work [to organize], which appealed mechanization of the human guage."‡ It affected everyday for many young people.

Modernization does not nec

*ZIT/PR, p. 214 (Schäfer); p. 16 (cited a book published about advertising to have a total effect . . . it in text). But already Viktor Klemperer, 1960) noticed many of the Nazi Third Reich.

†F, pp. 399, 410.

‡Klemperer, pp. 126, 191.

Hitler the latter was dominant. Revolutionaries often claim to be representatives of youth; this was true of Fascists as well as National Socialists, including Mussolini and the Spanish José Antonio Primo da Rivera, whose emphasis on youth was even stronger than Hitler's. But Hitler put much more of his cult of youth into practice than Mussolini did. Oddly enough, the impression he gave of himself was seldom (surely not after 1923) that of a particularly youthful person. But his party and his movement *were* youthful: In 1931, in Berlin 70 percent of the SA were men under thirty, and in the Reichstag in 1930, 60 percent of the National Socialist deputies were under forty, while only 10 percent of the Social Democrats were. The German exile Karl Otten wrote an incisive paragraph about Hitler's appeal to German youth: "The young truly love Hitler, in almost limitless ecstatic admiration. Not only because he understands their childish impulses and even encourages them. The Wild West games [*Indianerspiele*] of the young serve as a preparation for war."^{*} Hitler seems to have been the creator of a free country of the young. Before them he plays not the role of a severe father but of a mother, a source of many pleasures and of love. He allows them pseudo-revolutionary freedom for their biological and sexual impulses, adding to his appeal.[†]

Yet much of the new order depended on an increase of administration, the cult of youth notwithstanding. In 1939, Hitler wanted every young German to spend at least one month each year at manual labor, preferably on the land—a clear break with the sedentary bourgeois era. Still, the portion of the people who lived on the land and were engaged in agriculture was falling (it was 30.5 percent in 1925 and 26.1 percent in 1939). The portion of those who were employed in industry was exactly the same in 1939 as it was in 1925 (42.1 percent); what increased was the section of the population employed in administration and services, from 6.6 percent in 1925 to 10.4 percent in 1939. A new amorphous middle class was coming into being whose competences were not always clearly categorizable but whose style of life became increasingly modern.

^{*}About Hitler and the American Wild West, see p. 155.

[†]Cited by Scholdt, *SCO*, p. 660.

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^{*}See also Gert Kalow, *Hitler—das*

[†]This issue is, of course, insepar
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artistic and cultural policies of the Third Reich, Hildegard Brenner: "During the years 1934 to 1940 . . . one cannot deny the 'historical uniqueness' . . . in architecture. In this field National Socialism succeeded in reaching a form of self-expression that cannot be doubted."* (In support of this summary statement, Brenner also cites Bruno Zevi, *Poetica dell'architettura neoplasticista* [Milan, 1953], and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Europäische Architektur* [M., 1957], two of the most eminent European architectural historians, both of whom, incidentally, were serious and respected scholars of Jewish origin.)

It is in Hitler's artistic preferences and appetites—more than in his ideological and even literary preferences—that we may detect both bourgeois-conservative and modern-revolutionary elements. Especially in his preferences in music and painting, besides sculpture and architecture. This duality is there in his very statements. In his speech at Nuremberg on 1 September 1933: "It is better to imitate the good things than it is to produce new bad things." (Note, however, that this was the political period, when he found it necessary to appeal to German conservatism.) At the same time, there was his respect and admiration for supermodern technology. To Speer he said that the autobahns would be his Parthenon.† Again to Speer: "The popes of the Renaissance and the rulers of the Baroque era considered buildings as pastimes. For [Hitler] it was part of the political will of the National Socialist movement."‡ He thought that he and his architects might achieve a new kind of architectural unity of what was best in the old and in the modern. Hence his preference for the neoclassicism of the architects Tessenow and Troost and Speer, different and better than the neoclassical architectures of Mussolini or Stalin: "It had been the declared will of Hitler and

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*Hildegard Brenner, *Die Kunstpolitik des Nationalsozialismus*, Hamburg, 1963, p. 118.

†"Road-building had always been the sign of powerful governments, he said, from the Romans and the Incas down to Napoleon." (1/w, pp. 22-23)

‡Krier, K, p. 213, citing Speer. About the autobahns-Parthenon analogy, see R, p. 527 et seq. Also, Hitler to Abel Bonnard (a French intellectual admirer of his) in 1937: "A man must be considered anew, spiritually and not only professionally. . . . It is not enough to build him a house but to have a light shine out from it" (HR, p. 319)

*K, p. 226.

†M/A, p. 103.

‡Wolfgang Wippermann, "Nator (26 December 1981), p. 127. "In this he and Protestant conservatives of the W.

standesmenschen") typical of the older, anti-Enlightenment traditions of German thinking. It was post- (if not anti-) -conservative, -populist, and -modern. In his mind, at least, there was no conflict between the older and the newer elements at hand. To the contrary, he thought that he represented and incarnated a new kind of German unity. He showed respect for some of the old things; but a conservative he was not, and a reactionary not at all.*

ADOLF HITLER was not the inventor of National Socialism, but he recognized the compatibility—indeed, the marriageability—of two great movements. This was a worldwide phenomenon. For a long time, nationalism and socialism seemed to be incompatible, indeed hostile to each other. Socialism was, after all, international, given its belief that entire classes, rather than entire nations, mattered and that the struggle of classes carried history forward. What happened in many places after about 1870 was that the nineteenth-century antithesis and debate between conservatives and liberals had begun to lose its meaning. For two reasons: Because of the developing democratization of societies, conservatives were becoming more liberal, while some liberals were becoming more conservative. But what was at work here wasn't the development of some kind of a transcendent Hegelian solution. The alternatives were not about to be superseded by a synthesis. They were increasingly overshadowed by two new forces on other planes: by nationalism and socialism. Throughout the twentieth century the relationship (or the compound or mixture) of nationalism and socialism would

*Contrary to the famous "Is Paris Burning?" idea in 1944, he did not order Paris to be destroyed. At the time of the German retreat from Rome that year, he also ordered Rome to remain unharmed and untouched; but that order of his was made public for propaganda purposes, to impress some people worldwide, including Catholics. On the other hand, the destruction of London or Budapest did not bother him at all. He did not, of course, order the destruction of the great cities of Germany—the air war of his "barbaric" Anglo-American enemies was doing that—but he rigidly refused to visit or even look at the destroyed cities. He sympathized with Goebbels's argument, according to which this may have had a positive side—i.e., the destruction of the last remnants of an old bourgeois order. On one occasion he also said that in less than thirty years the destroyed cities would be rebuilt.

prove to be the dominant world.*

Of course the German almost sui generis. It was the dominant partner in the populist nationalism that was also the condition of deeper roots in Germany and at least some later part of a Germany that was born in a particularly German native political thinkers. Oswald Spengler's *Preuss.* even more trenchant than his book in 1932.† Yet these and sometimes (but only one thing; Hitler the revolution) in Germany the failure

had already in 1914. When on 2 August, calling for German Socialist deputies to vote for war credits. In the hot sky of international socialism in (And this happened elsewhere) of the democratization of more than it internationalism already had more in common

*About this see chapter 9. (A logical Problem," in *The American point in Mussolini's life.* Unlike movement of "Fascism." Yet early was a nationalist Socialist. Mutations (one of the reasons that, about 1914, "socialism," insisting that Communism

†"Der Arbeiter [the worker] is at a century of German history, with (reprinted in Jünger, *Essays*, II, 1) Armin Mohler, *Die konservative Revolution*

the twentieth century, people's parties became rightist rather than leftist: anti-international, anticapitalist, and, on occasion, anti-Semitic. With few exceptions,* populism moved from the Left to the Right—including in the United States.

And Hitler was a populist—a believer in the sovereignty of the people; a modern populist, and not an old-fashioned demagogue. Yes, there had been populists before him. But the very idea of who “the people” were changed during the last few centuries.† Among the earlier populists, nationalism, as such, was only latent; but Hitler realized—among other things—that modern populism, by its very nature, must be nationalist, and—more important—that nationalism must be populist.‡ The words “Volksgemeinschaft” and “Volksgenossen” (“people’s community” and “folk-comrades,” inadequately translatable in English) were basic to Hitler’s principles. The relationship between the Führer and the people was quite different from that of the kaiser and his citizens: “not a respectful acceptance of hierarchy but the voluntary and unlimited acquiescence of the people.” Also: “In the Hitler movement Germany experienced its only genuine revolution, even though that did not entirely conform to the theoretical model of ‘revolutions.’”*** Or Fests: “Dismissing Revolution, he [Hitler] had become in reality

*For a while, Communists stuck with their populist terminology: “People’s Democracies,” for example (as different from “Capitalist Democracies”). Yet these were often not much more than leftovers of an earlier political terminology.

†About this see Lukacs, *HC*, p. 69 *et seq.*

‡This is evident in the political history of the United States in the twentieth century, though it is lamentably seldom recognized thus: populism *is* nationalism, in more ways than one; while populism and (true) conservatism are entirely incompatible (no matter what our recent “conservatives” say). A conservative and anti-democratic nationalist such as Ernst Jünger recognized this, though only after his disillusionment with the Third Reich. The populism that began with the democratic propaganda of the French Revolution—he wrote during the war—has now produced “all kinds of new spirits and new evils” (*Strahlungen*—his diaries—27 March 1944, cited by Scholdt, *SCHO*, p. 542). Also in his *Auf den Marmorklippen* (published in Berlin, in 1939!): “What happens when the weak misread the laws [of history] and, half-blind, they unlock with their own hands the gates that were closed for their own protection?”

**Lothar Kettenacker, “Sozialpsychologische Aspekte der Führer-Herrschaft,” in *Der Führerstaat: Mythos und Realität. Studien zur Struktur und Politik des Dritten Reiches*, s, 1981, pp. 124, 130.

the German phenomenon “His place in history is due to the conservative despotistic; but he was more than all of his domestic political election campaigns. His future government was not the condition that he had with his plan to appeal to the *gemeinschaft*, an entire people great unemployment and was more influential than

He carried the revolution. 1940, he said in a speech: ‘the armies now marching of the Third Reich (September 1941). he said that *Habsburg monarch*. “As the German people had received historical justification for the and its fall was a historical phenomenon by the Marxists . Führer finds a special gift of

Destiny . . . Hitler did not die too).** Hitler was a ne

*F, pp. 1035, 1037.

†M. Rainer Lepsius, *Extremismus und sozialistische Machtergreifung*, s, 19

‡Koeppen ms., pp. 23–24.

**HR, p. 343, cites FR: Hitler to Providence; if he recovered, he would he regained his sight. “I was really me.” Speer (SP, p. 570, note 19) c 1944: “It seems to me as if we must and Hell until we win the final victory am not. But deep inside I am still a that the laws of nature that a God fights bravely and does not capitulate anew, will not be abandoned by the end. And that has been

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the German phenomenon [*Erscheinung*] of Revolution." Further:
"His place in history is much closer to the great revolutionaries than
to the conservative despots." And: "He may have [seemed] anachro-
nistic; but he was more modern and more devoted to modernity
than all of his domestic political opponents."** The fact that during
his election campaigns Hitler did not outline a program for his
future government was neither due to a cautious calculation nor to
the condition that he had no precise economic program. It accorded
with his plan to appeal to all social strata "in the name of the Volks-
gemeinschaft, an entire people's community."† Even at that time of
great unemployment and social distress, his populist nationalism
was more influential than any economic appeal.

He carried the revolutionary theme into the war. On 8 November
1940, he said in a speech: "Every soldier knows and must know that
the armies now marching under our flags are the revolutionary
armies of the Third Reich." And in one of his table talks (21 Sep-
tember 1941), he said that William II should have destroyed the
Habsburg monarchy: "As neither the emperor, nor his circle, nor
the German people had recognized this task, there remained no his-
torical justification for the existence of Hohenzollern monarchy,
and its fall was a historical necessity. That the monarchies were ter-
minated by the Marxists . . . and not by National Socialists the
Führer finds a special gift of Destiny."‡

Destiny . . . Hitler did believe in God, in a God (perhaps Stalin
did too).** Hitler was a new kind of revolutionary, transcending

*F, pp. 1035, 1037.

†M. Rainer Lepsius, *Extremer Nationalismus. Strukturbedingungen zu der national
sozialistischen Machtergreifung*, 5, 1966, p. 11.

‡Koeppen ms., pp. 23-24.

**HR, p. 343, cites FR: Hitler told Frank that in the hospital he had hoped in
Providence; if he recovered, he would see that as a sign, to be a politician; and when
he regained his sight, "I was really stunned and took it as a call from Heaven for
me." Speer (sp, p. 570, note 19) cites Hitler's speech to industrialists on 26 June
1944: "It seems to me as if we must endure all of the trials of the Devil and Satan
and Hell until we win the final victory. Perhaps I am not a pious churchgoer, that I
am not. But deep inside I am still a devout believer [ein frommer Mensch], meaning
that the laws of nature that a God has created correspond to this world: whoever
fights bravely and does not capitulate but recovers again and again and advances
anew, will not be abandoned by the Almighty but receive the blessing of Provi-
dence in the end. And that has been the lot of all great souls [Geister] of this world."

→ 116
Boettger
cont.

(and, in a way, melding) Germanic myths and German Christianity (as also "Right" and "Left"), uniting some of their doctrines within his own revolutionary ideology. But it is very significant that, as the Third Reich evolved, power became more decisive than ideology. Hitler himself knew that. Well before him, Proudhon had seen deeper than had Marx: People, Proudhon wrote, react less to ideas about social contracts than to realities of power. Two episodes of reactions during Hitler's career possess, I think, considerable significance. When in November 1923 the aggressive minority of Hitler's National Socialists rose in Munich, it is remarkable that neither the Communists nor the Social Democrats did anything: "There is no report of a single armed Leftist uprising anywhere in Bavaria during the Putsch."⁸ Even more significant, to me, was the reaction of the German people, with their majority of anti-Communists and conservatives, to the news of Hitler's pact with Stalin in August 1939. There was not a single resignation from the party, not a single expression of disapproval from the conservatives, from those many millions who in 1932-33 and after had sided with Hitler because of their anticommunism. To the contrary, there were many expressions of wonder and felicitation at that unquestionable triumph of Third Reich diplomacy. (The same was true of sympathizers of National Socialism throughout the world.) This at a time when thousands of Communists worldwide were experiencing shock, confusion, and disappointment. Yes, compared with communism, Hitlerism was more modern. And popular.

Maser (M/A, p. 279, note 401) cites his 1971 interview with Eva Braun's sister: Hitler and Eva Braun prayed together before their suicide. Here the perceptive Haffner was partly wrong. HE/AN, p. 92: "[Hitler] was, in spite of his customary rhetorical appeals to 'Providence' and the 'Almighty,' not only irreligious himself [true] but also had no perception of what religion can mean to others" [not so]. (About Stalin, see his reference to God in his talk with Churchill, August 1942; also his later treatment of the Russian Orthodox Church.) Hitler was no atheist. Here again we may encounter the particular danger of half-truths, and perhaps also St. John of the Apocalypse, who predicted that the Antichrist would not appear as Satan or Lucifer, not as an atheist but as someone who in many ways acts and presents himself as a believer and a Christian. (For further discussion, see chapter 9.)

⁸Harold J. Gordon, Jr., *Hitler and the Beer Hall Putsch*, Princeton, 1972, pp. 407-8, also p. 449.

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interview with Eva Braun's sister: her suicide. Here the perceptive [er] was, in spite of his customary 'right,' not only irreligious himself but also can mean to others" [not so]. (with Churchill, August 1942; also Churchill.) Hitler was no atheist. Here is a half-truth, and perhaps also the Antichrist would not appear as the one who in many ways acts and prefigures further discussion, see chapter 9.) [Putsch, Princeton, 1972, pp. 407-8,

ALLOW ME NOW TO RETURN TO Tocqueville (whom Hitler had surely not read, and who would have been anathema to him). Three principal elements in Tocqueville's vision and in his writing are relevant to our theme here. The first is Tocqueville's prophetic perception of a new kind of tyranny peculiar to the coming democratic age, the tyranny not of a minority but of a majority; a tyranny not only established with the consent of but exercised by the majority on occasion. That new kind of "Caesarism" (as Tocqueville at times put it) was already apparent, here and there, in the nineteenth century, though not in Germany. Twenty years after Tocqueville first wrote about it in *Democracy in America*, it came to France through the plebiscitary triumph of Louis Napoleon. But the semi-authoritarian regime of Napoleon III was still very different from that of Hitler. In the Third Reich, the majority gave not only its passive but its active consent to the Führer. Hitler was more of a populist (and, in the broadest sense of the term, more of a democrat) than Napoleon III, more so than other dictators, such as those in South America or Mussolini or Kemal. As a matter of fact (as he himself said), Hitler was not really a typical dictator—but this was not, as some of the Functionalist historians argue, because he was hesitant, circumscribed by his bureaucracy, or "weak." He was more than a dictator; he was something else. "The old tyrants," Chesterton said, "invoked the past; the new tyrants will invoke the future."

The second element of Tocqueville's vision is his startling statement, again made first in *Democracy in America*, that the age of great revolutions may be a thing of the past, because in a democratized society the majority of people do not wish to be disturbed by revolutionary ideas, though they are wont to accept the presence of a vast bureaucracy in their everyday lives. Again, this applies to Hitler—though only to some extent. His 1934 statement to the effect that there would be no revolutions in Germany for a thousand years was more than an assuaging of the latent fears of German conservatives and ordinary people. From time to time, he still employed the adjective "revolutionary" in a positive sense—in the sense that what he established was a revolutionary "New Order," as opposed

to disorder. Here again, an anti-Marxist epigram of the profound Simone Weil (1942) is telling: "It is not religion but revolution that is the opiate of the people"—and Hitler's usage of "revolution" was a kind of opiate for the New Order.

The third element is Tocqueville's vision of the last one thousand years. Aware and knowledgeable as he was of the classic division of European history into ancient, medieval, and modern epochs, he had another view that transcended these categories. This was the change from the aristocratic age to the democratic age; from entire societies ruled by minorities to societies ruled by their majorities (or, at least, in the name of their majorities). He thought that this was the deepest change in the history of the last thousand years.

What we may then see now, at the end of the so-called Modern Age, is that this last great era, which began about five hundred years ago, may have been marked by the—sometimes uneasy but civilizationally and culturally fruitful—confluence of tradition and reform, of aristocracy and democracy, with the former weakening and the latter rising, until now, when we live in an overwhelmingly democratic age (and when we may have to rethink the very political terms associated with democracy). What this means for the future, I cannot tell; new divisions and new hierarchies will appear. But what it means for the recent past, a historian can—and ought to—recognize: that Hitler was a new kind of revolutionary; a populist revolutionary in a democratic age, notwithstanding all of the then still extant older elements of German institutions and German society, many of which he knew how to employ for his purposes.*

*A general tendency of most historians—and perhaps especially the German ones—has been to see the Hitler chapter of German history as a horrid but transitional one: something between (or a compound of) the old and the new, in part also because of the evident ambiguities in Hitler's character and ideas. There is truth in this vision, though, in my opinion, it does not go far enough.

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THE TERM "TOTALITARIANISM" was not included in the *Oxford English Dictionary* until 1936, but it had already appeared in the late 1920s, in a Fascist Italy. We may find it applied to Fascist Italy or to the Soviet Union, but it was seldom applied to Communist Russia until the 1950s. The term "totalitarianism" became a catchword applied especially to Communism in the mid-1940s, and, as we shall see, imprecise throughout the twentieth century.* However,

*An influential example of the term's use is *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, published in 1941 by the Oxford intellectual, especially in New York City, Hannah Arendt. Arendt was (at best) willing to recognize the totalitarianism of Hitler and Stalin, but she was flawed and dishonest book (see my *Reconsidered*, April 1990).

Hitlerism and Stalinism, what we ought to consider now is the incorrect application of "totalitarianism"—meaning total state rule—not only to the Third Reich but to the very ideas (and some of the practices) of Adolf Hitler.

To begin with what is (or should be) obvious: the *total* rule of the state is impossible. Even at the peak and at the maximum extent of a modern tyrant's rule, there remain people and islands of life that are surprisingly untouched by the police rule of the state. Still, the term "totalitarianism" may seem reasonable when it is the practical *intention* of the tyrant or tyrants ruling a state to exercise total control over its inhabitants. But there is room for a serious question whether that was Hitler's intention. His intention was to rule with the active consent of the majority of his people, among whom the potential opposition of—small—minorities would be insignificant and entirely ineffectual. It may even be said that while Stalin (not unlike other, mostly Oriental rulers) was exercised by the danger of potential opponents, whence his purges), Hitler (and also Himmler, the SD, and the Gestapo), while aware of the existence and the locus of potential opponents, were principally interested in discovering evidence of any *actual* opposition. For Hitler the only categorically and unquestionably potential opponents—people whose asseverations, indeed, whose very acts, of loyalty were unwanted because, to him, they could not be anything but actual enemies—were the Jews; and it is to this obsession of his that I shall have to return (chapter 6).

Of course, Germany was not Russia; and the Hitler revolution in Germany was not at all like the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Except for Jews, there was more individual and even political freedom in National Socialist Germany than in Communist Russia—a greater variety of publications in the sciences and in the arts, and more

mid-1940s and originally referred only to the origins and practices of Nazism; unhistorical and shrilly verbose, the book illustrated its theses with quotes taken from an indiscriminating variety of books. After 1948, after the manuscript was rejected by various New York publishers, Arendt thought it politic to add two, extremely superficial, chapters expounding the totalitarian features of Stalinism. These were illustrated by citations from no more than two (then recent) books describing Stalin's crimes.

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In reality, the Third Reich and "Beamtenstaat."‡ But not with that of the Third often, Goebbels—seldom

*Schramm, SCH, p. 95: "It is as a hyper-Machiavellian not from what he saw as 'the eternal' Hitler was not a tyrant imposed into the war, a highly popular (p. 370), on the subject of Hitler only one dogma, in brief: what

†See Lukacs, LEW, p. 324. *Not of the West*: "The state is the form of state" as being of a higher order never—except when circumstances

‡This is the essence of the *Limits of Hitler's Power*, Chicago



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struction of the various German opposition groups against Hitler,
one is struck by their relative liberty of movement within that police
state; by the relative ease with which some people flitted back and
forth between Germany and abroad, or met foreign diplomats in
Berlin, talking cautiously but almost freely. This kind of behavior
would have been inconceivable in the Soviet Union (and in some
other police states too). But then, Gestapo and SD notwithstanding,
National Socialist Germany was both more and less than a police
state.* The clever Carl Schmitt, the principal constitutional theorist
of the Third Reich, wrote in 1935 that the National Socialist re-
gime meant the end of the old Prussian "Beamtenstaat," with its
Hegelian conception of a state governed by officials. It was, instead,
a "Volksgenossenstaat," a state of the comradeship of the people:
"The state is the instrument of the people."† That was exactly what
Hitler thought. The German working class, among others, felt
something of this, too: Many of the steelworkers of Krupp were
more reliable followers of the Führer than were some of the old
Prussian civil servants. As late as March 1945, Speer was driven to
despair as he overheard the talk of German workers who, unlike
himself, were still confident of Hitler and of victory in the end.

In reality, the Third Reich was a mixture of "Volksgenossenstaat"
and "Beamtenstaat."‡ But our concern is with the history of Hitler,
not with that of the Third Reich. He—unlike Mussolini or, more
often, Goebbels—seldom used the word "total." Bullock properly

*Schramm, SCH, p. 95: "It would be an oversimplification to characterize Hitler as a hyper-Machiavellian no longer inhibited by law. His concept of legality came from what he saw as 'the eternal laws of natural events.'" Kershaw, KER, p. 194: "Hitler was not a tyrant imposed upon Germany. He was in many respects, until well into the war, a highly popular national leader." At the same time Speer (SP, p. 370), on the subject of Hitler's pragmatism, cites him as saying: "There can be only one dogma, in brief: what is useful is right."

†See Lukacs, LEW, p. 324. Note, too, the difference from Spengler, in *The Decline of the West*: "The state is the form of a people." The "elitist" Spengler still saw "the state" as being of a higher order than "the people"; Schmitt sometimes; Hitler never—except when circumstances forced him to do so (about this see chapter 5).

‡This is the essence of the important argument of Edward N. Peterson, *The Limits of Hitler's Power*, Chicago, 1968.

cited his speech in Munich in November 1934: "In Germany bayonets do not terrorize a people. Here a government is supported by the confidence of the entire people. . . . I have not been imposed by anyone upon this people. From this people I have grown up, in the people I have remained, to the people I return. My pride is that I know no statesman in the world who with greater right than I can say that he is representative of the people."* Fest's insight is considerable: "Hitler never wanted to establish a tyranny [Gewaltherrschaft]." And: "A mere hunger for power is insufficient to explain the Hitler phenomenon, which cannot be studied as [yet] another form of modern tyranny."† We have seen that Hitler himself said that he was not a dictator and did not wish to be one. Kershaw expressed this, in a judicious sentence: "To suggest that Hitler's power rested on 'totalitarian terror'—leaving aside difficulties with the concept of 'totalitarianism'—is to state only a partial truth."‡ In HF/AN, Haffner made the bold suggestion that at least until 1938 the Third Reich was not a totalitarian but an authoritarian state, thus at least comparable to other dictatorships in the Europe of the 1930s, including Italy.

THERE IS (OR, RATHER, WAS), of course, a difference between "totalitarian" and "authoritarian" regimes, between, say, Hitler's on the one hand and Franco's or Salazar's or Pilsudski's or Metaxas's on the other—a difference that is more than one of nuances. Most of these dictators did not intend to maintain total control over personal and family lives. But by fixing our attention on *the state*, we miss the essential difference that separates Hitler's vision—and his intentions—from that of all other contemporary dictators, including Mussolini and Stalin.

Consider that the state, as we know it, was a creation of the so-called Modern Age, arising first in Renaissance Italy and then in Western Europe about five hundred years ago; in an age marked by the roiling and evolving mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, democ-

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*Zitelmann (ZIT/B, p. 85) cites there existed a widespread feeling democracy." He adds: "Hopes for utopian aspirations for a better, paradoxical: but the end of [parliar beginning of true popular rule."

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*BU, p. 404.

†F, p. 571; also p. 572.

‡KER, p. 62.

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racy—and that Hitler's vision of history and of the future entailed a radical break with the institutions of the Modern Age. He would have agreed with Tocqueville on one thing: that the age of democracy was now irreversible. One hundred years before Hitler's assumption of power, Tocqueville projected a new kind of tyranny, peculiar to the democratic age: the tyranny of a majority. What was perhaps peculiar to Hitler was his establishment of a tyranny not so much *of* but *through* a majority.* "The state"—i.e., state interests, the security of the state—was a sacrosanct term in the modern world, even in Stalin's Soviet Russia, at the latest by 1939.† But already in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had written that "the state is but a means to the end" ["Der Staat ist ein Mittel zum Zweck"]. And—with all of the compromises he had to make for the sake of the state—he remained consistent about this priority till the end. In March 1929, he said: "For us the idea of the Volk is higher than the idea of the state." On 10 May 1933: "It is not an accident that religions are more stable than forms of states." On 6 April 1938, he put it tersely in a speech in Salzburg: "In the beginning was the Volk, and only then came the Reich." Or, in his significant speech to officers in the Platterhof in May 1944: "The state is only an enforced framework" [eine Zwangsform].‡ On 5 September 1934, in Nuremberg:

*Zitelmann (ZIT/B, p. 85) cites Haffner: In 1933, among the German majority there existed a widespread feeling of freedom, of being "relieved of [parliamentary] democracy." He adds: "Hopes for a revival of national greatness were joined with utopian aspirations for a better, more socially minded society. It may sound paradoxical: but the end of [parliamentary] democracy seemed to mean to many the beginning of true popular rule."

†The term *the state*, originally anathema not only to Marx but also to Lenin, had become sacrosanct in the Soviet Union by 1939. (It may even be argued that Stalin's 1936–39 purges signified in large part the transformation of a party bureaucracy into a state bureaucracy.) In any event, Stalin (who, the very opposite of Lenin, was not a revolutionary but a statesman) discovered the supreme importance of the state at the very time when Hitler found that supreme importance to be outdated—another example of the backwardness of Stalin's Communism compared with Hitler's National Socialism.

‡Jäckel (JHW, p. 99) also cites MK: "The question of the external structure of the state . . . is not of principal importance, it only serves certain practical purposes." Haffner (HFA/N, p. 86) goes further—in my opinion, correctly—recognizing the significance that "in Hitler's political system the state plays an entirely subordinate part."

"Foreigners may say that the state created us. No! We are The State! We follow the orders of no earthly power but those of God who created the German people! On us depends the state!"

Here was one of the differences between Mussolini and Hitler, or between Italian Fascism and German National Socialism. In the Fascist Manifesto of 1932 Mussolini said, "It is not the people who make the state but the state that makes the people."^{*} Mussolini was a populist, but less so than Hitler. Campaigning against the individualism of the Italian people, Mussolini tried to institutionalize and enforce the submission of the individual to the state—harking back, at least in some ways, to the ideal of the state of the Italian Renaissance. He occasionally used "totalitarian" as an adjective. Yet his Italian regime was authoritarian rather than totalitarian, and not only because of his acceptance of the monarchy, the church, and many other minor exceptions to Fascist "totality." To describe Hitler and National Socialism as one of the forms of Fascism, as Ernst Nolte did, is wrong—as is the imprecise and mistaken leftist practice of applying the adjective "Fascist" to all movements and regimes of the radical right.[†]

At the same time, Hitler's political realism compelled him to consider the primacy of state interests on many an occasion. Already in 1926, he put the necessity of good relations with Mussolini above the nationalist desires of many Austrians and South Germans to reclaim the largely German-inhabited South Tyrol, which the Paris peace treaties had awarded to Italy. He had some trouble convincing some of his followers of this. The decision not to imperil his potential relationship with Mussolini, whom he admired and respected at that time, may have been ideological as well as realistic. I find Hitler's reaction to Mussolini's acquiescence in his occupation of

^{*}Cited in a study by Horst Zimmermann in Manfred Funke, ed., *Deutschland und die Mächte. Materialien zur Aussenpolitik des III. Reiches*, D, 1977, p. 817.

[†]Haffner, *HF/AN*, p. 60: "Nothing is more misleading than to call Hitler a Fascist." Fest, who was sympathetic to Nolte, used the term "Fascist" in *F*, on occasion; but as Bracher wrote in his complimentary review of *F*, this happened seldom, and it had no influence on Fest's interpretation, according to which Hitler, unlike other "Fascists," did not depend on historical reminiscences but worked for revolutionary change.

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Austria in March 1938 perhaps more significant: "Mussolini, I shall
never forget this!" Hitler fired this emotional, and revealing, mes-
sage to the Duce when the latter had accepted the Anschluss,
meaning also the presence of a Greater Germany at the crest of the
Alps. That was months, even years, after Mussolini had proclaimed
a Rome-Berlin Axis and his friendship for Hitler, and after a large
accumulation of most reliable evidence of Mussolini having written
off the independence of Austria. Yet Hitler was relieved. He had
feared that, after all—or in the end, or at the crucial moment—
Mussolini's Italian *Staatsräson*, *raison d'état*, would kick in, more
important than their ideological comradeship.

It was to solidify his position and authority within the German
state (even more than within the National Socialist Party) that
Hitler moved against Röhm in the brutal coup of June 1934—after
which he made one of his few speeches sanctifying the cause of
the state: "The nation must know that its existence—and this will
be guaranteed by its internal order and security—will not be en-
dangered with impunity by anyone! And everyone must know for all
the future that if he raises his hand to strike at the state, then certain
death is his lot."* There was—obviously—some political calculation
behind such a statement, but it was not altogether contrary to his
own realistic beliefs. Bullock was astute in writing that Hitler's
"originality lay in his realization that effective revolutions, in modern
conditions, are carried out with, and not against, the power of the
State: the correct order of events was first to secure access to that
power and then begin his revolution."† But already in 1932 Ernst

*Cited by Fest, F, p. 644. He adds: "Repellent as the circumstances of the murder
of Röhm are, we may yet ask whether Hitler had any other choice at all. . . ." Hitler's successor
Dönitz did not comprehend this well enough. In 1945 (in captivity), he said that in June 1934
Hitler had to navigate between two opposites: According to the radical Nazis (Röhm), the National
Socialist revolution had not gone far enough; according to the conservatives (Papen), it had gone
too far. But there was more than this kind of calculating navigation in Hitler's mind. As long as
Röhm was alive, Hitler could not count on the unquestioning obedience of the
leaders of the army, which was the only strong element in the structure of the state
that was not yet entirely subordinated to him.

†Bullock, p. 257.

whether power is achieved on [the basis of] or in the form of a state."*

see Albert Speer. He placed in *Mein Kampf*: "It is the task of the German people to stand heroically but to preserve the inviolable, and the lack of such a negligence." And, "The use of 'Selbstzweck' cannot be touched with the touch of disaster through the instrumentality of every member of the people."† It was that night, after the war—he for the first time (his idea was the injection of the Führerbunker); but Hitler's priority was not the German people—more so—till the end.‡

the German people identify. Yes, Hitler was a racist—

of MK, II, p. 603.

the reminiscences of the West of the 19th century, *Deutscher Sonett*, p. 65. Krekeler was a member of the national commission of the state and the fundamental sentence: "the German constitution," "perhaps that my colleagues found very valuable—interestingly, only the foreign people may then again gain. There must exist some basic values and basic rights conservatism, inspired by the

in the sense in which many people (all kinds of people, including Benjamin Disraeli) have recognized the unavoidable influence of race in the conflicts of humanity. He did write in *Mein Kampf* that "the racial question was the key to world history." That he was not consistent in his racial preferences is obvious. When the occasion demanded, he chose, or sought, alliances with Japanese, Chinese, Romanians, Arabs, and so forth, while remaining committed to fighting or even destroying his "Nordic" or "Aryan" opponents. This may, of course, be attributed to the exigencies of his statecraft, especially during the war. But that was not all. We have no evidence that—even during his formative years, in Vienna—Hitler read or took seriously the late-nineteenth-century French or German racialist philosophers, such as Gobineau, Vacher de Lapogüe, Lagarde; or that the hysterical racist pamphleteers of the "Ostara" type had a strong or definite influence on him. Not many of his biographers have noted or emphasized this. Haffner did, however. Aware of the above-cited sentence in *Mein Kampf* about race being the key to history, Haffner noted that race was "never defined by him and often equated with the concept of 'nation' . . . A supreme race as a master nation shall, according to Hitler, rule the world one day—but which, a race or a nation? the Germans or the 'Aryans'? This is never entirely clear with Hitler. Equally unclear is whom he regards as Aryans. Only the more or less Germanic nations? Or all whites except the Jews? This is nowhere clarified by Hitler." The real racial differences among white, black, and yellow-skinned people did not much interest Hitler. What interested him was "the struggle within the white race, between the 'Aryans' and the Jews.'" Only about Jews did he remain consistent, to the very end of his life. Yet even on the subject of what the Jewish race meant, he changed his mind, as we shall see in a moment.

