

Travor-Rope

Lost Days of Notice

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The Last Days of Hitler

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an example of the correct behaviour of a true German soldier. Already two years before he had stated very clearly what that duty might be. It was in February 1943, when the news reached him that Field-Marshal Paulus had surrendered at Stalingrad. On hearing such news Hitler was beside himself with rage and treated his General Staff to a tirade on the subject. Why, he asked, had he made Paulus, at this last minute, a Field Marshal? Why, except to show that the Fuehrer was honouring him at his death? For of course he had expected Paulus and his commanders to commit suicide. They should have 'closed ranks, formed a hedgehog, and shot themselves with their last bullet'. Why should they not have shot themselves? "It is," he declared ominously, "the road that every man has to take some time." Even in peacetime, "in Germany about 18,000 or 20,000 people a year chose to commit suicide, even without being in such a position." How could there be any excuse for a defeated war leader? "When the nerves break down, there is nothing left but to admit that one can't handle the situation and to shoot one's self."¹ In April 1945 Hitler recognized that he had met his Stalingrad. I do not think he would have failed to follow his own prescription to the letter. He would have chosen the formal death of the soldier, with a revolver.

Why then did the Russians expurgate the revolver from their version of Hitler's death? There is a perfectly rational explanation which, though conjectural, may well be true. The Russians may well have concealed the manner of Hitler's suicide for precisely the same reason for which Hitler chose it: because it was a soldier's death. I myself suspect that this was their reason. After all, it is in line with their general practice. Previous tyrannies of the spirit have sought to crush defeated but dangerous philosophies by emphatic, public executions: the gibbet, the block, the bloody quarters exhibited *in terrorem populi*. But such spectacular liquidations, however effective at the time, have a habit of breeding later myths: there are relics of the dead, pilgrimages to the place of execution. The Russian Bolsheviks have therefore preferred in general a less emphatic method: their ideological enemies have slid into oblivion in nameless graves at uncertain dates and no

¹ *Hitler Directs His War* (New York, 1950), pp. 17-22.

relics of them suggested that this philosopher Hitler's death suicide and his total concealment to admit the expedient to Germans hero Russians a mo

If this is so my book was same reason with (as far as such myth. It would matter, seek means: they by Which of these I will only say has the suppression if a myth is was prevented the When has once ages to a false Russian argument sinister implication that they believe reign really was that secrecy is not It is a view which perhaps too narrow that Hitler's reign no one can be seen history either of stage-managed

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who has often been represented as a tool, but whose personal power was in fact so undisputed that he rode to the end above the chaos he had created, and concealed its true nature—even presiding from his grave over his weak and worthless subordinates in the dock at Nuremberg! If this absolutism was unchecked, uncontrolled, by any external force, it is vain to suppose that any internal resistance could have corrected it. No man can escape the corruption of absolute power. The inhibitions, the cautions, the introspections which may influence the exercise of power when it is limited by insecurity or competition do not survive those limitations; and in Hitler's last years it will be futile to look for the diplomacy and concessions of his more tentative days, or the reservations and occasional humilities of *Mein Kampf*.¹

Then there is Nazism itself, the religion of the German revolution, which underlay and inspired its temporary but spectacular success, and was as important an element in its politics as was Calvinism in earlier convulsions. Many worthy scholars have examined this vast system of bestial Nordic nonsense, analysing its component parts, discovering its remote origins, explaining its significance, and disposing of its errors; but of all the works on that dispiriting subject, the best, the most illuminating, the most valuable, seem to me to have come not from the conscientious scholars, nor from the virtuous victims of the movement, but (since failure is often a better political education than either industry or virtue) from one disappointed Nazi. Hermann Rauschning, an East Prussian magnate, was one of those military aristocrats who joined the movement in its early days, hoping to use it for their own ends, and who, having made their contribution to its success, and been cheated of their reward, saw the final ruin of their class in the purge of 1944. More intelligent than the rest, Rauschning escaped early from the movement which he could neither control nor stop, and in two books exposed, with terrible

¹Some of the contrasts between Hitler's theory, as published in *Mein Kampf*, and his practice during the war will be noticed as they become relevant—eg pp. 96-97, 101, 110.

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clarity, the true significance of the Nazi movement. His motives had not been pure, either in joining or in leaving the Party. He was no democrat, no pacifist, no martyr (if these are pure professions); and the intellectual clarity he achieved was the clarity not of suffering but of disillusion. But truth is independent of the stimulus that has provoked its discovery, and the conditions that have guided its expression; and to say that Rauschning is no better than his class is an irrelevant criticism of his books. In those books he demonstrated, as none other has done, the essential nihilism of the Nazi philosophy. This nihilism, the expression of frustration by the existing world, had inspired the Nazi movement in its early days; it was obscured in the days of power by other, more positive interests which became parasitical upon it; but in the last days, with which this book is concerned, when all hope and profit had departed, when all rivals had been eliminated or had fled, and the Party, in undisputed power, had nothing positive to offer any more, it was to this nihilism that it returned as its ultimate philosophy and valediction. The voice that issued from the doomed city of Berlin in the winter of 1944 and the spring of 1945 was the authentic voice of Nazism, purged of all its accessory appeals, its noonday concessions, and welcoming once more the consequences of its original formula, World Power or Ruin.

For by the winter of 1944 the positive alternative of the formula had failed, as all knew except a few still blinded devotees. That positive alternative was described in general terms as 'world power', or 'historical greatness'; more particularly defined, it meant one thing only—the conquest of Russia, the extermination of the Slavs, and the colonization of the East. This was the real message of Nazism. It is the burden of *Mein Kampf*;¹ obscured by the more general terminology of destruction, it rings through the conversations recorded by Rauschning;² and in Hitler's last written message, composed when the Russians were already at the gates of the

¹ *Mein Kampf*, chap. xiv. All references to *Mein Kampf* are to the 45th edition, 1938 (2 vols).

² *Hitler Speaks*, chap. iii, etc. (Darré's wartime speeches fully confirm this account by Rauschning of his earlier utterances).

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new gospel. It was they who preached racialism and 'living space', and practised extermination and enslavement; it was they who emphasized the crusade by organizing 'Germanic' foreigners into anti-Russian legions; they carried Nordic mysticism to lengths which even Hitler ridiculed; and in the end they were prepared to carry on the Eastern crusade at a price which even Hitler rejected—surrender in the West. It was not Hitler but Himmler, the high-priest of the SS, who expressed the Nordic gospel in its most outrageous form; and it was particularly in respect of Russia that he expressed it.¹ An appreciation of this anti-Russian character of Nazism is not only necessary to the understanding of Nazism itself; it will also explain, in part, the most significant opposition to Hitler inside Germany—the opposition of the Army General Staff.

Hitler's struggle with the Army General Staff is one of the most interesting features of Nazi history during the war, for the General Staff was the one centre of opposition which Hitler, though he succeeded in ruining it, was never able to conquer. In 1924, when Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*, he looked back on the German General Staff as 'the mightiest thing the world has ever seen';² but once he had attained power, he discovered, with disgust, that the General Staff was not content to be a mighty instrument of his policy—it had a policy of its own. Just as it had dictated terms to the Kaiser, so it sought to dictate to the Fuehrer. Hitler liquidated the trade unions without a blow; he frightened the middle-classes into submission; he bribed the industrialists; he had no trouble from the Churches; and the Communists, since they had long surrendered their independence, supplied the easiest converts of all. But the Army refused to be converted or bribed or frightened; and since Hitler needed it, he could not ignore or liquidate it—rather, he had to increase it. At one time, in 1934, the Army even forced Hitler to crush his own radical wing and publicly to disown the Revolution of Destruction.³

¹ Compare his speeches quoted below, pp. 74, 77.

² *Mein Kampf*, p. 249.

³ In a speech to the Reichstag after the liquidation of Roehm and his followers on June 30th, 1934, Hitler condemned those who regarded revolution as an end in itself; but this was only a tactical condemnation forced upon him by the temporary ascendancy of the Army.

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Unable to storm this last citadel, Hitler set out to sap and mine it. By forced resignations and new appointments he partially succeeded—but only partially. In 1938, at the time of the Munich crisis, the General Staff, under Halder, decided to remove the demented government; but the sudden news that Chamberlain had accepted the invitation to Munich knocked the weapons from their hands as they were preparing to strike.¹ Hitler's success at Munich was temporarily fatal to the Army leaders. They never had any outside support; they represented only themselves; and they were powerless against a dictator who could achieve triumphs such as this. For a time, the opposition of the General Staff became again insignificant. Besides, the policy of the German Government for the next three years was not inconsistent with their own.

The leaders of the German Army believed in a policy of limited conquest. They wished Germany to be a great power, capable of supporting an efficient, well-paid and privileged army. Such a position could be achieved by a mere reversal of the events of 1918; in fact, a restoration of imperial conditions. In so far as Hitler was likely to gain for them that external support which they lacked, they were prepared to support him, and to connive at some of the incidental vulgarities of his movement; but as practical men, organizers and calculators, not mystics or prophets, they were opposed to any unlimited venture of which they could not foresee or control the consequences. In particular, they were opposed to any conquest which would alter the social structure of Germany, and submerge their own privileged but precarious class in a new millenary Nazi Reich. Thus they were consistently opposed to war with Russia. Russia was the traditional ally of the German Junkers, whose prejudices, though swamped in the middle-class officers' corps, still dominated the General Staff. The Bolshevik Revolution did not alter this alliance, for they were practical men, above mere ideological conceptions; and in fact it was through an agreement with Bolshevik Russia that they had contrived to keep a shadow army in

¹ The account of this abortive plot, first revealed by Halder, and since confirmed by other generals (eg Mueller-Hildebrandt), has been accepted as genuine by the authorities who examined it.

existence during the dark days after Versailles. Thus the interest of the German Army leaders was satisfied by the conquest of Poland and France, and in 1940 they would gladly have called a halt and stabilized the position on the basis of their gains. Unfortunately, what had satisfied them had merely inspired the confidence and excited the appetite of Hitler. The imperial frontiers of Germany were to him a contemptible ambition.¹ What was an end to them was only a means to him. In June 1941, flushed with success, and intoxicated by the propaganda which hailed him as 'the greatest strategic genius of all time', he set out to achieve the fundamental aims of the Nazi movement—the colonization of the East.