For, whether race was the key to history or not, there was an

*H/AN, pp. 80, 82. This is more solid than Fest's citation of the often unreliable Rauschning in F, p. 939. Hitler allegedly said to Rauschning: "Race is a higher concept than nation. With the idea of nation the French led their revolution beyond their frontiers. With the idea of race National Socialism will carry out its revolution to a new world order."

D.T. (and I) made certain we did not go into it. Anti-Semitism was the most useful part of racism. The rest was confusion.

evolution of his thinking in that regard. There were many committed and rigid racist and racial dogmatists among his early allies and followers. The dogmatic racists among the higher members of the Third Reich's hierarchy, such as Himmler, were numerous and important; their racial philosophy led to the establishment of various institutions. Yet Hitler did not share Himmler's "primitive biologism" (well put by Marlis Steinert). Schramm noted that he "had serious reservations about the glorification of the early period of the Germanic peoples—unlike many of his followers."^{*} Speer cited Hitler's dismissal of Himmler's racialist mysticism: "What nonsense! We have reached a time that leaves mysticism behind, and now he is beginning with his again. We might as well have stayed with the Church. That has tradition at least." A number of historians noted that Hitler did not take Alfred Rosenberg seriously at all, and that he was contemptuous of Rosenberg's cloudy book *Myth of the 20th Century*. According to Speer, Hitler said, "A step backward to medieval mythmaking!"[†] Heer cited one of Hitler's 1942 table talks, in which he expressed his pleasure with Cardinal Faulhaber's public protests against Rosenberg's screed.[‡]

Hitler's many—and there were many—statements about races are really statements about what he saw as national characteristics. There *was* a racist element in his thinking (as is true of almost every nationalist), but his governing obsessions were not biological. He knew of the relative lack of response among the German people to the racial propaganda put out in streams by Rosenberg and Himmler. National sentiments of superiority, where and when they existed among the German people, were cultural rather than racial. This is a subject of enormous significance and delicacy which lies largely unexplored. There was (and remains) a superficially slight but essentially profound difference between a *folkish* and a *racist* type of thinking.^{**} The response that Hitler wished to evoke was the result of the former rather than the latter. And that reflected, too,

^{*}SCH, p. 77.

[†]SP, pp. 108, 110.

[‡]HR, p. 406.

^{**}See LEW, p. 397.

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In May 1944, to officers in a remarkable speech at the Platterhof, Hitler said: "We have this people of ours that is not to be identified with a race, and this is now clear to millions. . . . But when I began [speaking] about twenty-five years ago this was not so. I was told by [counterrevolutionary-*bürgerlich*] circles: Yes, Volk and Race are one and the same! No! Volk and race are not the same. Race is a component of blood, a hematologic [*blutmässig*] kernel, but the Volk is very often composed not of one race but of two, three, four or five different racial kernels. . . . Each of these racial kernels possesses particular talents."* And in the Bormann records, on 13 February 1945, Hitler said: "Pride of race is a quality which the German, fundamentally, does not possess. We use the term of Jewish race as a matter of convenience, for in reality and from the genetic point of view there is no such thing as the Jewish race." *There is no such thing as the Jewish race.* . . . †

NATIONALISM AND RACISM are not easily definable terms. (Nor is there a first-rate general history of either nationalism or of racism. One reason for this is that nationalism may differ from country to country more than internationalism or socialism does.) And this is not the place to expatiate on their differences or on their origins, except to emphasize three matters: (1) that Adolf Hitler was more of a nationalist than a racist; (2) that nationalism can be even more exclusionary than racism—mostly because of its attribution of cultural,

*Speech of 26 May 1944, published and annotated by Hans-Heinrich Wilhelm, in *Militärgeschichtlich Mitteilungen*, 1976 (2), pp. 149–50. In this speech Hitler did not insist on the superiority of the Nordic racial "kernel": "The strongest of these racial kernels, with a commercial but no creative talents, would have been the Jews among us, in the long run, and with the difference that this Jewry would not have been absorbed racially by the German people but that it would have destroyed the German Volk gradually, step by step."

†*The Testament of Adolf Hitler*. The Hitler-Bormann Documents, I, 1961 (hereafter AH/V). In these last recorded monologues, Hitler also referred to Jews as "a spiritual race."

linguistic, and even religious elements;* and (3) that nationalism, more than racism, is a modern, and populist, phenomenon.

Modern, and populist. When Samuel Johnson made his celebrated pronouncement "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel," he meant *nationalism*, since that word did not yet exist in English. Patriotism (as George Orwell noted in one of the few essays extant on its distinction from nationalism) is defensive, while nationalism is aggressive; patriotism is rooted in the land, in a particular country, while nationalism is applied to the myth of a people (indeed, to a putative majority); patriotism is traditionalist, while nationalism is populist. Populism is folkish; patriotism is not. This phenomenon—or, rather, tendency—is almost universal in the twentieth century. The nineteenth century was full of liberal nationalists, some of them inspiring and noble figures. In the twentieth century this has seldom been so. One hundred years before, Orwell's (1943) distinction between nationalism and patriotism would have seemed labored, it would have made relatively little sense. Even now nationalism and patriotism often overlap within the mind and the heart of the same person. Yet we must be aware of the differences between them—because of the phenomenon of populist nationalism, which, unlike old-fashioned patriotism, is inseparable from the myth of a people. One can be a patriot and, at least culturally, cosmopolitan. But a populist is inevitably a nationalist of sorts. Patriotism, too, is less racist than is populism. A patriot will not exclude a person of another race from the community where they have lived side by side and whom he has known for many years; but a nationalist will always remain suspicious of someone who does not seem to belong to his kind of people—or, more likely, to his way of thinking. "The jingo nationalist"—Alfred Duff Cooper said it well—"is always the first to denounce his fellow countrymen as traitors."

This difference between patriotism and nationalism Hitler exemplified. About its meaning he was explicitly clear. Early in his youth, as he put it in *Mein Kampf*, "I was a nationalist, but not a patriot."

*Few, otherwise racist, Southerners would deny that American-born blacks are Americans; many German Nazis denied that German-born Jews were Germans. (Other examples: Ulster, Yugoslavia.)

He desired to unite him Greater Germany, at the Habsburg imperial state thoped this theme often. Th 6 April 1927, reported in c later, "Nationalism and Pa A few excerpts: "We are n "A decisive settlement of the German Bürgertum th young and socialistic natio older outdated patriotism. have a true national goal. absolutely different things. allow the past to continue career Hitler was aware of t He made good use of it. He and the occasional opposit clergy, and lay people to N racial institutions when at th their unqualified nationalist Patriotism is not a subst alism often is; it may fill t spiritual—needs of people.) Quint made telling observ impulse [Ausgangspunkt] . his movement, which grew

*The subtitles of the lead article in his speech: "The curse of the small guilt of the Bürgertum—The international—The nationalist state."

†Example: In the mostly Catholic of the vote, while in 1935—union with the Third Reich. In A Eichmann, Globocnik, Kaltenbrunner the *Austrian* National Socialist League also be telling that in 1940 Hitler United States as "radical nationalists

‡See chapter 2 for a discussion

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but was there anything new in that? The principle of the triumph of the Tough over the Weak goes back even beyond Machiavelli, perhaps to Cain and Abel themselves.* Hitler understood that people respond to—indeed, that they will respect—the realities of power.† Moreover, unlike many Social Darwinists, Hitler was not a materialist, convinced as he was of the power of ideas.

He was an extreme nationalist—perhaps the most extreme nationalist of all the principal figures of the twentieth century. And while nationalism is atavistically human, deeper, and stronger than class consciousness, the trouble is not only its latent inhumanity but the—perhaps surprising—abstractness of its assumption about human nature itself. "Love of the people": but who *are* the people? Nationalism is both self-centered and selfish, because human love is not the love of oneself, it is the love of *another*. Patriotism is traditional and not merely biological, because charitable love is human and not merely "natural." Nature has—and shows—no charity.‡ That Hitler believed. He also believed that charity does not have a function in the history of mankind. Whether that amounted to his belief in Social Darwinism is arguable. What is not questionable is that his hatred for his opponents was both stronger and less abstract than was his love for his people.** That was (and remains) a distinguishing mark of the mind of every extreme nationalist.

*Zitelmann—as well as others—overemphasized Hitler's Social Darwinism. Hitler often made references to Marx but seldom, if ever, to Darwin.

†In February 1924, before the court: "The psyche of the people is such that it respects the existence of power, first of all." (ZIT/A, p. 47.)

‡It is therefore that the dignity of human life must proceed from a denial of Darwinism, and from the recognition that, no matter how biologically small, there is an essential difference between human beings and all other living beings. Both Christianity and Western civilization are humanist in that sense, in the sense of their requisite denial of the survival of the fittest as a principle governing humanity.

**And yet consider: Hatred is a *human* inclination, as is love. Just as human love is something more and different from an animal's instinctive affections, hatred in humans is something different from the "red tooth and claw" of nature. And while human love is always a love for another, human hate is inevitably self-centered; for we often hate in others something that we hate in ourselves. (That, too, is true less of racism than it is of nationalism.) And what did Hitler hate in himself? That is a secret that he died without divulging.

*Survival of the fittest destroys the
potentiality of the race*

Hitler's ideology

This tendency is not unreasonable; their emphasis is on Hitler's career leading to a war that he could not but lose, dragging millions to death and destruction before the end. This widely and generally held view still remains acceptable, except for two things. One is that in 1940 and 1941 Hitler came close to winning his war. The other is that his ultimate defeat may have been foreordained (even though "foreordained" suggests a determinism that historians ought to avoid) because of his hubris; but then hubris is a fault of character rather than of vision; and Hitler was not blind.* As Pascal said, love is not really blind; and neither are other kinds of passion. They are, more than often, a compound of a startling clarity of vision with a startling blindness (a compound that, like "half-truth," is not fixable within the categories of mathematics). And since vision involves purposes rather than motives, we ought to direct some attention to what Adolf Hitler's purposes were before and perhaps especially during the war.

They are not easy to ascertain.† (Or perhaps I should write

the "to this day widely prevalent representation of [Hitler] the man of instincts . . . ignoring the rationality and the boldness of planning that were basic to his behavior and which governed his rise not less than all his other apparent abilities"—very true, but then Fest does *not* apply the same judgment to the war years and to Hitler's foreign policies (about which we may find the few mistakes in his otherwise excellent book). Steinert, who is very good on the German people during the war (in *ST/HK/D*) in *ST*, is weak on Hitler's statesmanship and strategy, with a share of minor errors; also unduly dependent on Goebbels. The most extreme disproportion between the space and treatment devoted to the war and the prewar years is in Davidson. (See chapter 1, p. 22*n*.)

*Kershaw in *KER*, for instance, p. 121: ". . . a deepening hubris of power, the early stages of what was to develop into catastrophic *folie de grandeur* and detachment from reality." (Not entirely untrue, but the last three words are debatable.) *KER* also tends to exaggerate Ribbentrop's influence on Hitler (pp. 144, 146); and he does not treat Hitler's aim and wish to split his enemies after 1941. Yet Kershaw is correct when he states (p. 177): "Hitler's decisions in the military arena were by no means all as absurd as they were sometimes retroactively painted."

†Schramm, in *sch*, p. 31: "Hitler hardly ever lost control of himself completely, even though in time his nerves were taxed to such an extent that most men, operating under a similar burden, would not have been physically equal to it. Consequently, it is very difficult to come to grips with what Hitler really thought and perceived, difficult to clarify the extent to which he was motivated by logic or impelled by instinct."

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"understand," rather than "ascertain"—since, unlike in the natural sciences, the purpose of historical knowledge may be understanding even more than "certainty.") There exists a substantial body of his own statements about his purposes—not only in his public speeches and his "private" table talk but well before that, in the hundreds of pages directed to what the aims of German foreign policy and German expansion should be, in *Mein Kampf* and in *Hitler's Secret Book*, as well as in the many articles he dictated or wrote during the years before his coming to power.* But here may be a case of not seeing the trees for the forest. To think (as, for example, Bullock does) that Hitler's aims were clearly set forth in *Mein Kampf*, and that therefore there was a frightening consistency in his purposes and their execution, is too simple. Recall, too, that he was also a very secretive man.† Whatever his basic ideas were (and we have also seen that there was, at least in some of them, an evolution), there were instances when he, like every other human being (not to speak of a politician or a statesman) had to adjust them to circumstances beyond his direct control. We have also seen that many of his statements were meant for public purposes, including the purpose of influencing not only large groups of listeners but men around him, and his conversants. Of course, no historian—and surely no biographer—possesses the mental powers (and, consequently, ought not to have the intellectual arrogance) to define and divide and nail down two categories of proof: (a) this was what his subject said he thought, (b) this was what his subject really thought.

**Hitler's Secret Book*, NY, 1961 (hereafter: HSB). Deuerlein is very perspicacious about this (D, p. 76): "... *Mein Kampf* is not ... a 'Timetable of a World Conqueror'; rather a summary of what Hitler himself said; lead articles for [a] 'Völkischer Beobachter'."

†Gerald Fleming, *Hitler and the Final Solution*, Berkeley, Calif., 1982 (hereafter: FL), p. 18, citing Hitler's words to General Halder when appointing the latter as chief of staff of the army, September 1938: "You should know first of all that you will never be able to discover my thoughts and intentions until I give them out as orders. . . . In politics things are entirely different. You will never learn what is going on in my head. . . ." (Halder confirmed this personally to Fleming.) See also Schramm (SCH, p. 130), Hitler to Admiral Raeder, admitting his own "three ways of keeping secrets."

We may say—at the pose was to make Germany certainly the greatest in achievement of a new people (which involved the eventual unity of nearly in a single Reich. We may his minimal aim,* even though with any great consistency would evolve and change. of expelling Jews from Germany in 1940) of expelling them (1941), when emigration alone have masses of them extermination of the remanded (a complicated matter return). There is, of course, Jews (at least in Germany of Hitler's. There is also a "raum": to obtain, or conquest settlement in the east of Europe sions and intentions may be thing; and, despite Hitler's statements and directives concerning were less consistent than his.

This is the main reason in view, according to which the Russia leading to *Lebensraum*.

*"God writes straight with crooked lines." He achieved this (except for Austria) millions of Germans abandoned in of Germany: after the war, millions slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia. years, there were few Germans left which was perhaps the most enduring. †Schreiber (SCHRB, p. 65) mentions only twice. (The term came first early as 1897.)

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We may say—at the risk of some imprecision—that his purpose was to make Germany one of the greatest powers of the world, certainly the greatest in Europe. The fundament of this was the achievement of a new and unprecedented unity of the German people (which involved the expulsion of the Jews among them), and the eventual unity of nearly all German-speaking people in Europe in a single Reich. We may essay the statement that this was probably his minimal aim,* even though he did not (and could not) follow it with any great consistency. Especially during the war, his policies would evolve and change. We shall see, for example, that his policy of expelling Jews from Germany eventually evolved into the aim in 1940 of expelling them from most, if not all, of Europe; then (in 1941), when emigration and expulsion were no longer possible, to have masses of them exterminated, and then (in late 1944) the mass extermination of the remnant millions in the death camps was suspended (a complicated matter to which in chapter 6 I shall have to return). There is, of course, ample evidence that the presence of Jews (at least in Germany and Europe) was a fundamental obsession of Hitler's. There is also ample evidence of his desire for "Lebensraum": to obtain, or conquer, if need be, more lands for German settlement in the east of Europe, including Russia. But while obsessions and intentions may overlap, they are not altogether the same thing; and, despite Hitler's innumerable and often categorical statements and directives concerning the latter, his Lebensraum policies were less consistent than his Judeophobic ones.†

This is the main reason why we must qualify the widely accepted view, according to which anti-Judaism and the conquest of European Russia leading to *Lebensraum* were not only the two fundamental but

*"God writes straight with crooked lines." Paradoxically, his defeat and death achieved this (except for Austria and the South Tyrol). In the last year of the war, millions of Germans abandoned their lands and fled westward, into what remained of Germany; after the war, millions more were expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Thus, for the first time in eight hundred years, there were few Germans left in Eastern Europe beyond the Oder River—which was perhaps the most enduring, and historic, consequence of Hitler's war.

†Schreiber (SCHREIB, p. 65) mentions that Hitler used the term "Lebensraum" in MK only twice. (The term came from the German geographer Ratzel and others, as early as 1897.)

States. We shall return to these crucial matters in the course of this chapter.*

MUCH THAT WAS SUCCESSFUL in Hitler's career was due to his opponents' underestimation of his abilities. The head of the small party that Hitler joined in 1919 underestimated his capacity to attract people and power to his side;† the German politicians (and not only politicians) woefully underestimated his political abilities; and after he came to power many people throughout the world derided his talents as a potential European statesman. Yet he proved to be an alarmingly effective statesman—not only in peace but also in war—and an often alarmingly successful strategist.‡ From a provincial demagogue, he rose to a successful politician and an awesomely respected leader of a great nation, and then—at least for some time—to the director of the greatest war machine in the world. In that capacity, the world—including his leading opponents—finally learned not to underestimate him, even though there

*I must also state another disagreement with Hillgruber, who was a proponent of the—to many Germans still attractive—two-war theory: that the war in the West (which was a "normal European war" [ein europäisches Normalkrieg]) was regrettable, a tragic development to which Hitler had decisively contributed, whereas the war with Russia, at least in its latter stages, amounted to a heroic defense of the German land, the German people, and Western civilization. I understand the sentiments of this native of East Prussia; but I must abide by the answer that Field Marshal Montgomery gave in May 1945 to the exclamation of the German generals who wished to get from him a partial surrender: "The Russians are savages!" Whereupon Montgomery: "You should have thought of that in June 1941."

†Fest, F., p. 203: "With a mixture of coldbloodedness, calculation and determination as well as [his] readiness to take great risks for the sake of limited aims—and this he demonstrated in all kinds of crisis situations—he succeeded in getting the Party in his hands." Also, p. 206: His later demonstrated ability to master crises included, too, his repeated tendency "to endanger his triumphs through their further exaggeration."

‡Some of his biographers shy away from the word "statesman," mostly because of the positive connotations of the word. Thus Heiber in *HB*, p. 117: "No. Hitler was a very clever leader of a party, a dedicated demagogue, an inspiring speaker, and even about Hitler the military commander there will be something to say: but a *statesman* he was not."

was little in Hitler's past Caesar or a Napoleon. had learned a bitter and

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in Hitler's career was due to his abilities. The head of the small underestimated his capacity to side;† the German politicians (and underestimated his political abilities; any people throughout the world European statesman. Yet he proved statesman—not only in peace but ingly successful strategist.‡ From to a successful politician and an great nation, and then—at least of the greatest war machine in world—including his leading oppo- terestimate him, even though there

with Hillgruber, who was a proponent of two-war theory: that the war in the West (in europäisches Normalkrieg) was regret- ter had decisively contributed, whereas the ges, amounted to a heroic defense of the Western civilization. I understand the senti- must abide by the answer that Field Mar- exclamation of the German generals who "The Russians are savages!" Whereupon of that in June 1941."

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from the word "statesman," mostly because Thus Heiber in *HB*, p. 117: "No. Hitler indicated demagogue, an inspiring speaker, under there will be something to say: but a

was little in Hitler's past that suggested a character comparable to a Caesar or a Napoleon. But the evidence had come, and the world had learned a bitter and hard lesson.

One—perhaps the main—source of Hitler's political and military, diplomatic and strategic, abilities may be summed up briefly. He had an ability—mostly, though not entirely, instinctive—to recognize the weaknesses of his actual or potential opponents. (And also those of his actual, or potential, allies or followers.) He did not always know with certainty what they would do; but he was reason- ably confident (and often rather accurate) in understanding what they were loath to do. This stabbing comprehension of the weaker sides of human nature carried him far; but it also led to some of his greatest failures when he underestimated some of his adversaries and therefore failed to understand them.* Still a powerful understanding of human nature may be a principal instrument, serving not only a statesman but a strategist as well.† Napoleon Bonaparte knew this when he quipped that there are two human occupations where an amateur is often better than a professional, one being prostitution and the other war.

In Hitler's case we may have to carry this a little further, evoking Napoleon's contemporary Clausewitz, the great German theoretician of war.‡ His famous maxim that war is but the continuation of politics by other means, surely applies to Hitler. (It is of course a truism: even a tyrant prefers an opponent who surrenders rather than fights.) But Clausewitz was thinking and writing about the many dynastic wars of the eighteenth century and of Napoleon, and

*Churchill, for example. Also, not being an optimist, Hitler was wont to expect the worst from his enemies. This went beyond attributing weaknesses to them.

†Schramm (*sch*, p. 32, note 2) cites Dr. v. Hasselbach ("the most critical and reliable of Hitler's doctors"): "Hitler repeatedly asserted that one of his essential capacities, which he could depend on absolutely, was the ability to judge men. Even a brief impression was sufficient for him to be able to say what sort of a person a man was and how he could best be used."

‡Görlitz-Quint cite a Hitler statement in *GO*, p. 482: "Strategy is not a secret science. It is the application of a healthy knowledge of human nature. Its basis [ihre Grundformen] may be studied at a boxing match. Armies are nothing but gigantic bodies." This corresponds to Hegel's idea according to which the state is but a human being writ large, a "Macroanthropos."

Hitler's wars were so very different. (Also, Hitler was a Clausewitzian in the reverse sense, too, waging politics as if it were war.)

In addition—superseding both Napoleon's and Clausewitz's realistic recognition of the supreme importance of morale in war—Hitler was an idealist determinist, which is perhaps a peculiarly German inclination. He believed (as had Schopenhauer and Nietzsche) in the supreme importance of will; and also in the supreme power of ideas. He thought that in the streets of German cities as well as in the arena of politics, his National Socialist storm troopers must, and would, win: that one National Socialist street fighter was worth two or three of his Communist or Socialist opponents, not only because he was better disciplined and trained but because of the superior force of his convictions and ideas. He believed that the war in Europe was but the repetition on a larger scale of what had happened within Germany in 1928–33: that a German fighting man was worth two English or three French or four Russian soldiers because of the superior nature and strength of the idea which he incarnated. And that was why Germany had to win this war against her numerous enemies, just as the National Socialists had had to win, and indeed had won, their war against their enemies within Germany.* This conviction carried Hitler very far: but not far enough. Yet this was one instance in which there was probably no difference between his publicly expressed and his most private beliefs; in this kind of determinist idealism he seems to have believed till the end.†

At the same time, Hitler's convictions were sustained, assisted,

*Fest cites Hitler on the British appeasers (F, p. 801): "meine Hugenberger," "the likes of Hugenberg" (or "my Hugenbergs"), Hugenberg having been the German nationalist conservative who went along with Hitler hoping to get his own way, and then was easily discarded.

†He was, like most successful military leaders, an innovator; but, true to himself, he was more convinced of the importance of military morale than of that of new weapons. In this respect there was, again, a difference between his public statements and his private beliefs. It was to others that he would occasionally suggest the decisive importance of "wonder weapons," while there is little evidence that he privately shared the breathless expectations attributed to them. Steinert (ST, p. 538) exaggerates Hitler's trust in new weapons (his "puerile illusions"). Jäckel (JHW, p. 149) is probably right: There comes a time when Hitler "no longer believes in what he says," though Jäckel does not apply this to the 1943–45 years.

and served by a knowledge which he was not wanting. His private and incomplete, was no military service during the First World War. Instead, he was a fast reader of all that happened most important, he had absorbing and retaining a memory which would sometimes amaze his contemporaries. There were campaign decisions which were wrong; but there were many

*A few examples. Lukacs, LEW, p. 104, cites "ambassadors' dispatches, was never culled from spies. In early July 1940 the transcripts of monitored conversations of the spring of 1941 he wanted and got agents working within the Soviet empire but Hitler was acutely interested." American opponents of Roosevelt drew upon an article from an issue (Marc Irving describes the "Forschungsamt" processes; but this is an exaggeration.

†Schramm (SCH, p. 104) cites Jodl details: "It was due to him personally 37-mm. and 50-mm. guns in time, and were replaced with the long 75-mm. 'Königstiger' . . . were developed p. 106: "This degree of technological engineering that Hitler had never had any practical experience in industry together with iron diligence and a strong self-discipline Hitler began to impose on the army, p. 78: "It is quite clear that Hitler matters beyond his ken. On the broad grasp of military strategy and affairs that one would not expect in a layman, Kershaw is less convincing. Kershaw, weapons derived from the technological principles of the 1920s. Moreover, he was scarcely scientific and technological principles of the 1920s, *passim*, about many examples, including bunkers: planned by Hitler to the last sketches, but well developed."

even when he had to impose them against the judgment of the best-trained general officers in Europe.*

There was one important—and historic—realization that Hitler made, and which served him well. This was the return of the supreme importance of land power. Sea power was the prime key to history, wrote the American Admiral Mahan (who was respected in Germany as well as in Britain) in the 1890s. That may have been true for centuries, perhaps, but no longer. The motorization of military movement changed that. In Napoleon's time the English, if not necessarily victorious, were unconquerable while they could sail rings around Napoleon's European empire, landing here or there with ease. But latest by the 1930s, armies could move faster on land than amphibious forces at sea. Hitler knew (and he said so on many occasions) that the horrible and senseless trench warfare of World War I, million-man armies struggling on the Western front in the mud for a few miles gained or lost, would not return. He was fascinated by the automobile, in many ways. The mobility of armor was even more important than its firepower.† Among his opponents the French, with the exception of Colonel, later General, de Gaulle, almost entirely failed to comprehend this; Franklin Roosevelt, as late as 1941, insisted that "naval power was the key to victory," which was still true in the Pacific and the Atlantic, but not in Europe; Winston Churchill had learned this quickly. All the superiority of the Allies at sea (and even in the air) was not enough; Hitler had to be defeated and Germany conquered on land. Perhaps Stalin knew it; but then the Russians have always been land animals.

*Schramm, *SCM*, p. 147: "It would be a mistake to belittle Hitler as a strategist, or to deny that during the first half of the war he developed conceptions regarded as masterly even by many skeptical experts." P. 190: "Undoubtedly Hitler was able, by his methods, to get much more out of the German Wehrmacht than even the most sanguine optimist would have believed possible." Bullock, *too* (*BU*, p. 588): "Hitler, the outsider, who had never been to a university or a staff college, had beaten the Foreign Office and the General Staff at their own game. It is customary to decry this achievement. . . . [But] if Hitler . . . is justly to be made responsible for the later disasters of the German Army, he is entitled to the major share of the credit for the victories . . . the German generals cannot have it both ways."

†Yet he studied naval handbooks in great detail. He was able to recall many details about the speed, armor, tonnage, and gunnery of enemy warships. Fest (*F*, p. 306) recognized Hitler's realization of the passing predominance of sea power.

ON 30 JANUARY 1933, a and depressed nation which felt themselves gripped by what to anticipate. Except envisaged the worst, most a new order that was both expected. There was a rapid past—this in spite of Hitler's revolution was being accomplished. There was, however, a common with the rest of the world.

It was not only that the situation of power was inadequate for observers. (This is evident in the newspapers during the Depression, despite the despite the recurrent elections many passed in 1932, that assertive than at any time July 1932, which virtually acknowledged both by the opinion with a shrug of a desultory disarmament coalition was increasingly stiff reason to believe that they have risen in the 1930s even the conclusion of this argument does is a brief discussion of how made good use of the traditional German Foreign Ministry

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ON 30 JANUARY 1933, HITLER became the chancellor of a dark and depressed nation whose depression, however, was unusual, because it was not lethargic. On the contrary, millions of Germans felt themselves gripped by a strange kind of agitation, not knowing what to anticipate. Except for a minority who, with every reason, envisaged the worst, most Germans soon accustomed themselves to a new order that was both more and less radical than they had expected. There was a radical break with their immediate political past—this in spite of Hitler's proud insistence that a national revolution was being accomplished without turmoil and bloodshed. There was, however, a continuity—of sorts—in Germany's relations with the rest of the world.

It was not only that the immense importance of Hitler's assumption of power was inadequately understood by almost all foreign observers. (This is evident from the articles and commentaries of foreign newspapers during the week following 30 January 1933.) Despite the Depression, despite the very high rate of German unemployment, despite the recurrent electoral and political crises through which Germany passed in 1932, that year German foreign policy became more assertive than at any time since 1918. The Lausanne agreement in July 1932, which virtually put an end to all German "reparations," was acknowledged both by the Wilhelmstrasse and by German public opinion with a shrug of the shoulder; and at the more and more desultory disarmament conferences in Geneva the German delegation was increasingly stiff-necked and demanding. There is every reason to believe that the power and prestige of Germany would have risen in the 1930s even without Hitler; but a detailed exposition of this argument does not belong in this book. What does belong is a brief discussion of how Hitler, in the service of his statesmanship, made good use of the traditional and conservative personnel of the German Foreign Ministry during the first five years of his rule—

*On one occasion, Goebbels criticized Hitler's foreign minister Neurath: Not a Nazi, "he belongs to an entirely different world." Hitler: No. "[Neurath] is seen in the Anglo-Saxon world as a [gentleman]." (SP, p. 162.) Also p. 217: "'Gentleman' was an unusual word for Hitler to use."

even as he also took care not to alienate that other traditionalist and conservative element of the former republic: the army. Only one or two German diplomats resigned from the foreign service after 1933 and before 1938. Still Hitler's belief in his ideology remained fundamental. It would be too simple to think that he had subordinated his revolutionary ideology to the interests of the state (something that Stalin would do in a crass and brutal manner, misunderstood by anti-Communist ideologues to this day). It would be more accurate to say that Hitler's Realpolitik* was a compound of ideological convictions and calculations of state interest, indeed to the very end—a compound in which he, at least, saw no contradictions.†

Those of Hitler's serious biographers who have felt compelled to acknowledge, and describe, the startlingly successful first six years of his chancellorship have concentrated mostly on his domestic achievements without, of course, ignoring those of his statesmanship in foreign policy—reasonably so, since the two were not separable.[‡] While, on the one hand, his forging of a German national unity was the basis on which his foreign moves had to depend, on the other hand his popular support was steadily enhanced by his people's admiration of his foreign policy, which had led to such a

¹The word "Realpolitik" was coined by the Heidelberg writer A. L. von Rochau in 1853, in his book *Grundsätze der Realpolitik*.

†Thus, for example, he would appoint the same Papen, for whose political ideas and tactics within Germany Hitler had little respect, to important foreign posts (in Vienna and Ankara), where Papen's canny abilities served Hitler well (at least until 1944). As a matter of fact, there were crucial occasions (such as in July 1940) when Hitler would call for Papen, if not for advice, then to hear him out. LEW, p. 334, note 15: "On one occasion, in 1939, Ribbentrop forbade members of the ministry to talk directly with Papen [606, D, VIII, p. 330]—yet Papen continued to function under Hitler's protection."

⁴Görlitz-Quint, 60, p. 513: "He applied the image of the party struggles [of the Weimar Republic] literally to foreign policy. He never realized that domestic and foreign policy are two entirely different matters." But are they? In this respect Irving's summary statement is, for once, more telling (i/w, p. xxiii): "In Hitler's view, Germany's [former] statesmen had put domestic strength too low in their priorities. . . . First he restored Germany's psychological unity; on this stable foundation he rebuilt her economic strength; and on that base in turn he built up the military might with which to enforce an active foreign policy."

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*Thus Fest, F, p. 836: "After he returned to it." This is very d.

†Fest is not correct about resisting Germany's further aggression. Hitler's Realpolitik dictated that he was a tactician and showed no ideological consistency: for years he did nothing to keep [the civil war] going."

‡Toland, *TO*, p. 401: Hitler in 1936: "Admittedly spineless to justify German rearmament thing to do with his calculation

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great rise of German power and prestige abroad. Yet again, it would be erroneous to assert that before 1939 Hitler's statesmanship was, by and large, successful, because he had not yet broken with Realpolitik; and that thereafter the war and its catastrophes were the results of ideology overwhelming whatever "realpolitical" talents for statesmanship he may have possessed.* Ideology, even in the 1930s, was not something apart and different from his cold calculations, but part and parcel of them. Thus, for example, in his most difficult year, 1934, when National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy seemed, at least for a while, to oppose each other, Hitler knew that this would not continue. His first meeting with Mussolini in June 1934 may have been inconsequential; but, contrary to the views of some of his biographers, it was not altogether a failure. It may have, at worst, delayed the pronouncement of a Rome-Berlin Axis that Mussolini would then declare in 1936, but it neither compromised nor obstructed its eventual development.† A compound of ideology and statesmanship governed Hitler's decision to actively support Franco in the Spanish Civil War, and also Germany's relationship with China and Japan.‡ It is true that both in *Mein Kampf* and in his 1928 "book" he had emphatically defined his realistic calculations, a German Reich needing good relations with England and Italy. But it was more than realistic calculation that made him arrive and rejoice at a naval treaty with England in 1935. He thought (and he had some evidence to that effect) that people in the governing circles of England would acquiesce in the rise of a new Germany

*Thus Fest, *F*, p. 836: "After 1939 Hitler departed from 'Politik' and he never returned to it." This is very debatable.

†Fest is not correct about Mussolini, "who, more than others, insisted on resisting Germany's further advance" at Stresa, in 1935. (*F*, p. 673.) He also exaggerates Hitler's Realpolitik during the Spanish Civil War. *F*, p. 685: "... here again he was a tactician and showed a cold rationality that was entirely [?] free of ideology: for years he did nothing to promote Franco's victory and wanted rather to keep [the civil war] going."

‡Toland, *ro*, p. 401: Hitler's persuading Japan to sign the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1936: "Admittedly spineless, the agreement was important as a propaganda ploy to justify German rearmament." It had nothing to do with rearmament, and everything to do with his calculation about the advantageous use of anticommunism.

because of their anticommunism and perhaps even because of certain racial sympathies.* Beneath this coursed his fundamental conviction of his ability to recognize and to profit from the weakness of his opponents. And so he was able to achieve something even greater than Bismarck and, unlike Bismarck, without war: the Saar, the remilitarization of the Rhineland, the incorporation of Austria, and the Sudetenland, creating a Greater German Reich such as the world had never seen. Even before he changed the map of Europe, even before he flung his armed power beyond the German borders for the first time in March 1938, he had already achieved a Diplomatic Revolution. He had, as yet, no fixed alliances—only a few treaties of nonaggression or friendship or anticommunism. At the same time, France had political and military alliances with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, even Soviet Russia. Yet these no longer amounted to much; most of them were useless paper. That was a diplomatic revolution without precedent in the modern history of Europe.

But then, in the winter of 1937-38, there came a change. It was not a change in his objectives, or a result of his changing view of the European situation. It was a change within the man himself. He had convinced himself that he might not have long to live, that time was working against him—and, thus, against Germany. There is a concordance of evidence for this, ranging from changes in his personal and physical habits and his dictation of a private will and testament (in early May 1938) to his decision to appoint Ribbentrop as his foreign minister and dismiss General Fritsch as commander in chief of the army while he himself assumed the functions of minister of war and supreme commander of the Wehrmacht. Much has been

*Zitelmann, too (especially in ZIT/A), is mistaken about Hitler's foreign policy. He overemphasizes Hitler's affection for England, suggesting thereby that the British were responsible for not responding to that adequately. Other German historians have inclined to this, including Hillgruber, who respected Chamberlain but not Churchill. Also, Zitelmann explains Hitler's decision to move into the Rhineland in March 1936 as a reaction to the French Chamber of Deputies' ratification of the 1935 Franco-Soviet Pact "that Germany considered as a break of the Locarno Treaty." Not Germany: Hitler, who used it as a pretext.

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*A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of* him: "The conference was a man which some of Taylor's works were in later editions of *AV*, pp. 367-70 bach Conference in view of Taylor 1937 has been a subject of considerable record (like the record of another 22 August 1939) was not an exact

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written about the so-called Hossbach Conference of 5 November 1937, when Hitler, for the first time, told his military chiefs to prepare for an eventual war. It was less of a blueprint for war than an admonition to the generals that a resort to force might be necessary in the near future. Hitler described when and how Germany would move against Czechoslovakia and into Austria. Such eventualities included a conflict between France and Italy—civil war in France, for example. Because this did not happen, A. J. P. Taylor wrote that "Hitler's exposition was in large part daydreaming, unrelated to what followed in real life." This is not very convincing. The important matter in the conference was Hitler's calculation that when his opportunity arose, France would be paralyzed by weakness: "Britain, almost certainly, and probably France as well, had written off the Czechs and were reconciled to the fact that this question for Germany would be cleared up in due course." This was a remarkably accurate statement of matters in November 1937; it was exactly what happened less than a year later.

But there is another element—or, more precisely, the absence of an element—in this November 1937 conference that has not received the attention it deserves. This is that Hitler made almost no reference at all to Russia. He said something to the effect that in the event of war over Czechoslovakia, Russia would be preoccupied with Japan (which was true), and then there is a cryptic sentence: "Poland—with Russia in her rear—will have little inclination to engage in war against a victorious Germany." In other words, if Poland were to move against Germany, Russia might move against Poland. Here was something like the pattern of German-Russian collusion against Poland nearly two years before it came about.

*A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, NY, 1961. According to him: "The conference was a manoeuvre in domestic affairs." (Only in the sense in which some of Taylor's works were maneuvers in British academic affairs.) Bullock, in later editions of *BU*, pp. 367–70, adjusted his earlier statements about the Hossbach Conference in view of Taylor: "The significance of this meeting in November 1937 has been a subject of considerable controversy." It is true that the Hossbach record (like the record of another important Hitler speech to his generals, that of 22 August 1939) was not an exact verbatim transcript.

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was still possible). Stalin was as secretive about his contacts with Berlin as behooved a sly Caucasian chieftain. It is significant that Hitler allowed hints to be dropped on occasion (as early as May) to the British and the French about the possibility of a German agreement with Russia.* Instructive, then, is his, often cited, conversation with the Swiss Carl J. Burckhardt on 11 August 1939, a few days before he approached Stalin directly. He told Burckhardt (who, he knew, was a partisan of some kind of German-British accommodation): "Everything I undertake is directed against Russia; if the West is too stupid and too blind to understand this, I shall be forced to seek an understanding with the Russians, defeat the West, and after its defeat turn with all of my forces against the Soviet Union. I need the Ukraine, so that they cannot starve us out, as during the last war." Many historians have described this statement as revelatory of Hitler's entire subsequent war strategy; Hillgruber described it as prophetic and farsighted [visionär].† In reality, it was Hitler's attempt (he knew that Burckhardt was listened to in London) to frighten the Western powers into abandoning Poland.

The attempt did not succeed. Nor did the news of the Hitler-Stalin pact eleven days later; nor his last attempts to "drive a wedge," as he himself put it, between the British and the Poles through his last, fraudulent, "offers" to Poland. Since the Poles refused to become German satellites, he would subdue them through war. With Britain and France he did not want war, and hoped that it might not come to that. But on 3 September 1939, Britain and France, however reluctantly, declared war on the Third Reich. Here was the first great and ultimately decisive failure of Hitler's statesmanship. Still, strategically it was not a decisive failure—at any rate, not yet. He knew that the British and the French were reluctant warriors. They might declare war, but beyond that, at least for the time being, they would do little or nothing. About that in the short run he was right.

*His ability to *divide et impera*—that is, not committing himself to one side or another for a time—existed already in 1921–22 and 1924–25 in the face of antagonisms within the party (and perhaps also in 1933–34, between the army and the SA.)

†HST, pp. 28–29. Also F, p. 801, and HF/A1, p. 224.

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WAR IS AN UNPREDICTABLE THING; and there was no reason for him to go to war; certainly not in 1939. So here we come to the great failure of his statesmanship that was inseparable from the faults of his character.* He was in a hurry. This was not the result of a frenzied fanaticism. Throughout Hitler's career there had been many occasions when he knew how to wait, sometimes to the extent of prolonged hesitations. But we have seen that in the winter of 1937-38 he had convinced himself that he did not have long to live; that this led to a change of his physical habits, including his medications; that he had come to think that he was more ill than he actually was. And now he projected this feeling about himself onto the destiny of his nation. He feared that Fate, or Providence, might not allow him to fulfill his great tasks for Germandom. Already at the Hossbach Conference in November 1937, he said that he had to assume that Germany's "problems" must be solved before 1943-45, when time would turn against Germany, when the rearmament of the Western democracies against her would be completed. His friend Mussolini advised him against this—and not only because Italy was not ready for war in 1939. Time was *not* working for Britain and France, he wrote Hitler. They would not sustain a disciplined and severe program of rearmament against a National Socialist Germany and a Fascist Italy, strong and resplendent across Europe. Hitler, who believed in the innate superiority of National Socialism to the outdated liberalism of the West, should have listened to Mussolini, who was largely right; but for reasons peculiar to him, he did not. That was probably the most important miscalculation of his statesmanship, and led to his undoing. Two other mis-

*His barbaric mistreatment of the Polish people had much to do with his hatred of them for having dared to resist him and thus brought about a world war. Haffner (HF/AN, p. 162) shrewdly remarks: "... having won the war against Poland militarily, Hitler by no means used his victory for realizing his original objective, which was to force the Poles to enter the alliance they had previously refused." At the same time, there is plenty of evidence for the, potentially suicidal, character of his hubris. As Fest cites his statement on 23 November 1939: "In this struggle I will stand or fall. I will not survive the defeat of my people. For the outside [world] no capitulation, on the inside no revolution." So it was to be.

takes were his misreading of the situation in 1940, and his consequent conviction that his Russian neighbor no later than in

HE FAILED TO CONQUER RUSSIA: the beginning? He was stopped in December 1941. Not all of the strategy in Russia were attributed to Stalingrad was wrong, his generals, not to drive directly to Moscow, at least debatable,* and his decision to retreat in December 1941 probably. (These pages are directed to question, not about his military tactics, the invasion of Russia as early as issued in December.) That was an ally accepted opinion,† convinced of the consequences. A strategic folly aiming at something much more than the permanent conquest of the Germans there.

But was *this* the reason why he decided in July 1940? That, too, is debatable.

*Hillgruber (and others) make much of Hitler's refusal to make Moscow the main objective. His ideology ["Weltanschauung"]

‡It was—and it ought to be—debated after July 1940 the war against England to Hitler. This argument is not tenable. The German historian Bernd Stegemann (1982, pp. 206-13 (also in 1987); also *Festschrift für die Sowjetunion 1941 als Versuch, die deutsche Außenpolitik des III. Reiches zu rekonstruieren* (Herford/Bonn, 1988). In Manfred Loh's *Materialien zur Außenpolitik des III. Reiches* criticized Broszat's article in *VFZ*, 1970, for his conviction to go at Russia was not a "calculated" that he felt compelled [*ein Zugzwang*] in 1940 and proceed to a decisive ending

ing; and there was no reason for in 1939. So here we come to the up that was inseparable from the a hurry. This was not the result of ut Hitler's career there had been ow to wait, sometimes to the extent e have seen that in the winter of lf that he did not have long to live; ytical habits, including his medica- hat he was more ill than he actually eeling about himself onto the dese- it Fate, or Providence, might not s for Germanism. Already at the iber 1937, he said that he had to s" must be solved before 1943-45, ermany, when the rearmament of at her would be completed. His ainst this—and not only because 1939. Time was *not* working for r. They would not sustain a disci- rearmament against a National ally, strong and resplendent across he innate superiority of National sm of the West, should have lis- ly right; but for reasons peculiar ibly the most important miscalcu- d to his undoing. Two other mis-

h people had much to do with his hatred thus brought about a world war. Haffneraving won the war against Poland mili- for realizing his original objective, which ce they had previously refused." At the the, potentially suicidal, character of his November 1939: "In this struggle I will if my people. For the outside [world] no So it was to be.

takes were his misreading of the British, especially in the summer of 1940, and his consequent conviction that he ought to attack his Russian neighbor no later than in the early summer of 1941.

HE FAILED TO CONQUER RUSSIA. But was his failure ordained from the beginning? He was stopped only at the gates of Moscow in December 1941. Not all of the mistakes of the German military strategy in Russia were attributable to him. If his decision to hold on to Stalingrad was wrong, his often-criticized directive, overriding his generals, not to drive directly on to Moscow in July 1941 is at least debatable,* and his determined order forbidding an overall retreat in December 1941 proved to be surprisingly effective. But these pages are directed to questions about his strategic statesmanship, not about his military tactics. Why did he choose to plan an invasion of Russia as early as July 1940? (The final directive was issued in December.) That was his supreme folly—thus the generally accepted opinion,† convincing because of what we know of its consequences. A strategic folly, motivated by his Lebensraum folly, aiming at something much more than the defeat of an opponent: to the permanent conquest of those lands for the purpose of settling Germans there.

But was *this* the reason why he chose to plan a war against Russia in July 1940? That, too, is debatable.‡ He took this step at the very

*Hillgruber (and others) make much of this. Yet as early as 5 December 1940, Hitler refused to make Moscow the main operational objective.

†"His ideology ["Weltanschauung"] now dominated his Realpolitik." GO, p. 240.

‡It was—and it ought to be—debated. Hillgruber, in HST, repeatedly wrote that after July 1940 the war against England was of secondary [zweitrangig] importance to Hitler. This argument is not tenable. (About this see Lukacs, and LEW, *passim*.) The German historian Bernd Stegemann (1982) refuted it convincingly, in GWU, 1982, pp. 206-13 (also in 1987); also Hartmut Schusterreit, *Vabanque. Hitlers Angriff auf die Sowjetunion 1941 als Versuch, durch den Sieg im Osten den Westen zu bezwingen* (Herford/Bonn, 1988). In Manfred Funke, ed., *Hitlerdeutschland und die Mächte. Materialien zur Aussenpolitik des III. Reiches* (D, 1977), Hillgruber (p. 100, note 18) criticized Broszat's article in VFZ, 1970, in which the latter wrote that Hitler's decision to go at Russia was not a "calculated plan to realize his [Lebensraum] ideas" but that he felt compelled [sein Zugzwang] to get out from waiting in the summer of 1940 and proceed to a decisive ending of the war." Broszat was right; Hillgruber's

time when he began to realize that the British were not giving in. As he said to the close group of generals at the Berghof on 31 July 1940, the British had two hopes left: Russia and America. Against America he could do nothing. But if Russia were knocked out, Churchill's—and Roosevelt's—hopes would be eliminated. The continental power of Germany would then be untrammelled and unconquerable, and sooner or later Churchill and Roosevelt would be forced to accommodate him. Their own people would be forced to realize the futility of an unwinnable war, and many among them would take at least some satisfaction from the liquidation of Communist power in the world.

This calculation was not entirely unreasonable. "Russia: England's last hope"—he repeated this among his generals and to his staff (including his secretaries), again and again; many records of that exist in 1940 and 1941, and even later,* and probably not only for

answer was weak: "In reality Hitler's decision for a war in the East [it was not yet a decision] came in July 1940, at a time when he was convinced of the possibility of reaching an arrangement with Britain." He was *not* so convinced then. The often superficial, but in this case insightful, Gisevius (61, p. 516) wrote: "He took the detour to Moscow [in order to] defeat England." Bullock is not clear about this (av, p. 598): On 31 July 1940, "Hitler still put the invasion of Britain in the front of his argument but he was already looking ahead to an attack on Russia in 1941, whether the British capitulated first or not." Jackel sees a duality; but he is undecided. JHJ, p. 86: "Since the 1920s Hitler wanted to conquer Lebensraum in Russia. That was always his main motive. Yet he did not emphasize this when he attempted to convince his circle about his plan." More clearly, p. 86: "Everything indicates that he had always kept [the *Lebensraum* plans] in sight. Whether he really believed the new strategic justification that he presented in July 1940 or whether he introduced it to win over his supporters for a new campaign of conquest is of course hard to determine. Probably both were the case."

*There are many such statements of Hitler's, among which is the one on 27 December 1940 to Admiral Raeder, who insisted on concentrating all German resources against England. Hitler: "This cannot be done until England's last continental hope is eliminated." To Hewel, 29 May 1941: When Russia is defeated, "this will force England to make peace. Hope this year." Halder's war diary, 14 June 1941: "After the attack on Russia and the evolution of his calculation that the collapse of Russia would induce England to give up the struggle." That same day: "The main enemy is still Britain." (From "an unpublished source taken by a Luftwaffe general"—no other reference or source, however—in Irving, I/II, p. 266.)

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Hewel diary, 20 June 1941: "A long
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"The ultimate objective of the Reich
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*AH/B, p. 15, February 1945.

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purposes of self-justification. It was not to them but to his party
cronies that he kept speculating about Lebensraum during his 1941
and 1942 table conversations (though seldom before the begin-
ning of the invasion of Russia). And at the end, in one of his last
"table" (i.e., Bormann-recorded) conversations, he said: "No deci-
sion which I had to make during the course of this war was graver
than to attack Russia."

For Time—and it's always Time, you notice—would have
been increasingly against us. In order to persuade Britain to
pack up, to compel her to make peace, it was essential to rob
her of her hope of being able still to confront us, on the
Continent itself, with an adversary of a stature equal to our
own. We had no choice, we had at all costs to strike the
Russian element out of the European balance sheet. We had
another reason, equally valid, for our action—the mortal
threat that a Russia in being constituted to our existence.
For it was absolutely certain that one day or another she
would attack us.*

"We had no choice"? "Absolutely certain"? Not at all. And what
is significant: In Hitler's explanation of his decision there is not one
word about Lebensraum.

It is of course possible that his emphasis on the English factor was
meant to impress his generals. Possible, though not probable: for
none of his leading generals showed the slightest reservations about

Hewel diary, 20 June 1941: "A long conversation with the Führer. Expects a lot
from the Russian campaign . . . he thinks that Britain will have to give in." (Note
that Hewel was *not* a general.) To Keitel on 18 August 1941 (ADAP/D/13/1, p. 346):
"The ultimate objective of the Reich is the defeat of Great Britain." On 22 August
1941, with his armies at Leningrad, storming toward Kiev, and closer and closer to
Moscow, Halder war diary: Hitler's aim is "to finally eliminate Russia as England's
allied power on the continent and thereby deprive England of any hope of a change
in her fortunes with the help of the last existing Great Power." Hitler to Admiral
Fricke (КТВ/СКЛ, 28 October 1941): "The fall of Moscow might even force En-
gland to make peace at once."

*AH/B, p. 15, February 1945.

the "Barbarossa" plan.* Indeed, they were more sanguine in their expectations than was Hitler himself, who, before the invasion of Russia, was suddenly beset by anxiety.†

We must keep in mind that while every human act arises from a multiplicity of motives, there is such a thing as a multiplicity, or at least a duality, of human purposes too.‡ It is wrong to presume that it was *only* Lebensraum, and ideology, that made Hitler choose to turn and plan his invasion of Russia in July 1940. It may also be wrong to assume that not only the principal but the *only* purpose of his invasion of Russia was strategic and political, to compel the British (and also the Americans) to recognize the hopelessness of the war against him. Both elements existed in his mind: to knock out the last potential ally of a Britain that he could not—yet—invalidate; and to achieve an—as yet undefined—Lebensraum in the conquered East. I incline to believe that of the dual purposes, the first was primary—without saying that the second was inconsequential.**

*Barry A. Leach, *German Strategy Against Russia 1939-1941*, Oxford, 1973, p. 100: "... this attempt to give the operations in the East some relevance to the war already being fought in the West was a rationalization for the ears of the generals. The true purpose of the campaign was the fulfillment of Hitler's *Lebensraumpolitik*." Not so. Haffner is more measured, but his conclusion is debatable, (HF/AN, p. 115): "One should not take these rationalization attempts of Hitler too seriously. Hitler's attack on Russia was not made *because* but *in spite of* the continuing war against Britain." (Haffner's italics)

†As early as 9 January 1941, КТВ/ОКВ: "The Russians should not be underestimated even now." On 21 June 1941, Himmler to Heydrich: "The Führer is not so optimistic as his military advisers." Leach, above, p. 156. The night before 22 June, someone in Hitler's circle spoke of Russia as "a big bubble." The generals were, without exception, confident. Hitler suddenly became thoughtful. He said that Russia was rather like a ship in "the Flying Dutchman." He added: "The beginning of every war is like opening the door into a dark room. One never knows what is hidden in the darkness." (Lukacs, LEW, p. 139.)

‡Historians on the duality: Jackel in JHW, p. 68; also p. 56: "... in the prevailing circumstances the Eastern campaign was also to serve a dual purpose. It was meant to lead to the conquest of living space as well as to discourage Britain once and for all." Haffner, HF/AN, p. 102: "It is always a mistake in politics to pursue two aims simultaneously." Perhaps. Zitelmann (ZIT/A, p. 147) writes that Hitler's purposes were not clear; he does not mention a duality but brings up Hitler's habit of amassing "every possible argument to justify his decisions."

**Consider that while Hitler did not speak much about Lebensraum before the campaign began, he kept talking about it to some of his circle in August and

THE SEVENTH OF DECEMBER 1941. The Russian wastes before Moscow after the attack on a tropical morass. Hitler's world war—which he could have wished to win it. He had many consequences, to which something must be stated: Hitler's States on 11 December 1941, as Hitler's supreme folly by

It was, in some ways, an 1940—questioning Mussolini France and Britain—that led to the hypocritically chivalrous ever, in December 1941 he to the American chargé d'

September 1941—which at least: poses of justification. Consider, his table talks, detailed plans for (Hitler but by Himmler and others these plans). Zitelmann in ZIT/A, 1 quest of the Russian lands Hitler's man society in order to realize an

"Emphatically—and wrongly—never supposed—any more than would have to reckon with a major. Not at all. Hitler to Jodl (КТВ/О the day before issuing the definition continental-European problems in position to intervene." Haffner in on the United States: "This must World War II. I cannot explain it. comprehensible rational explanation of lunacy... what induced Hitler an entry which he had so far seen Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor Moscow..." An inadequate explanation

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THE SEVENTH OF DECEMBER IN 1941 was the turning point of World War II. The Russians halted the Germans in the frozen wastes before Moscow almost at the same moment that the Japanese attack on a tropical morning at Pearl Harbor thrust the United States into the war. Hitler's European war now became a veritable world war—which he could no longer win, or at least not in the way he had wished to win it. He himself realized this—a realization with many consequences, to which I must soon turn. But at this time something must be stated about his declaration of war on the United States on 11 December 1941. This has been defined and categorized as Hitler's supreme folly by many historians.*

It was, in some ways, an unusual event. Hitler himself said in June 1940—questioning Mussolini's stentorian declaration of war on France and Britain—that declarations of war belonged to the past, to the hypocritically chivalrous trappings of dynastic wars. However, in December 1941 he had Ribbentrop make such a declaration to the American chargé d'affaires in Berlin. Many historians have

September 1941—which at least suggests that this had begun to serve him for purposes of justification. Consider, too, that beyond Hitler's general speculations in his table talks, detailed plans for German settlements in the East were not made by Hitler but by Himmler and others (and in 1943 a Führer order led to the stoppage of these plans). Zitelmann in *ZIT/A*, p. 161: "The long accepted view that with the conquest of the Russian lands Hitler wanted to introduce a 're-agrarianization' of German society in order to realize an 'anti-modern' and 'anti-industrial' utopia is wrong."

"Emphatically—and wrongly—by A. J. P. Taylor. Bullock in *BU*, p. 662: "Hitler never supposed—any more than Hindenburg or Ludendorff in 1917—that he would have to reckon with a major American intervention in the European war." Not at all. Hitler to Jodl (*KTB/OKW*, 1, p. 996) on 17 December 1940—that is, the day before issuing the definite Barbarossa directive: "We must resolve all continental-European problems in 1941, since from 1942 the U.S.A. will be in a position to intervene." Haffner in *HF/A1*, p. 229, on Hitler's decision to declare war on the United States: "This must be the most puzzling of any of his decisions in World War II. I cannot explain it. . . ." *HF/AN*, pp. 117–18: "There is to this day no comprehensible rational explanation for what one is tempted to describe as an act of lunacy. . . . what induced Hitler to trigger America's entry into the German war, an entry which he had so far sensibly done everything to prevent, was not the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor but the successful Russian counteroffensive at Moscow. . . ." An inadequate explanation.

example of Hitler's hubris, an Pearl Harbor notwithstanding, yet some trouble in obtaining a from Congress. This retrospect a virtual state of war existed in ican and German naval units. before his invasion of Russia), his naval commanders to avoid units, even if German sub- attacked by the latter. He knew from a serious naval clash with ould not give Roosevelt such a hands of German naval com- come off. Moreover, while he s to go to war against him, he by welshing on the principal d them to go to war with the ously.

ar on the United States made able; whether his withholding e changed the main course of correct an assumption that is than the somewhat jejune spe- German declaration of war on (this is the widely accepted view him, of course) ignorant of the underestimated the Americans (potential. Sufficient evidence irected in America and things

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United States but historians such as statement in his *Deutschland und der* seriously doubt that Roosevelt would and anti-Semitic movement in the Party had played a role in American in Germany?"

American from his early youth. He was an avid reader of the Western and Indian stories of the German writer Karl May, whose last public lecture and funeral he attended in Vienna.* We have also seen that Hitler often expressed his liking of and even admiration for American industry and its techniques. He was, in sum, not uninformed about the United States, including some American political currents. One of the few German military attachés whose reports he read assiduously in 1940 was General von Boetticher in Washington. ("He knows how to read behind the scenes.") He was attentive to all kinds of evidence of anti-Roosevelt and "isolationist" opinions, of American "radical nationalists." He and Stalin were the first foreign statesmen who wanted to include the American electoral timetable in their calculations (Stalin telling Molotov not to travel to Berlin until after the November 1940 American presidential election; Hitler telling Mussolini that he should have delayed his attack on Greece until after that election). Throughout the war, and well after December 1941, Hitler was aware of certain American currents of opinion; that, for example, in 1944 anti-Communist and at least indirectly pro-German currents were surfacing among some Republicans in Washington. In his last table

*Koeppen notes 1FZ, 5 October 1942: "The Führer then told us that he acquired most of his knowledge of [American] geography from reading Karl May." Andreas Dorpalen, in his excellent article "Hitler, the Nazi Party, and the Wehrmacht in World War II," in Harry L. Coles, ed., *Total War and Cold War*, Columbus, Ohio, 1962, p. 72: "His generals lacked resourcefulness and imagination," [Hitler] began to complain; "they are too correct, their thinking is too conventional. They should have read more Wild West stories." Steinert in ST/НК/В, p. 545: "The false romanticism and anti-civilizational [philosophy] of a Karl May, reading of whom Hitler repeatedly advised." He said that as chancellor he reread all of May's books. In 1943 he ordered the printing of 300,000 copies of a May book (*Winterou*), to be distributed among German soldiers. Klaus-Dietmar Henke, in *Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands*, xi, 1995, p. 133: In November 1944, "Himmler's chief of staff transmitted to the Gauleiters an exhortation from Guderian to prepare for cunning battle tactics and 'Indian-like' conduct . . . Karl May's books have proved to be educational in this regard." In Scholdt, *schö*, five solid pages (296-300) deal with this theme; see also Vappu Tallgren. Also Gertrud Willenburg, *Von Deutschen-Helden. Eine Inhaltsanalyse der Karl-May-Romane* (Köln, 1967). May's most famous protagonist, "Old Shatterhand," was a German-American. At the same time May was not a promoter of brutality. Many Germans liked his stories, including, for example, the radical artist George Grosz.

conversations he said that the war against America was "a tragedy"; and to the last moment he nurtured hopes of a break between Washington and Moscow from which he could then profit, at least to some extent. In this his wishes were in accord with the great majority of the German people. Even though in 1945 latent difficulties between London and Moscow were much more evident than any between Washington and Moscow, Hitler, again like most Germans, put some hope in a break not between the former but between the latter. (By that time he had given up all of his earlier illusions about the British, whose resolute anti-German strategy and policy filled him with hatred.)

It is true that in both his public and his private statements we may find enough evidence of anti-American statements and clichés, and of a generally condemnatory view of American civilization.* Yet these coexisted with a more informed and realistic view of America in his mind. In this as well as other instances, it may be too much to say that his wishes were the fathers of his thoughts; but it may not be too much to say that they baptized them.

AS EARLY AS NOVEMBER 1941—that is, before the failure of the German army before Moscow, and before the event of Pearl Harbor—Hitler knew that he could no longer win the war: more precisely, *his* war, the war he had planned to wage and to win. There is evidence of this in General Halder's war diary of 18 November 1941 (that is, before the last attempt of Army Group Center to resume its advance on Moscow), quoting Hitler: "The recognition, by both of the opposing coalitions, that they cannot annihilate each other, leads to a negotiated peace." And: "We must consider the possibility that it will not be possible for either of the principal opponents to annihilate the other, or to subdue them entirely." This is corroborated by an

*See his statement in H2B that a conflict with America might come only after his lifetime. But then he made few such statements until they began to accumulate in his table conversations in the autumn of 1941—probably because he then foresaw that the war with America was soon to come. Thus, for example, his table conversations of 10 September, his statements to Ciano on 25 October, and to the Bulgarian foreign minister Popov on 27 November.

emphatic statement by Haps closest to Hitler wrote that by the winter longer be achieved." † Hitler: Hitler's "militarism" should certainly have been a naïve thought! Earlier and knew that the war people before they are

Significant considerations obvious: The portrait of Hitler till the end that the war was best, oversimplified and the above, is the now expressed views and his useful term, since so much meant to impress them capable of making circles now on be increasingly to circumstances that by other terms: the purpose quest than the forcing of preferably on his terms. Invincibility now had a sudden victories ("Blitzkrieg must now settle down for would still be so strong that unnatural coalition

*Halder diary, 18 November pp. 26–27 and 204. There are mid-August. (Goebbels diary Churchill fall?) Hitler considered inevitable.

†Hitler on 23 May 1939: solving a problem by adapting stances must rather be adapted p. 549)

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emphatic statement by Colonel-General Jodl, the man who was per-
 haps closest to Hitler during the war.* From prison in Nuremberg, he
 wrote that by the winter of 1941 Hitler knew that "victory could no
 longer be achieved." In a memorandum dictated to his wife about
 Hitler: Hitler's "military advisers—today one often hears it said—
 should certainly have made it clear to him that the war was lost. What
 a naïve thought! Earlier than any person in the world, Hitler sensed
 and knew that the war was lost. But can one give up a Reich and a
 people before they are lost? A man like Hitler could not do it."

Significant considerations arise here for a historian. One of them is
 obvious: The portrait of Hitler, blinded by his fanaticism, believing
 till the end that the war would not, because it could not, be lost is, at
 best, oversimplified and, at worst, false. The other, connected with
 the above, is the now growing discrepancy between Hitler's publicly
 expressed views and his private ones. ("Private" may not always be a
 useful term, since so many of his statements to his private circle were
 meant to impress them.) In other words, this man, who was at times
 capable of making circumstances conform to his ideas,† would from
 now on be increasingly compelled to adjust at least some of his ideas
 to circumstances that he could perhaps influence but not control. In
other terms: the purpose of his military strategy now was less con-
quest than the forcing of at least one of his enemies to deal with him,
preferably on his terms. But: this was not truly an admission of defeat.
Invincibility now had a priority over conquest. The time for short,
 sudden victories ("Blitzkriege") may have been over; he and the Reich
 must now settle down for a longer war, during which German power
 would still be so strong that sooner or later one of his enemies—of
 that unnatural coalition of Anglo-Saxons and Russians, Capitalists

*Halder diary, 18 November 1941. Jodl's statements cited by Schramm, *sch*,
 pp. 26–27 and 204. There are some signs that Hitler began to think that as early as
 mid-August. (Goebbels diary, 18 August 1941: "Separate peace with Stalin? Will
 Churchill fall?") Hitler considered the American entry into the war as practically
 inevitable.

†Hitler on 23 May 1939 to his generals: "The principle whereby one evades
 solving a problem by adapting oneself to circumstances, is inadmissible. Circum-
 stances must rather be adapted to demands [*Forderungen*]." (IMT, xxxviii, 079-L,
 p. 549)

and Communists—would be constrained to admit it. He might no longer be able to win *his* war on his terms, but he might still win a different sort of war, or at least not lose it.

This conviction sustained him almost until the very end. It was his final shift to a Friderician strategy; more, to a Friderician view of his own future. He had always admired Frederick the Great rather than Bismarck the Iron Chancellor—in this case the warrior-king rather than the statesman.* The result was his vision of—or, rather, his hopes for—a historic parallel. Frederick won because—unexpectedly—he defeated one of his main enemy powers, and then the whole group of enemy powers fell apart. It was not only that Frederick was brave and resolute, winning victories in the field against great odds; his resolution led to a break in the coalition of his enemies, a coalition less unnatural than that between Capitalists and Communists in this war. Elements of this vision inspired Hitler almost until the last week of his life.† What he failed to understand was that, yes, a break between Americans and Russians might come—but too late for him. This was not a war between eighteenth-century dynasties but a world struggle in which his opponents, no matter how disparate, were agreed on one thing: He and his Third Reich must be conquered and occupied, without conditions and without reservations. Even if Frederick had not won at Rossbach or Leuthen, his opponents would at some time have signed a peace with the Prussian king; but Hitler's adversaries would not make peace with Hitler.‡

However, we are running ahead of our main story. December

*A good summary of historians' comments about this is SCHRB, p. 133, note 252.

†On the night of 12 April 1945, Goebbels rushed to the chancellery bunker with the news of Roosevelt's sudden death. He brought champagne: "The Empress is dead!" (The sudden death of the Russian empress Elizabeth in 1762 led immediately to the dissolution of the anti-Prussian coalition and to Frederick's triumph.) This episode is often misread by historians. (BU, p. 781: "Goebbels's mood was fully shared by Hitler.") It was Goebbels, not Hitler, who was carried away by enthusiasm that night. (Hitler also disliked champagne.)

‡The American diplomatic historian Paul Schroeder, in his excellent book (*The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848*, Oxford, 1994), p. 477, on the great coalition of 1813–14 against Napoleon: "Military victory was never the primary goal for the coalition as a whole, even in the final stages of the war. The allies, though they sometimes differed sharply over terms, always sought a negotiated

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1941 not only marked the turning point of the war and a change in Hitler's view of it; it led to new decisions and to a change in his work habits. He ordered the entire German economy to be placed on a full wartime footing. (He was especially fortunate to find Albert Speer as a successor to the able Todt, who died in early 1942; Speer was neither an economist nor an administrator, but Hitler recognized his organizational abilities.) Hitler himself assumed the post of army commander in chief upon the resignation of the sick General Brauchitsch. But most important was his order superseding the suggestions and inclinations of some of his generals. He forbade a cautious retreat of the German armies (except at limited local salients) in spite of the awesome severities of the Russian winter and the hardly less awesome fighting abilities of the Russians. And after two months, at the latest by March 1942, it became evident that not his generals but he, with his unorthodox military directive, had been proved right. A catastrophe was avoided, and he could say in April: "We have mastered a destiny which broke another man 130 years ago."^{*}

peace in one form or another and agreed that the war should be ended as soon as the right terms were attained. The reason the war lasted to a military decision, though not total victory, was Napoleon's persistent refusal to negotiate seriously. As soon as a French government agreed to negotiate, the war was ended, though at the time the French army was still capable of fighting and controlled most of France and vital areas outside it as well." This was not true of Hitler and World War II, certainly not after 1941.

"There was an astonishing recovery within the man himself. In November 1941 he sometimes gave the impression of being depressed. Now he changed his long-established habits of work. These had included a bohemian element; he was often unorganized in his daily routine. But now his disinclination for regular and continuous work disappeared. Speer was one of the first to notice this (SP, p. 306): "Instead of his former habit of arranging things in spurts, between periods of lassitude, there came now an extensive working routine. Previously he understood excellently how to let others work for him; now he, with increasing burdens, took more and more details upon himself. He made himself into a strongly disciplined worker, and as this went against his character (*Wesen*), it did not [always] work well for his decisions." Also Fest (F, p. 917): "his great, desperate self-discipline." And Maser (M/A, p. 254): Deep down and secretly he no longer had illusions about a [final] victory, in 1941-42, and that "kept him from visiting the front line. [But] that was not the result of a fear for his own life." Two elements in his routine did not change: his habit of rising late in the morning and retiring very late at night; and his growing dependence on a great variety of medicines.

reverse the entire course of the war; but it would be a turning point, forcing at least one of his enemies to ponder whether the cost of subduing such a tough and stubborn Germany might not be too heavy to bear. Again and again, Hitler insisted on this necessary precondition, when Goebbels or Ribbentrop or even Rommel tried to convince him to seek contact with one or another of his enemies. That would be useless, Hitler repeated, without having previously proved the power of Germany in the field. In this he was probably right. But he underestimated the importance of what bound the otherwise so disparate alliance of his enemies together: their resolution to put an end to him and to enforce the surrender of the Third Reich. In that he was most probably wrong.

THERE WAS ANOTHER feature of Hitler's statesmanship that differed from the Friderician or Clausewitzian pattern. In those eighteenth-century wars, the aims of the warring states were clearly defined; and when circumstances forced the rulers to adjust them, they remained essentially the same: territory. Yet Hitler's territorial aims—in this his thinking differed entirely from the German imperial aims during World War I—were vague, or, rather, willfully left pending. The armistice conditions he imposed on the French, for example (which showed a certain degree of calculating statesmanship that the British ambassador to France in June 1940 described as "diabolically clever"), left many territorial conditions undefined. Here and there (as in Poland in 1939 and Italy in 1943), measures akin to German territorial annexation were made, but these were the exceptions rather than the rule. One reason for this was, of course, calculation: the postponing of territorial redefinitions until the war was finally won—or until a settlement was reached with one or another of Germany's adversaries.