With the opening of the Russian campaign in 1941, the opposition of the German General Staff began again. Its ultimate achievement was the abortive Plot of July 20th, 1944; but it had passed through long underground channels before it broke out in that sudden, spectacular cascade. At first the generals had merely advised and protested. A Russian war was against their political interest; but their political interest no longer mattered. They had launched themselves on the brown Nazi current without making sure of its direction, and now they were adrift. It was against their military knowledge too; but that too was brushed aside, for now they were faced by the greatest strategical genius of all time, who of all things most resented the suggestion that there were 'experts' who knew more than he. That Russia could resist the German armies seemed to him a ridiculous belief. "You have only to kick the front door," he declared, "and the whole house will tumble down." When the chief of the Army General Staff produced figures of Russian tank production, Hitler flew into a rage and ordered the technical department which had compiled such 'defeatist' figures to be silenced.² So the generals meekly gave in, as the *bourgeoisie* had given in, as everyone

¹ *Mein Kampf*, p. 736.

² Halder, who witnessed it, has described this scene, when Hitler 'went off the deep end—he was no longer a rational being . . . he foamed at the mouth and threatened me with his fists. Any rational discussion was out of the question.' The offending department was the *OKW Wirtschafts- und Rüstungsamt*, under General Thomas. Speer has also described the incident.

(according to Hitler's philosophy) w before a superior willpower; and the F It is true the house did not tumble do that was explained away. Just as Brit unbeaten, so Russia was only appar practical purposes, Hitler announces war was over; "the Russians no longe at doubting generals";¹ or in a more would explain that the Russian bea refused to lie down; and to advertise b the dissolution of forty divisions of 1 man-power to industry, and the cess duction, all without reference to the A theless, the generals continued to do Hitler took over the high command Nine months later, Halder, chief of the Staff, by common consent the ablest only successor in the great tradition o was dismissed. Meanwhile the OKW Staff,² had become a new political d Forces, and suitable generals had b the grovelling Keitel, who believed genius,³ and the industrious Jodl w

¹ This phrase, according to Halder, was the idea became a monomania with him.

² The OKW (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*) was a coordinating committee of the three branches of the armed forces, originally developed by Hitler into an instrument he used particularly to impose his will on the General Staff, the stronghold of military opinion. It was the OKW throughout as 'Combined General Staff'. It had an accurate idea of its functions under Hitler's leadership. Keitel was *Chef OKW*, Jodl *Chef of Staff*.

³ Keitel said at Nuremberg that 'everybody confirmed that Hitler's grasp of strategy and tactics was not only of the highest quality but also of the most practical. Nights of the war were passed at his disposal. He read the General Staff books by Moltke, Schlieffen, and Clausewitz with remarkable knowledge not only of all the details but also of the whole of the game. He was a genius, far from the globe, amounted to genius. Far from Keitel) advising Hitler, it was Hitler who was advising Keitel (in 1946). Hitler certainly showed an astonishing

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(according to Hitler's philosophy) would ultimately give in, before a superior willpower; and the Russian adventure began. It is true the house did not tumble down at the first kick, but that was explained away. Just as Britain was only apparently unbeaten, so Russia was only apparently standing up. For practical purposes, Hitler announced in October 1941, the war was over; "the Russians no longer exist!" he would shout at doubting generals;¹ or in a more compromising mood he would explain that the Russian bear was dead—it merely refused to lie down; and to advertise his confidence he ordered the dissolution of forty divisions of the Army, the return of man-power to industry, and the cessation of armament production, all without reference to the Army Command. Nevertheless, the generals continued to doubt. In December 1941 Hitler took over the high command of the German Army. Nine months later, Halder, chief of the German Army General Staff, by common consent the ablest of German generals, the only successor in the great tradition of Moltke and Schlieffen, was dismissed. Meanwhile the OKW, or Combined General Staff,² had become a new political directorate of the Armed Forces, and suitable generals had been exalted within it—the grovelling Keitel, who believed in Hitler's strategical genius,³ and the industrious Jodl who applied it. From the

¹ This phrase, according to Halder, was Hitler's 'theme-song', and the idea became a monomania with him.

² The OKW (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*), originally a co-ordinating committee of the three branches of the Armed Forces, was gradually developed by Hitler into an instrument of political control, which he used particularly to impose his will upon the OKH, or Army General Staff, the stronghold of military opposition. I have translated OKW throughout as 'Combined General Staff', as this gives a more accurate idea of its functions under Hitler than would a literal translation. Keitel was *Chef OKW*, Jodl *Chef OKW Fuehrungsstab* (operational staff).

³ Keitel said at Nuremberg that 'every professional soldier would confirm that Hitler's grasp of strategy and tactics commanded admiration. Nights of the war were passed at his headquarters in study of all the General Staff books by Moltke, Schlieffen, and Clausewitz, and his remarkable knowledge not only of all the armies, but of the navies of the globe, amounted to genius. Far from the chief of the OKW (*ie* Keitel) advising Hitler, it was Hitler who advised him' April 5th, 1946). Hitler certainly showed an astonishing grasp of military detail,

Fuehrer's Headquarters in deep underground bunkers in Berlin and Rastenburg the war was directed by somnambulist decisions; the control of the Party over the Army was complete; and the opposition of the Army General Staff continued underground.

The existence of serious opposition to Hitler in the Army General Staff during the years 1941 to 1944 has sometimes been doubted. Hitler never made that error. It was the greatest mortification to his otherwise complacent spirit that the one instrument on which he must always rely was secretly but fundamentally opposed to him. He often said so. Often he declared that in 1941 the generals had lost their nerve, and only his iron will, his military genius, had saved the German armies in that first terrible Russian winter. Often he openly envied and praised the power, the foresight, and the thoroughness of Stalin, who had liquidated his General Staff by a wholesale purge before undertaking the risk of war. Often he raged at his own indignant officers, calling them liars and traitors to their faces, until, as some believed, resentment drove them to conspiracy. Personal antipathies increased his hatred of the whole class. However shrilly he might protest his strategical genius, however complacently he might listen to the flattering echo of his protestations, he could never convince himself of its universal acceptance. With his inner ear he always listened for the voice of mockery; and if anyone at court wished to ruin the career of an officer, he had only to whisper, in the right quarter, that his intended victim had referred to Hitler as 'the corporal'.¹ Nevertheless, though this opposition to the war existed since 1941, and though its leaders were planning the assassination of Hitler from January 1942 onwards, it could not, owing to the unrepresentative character of its leaders, express itself in action until the myth of Hitler's

¹ Statement by Keitel.

but such knowledge has not hitherto been understood to constitute strategical genius. A more critical judgment is that of Halder, that Hitler showed an extraordinary grasp of technical detail and a capacity for unlimited generalization, but that nearly all decisions of strategy must be taken in the middle region between these two categories—and there Hitler was deficient.

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If 1941 marks the triumph of th also marks a further stage in the c ment—the change from a cabinet I brings its own corruptions, and aft marked deterioration became appar the Nazi leaders. There were al personnel. The ascendancy of Hit challenged within the Party till the of all, when all power to compel or enforce his decisions, all hope of su achievement had departed, that de force of personality, and perhaps th undisputed over his followers. Bu among his eager flatterers, could vertiginous position? 'Relations b leaders can only be understood', say rupted member of the court,¹ 'if t preted as a struggle for the succes: War of the Diadochi² started very e: first the succession had been vested, 1st, 1939, in Goering, who, though still an able and important functio Luftwaffe, the architect of the fou Hermann Goering Werke, originato centration camps—a man who had : bloodshed before which even Hitler ing, the next in succession, by the Hess, a harmless, simpleminded decisions and absurd in his beliefs. B to Scotland on his crack-brained r of the succession had to be reconsid

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omnipotence had been shaken by defeat. By 1944 that con-
dition seemed to have been fulfilled; but in 1941 the Party was
triumphant as never before.

If 1941 marks the triumph of the Party over the Army, it
also marks a further stage in the change within the govern-
ment—the change from a cabinet to a court. Absolute power
brings its own corruptions, and after the successes of 1940 a
marked deterioration became apparent in the characters of all
the Nazi leaders. There were also important changes in
personnel. The ascendancy of Hitler, indeed, remained un-
challenged within the Party till the end; even in the last days
of all, when all power to compel or reward, all machinery to
enforce his decisions, all hope of success or relief, all glory of
achievement had departed, that demonic character, by mere
force of personality, and perhaps the habit of control, reigned
undisputed over his followers. But if he should die, who,
among his eager flatterers, could hope to succeed to that
vertiginous position? 'Relations between the various high
leaders can only be understood', says the ablest and least cor-
rupted member of the court,¹ 'if their aspirations are inter-
preted as a struggle for the succession to Adolf Hitler. The
War of the Diadochi² started very early behind the scenes.' At
first the succession had been vested, by a decree of September
1st, 1939, in Goering, who, though politically a coward, was
still an able and important functionary—the founder of the
Luftwaffe, the architect of the four-year plan, head of the
Hermann Goering Werke, originator of the Gestapo and con-
centration camps—a man who had assumed responsibility for
bloodshed before which even Hitler had quailed. After Goer-
ing, the next in succession, by the same decree, was Rudolf
Hess, a harmless, simpleminded crank, unstable in his
decisions and absurd in his beliefs. But in 1941 Hess had flown
to Scotland on his crack-brained mission, and the question
of the succession had to be reconsidered.