But there was another element in Hitler's brand of statesmanship. More than territory, he preferred vassalage. We may detect evidence of this inclination already in his domestic politics in 1933 and afterward. There was to be only one political party in the Third Reich; but former conservative politicians such as Papen or Neurath were allowed not only to exist but also to function, and serve, within the hierarchy of the National Socialist Reich, as long as they were

p. 49) wrote: "After 1941, indeed gain no more successes." Not so. Defeat and destruction were the only

obedient and subservient to him. In 1939, "Czechia" became a German protectorate under the name of Bohemia-Moravia, and Slovakia an "independent" state, yet entirely subservient to him. A. J. P. Taylor ("Only Danzig prevented cooperation between Germany and Poland") was entirely wrong: Hitler wanted a Poland that was a satellite or, at best, a junior partner of Germany, without any independence in foreign policy. These aims of a Hitlerian Realpolitik superseded his ideological preferences. All over Europe (for example, in Holland, Denmark, France, Romania, and in a few remarkable instances even in Austria), local National Socialist leaders were abashed when they found that Hitler did not support them and paid them hardly any interest at all. He preferred to work with the established pro-German governments of such provinces and states. The most telling example of this occurred in Romania in January 1941. There the National Socialist and populist Iron Guard (whose anti-Semitic ideology and practices were perhaps the most fanatic and radical in all Europe) got into conflict with the nationalist and military government of General Antonescu, whom Hitler respected and liked. When in January 1941 fighting broke out between the Antonescu and Iron Guard forces, the Germans unequivocally supported the former at the expense of the latter, on occasion with German armor and tanks.

Of course he had his reasons. While the war lasted, he needed order in the countries that were his allies or satellites—a kind of stability that must not be endangered by revolutionary experiments, and that assured undisrupted deliveries of necessary material supplies to the Reich. Thus he put up for a long time with allied chiefs of state—a Pétain, an Antonescu, Regent Horthy of Hungary, King Boris of Bulgaria—some of whom he knew were not wholly loyal or unconditional adherents of a National Socialist Germany. Still, it is significant that he did not offer the slightest promise or give the slightest indication to the effect that sooner or later, perhaps after the war, his foreign National Socialist followers would get their rewards.* In sum, a perfect conformity with the requirements of German foreign policy

*He would, of course, recognize and support some of them in 1944, when his former satellites or junior partners deserted him; but that was no longer important.

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was a must, while a perfect conformity with the ideology and practices of German National Socialism was not—except in the case of Jews.

THIS DISCREPANCY between ideology and statesmanship is most startling when we observe Hitler's views and expressed opinions of Stalin. Hitler respected (and, later, increasingly admired) Stalin.* There are many recorded expressions of Hitler in that regard, before the war and in many instances during it.† Yet none of this can be found in his public speeches, or in the official propaganda of the Reich as directed by Goebbels. The unavoidable struggle against "Jewish Bolshevism" was the main theme, and the main justification of the war against Russia, as presented to the German people and to the rest of the world until the end, with no diminution or alternation in tone. There were many people outside Germany who did not believe this, or did so only with reservations. Yet it had lasting effects within Germany, as may be seen in the approval of the war against Russia even by such anti-Nazi or non-Nazi personages as Bishop (later Cardinal) von Galen in 1941, or by the continued evocation of the "Bolshevik" terminology by the Dönitz government and by German generals even after Hitler's suicide. But there is a good deal of evidence that Hitler himself did not believe this.‡

*In August 1939, he ordered his photographer Heinrich Hoffmann (whom he also entrusted with a special personal message to Stalin) to retouch the photo showing Stalin with a cigarette in his left hand. Gisevius (61, p. 449) cites Hoffmann, who recalled Hitler's words: "The signing of a pact between two great nations is a solemn act; one does not do that with a cigarette between one's fingers! Such a picture does not show seriousness enough."

†Hitler to Mussolini in January 1940: "... since Stalin's final triumph Russia has been experiencing a change from the Bolshevik [ideology] to a more nationalist Russian way of life." Conversely, there is evidence of Stalin's admiration for Hitler (as late as December 1944, he made a sympathetic remark about Hitler to de Gaulle). There is also some reason to believe that Stalin's purges of some of his followers, beginning in 1935, were influenced by his perception of Hitler's liquidation of Röhm in 1934.

‡Speer, *SP*, p. 319: As the war went on, Hitler "spoke of Stalin with full acknowledgment; he especially emphasized the parallel with Stalin's resolution in the face

He, who was obsessed with the influence of Jews on Roosevelt and Churchill, knew that Jews had no influence on Stalin; that, indeed, Stalin was an anti-Semite of sorts. Great Russian nationalism, and—perhaps—pan-Slavism made Stalin and Russia formidable. Near the end, in 1945, he even ruminated whether he should have attacked Russia at all; and that a nationalist Russia, purged of Jews, might be the greatest danger yet.²

WE NOW COME TO THE last year of the war and the last year of Hitler's life. Now the necessity of adjusting his ideas to circumstances, of subordinating what remained of his military strategy to what he thought were the requirements of statesmanship, had become absolute. Military and political decisions, and their purposes, are of course never entirely separable. This Hitler knew very well. Yet it is possible for a historian to list their respective evidence

of danger to Moscow in the winter of 1941 in which he saw something similar to [his own] situation. [This in 1945.] On other, earlier occasions he said, half-jokingly, that in the event of a victory over Russia the best thing would be to entrust Stalin with the administration of that country, naturally under German supremacy, for Stalin would be the best man for that. All in all, he saw in Stalin something like a colleague." As late as July 1944 (see p. 399), Hitler speculated that Stalin might have been right in the purges; perhaps the Moscow process against General Tukhachevsky was not a fake. Zitelmann in ZIT/A, p. 161: "The thesis spread by propaganda [it was not only spread by propaganda but expressed by Hitler on occasion] that 'the issue was the defeat of Jewish Bolshevism Hitler did not himself believe'; he had concluded that Stalin pursued 'a national-Russian policy, having freed himself from the Jewish influence through his purges.' Yet the same Hitler, on 8 November 1941, in one of his public speeches (Heer, HR, p. 384): Stalin is 'nothing else . . . but an instrument in the hands of an all-powerful Jewry'; behind him stand Kaganovich 'and all those Jews who are [leading] that powerful state.'"

On 8, 26 February 1945: "The brutal manner in which [Stalin] decapitated the Jewish intelligentsia, who had rendered him such signal service in the destruction of Tsarist Russia, encouraged me . . ." Also: "That Stalinist empire which, in all its essentials is only the spiritual successor to the empire of Peter the Great." 2 April 1945: "It is possible that under the pressure of events, the Russians will rid themselves completely of Jewish Marxism, only to reincarnate Pan-Slavism in its most fierce and ferocious form."

separately, while recognizing the same: to bring about a breakthrough.

Hitler's phrase in July 1941 at Kursk, is telling as a giant torch ("ein Fackel", demonstrating its invincibility, that it was still counter-Stalingrad. The Russian and Italy were in defense and invincibility remarkable how, in early German retreat from France the Allies' attempt to crush preparations for a great offensive.† He knew, in this situation, that the great running out of steam, and thrust into Germany produced the great winter offensive, perhaps even all of Belgium not Paris but Antwerp) and British armies in Belgium's army into a sea of confusion the Americans to su-

*He was, of course, impressed by the production. From 1942 to 1944 support [Hitler's] thesis that the noses and anxieties may be too

†Carr (c, p. 105; also Schraeder) in 31 August 1944: "I shall not let an opportunity pass: childish and naive to hope for. The time will come when the spite of everything the rupture will continue to fight until there is it. . . . Whatever happens we must fight." Great said, 'one of our damned

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separately, while recognizing that their aims were, by and large, the same: to bring about a break in the enemy alliance.

Hitler's phrase in July 1943, exhorting the army before the great battle at Kursk, is telling: A German victory there must work as a giant torch ["ein Fanal"], a sudden, dramatic eruption of a flame, demonstrating to the world that Germany was still invincible, that it was still capable of great offensives, of winning a counter-Stalingrad. The defensive achievements of the army in Russia and Italy were important but not sufficiently impressive, for defense and invincibility were not quite the same thing.* It is remarkable how, in early September 1944 (that is, during the rapid German retreat from France and Belgium, and before the failure of the Allies' attempt to cross the Rhine at Arnhem), Hitler ordered preparations for a great German offensive to come in the Ardennes.† He knew, in what otherwise verily seemed a desperate situation, that the great American-British offensive was temporarily running out of steam, and that the Allies were not ready—yet—to thrust into Germany proper; but there was more to it. The aim of the great winter offensive was not to reconquer northern France or perhaps even all of Belgium (the ultimate goal of the offensive was not Paris but Antwerp) but to drive a wedge between the American and British armies in Belgium (whether he hoped to force Montgomery's army into a second Dunkirk was not clear); to shock and stun the Americans to such an extent that they might have to recon-

*He was, of course, impressed with Speer's achievement of German armament production. From 1942 to 1944, this had *tripled*. Speer, *SP*, p. 299: This seemed "to support [Hitler's] thesis that the impossible *can* be made possible, and that all prognoses and anxieties may be too pessimistic."

†Carr (c, p. 105; also Schramm, *sch*, p. 165) cites Hitler speaking to two of his generals on 31 August 1944: "The time is not yet ripe for a political decision . . . I shall not let an opportunity pass . . . but at a time of heavy military defeats it is quite childish and naive to hope for a politically favourable moment to make a move. . . . The time will come when the tensions between the Allies become so strong that in spite of everything the rupture occurs. History teaches us that all coalitions break up, but you must await the moment, however difficult the waiting may be. (I shall) continue to fight until there is a possibility for a decent peace . . . then I shall make it. . . . Whatever happens we shall carry on in this struggle until, as Frederick the Great said, 'one of our damned enemies gives up in despair.'"

sider the practicality of their avowed aim of forcing Germany to surrender unconditionally.*

"The Battle of the Bulge" failed. But—in this Hitler was in accord with the majority of the German people—he had begun to think that among his opponents the Americans might be the most amenable to making compromises.† Thus, for example, in June 1944 he not only

At that time Hitler was very ill. He told his favorite physician (Morell) that the weeks after the twentieth of July were the worst of his life. No one can imagine what he had to fight through. "Despite severe complaints, hour-long losses of balance, a dreadful condition about which he said nothing to no one, he stood fast and struggled through with an iron energy. There was the danger of a collapse, but he defeated it with his will." (Schenck, PH, p. 131.) Also: during September and October there were days when he had to cancel his daily situation conferences, and he was bedridden for almost two weeks. In mid-November (Schenck, PH, p. 396, relying in part on Goebbels's diary), Hitler stayed in bed, pale and thin, in his nightshirt under army blankets. He was advised to summon his generals to his bedroom and hold the situation conference there. No: "Heavily breathing he got up, stumbling, dressing himself without help, hobbled to the conference map table, sat down, wiped the sweat from his eyes, and asked for the generals to come in." While in their postwar prison in Spandau, Walther Funk told Speer that Hitler did not tell his doctors how he really felt ("he believed in his own lies"). Speer (SP, p. 367) is more plausible: People around Hitler "admired his composure in critical situations. . . . This self-command was an extraordinary achievement of his will till the end: in spite of his aging, in spite of illness, in spite of [Morell's medical experiments] and endlessly accumulating burdens. To me his will seemed unbridled and untrammelled like that of a six-year-old child who will not be discouraged or worn out; that was, in part, ludicrous, but it was also impressive."

*Haffner, HF/AN, p. 156: "Why did he insist [on the Ardennes offensive]? The answer is a riddle to this day." No. Henke (p. 314) cites Hitler's address to division commanders at his headquarters in Ziegenberg, four days before the offensive: "When we strike a few heavy blows here, then it may happen that at any moment [their] artificially upheld [alliance] suddenly collapses with a gigantic thud." (From Helmut Heiber, ed., *Hitler Lagebesprechungen. Die Protokollfragmente seiner militärischen Konferenzen 1942-1945*, 8, 1952, p. 713.) Also: "The strategic calculation behind his orders for the great offensive in the West was not at all as wrongheaded or irrational as it is often said."

†Haffner (HF/AN, p. 52) does not see this: "In his struggle against the allied coalition of 1942 to 1945 he never showed even the glimmer of an idea of exploiting the internal tensions of the coalition with a view of splitting it apart." There were times when Hitler thought that his main chance might be a contact with Stalin (Goebbels diary, 5 March 1945), but that was not his main inclination.

allowed a peaceful German v which he hoped to gain pro Marshal Kesselring to attain. And when, in March 19 negotiations with the American armies in Italy, Hitler 17 April received Wolff in Berlin his endeavor.* Around the same time, Speer, to allow some of the German view of their previous conduct before the Russians and prepare quarters in Germany. By that time he had power enough to drive a wedge, still convinced that a break in negotiations did lead to a showdown with Sevel and Stalin, who complained

"In his way," because a few hours an armistice. Henke, p. 676: Hitler hoped Wolff's negotiations with the Americans cause dissensions within the anti-Hitler Dulles, *The Secret Surrender* (NY, 1979); and especially men negotiators, the Swiss Max Waser (1981). The negotiations began as early

†With some reason. Waibel, p. 28 certain Germans "had hoped eventually against the Russians." P. 31: "... the the Russians was the last great hope thread through all of the negotiations: American generals and an SS general: 15 April, Wolff wrote a letter to Dulles Roosevelt's death. The next day Himmler the order three times) to Berlin, where he and Kaltenbrunner before seeing Hitler dividing of the Allies from the Russian Hitler to Wolff: In the East and in Italy two months. "During these two decisive Russians and the Anglo-Saxons will convince him, he will gladly ally with them again

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allowed a peaceful German withdrawal from the city of Rome (from
which he hoped to gain propaganda advantages) but allowed Field
Marshal Kesselring to attempt negotiations with American gen-
erals. And when, in March 1945, SS general Karl Wolff entered into
negotiations with the Americans about a partial capitulation of the
German armies in Italy, Hitler not only was apprised of this but on
17 April received Wolff in Berlin and, in his way, wished him well in
his endeavor.* Around the same time, he agreed to a proposal from
Speer, to allow some of the Czech directors of the Skoda Works, "in
view of their previous connections to American industry," to flee
before the Russians and prepare a direct flight to American head-
quarters in Germany. By that time Hitler no longer believed that he
had power enough to drive a wedge between his enemies. But he was
still convinced that a break would come; indeed, the Dulles-Wolff
negotiations did lead to a short but bitter controversy between Roo-
sevelt and Stalin, who complained sharply about it.†

*"In his way," because a few hours later he told him to wait a bit before signing
an armistice. Henke, p. 676: Hitler had known about this for months; he sanctioned
Wolff's negotiations with the Americans "because he saw in it a good instrument to
cause dissensions within the anti-Hitler coalition." About this episode see Allen
Dulles, *The Secret Surrender* (NY, 1966); Bradley D. Smith and Elena Agarossi,
Operation Sunrise (NY, 1979); and especially the memoirs of one of the chief middle-
men negotiators, the Swiss Max Waibel, 1945: *Kapitulation in Norditalien* (Basel,
1981). The negotiations began as early as February.

†With some reason. Waibel, p. 28: Parilli, the Italian middleman, thought that
certain Germans "had hoped eventually to fight together with [the Americans]
against the Russians." P. 31: "... the thought of dividing the Western Allies from
the Russians was the last great hope of the German leadership and ran like a red
thread through all of the negotiations." Thus two months before Hitler's suicide,
American generals and an SS general sat at the same table in Switzerland. On
15 April, Wolff wrote a letter to Dulles, expressing his condolences on President
Roosevelt's death. The next day Himmler—and Hitler—ordered Wolff (repeating
the order three times) to Berlin, where he spent more than ten hours with Himmler
and Kaltenbrunner before seeing Hitler. Waibel, p. 106: "... in this way alone the
dividing of the Allies from the Russians could be achieved." And pp. 107–8, citing
Hitler to Wolff: In the East and in Italy the German armies may fight for another
two months. "During these two decisive months of the war a break... between the
Russians and the Anglo-Saxons will come, and whichever of the two sides comes to
him, he will gladly ally with them against the other."

a scene

There were other such military moves in 1944-45 that Hitler permitted. There was the German withdrawal in northern Norway, including the calculated hope that within that subarctic vacuum the Russians advancing from northern Finland would bump into landing British commandos. There was the German withdrawal from Greece, where they left weapons behind to both the Royalist (that is, the pro-British) and the Communist guerrillas, hoping thereby to contribute to a coming civil war. (Hitler thought—wrongly—that Stalin would move through Bulgaria to Thrace and the Aegean.) In April 1945, there arose the increasingly obvious inclination among some German commanders to give up fighting the Americans while their comrades were still bitterly fighting the Russians. This evoked practically no condemnation from Hitler, who was not, of course, informed of all of them. In any event, it was too late to matter.

More significant than these military episodes were the political attempts by leaders of Hitler's Reich in 1944 and 1945 to split the coalition of the Allies. Save for shorter monographic articles and studies, a general survey of German foreign policy of that period does not yet exist; and not much attention has been devoted to it by Hitler's biographers. Yet some of the evidence is interesting. In 1942 and 1943, Ribbentrop and Goebbels (and at least on one occasion Papen in Turkey) had tried to suggest to Hitler the advisability of establishing some contact with one of the Reich's enemies; but we have seen that Hitler rejected that, convinced as he was not only of the futility but of the danger of such a move before some resounding German military success on one front or another. Thus, for example, in 1943 (when for a few months Stalin's dissatisfaction

In Patricia Meehan (*The Unnecessary War: Whitehall and the German Resistance to Hitler*, 1, 1995, p. 327), there is a telling entry from a dispatch by Dulles to Washington in late 1944, cited from the National Archives (NA. RG. 226. OSS Entry 138, Box 2, Folder 83): "I feel we should prepare quietly and without formality in Switzerland, France and elsewhere certain individual Germans. . . . If we do nothing of this nature, the ready-made Russian-German committee may monopolize the field." Both Allen and his brother John Foster Dulles have at least indirectly contributed to the acceptance of the German two-war theory after the war.

with his Anglo-American a three months there was a German-Russian front line ment of a—perhaps—prussian agents in Stockholm.* missed is debatable. There a—not entirely secretive—his Western allies: a tactic via Burckhardt in August 1944.

But in 1944 there was : himself, and officials of t Jewish organizations and, ones. Note that by that tim ful personage in the hierar 1944-45 Hitler also appoi Yet it was Himmler, the d Jews and others, for whom Realpolitik) now had risen Socialist ideology. The ne mann) with certain Jewish engage in some contact wi to Allied intelligence, incl knew what this was about. Jewish agents whom the 9 June 1944, and arrested th clandestine agreement wi Board in Switzerland in : ordered the ending of the April 1945, he himself neg Switzerland and Sweden, the Swedish prince Berna Hitler, offering capitulat

*Fest exaggerates this possibi in the summer of 1943 [in realit September], the Soviet Union known its willingness to negotia

s in 1944-45 that Hitler
 awal in northern Norway,
 in that subarctic vacuum
 inland would bump into
 the German withdrawal
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 communist guerrillas, hoping
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 1s Stalin's dissatisfaction

with his Anglo-American allies was appreciable, and when for about
 three months there was a lull of fighting along almost the entire
 German-Russian front line), Hitler forbade the further develop-
 ment of a—perhaps—promising contact between German and Rus-
 sian agents in Stockholm.* (Whether that was a great opportunity
 missed is debatable. There are indications that Stalin permitted such
a—not entirely secretive—contact to impress—that is, blackmail—
his Western allies: a tactic not unlike Hitler's "message" to London
via Burckhardt in August 1939.)

But in 1944 there was a new development. Heinrich Himmler
 himself, and officials of the SS, were establishing contacts with
 Jewish organizations and, through them, indirectly with American
 ones. Note that by that time Himmler had become the most power-
 ful personage in the hierarchy of the Third Reich. (In the winter of
 1944-45 Hitler also appointed him to a high military command.)
 Yet it was Himmler, the director of the extermination of masses of
 Jews and others, for whom "Staatsräson" (another German word for
 Realpolitik) now had risen above the categorical dictates of National
 Socialist ideology. The negotiations of his agents (including Eich-
 mann) with certain Jewish persons in Budapest had but one aim: to
 engage in some contact with Americans and make that fact known
 to Allied intelligence, including that of the Russians. The British
 knew what this was about. They were unimpressed with some of the
 Jewish agents whom the SS had permitted to travel to Turkey in
 June 1944, and arrested them. Yet Himmler was able to arrive at a
 clandestine agreement with a representative of Roosevelt's Refugee
 Board in Switzerland in September 1944; and a month later he
ordered the ending of the gassings at Auschwitz. Near the end, in
 April 1945, he himself negotiated with Jewish representatives from
 Switzerland and Sweden, with a former Swiss president, and with
 the Swedish prince Bernadotte. On 25 April 1945, he broke with
Hitler, offering capitulation to the Western Allies. Of course there

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 committee may monopolize
 ulles have at least indirectly
 theory after the war.

*Fest exaggerates this possibility. F, p. 948: "In December 1942 and once more
 in the summer of 1943 [in reality, the most significant contacts were suggested in
 September], the Soviet Union through its representation in Stockholm made
 known its willingness to negotiate with Hitler about a separate peace."

were historical precedents for this. Often it is the head of the secret state police who knows the power of his foreign opponents better than do others in the government. It was thus that Fouché negotiated against Napoleon, whom he betrayed in the end; thus, too, it was Beria who after Stalin's death attempted to arrive at wide-ranging compromises with Washington.

These and other similar attempts of Himmler and the SS were, in part, arranged behind Hitler's back—but not all of them against his wishes. We know of only one difficult scene, in February 1945, when Hitler ordered Himmler to stop such dealings; but a few days later Himmler resumed them. Except for that single instance, there is no evidence of accusations or criticisms of Himmler because of these attempts—and Himmler had plenty of jealous enemies in the German hierarchy and in Hitler's own circle.* The aim, for Himmler as well as Hitler, was a break in the enemy coalition. That Hitler had fewer hopes about this than Himmler is unquestionable. Yet this was his objective until the end.

While Himmler hoped to achieve some kind of accommodation with the Western Allies, Ribbentrop and Goebbels were partisans of seeking a deal with Stalin. On one occasion Ribbentrop even offered to fly to Moscow. Hitler, probably rightly, rejected the idea, saying that Ribbentrop should not do what Hess, flying to Scotland, had tried in May 1941. Still, in February 1945 he allowed Ribbentrop (who was the most rigid of his followers) to send a memorandum to German diplomatic posts abroad, a "Sprachregelung," permitting German diplomats to seek contact with Western counterparts to remind the latter that a Russian penetration into Germany and to the center of Europe would present the gravest danger to the world. But Hitler no longer believed that such attempts would be successful. He still believed that the unnatural alliance between Americans and Russians would break up—though no longer necessarily

*Including the cold and brutal Kaltenbrunner within the SS. (About this see also Fleming, *FL*, pp. 169–70.) Maser (*M/A*, p. 349) makes too much of Himmler's conspiracies, suggesting the possibility—in my opinion, wrongly—that Himmler recommended the physician Dr. Stumpffegger to Hitler with the purpose of eventually poisoning the latter.

because of him.* Neither his so much further use. In this respect 28 March may be telling. He grabbed Speer's arm and, with you still believe that the war could believe that, all would be well." the only thing that mattered. It was the only condition of a realistic idealist; it was the minimalist idealism.

Eight days before his suicide Berlin encircled by the Russians have made this decision, the member 1944, and should have been Prussia." That could have achieved *Feldherr* would have died in his battered armies, on the eastern Asiatic flood—an act that

*Goebbels diaries, citing Hitler, : break up in any circumstance; the que are beaten down, or only after that. impression that he [Hitler] lives in the earth like a *deus ex machina*. He is in the enemy camp is a justification for February and March 1945 Hitler suggests with the enemy in different ways

†Speer's account in *SP*, pp. 457–58 condemnatory of Speer. Contrary to Earth order (to destroy all installations during the retreat of the army) was definite evidence of Hitler's criminal was clear to Hitler that parts of his did. Yet the same Hitler still wished to cite Hitler to Kaltenbrunner in late I come to show Hitler his model of Lin I could talk like this about my plans that we really are going to win this source is given, but perhaps it is not after that 28 March confrontation, at "Here! Read it! You did not believe it

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of Himmler and the SS were, in—but not all of them against his difficult scene, in February 1945, upon such dealings; but a few days after that single instance, there were criticisms of Himmler because of the plenty of jealous enemies in Hitler's own circle.* The aim, for Hitler, in the enemy coalition. That Hitler and Himmler is unquestionable. and.

of some kind of accommodation and Goebbels were partisans of the occasion Ribbentrop even offered help, rejected the idea, saying to Hess, flying to Scotland, had in 1945 he allowed Ribbentrop (powers) to send a memorandum in "Sprachregelung," permitting with Western counterparts to penetration into Germany and to be the gravest danger to the world. such attempts would be successful—though no longer necessarily

er within the SS. (About this see also) makes too much of Himmler's opinion, wrongly—that Himmler received Hitler with the purpose of eventually

because of him.* Neither his strategy nor his statesmanship was of much further use. In this respect his face-to-face talk with Speer on 28 March may be telling. He knew that the war was lost. But he grabbed Speer's arm and, with tears in his eyes, implored him: "If you still believe that the war could still be won, if you could at least believe that, all would be well."† Belief still mattered—in fact, it was the only thing that mattered. It could no longer be adjusted to conditions. It was the only condition left. That was no longer the mark of a realistic idealist; it was the admission of the defeat of his determinist idealism.

Eight days before his suicide, when he had decided to stay in a Berlin encircled by the Russians, he said to Jodl: "I should already have made this decision, the most important in my life, in November 1944, and should have never left the headquarters in East Prussia." That could have achieved two things. One: Hitler the *Feldherr* would have died in battle, on the front, at the head of his battered armies, on the eastern frontier of the Reich, breasting the Asiatic flood—an act that might have had incalculable symbolic

Scene

*Goebbels diaries, citing Hitler, 22 March 1945: "The enemy coalition will break up in any circumstance; the question is only whether it breaks up before we are beaten down, or only after that." 28 March 1945: "Sometimes one had the impression that he [Hitler] lives in the clouds. But so often he has come down to earth like a *deus ex machina*. He is as convinced as before that the political crisis in the enemy camp is a justification for our greatest hopes." Speer, *SP*, p. 433: "In February and March 1945 Hitler suggested on occasion that he has allowed contacts with the enemy in different ways, yet without explaining any of them."

†Speer's account in *SP*, pp. 457–58. Irving's account (*I/H*, p. 785) is predictably condemnatory of Speer. Contrary to Haffner, who thinks that Hitler's Scorched Earth order (to destroy all installations in the German cities and towns before and during the retreat of the army) was not only categorical but unalterable and the definite evidence of Hitler's criminal intent. Speer, *SP*, p. 461: "I think that now it was clear to Hitler that parts of his destruction orders will no longer be fulfilled." Yet the same Hitler still wished to instill faith in his people. Irving (*I/H*, p. 768) cites Hitler to Kaltenbrunner in late February 1945 (after the architect Giesler had come to show Hitler his model of Linz): "My dear Kaltenbrunner, do you imagine I could talk like this about my plans for the future if I did not believe deep down that we really are going to win this war in the end?" (As often with Irving, no source is given, but perhaps it is not implausible.) Also Hitler to Speer, a fortnight after that 28 March confrontation, at the news of Roosevelt's death (*SP*, p. 467): "Here! Read it! You did not believe it! . . . The war is not lost. . . ."

consequences for future German generations. Two: Such an end of the Third Reich, in late 1944, must have meant the flooding of most of Germany by the Americans and the British, a great swirling confusion of Anglo-Saxon and German armies, the former wending their way eastward in the midst of a still largely intact German army and a still largely intact German people, eventually meeting the suspicious Russians somewhere in eastern Germany, Anglo-Saxons as well as Russians attempting, first nervously, then more and more determinedly, to get the Germans on their side during a developing confrontation. Schramm quotes Jodl further: "He should have fallen in battle rather than taking flight in death, it is said. He wanted to, and he would have done so if he had been physically able. As it was, he did not choose the easier death, but the more certain one. He acted as all heroes in history have acted and will always act. He had himself buried in the ruins of his Reich and his hopes. May whoever wish to condemn him for it do so—I cannot."^{*}

With all respect to the forthright quality of Jodl's loyalty: did Hitler really "not choose the easier death"? This is debatable. More important: was he a hero? This is perhaps not a matter left for historians to debate. The moral dimensions of that epithet are more important, greater than that. Let me say only that he was bereft of the nobility that the word *hero* implies, as imply it must. His mind and his willpower were extraordinary: but mind and willpower alone do not a hero make.

^{*}Schramm, *sch*, pp. 180-81. Also Haffner's discussion of Hitler's last days (*HF/A1*, p. 234): "We have no proof that Hitler actually continued to believe in final victory up to the very end." A similar duality in Maser (*M/A*, pp. 426, 428): He no longer believed in victory but "to postpone his own end . . . was an awesome crime." Bullock's judgments are unduly simplistic (*BU*, p. 397): ". . . and in the last years of his life he was cut off from all human contact and lost in a world of inhuman fantasy"; also *BU*, pp. 783, 797: "All the grandiloquent talk of dying in Berlin cannot disguise the fact that this perulant [?] decision was a gross dereliction of his duty to the troops still fighting under his command and an action wholly at variance with the most elementary military tradition." And: "His death was anything but a hero's end; by committing suicide he deliberately abandoned his responsibilities and took a way out which in earlier years he had strongly condemned as a coward's." (No: Hitler angrily condemned General Paulus for *not* having committed suicide at the end of Stalingrad.)

Even so, there remained some in Hitler's last testament, whereas his successor as Reich president.^{*} Doenitz, who was not a nationalist conservative, would be inclined to seek some kinship with the Allies; Goebbels, on the other hand, a believer and spokesman for a delicate balance, between West and East. That balance—if that is what it was in the wording of his testament and in its intent itself, he did not say one word about the Jews for having created his postscript, his last statement to the inevitability of the struggle in which who had made an attempt to command general in the Battle of the family. Doenitz remained personally in contact with the Western Allies, while the continuation of the war against the East and "Europe" against "Bolshevism" well after the dissolution of the Reich was the head of an almost powerless government, representing the two-war effort in which the war against the West and the war against Russia was both unregrettable, too, that the Western Allies. This was not only a tactical decision; it was believed by many

^{*}Hitler had held these two offices and in 1943 ordered that in the customary "Führer designation be omitted.

[†]Note the language of Hitler's last Order of the Front, 16 April 1945. It began: "For the mortal enemy masses have begun an attack." "Bolshevism" character? He did not.

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Even so, there remained something of a "realpolitical" calculation in Hitler's last testament, whereby he appointed Admiral Doenitz as his successor as Reich president, and Goebbels as Reich chancellor.* Doenitz, who was not a committed National Socialist but a nationalist conservative, would head a new government, very obviously inclined to seek some kind of agreement with the Western Allies; Goebbels, on the other hand, the most radical of Nazis, was believer and spokesman for a deal with Soviet Russia. A statesman-like balance, between West and East, Hitler may have thought. That balance—if that is what it was—is also perceptible in the wording of his testament and in its so-called postscript. In the testament itself, he did not say one word about the war against Russia: he blamed the Jews for having created the war with the West. Yet in his postscript, his last statement to the armed forces, he insisted on the inevitability of the struggle in the East.† On 1 May Goebbels, who had made an attempt to negotiate with the Russian com- manding general in the Battle of Berlin, killed himself and his family. Doenitz remained personally intact in the north, ready to contact the Western Allies, while insisting on the necessary continuation of the war against the Russians, for the defense of Germany and "Europe" against "Bolshevism" well after Hitler's death, well after the dissolution of the National Socialist Party. He was the head of an almost powerless but still functioning Reich government, representing the two-war theory until the end, according to which the war against the Western Allies was regrettable, while the war against Russia was both unavoidable and heroic; and it was regrettable, too, that the Western Allies had failed to appreciate that. This was not only a tactic but a conviction of men such as Doenitz; it was believed by many Germans for many years after

*Hitler had held these two offices and titles since 1934, but a directive in 1943 ordered that in the customary "Führer and Reich Chancellor" the latter designation be omitted.

†Note the language of Hitler's last Order of the Day to soldiers of the Eastern Front, 16 April 1945. It began: "For the last time the Jewish-Bolshevist mortal enemy masses have begun an attack." Did he really believe in their "Jewish-Bolshevist" character? He did not.

The Jews: Tragedy and Mystery

*Hitler and the Jews: the evolution of a historiography—
The motives of his obsession—The purposes of his policies—
Levels of his knowledge*

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO separate a biography of Hitler—or a study of his strategy and statesmanship—from the history of Jews, particularly those within the Reich before 1939 and generally those within Europe and Russia during World War II. He and his regime engaged in many kinds of barbaric cruelties, involving millions of victims who were not Jewish. But we must give at least a thought to whether Hitler's historical reputation would be different had it not been for the mass murder of at least 4.5 million Jews due to his orders, or at least in accordance with his wishes. (The trouble with what is unthinkable is that at times it must be thought about.) He wanted to win a great war for Germany, and he wanted to eliminate Jews from Europe; and these two aims were complementary, indeed inseparable, in his mind. Near the end he was compelled to separate them. In February 1945, he said that he had at least "lanced the Jewish abscess." Yet in this he failed, too: It was because of him that anti-Semitism became unacceptable, if not unthinkable, intellectually as well as politically after the war, and especially in Germany.

The consequences of this, multiple, protean, and perhaps the swift international acceptance of the Holocaust (Israel.) The origins of that Semitism existed in many before and independently of the mass executions cannot be the subject of an evolving historiography of

The literature of the Holocaust. The small part of it has been an evidence connecting Hitler (a) the search for the documents (b) the reconstruction of the ghettoization, deportation, and "re-ghettoization" of Jews and their fate. We shall turn to some problems—later. But before a rapid sketch of the history of

That the cruelties visited Hitler was obvious enough. It was given special attention was directed by professional or popular. Of course, documentary material after 1945 (though more rare) but there was more to this popular interest in the Holocaust about two decades. The volume appeared in American (or English) reasons that are not easy to with the Holocaust began to

*See LEW, p. 436 *et seq.* for a treatment of the sources and symptoms of modern anti-Semitism.

†I found what may have been its *temporary Review*, March 1944. (A volume of the same issue of this, not-very-radical was brought to Hitler's attention and the Franklyn article.)

"definitely" end;* but allow me to conclude this introductory subchapter with what I think is a trenchant statement by Haffner: "After 1933 something like a Führer state would probably have come into being even without Hitler. [Possibly.] And there probably would have been another war even without Hitler. [Perhaps.] But not the murder of millions of Jews."† [Yes.]

THE MOTIVES OF HITLER'S Judeophobia remain a mystery. More ascertainable—at least to a considerable extent—are his *purposes*.‡ But before my attempt to make a necessary—and seldom observed—distinction between motives and purposes, some other distinctions may be in order.