¹ Speer.

² The War of the Diadochi was the war between the successors of
Alexander the Great.

Albert Speer, who was present at Hitler's chalet at Obersalzberg on the day of Hess's flight, has described how Hitler received the news of his deputy's eccentric gesture. Two of Hess's adjutants arrived at the chalet and announced that they had a personal letter from Hess to Hitler. One of them was called in and delivered the letter. Standing in the passage, Speer heard the loud voice of the Fuehrer raised in command; Martin Bormann, Hess's indefatigable assistant, who was already beginning to overshadow his nominal chief, was ordered to make immediate telephone connection with the satraps of the court, Goebbels and Ribbentrop, Goering and Himmler, who were all summoned to the presence. Hitler then called Udet, the air ace of the Luftwaffe, and asked whether Hess had any chance of reaching Scotland, flying alone in a twin-engined aircraft, without navigational aids. The reply of the Luftwaffe was a categorical negative; Hess, the experts were agreed, would come down in the sea, short of his destination. Encouraged by this, there were some who advocated that the whole affair should be hushed up: Hess would perish, and no one need ever know. But Hitler was unconvinced. He despised experts, and he knew Hess's ability as a pilot; he had sometimes remonstrated with him about his indulgence in these dangerous sports.¹ Lest the British should get in first with their version, and exploit the propaganda value of the incident, he at once issued a communiqué. Hess's two adjutants were arrested, and in 1945 were still in prison, although hitherto, observes the caustic Speer, 'the custom of punishing the bearers of bad news had been known only in Asiatic countries'.

When Hess flew to Scotland, he was already a back number in the Fuehrer's entourage, from which he was gradually being

¹ An incident described by Rauschning contains a pleasant element of dramatic irony. Hess had just been a successful competitor in a flying competition. 'You must give that sort of thing up in future,' Hitler told him. 'There are better things in store for you.' (*Hitler Speaks*, p. 18.)

oust by the persistent Bormann, who seemed to avoid the glare of day to despise the rewards and trimming able in his appetite for the reality of presence he gradually became indisposed his well-timed insinuations he succeeding all rivals about his master's thrice adviser and financial administrator to responsible to Hess; but his work in the personal circle of the Fuehrer. Entry the Berghof, Hitler's chalet, and withdrawal for his collections, he soon found himself favourites of the court, and lost to former associates; and Hitler, thinking of a trious and reliable servant, did not distrust, in this unobtrusive secret position which thus innocently disguised now personal secretary to the Fuehrer Hess in the inner council. He was; Hess emerged less and less frequent seclusion.

On the flight of Hess, Bormann a candidate for his position as head Goering, sensing a rival and person warned Hitler against him, but in the evening opening his morning paper, he read appointed to the vacant post. To second in succession to the Fuehrer, By a decree of June 29th, 1941, the Goering alone, and no heir was made Goering was Bormann's greatest enemy victim, in the byzantine palace of the gaden, and the mobile Fuehrer's head

Nevertheless, though Goering thus position in the state under Hitler, the correspondence with its formal expectations, the corruption of power and arriviste began to consume, and ultimately

¹ Photographs of Bormann are rare

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who seemed to avoid the glare of daylight and publicity¹ and
to despise the rewards and trimmings, was nevertheless insati-
able in his appetite for the reality of power; by his invariable
presence he gradually became indispensable to Hitler; and by
his well-timed insinuations he succeeded ultimately in remov-
ing all rivals about his master's throne. At first, though private
adviser and financial administrator to Hitler, he was nominally
responsible to Hess; but his work inevitably drew him into the
personal circle of the Fuehrer. Entrusted with the building of
the Berghof, Hitler's chalet, and with the purchase of pictures
for his collections, he soon found himself among the privileged
favourites of the court, and lost no time in discarding his
former associates; and Hitler, thinking he had found an indus-
trious and reliable servant, did not detect, or at least never
distrusted, in this unobtrusive secretary, the consuming ambi-
tion which thus innocently disguised itself. By 1941 Bormann,
now personal secretary to the Fuehrer, had almost replaced
Hess in the inner council. He was permanently there, while
Hess emerged less and less frequently from embittered
seclusion.

On the flight of Hess, Bormann was therefore a powerful
candidate for his position as head of the Party Chancery.
Goering, sensing a rival and personally detesting Bormann,
warned Hitler against him, but in vain. A fortnight later, on
opening his morning paper, he read that Bormann had been
appointed to the vacant post. To the greater position, of
second in succession to the Fuehrer, he could not yet aspire.
By a decree of June 29th, 1941, the succession was vested in
Goering alone, and no heir was mentioned. From now on,
Goering was Bormann's greatest enemy, his next-intended
victim, in the byzantine palace politics of Berlin, Berchtes-
gaden, and the mobile Fuehrer's headquarters.

Nevertheless, though Goering thus still occupied the greatest
position in the state under Hitler, the real position bore little
correspondence with its formal expression. From 1941 on-
wards, the corruption of power and the complacency of the
arriviste began to consume, and ultimately to obscure, the

¹ Photographs of Bormann are regarded as a rarity.

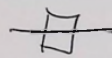
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once vigorous abilities of that formidable character until, at the end, he was popularly regarded as a mere voluptuary, a scented Nero fiddling while Rome burned. For by 1941 Goering had achieved everything that he had ever sought. He was Grand Vizier; he was Reich Marshal; enormously rich; and contented. The war (it was agreed) was won; there was no need of further effort. So Goering began to take his ease among his flatterers and neglect his offices. The Luftwaffe failed, the bombers came through, German industry creaked, but Goering came only rarely to Berlin. He was in Karinhall, his vast country palace in the Schorfheide, dressed (says an eyewitness) now like some oriental maharaja, now in a light-blue uniform with a bejewelled baton of pure gold and ivory, now in white silk, like a Doge of Venice, only studded with jewels, with the emblematic stag of St Hubertus on his head, and a swastika of gleaming pearls set between the antlers. There, in scenes of Roman luxury, he feasted and hunted and entertained, and showed his distinguished guests round the architectural and artistic wonders of his house—a study like a medium-sized church, a domed library like the Vatican library, a desk twenty-six feet long, of mahogany inlaid with bronze swastikas, furnished with two big golden baroque candelabra, and an inkstand all of onyx, and a long ruler of green ivory studded with jewels. Meanwhile his art gangsters came continually in from Paris and Rome, from Athens and Kiev, and some also from the museums of Germany, with their tribute of jewels and statuary, of old masters and *objets d'art*, of Gobelin tapestries and altar-pieces, of goldsmiths' work and Augsburg work, and old Roman bishops' staves, from the looted museums and gutted palaces of more ancient, famous states.

There, for the time, we may leave Goering; for whatever pose he may have been able to strike at Nuremberg, he was in fact, by the end of the war, a totally discredited figure, as will be evident in this narrative. He had taken Hitler at his word and behaved as if the war was won; and it was not. The Russian bear refused to lie down; the British refused to admit defeat; and soon there were the Americans to consider too. Doubts grew about the Fuehrer's somnambulist strategy;

under defeat in the East, and bon universal mental perplexity, the br and People began to decompose; prominence in place of the too soon To resolve the mental doubts, to refi the voice of the prophet Goebbels a long silence; for in time of victory distractions. To prevent heresy from conspiracies, the power of Himmler by which it ultimately seemed to over of Hitler himself. *paraphrase*

Joseph Goebbels was the intelle perhaps its only intellectual. Unlike who sprang with monotonous regula and Austria, he was a West Germa land; and it was the Latin lucidity of suppleness of his argument, which successful as a preacher than the fir the South. Essentially Goebbels was radical character who sought instar he was capable of seeing the trutl despising it: consequently he coul were to him always currency, never always prove what he wanted. So h that their defeats were always vict only apparently superior, and that all old problems obsolete—until in convincing, and his constructive pro and of no effect. "I often had occ Speer, "that Goebbels' style was 'I propagandist principles were also ample, it would have been much be the people the same watchword as *Blood, Sweat and Tears*. This was word, and it would have suited the Goebbels always raised false hopes merely caused discrepancy betwee trend of popular opinion." In fact depend solely upon his propaganda



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under defeat in the East, and bombing in the West, and a
universal mental perplexity, the brief unity of Party, Army,
and People began to decompose; and other figures rose to
prominence in place of the too soon contented Reich Marshal.
To resolve the mental doubts, to refute the whispered heresies,
the voice of the prophet Goebbels was once more raised after
a long silence; for in time of victory, prophets are unnecessary
distractions. To prevent heresy from hatching into plots and
conspiracies, the power of Himmler began that rapid growth
by which it ultimately seemed to overshadow even the authority
of Hitler himself.