We must recognize that the Jewish "problem" was Hitler's fundamental obsession—as I suggested in chapter 5, more fundamental than his obsession with the importance of Lebensraum.** At a certain time of his life, Hitler convinced himself that the presence of the Jews was a fundamental problem of Germany and of Europe, and probably of the entire world—the key to history, so to speak. I write "convinced himself," rather than "became convinced," since the latter phrase at least partly suggests the result of outside influ-

*Schreiber in SCHRB, pp. 286–87: "Obviously there exist a great number of excellent studies [about the Final Solution] . . . but a comprehensive survey that considers all the various perspectives and includes all of the most recent single studies does not yet exist."

A good summary statement by Jäckel (IH, p. 46): "It can be ruled out that a single killing order was given. The extermination was divided into several phases and covered a wide variety of methods and victims. We must therefore assume a correspondingly wide variety of orders extending over a period of several months."

†HF/AN, p. 216.

‡In ZIT/A, pp. 42–43, Zitellmann comes close to suggesting that Hitler's anti-Semitism served principally propaganda purposes, which is very debatable. He cites a Hitler speech (27 February 1925): It is "psychologically wrong to establish a variety of aims for the struggle"; it is right "to select but one enemy that everyone can recognize: he is the only guilty one." Then: "And this enemy is the Jews."

**This is the very opposite order from that of Zitellmann, who in an interview with the Swedish historian Alf W. Johansson in November 1992 stated that the creation of a new Lebensraum in the East was Hitler's "central aim" and that it is at least debatable whether the liquidation of the Jews was his aim, surely not for a long time.

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ences; and while Hitler, like every other human being, was undoubt-
edly influenced by what he read and by what others may have said,
this conviction was largely a creation of his own mind, *sui generis*.

As a matter of fact, the term “anti-Semite” does not entirely fit
him. “Anti-Semitism” as a word appeared in the 1870s when—
perhaps especially in Germany—the former, mainly (though never
exclusively) religious discrimination against Jews had grown weaker;
what rose in its stead was a categorization of and a sentiment for
segregating Jews (or even expelling them from the national commu-
nity) because of their alleged racial characteristics, including even
Christians of recent Jewish ancestry. Thus anti-Semitism was often
directed at assimilated Jews who were successful in occupying im-
portant positions in their national societies, confident of their rights
and of their unquestionable acceptance as national citizens. Many
people, in many parts of the world, reacted against such an unques-
tioned assimilation; so had Hitler; but he was no ordinary anti-
Semite. Few anti-Semites regarded—or still regard—the presence
of Jews as not only a problem or a national irritant but as the *prin-
cipal* problem of their nation. Many anti-Semites also happen to
be racists—indeed, their anti-Semitism is but part of their racism—
whereas Hitler was the opposite. His obsession with Jews was deeper
and more consistent than his racism,* which is why I preferred to
write *Judeophobia*, rather than *anti-Semitism*, at the beginning of this
subchapter. Even in 1919–23, when he became prominent in the
midst of many nationalists, riding a wave of popular anti-Semitism,
it is possible that among all the other National Socialists (except for
marginal fanatics such as Julius Streicher), Hitler was one of the
very few, and perhaps the only one, to whom the Jewish “problem”
was absolutely primary.

*Fest, F, p. 780: “The unmistakable difference between his rigorous obsession
with Jews and the lukewarm German anti-Semitism . . . now (November 1938)
became even more evident. The otherwise so perceptive Haffner is wrong about
this (HF/AN, p. 9): “Hitler’s anti-Semitism is an East European plant.” (Not really:
Austrian more than German around the turn of the century.) But p. 103: “No-
where had that Jewish patriotism such fervent, deeply emotional features as in
Germany.” Largely true: which is one of the deepest elements of the German
tragedy.

It was a phobia—and, like some other phobias, not at all irrational to his mind. Several times, as early as 1920, he said that the Jewish “problem” must be “solved” not by emotional but by “cool,” “rational,” “scientific” means. Then and throughout the rest of his life, he kept repeating that Jews were bacilli, viruses, parasitic pests on the bodies of living nations;* and that the time comes in the life of just about every nation when, like a sheepdog, it rises to shake itself and get rid of pests in one big heave. Then, in the very last sentence of his testament, a few hours before his death (when, as we saw, he said nothing about Lebensraum), he dictated: whatever may happen, the German nation must not allow Jews to return in their midst.

The question now arises: when did his Judeophobia crystallize—or congeal—in Hitler's mind?† In *Mein Kampf*, he wrote that his “realization” of what the presence of Jews meant occurred in Vienna, around the twentieth year of his life; that he was no convinced anti-Semite before he had come to Vienna; and that in Vienna his startling, though gradual, realization of the influence of Jews led to “my most difficult mental struggle. Only after months of struggle between reason and feeling, victory began to favor reason. Two years later sentiment had followed reason, and from then on became its most faithful guard and watchman.”‡ (It is interesting to note Hitler's own sequence: emotion catching up with reason, not the other way around.) Yet Jäckel and others found no anti-Semitic utterance by Hitler until the thirty-first year of his life, in Munich. In chapter 2, directed to the Vienna-Munich question, we saw that there were perhaps four instances where Hitler, probably consciously, had altered conditions and facts about his early life. We

*By a horrible coincidence, the gas used in Auschwitz and in other extermination camps—Zyklon B—had been widely used by exterminators of pests and other insects in the houses and apartments of Central Europe.

†Maser, *M/A*, p. 263: “Despite all of our knowledge of details, the origin of Hitler's anti-Semitism is not entirely clarifiable.”

‡Cited in Maser, *M/A*, pp. 247–48, also in *M/F*, p. 100. According to Heer (*HR*, p. 117), this was not true; Hitler left Linz already imbued with anti-Semitism. (Perhaps, but only partly; see his relationship to Dr. Bloch, pp. 195–196.)

must admit at least the possibility may have been unconscious the event of the congealing retrospect for more reasons than his eventual readers. We show Vienna, Hitler had come to the mill anti-Semitism of the people is no evidence that this had been words, that the mutation of his occurred in Vienna and not later room for doubt that his expectation Soviet-like “regime,” included decisive. Still the sudden eruption principal obsession remains a riddle

There remains one possible of his Judeophobia—a considerable amount to an explanation and which involves Hitler's relationship (chapter 2) that in *Mein Kampf* his relationship to his father, in terms of what he would sometimes reveal his version in *Mein Kampf* was well beyond the properly expected about his respectable relationship also points to the strong probability

*In addition to a lack of evidence of 1919, there are such facts as his friendship with a Jewish man in the Vienna men's hostel (his overcoat (many such details in *HR*, p. 59); the fact that Hitler's Iron Cross was a commendation of a Jewish reserve officer, in respect); that a number of Viennese Jewish colors by him in the years 1910–1913 Dr. Bloch.

†Schramm, *sch*, p. 51: “. . . in the great and immeasurable intensity of Hitler's inexplicable.” *

* D.T. Anti-Semitism

D.T. One could say it was an elegant solution when he belatedly admitted the liquidation, it certainly pleased him

her phobias, not at all irrational. In 1920, he said that the Jewish was emotional but by "cool," and throughout the rest of his life bacilli, viruses, parasitic pests that the time comes in the life of a sheepdog, it rises to shake the heavens. Then, in the very last years before his death (when, as we know from his diaries), he dictated: whatever the circumstances, I must not allow Jews to return in

his Judeophobia crystallize—*Mein Kampf*, he wrote that his hatred of Jews meant occurred in the last years of his life; that he was no convert to Vienna; and that in the realization of the influence of the struggle. Only after months of victory began to favor reason. He had reason, and from then on he was a "catchman."† (It is interesting to note that he was catching up with reason, not that others found no anti-Semitic in the last year of his life, in Munich. In the Munich question, we saw that where Hitler, probably confused by the facts about his early life. We

Auschwitz and in other extermination camps exterminators of pests and other vermin in Europe.

knowledge of details, the origin of

HR, p. 100. According to Heer (HR, p. 100), he was imbued with anti-Semitism. (Per Bloch, pp. 195-196.)

as an elegant solution
liquidity, it
will be

must admit at least the possibility that, in this instance, the alteration may have been unconscious: that Hitler placed and exaggerated the event of the congealing of his Judeophobia to Vienna in retrospect for more reasons than that of propaganda, or to convince his eventual readers. We should not doubt that, at the latest in Vienna, Hitler had come to share some of the routine, run-of-the-mill anti-Semitism of the people of that place and period. But there is no evidence that this had become his basic obsession—in other words, that the mutation of his anti-Semitism into his Judeophobia occurred in Vienna and not later in Munich.* There is not much room for doubt that his experiences with the Munich leftist and then Soviet-like "regime," including its many Jewish leaders, were decisive. Still the sudden eruption of his anti-Semitism into his principal obsession remains a mystery.†

There remains one possible consideration of the motive force of his Judeophobia—a consideration which cannot and does not amount to an explanation and which is no more than a hypothesis. It involves Hitler's relationship with his father. We have seen (in chapter 2) that in *Mein Kampf* he described his father, as well as his relationship to his father, in terms that did not at all correspond to what he would sometimes reveal to others. Everything indicates that his version in *Mein Kampf* was a conscious choice, and that it went well beyond the properly expectable few phrases of a public figure about his respectable relationship with his sire. Everything we know also points to the strong probability (at times expressed by Hitler

*In addition to a lack of evidence of extant anti-Semitic expressions of his before 1919, there are such facts as his friendship (or at least friendly acquaintance) with a Jewish man in the Vienna men's hostel who helped him and on occasion lent him his overcoat (many such details in Hamann, summed up also above, chapter 2, p. 59); the fact that Hitler's Iron Cross decoration was awarded him on the recommendation of a Jewish reserve officer, Gutmann (whom, however, Hitler did not respect); that a number of Viennese Jewish people had bought paintings and watercolors by him in the years 1910-1913. He gave one of his earliest watercolors to Dr. Bloch.

†Schramm, SCH, p. 51: "... in the end all attempts to explain the unprecedented and immeasurable intensity of Hitler's anti-Semitism finally founder on the inexplicable."

* D.T. Anti-Semitism became his Fascist pact.

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and perhaps even hated his
 s were made to connect Hitler
 age, foremost among them the
 illegitimate son of a Jewish
 the fact of fatherhood with
 of some historians are suffi-
 thaler-Schicklgruber relation-
 ning else. Yet we may consider
 size "mere possibility"—that
 was half Jewish (perhaps also
 nce there were people, young
 out his father, true or not). It
 scribed his father as "liberal"
 was not, and that he heard
 in his fourteenth or fifteenth
 of his father—which, again,
 Deuerlein was one of the few
 oughout, the possibility exists
 Hitler's father can never be
 rt's perspicacious argument:
 ue Führer projects on the Jew;
 y's suffering is the fault of the
 a Professor Binion's psycho-
 g to which Hitler hated the
 (treated) his beloved mother;
 at hatred then burst forth in
 of his martyred mother. Men
 ey hate (and fear) in them-
 e age of thirty, was moved by

ed, see chapter 2. Also Schreiber,
Kampf. Antwort an Hitler (Vienna,
 ed of Jews." And Edgar Alexander
), *Der Mythos Hitler* (z, 1937, repr.
 system." (SCHREIBER, p. 124, note 233)

"MOVED BY HATRED"—WE HAVE enough evidence of this, includ-
 ing Hitler's own words. But such a general statement is no more
 than the observation of a psychic tendency. Allow me to repeat: The
 true motives—or, in other words, the real sources—of Hitler's
 Judeophobia are not ascertainable. What is more—and legiti-
 mately—ascertainable is the evidence of his expressed purposes.
 There is a difference between legal and historical evidence, but for
 both the great commonsense maxim of Samuel Johnson properly
applies: "Intentions must be gathered from acts." Truth is a slippery
 fish, and law is often a coarse net: but even law, or at least English
 law, admits "motive" as evidence only when it refers to an intention
 expressed. The historian's search for and admission of evidence is
 not constrained by the categories of legal procedure. Potentially all
 is grist to his mill—which makes his work both easier and more dif-
 ficult than that of the lawyer or judge. But he, too, must be aware of
 the difference between motives and purposes; he must eschew the
 categorical, and often false, attribution of psychic motives—a pesti-
 lential intellectual habit of this century—while his task includes
 looking for evidence of his subject's expressed purposes.* In other
 words, the psychic sources of Hitler's motives are one thing, while
 expressions of his intentions are another—and the historian's prin-
 cipal task is the attempt to comprehend and describe the latter, not
 the former, including the evolution of when and how those inten-
 tions resulted in acts.

There was an evolution in Hitler's Jewish policies—its stages cor-
 responding, by and large, to turning points of his life and career.
 His original policy was expulsion: to force all Jews to leave Ger-
many. Then came the first change, in the winter of 1938-39, force-
fully expressed in his speech of 30 January 1939: He saw the coming
of a war; if so, the Jews will have made it and they would have to pay
for it. From this time on, his intentions involved more than the Jews
 of Germany and Austria—they involved all the Jews of Europe. In
 his mind the war and Jews were inseparably connected. It was only

*Cf. HC, chapter 4, "Motives and Purposes."

decades later that historians recognized the great significance of the key sentences in that speech, which otherwise were but yet another example of his anti-Jewish diatribes. Also significant is the fact that Hitler kept referring to this "warning" in his wartime speeches again and again. Significantly, too, he, perhaps consciously, misdated the date of his warning, referring to the date of his speech as 1 September 1939, the moment the war began—obviously wishing to impress people with the categorical and inescapable connection of Jews and the war that had been forced upon him. For about two more years, emigration—that is, expulsion—of Jews from the Greater German Reich still went on, together with the first drafts of plans to expel Jews from all of Europe, perhaps to Madagascar; and then, in the summer of 1941, came another change.† The invasion of Russia—and the American entry into the war—involved new problems: the presence of more millions of Eastern European Jews in the territories overrun and occupied by Germany, and the closing off of the last possibilities of expulsion overseas. Some time in August–September 1941, Hitler either ordered or approved a Final Solution. The first mass executions of Jews took place during the summer and autumn of 1941 in Eastern Europe, while the Final Solution (meaning the collection and extermination of most Jews throughout Europe) was being planned and drafted and finally set down on paper by some of Hitler's minions at the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942.‡ Most of the Jews who were murdered

*"Today I will once more be a prophet. If the international Jewish financiers *inside and outside Europe* should again succeed in plunging the nations into a world war, the result will not be the bolshevization of the earth and the victory of Jewry, but the *annihilation of the Jewish race throughout Europe*" (my italics).

†Haffner in *HF/AN*, p. 84: The Jews "had to be removed not like a piece of furniture that is taken away to be put elsewhere, but like a stain that is removed by wiping it out." Yes, but only after 1941.

‡That conference was first set to meet on 8 December 1941. Its postponement may have had something to do with the American entry into the war. Hitler's knowledge of its decisions is at least indicated by his table conversation of 27 January 1942, recorded by Heim (*HM*, p. 239): "The Jew must disappear from Europe! *At best they go to Russia.* I have no compassion for Jews. They will always remain an element inciting peoples against each other. They do this in the lives of nations as they do it in private life. *They must be extracted from Switzerland and Sweden.* [My italics.] Where there are few of them they are the most dangerous. Five thousand Jews

during World War II were killed in the fall of 1944. In October 1944 of the gassing—probably not on his back. Still, Hitler insisted he believed in—the inseparable connection of the war, whence his exhortation to minute testament.

This summary of a sequence of the most serious historians without some details that may suggest intentions.* To begin with, the condemnation of Jews was, allow me to say, in the 1930s he did permit women of Jewish ancestry in at least semblance of such mild expressions. What is at work

briefly in all kinds of Swedish positive reasons enough for that. . . . My intention. On the one hand, Hitler refers to the fact that he talked on other occasions, too, at the same time, his intention to combat the Jews is entirely in accord with the Wannsee Conference.

*Carr, c. p. 93: "Just as one must admit that to some extent modified Hitler's Holocaust we must allow the possibility before the gas chambers."

†Between the two crucial elections, not strongly emphasize anti-Semitism: "well-meaning Jews" may stay in Germany (Wohlverhalten)." Heidenreich, comic actor Felix Bressart: "Pity that he (pp. 362–63) mention that on 27 January to a cabinet post for the nationalist father. On several occasions, he (half-Jewish officers in the armed services, Erich Raeder, *My Life*, An came to the Nuremberg laws, he did not half-Jews with Jews. Schleunes in 1947 hand appeared occasionally at crucial indecisive one. He did not delegate a close check on it." *

* It was an error to justify his cat

27mo.

and the great significance of the otherwise were but yet another. Also significant is the fact that "ing" in his wartime speeches, perhaps consciously, missing to the date of his speech as war began—obviously wishing and inescapable connection placed upon him. For about two million—of Jews from the Greater with the first drafts of plans to Madagascar; and then, a change.† The invasion of the war—involved new problems of Eastern European Jews in Germany, and the closing of the door overseas. Some time in 1942 he ordered or approved a Final Solution of Jews took place during the war in Europe, while the Final Solution of most Jews was carried out and drafted and finally set in motion at the Wannsee Conference. The Jews who were murdered

the international Jewish financiers plunging the nations into a world of blood and the victory of Jewry, "Europe" (my italics). They will be removed not like a piece of furniture but like a stain that is removed by

December 1941. Its postponement of German entry into the war. Hitler's last conversation of 27 January 1942 must disappear from Europe! At the time. They will always remain an element in the lives of nations as they exist in Switzerland and Sweden. [My italics.] Most dangerous. Five thousand Jews

during World War II were killed between the summer of 1942 and the fall of 1944. In October 1944, Himmler ordered the termination of the gassing—probably not against Hitler's intentions or behind his back. Still, Hitler insisted on—and, from all existing evidence, believed in—the inseparable and principal responsibility of Jews for the war, whence his exhortation to the German people in his last-minute testament.

This summary of a sequence of events will, I think, be accepted by most serious historians without reservations. But to this we must add some details that may suggest the complicated character of Hitler's intentions.* To begin with, categorical and unyielding as his condemnation of Jews was, allowing for no exceptions, on several occasions in the 1930s he did permit or order the exemption of men and women of Jewish ancestry in individual cases.† Yet there was not the least semblance of such mitigations in his speeches and public expressions. What is at work here is not a clearly Machiavellian

briefly in all kinds of Swedish positions. That much easier to extract them! We have reasons enough for that. . . . My italics should suggest the duality within Hitler. On the one hand, Hitler refers to the deportation of Jews to Siberia (about which he talked on other occasions, too), not about their physical extermination. At the same time, his intention to comb through Europe to extract all Jews from everywhere is entirely in accord with the expressed intentions of the protocol of the Wannsee Conference.

*Carr, c, p. 93: "Just as one must pay due regard to 'alternative' foreign policies which to some extent modified Hitler's own concepts, so, too, in studying the Holocaust we must allow the possibility that there were other 'final solutions' before the gas chambers."

†Between the two crucial elections of September 1930 and March 1933, he did not strongly emphasize anti-Semitism in his speeches. On one occasion he said that "well-meaning Jews" may stay in Germany, "once they demonstrate their proper behavior [Wohlvverhalten]." Heiden (HD, p. 347) cites a Hitler remark about the comic actor Felix Bressart: "Pity that this Bressart is a Jew!" Görlitz-Quint (GQ, pp. 362-63) mention that on 27 January 1933 Papen supported and Hitler agreed to a cabinet post for the nationalist Theodor Düstenberg, who had a Jewish grandfather. On several occasions, he (as late as 1940) ordered the reactivation of half-Jewish officers in the armed services (examples of this in Admiral Raeder's memoirs, Erich Raeder, *My Life*, Annapolis, Md., 1960, pp. 263-64). Also, when it came to the Nuremberg laws, he did not approve the plans of the Party to equate half-Jews with Jews. Schleunes in *The Twisted Road to Auschwitz*, p. 131: "Hitler's hand appeared occasionally at crucial moments, but it was usually a vacillating and indecisive one. He did not delegate responsibility for Jewish policy, nor did he keep a close check on it." *

* It was an emotional check-point, there to justify his ego rather than a call to immediate action.

discrepancy between his public statements and his private beliefs. Many things—and witnesses—indicate that he not only wanted people to believe what he said, but that he himself believed everything that he said *while he said it*.*

However, there were some differences between his intentions and those of some of his minions. There is evidence that it was not he but Goebbels and others who organized the "Kristallnacht" pogroms of 9–10 November 1938, and that Hitler ordered their cessation—not, of course, to protect its victims but to protect the reputation of his regime and of Germany.† (At that time, he also rejected Heydrich's proposal to require German Jews to wear a yellow star; he agreed to more restrictions for Jews, but not to all of them.) Yet there is no evidence of the slightest discrepancy between his own convictions and his public statements attributing all of the blame for the coming war to Jewish influences (meaning the decisions of the British and French governments, and of President Roosevelt, to resist him).

We have seen that in the spring of 1941 Hitler was preparing himself, his army, his people, and his propaganda, for a new kind of war—an unrestricted and brutal war, against Russia; that he found it useful to employ the category and the argument describing the enemy as "Jewish-Bolshevism"—but that he did not entirely, or really, believe in the truth of that category. And soon after the beginning of the Russian campaign came the change: the passage from expulsion to extermination, the so-called Final Solution.‡ Evidence that Hitler ordered that, or at least consented to it, is strong—

*In his *Germany 1866–1945* (NY, 1980), Gordon A. Craig puts this well: One of Hitler's psychological principles was "that arguments are weakened by qualifications or concessions to the other side, so that the uncompromising and categorical style tends to be the most convincing." Craig wrote this about Hitler's speeches in the early 1930s, but it is also true of statements made to his circle, including his wartime table conversations.

†Speer (SP, p. 126) recalls "a few words of Hitler, regretting such extremes [*diese Übergriffe*]. He seemed uneasy about them." Other sources confirm this.

‡We must consider that it is only in retrospect—and principally because of the employment of this term at the Wannsee Conference—that we equate "Final Solution" with extermination. Among the frequent instances of the employment of this term (see Lukacs DL, p. 131, note), on 24 June 1940 *re* the plan to deport all Jews of Europe to Madagascar, Heydrich's memorandum to Ribbentrop: The Jewish

in spite of the previous written directive to that, sometimes were—made important decisions could be—

There are many indications of Hitler's August (or early September) war against Russia,† but American connection; for then seemingly unavoidable factor. There is a significant sign of 20 September 1941: "The reprisals against German

problem "can no longer be solved" becomes therefore necessary time that the ominous phrase generally believed. To this add June and as late as 2 February. He has now other ideas, too. manches jetzt anders, nicht ger of the language of this statement.

*Jäckel, JH, p. 46: "We must be sure that whether the Holocaust should prove illuminating, since the improvisations may be."

†According to Jäckel (JH, p. 131) the Russian Jews, but it is also likely that in May 1941 he expressed the desire for the future." Yet Hitler did not operate extermination. JH, p. 53: "According to three days before the Russian from [Poland] in the foreseeable camp only. This statement can death, and indeed the killing can also be taken literally. On July 1941 to Siberia. . . ." (He also mentions In August and September 1941 remaining Jews in Germany. (in that direction.) Uwe Dietrich p. 357: ". . . it is very possible to aim that he tried to achieve." In December 1941. See also H. Förschberg, "in Uwe Backes, *Eck Vergangenheit. Impulse zur Historie*

Stengracht told me, the Führer considers to hold this measure for an eventual entry of America in the war.*

In any event: the reason Hitler gave no written directive ought to be obvious. He knew what these measures meant,† and he also knew how their evidence would shock people throughout the world—including Germany. Like other decisions throughout his career, the Final Solution had to be (and to remain) a state secret. There is plenty of evidence of directives to that effect.‡

To this we may now add something else. The mass extermination

*Koeppen notes in IFZ, 20 September 1941, p. 21. It corresponds with Goebbels's diary, 19 August 1941: "We also talk about the Jewish problem. The Führer is convinced that his former prophecy in the Reichstag had come true, that if Jewry were to succeed to provoke a world war again, he would end that with the extermination [Vernichtung] of the Jews. . . . In the East the Jews must pay the bill; in Germany they have already partly paid it, and in the future they will have to pay more. Their last refuge is North America; and there too they will have to pay sooner or later. . . . In any case the Jews will have no reason to laugh in the future. . . . And will not rest until we too have taken the final measures against Jewry." On that day, Hitler allowed Goebbels and Heydrich to order the compulsory wearing of yellow stars for the remaining Jews in Germany.

Broszat (in VFZ, October 1977, p. 761) considers that Hitler's unwillingness to proceed to a wholesale deportation of Jews from Berlin in November 1941 may have had something to do with the presence of remaining American journalists in Berlin. Haffner (HF/AN, p. 142) dates Hitler's decision to proceed to extermination only in early December 1941, "[after] he abandoned all hope of a negotiated peace with Britain (and the associated hope of preventing America from joining the war)"—and he had to face the end of the German offensive before Moscow. I think this is too late. (There is one symbolic coincidence: the first gassing of Polish Jews took place in Chelno on 8 December 1941.)

†In his speech to officers on 26 May 1944: He had to eliminate [entfernen] the Jews. "One could of course ask me: Well, could you not have done this more simply—not simply; for anything else would have been more complicated—or more humanely?" Cited also by Broszat, p. 759.

‡Görlitz-Quint, GQ, pp. 552–53: His original plan was ghettoization, but then he consciously went along with the gassing plans as "head of the state . . . this dark side of [his war leadership] was even more strictly kept as a state secret than was the euthanasia program." (For that a written Hitler order did exist—if only because it was necessary to free German physicians from their oath to preserve life.) Fleming, FL, p. 20: "Already at the beginning of the euthanasia program," Hitler ordered that "the Führer's Chancellery must under no circumstances be seen to be active in this matter." FL, p. 22, quoting Jodl at Nuremberg: "the 'Final Solution' of the Jewish

of Jews was a state secret—world or even to Hitler's own secret—that knowledge away anything about its details. One consists of his refusal must be looked at and was his refusal to be accused of not being people close to him—into camps in the east their being forced to

question was a 'masterpiece of everything . . . including the sense of criminal justice and the cause of all people.' Finally, there was on 11 July 1943: The word term "Special Treatment" are allowed.

*As late as in his speech will become acquainted with objective solution of the [pp. 446–47: "England too the last minute.")

†Throughout the war, I work. On 17 July 1941 to Madagascar, is the same about Madagascar—and a Regent Horthy in April 19 responded, plaintively, that Hitler said something about they "would either have to were no other alternatives. fairly barbaric procedure that left over. Roughly speaking, ments." In 1944, Hitler asks. Speer confirmed to Fleming wanted Speer to gather Hu

*Euthanasia had shown him that liquidation must be kept as the #1 secret

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considers to hold this measure for war."*

no written directive ought to be meant,† and he also knew people throughout the world—throughout his career, the (main) a state secret. There is no effect.‡
 else. The mass extermination

p. 21. It corresponds with Goebbels' out the Jewish problem. The Führer said that had come true, that if Jewry he would end that with the extermination the Jews must pay the bill; in Germany the future they will have to pay more. too they will have to pay sooner or later to laugh in the future. . . . And measures against Jewry." On that day, the compulsory wearing of yellow

considers that Hitler's unwillingness to come from Berlin in November 1941 may have remaining American journalists in decision to proceed to extermination ended all hope of a negotiated peace preventing America from joining the war an offensive before Moscow. I think the first gassing of Polish Jews

He had to eliminate [entfernen] the Jews. Could you not have done this more easily? It would have been more complicated—or

plan was ghettoization, but then he was "head of the state . . . this dark world kept as a state secret than was the order did exist—if only because it was their oath to preserve life.) Fleming, "The Asia program," Hitler ordered that measures be seen to be active in this "the 'Final Solution' of the Jewish

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 each

of Jews was a state secret of the Reich, not to be admitted to the outside world or even to the German people at large. But it was also Hitler's own secret—a secret at least to the extent that he pushed that knowledge away from himself. He surely did not want to know anything about its details. There are three kinds of evidence for this. One consists of his repeated statements that the Jewish "problem" must be looked at and dealt with in "cool, scientific" ways.* Another was his refusal to admit—not only to foreign visitors whom he accused of not being severe enough with their Jews but also to people close to him—that the aim of the concentration of the Jews into camps in the east was something other than deportation, and their being forced to work.† Finally, and most significantly, there

question was a 'masterpiece of concealment.' " (FL, p. 61, calls it "Hitler's Cunning," perhaps not the best term.) Deuerlein, D, p. 152: "Hitler did not talk about everything . . . including the so-called Final Solution. . . . He was not a murderer in the sense of criminal justice; he did not murder or kill anyone; but he was still the author and the cause of all of the murders committed by members of the German people." Finally, there was Bormann's confidential instruction from the chancellery on 11 July 1943: The words "Final Solution" must not be mentioned, not even the term "Special Treatment" [Sonderbehandlung]; only references to Jews sent to work are allowed.

*As late as in his speech of 30 January 1944: He hopes that "other nations too will become acquainted with the elements of a scientific understanding and objective solution of the [Jewish] question." (Also in 1944, cited by Heer, HR, pp. 446-47: "England too may shake herself and get rid of the Jewish bacteria in the last minute.")

†Throughout the war, Hitler kept speaking of Jews being deported eastward to work. On 17 July 1941 to the Croat Kvaternik: "where the Jews are sent, to Siberia or Madagascar, is the same for him." As late as July 1942, he still talked to his circle about Madagascar—and about Siberia too. When he berated the Hungarian Regent Horthy in April 1943 for not being tough about Hungarian Jews, Horthy responded, plaintively, that he could not simply beat them to death—whereupon Hitler said something about Jews being "bacilli," while Ribbentrop declared that they "would either have to be annihilated or put into concentration camps: there were no other alternatives." Goebbels in his diary of 27 March 1942 wrote of "a fairly barbaric procedure that cannot be precisely described: how many Jews will be left over. Roughly speaking about 60 percent liquidated, 40 percent in labor detachments." In 1944, Hitler asked Horthy for 100,000 Jews to work in German factories. Speer confirmed to Fleming (in a letter in 1981, FL, p. 161, note 12) that Hitler wanted Speer to gather Hungarian Jews for the construction of large underground

was his evident unwillingness to read or hear or see reports of what was really done to Jews in the east. This unwillingness accorded with his unwillingness to visit or even to look at photographs of severely bombed German cities, or at pictures of the German refugees trekking westward in the brutal winter of 1944-45, pictures that he, at least on one occasion, pushed aside (and perhaps even with his unwillingness to look at photographs of the July 1944 conspirators' executions).^{*} Here we are faced, again, with a duality in his character. Generally speaking, not wanting to know something means preferring not to think about it at all. Within Hitler's person we may recognize an element of weakness in a man who otherwise could not be described as a coward; or, at best, a sensitive (and, in a way, feminine) element in the character of a man whose brutal ideas and brutal expressions were the very opposite of sensitive. Hitler was not a sadist. He took no sensual pleasure in the sufferings of his enemies or victims. Sadism is a sin of the flesh; Hitler's sins were those of the spirit. There is no evidence that his often-stated beliefs—that by persecuting the Jews he was acting as an instrument of God, and that the war had been forced on him by Jews—were meant for public consumption only.[†]

factories in Germany. In March 1943, Dr. Korherr, a statistician working for the SS, was ordered by Himmler to prepare an exact statistical account of the number of Jews remaining in the East; this was then summarized and typed on a special typewriter for Hitler to read. According to Eichmann (FL, p. 138), Hitler saw it and then ordered it to be destroyed.

^{*}See also the article by Dieter Pohl ("Die Holocaust-Forschung und Goldhagens Thesen") in VFZ, January 1997, p. 11: "... it is still not wholly clear whether economic motives, meaning the preservation of Jews for work, did not have a considerable influence on the sequence of the mass murders."

[†]Maser (M/A, p. 255) makes an interesting remark about Hitler's unwillingness to confront one of his last cooks, Frau Manziarly, who was of (partly) Jewish origin: "... this also suggests that even in connection with the killing of Jews he was 'only' inhuman as long as he did not have to face his victims."

[†]To this we may add another possible connection of the Final Solution with his private knowledge that the war could no longer be won: He knew not only that he would lose his war but also that the Jews of the world knew this. The perceptive Burrin (his concluding paragraph), p. 169: "Around the middle of September 1941, when he decided to kill the Jews, he certainly did not think defeat was inevitable. But he must have assuredly felt that it would take a great deal of luck in the future

THERE WERE, as we have seen, individual condemnations of Jews. There is the statement of Giesler,^{*} who saw Hitler read a biography of Emperor Frederick the Great by Ernst Kantorowicz. In (11 December 1941), he asked: "are there, any decent Jews?" "who took his own life as decomposition of other nations Hitler mentioned the "Dr. Bloch, as we have seen

for him to win; and he saw clearly The extermination of the Jews, the vengeance. By putting to death the little did it matter to his obsessed civilians—he was demonstrating the somehow sacrificial death of the Jew victory, to fight on to annihilation at the spilled German blood, and to conduct this exercise of vengeance, as the situation worsened, and as he

^{*}Giesler, p. 520; about him see c

[†]In *Hitler's Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier* (1968), p. 36, Dietrich Eckart, Hitler's friend and confidant, called him a decent Jew. Lukacs, LEW, pp. 452-453, in his book entitled *Geschlecht und Charakter der Juden und Christen*, the problem of [He . . .] was probably right in his criticism of anti-Semitism. He was wrong in his view of rising Christianity: "Against the Jewish thirst for the founder of a decision as in the Year One. Between religion and culture, between woman and man, between nothingness and Godhead the two opposite kingdoms: There is a Third Reich that was to be ruled by the religion of the folk."

* The angels were coming to him every night. How hideous ~~and~~ they must have seemed to him. Power to torment him. Like devils!

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Holocaust-Forschung und Goldhagens
it is still not wholly clear whether eco-
Jews for work, did not have a consider-
orders."
remark about Hitler's unwillingness
only, who was of (partly) Jewish origin:
with the killing of Jews he was 'only'
victims."
connection of the Final Solution with his
er he won: He knew not only that he
the world knew this. The perceptive
around the middle of September 1941,
did not think defeat was inevitable.
take a great deal of luck in the future

*to him, living may be
must have been
it was. Like devils!*

THERE WERE, as we have seen, a few exceptions to Hitler's categor-
ical condemnation of Jews. There were his exemptions of certain
individuals. There is the statement by his apologist, the architect
Giesler,* who saw Hitler reading, in October 1944, the great biog-
raphy of Emperor Frederick II by the fine German Jewish medie-
valist Ernst Kantorowicz. In one of Hitler's table conversations
(11 December 1941), he asked the rhetorical question: Were there,
are there, any decent Jews? Hardly any. Otto Weininger, perhaps,
"who took his own life as he realized that the Jew lives by the
decomposition of other nations and peoples!"† But on other occa-
sions Hitler mentioned the "Edeljude," the "noble Jew," Dr. Bloch.

Dr. Bloch, as we have seen (in chapter 2), was the Jewish physician

for him to win; and he saw clearly the price he would have to pay to avoid defeat.
The extermination of the Jews, then, was at once a propitiatory act and an act of
vengeance. By putting to death those he thought of as his archetypal enemies—
little did it matter to his obsessed mind that these were powerless and unarmed
civilians—he was demonstrating his will to fight to the end. By means of the
somehow sacrificial death of the Jews, he was fanatically steeling himself to achieve
victory, to fight on to annihilation. At the same time, and above all, he was expi-
ating spilled German blood, and avenging beforehand a possible defeat. He would
conduct this exercise of vengeance, as it turned out, with mounting determination
as the situation worsened, and as he advanced toward an apocalyptic end."

*Giesler, p. 520; about him see chapter 7.

†In *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier*, ed. H. Picker-A. Hillgruber (M:
1968), p. 36, Dietrich Eckart, Hitler's early mentor, had told Hitler about this *only*
decent Jew. Lukacs, *LEW*, pp. 452-53: "Weininger in 1902 wrote an extraordinary
book entitled *Geschlecht und Charakter (Sex and Character)* about women and men,
Jews and Christians, the problem of whose relationship consumed his fiery mind.
[He . . .] was probably right in foreseeing the rise of a tremendous movement of
anti-Semitism. He was wrong in believing that this would be the result of a new,
and rising, Christianity: 'Against this new Jewry a new Christianity comes to light:
Humanity thirsts for the founder of a new religion, and the struggle moves toward
a decision as in the Year One. Between Jewry and Christianity, between commerce
and culture, between woman and man, between earthbound life and a higher life,
between nothingness and Godhead, mankind will again have to choose. These are
the two opposite kingdoms: *There is no Third Reich.*' There was to be a Third Reich,
a Third Reich that was to be ruled not by the religion of Christianity but by the
religion of the folk."

in Linz who treated Hitler's mother during her last, painful illness. In March 1938, the old Dr. Eduard Bloch saw Hitler's triumphant entry into Linz from the window of his apartment in a house on the main street. Thereafter he and his family were treated with circumspection by the National Socialist authorities, who assisted his emigration to the United States. On 16 November 1938, before his departure, Bloch sent a letter to a Renato Bleibtreu, the director of the Viennese office of the NSDAP Central Archives, enclosing Bloch's medical record book of 1907, to be transmitted to the Führer. This was a remarkable letter, sentimental, memory-laden, and deeply melancholy, and yet not a groveling one. It included a long description of the young Hitler at the time of his mother's death, who left a long and searing impression on this physician's memory: "In my almost forty-year-long practice I have never seen a young man who was so struck by pain and sorrow as the young Adolf Hitler! I had the impression that here stands a man before you of whose very being, of whose heart, a piece had been torn out! . . . I have the conviction that he has not forgotten his mother's doctor, whose practice has been governed not by material but ethical considerations; but I am also convinced that the same principles govern thousands of my coreligionists whose many spiritual sufferings are the same as mine."*

There is a humility in Dr. Bloch's letter that I find deeply moving. I write "humility"—which is of course different from cowardice, just as confidence differs from arrogance. The great historian Jakob Burckhardt once wrote that humility is something of which the ancient world was not capable; it was a virtue brought into our world by Christianity. Was Hitler capable of humility? Hardly: except on that occasion on Christmas Eve in 1907, when before this modest Jewish doctor he bowed deep, thanking him for what he had done for his mother.

*To this were added another two pages, dated 7 November 1938: "Recollections of the Führer and of his [departed] mother." These are reproduced in Schenck, pp. 520ff. In these pages Schenck demolished Binion's thesis about Bloch's medical errors and his medical—and financial—irresponsibility. (See also Dr. Bloch's article about Hitler in *Collier's*, 15 and 22 March 1941.)

* Bloch warns him of the pains his mother will suffer.

The (Chapter

*Hitler in the hist.
The problem of "public opi
Third Reich—
clas*

THE HISTORY OF GER includes Hitler. This perhaps understandal mans who shy away from it. the statement of a German re Hitler does not belong in G presumably also other non-C understandable—and excusal mans to regard the Hitler ye tory of their country and of chapter, suggesting something are popular inclinations and non-German people (perhap women) to the effect that Ge was but another German thi Second War, a continuation one. What we face here are e tions of a perennial question:

iod or place in history, the
ps especially difficult when
le. And it is to the credit of
o grapple with this problem
g had the courage to admit
main their own.

istory, and perhaps not for
twentieth century is: How
e question has been raised
answers," wrote Eberhard
w) Hitler came to power,
assage, "is unquestionably
rted Hitler, who rallied to
der him. Beyond that it is
ions, for whom Hitler is a
hed and unchanging is the
ider, a very serious German
6: "Our confrontation with
be ended; in a way we are
serious examination of our
—which means an accep-
those whose heart is strong
German people, no matter
are the people of Martin
Engels and also of Adolf
Schneider rightfully said,

another German-speaking
who cites Schramm: "The
[unheimlich] man is a politi-
ques: "After the collapse of

opments of German history be-
the First World War, creating
the rise of Hitler possible but

his rule, after his death, after the triumph of the Allies, in German
lands, especially in Christian and conservative circles, [people] were
willing to regard Hitler as a daemon, an anti-Christ, as a phe-
nomenon beyond understanding, disappearing (thus) into meta-
physical clouds. This retreat into a . . . metaphysical hell . . . served,
first of all, as a kind of relief: one did not want to admit that one was
also responsible for the rise, for the assumption of power, for the
Europe-wide destructive achievements of this man."

In his massive biography Fest is sometimes, at least implicitly,
ambiguous about such an assumption of a unique German responsi-
bility. Yes, Germany was a special place. There evidently existed
"national characteristics that had made National Socialism different
from the Fascistic movements of other countries, but then Hitler
had found obedient followers everywhere." And: "Even though every
nation carries in itself the responsibility for its history," it is wrong
"to deny the recognition that in [Hitler] culminated the powerful
tendency of a time that marked the entire first half of the century."
This may be too Hegelian, with its implication of *Zeitgeist*, but
there is truth in Fest's conclusion: "In the end it is also certain that
he could not have destroyed Europe without [a] concurrence from
the latter." In sum: "He was much less a great contradiction than the
reflection [*Spiegelbild*—literally "mirror image"] of his times." The
young Zitellmann, in his early commentary on "Hitler-research,"†
which contains interesting and insightful commentaries and criti-
cisms of Hitler's various biographers, distinguishes the external cir-
cumstances that allowed Hitler to assume power and to accomplish
his extraordinary success from what Zitellmann—in my opinion
employing the wrong term—calls the "subjective" factor; that is, the
characteristics of Hitler's personality.

In 1985 Martin Broszat summed up the problem: "Extraordinary
in our situation is the necessity, as well as the difficulty, of fitting
National Socialism properly into German history."‡ Haffner asked

*F, pp. 516–17; F, p. 1024.

†"Hitlers Erfolge—Erklärungsversuche in der Hitler-Forschung," in *Neue Poli-
tische Literatur* (hereafter: NPL), 1982, p. 22.

‡In *Merkur*, 8 May 1985.

the concordant question: "Did the Third Reich represent continuity in the history of Germany, or did it depart from the beaten path? The simple answer is that it contained elements of both continuity and discontinuity, and that continuity predominated."^{*} This is significant because Haffner was a conservative—but also someone deeply aware of what Armin Mohler and others had called "The Conservative Revolution" among important German thinkers and writers in the 1920s who thought that Germany must represent something new, breaking out from an antiquated liberalism and parliamentarianism, in the direction of a stronger, brighter, sun-laden future.[†]

However, it was *not* inevitable—as some Germanophobes during and after the war, including the American journalist William Shirer, wrote—that German history unavoidably and necessarily culminated in Hitler. That is, too, why the debate among German (and sometimes English) historians about a Special German Path in modern history ("Sonderweg"), meaning a departure from Western democratic development, going back to the failure of a German democratic revolution in 1848 and even earlier, may be exaggerated. Not only Germany but the majority of the present nations of Europe refused to follow or adopt the French, the British, the American, the Swiss, the Scandinavian, or other Western models in the 1920s and 1930s. Still, some of the statements of serious German historians during the "Sonderweg" discussion are worth

^{*}HF/A1, p. 211.

[†]Haffner cites, in some detail, the poet Stefan George in 1921, who prophesied the coming of an age which "Brings forth the one who helps, the Man / He bursts the chains, restores on fields of rubble / His order; scourges those who've gone astray / Back to eternal justice, where the great / Is great again, and master once more master / Obedience reigns, and on the people's banner / Pins the true sign and through wild storm and terror / Of the red dawn he leads his faithful band / To the day's deed—the New Reich's planting." George was (as were some others) a prophet of a Third Reich; but he disliked Hitler, and left Germany in 1933 for Switzerland, where he died. One of his last close followers was the hero Count Stauffenberg, who attempted to kill Hitler in 1944. "The chapter of German intellectual history entitled 'George-Hitler-Stauffenberg' still remains to be written." (These quotes from the American edition of *The Meaning of Hitler*.)

* Dr. to quotes this.

considering.* The historian T the unquestioning acceptance o the other hand, the sociologist K thesis of the German 'Sonderweg' German political consensus after the best of scholarly intentions, know that, willingly or unwilling forces that tend to oppose our 1945." The thoughtful histori guished between a particular G sein)[†] and the "Sonderweg."[‡] limited to the era of [the Third ticular German mentality [*Sonde* with its opposition to the Frer after 1870 and 1918 must be e perspectives [and, I would add, 1 tics, out of a myth reality. The r was not a particular German c National Socialist dictatorship German ideology that in 1933– tarian reality."[‡]

From a very broad historical two world wars of the twentieth things, the last attempt of a state was the great European power the seventeenth and eighteenth world power (and an important power) during the nineteenth ce it was Germany's turn, in both Wars. Yes, there was a connecti

**Deutscher Sonderweg: Mythos oder R* Vienna, 1982). See also a summary of 326–27.

[†]"Bewusstsein" may suggest "ment perhaps—in this instance—even "ideol tality and ideology see pp. 208–209.

[‡]Sontheimer in *Deutscher Sonderweg*,

0

especially for German historians. . . . To identify the sources of this fateful mistake of the past and to research it without minimizing it ["bagatellisieren"] remains a task of German historical scholarship. Ignoring it means the loss of its commitment to truth.*

There remains the other side of this question, which is Hitler's affection for the German people. A quarter century ago, I wrote that "the fundamental source of Hitler's strength was hatred. Compared to the power of his hatreds, even his love for his people—the living purpose of a great national leader—amounted to little. In this he was quite unlike Napoleon."† Perhaps "little" is not the right word, for in any case, love is a matter of quality, not of quantity. And—as also in other instances—ambiguities in Hitler's thinking are discernible in such a complex matter.‡ Many German historians—again, understandably—have made much of some of Hitler's remarks, especially toward the end of the war, about Germans being a people who deserved to perish if they proved to have been too weak. Yet at the same time (on 2 April 1945, for instance), he spoke of his "unbreakable faith in the future of the German people."** In

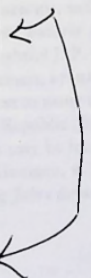
*In VFZ, October 1977, p. 745. Also Gisevius, 61, p. 7: "... especially we Germans must see clearly that this man has never been apart from us. We have not only endured the phenomenon of Hitler—we had contributed to its formation ["mitgestaltet"].

†In LEW, p. 166.

‡On one side there is Hans Frank: "Volk und Führer, Führer und Volk were betrothed. Each searched and desired the other, each trusted the other." On the other side Haffner: "Did he love the Germans? . . . It was only as an instrument of power that he was ever genuinely interested in them. He had great ambitions for Germany, and in that he found himself at one with the Germans of his generation." (HF/AN, p. 164) "During the final years, he increasingly despised them." (No.) "... He no longer sought contact with them." (Yes.) (HF/AN, p. 141)

**The evidence is contradictory. Schramm (SCH, p. 4) cites Hitler at one of his table conversations, 5 July 1942: "... in the struggle of peoples those with the better average quality will always be the victors . . . the natural order of things would be disrupted if the inferior should master the superior." Schramm also cites (p. 176) the report of General Carl Hilpert, dictated to his war diaries, on 18 April 1945: "Hitler leaned back and began a long lecture on the struggle of the German people. It culminated with the words: 'If the German people loses the war, it will have proved itself not worthy of me.' ["meiner nicht würdig"]. Yet on the same page: "The more people have to endure, the more magnificent would be the ultimate rebirth of eternal Germany."

A+O



at sometime in the late 1930s
the dominant power in Europe
the important sense there were
two world wars. I am not only
World War II, when many of the
and civilians disappeared.
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y of a people) in a war for his
Mein Kampf: "Either Germany
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edience and discipline carried
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in 1977: "It was not with
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the German people identi-
exists an essential problem,

March 1945, Speer was deeply shocked when Hitler ordered the destruction of all factories, plants, bridges, and the like before the retreating German lines in the west. But Speer also recorded his impression that by the end of March Hitler no longer seemed to insist on that. What he insisted on, till the very end, was that the Allies wanted to destroy the German people.*

IN A MOST TRENCANT (though, alas, seldom sufficiently contemplated) short chapter—"Some Characteristics of Historians in Democratic Times"—in the second volume of *Democracy in America* Tocqueville made some very important statements about the problems of history in the then coming mass democratic age. Among other matters, he suggested that, contrary to expectations at first sight, a proper reconstruction of the history of peoples will be a more difficult task than the reconstruction of history at the time of aristocratic societies. Despite the increasing openness of all kinds of archives during the last one hundred years, this has proved true. Of course, it is a mistake to believe that the phenomenon—as we shall soon see, imprecisely so named—of public opinion became a factor not only during the last century or two. It has played a role from the beginning of history. As Pascal wrote in his *Pensées*: "Opinion" is after all "the queen of the world." But it is also true that the evolution of modern history toward democracy (and by this I do not only mean the evolution of universal education but the evolution of consciousness), what may be called "the structure of events" has undergone changes, by which I mean an increasing intrusion of mind into matter. Contrary not only to Marx but also to Adam Smith and, indeed, to all materialist philosophies, it is at least

*An interesting observation by Klaus-Dietmar Henke, *Die amerikanische Besetzung Deutschlands*, M, 1995, p. 308. Allied propaganda was directed against Nazism and militarism, not against the German people. "It is remarkable that Hitler was personally and accurately concerned with this, and that he wanted to falsify the expressed intentions of the Allies. In February 1945 he looked over the text of a speech by Hermann Esser which he changed only in one way. Each time Esser wrote that in Yalta 'the destruction of National Socialism' had been decided, [Hitler] changed the wording into 'destruction of the German people.'"

* Deeds are the king. It is the actions of men and not their sentiments that make history.

arguable that what matters primarily is in the events of the world to believe; and that the very matter is the consequence of that. And as, for example, to "market" Hitler's dependence on the German people he was wholly aware, and with what degree from—perhaps both dependence in the cases of Cro and Mussolini and Stalin.

But there are peculiar problems to deal with. The modern "sample research" are relatively new (in the United States in 1935)—and, alas, seldom considered likely to trend away from political to social. German historians after 1965—more important, descriptions of German people during the war, of their relationship to Hitler, of insightful passages in the memoirs of participant observers; but systematically appeared only during the last two decades. Authors have been aware of the many of the most valuable of the war had come to power,† few of them thereafter and during the war.

†A few examples. Thomas Childers, Jürgen W. Falter, *Hitlers Wähler* (M, 1995); Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: The Rise and Fall*, M, 1998; and his pioneer study, *The Third Reich, Bavaria 1933-1945* (M, 1990). Especially insightful J. P. Stern, *Hitler: The Secret Struggle for Power*, M, 1999; important Steinert, *Hitler: The Man and the Myth*, M, 1997; there are

†In addition to many of the excellent studies of the Weimar Republic (Bracher, for example, 1969), and attitudes may be found in 1933: W. Brodersen, Humann, v. Paczensky, eds. *1933: Fünfzig Jahre danach* (M, 1983).

nuanced assessment of the patterns of article by Bernd Stöver, "Loyalität statt und ihr Bild von III. Reich," in *vFZ*, July sources [proving] the resistance of any of the existing loyalty to the regime."

**HC*, pp. 92–93, quoting the eminent Dutch historian Pieter Geyl in an essay about the American Civil War: "Did the majority of the Netherlands people will the complete rupture with Philip II and with the Roman Church? . . . No. Did the majority of the English people will the overthrow of the monarchy and the execution of Charles I? . . . No. Did the French people will the Republic and the execution of Louis XVI? . . . No. Did the majority of the German people in 1933 want Hitler, did they will war? No." The very election of 1860, in which Lincoln polled less than 40 percent of the votes, proves that the majority of the American people had not deliberately willed the Civil War; but Geyl rightly asks: "Does this prove that the war might therefore have been avoided? Is it not rather one more proof of the general truth that the course of history is not governed by the conscious will of the majority?"

*D.T. The conscious will of the majority is but a tide. A vessel with a powerful motor will make ~~its way~~ ^{its way} against any tide but a cataclysmic storm.

80 percent were his committed opponents.* (Also, belief in Hitler and belief in National Socialism were not always the same thing.) Furthermore, it is not always, and not necessarily, true that a mass is more than the sum of its individual components. In many ways a collective is *less* than that, since its members are men and women, Catholics and Protestants and atheists, former monarchists and former Socialists, and so forth; and the interesting question is *how* a German Catholic or a former Socialist voter became either a partially or fully committed believer in Hitler. A further difficulty presents itself with the German terms "Volksgefühl," "Volksstimmung," and "Volksmeinung" (especially employed by Zitelmann), which are only imprecisely translatable into English ("popular" or "national feeling," "sentiment," "opinion"), and are undefinable and overlapping. This touches on yet another particular problem, which is that of the categories and tendencies of German rhetoric—already evident in the tone of German public statements and publications during World War I, when, for example, French or British nationalism was often as sharp or even brutal as the German; but somehow the *rhetoric* of the Germans was different. Here we must recognize that, Freud notwithstanding, speech is not only an expression of thought, but that habits and patterns of speech have an evident, and often ascertainable, effect on habits and patterns of thought.†

Closely connected with this is another necessary recognition: that

*Kershaw in *PO/PD*, p. vii, is very good about this: His book "is about the muddled majority, neither full-hearted Nazis nor outright opponents, whose attitudes at one and the same time betray signs of Nazi ideological penetration and yet show the clear limits of propaganda manipulation. The picture painted is not a simple, straightforward, and clear-cut one."

†Some of this is ascertainable in the memoirs of German generals and other high officials of the Third Reich. A careful study of the gradual (though rapid) adjustment of the German press to the era of the Third Reich in 1933 is, as yet, missing. About "adjustment"—great writers such as Tocqueville and Fontane gave us incomparable portraits of what happened in 1848 in Paris or in Berlin, but such portraits about 1933 hardly exist, partly because, as I attempted to express earlier, "the structure of events" and the mental habits of large numbers of people were not what they were a century before.

of the difference between expected more of the mental dictable mental reactions—wholesale acceptance of the in *Mein Kampf*: "To lead m

(act)

BUT ENOUGH OF THESE M temological—consideration its variations.† To begin with the widely accepted thesis, : sion not only contributed acquire power. We know breakthrough—in his fortune election, when the Nation more votes than they did almost 19 percent of all votes tively little attention to d Socialist votes in the sum municipal and state electio for instance), rising at time before the worldwide Depre Weimar Germany. Some h crucial ascent from 1930 to years of the Depression, I gram—in other words, his

"Mentality," here, is not altogether *mentalités* among historians. This is French academics) of the fatal shostruction of history. Admittedly a c spectives, it must mean more than j certain place and time.

†Steinert, in *ST/HK/D*, p. 336, who have claimed that Hitler's su would have been greatly handicapp pictorial materials were more easily voice or text.

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airs of German generals and other ndy of the gradual (though rapid) the Third Reich in 1933 is, as yet, ch as Tocqueville and Fontane gave 1848 in Paris or in Berlin, but such e, as I attempted to express earlier, of large numbers of people were not

of the difference between mentality and ideology. For Hitler expected more of the mentality*—of the mental habits and the predictable mental reactions—of the German people than of their wholesale acceptance of the National Socialist ideology. As he wrote in *Mein Kampf*: "To lead means to be able to move the masses."

(actions not sentiments.)

BUT ENOUGH OF THESE methodological—or, more properly, epistemological—considerations. Our subject is Hitler's popularity, and its variations.† To begin with, there are serious reasons to question the widely accepted thesis, according to which the 1930–33 Depression not only contributed to but made it possible for Hitler to acquire power. We know that a most important step—literally a breakthrough—in his fortunes was the September 1930 Reichstag election, when the National Socialists received nearly seven times more votes than they did two years before—from less than 3 to almost 19 percent of all votes cast. Yet historians have devoured relatively little attention to the already rapid increase of National Socialist votes in the summer of 1929 and in early 1930 in the municipal and state elections (in Saxony, Mecklenburg, Baden, for instance), rising at times to 13 or 14 percent. This happened before the worldwide Depression and the tide of unemployment in Weimar Germany. Some historians have remarked that during his crucial ascent from 1930 to 1933, which coincided with the worst years of the Depression, Hitler had no definite economic program—in other words, his appeal was not primarily, and perhaps

"Mentality," here, is not altogether identical with the now fashionable use of *mentalités* among historians. This is a greatly overdue recognition (especially among French academics) of the fatal shortcomings of a materialist philosophy and reconstruction of history. Admittedly a difficult task, calling for sensitive minds and perspectives, it must mean more than particular references to the "mental climate" of a certain place and time.

†Steinert, in *ST/HH/D*, p. 336, makes the convincing argument against those who have claimed that Hitler's success was due to his radio speeches and that he would have been greatly handicapped by his television image. As Goebbels proved, pictorial materials were more easily manipulated and on occasion falsified than was voice or text.

*This is also the Celi Rauber period and A. H. identifies his success with his presence.

scarcely at all, economic. What came to the fore in 1930 and after was a tremendous surge of German nationalism*—among all classes, and significantly among those who were worst affected by unemployment and other economic woes. "The workingmen have no country," Marx wrote. He could not have been more wrong—something that was already evident in 1914, and even more in the 1930s. Haffner is especially commendable for having recognized this. German nationalism "now suddenly became part of everyday political discourse. Even the Communists began to speak in nationalistic tones. . . ."† And what happened in Germany in 1933 and after proves again the superior quality of Proudhon's insight

*A very telling description of a significant episode in Heiden, HD, pp. 231–32. In April 1928 Stresemann spoke in the Bürgerbraukeller in Munich, a good speech. A group of young National Socialists entered, shouting, and then began to sing "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!"—and the chairman of the meeting stood up and sang with them. Stresemann was white with fury at the cowardice of this man. That night he had a kidney attack; a year later he died. "The meeting was destroyed—thanks to the cowardice of its organizers. . . . When Stresemann confronted them later, one of them answered: 'Herr Minister, one had to show these boys that we are just as good Germans as they!' Instead of having shown them the door. Afraid not to look sufficiently 'national' to a ruffian, they abandoned their dignity. What more remains to be said? Thus would Hitler come to power."

†HF/A1, pp. 169–70. As late as 17 May 1933 there were still some Social Democratic deputies sitting in the Reichstag who applauded Hitler's foreign-policy speech, about greatness coming to Germany—probably sincerely, and not because of mere opportunism.

In a thoughtful article P. Stadler, in *IZ*, 1988, p. 25: Germany was different from other countries; Hitler rose to power by largely democratic means. "Historical research, in masterful analyses—as in Bracher's seminal work—worked out and reconstructed the events leading to January 1933, illuminating the responsibility of people [around Hindenburg] and thus contributing essentially to [the historical recognition] of important factors. . . . On the other hand it did not emphasize that the main responsibility is not to be found among the Papens, etc., but with the average German voter."

To this let me add: To what extent are people responsible for their regimes? In 1792–93, in France, the Jacobins were not a majority. In 1917, the Bolsheviks in Russia were not. In 1922, the Fascists in Italy were not. But Hitler had a large plurality, a near-majority, behind him in 1933—as a matter of fact, the July 1932 elections should have made him chancellor then, except for Hindenburg's temporary reluctance.

over that of Marx—that pe-
to realities of power.*

Hitler understood that the four general plebiscites not follow a major foreign-powers had not merely mi expansion: they had to witness [the Rhineland occupation should not, blame the German how foreign statesmen treat the same time their mute Hitler's brutal mass execution. As Haffner put it, "if one German people, then perhaps

"What kind of state was it widely held beliefs, it was not Democratic Republic or structured political party. The Central Committee, no Politburo committee meetings. . . . It state but Hitler who dominated

Again Haffner, HF/A1, pp. 185 politically unified nation. It is a puzzle because people like to forget that thing like a national coming together the National Socialist Party, but by beginning to be called." Also M. B. unserer Geschichte (M, 1986), p. 16. ism was more important than its ideology.

"Or consider that Ferdinand I. Bismarck in 1863: "a secret . . . tradition to accept dictatorship." In Re p. 120: "an insight of immense significance years. . . ." Or Julius Fröbel, a German enough of principles and doctrinal theory. What it wants is power, revered, more than it dreams of."

†KER, p. 105. This was already League of Nations, or the Saar ple-

* D. Fr. I did not
that the moment
Hitler and went

people responsible for their regimes? In a majority. In 1917, the Bolsheviks in Germany were not. But Hitler had a large plus—as a matter of fact, the July 1932 election except for Hindenburg's temporary

†KER, p. 105. This was already so well before 1936: Hitler's rejection of the League of Nations, or the Saar plebiscite, for example.

* D. T. I did not need the O. O. to tell me that the moment was ripe. The people loved Hitler and wanted more of him - when

2. 7 *

People want more of something they will grow

Same?

Hitler's Third Reich was not a party state, it was a Führer state. . . . A colossal achievement to have united virtually the entire nation behind him [by 1938]—and accomplished in less than ten years! Accomplished, moreover, on the whole not by demagoguery but by achievement. . . ." Thus wrote Sebastian Haffner, a liberal conservative with an unimpeachable intellectual reputation. And Hans Frank, in the shadow of the gibbet: the Party Congress in 1938 was Hitler's "wedding with the German people. . . . Above everything smiled the great magician Hitler, blessing, bewitching, touching their hearts. . . ." * These are emotional images in the memory of a desperate man. Yet we ought not to ignore other such evidence of national confidence, such as the fantastically high German marriage and birthrates in 1938–39, together with the extraordinary drop in the number of suicides, and so forth.

We have seen that in 1939 the German people, after so many years of anti-Communist propaganda, reacted to Hitler's pact with Stalin without a murmur, indeed with sentiments of admiration—by which Hitler himself was surprised, and relieved. Thereafter, during the war German opinion and sentiment sometimes lagged behind Hitler,† and sometimes it ran ahead of him—as in the summer of 1940, when all of the surveys reported an impatience among the people about the expected invasion of England: "Wann geht es los?" "What are we waiting for?"

"The Germans," wrote Jäckel, "loved him rather than feared him." (This was not true of Russians under Stalin.) "Under Hitler the Germans never doubted, despaired, or revolted as they might have under a tyrant. Forces from abroad had to take him away from them, and only then was the spell that had bound them to [him] for over twelve years broken. . . ."‡ As late as September 1944, a call for volunteers of the year 1928 (fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds) in the Catholic "Westmark" (the Saar and the Palatinate) resulted in 96 percent volunteering. Kettenacker cites a British survey of German

* HF/AN, p. 34; HF/AI, p. 194; Frank, FR, p. 264.

† Steinert, ST/HK/D, p. 91, agrees with Helmut Krausnick, who wrote that in September 1939 the majority followed Hitler into the war with a "reluctant loyalty [widervillige Loyalität]."

‡ JH, pp. 80–90. "And broken immediately." This may be put too simply.

prisoners of war near the were convinced anti-Nazi; must of course consider the enemy; and there is much January 1945, the belief in and only then, began the then it was not an overall c

The mass of the German loved, Hitler, while they did Socialism and the party. I serve this distinction—ke such a categorical statement mindedness at work, too. Or: they put their faith in was understandable. It had successes, with his elevation with the national prosperity of power. "Hitler," wrote H leading principle of all the the party, the bureaucracy, had many reservations [Sehler, was the exception. Q 'The Führer does not know into this!' Or: 'The good Written shortly before his Sight of the Gallows'—he s in the national imagination kind of faith, and, indeed, to

* Lothar Kettenacker, "Sozialps. Der Führerstaat: Mythos und Realität 1944, 40 percent of German prisoners the first months of 1945, 44 percent belief in a German victory was not Socialism or even to Hitler.)

† Frank, pp. 260–61. Another history, in *Hitler* (Chicago, 1955), "The trust in a single man, had revered a man then led them into the greatest

D.T.
Communist
*

* D.T. He was doing so well that I had to wonder if not only the G.I.s, but the Danes who were liberated him.

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prisoners of war near the end of the war: Not more than 9 percent
 were convinced anti-Nazis, 15 percent were passive anti-Nazis." We
 must of course consider the cohesion of soldiers in camps run by an
 enemy; and there is much evidence that within Germany, after mid-
 January 1945, the belief in National Socialism was eroding. Then,
 and only then, began the erosion of trust in Hitler, too. But even
 then it was not an overall development.

The mass of the German people admired, and perhaps even
 loved, Hitler, while they did not necessarily admire or love National
 Socialism and the party. We must, perhaps for the last time, ob-
 serve this distinction—keeping in mind, too, the limitations of
 such a categorical statement, for there were overlappings and split-
 mindedness at work, too. The German people believed in Hitler.
 Or: they put their faith in him. This may not be excusable. But it
 was understandable. It had much to do not only with his startling
 successes, with his elevation of German prestige in the world, but
 with the national prosperity he achieved soon after his assumption
 of power. "Hitler," wrote Hans Frank from prison, "had become the
 leading principle of all the nation's deeds and hopes. . . . [But] about
 the party, the bureaucracy, the ss and many other things the people
 had many reservations [Sehr ablehnend] . . . 'Der Führer,' 'der Hit-
 ler,' was the exception. Quite popular were such expressions as:
 'The Führer does not know about that!' or: 'The Führer will get
 into this!' Or: 'The good Führer, how he is being misused!' "†
 Written shortly before his execution—note Frank's title, "Within
 Sight of the Gallows"—he saw in this the very obverse of a poverty
 in the national imagination; rather, it was a sentimental German
 kind of faith, and, indeed, touched by a primitive loyalty. His pages,

*Lothar Kettenacker, "Sozialpsychologische Aspekte der Führerherrschaft," in
Der Führerstaat: Mythos und Realität, s, 1981, p. 107. Henke, p. 806: At the end of
 1944, 40 percent of German prisoners of war still believed in a German victory; in
 the first months of 1945, 44 percent, but in early March only 11 percent. (Yet a
 belief in a German victory was not necessarily identical to loyalty to National
 Socialism or even to Hitler.)

†Frank, pp. 260–61. Another high official, Otto Dietrich, Hitler's press secre-
 tary, in *Hitler* (Chicago, 1955), "The majority of the German people had put their
 trust in a single man, had revered him like a saint and loved him as a father. This
 man then led them into the greatest catastrophe of their history."

the marks of feverish sentimentality were not really meant to rehabilitate the elements of that kind (in their own), and they cannot be

historians of another German phenomenon. Their approach, since they did not attempt to alter some of the elements. This was mostly what the early example of their argument, Hildebrand in 1981: "One must speak of Hitlerism."⁸ This is too much for the Historians' Conference in 1988: "The 'Historikerstreit' suggested that the genocide of fear [Angstreaktion] to the Germans, while the other aimed to justify the invasion in 1941 may have been a necessary condition, whether consciously or unconsciously, of the National Socialist era. . . . Both sides were criticized to a high degree. . . ." The controversy, asserted Hildebrand: "How far was the war against the Germans?" Here I am inclined to see an inclination to a two-war view of the Soviet Union may have been a necessary condition, and that the war was regrettable, and that the war was within traditional limits, as in the Normalkrieg. But was it? The people, his invasion of Denmark, his bombing of

Rotterdam, Coventry, Belgrade, his treatment of the Jews before 1941, categorizable within the confines of a "Normalkrieg"? As Horst Möller wrote: "Judgment about the National Socialist dictatorship is a key to the historical-political consciousness of the [West German] republic. Mutations in the assessment of that era of German history are often seen as being seismographic for our political culture."⁹ There are reasons to believe that (as, among others, Zitellmann's example suggests) a revision of the history of the Third Reich is going on and will continue to go on, among historians. This is inevitable and not necessarily regrettable. What matters are the purposes and, consequently, the quality of such a revisionism: for revisionism may suggest or even lead to rehabilitation—and a certain kind of revisionism may, in the end, lead to a rehabilitation not only of some of the character and achievements of the Third Reich but eventually, though implicitly, of Hitler.

"War alles falsch?" "Was everything wrong?" That was the question that many Germans asked when it came to a retrospective view of Wilhelmine Imperial Germany during the Weimar Republic (much later, in 1951, it was the title of a book by Joachim Kürenberg, appraising and defending the character of Kaiser William II). That book (a moderate publishing success) appealed to the memories of an older German generation. That phrase, "War alles falsch?," "Was everything wrong?," when applied to the Third Reich (and implicitly even to Hitler) involves not only the memories of the now dwindling German survivors of the 1930s and 1940s but also the sensitivities, perspectives, and inclinations of generations of Germans yet to come.

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HITLER of an older German generation, and especially of German nationalist conservatives, did exist. This generalization allows for many significant individual exceptions and requires certain qualifications about German "conservatism." Yet generalizations, like brooms, should sweep and not stand in a corner.

⁸HS, p. 323. Christian Meier quoted a leader of the Christian Democratic Party in 1983: Germans should finally "step out of the shadow of Hitler." (HS, p. 51)

⁹HS, p. 75. (This was the volume first produced the "functionalist"

As some German historians, as well as Bullock, put it: Hitler was appointed to power not through a popular revolutionary movement but through the intrigues of conservatives such as Papen.* Perhaps for "not" I would put "less," but generally speaking, the statement is valid.† As Walter Euchner wrote during the Historians' Controversy: "Contrary to the Bolsheviks, the National Socialists . . . could accomplish their political aims with the voluntary support of a considerable part of the traditional elites."‡ And by March 1933 many of the latter responded to the desiderata of a Third Reich. This strange man, Hitler, was no longer only an inevitable element for a conservative and nationalist revival, a "faute de mieux," in place of something better, but someone who had become eminently respectable.** Thereafter Hitler's power contributed to his respectability

*Bullock's paragraph in *HV*, pp. 254-55, is a fair summary, and unexceptionable: "... the heaviest responsibility of all rests on the German Right, who not only failed to combine with the other parties in defence of the Republic but made Hitler their partner in a coalition government. The old ruling class of Imperial Germany had never reconciled itself to the loss of the war or to the overthrow of the monarchy in 1918. They were remarkably well treated by the Republican regime which followed. Many of them were left in positions of power and influence. . . . All this won neither their gratitude nor their loyalty. Whatever may be said of individuals, as a class they remained irreconcilable, contemptuous and hostile to the regime they continued to exploit. The word 'Nationalist,' which was the pride of the biggest Party of the Right, became synonymous with disloyalty to the Republic." In *HV*, p. 120, Bullock also makes a trenchant statement about the considerate treatment Hitler received at his 1924 trial: "Such were the penalties of high treason in a state where disloyalty to the regime was the surest recommendation to mercy."