perfectly clear
Joseph Goebbels was the intellectual of the Nazi Party—
perhaps its only intellectual. Unlike most of the Party leaders,
who sprang with monotonous regularity from Saxony, Bavaria,
and Austria, he was a West German, from the Latin Rhine-
land; and it was the Latin lucidity of his mind, the un-German
suppleness of his argument, which made him so much more
successful as a preacher than the frothblowing nationalists of
the South. Essentially Goebbels was a practical man, a restless,
radical character who sought instant and complete results. If
he was capable of seeing the truth, he was also capable of
despising it: consequently he could use it; and since ideas
were to him always currency, never objects of value, he could
always prove what he wanted. So he persuaded the Germans
that their defeats were always victories, that the enemy was
only apparently superior, and that new weapons would make
all old problems obsolete—until in the end he proved without
convincing, and his constructive propaganda became ridiculous
and of no effect. "I often had occasion to notice," observes
Speer, "that Goebbels' style was 'Latin' not 'Germanic'. His
propagandist principles were also essentially Latin. For ex-
ample, it would have been much better if Goebbels had given
the people the same watchword as Churchill gave his people,
Blood, Sweat and Tears. This was a hard and honest watch-
word, and it would have suited the German people well. But
Goebbels always raised false hopes among the people, which
merely caused discrepancy between his propaganda and the
trend of popular opinion." In fact Goebbels' position did not
depend solely upon his propaganda. He was respected for his

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intelligence, his administrative ability, and his apparent personal integrity: he neither believed palpable nonsense, nor performed ludicrous antics, nor exhibited indecent opulence; he wielded no engines of terror or oppression; and he was a radical who preached not only total war but also total mobilization, which those (like Goering) who prized their privileged standard of living would never advocate. Nevertheless, propaganda remains his permanent achievement, his ultimate title to fame. Whatever else history may say of Dr Goebbels, it must credit him with one contribution to the science of politics—a terrible but a positive contribution which, like the atom-bomb, may be deplored but cannot be undone: he created a system of propaganda, ironically styled 'public enlightenment' which persuaded a people to believe that black was white. Certainly Hess and Goering and Bormann could claim no achievement comparable with this.

On Hitler's side, the sinister figure of Himmler grew daily in stature. In the public imagination Himmler is a real and terrible figure, a cold-blooded inhuman ogre ruthlessly exterminating millions of helpless prisoners by every refinement of sadistic torture; not a man, but an impersonal abstraction, a creature to whom the weaknesses of pity and forgiveness are unknown; an inexorable monster whose cold, malignant rage no prayers, no human sacrifices can ever for one moment appease. Certainly Himmler was implacable. His power seemed as unlimited as his ambitions of destruction. In the calmest, most dispassionate manner he ordered the destruction of whole races, the extermination of Jews and Slavs. He was quite pitiless; nothing horrified him. The thought of hundreds of thousand of men and women stuffed into 'humane' gas-wagons—incidents which frequently drove the criminal attendants mad—the knowledge that the torture chambers of Europe were peopled by his victims, and that at every hour of the day his name was being execrated by dying people in a whole continent—these things (if he thought of them) never interrupted the regularity of his meals, never disturbed the routine of his office, never disconcerted the puffy smoothness of that cold complacent expression. But Himmler was not a sadist. There was nothing terrible or volcanic in his character.

His very coldness was a negative bloodless. He did not delight in it; and the scruples of others were but unintelligible. 'But they are' would say, with ingenuous deprecations, or even his own subordinated at some particularly savage there were many curious qualities some an incredible, enigmatical figure ignorant and naïve. The man who, being in total defeat, still regarded himself as meeting the Allied commanders, and in office by their permission, cannot help subtlety. He was also beloved by a sense of neater conscience indeed, but it was of only normal weakness. His adjustment even after his death, unconditional in the SS conspired against him. The Führer; and its members spoke 'Reichsheini'. Brutality? his subchorus, there were no signs of bruhesitation seemed to them his and Himmler himself could never touch which he had acquired. In the end, using it; it was some strange foible and he satisfied himself with making private circle.¹

Nevertheless the character of Himmler as these facts may suggest to those of the human mind. In a civilized world are seldom tolerated; but if we look at periods of society, at periods of rechange, his prototype is there. In the mystic in politics, the man who turns humanity to an abstract ideal. The history were not cruel or self-indulgent painfully conscientious and austere

¹ Some such jokes are mentioned in *Fall of the Curtain* (1945).

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His very coldness was a negative element, not glacial, but
bloodless. He did not delight in cruelty, he was indifferent to
it; and the scruples of others were to him not contemptible,
but unintelligible. 'But they are animals', or 'criminals', he
would say, with ingenuous deprecation, when foreign ambas-
sadors, or even his own subordinates, sometimes remon-
strated at some particularly savage holocaust. In this monster
there were many curious qualities, which have made him to
some an incredible, enigmatical figure. He was extraordinarily
ignorant and naïve. The man who, after such a career, culminat-
ing in total defeat, still regarded himself as a fit negotiator to
meet the Allied commanders, and hoped to be continued in
office by their permission, cannot have been a man of diabolical
subtlety. He was also beloved by all of his subordinates—men
of neuter conscience indeed, but in other respects apparently
of only normal weakness. His adjutants and advisers remained,
even after his death, unconditionally loyal to him. No one
in the SS conspired against him. To the end he was its *Reichs-
fuhrer*; and its members spoke of him with affection as
'Reichsheini'. Brutality? his subordinates exclaim in naïve
chorus, there were no signs of brutality in his private nature;
hesitation seemed to them his most obvious characteristic.
Himmler himself could never understand the reputation
which he had acquired. In the end he despaired of understand-
ing it; it was some strange foible of foreigners, he concluded;
and he satisfied himself with making little jokes about it in his
private circle.¹

Nevertheless the character of Himmler is not as mysterious
as these facts may suggest to those familiar with the variety
of the human mind. In a civilized world, it is true, such men
are seldom tolerated; but if we look back at the cataclysmic
periods of society, at periods of revolution and violent social
change, his prototype is there. It is the Grand Inquisitor,
the mystic in politics, the man who is prepared to sacrifice
humanity to an abstract ideal. The Grand Inquisitors of
history were not cruel or self-indulgent men. They were often
painfully conscientious and austere in their personal lives.

¹ Some such jokes are mentioned in Count Bernadotte's book, *The
Fall of the Curtain* (1945).

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They were often scrupulously kind to animals,¹ like St Robert Bellarmine, who refused to disturb the fleas in his clothes. Since they could not hope for theological bliss (he said), it would be uncharitable to deny them that carnal refreshment to which alone they could aspire. But for men who, having opportunities of worshipping aright, chose wrong, no remedy was too drastic. So the faggots were piled and lit, and the misbelievers and their books were burnt, and those gentle old bishops went home to sup on white fish and inexpensive vegetables, to feed their cats and canaries, and to meditate on the Penitential Psalms, while their chaplains sat down in their studies to compose their biographies and explain to posterity the saintly lives, the observances and austerities, the almsgivings and simplicity, of those exemplary pastors, knowing (as Cardinal Newman said) that it is better that all humanity should perish in extremest agony than that one single venial sin should be committed.

¹ 'We Germans,' said Himmler (in the course of a speech described at Nuremberg as 'one of the most monstrous documents ever penned'), 'who are the only people in the world who have a decent attitude towards animals, will also assume a decent attitude towards these human animals [he was referring to Czech and Russian women], but it is a crime against our own blood to worry about them and give them ideals' (Nuremberg document 1919-PS). According to Kersten, Himmler hated bloodsports as 'cold-blooded murder of innocent and defenceless animals', and said to him: 'Goering, that damned bloodhound, kills all animals. Imagine, Herr Kersten, some poor deer is grazing peacefully, and up comes the hunter with his gun to shoot that poor animal. . . . Could that give you pleasure, Herr Kersten?' (Deposition by Kersten in Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam). In fact Goering would have repudiated the charge of cruelty: he held the orthodox view that animals enjoy being hunted; and at Karinhall he erected a pompous monument to himself on their behalf, testifying the gratitude of the animals of the Reich to their protector.

Such a comparison perhaps fanciful in designing the human race to throw up into positions of epochs, remain unobserved in gaps, himself, everyone is agreed, was common, pedantic, and mean. Incapable of thought; and yet he could speculate, to lose himself in the minutiae of the theological minutiae. Hitler himself, in one sense, was a Nazism, that great system of the only a weapon of politics; 'the ideology of the SS'; but to Himmler, the pure Aryan truth, which undefiled, he shall without doubt such a narrow pedantry, with such did Himmler study the details of have supposed, but wrongly, that He gave Speer the impression 'half crank'. During the war, when total mobilization, Himmler was and millions of marks in the price. In one department of his foreign intelligence, eager researchers studied such crucianism and Freemasonry, the sion of the harp in Ulster, and the pinnacles and top hats at Eton.² laboured infelicitously to isolate was sent to Tibet to discover treasures believed to preserve the ancient relics of authentic German *Kultur*.

¹ Speer.

² The department was RSHA (Reich

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each to their protector.