†To this, however, we must add the stunning evidence from the Goebbels diaries—from 1930 and, in a way, even earlier—of Hitler's absolute conviction that he would be assuming power, sooner or later.

‡*HS*, p. 357. Fest noted that already in the summer of 1932, "conservatives" such as Papen, von Braun, and Schwerin von Krosigk doubted whether a government without Hitler could exist for long.

**One example: The old monarchist Field Marshal Mackensen was much impressed with Hitler at Potsdam in March 1933. He was somewhat critical of Hitler's mustache and hair but said "he won my heart as a statesman, soldier, and man." Even though men such as Mackensen had no political influence or following, Hitler understood them well. He awarded a large estate to Mackensen. In December 1939 he visited the aged martinet on his ninetieth birthday. In 1941, he allowed him to travel to the kaiser's funeral in Holland on a special train.

(perhaps especially among also true: His respectability among the conservative at least to the feebleness of "Neither in German Catholicism an opponent who was among all of the institutions of the era, the record of the Catholic priests as well as some of the speaking, the least comprehensive. The historical literature extensive. At the same time otherwise non-Nazi or even less than inspiring, especially

**HR*, p. 471.

†A few random examples. Cardinal Faulhaber, at the signing of the 1933 Concordat, not been able to accomplish in six months on a world-historic scale. In 1936, Faulhaber visited Hitler entirely with Hitler about the new Führer also demonstrated social responsibility." *HR*, pp. 282, 310: "Evidently, the Cardinal pressed the Cardinal." Faulhaber (27 December 1936) was made an anti-Nazi Cardinal Preysing of Breslau undoubtedly eliminated the very nationalism as well as many phenomena dangerous to religion and morality. *von Galen. Neue Forschungen zum . . .* (1992), p. 211. The weak Catholic Bishops' Conference, serious the latter's birthdays. (In 1939) he valid for this world: Praised by heaven." No neater formula can be

Public respectability for many of the divisions of nationalism. Bishop Bernini entire nation must stand united, triumphs." Kuroppka, p. 357. About the German invasion of Russia in 1941, i

as Bullock, put it: Hitler was popular revolutionary movementervatives such as Papen.* Perhaps generally speaking, the statement is during the Historians' Controthe National Socialists . . . could the voluntary support of a con-tes."† And by March 1933 many siderata of a Third Reich. This only an inevitable element for a, a "faute de mieux," in place of o had become eminently respec- contributed to his respectability

is a fair summary, and unexceptionable: on the German Right, who not only defence of the Republic but made Hitler the old ruling class of Imperial Germany the war or to the overthrow of the mon- created by the Republican regime which of power and influence. . . . All this by. Whatever may be said of individuals, contemptuous and hostile to the regime they which was the pride of the biggest Party ally to the Republic." In 80, p. 120, Bul- get the considerate treatment Hitler re- politics of high treason in a state where mendation to mercy."

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(perhaps especially among the people at large); but the converse was also true: His respectability contributed to his power (perhaps especially among the conservative elements of German society)—or at least to the feebleness of resistance against him. As Heer concluded: "Neither in German Catholicism nor in the Vatican did Hitler meet an opponent who was worthy of him [der ihm gewachsen war]."¹ Among all of the institutions, including the churches, of the Hitler era, the record of the Catholic Church—of some of the bishops and priests as well as some of the Catholic population—was, relatively speaking, the least compromised and was sometimes even inspiring. The historical literature devoted to that complicated subject is extensive. At the same time, some of the responses to Hitler by otherwise non-Nazi or even anti-Nazi members of the hierarchy are less than inspiring, especially in retrospect.†

*HR, p. 471.

†A few random examples. Cardinal Faulhaber, archbishop of Munich, to Hitler at the signing of the 1933 Concordat: "What the old parliaments and parties had not been able to accomplish in sixty years, your far-seeing statesmanship achieved in six months on a world-historical level . . . a great deed of immeasurable blessing." In 1936, Faulhaber visited Hitler at the Berghof. He was much impressed, agreeing entirely with Hitler about the necessary worldwide fight against Bolshevism. "The Führer also demonstrated social and diplomatic manners worthy of a born sovereign." HR, pp. 282, 316: "Evidently the Austrian charm of the Führer had impressed the Cardinal." Faulhaber's strong pastoral letter against Communism (on 27 December 1936) was made at Hitler's request. In 1936 even the principled and anti-Nazi Cardinal Preysing of Berlin remarked: "National Socialism in Berlin has undoubtedly eliminated the very dangerous agitations of Socialism and Communism as well as many phenomena of smut and dirt [*Schmutz und Schund*] so very dangerous to religion and morality." In Joachim Kuroпка, ed., *Clemens August Graf von Galen. Neue Forschungen zum Leben und Wirken des Bischofs von Münster* (Münster, 1992), p. 211. The weak Cardinal Bertram of Breslau, then president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference, sent fulsome congratulatory telegrams to Hitler on the latter's birthdays. (In 1939 he said: "I told the children: Heil Hitler—that is valid for this world: Praised be Jesus Christ—that is the tie between earth and heaven." No neater formula can be imagined. Lukacs, LEW, p. 465.)

Public respectability for many German hierarchs was inseparable from expressions of nationalism. Bishop Berning in a letter to Göring in March 1942: "The entire nation must stand united, to accomplish the final (!) victory over its enemies." Kuroпка, p. 357. About Bishop, later Cardinal, Galen's praise of the German invasion of Russia in 1941, in the same sermon in which he attacked the

Scand

1936

1939

There were elements of resistance to Hitler in institutions such as the church and the army—and Hitler knew that very well—but their activation was compromised not only by Hitler's undoubted powers but also by the respectability he had achieved as head of the state (as well as by at least some of his popular and accepted ideas). At the same time we *must* understand that in Germany (as elsewhere in Europe) the main and many of the most principled opponents of Hitler *were* traditionalists—believers in the patriotic, often religious, and above all moral and noble standards of an older and better world. In more than one way, surely, during the crucial phase of World War II (in 1940 and 1941) the struggle was less between Left and Right than between two Rights. This was as true of Stauffenberg and his circle in 1944, as it was of Churchill and de Gaulle in 1940, and of untold examples of patriotic and religious men and women throughout Germany and Austria.

This is why Jäckel's otherwise convincing thesis (in *Hitlers Herrschaft*), which is a completion of his earlier *Hitlers Weltanschauung* about the long-range sources of Hitler's appeal and power, must be qualified. His survey of the long division in Germany between "Monarchists" and "Democrats"—or in other, perhaps less precise terms, between the German Right and Left—remains valuable and useful, as Jäckel traces convincingly and fairly accurately the contributions of the former Monarchists and of the Right to Hitler's assumption of power. But he writes hardly more than a page

National Socialist euthanasia policies (to which Hitler reacted by ordering the discontinuation of the large-scale euthanasia program). But consider, too, Galen's first sermon in April 1945, after Münster was liberated from Hitler by the British army: "My heart bleeds at the sight of the troops of our enemies [!] passing through." A particularly repellent—though atypical—episode: At the bishops' yearly conference in 1942, anxieties were raised when some priests reported that there were people in their church who refused to take communion together with Jewish Catholics, whose yellow stars were affixed to their clothes. Some priests were thus reluctant to distribute the Eucharist to Catholics of Jewish origin; others suggested special services for them. This did not come about, save for a few isolated instances, but also because by 1942 only a handful of such Catholics of Jewish origin remained.

*But then the brave Georg Elser, who tried to kill Hitler in November 1939, was a workingman.

about the, perhaps even more working class and the million voters, or about the unions, w [Hitler's] assumption of power to the new regime."⁷ It would argumentation to the Social wise thoughtful historian. But responsibility of the German (whether actively or passive something that many historians looked for more than a century classes, too, toward respectability and in many cases, has been Added to this was Hitler's unique but actually to elevate the German and higher situations within the the armed forces). In chapter 7: tion of the "working class" and "Bürgertum." During the last the earlier general opinion as port had come from the middle the former boundaries between class had begun to melt away and there is ample evidence that a and belief in him not only remained. There are many accounts

⁷JHH, pp. 49–50.

[†]Not only in Goebbels's diaries, workers' reactions to Hitler, even the Reichspropaganda Ministry in Düsseldorf. The worker is the most reliable follower of of burden." Steinert in ST/HK/D, p. 52 ment to the war" among armament impressed Speer decisively, deterring to do away with Hitler. Kershaw is right the German people, greatly reduced given the conditions of the last war years.

*D.T. 5 far will not quite answer He was the only one could not be

to Hitler in institutions such as the army, which he knew that very well—but their loyalty was secured by Hitler's undoubted powers as head of the state (as far as the law and accepted ideas). At the time, in Germany (as elsewhere in Europe), the most principled opponents of Hitler were in the patriotic, often religious, ranks of an older and better generation. During the crucial phase of the struggle was less between Left and Right.

This was as true of Stauffenberg as of Churchill and de Gaulle in France. The patriotic and religious men and women of Austria.

A convincing thesis (in *Hitler's Germany*) of his earlier *Hitler's Weltanschauung* of Hitler's appeal and power, the long division in Germany between "Left" and "Right"—or in other, perhaps less convincing and fairly accurately, between Marxists and of the Right to which Hitler reacted by ordering the disarming of the program). But consider, too, Galen's liberation from Hitler by the British troops of our enemies (!) passing as atypical—episode: At the bishops' conference when some priests reported that they had refused to take communion together with those who refused to wear the cross affixed to their clothes. Some priests refused to Catholics of Jewish origin; others refused to come about, save for a few isolated handful of such Catholics of Jewish origin.

Hitler was killed in November 1939, was

about the, perhaps even more startling, passivity of the German working class and the millions of former Socialist and Communist voters, or about the unions, who, in 1933, "watched rather passively [Hitler's] assumption of power and then tried to adjust themselves to the new regime."[†] It would be wrong, I think, to attribute Jäckel's argumentation to the Social Democratic sympathies of this otherwise thoughtful historian. But in his intention to emphasize the responsibility of the German traditional classes for the inclination (whether actively or passively) to support Hitler, he overlooks something that many historians, and not only Marxists, have overlooked for more than a century: the inclination of the working classes, too, toward respectability—something that on many levels, and in many cases, has been inseparable from their nationalism. Added to this was Hitler's unquestionable ability not only to declare but actually to elevate the German industrial working class to newer and higher situations within the structure of German society (and in the armed forces). In chapter 3 we saw his consistently high estimation of the "working class" and his often expressed contempt for the "Bürgertum." During the last thirty years many studies have revised the earlier general opinion according to which Hitler's main support had come from the middle and lower-middle classes. In reality, the former boundaries between lower middle class and working class had begun to melt away during the Hitler era. More than that, there is ample evidence that among the workers support of Hitler and belief in him not only remained strong but endured to the very end. There are many accounts of this, from many sources.[†]

[†]JH, pp. 49–50.

[†]Not only in Goebbels's diaries, where some of the significant items record workers' reactions to Hitler, even close to the end of the war. Also a report by the Reichspropaganda Ministry in December 1944, cited by Henke, p. 572: "The worker is the most reliable follower of the Führer and willing to shoulder any kind of burden." Steinert in *ST/HR/D*, p. 526, gives many examples of a "radical commitment to the war" among armament workers as late as the spring of 1945. This impressed Speer decisively, deterring him when he first began to think of the need to do away with Hitler. Kershaw is right in *KER*, p. 181: "Hitler's popularity among the German people, greatly reduced though it was since the heyday of 1940, was, given the conditions of the last war years, remarkable."

* D.T. Speer will think himself that he was not quite aware of Speer also had ambitions. He was the only man left—in his opinion—who could be accepted as a leader.

to the fall of the war

THERE WAS RESISTANCE to Hitler in Germany—a German resistance that was perhaps more admirable (and not only because of its obvious and often terrible risks) than the resistance of men and women in other nations that had been subjugated or were unwillingly allied with Hitler. It was limited to solitary persons, families, and small groups, and one varied and changing small minority conventicle within the only institution, the General Staff of the Army, that could have been effective (though that, too, was unlikely). This does not mean that, as I suggested earlier, a resistance to Hitler did not exist within the majorities, sometimes within the split minds of individual men and women. In any event, “resistance” meant a mental or actual reaction of opposition to Hitler (and we ought not to forget that, after all, the very word “resistance” suggests something that is *reactionary*). We must also consider that the anti-Jewish brutalities in Germany evoked *less* support among the German people* than among some Eastern peoples (examples: Romania, Latvia, Ukraine). This is not merely a tentative general statement about popular attitudes; it is evident from many of the recorded expressions of the time, and in the acts of many Germans who tried and dared to help Jews in the most difficult times. On the other hand, there were the brutal expressions and evident acts of a hard National Socialist minority, and the mute obedience and respect of the majority—less for National Socialism than for Hitler.

THE GENERALLY HELD VIEW, according to which respect for Hitler vanished within an instant of his death, also requires some qualifica-

*According to Haffner (HF/11, pp. 208-09): "... Hitler's anti-Semitism was the line that separated the loyal followers of the Führer—the majority of the people—and the not insignificant minority of Antis, people who in the privacy of their homes rallied against Hitler and his party, and who were convinced that this proved their adherence to traditional values even if they no longer dared to speak out, let alone act. There always existed a substantial number of Antis who later, after Hitler's fall, tried to describe themselves as the 'inner emigration,' or even as the 'resistance.' I believe that both these labels should be used with great caution." (I would say: with a mixture of respect and caution.)

tion. The majority of the Gestapo officials were unrepentant. The remaining officials were unrepentant. The phenomenon of their disloyalty was noted by his successor, Admiral Dönitz: "Let us place our trust in God." Believe me, in my twenty years I have found that his strategy was sound. During the days between Hitler's death and Germany's surrender, Dönitz and his staff were respectful of Hitler. (Dönitz was a member of the party, nor did he remove the bodies from government offices at Flensburg.) He fought the struggle against the Bolsheviks, and he saved the entire civilized world. . . no longer continuing the violence. . . only in order to promote the peace. . . diary on the day after the end of the war. . . ment for the continued existence of the international community created by the war.

That giving up the struggle giving up the struggle again is also obvious that for German Bolshevism—among other things—the German people. For a long time National Socialism was, after a strong article of belief, surely some Americans in the anti reasons for such a belief: n

*Doenitz in Nuremberg, IMT, tremendous personality . . . with extraordinary universal culture [*Bildung*], with enormously suggestive power."

†This is perhaps the only instance in which the otherwise unexceptionable Schuler unexpectedly succeeded to power, a position for which service for which he deserves no less credit than he won five years earlier." This estimation

in Germany—a German resistance (and not only because of its nature, but also because of the resistance of men and women subjugated or were unwilling to solitary persons, families, and changing small minority constituted the General Staff of the Army, in that, too, was unlikely). This earlier, a resistance to Hitler did sometimes within the split minds of any event, “resistance” meant a resistance to Hitler (and we ought not to consider that the anti-Jewish support among the German peoples (examples: Romania, a tentative general statement from many of the recorded acts of many Germans who tried difficult times. On the other side, and evident acts of a hard minute obedience and respect of National Socialism than for Hitler.

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tion. The majority of the German people, in the midst of their greatest dangers and shocks and tribulations, were stunned. Many of their remaining officials were unwilling and unable to come to terms with the phenomenon of their departed leader. After all, as late as March 1945 his successor, Admiral Doenitz, had addressed his commanders: “Let us place our trust unconditionally in Adolf Hitler’s leadership. Believe me, in my two years as Navy Commander-in-Chief I have found that his strategic views always turned out right.” During the days between Hitler’s death and the final capitulation of Germany, Doenitz and most of his government continued to be respectful of Hitler. (Doenitz did not announce the dissolution of the party, nor did he remove the swastika flag or pictures of Hitler from government offices at Flensburg.) He announced on 2 May: Hitler’s “struggle against the Bolsheviks was made in behalf of Europe and the entire civilized world. . . . The Anglo-Americans are therefore no longer continuing the war in the interest of their peoples but only in order to promote the spread of Bolshevism in Europe.”* His diary on the day after the capitulation, 9 May 1945: “The fundamental for the continued existence of the German people is the national community created by National Socialism.”†

That giving up the struggle against the West was preferable to giving up the struggle against the East was obvious by then. It was also obvious that for Germany, National Socialism was preferable to Bolshevism—among other things, because of the living standards of the German people. For a long time after the war, this notion that National Socialism was, after all, better than Bolshevism remained a strong article of belief, surely in West Germany (and also among some Americans in the anti-Communist 1950s). There were many reasons for such a belief: not only the prosperity that Hitler had

*Doenitz in Nuremberg, IMT, XIII, p. 33, cited by Maser: [Hitler] was “a tremendous personality . . . with extraordinary intelligence and willpower, with a truly universal culture [*Bildung*], with a powerfully impressive character and with an enormously suggestive power.”

†This is perhaps the only instance where I must express my disagreement with the otherwise unexceptionable Schramm, *sch*, p. 180: “That Admiral Doenitz, who unexpectedly succeeded to power, immediately initiated the surrender, remains a service for which he deserves no less recognition than General Weygand in France five years earlier.” This estimation of Weygand is questionable.

... Hitler’s anti-Semitism was the Führer—the majority of the people—people who in the privacy of their who were convinced that this proved they no longer dared to speak out, let number of Antis who later, after ‘inner emigration,’ or even as the could be used with great caution.” (I

When their purpose is his rehabilitation, that should be detectable from the relativizers' selection of their "facts" and of their own words. This is true of many of Hitler's admirers or defenders, whether they admit or realize their purposes or not. Some historians (Zitelmann, for example) evoke a now outdated (and originally Cartesian) physical vocabulary, suggesting that "subjective" prejudices have clouded an "objective" historical representation of Hitler. On the other hand, Maser refers to Hitler's unabashed admirer Hans Severus Ziegler's* "very subjectively composed book"—as if "subjective" were sufficiently explanatory.

Throughout this book we have met some of the arguments that professional and amateur historians and others have produced for the purpose of revising important elements in the history of Hitler; and this may be the place to sum up the main ones, as briefly as possible. Fifty years after his death, it is—or should be—uncontestable that Hitler was a more complicated—and also more secretive—man than has long been assumed; and that his powers of intelligence were considerable. At the same time, his apologists tend to emphasize the sensitive, the artistic, the surprisingly human side of his personality—often one-sidedly so. One-sided, too, is their portrait of the happiness and the prosperity that Hitler brought to the majority of the German people in the 1930s—without mentioning, let alone emphasizing, the darker elements in that overall picture. Then, among extreme apologists as well as among cautious rehabilitators, there is the tendency to exonerate Hitler—at least partially—from the responsibility of having started World War II. This is done by emphasizing the warlike purposes of his enemies, and their rigid unwillingness to compromise, particularly the Poles and the British.†

*In M/A, p. 283. Ziegler's *Wer war Hitler?* (Tübingen, 1970)—an extreme apologist and admirer.

†This tendency appears even in serious works. Two examples: Oswald Hauser, *England und das Dritte Reich. Eine dokumentierte Geschichte der englisch-deutschen Beziehungen von 1933 to 1939 auf Grund unveröffentlichten Akten aus dem britischen Staatsarchiv, I-II* (Göttingen and z, 1982). A long commentary in SCHREIBER, p. 56. Schreiber: Hauser's tendency is "to exonerate Hitler, in part even to assert his innocence [teilweise sogar zu verharmlosen], while accusing the British side." To a much lesser extent, this is also applicable to Dietrich Aigner, *Das Ringen um England* (M., 1969).

In addition, there has been at least partly, for his most attack Russia in 1941, by argumentation—that Stalin. In preceding chapters I have war thesis, according to which both understandable and excusable not only of Germany but of Germany serving as a bulwark variant of this argument account having been blind to the danger contributed to the collapse of Germany.†

Another instance of this kind of the merits of the German extreme examples consist of 1944 conspirators (as, indeed have, finally, seen Irving claim the extermination of the Jew perpetrated by others, and the camps rather than death camps

*See, for example, Günter Gillies articles by this writer have blamed British.

†Example: the military historian Hitler's plans for the invasion of England I-II (Göttingen, 1959), I, p. 25: "The British, who concentrated only on defense were ready to accept any partner—the [The British] did not foresee that the a strong Germany by the overwhelming "This argument—amounting, in essence appeals to some people even now, and correct it here. It was not that only with to win. That 'partner' was forced into It is also that Churchill saw the choice Germany; or—at worst—the eastern while; and half of Europe was better that, as late as the 1960s, wrote on to fallen at the head of his army in the six

the "cold war," and even now, many evolution in Russia as the greatest of the twentieth century, leading to the Communism and "Freedom," during which were but an aberrant episode. (This was William F. Buckley's thesis: "In whatever that means.") This view has many adherents (including many exponents in the 1970s) but it remained an integral part of the basic ideology of the Republican Party, compelling men like Ronald Reagan into endorsing it from the main subject of this century. To sum up why: (1) The main events of the twentieth century—of which the Communist Revolution and the establishment of Communist China in 1945 were but the consequences. (2) The meaning: the most consequential event—Russia's withdrawal from China—which meant Russia's withdrawal from the American entry into it, in both the short run, it was not Russia's fall that decided the outcome of World War II but that meant a break with the long tradition involved in the struggles of the twentieth century. The history of this century has shown the Americanization or the Russianization, the Communism after 1917 and before 1945, the Communism outside Russia (very much unlike the Russian Revolution), and the collapse of the Communism—proofs enough of the feebleness of

It is regrettable that in 1986 Chancellor Helmut Kohl's "Kuratorium" (Board of Directors) was also defended in one of the most original thinkers of the century, also by Joachim Fest. In 1994, Hans-Joachim Lauth (publisher of *Der Spiegel*), wrote an ideological but . . . the Second

World War was also a war virtually for European unification . . . Germany could be conceived as the Piedmont of Europe.*

One of Nolte's defenders in the "Historikerstreit," Klaus Hildebrand, wrote: "Much work is left for historiography to research and present the history of the Third Reich in connection with German, European, and universal history."† Such an attempt in the "Historikerstreit" was made by Andreas Hillgruber. His advocacy of what I called the two-war theory in 1986 contributed to the sudden outbreak of the Historians' Controversy. In *Zweierlei Untergang* (1986) he praised the desperate defense of the Eastern Front in 1944–45 "for the protection of the integrity of the great power status of the German Reich which, according to the will of the Allies, had to be destroyed." Anti-Prussianism "was the basis of the British war policy against Germany."‡ According to Hillgruber, respect and admiration are also due to leading National Socialist officials and to the SS units (including the volunteer Flemish, Dutch, and other SS units) in that struggle. Like Nolte, Hillgruber spoke of the "European conception" of the SS. A second—and to me more disturbing—matter was Hillgruber's reluctance to commend the patriotism of the July 1944 conspirators against Hitler. (This is significant because of the accepted consensus of the West German Republic, officially identifying itself with the patriotism of

*Piedmont: the state from which the unification of Italy had proceeded—its role comparable to the thirteen colonies in the history of the United States. We have also (see above p. 180n) seen Nolte's misdating and misconception of a letter by Chaim Weizmann to Neville Chamberlain in 1939. (He had found this in Irving, who, in turn, had gathered it from one of Hitler's table conversations.) Another example: Nolte's repeated references to the Rat's Cage (*Rattenkuffig*), a Bolshevik practice of forcing a victim's head into a cage inhabited by a raging rat. Hitler was supposed to have spoken of this in one of his table conversations. Yet it had been mentioned earlier by an excellent anti-Bolshevik historian of the Russian Revolution (Melgunov) and then described by George Orwell in 1984—of these Nolte seems to have been ignorant. "[Hitler's] horror of the rat's cage was but an outstanding expression of a general and genuine experience of the earlier postwar period. I think that here we may find the deepest roots of Hitler's most extreme impulses of action." Nolte in *HS*, p. 226. The Rat root?

†*HS*, p. 292.

‡*HS*, p. 341. *HS/W*, p. 48. Hillgruber accused Germany's enemies of having brought about not only a German catastrophe but "a destroyed center of Europe."

scene

Geyl wrote in his preface in
impelled to cite in detail:

with Napoleon," so, lis-
say, I heard that Winston
House of Commons, only to
upon the comparison all
and so it is with me. It is
The resemblances are too
to state this with unmis-
the contrasts, are such that,
had hated the dictator in
ence of Hitler began dark-
as if one should ask the
ing his name in one breath
it want to say that French
er stuff than German: the
French civilization, albeit
accompanied the conquest,
that it has been the lot of
compatible with any civiliza-
Napoleon—indeed, when
son on that score, I sus-
ist [his] "detractors" with
in on quite friendly terms.

ming up Napoleon's tyranny

ries? The worst that our
no parallel in Napoleon's

tered Moscow and Hitler did not;
after having crossed the Russian
Hitler's mechanized armies five
in Russia, after which his armies
Napoleon suffered a catastrophe
this.

system. Indeed that system remained true, from first to last, to conceptions of civil equality and human rights with which the oppression or extermination of a group, not on account of acts or even of opinions, but of birth and blood, would have been utterly incompatible. And yet methods of compulsion and atrocities are inseparable from the character of the dictator and conqueror, and we shall see that Napoleon incurred bitter reproaches, at home and abroad, for some of his acts. Nevertheless this is one of the points where the comparison is bound to do good for his reputation. What is the proscription of "the general staff of the Jacobins" beside the annihilation of all opposition parties in jails or concentration camps such as has taken place in the Third Reich? What is the murder of the Duke of Enghien beside those of Dollfuss, of General Schleicher and his wife, and of so many others on June 30th 1934? What are the executions of Palm, of Hofer, what are even the severities with which so many villages and towns in Germany and Spain were visited, beside what in our time all occupied territories have had to suffer from Hitler's armies? The French police were hated and feared in the occupied and annexed territories, but when one reads about their conduct with a mind full of present experiences, one cannot help feeling astonished at the restraints and resistances they still met within the stubborn notions of law and in the mild manners of a humane age.

Written in October 1944, this still rings true. But now allow me to continue this comparison a little further. It may be of some interest to note that throughout his life, Hitler made very few references to Napoleon.* In June 1940, during his fast and almost furtive

*A strange coincidence not noted by other historians: It was in Hitler's birth-place, Braunau, that in 1810 Napoleon's new bride, the Archduchess Marie Louise, was festively transferred from her Austrian to her French entourage. During his campaigns against Austria in 1805 and again in 1809, Napoleon spent the night in that frontier town—in the same Haus Schüdl (and presumably in the same second-story rooms) where seventy years later Hitler's father came to live. (It is a well-proportioned building on the south side of the large market square.)

visit to Paris at dawn, he spent a few moments contemplating Napoleon's tomb in the Invalides; and in December 1940 he ordered that the coffin of Napoleon's son be brought from Vienna to a wintry Paris, to be deposited next to that of his father—a gesture that evoked little reaction among the French people. To this we may add that a contemptuous dislike for France and the French marked Hitler's thinking from his earliest years.*

There were grave differences between Napoleon's and Hitler's personalities and temperaments. Unscrupulous cruelty—of a calculating Machiavellian and Mediterranean kind—marked what was probably the worst element in the mental habits of the former; hatred—and the cultivation of unbridled hatreds—was perhaps the worst element in the latter. It is at least arguable that Napoleon, that supreme egoist, was more confident—and often more optimistic—than was Hitler.† Another difference between the two lies in their attitudes toward the past. In that sense Napoleon was much less revolutionary than was Hitler. One attractive—and surprisingly human—facet of Napoleon's personality was his hereditary and family feeling, his 1810 inclination to settle down with a family, for his affection for Marie Louise and his love for his son amounted to more than the calculated purpose of consolidating his power through a grand

*A book remains to be written about Hitler's expressed views of other nations and nationalities, which were in many instances varied or changing rather than constant and uniform. There is, for example, place for a serious study of his attitude toward Britain and the British people, which was more complicated than the sometimes overused cliché of a love-hate relationship. However, what is striking is the evidence of Hitler's hatefulness toward people who dared to oppose or defy him. Thus his occasional expressions of respect or even admiration for the people disappeared and gave way to expressions of a contemptuous hatred as the war went on and neared its end. Not dissimilar was his treatment of Poland and the Poles, about whom he uttered few disparaging remarks before 1939 but whose defiance—leading to the outbreak of the war in 1939—made him impose cruelties on them unparalleled anywhere except in his treatment of Jews. We find nothing similar in the reactions of Napoleon or even Stalin, who on occasion showed some respect for the bravery of his opponents.

†Fest in *F*, p. 309, is convincing that Hitler's "entire intellectual and emotional system" seemed to have been dominated by a fundamental element of "Angst" [*Angsterlebnis*]. This, among other matters, also differentiates Hitler from the young Mussolini, who resembled the early Bonaparte rather than Hitler.

dynastic marriage. There was often maligned word) side o At his most grandiose, Napoleon at his coronation in 1804; Hitler had none (except perhaps). There is, too, the contrast: Napoleon's marshals were bloodhounds that hold them back, whereas Hitler and drive his generals forward.

More significantly, Napoleon's third force between Revolution and downfall: "After me, the Revolution formed it—will resume its course the marker is removed, and left off."† Hitler's vision was that since there would be no return fifty or a hundred years, a revolution.

Again, I must insist (for biography of Hitler; but I have a place in history. And it is in the ups and downs of Napoleon's career. Most of the substantial Napoleon were written and published whereas we have seen that since he began to appear within a day many of the great artists aspected Napoleon (Beethoven a time); this does not apply to Hamsun or Ezra Pound or prominent Englishmen who

*On one occasion in 1940 Hitler imposed his victorious peace treaty on the European state system that had

†Cited by Mathieu Molé in *France*; also by François Furet pp. 260–70.

Hitler's most brutal instructions may have been secret or oral or even too general to pin down; but he never disavowed them or their results; nor did he attribute them to others, in order to exempt himself for the sake of the historical record—another example of the difference between his and Napoleon's sense of history.*

In 1901, the French positivist historian Alphonse Aulard wrote in his *Histoire politique de la révolution française*: his aim was to study and appraise in an objective, scientific way, "historically and not politically." Eighty years later German historians expressed the desideratum of Hitler's "historicization" [*Historisierung*] in similar terms. Yet "objective" and "scientific"† are outdated Cartesian categories (as are their symmetrical antonyms: "subjective" and "artistic"). Like all human knowledge, historical knowledge is both personal and participant‡ (and, its expressions are less motive-bound than purpose-oriented). Or, to repeat: Perspective is an inevitable component of reality—to which I must now add that no perspective is ever devoid of the element of retrospect. And it is in the retrospective perspective of a century that we must consider Hitler's place in it. If the two world wars were the two mountain ranges dominating the historical landscape of the twentieth century, in the shadows of which we were living until 1989, in Europe and America and Germany and Russia

is a flagrant untruth. It is all part of the system. In the Enghien affair he sheltered behind the alleged overhasty action of Savary. In the case of Spain it was Murat. And now it was Miollis, the Governor of Rome, who had to bear the discredit of a deed which Napoleon had undoubtedly wished done." To this Geyl adds a telling footnote: "One could make a comparison here with Queen Elizabeth, who was also very ready to saddle her servants with the blame in difficult situations. The best known, but certainly not the only example, is that of her rage against Davison, on the pretext that he had given the order for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots without her authority."

*Consider, too, Napoleon's recorded musings—his "pièces justificatives"—at St. Helena, where, among other things, he predicted the rise of the United States and Russia and the necessity for France of friendship with England. Nothing like this with Hitler. *Avec et après moi le déluge*: improperly attributed to a French monarch but appropriate, in spirit, to Hitler.

†However, we must keep in mind that the German words for "science" and "scientific"—*Wissenschaft* and *wissenschaftlich*—are broader than our contemporary English usage of them. They include both "science" and "knowledge."

‡Veronica Wedgwood's *bon mor*: "History is an art—like all the other sciences."

alike, wherefore World War wars, and with results lasting then it follows that the peal which brings us to the unscie

THE QUESTION OF HISTORIC semantic. (Of the nearly ten d in the *Oxford English Dictiona* historical greatness, as such, d kind is the history of the e includes—indeed, it is insepar there has been such an evoluti whom the epithet "Great" wa century: Peter, Frederick, and do not only with quality but v declined, if not altogether van that Napoleon has not acquire indirect and sarcastic suggest should be called "Napoleon the

And so, for the last time, a c Many things that Napoleon proved enduring, many of his i including an architectural and actually began during the late tinued to develop during the I his sayings, crisp expressions of had an occasional sense of the any sense of humor, left few say a few trenchant observations). remembered are his automobil

*Was Napoleon the peak figure of unexpected culmination of the eighteer

†"Of persons" only "d. 'The Great honourable epithet, appended as a title chiefly monarchs, implying . . . that the great men of history."

array of neoclassical buildings, most of whose designs are attributable to his architects, whose designs he may have approved but whose style was not entirely in accord with his own.*

Konrad Heiden, Hitler's first serious biographer, chose a passage from Goethe for the motto of his book, about the "daemonic" quality of certain people—not necessarily statesmen: "All moral powers are helpless against them; in vain are enlightened minds [der hellere Teil der Menschen] against . . . the mass will be attracted to them." I wrote before about Hitler's extraordinary talent for adjusting circumstances to his ideas—to which I also added that as the war proceeded he was forced to adjust some of his ideas to circumstances over which he had no control—and that the guilt (or, rather, the want of civic responsibility) of most Germans was that they found it easy to adjust their ideas to circumstances—as indeed many people are inclined to do.

The old Germanomaniac and Wagnerite Houston Stewart Chamberlain praised Hitler in 1923: "the great simplifier of all problems." But sixty years before that, Jakob Burckhardt had written: The time of "the terrible simplifiers" will come. In 1981 Vappu Tallgren, a Finnish historian, made a significant contribution in his study of Hitler's "creed of heroism." Through the "cult of heroism in National Socialist Germany, Hitler wanted to prepare a new religion." The creed of heroism, for Hitler, was "a principle, not a rhetoric—which is why he believed that with that he expressed the

*An example was Speer's monumental model of a future central Berlin (1940), in which he included Hitler's own 1925 design of a triumphal arch. It was fitted within the proportions of that monumental design but otherwise its style was unfitting, very different from Speer's modern neoclassicism, and utterly inferior both to the Arc de Triomphe and to the Arc du Carrousel.

Haffner, *HE/AN*, p. 45: Unlike Napoleon, "Hitler did not create any state edifice, and his achievements, which for ten years overwhelmed the Germans and made the world hold its breath, have proved ephemeral and have left no trace, not only because they ended in disaster but because they were never designed for endurance." (Not quite: Hitler often insisted to Speer and others that his buildings must be constructed of granite, "lasting four hundred years.") "As a star performer, Hitler probably ranks even higher than Napoleon. But one thing he never was—a statesman." (Arguable.)

most essential element of I Yet, as I tried to state earlier been extraordinary, but m make. Nor does hero wor hero are not the same thing

There was no nobility in an easy dismissal of Hitler. The list of people—think that Hitler was a genius is exceptionable antitotalitarian Gide in 1940. An unpleasant English writer and thinker and radical, who—and this tawdry commercialism and also abhorred Chaplin). In titled *Hitler*—about whom h *Hitler Cult*. But then another *Condemned*, the hero is an and is forced to live in exile

*Vappu Tallgren, *Hitler und die* 1981, p. 258 (much praised by ingly—emphasizes the influence Hitler (see p. 155).