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Such a comparison perhaps seems fanciful; but nature is
fanciful in designing the human mind, and times of revolution
do throw up into positions of eminence men who, in stable
periods, remain unobserved in gaols and monasteries. Himmler
himself, everyone is agreed, was an utterly insignificant man,
common, pedantic, and mean. He was careful of money and
incapable of thought; and yet he could not resist the temptation
to speculate, to lose himself in the *O Altitudo*, and entangle
himself in the theological minutiae, of the pure Nazi doctrine.
Hitler himself, in one sense, was not a Nazi, for the doctrines of
Nazism, that great system of teutonic nonsense, were to him
only a weapon of politics; 'he criticized and ridiculed the
ideology of the SS'; but to Himmler they were, every iota of
them, the pure Aryan truth, which if a man keep not pure and
undefiled, he shall without doubt perish everlastingly. With
such a narrow pedantry, with such black-letter antiquarianism,
did Himmler study the details of this sad rubbish, that many
have supposed, but wrongly, that he had been a schoolmaster.
He gave Speer the impression of being 'half schoolmaster,
half crank'. During the war, while Goebbels was demanding
total mobilization, Himmler was employing thousands of men
and millions of marks in the projects of a religious maniac.
In one department of his foreign intelligence service, a school of
eager researchers studied such important matters as Rosi-
crucianism and Freemasonry, the symbolism of the suppres-
sion of the harp in Ulster, and the occult significance of Gothic
pinnacles and top hats at Eton.² The SS scientific laboratories
laboured infelicitously to isolate pure Aryan blood. An explorer
was sent to Tibet to discover traces of a pure Germanic race
believed to preserve the ancient Nordic mysteries in those un-
visited mountains. Throughout Europe excavators sought for
relics of authentic German *Kultur*. When the German army

¹ Speer.

² The department was *RSHA* (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*), *Amt VII*.

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prepared hastily to evacuate Naples, Himmler's only demand was that it should not omit to carry with it the tomb of Conradin, the last Hohenstaufen King. Meanwhile, rich business men, if they wished to join his exclusive Circle of Friends,¹ had to buy admission by subscribing perhaps a million marks to the *Ahnenerbe*, a 'scientific' institute that made expensive researches into Aryan origins.² Even in April 1945, when the whole Reich was tumbling in ruins, Himmler was contemplating the colonization of the Ukraine with a new religious sect mentioned by his masseur,³ and in conversation with Count Bernadotte (having just maintained that he was the only sane man left in Germany), interrupted the discussion of war and peace to digress for an hour on runes. He was particularly interested in runes, the epigraphic alphabet of the Northmen of the Dark Ages. Studied with the eye of faith, they might, he believed, yield resemblance to Japanese ideograms, and thus prove the Japanese to be Aryans after all.⁴

In such a character no grain of subtlety is discernible. Himmler was an elementary believer. His fanaticism was not the difficult birth of fear and weakness, nor his hesitation the consequence of doubt. Doubt had not yet nibbled at the infantile serenity of his cosmic acceptances. It was because he could not follow the intellectual processes or the labyrinthine

¹ The *Freundeskreis des RfSS*, a group of mystical financiers, headed by one Wilhelm Keppler (see below, p. 116 note), who formed themselves into an 'exclusive' club under this name.

² It was the *Ahnenerbe* whose fine collection of human skulls was described at Nuremberg. Himmler welcomed the Russian war (among other reasons) because it would enable him to enrich this collection with the hitherto unobtainable skulls of that sub-human type 'the Jewish-Bolshevik commissar', and elaborate instructions were given to ensure that commissars should be killed without damage to their skulls. (Letter from Dr Wolfram Sievers, head of the *Ahnenerbe*, to Himmler's secretary, Dr Brandt, read at Nuremberg, August 8th, 1946.)

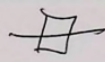
³ The sect was that of the *Bibelforscher*, the German equivalent of the English and American *Jehovah's Witnesses*. Their normal fate was to be imprisoned in concentration camps, and Kersten, the masseur, interceded for them, as for so many of Himmler's victims. Himmler responded with this fantastic notion (information from Kersten and Schellenberg).

⁴ Speer.

plots of his subordinates, that he w in them; because he was assured o him that he did not interfere with and sometimes certainly were, the For two years this *treuer Heinrich* who really believed that he was unce allowed his favourite adviser to indi attempts at peacemaking. He can ignorant of the plans to substitute h he would neither condemn these : implications. His followers wrung his interminable vacillation. In fact eye. The true believer can afford to vided their final loyalty is assured.

Of course if Himmler had been have heard less of him. He was also very efficient; and he had a capi subordinates. It is true that his pers strange figures; that he took politic Gebhardt, the sinister adviser whom genius; that (like Hitler and Wal influenced by his astrologer, Wulf; had attained the position which entrust to a father-confessor; and th depended on the illiterate jockey, Fu personal advisers. On a purely exec well—as far as it was possible to c illusion. In return, he was well ser squalid grave by the devotion of his

This dual character of Himmler, as an executor, and his oceanic cri believe, the key to his fantastic car conditional loyalty to Hitler, to who he owed everything, and inspiring, do, a similar loyalty among his own: both competent to execute and too was, as long as this harmony continu to a revolutionary leader. It is said power, Hitler once called, in Munich



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plots of his subordinates, that he would not become involved
in them; because he was assured of their ultimate loyalty to
him that he did not interfere with what must have seemed,
and sometimes certainly were, their treasonable dabblings.
For two years this *treuer Heinrich*, this 'faithful Heinrich',
who really believed that he was unconditionally loyal to Hitler,
allowed his favourite adviser to indulge in absurd, but serious
attempts at peacemaking. He cannot have been altogether
ignorant of the plans to substitute himself for his master; but
he would neither condemn these activities nor accept their
implications. His followers wrung their hands in despair at
his interminable vacillation. In fact he simply turned a blind
eye. The true believer can afford to let others speculate, pro-
vided their final loyalty is assured.

Of course if Himmler had been only a crank, we should
have heard less of him. He was also, in an executive capacity,
very efficient; and he had a capacity for choosing useful
subordinates. It is true that his personal court contained some
strange figures; that he took political advice from his doctor
Gebhardt, the sinister adviser whom many regarded as his evil
genius; that (like Hitler and Wallenstein) he was unduly
influenced by his astrologer, Wulf; that his masseur, Kersten,
had attained the position which more orthodox believers
entrust to a father-confessor; and that his relations with Hitler
depended on the illiterate jockey, Fegelein; but these were all
personal advisers. On a purely executive level Himmler chose
well—as far as it was possible to choose well in a world of
illusion. In return, he was well served; followed even to his
squalid grave by the devotion of his subordinates.

This dual character of Himmler, his impersonal efficiency
as an executor, and his oceanic credulity as a thinker, is, I
believe, the key to his fantastic career. Animated by an un-
conditional loyalty to Hitler, to whom, as he often protested,
he owed everything, and inspiring, as such simple characters
do, a similar loyalty among his own followers towards himself,
both competent to execute and too unoriginal to conspire, he
was, as long as this harmony continued, an ideal chief of police
to a revolutionary leader. It is said that soon after his rise to
power, Hitler once called, in Munich, on the aged philosopher

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Oswald Spengler, in order to receive the blessing of that disreputable sage. The reply of the oracle was unusually laconic. "Beware," he said, "of your praetorian guards." On June 30th, 1934 Hitler took the necessary precautions. After that, the praetorian guard was in the hands of the stupid, devoted, ruthless, efficient, mystical Himmler; and Hitler felt safe. Safe that is, until the delicate balance of Himmler's personality had been fretted away; and then it was Himmler's unexpected defection that decided Hitler to end the tedious drama. Only if this dual character of Himmler is appreciated, can the extraordinary events of April 1945 be understood.

From the opening of the Russian campaign, the power of Himmler had continued to rise; for the Russian campaign, while it alienated the regular Army, or at least the General Staff, was the consummation of the long ambition of the SS. While Hitler and Goering, intoxicated with pride and assurance, 'cut up the giant cake' of European Russia, promising themselves the Volga and the Crimea, Bialystok and Baku, and awarding the unvalued scraps to their Balkan satellites, Himmler was fixing his more mystical eyes on a vaster, remoter horizon. He was demanding 'an open road to the east, the creation of the German Reich this way or that, the fetching home of thirty million human beings of our blood, so that even during our lifetimes we shall be a people of 120 million Germanic souls'.¹ The defeat at Stalingrad, which chastened more realistic thinkers, did not affect the transcendental views of Himmler (for facts do not trouble the bigot and the crank); and his practical activity as a policeman became only more necessary than ever. Throughout 1943 and 1944 his power continually grew. Already head of the SS, the Armed SS,² the Secret Police, and the Criminal Police, in 1943 he became Minister of the Interior, and the entire police system of Germany became united under his command. In 1944 he achieved a further signal triumph. The German Foreign Intelligence Service, or *Abwehr*, had hitherto been part of the

¹ Statement by Himmler quoted at Nuremberg, *The Times*, February 15th, 1946. The scene in which Hitler, Goering, Keitel, and Rosenberg 'cut up the giant cake' at the Fuehrer's Headquarters in July 1941 is described in a minute by Bormann, quoted in *The Times*, December 18th, 1945.

² *Waffen SS*.

Combined General Staff. Under t Canaris, an enigmatical figure, n intrigue than in his official duties the war it had been borne along success of the German Army, a been able to enjoy the café and Estoril, and to speculate profitably Belgrade and Sofia, with an easy military initiative had passed to t expect something more; it expect restore the failing balance of pow began to criticize. The critics, insistent from the SS, whose own was already growing in establish the control of Walter Schellenberg.

Among the universally parochial berg, its youngest general, enjoyed He was credited with understanding that his notions were a little less some of his rivals, and the fact th sage home as early as 1942 sep; intellects of the Party. A North from the ideological gibberish o Nazis. He believed not in force subtlety; and he believed that he his greatest mistake, for he was i but he made other mistakes too. subordinates, he believed in Hir good genius of his master, a coun Kaltenbrunner and Ohlendorf.²

¹ The account of Canaris as 'a person Abwehr as 'a spiritual organization', November 30th, 1945, by Colonel I. highly idealized. The *Abwehr* can claim thinkers.

² Ernst Kaltenbrunner succeeded was nominally Schellenberg's superior access to Himmler reduced the sig Otto Ohlendorf was head of *RSHA Sicherheitsdienst*), and also Minister of Economics.

the blessing of that discipline was unusually laconic. "On June 1942, the Russian campaign, or at least the General Staff, was already growing in establishment and ambition under the control of Walter Schellenberg.

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Combined General Staff. Under the negligent rule of Admiral Canaris, an enigmatical figure, more interested in anti-Nazi intrigue than in his official duties,¹ for the first two years of the war it had been borne along, a happy parasite, on the success of the German Army, and its well-paid agents had been able to enjoy the café and cabaret life of Madrid and Estoril, and to speculate profitably in the black markets of Belgrade and Sofia, with an easy conscience. But when the military initiative had passed to the Allies, the Party began to expect something more; it expected intelligence which might restore the failing balance of power; and since none came, it began to criticize. The criticism came loudest and most insistent from the SS, whose own foreign intelligence service was already growing in establishment and ambition under the control of Walter Schellenberg.

Among the universally parochial minds of the SS, Schellenberg, its youngest general, enjoyed an undeserved reputation. He was credited with understanding foreign affairs. It is true that his notions were a little less extravagant than those of some of his rivals, and the fact that he began to work his passage home as early as 1942 separates him from the crasser intellects of the Party. A North German, he was also exempt from the ideological gibberish of the Austrian and Bavarian Nazis. He believed not in force, nor in nonsense, but in subtlety; and he believed that he was subtle. This was perhaps his greatest mistake, for he was in fact a very trivial character; but he made other mistakes too. Like so many of Himmler's subordinates, he believed in Himmler, and aspired to be the good genius of his master, a counter-influence to monsters like Kaltenbrunner and Ohlendorf,² and tempters like Gebhardt,

¹ The account of Canaris as 'a personality of pure intellect', and the *Abwehr* as 'a spiritual organization', which was given at Nuremberg on November 30th, 1945, by Colonel Lahousen (one of its members) is highly idealized. The *Abwehr* can claim a few martyrs; but no saints or thinkers.

² Ernst Kaltenbrunner succeeded Heydrich as *Chef RSHA*, and was nominally Schellenberg's superior, although Schellenberg's direct access to Himmler reduced the significance of this subordination. Otto Ohlendorf was head of *RSHA Amt III* (also called *SD or Sicherheitsdienst*), and also *Ministerialdirektor* in the Reich Ministry of Economics.

³ *Waffen SS*.

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who also shared the confidence and perverted the judgment of the Reichsfuehrer. He believed that Himmler alone was capable of purging the administration of its inveterate ignorance and corruption, and of rectifying the disastrous, arrogant foreign policy of Hitler and Ribbentrop. If only Himmler would be guided by him, if only the master of the greatest, most efficient organization in Germany would be directed by the subtlest and best-informed intelligence, then (so Schellenberg naively believed) there would be an authority which might yet rival the fatal maniac of Berchtesgaden, and, with a little good fortune and some careful preparation, might yet save Germany by negotiating a compromise peace.

Such, as they ultimately developed, were the plans of Schellenberg, the Gestapo officer who, in 1941, had taken over the control of Himmler's foreign intelligence service. To achieve them, two things were necessary. Firstly, he must create an intelligence service superior to all rivals in power and efficiency; secondly, he must build up some capital of goodwill in the Allied camp and among neutral powers, and seek, where possible, to mitigate the odium which clung, throughout the world, to Himmler's name. These two objects Schellenberg set himself conscientiously to attain. For two years he negotiated with Swedish and Swiss friends, arranged the escape of Jews and condemned prisoners of war, and sought to reduce the severity of Himmler's judgments and frustrate the savagery of Kaltenbrunner.¹ As time passed, he became more ambitious, more fanciful than ever. Like Hess, he believed that English public figures would listen to his overtures. He sent emissaries through neutral countries with tales so extravagant that they were dismissed with humiliating

¹ Schellenberg's motives, in thus saving life, were of course purely opportunist; for he was too 'realistic' to indulge any humanitarian fancies. As he explained to a friend, the extermination of the Jews would have been unexceptionable if it could have been carried out completely; but since two-thirds of the Jews were out of reach, such a policy 'was worse than a crime; it was folly' ('da aber nur ein Drittel in unserer Hand war, die übrigen aber ausserhalb unseres Machtbereiches lebten, sei die Art der Behandlung der Juden schlimmer als ein Verbrechen, es sei eine Dummheit gewesen.'—Schwerin von Krosigk's diary, s.d. April 15th, 1945).

ridicule; he even discovered a c believed that, by ingenious psych about 'the psychological revival of German people'. What better qual for a peace emissary to the devout I planned to send the psychologist on Temple.

At the same time he was building service. Like so many Germans, he ing admirer, of the British Intelligence of which indeed he knew very l evidently read much in those amazi the reference library of the Gestapo. much about that all-pervasive, incess by Edward III and perfected by Oliv the otherwise unaccountable success politics, and which, operating thro Scout Movement, and other depe overthrown dynasties, altered gover inconvenient ministers throughout t a universal, 'totalitarian' intelligenc the ambitious dream of Schellenber it would consist in the liquidation c service, the *Abwehr*; and this, after during which he exploited every erro he secured. The *Abwehr* was well av prepared for it; but it was helpless notoriously inefficient, politically sus and the spasmodic efforts of certain to achieve some internal reform le resignation. Meanwhile Schellenber, efficient, enjoyed all the advantage 1944, his bankruptcy demonstrated failures, Canaris was dismissed. In The surviving directors of the old the Kursalon at Salzburg, and then mler with Schellenberg at his side Himmler outlined his programme. said, was un-German; it implied c

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create a new, aggressive, totalitarian and pure Aryan intelligence service instead. And then, his imagination warming as he left the tedious details of organization for the mysterious generalities in which his idealist spirit was at home, he described the events which were about to follow. There was no room for defeatism now, he said; great things were coming. The Fuehrer was inspired as never before; his statesmanship, skill, and intuitive wisdom were yet to exhibit their masterpiece. He prayed that the infatuated plutocrats of the West might be foolish enough to invade the Continent. They would be hurled back and 'drowned in the seas of their own blood'. Then it would be the turn of the East. Within a year the Russians were to be chased headlong across the Volga, over the Urals, and into Asia, their barbarian home, whence a Chinese Wall, built by Slavonic slave labour, would prevent them from ever returning.¹ A fortnight later the Western Allies landed in Normandy. Two months after that occurred the most spectacular political event since 1934; the Generals' Plot of July 20th, 1944, which showed that the leaders of the German Army regarded the war as lost, and were at last prepared to break their alliance with the Party.

Many of the details of the Generals' Plot are already well known. Its importance cannot be overrated. After long preparation, a small section of the German people had at last taken the initiative. Ignoring, or overriding, the fumbings and hesitations of more timorous conspirators, it had made a positive, determined, and nearly successful effort to destroy the Nazi régime. That section was the East German aristocracy (appropriately it was in their home, in East Prussia, that the blow was struck), the rulers once of the German Army, now only of the General Staff, the colleagues of Rauschning, who had thought it possible to bend the angry spirit of Pan-Germanism to their will by accepting the Nazis as junior partners, and who now sought, by this desperate blow, to undo their disastrous error. It was too late; their error was

¹ This project of an Eastern Wall was seriously entertained by Hitler and often mentioned by Him, eg in a letter to Mussolini of March 25th, 1943; and cf. Ulrich v. Hassell, *Vom aendern Deutschland*, p. 276.

irreparable; as a class the Junk obsolete as the mammoth and t

Nevertheless the conspiracy was nearly successful. Several t been sent to Hitler's headquart through some technical hitch, b finally introduced it, concealed ference room at Rastenburg. Wl and the conference had begun, against the table-leg and made ar As he crossed the outer comp detonation. Then he climbed i and confidently announced the d ful usurpation of a new gove: announcement. In the meantime agreed) had intervened. How H clear. Either he had moved away peculiar construction of the tabl him. When the dust and turm sided, it was clear that the plot were pierced, his right arm w tattered, and he had fallen, daz obsequious Keitel; but while f wounded around him, he was al

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irreparable; as a class the Junkers are now gone for ever, as obsolete as the mammoth and the mastodon.¹

Nevertheless the conspiracy had been well planned and was nearly successful. Several times the explosive charge had been sent to Hitler's headquarters, and had returned unused through some technical hitch, before Count von Stauffenberg finally introduced it, concealed in a briefcase, into the conference room at Rastenburg. When Hitler had taken his place, and the conference had begun, Stauffenberg laid his briefcase against the table-leg and made an excuse to slip out of the room. As he crossed the outer compound, he heard the noise of detonation. Then he climbed into his plane, flew to Berlin, and confidently announced the death of Hitler and the successful usurpation of a new government. It was a premature announcement. In the meantime Providence (as all good Nazis agreed) had intervened. How Hitler escaped is still not quite clear. Either he had moved away from his place in time, or the peculiar construction of the table had diverted the blast from him. When the dust and turmoil of the explosion had subsided, it was clear that the plot had failed. Hitler's eardrums were pierced, his right arm was bruised, his uniform was tattered, and he had fallen, dazed, into the arms of the ever-obsequious Keitel; but while four men lay dead or mortally wounded around him, he was alive. Had the conference taken

¹ It should be emphasized that the men of July 20th, Beck, Tresckow, Olbricht, Stauffenberg, and a few other General Staff officers, were a radical group among the opponents of the Nazi Government, and were not necessarily supported by the numerous other groups whose ineffective opposition is often discernible. Had Stauffenberg succeeded in killing Hitler, the other groups would doubtless have followed his lead; his failure, by frightening them back into mutual distrust and hostility, enabled the government, by prompt action, to destroy them all. The equal retribution which fell upon all groups alike, has given them the semblance of a unity of purpose and policy which they certainly never had. Thus the civilian groups of Goerdeler and von Trott zu Solz seem to have been separate from the Army group, which was itself subdivided. Rommel, for instance, while agreeing with the purpose of the plot, seems to have been genuinely shocked at Stauffenberg's methods.