†Schramm, *sch*, p. 183: "The equivalents to 'hero' and 'genius' giving Hitler more than his due point."

‡It is not only that *The Great*, *BU*, p. 805: "Chaplin's brilliant Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (L: 15 The face was obscenely comic—tache . . . and disgusting, thin little hands claw-like haranguing the center about to bowl . . . [or] hand imaginary dumb-bell. The salute palm upwards, made me want to thought. . . ." (Another famous Hitler was Einstein.)

unorthodox opinions of what Hitler represents in the modern history of Europe.*

Still, it is with this question of "greatness" that many of Hitler's biographers have been struggling.† Haffner, for example: "Of course one hesitates, and justly so, to call him 'a great man.'‡ 'Those who are only vigorous destroyers are not great at all,' says Jakob Burckhardt, and Hitler certainly proved himself a vigorous wreck. But beyond any doubt he also proved himself a star achiever of high calibre, and not only in wrecking. Admittedly, without his decidedly exceptional vigor the disaster which he accomplished would have turned out less enormous, but one should not lose sight of the fact that his road to the abyss led across high

*Examples from Lewis's 1931 book (reprinted in New York, 1972, not easily available in most libraries): "the Communists help the police to beat and shoot the Nazis" (p. 16). The Nazis are "clean and law-abiding" (p. 19). "Whereas the Communist is invariably armed, the Nazi has only his fists or sticks to defend himself with, owing to the discrimination of the Republican police authorities" (p. 28). Hitler: "An asceticism not without nobility" (p. 31). "In setting about to expound the doctrine of Hitlerism, it rapidly becomes apparent that it is rather a person than a doctrine with which we are dealing." England "is married to Jews," but (p. 42): "still allow a little *Blutgefühl* to have its way (a blood-feeling toward this other mind and body like your own)—in favor of this brave and unhappy impoverished kinsman." "I do not think that if Hitler had his way he would bring the fire and the sword across otherwise peaceful frontiers" (p. 49). "Hitler is a very different person from Mussolini, Pilsudski, or Primo da Rivera" (p. 51). In 1939 Lewis wrote *The Hitler Cult*—now very critical of Hitler, with some insights: "He disdains democracy and all its works. Yet he himself, as a demagogue, hanging upon the emotional suffrage of the masses, is a typical democratic statesman—and this in spite of the fact that the agreeable *laissez-faire* of Western democracy had passed over, with him, into a demagogic despotism."

†The title of Lothar Burchardt's *Hitler und die historische Größe* (Konstanz, 1979) is promising, but the book does not really deal with the idea or with qualifications of "greatness."

‡Irving, of course, has no such hesitations; in his foreword to *I/H*, p. xxiii, he suggests the epithet "Hitler the Great," citing Jodl in Nuremberg: "I blame his humble origins, but then I remember how many peasants' sons have been blessed by History with the name 'Great.'" Jodl, too, *IMT* xv, p. 602, cited by *M/A*, p. 195: Hitler was "no charlatan, but a gigantic personality, at the end acquiring an infernal kind of greatness, but greatness he possessed undoubtedly. . . ." Doenitz, also at Nuremberg: "Hitler was a great military leader: despite the defeat at Carthage the people admired Hannibal. . . . And despite our German defeat the people still admire Hitler. . . ."

peaks."* Fest wrestles with history shows no phenomenon him 'great'?" He says yes 'great.' But then he cites Haffner, since Burckhardt of the common laws of men of "great" individuals.† P managed by Schramm. "wrought during his twelve one of the 'great' men informed less by creative e that even his most positive and ultimately sinister character

"By virtue of his person millions, Hitler poses an

**HF/AN*, p. 40. See also ancient in Scholdt, scho, p. 18: I achieve what he had planned, to his control. He proved himself nents within the Party on occasions stirrup [Steigbügelhalter]. Hatred from the beginning, from 1933 have won the war of 1914 if he with the right means to the right believable, disastrous adventure. history of Europe I find no or destructively, even more than ha

†*HF*, pp. 17, 189. Karl-Dietrich solves it) by a dual adjective: "the bolical world-historical greatness *Zeit der Weltkriege*, vol. 2, s, 19 p. 806): "The fact that his careerly due to his own mistakes, greatness. The flaw lies deeper.) an ugly and strident egotism, a) The passions which ruled Hitler to dominate, and, where he could

‡*SCH*, p. 12. "By comparison timorous and halting." Görlitz-C figure in German history compared the word 'great' because 'great' is

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peaks."* Fest wrestles with the semantic question: "All known his-
tory shows no phenomenon such as he; should one then call
him 'great'?" He says yes and no; "still one is reluctant to call him
'great.'" But then he cites Burckhardt in the opposite sense from
Haffner, since Burckhardt "spoke about a remarkable dispensation
of the common laws of morality" when it came to the consciousness
of "great" individuals.† Perhaps the question of "greatness" is best
managed by Schramm. "In terms of sheer magnitude of what he
wrought during his twelve years and three months in power he was
one of the 'great' men in history. But his perverse greatness was
informed less by creative energy than by some malevolent genius, so
that even his most positive intentions and deeds acquired a dubious
and ultimately sinister character."‡

"By virtue of his personality, his ideas, and the fact that he misled
millions, Hitler poses an historical problem of the first magni-

*HF/AN, p. 40. See also another unexceptionable anti-Hitlerian, Golo Mann,
cited in Scholdt, *SCHO*, p. 18: Hitler "changed everything . . . Hitler alone could
achieve what he had planned, to build a popular movement and then keep it under
his control. He proved himself far superior [turmhoch] to all of his rivals, oppo-
nents within the Party on occasion, as well as to the conservative holders of his
stirrup [Steigbügelhalter]. Hatred of Jews was his passion; the war was his enterprise
from the beginning, from 1933 to 1945. The will to prove that Germany could
have won the war of 1914 if he had commanded it then, if he had waged that war
with the right means to the right ends, this remains the source of his entire, un-
believable, disastrous adventure. 'Then it was the Kaiser, now it is I.' In the modern
history of Europe I find no one who had affected events so decisively and so
destructively, even more than had Napoleon."

†F, pp. 17, 189. Karl-Dietrich Erdmann "solves" the problem (or, rather, un-
solves it) by a dual adjective: "the impenetrable darkness of his person . . . his dia-
bolical world-historical greatness" (in Gebhardt, ed., *Handbuch der Geschichte. Die
Zeit der Weltkriege*, vol. 2, s, 1976). Bullock's conclusion is somewhat better (BV,
p. 806): "The fact that his career ended in failure, and that his defeat was preemi-
nently due to his own mistakes, does not by itself detract from Hitler's claim to
greatness. The flaw lies deeper. For those remarkable powers were combined with
an ugly and strident egotism, a moral and intellectual cretinism. [Not a *mot juste*.]
The passions which ruled Hitler's mind were ignoble: hatred, resentment, the lust
to dominate, and, where he could not dominate, to destroy."

‡SCH, p. 12. "By comparison, the autocracy of previous despots seems almost
timorous and halting." Görlitz-Quint in GQ, p. 234: "In any case there is no leading
figure in German history comparable to him." Also p. 628: "We consciously avoid
the word 'great' because 'great' suggests a connection to ethical value."

1914-18
in the
travels
+ in 1918
while
blind.

tude."* This is well put. Great and profound is the problem of Hitler's place in history—not whether he deserves or not the sentimental, imprecise, and perhaps antiquated adjective "great."

In November 1936 (after his long discussion with Cardinal Faulhaber), Hitler sat with Speer at the large window of the Berghof, looking out at the mountain twilight. After a long silence he said, "For me there are two possibilities: to succeed with my plans entirely, or to fail. If I succeed, I will be one of the greatest men in history—if I fail, I will be condemned, rejected, and damned."† When, on 1 May 1945, his great opponent heard the news of his death on the radio, Churchill said at the dinner table: "Well, I must say I think he was perfectly right to die like that."‡

He left the name at which the world grew pale
To point a moral or adorn a tale.**

The first line is applicable to Hitler; the second is not.

*SCH, p. 123. In this respect Schramm's view accords with that of the otherwise different Heer. SCH, pp. 182–83: "Anyone who speaks of him as satanic or infernal is, in effect, making a theological statement. Whoever calls him a 'demon' is ultimately reserving judgment about the nature of his acts."

†On 6 April 1938 in Salzburg he said: "I think that the times in which I lead Germany are historical times of German greatness . . . I believe that the future and German history will confirm that in the times of my leadership I achieved the highest benefits for the German people." (Deuerlein, D, p. 133.)

‡It saved Churchill from a difficult and perhaps embarrassing problem. "At any time in the last few months of the war he could have flown to England and surrendered himself, saying: 'Do what you will with me, but spare my misguided people.'" (Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 6, *Triumph and Tragedy*, p. 673.) Would that embarrassment have been due to Hitler's "greatness"? No: it would have been merely political. (Churchill respected Napoleon but not Hitler.) That embarrassment—together with thoughtlessness—among the Allies also marked the fate of Mussolini in 1943, when they (or the Italian royal government) made no effort to deliver Mussolini to the Allies or even to take him south with the royal government. He remained on the Gran Sasso for nine days after the signing of the Italian surrender, four days after its public announcement and the flight of the king and the government from Rome to the south. No provision was made in the armistice instrument for the surrender of Mussolini.

**Samuel Johnson about Charles XII of Sweden, in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. Fests, in his conclusion, p. 1029: "In a variation on a phrase of Schopenhauer whom he [Hitler] in his way respected it may be said that he taught something to the world that the world shall never again forget."

"THERE IS NO ARGUMENT one can defend a poem. It is sensible."* So we judge as what were the consequence

His war (and World War) catastrophe for the German European peoples—for the and the subsequent Communist consequence of that war. A of Germany, which lasted expulsions from the east as people in the so-called "C enduring consequence was east: the entire loss of East portions of the former Prussia case of the Königsberg and almost complete elimination from countries in Eastern Europe lived for eight hundred years

The year 1945 marked political, cultural, intellectual the European age, and there was something else German intellectual influence

*Lukacs, HC, p. 93: "Its survivalized tradition, and on authentic consensus, formed by the historic existential experience. For it is in through the decay of untruth."

†Haffner gives a telling summary whether we like it or not, is the very been no partition of Germany; Americans and Russians in Berlin; Hitler there would be no decolonization: be no Asian, Arab, or Black Africa pre-eminence. Or, more accurately mistakes. He certainly did not wait

profound is the problem of
he deserves or not the senti-
mental adjective "great."

discussion with Cardinal Faul-
bridge window of the Berghof,
After a long silence he said,
to succeed with my plans
one of the greatest men in
ed, rejected, and damned."†
ment heard the news of his
the dinner table: "Well, I must
like that."‡

and grew pale

the second is not.

records with that of the otherwise
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"THERE IS NO ARGUMENT," George Orwell once wrote, "by which
one can defend a poem. It defends itself by surviving, or it is inde-
fensible."* So we judge achievements by their consequences. And
what were the consequences of Hitler?

His war (and World War II was *his* war) ended with the greatest
catastrophe for the German and also for the Central and Eastern
European peoples—for the latter, because the Russian occupation
and the subsequent Communist rule in that part of Europe was the
consequence of that war. A consequence of the war was the division
of Germany, which lasted for more than forty years, with mass
expulsions from the east and protracted sufferings for the German
people in the so-called "German Democratic Republic." A more
enduring consequence was the drastic reduction of Germany in the
east: the entire loss of East Prussia, together with other substantial
portions of the former Prussia, Silesia, Saxony to Poland (and, in the
case of the Königsberg enclave, to Russia). Even more enduring: the
almost complete elimination of the presence of ethnic Germans
from countries in Eastern Europe where some of their ancestors had
lived for eight hundred years.

The year 1945 marked, too, the end of the predominance—
political, cultural, intellectual—of Europe in the world, the end of
the European age, and the end of the European state system.†
There was something else, too: the end of the predominance of
German intellectual influence in the world. For what had happened,

*Lukacs, HC, p. 93: "Its survival depends on the coagulating consensus of civil-
ized tradition, and on authentic responses to quality; but that is a long-range con-
sensus, formed by the historical thinking of generations and confirmed by
existential experience. For it is in the long run that, somehow, truth may survive—
through the decay of untruth."

†Haffner gives a telling summary of this (HF/AN, pp. 100-01): "Today's world,
whether we like it or not, is the work of Hitler. Without Hitler there would have
been no partition of Germany and Europe; without Hitler there would be no
Americans and Russians in Berlin; without Hitler there would be no Israel; without
Hitler there would be no decolonisation, at least not such a rapid one; there would
be no Asian, Arab, or Black African emancipation, and no diminution of European
pre-eminence. Or, more accurately, there would be none of all this without Hitler's
mistakes. He certainly did not want any of it."

signature
by
Joachim
Lukacs

18258

for about seventy years after 1870, was not only that the practices and standards of German education and learning had influenced and were adopted in many places of Europe and of the world, including nations that were opponents of Germany in the two world wars. Something that had begun after the French Revolution: a romantic (and often sentimental and categorical) idealism, reacting against the materialism (and often against the rationalism) of the Enlightenment. This most important and potentially fruitful intellectual achievement—a great chapter in the history of the European mind—was mostly represented and exemplified by Germans; and then it was carried by some of them to extremes, to a deterministic idealism* that proved to be more inhumane than the deterministic materialism that had preceded and (lamentably) survived it—at least for a while. And an incarnation of an unstinting belief in a determinist idealism was Adolf Hitler.†

The English historian of religion Owen Chadwick wrote: "The Reformation would have happened without Luther. But without Luther it would not have happened in the way it happened."‡ Four centuries later the same condition—mutatis mutandis—applies to nationalist socialism and Hitler. He was the greatest revolutionary of the twentieth century. That is not an approbatory adjective.

*"One has to go back a long way in history—perhaps to Alexander the Great—to find a man who, in a below-average short span of life, transformed the world so fundamentally and lastingly as Hitler. But what one would not find in the whole of world history is a man who, with an unparalleled and gigantic effort, achieved, as Hitler did, the exact opposite of what he had hoped to achieve."

†This is but a brief statement of what is summarized at somewhat greater length in Lukacs, LEW, especially pp. 6-7 and pp. 519-27.

‡Two random examples of an, alas, wholehearted belief in this deterministic idealism by two of his generals. Jodl on 7 November 1943: "We will win because we must win, for otherwise world history will have lost its meaning." Field Marshal Model on 29 March 1945: "In our struggle for the ideals [Ideenwelt] of National Socialism . . . it is a mathematical certainty (!) that we will win, as long as our belief and will remains unbroken." Cited by Manfred Messerschmitt, "Die Wehrmacht in der Endphase. Realität und Perzeption," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 4 August 1989, pp. 37-38.

§Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1991, p. 73.

"Great" may be applied to c need not be a reactionary to s tieth century, that to design: may be even more approbat than the epithet of a Great R lowed Hitler was our still-pre revolutions—something that queville had.

What he had seen—and, m dable attraction of populist 1 That nationalism proved to l twentieth century. He was its 1 that sometime after 1870 nat sede the older nineteenth-ce liberalism, indeed perhaps ev two, nationalism was more gories of socialism and capita because strength was more p ality was more powerful thar powerful than internationalis formerly rigid categories of s vate ownership began to lea than management; and owner be ultimately obedient to the

Hitler was not the founde Germany. Among the princi was the first national socialist was an Italian first and a Socia creation of "Fascism." We h practices but in the ideas, of solini's Fascism. But that bec the reciprocal influences of 1940s: Mussolini, Stalin, and influences—more precisely, o something. Mussolini was no Stalin was not (and did not became influenced and impr

* D.T. Now the last great barrier to the triumph of materialism had been removed. Neither America nor Russia would prove a + + +

+++ counter-force to it.

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European Mind in the Nineteenth Cen-

"Great" may be applied to criminals or terrorists, too. (Also, one
need not be a reactionary to sense, especially at the end of the twen-
tieth century, that to designate someone as a Great Conservative
may be even more approbatory—at least in the Western world—
than the epithet of a Great Revolutionary.) In any event, what fol-
lowed Hitler was our still-present era of no great wars and no great
revolutions—something that he had not foreseen, though Toc-
queville had.

What he had seen—and, more or less, accurately—was the formi-
dable attraction of populist nationalism in the age of the masses.
That nationalism proved to be the principal political reality in the
twentieth century. He was its most extreme representative. He sensed
that sometime after 1870 nationalism and socialism came to super-
sede the older nineteenth-century categories of conservatism and
liberalism, indeed perhaps even of Right and Left; and that, of the
two, nationalism was more influential than socialism. The cate-
gories of socialism and capitalism themselves began to be outdated
because strength was more powerful than wealth, because nation-
ality was more powerful than class, because nationalism was more
powerful than internationalism. When there was national unity, the
formerly rigid categories of socialist and capitalist, public and pri-
vate ownership began to leak; what mattered was not ownership
than management; and ownership and management and labor would
be ultimately obedient to the dictates of nationalism.

Hitler was not the founder of National Socialism, not even in
Germany. Among the principal figures of the century, Mussolini
was the first national socialist who recognized, around 1911, that he
was an Italian first and a Socialist second—this eight years before his
creation of "Fascism." We have seen differences, not only in the
practices but in the ideas, of Hitler's National Socialism and Mus-
solini's Fascism. But that becomes inconsequential when we look at
the reciprocal influences of the main dictators in the 1930s and
1940s: Mussolini, Stalin, and Hitler. That comparison of reciprocal
influences—more precisely, of their development—ought to tell us
something. Mussolini was not (and did not become) a Communist;
Stalin was not (and did not become) a Fascist; but both of them
became influenced and impressed by Hitler's ideas and achieve-

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ments to an extent that makes it both proper and precise to say that they became more and more nationalist socialists as time went on. That development (including their increasing inclination to anti-Semitism) ended with their deaths. So much for the war and the short run. But we must recognize that in the long run, too, in one sense Hitler's vision survived him. During the twentieth century the compound of nationalism with socialism has become the nearly universal practice for all states in the world. International socialism is a mirage. At the same time every state in the world has become a welfare state of sorts. Whether they call themselves socialist or not does not matter much. Hitler knew that. The economic structure of Germany that he had in mind had few of the characteristics of either Marxian or state socialism, but it could not be called capitalist, either. Fifty years later it cannot be denied that nationalism remains the most potent force in the world. We are all national socialists now. Of course, the proportions of the compound of nationalism and socialism vary from country to country; but the compound is there, and even where social democracy prevails it is the national feeling of people that matters. What was defeated in 1945, together with Hitler, was German National Socialism: a cruel and extreme version of nationalist socialism. Elsewhere nationalism and socialism were brought together, reconciled and then compounded, without remotely comparable violence, hatred, or war. But Hitler's nationalism was profoundly different from traditional patriotism, just as his socialism had few of the marks of the traditional philanthropy of the earlier Socialists.*

To this the objection may be raised: After all, has not the appeal of Communism long survived that of Hitler's National Socialism? Despite all the superficial evidence—examples: the surviving appeal of "Communist" parties in Russia and Eastern Europe, Chinese "Communism," Castro in Cuba—the answer is no, for three reasons at least. The first is that the surge of Communism that enveloped

*For the last time (see also above, chapter 4), he was a populist nationalist, not a traditional patriot. He knew better than most people that the true opposite of nationalism, with its cult of the people, is not so much a modern internationalism as a traditional patriotism, with its love for the land and for its history.

much of Eastern Europe: revolutions but simply due in that part of Europe. The communist regimes in the odd Cuba, Ethiopia, Angola, a anticolonialism (and in Ca than of the appeal of Con Soviet Union. The third r the present—and probably or pro-Stalinist parties, esp from but fundamentally be alism. If International Soci nism does not even qualify

As Karl-Dietrich Brache: of Hitler was a fundament National Socialism"—that seemed to represent.* And the corresponding, and p German historian, Hagen S torians' Controversy, about tory: that the constitution: nothing effective to counte nationalists. Certainly the e erably dampened the Germ but it is questionable "whet than one or two generation about the efficacy of which

*SCH, p. 107. Consider, too, F assumption of power in Argentina death. Apart from its significance estimated, in view of the Latin A after a time span of many years: B Washington, Castro fifteen years;

THS, p. 149. Consider also the over the Western world: their extr the appearance of so-called Right-tivity is not comparable to anxiety is not simply attributable to "poli

should we have illusions about the permanent constitutional validity of laws according to which in Germany the public display of the swastika and of pictures of Hitler remains forbidden forever. What we must hope for and trust is that when the time for the removal of such proscriptions comes, such a legal decision will reflect a climate in which the symbols of Hitler's era* will attract nothing more than historical curiosity.

THAT TIME IS NOT YET; and now when the German state has become united, when the entire postwar period marked by fifty years of the so-called cold war has unraveled, when the entire century is ending, let us conclude with an attempt to identify—identify, rather than define—Hitler's place in the history of it.

The twentieth century—historically speaking—was a short century. Whereas the historical eighteenth century lasted 126 years, (from 1688 to 1815), marked by the world wars principally between England and France; and the nineteenth century lasted ninety-nine

anxiety about the mass appeal of extreme nationalism in the age of mass democracy. But here a historical, or, rather, a political comparison may be in order. It is generally accepted that Hitler's breakthrough came in September 1930, with the sudden 18 percent of the vote the National Socialists won in that year's German elections. In our day we may find that in many countries of the Western world so-called Right-wing movements (Le Pen in France, the neo-Fascists in Italy, Haider in Austria, perhaps Buchanan, too, in the United States) may count on a 12 to 20 percent support among the electorate . . . but not in Germany. There, in 1930, the National Socialists gained respectability because of their nationalism, the decisive element in Hitler's coming to power. A concerted opposition to that did not exist. This is not so today. History does not repeat itself. Still we must not eschew the possibility that in the future, as in the past, "hard" minorities may achieve important inroads into "soft majorities."

*Symbols matter; or at least they tell us something. The flag of the party and then of the Third Reich, the swastika in a red field, was Hitler's own, brilliant design. Yet he would have done better—probably in both the short and the long run—if he had kept the black-white-red flag of the imperial Reich. (Next to the swastika flag it survived in Germany until about 1935; and 18 January, the birthday of the Second Reich, remained a day of public celebration during the Third.) But now the swastika flag, like the Third Reich, is only an episode, and the republican-democratic black-red-gold flag has outlasted even the forty-seven years of the black-white-red one.

years (from 1815 to 1914), twentieth century lasted 5 marked by the two world called cold war between Ar the withdrawal of Russia 1 tion of Germany. The cruc (marking the passage from thing else) was its early one the career of Hitler belongs the popular and mistaken 1 Russian Revolution in 1917 of Germany or of Europe competition of a triangle of racy, incarnated principally states of Western Europe, a represented only by Soviet elsewhere. And there was some extent similar but by ments) in Germany, after 1. Reich, which proved to be and temporary alliance of Li nism, of the English-speaki and conquer it. Neither side

That by itself identifies 1 twentieth century. But there resented by liberal-conserv; munists and radical national Europe, and in almost ever United States, South Americ cal nationalists were silenced successors reappeared again.)

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years (from 1815 to 1914), marked by the absence of world wars, the
twentieth century lasted seventy-five years (from 1914 to 1989),
marked by the two world wars and by their consequence—the so-
called cold war between America and Russia. It ended in 1989, with
the withdrawal of Russia from Eastern Europe and the reunifica-
tion of Germany. The crucial period of this—transitional—century
(marking the passage from the so-called Modern Age into some-
thing else) was its early one-third (1920 to 1945) in which, of course,
the career of Hitler belongs.* During this period—again contrary to
the popular and mistaken impression about the importance of the
Russian Revolution in 1917—the history of the world (and not only
of Germany or of Europe) was marked by the existence and the
competition of a triangle of forces. There was parliamentary democ-
racy, incarnated principally by the English-speaking nations, by the
states of Western Europe, and Scandinavia. There was Communism,
represented only by Soviet Russia, incapable of assuming power
elsewhere. And there was National Socialism (and also other, to
some extent similar but by no means identical, nationalist move-
ments) in Germany, after 1933 incarnated by Hitler and the Third
Reich, which proved to be so powerful that it took the unnatural
and temporary alliance of Liberal Democracy and Russian Commu-
nism, of the English-speaking and the Russian empires, to defeat
and conquer it. Neither side could do it alone.

That by itself identifies Hitler's place within the history of the
twentieth century. But there was even more to it. This triangle, rep-
resented by liberal-conservative-democratic people, and by Com-
munists and radical nationalists, repeated itself in every country in
Europe, and in almost every country of the world—including the
United States, South America, China, and Japan. (In 1945, the radi-
cal nationalists were silenced or subdued—temporarily. Later their
successors reappeared again.) Not all of the radical nationalists were

*Conversely, the crucial phase of the nineteenth century (1815 to 1914) was *not* its first one-third (1815 to 1848), which was (as Napoleon had foreseen) a continuation of the appeal of the French and other European revolutions. After 1849, the period of repeated revolutions was succeeded by a period of wars (that Bismarck had correctly foreseen), which was much more decisive; in spite of the recognition of Marx, the struggle of nations succeeded the struggle of classes. *That* period ended in 1945.

ough many of them were.*
 are the fact that Hitler repre-
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 "The place of the National
 [Ortsbestimmung] still re-

Meanwhile he had become a global
 but of hope (for many)." Fest, 7,
 opponents and competitors had much
 crisis of which he himself was the
 writer Robert Musil in 1933, who
 alternatives: he cannot think that the
 replace this new kind of a revolu-
 National Socialism has its destiny
 phase of history." A general state-
 developed a program of his own,
 have coincided with the deeper ten-
 sion. We may not be able to explain
 an author or an executor, a producer
 as an author because he was ex-
 better understanding than most of
 possibilities of his time? These are
 the individual in history but also
 these generalizations of Jäckel's are
 expressions; moreover, they are

of his small book (p. 170): There
 of Hitler was not only a problem
 that of his environment, of the
 that explains why the preoccupa-
 his death, and at the same time
 Bullock, xv, p. 808: "Hitler,
 phenomenon. The conditions and
 confined to his own country,
 Germany than anywhere else. Hitler's
 to which he gave expression

mains a desideratum of further research."* But is the problem still
 that of "research"? Perhaps—even though there is reason to believe
 that no more important, or even significant, documents by or about
 Hitler will come to light. But then history does not only consist of
 documents.

ALLOW ME NOW, at the risk of presumption, to sum up three long-
 range considerations: (a) about a necessary Christian view of Adolf
 Hitler; (b) about his place in the culture-civilization antithesis; and
 (c) about his place at the end of the so-called Modern Age.

On 2 June 1945, hardly a month after Hitler's suicide, Pope
 Pius XII spoke before the College of Cardinals about "the satanic
 apparition [Gespenst: ghost, apparition] of National Socialism."
 With all respect due to this much, and sometimes unjustly, criticized
 pope, I am inclined to agree with Friedrich Heer: "Again this is be-
 ing metaphysical, removing something from history and from the
 responsibility for history, acquitting Catholics of their responsibili-
 ties. For a 'satanic apparition' no one is responsible—at best, an exor-
 cist. . . . The Pope overlooks entirely that this 'satanic apparition' was
 a very concrete human incarnation who, before all in the Munich so
 loved by the Pope but also elsewhere, was promoted and helped into
 power by very responsible and notable men. . . ."† In the first chapter
 of this book I wrote that Hitler represented many half-truths; and
 that a half-truth is not only more dangerous but worse than a lie,
 because human acts and expressions are not frozen into mathematical
 categories: hence a half-truth is not a 50 percent truth but something
 else. To this let me add La Rochefoucauld's great maxim: "There are
 evil men in this world who would be less dangerous if they had not

*SCHRB, p. 332. A long but essentially uninspiring attempt (in reality not much
 more than a bibliographical disquisition) was made by Klaus Hildebrand in HZ,
 pp. 583-632, "Hitlers Ort in der Geschichte des preussisch-deutschen National-
 staates." In 1988 the neoconservative Michael Stürmer wrote that Germany "today
 is a land without history." In some ways the opposite is true. Maser in his conclu-
 sion of M/A was proved wrong (p. 439): "Only when West and East Germany are
 unified will Adolf Hitler, the all-German trauma, be finally superseded." It did not
 happen thus.

†HR, pp. 535-36.

something good about them."* Let me repeat: Does this mean that Hitler was "only" "50 percent bad"? No. It was not only, as I wrote in chapter 1, that he had great talents given to him by God which he used for evil purposes, whence his responsibility; it is also, as I suggested in chapter 6, that his evil characteristics were spiritual. In this day and age it is unfashionable to cite great Fathers of the Church; but it was St. Thomas who wrote about a half-truth being worse than a lie; and allow me now to bring up St. Augustine, who wrote that "whatsoever things are, are good," while evil is spiritual, because it is part of the human condition. What this means is not only that the sins of the spirit are worse than those of the flesh but that the two are inseparable; that there are no sins of the flesh without their—preceding as well as simultaneous—sins of the spirit.†

*This is much more profound than Graham Greene: "The greatest saints have been men with more than a normal capacity for evil, and the most vicious men have sometimes narrowly evaded sanctity." (Cited in Toland's Foreword, 10, p. xiii, where he wriggles around the question of Hitler's "greatness.")

†In this respect we ought to, again, reject the "demonization" of Hitler, or the temptation to attribute to him the qualities of being "diabolical" or "satanic." To the contrary, we can see elements in his career that bear an uncanny reminder of what St. John of the Apocalypse predicted as the Antichrist. The Antichrist will not be horrid and devilish, incarnating some kind of frightful monster—hence recognizable immediately. He will not seem to be anti-Christian. He will be smiling, generous, popular, an idol, adored by masses of people because of the sunny prosperity he seems to have brought, a false father (or husband) to his people. Save for a small minority, Christians will believe in him and follow him. Like the Jews at the time of the First Coming, Christians at the time of the Antichrist—that is, before the Second Coming—will divide. Before the end of the world the superficial Christians will follow the Antichrist, and only a small minority will recognize his awful portents. Well, Hitler did not bring about the end of the world, but there was a time—not yet the time of the mass murders but the time of the Third Reich in the 1930s—when some of St. John's prophecies about the Antichrist accorded with this appearance and his appeal. And it may not be unreasonable to imagine that in the coming age of the masses he was but the first of Antichrist-like popular figures.

In 1933 Joseph Roth wrote: "The Third Reich is now a country of Hell." No: but it did have some of the features of a nation led by an Antichrist. (Already in 1923 some of Hitler's followers had compared his life to that of Christ: thirty years of obscurity and then suddenly three years of a shining revelation.) Carl Jung: "Hitler's power is not political: it is magic." Also Lukacs (LEW, p. 524, note 194, and HC, p. 298). Klaus Mehnert in 1951: "The German people's journey from Liebknecht to Hitler and the Russian people's journey from Lenin to Stalin. . . . In both cases . . . the journey was one from dialectic to magic." An exaggeration of a generalization; but not without some substance.

Another consideration—Hitler—may be due to the accepted notion of the super-Civilization is essentially spiritual and creative. Civilization, a social order; at worst, it is in this idea go back to the nine appealed to Germans and worldwide, and then it was mered down by Oswald Spengler, or, rather, rises beyond civil places like Greenwich Village. Spengler the direction is the ossified civilization.* It was and Aryans, to him and his custodians of culture. "True, one occasion. "It does not feel of a revelation arising from a people."† Besides his, he (rather than in refinement) proponent and promoter of pion of civilization? Not at This is not the place to discuss two terms, except to note that whereas they and the Roman urbane notions of a civilization," as we know it, is a hundred years. In English, it was defined as the antithesis

*During World War I, many (was infinitely superior to the English and linguistic problems here. Consistent house parties in 1906: " . . . sometimes he thought that they truly than the Greeks or Romans." while the substitution of the word would be senseless in English.

†Cited in Peter Adam, *Art of the*

I hope that my readers will allow this brief summary disquisition, if for no other reason than the existence of a recognizable condition: at the time of this writing, fifty or more years after Hitler took his own life, we in the Western world are threatened not by an endangerment of "culture" but by grave dangers to civilization.* Let me repeat: The kind of civilization that we still know was the product of the so-called Modern Age. The term "Modern" is both unhistorical and imprecise, suggesting that this "modern" age would last forever.† It would be more accurate to name the last five hundred years the Bourgeois Age, characterized as it was by the coexistence of aristocracies and bourgeois, and with the gradual and uneasy rise of the latter. That Hitler was the enemy of almost everything that was "bourgeois" needs no further explanation.‡ He belongs to the end of an age, and he was defeated, and—for a while—bourgeois civilization has been restored, at least in Western Europe and West Germany. But if Western civilization melts away, threatening to collapse, two dangers lie in the future. During a rising flood of barbarism his reputation may rise in the eyes of orderly people, who may regard him as a kind of Diocletian, a tough last architect of an imperial order. At the same time he might be revered by at least some of the New Barbarians. But this book is the work of a historian, not of a prophet.

*Speer in prison already in 1947: Hitler's war has shown "the vulnerability of modern civilization, built up during centuries. We know now that we live in a building that is not immune to earthquakes . . . if the automatism of progress leads to a further dehumanization [*Entpersönlichung*] of people, depriving them of responsibility even more. [In the] decisive years of my life I have served technology, blinded to its possibilities. In the end I am sceptical about it." This is the opposite of Spenglerianism.

†The Middle Ages is a misnomer, too, because the term suggests a position in the "middle," between Ancient and Modern. But there is a difference, due to our historical consciousness: People during and at the end of the Middle Ages did *not* know that they lived in the Middle Ages, whereas we know that we have been living in the Modern Age, and that we are near the end of it.

‡We must recognize, too, that in an essential way he belonged to his age, for in his own way, he believed in Progress—unable and unwilling to recognize that the grave task before civilization now is a necessary rethinking of the entire meaning of Progress. (A term that Tocqueville abhorred, but Hitler did not).

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ABBR

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| ADAP | Akten zur deutschen |
| AH/B | <i>The Testament of Hitler</i>
documents. 1 |
| BU | Alan Bullock, <i>Hitler</i>
ed., 1962. |
| C | William Carr, <i>Hitler</i>
L., 1978. |
| D | Ernst Deuerlein, <i>Hitler</i> |
| DL | John Lukacs, <i>The Struggle Between</i> |
| F | Joachim Fest, <i>Adolf Hitler</i>
with a new introduction |
| FAZ | <i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i> |
| FL | Gerhard Fleming, <i>Hitler</i>
Calif., 1982. |
| FR | Hans Frank, <i>Im Auftrag</i> |
| GD | German Document |
| GI | Hans Bernd Gisevičius
M., 1963. |

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 MK *Mein Kampf*.
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- KTF/SKL Kriegstagebuch, Seel
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- SCH Percy Ernst Schramm
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