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place in the usual concrete bunker, instead of in a wooden hut, not one of the participants could have survived.

Almost every element in the German political situation was affected by the Plot of July 20th. From that time onwards Hitler knew that the Army, as an institution was in opposition; he knew that if he won the war, it would be in spite of the generals, not because of them. More and more, from that moment, he surrounded himself with officers from the Navy and the Luftwaffe. The German Navy might not have played a conspicuous part in the war, but it was untainted by treachery; the Luftwaffe might not have come up to expectations, but the blame for that belonged not to it but to Goering. As for the Army—the common soldiers were doubtless loyal, and Hitler came more and more to identify himself with them to the exclusion of their officers. If he trusted in any generals at all, it was in a few toadies only, in Keitel and Burgdorf; ¹ as a class, he regarded them all as traitors, and their treachery was always in his mind and often in his mouth. Whenever an army retreated or a stronghold fell, he cried treachery; telegrams of hectic recrimination and angry strategic lectures issued ceaselessly from the Fuehrer's headquarters; and the sedulous Bormann screamed treble to his master's bass. At his last fullscale conference, Hitler accused the generals to their faces of deceiving him; and in his last written documents, the testaments that were to recommend him to posterity, he could not omit a last sidelong condemnation of the treachery of Army officers and the Army General Staff.

Drawing thus away from his generals into the safer company of his intimate admirers, Hitler inevitably hastened the conversion of his headquarters from a war cabinet to an oriental court of flatterers and toadies. How far the process had already gone is clear from eyewitness accounts of the scene shortly after the detonation. That same day, July 20th, Mussolini, now the puppet-ruler of Lombardy, was due to arrive at Rastenburg on a visit to his protector. His train reached the station early in the afternoon, and Hitler, white as a sheet,

¹ General Wilhelm Burgdorf was *Chef Heerespersonalamt OKH* and *Wehrmacht* adjutant at the Fuehrer's headquarters. He associated himself completely with the views of Hitler, Bormann, and Goebbels.

was there on the platform to receive the station, Hitler explained the miracle hours ago; and arriving at his head to see the scene of the incident. Debris, for the walls had caught fire, the ceiling had fallen in. After the shambles, they withdrew for a tea party, the teacups that Hitler is seen in his

It was five o'clock when the tea party court assembled in the Fuehrer's hall. It was naturally about the Fuehrer deteriorated into recrimination. A pitched and bitter argument; and even because the war had not yet been won, raved against the generals because they had let England, and the generals raved against Hitler and Doenitz. All this time Hitler was reserved, as if mere spectators could tell them of his African adventures. Someone mentioned that other famous plot, the Roehm plot of June 30th, 1934, which followed it. Immediately Hitler went into a frenzy, with foam on his lips, and he revenged on all traitors. Providence again, he screamed, that he had been spared history; and he ranted wildly about women and children—all of them in concentration camps—an eye for an eye, none should be spared who set him free. The court fell silent as the half hour; the visitors thought he would know," said one of them, "why I did there and then." Mussolini looked at nothing; Graziani sought feebly to bring a technical discussion with Keitel; dressed in white, circulated with their worshippers.

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was there on the platform to receive him. As they left the station, Hitler explained the miracle of his escape, only a few hours ago; and arriving at his headquarters, he took his guest to see the scene of the incident. The room was a mass of debris, for the walls had caught fire after the explosion and the ceiling had fallen in. After wandering through the smoking shambles, they withdrew for a tea party. As so often, it is over the teacups that Hitler is seen in his most outrageous postures.

It was five o'clock when the tea party began, and the whole court assembled in the Fuehrer's headquarters. Conversation was naturally about the Fuehrer's escape, but it quickly deteriorated into recrimination. Voices were raised in high-pitched and bitter argument; and everyone in turn was blamed because the war had not yet been won. Ribbentrop and Doenitz raved against the generals because they had betrayed Germany to England, and the generals raved in reply against Ribbentrop and Doenitz. All this time Hitler and Mussolini sat quiet and reserved, as if mere spectators of the scene, while Graziani told them of his African adventures. Then, quite suddenly, someone mentioned that other famous 'plot' in Nazi history—the Roehm plot of June 30th, 1934, and the bloody purge which followed it. Immediately Hitler leapt up in a fit of frenzy, with foam on his lips, and shouted that he would be revenged on all traitors. Providence had just shown him once again, he screamed, that he had been chosen to make world history; and he ranted wildly about terrible punishments for women and children—all of them would be thrown into concentration camps—an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth—none should be spared who set himself against divine Providence. The court fell silent as the Fuehrer raged for a full half hour; the visitors thought he must be mad—"I don't know," said one of them, "why I didn't go over to the Allies there and then." Mussolini looked embarrassed, and said nothing; Graziani sought feebly to break the spell by beginning a technical discussion with Keitel; and all the time footmen, dressed in white, circulated with their teapots among the gaping worshippers.

This scene was interrupted by a call from Berlin, where order had not yet been restored. Hitler seized the telephone

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and shouted his orders into the mouthpiece, giving full orders to shoot anyone and everyone. Why hadn't Himmler arrived yet? Then came the portentous statement of the megalomaniac: "I'm beginning to doubt whether the German people is worthy of my great ideals."

These words broke the spell of silence. At once the entire court competed to speak, each protesting his loyalty. In groveling terms Doenitz sang the praises of the German Navy. Goering began a violent quarrel with Ribbentrop and made a pass at him with his field-marshal's baton; and the voice of Ribbentrop was heard above the tumult protesting, "I am still Foreign Minister and my name is *von* Ribbentrop." Only Hitler was silent now. The parts in the comic opera had been reversed, and the *prima donna* ceased while the chorus discordantly sang. He sat still; in his hand he had a tube of brightly coloured pastilles which he continually sucked;¹ only at intervals, like a still spluttering volcano, would he utter some savage phrase, the residue of his unexpended emotion, about blood, and Providence, and concentration camps.

This scene, as it is described to us,² is perhaps overdrawn; but not improbably. Absolute power corrupts absolutely, and we have too many accounts of life in that exotic court to doubt the authenticity, in its main lines, even of this. When a staid German general compared Goering to Elagabalus, he was not exaggerating. In the absolutism, the opulence, and the degeneracy of the middle Roman Empire we can perhaps find the best parallel to the high noonday of the Nazi Reich. There, in the severe pages of Gibbon, we read of characters apparently wielding gigantic authority who, on closer examination, are found to be the pliant creatures of concubines and catamites, of eunuchs and freedmen; and here too we see the *élite* of the Thousand-Year Reich a set of flatulent clowns swayed by purely random influences. Even Mussolini was embarrassed; but then Mussolini had after all, like Goebbels, a Latin mind; he could never be at home among these cavorting Nibelungs.

¹ The reader who will persevere as far as p. 112 will learn more about these pastilles.

² By Eugen Dollmann, Himmler's 'Highest SS and Police Leader' for Italy, who had accompanied Mussolini.

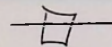
Goebbels, incidentally, was not part of the party; he was in Berlin, giving of the revolt.

The effect of the Generals' Plot was also decisive. It was both person and the Plot achieved a notable success. In April 1945 he described the version. "I know," he said, "that I heedless pagan, but in the depths of I believe in God and Providence. If I have learned to believe in miracle escape on July 20th was a miracle experienced in my own life, this very miracle was the convenient thaw Himmler commanded an Army Group were about to break across the ice."

Politically the Generals' Plot and Himmler's decline. To the outer we seemed so powerful as in the morning Plot, the months when many supposed assumed control of the state, Hitler by the explosion or imprisoned but after the Plot, Himmler increased his man is never so necessary as when a been disclosed. One of his first acts over the old Army Intelligence Section figured largely among the conspirators plied their explosive charge from that had already been proved inefficient; that they were disloyal. Against Adolf was inconclusive; he disappeared in later was executed with medieval Colonel Hansen, was executed. Goehoven, who, as head of the sabotage the explosive, committed suicide to His predecessor, Colonel Lahousen

¹ Schwerin von Krosigk. Cf. below p.

² He was strangled in Flossenbürg Concentration Camp in 1945.



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 aler's 'Highest SS and Police Leader'
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Goebbels, incidentally, was not present at this Mad Hatter's
 tea party; he was in Berlin, giving orders for the suppression
 of the revolt.

The effect of the Generals' Plot on the career of Himmler
 was also decisive. It was both personal and political. Personally
 the Plot achieved a notable success; it brought Himmler to
 God. In April 1945 he described to a friend this signal con-
 version. "I know," he said, "that I am generally regarded as a
 heedless pagan, but in the depths of my heart I am a believer;
 I believe in God and Providence. In the course of the last year
 I have learned to believe in miracles again. The Fuehrer's
 escape on July 20th was a miracle; and a second I have
 experienced in my own life, this very spring. . . ." The second
 miracle was the convenient thaw on the river Oder, when
 Himmler commanded an Army Group there, and the Russians
 were about to break across the ice.¹

Politically the Generals' Plot marked the beginning of
 Himmler's decline. To the outer world indeed Himmler never
 seemed so powerful as in the months immediately after the
 Plot, the months when many supposed that he had actually
 assumed control of the state, Hitler having been either killed
 by the explosion or imprisoned by the usurper. Certainly,
 after the Plot, Himmler increased his authority; for the police-
 man is never so necessary as when a widespread conspiracy has
 been disclosed. One of his first acts was to complete his victory
 over the old Army Intelligence Service, whose former chiefs
 figured largely among the conspirators and had actually sup-
 plied their explosive charge from their captured supplies. They
 had already been proved inefficient; now Himmler could show
 that they were disloyal. Against Admiral Canaris the evidence
 was inconclusive; he disappeared into prison, and nine months
later was executed with medieval barbarity.² His successor,
 Colonel Hansen, was executed. General Freytag von Loring-
 hoven, who, as head of the sabotage department, had supplied
 the explosive, committed suicide to avoid a more painful end.
 His predecessor, Colonel Lahousen, and some others, escaped

¹ Schwerin von Krosigk. Cf. below p. 146.

² He was strangled in Flossenbürg Concentration Camp on April 9th,
 1945.

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miraculously to tell the tale at Nuremberg and mortify Goering by their survival. But the old intelligence service was merely a department of the old General Staff; and the whole General Staff was involved, or suspected, in this extensive conspiracy. In the great blood-purge which followed—a purge more drastic even than the purge of 1934—over fifty General Staff officers perished, and hundreds of lesser figures were inconspicuously removed. General Halder, its now deposed chief, was thrown into a concentration camp on mere suspicion, and for four months never saw the light of day. His predecessor, General Beck, the acknowledged leader of almost every group in the conspiracy, was forced to an untidy suicide. His successor, Zeitzler, was dismissed. Stauffenberg and three other conspirators were shot at once on the orders of Fromm, who thus sought to conceal his own guilt—but in vain; for he too was hanged; Stuelpnagel, commanding the armies of occupation in France, who had rashly obeyed the orders of the usurpers and had imprisoned the Gestapo in Paris, shot himself in a wood near Verdun. Misfiring, he only blinded himself, and was executed instead. Kluge, the commander in the field, took his own life. Witzleben was executed; so was Fellgiebel—a philosophical general, he followed the best examples, and spent his last hours discussing with his adjutant the immortality of the soul. To Rommel, once Hitler's darling general, whose prestige had been deliberately and (as it now seemed) dangerously enhanced by propaganda, Hitler sent General Burgdorf, his most assiduous sycophant, with a revolver and a poison capsule. He was told that if he would commit suicide quietly, there would be no publicity and no reprisals on his family;¹ and he obeyed. One general, who was killed soon afterwards, was about to receive a state funeral when his complicity was discovered; the plans were changed at once, and he was hustled unattended to a criminal's grave. No wonder Hitler withdrew into a long privacy; no wonder he shrank from the company of his most competent military advisers, and listened only to the bombastic amateurs of the SS; he could no longer be sure

¹ This account of Rommel's death is given by Jodl and Keitel, and confirmed by other sources. Cf. Hans Speidel, *Invasion 1944* (Tuebingen, 1949).

of the loyalty of any officer. And in those months to enjoy an extravaganza the days of the Plot he succeeded chief of the Reserve Army. Short from the Armed Forces the concentration camps. Within a few months this himself in command of an Army of Russians on the Vistula Front.

Nevertheless, in spite of these apocalyptic signs, Himmler was in fact in decline. The life made him for a moment more narrowness of its failure was proof that all, it had been a very near thing for Himmler himself agreed), not that Hitler's life. There were even some who suspected a conspiracy could not go on so long a period without Hitler against nature, or at least against a

Such doubts were not left unexpressed by persistent Bormann. This 'evil genius', 'Brown Eminence, sitting in the shadow', described him, 'Hitler's Mephistopheles', generally known, had by now achieved a position such as had never been previously attained by his master. Hitherto it seemed, Hitler's policy never to allow himself to attain to any singularity of position seemed always to play off one minister against himself to hold the balance against Bormann, who, like Holstein in the past, had 'realized from the beginning that his position was insignificant', but

¹ In fact it seems very unlikely that Himmler knew of the Plot; but it is certain that Schellenberg, who knew about it, did not mention the matter to him. Schellenberg certainly had opportunities of knowing about the opposition. Another who claims to have known about the Plot is

² Schwerin von Krosigk.

way from his master's side, even hours as he—rising at midday and morning—in sole control of the vast indispensable, indefatigable, and the sole custodian of Hitler's secrets, orders, the sole method of approach to the Führer's presence. During the years of Hitler's rule, he had strengthened his authority. The Party hacks who, having thumped their chests, had been rewarded with these lucrative positions, Bormann had changed that. One by one they had gone, and new men had replaced them. More energetic, more fanatical men, who owed their positions to Bormann himself. Throughout the years, like the SS, had grown; like the SS, the functions of the Armed Forces, Administration and supply, fortification of the Reich, the SS, it had become more formidable, with every defeat of German arms. The parallel development of these twin powers created what would happen when they met. In Himmler and Bormann, having two independent bodies, at last met face to face. Himmler was made Minister of the Interior the moment had come. Till then the Party men had been excellent; thereafter not so. The slightest attempts by Himmler outside the SS were openly resented by the Party men, several Higher SS and Police Leaders could presume on Himmler's new position as the preserver of the Gauleiters; they resented. Bormann immediately reported to Hitler that he had exploited them to fortify his own position as the Führer; these were Himmler's regional offices in occupied countries.

position. To our surprise [it is Speer who is speaking] it did not take him long to stalemate Himmler as Minister of the Interior.¹ Such are the advantages of a central position.

In the same way, after the Plot of July 20th, Bormann was again quick to exploit the errors or omissions of his rival. While Himmler naïvely believed (since Goering was plainly out of favour) that he was the obvious heir-apparent to the throne, and took every promotion as confirmation of such a certainty, Bormann was in fact seeing to it that he was moving not upwards and towards the centre of power, but outwards and away from it. In the dark days of the last winter of war, Bormann achieved a further triumph; he secured the appointment of Himmler as Commander-in-Chief of Army Group Vistula, a new formation fighting a desperate battle against the Russians east of Berlin. Thus Himmler was moved away from Berlin, where he might still attract the favour of Hitler or interfere with the influence of Bormann; and Bormann, remaining safely in possession, indeed monopoly, of the Führer's ear did not omit to ascribe the irresistible advance of the Red Army to the incompetence, perhaps even treachery, of his rival.

Nevertheless Bormann, though powerful, was not quite alone, not quite omnipotent, at Hitler's headquarters. Firstly, there remained Goebbels. Over all (or perhaps all but one) of Hitler's subordinates Goebbels enjoyed one indisputable advantage; he was able. Even Bormann recognized that to quarrel with Goebbels might prove fatal; and Goebbels, in his turn, recognized that Bormann had an undeniable vantage post through the regularity of his attendance upon Hitler. Between these two, therefore, though they differed to the end on many matters of policy, there subsisted, to the end, a working agreement. As an intimate personal friend, Goebbels always had

¹ A similar account has been given by Goering. It should be emphasized that the conflict between Himmler and Bormann was not solely a conflict of personalities and jurisdictions; it was also a conflict between the Party and the SS. The SS, as it was more fanatical, was also (in general) more disinterested than the Party, and entertained a bitter hatred for the corruption of the Party officials. This was the basis of the various plans in the SS to replace Hitler by Himmler. The fact was recognized even by the opposition. Cf. Hassell, *Vom dritten Reich*, p. 178.

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direct access to the Fuehrer; nevertheless he thought it prudent to conciliate Bormann by using him as an intermediary in inessential matters, and only using his own special position on special occasions. And Bormann, on his side, recognizing this concession, did not seek to interfere with the occasional independence of Goebbels. In the last days of all, the actions of Goebbels and Bormann were symbolical of this practical compromise between the two surviving high-priests of Nazism. Their advice was different, their ambitions were different, their personal plans were different, but in the decisions of the Fuehrer, and in the mummery of his court, they agreed; and both officiated together at his last pagan sacraments of marriage and funeral before pursuing their separate courses to different fates.

The second character whose personality limited the empire of Martin Bormann was Hitler himself. Liberal refugees, theoretical Marxists, despairing reactionaries have pretended, or persuaded themselves, that Hitler was himself only a pawn in a game which not he but some other politicians, or some more cosmic forces, were playing. It is a fundamental delusion. Whatever independent forces he may have used, whatever incidental support he may have borrowed, Hitler remained to the end the sole master of the movement which he had himself inspired and founded, and which he was himself, by his personal leadership, to ruin. Neither Roehm nor Himmler, neither the Army nor the Junkers, neither high finance nor heavy industry, ever controlled that demonic and disastrous genius, whatever assistance they may at times have given or received, with whatever hopes or credulities they may have solaced their occasional misgivings, their frequent disappointments. And certainly, whatever ascendancy he may have gained over Goering, Hess, and Himmler, Bormann never controlled the uncontrollable will of Hitler, by whose favour alone he held office. His last political advice—to leave Berlin for Obersalzberg in April—was rejected; his dearest wish—to retain power after Hitler's death—was ignored. In 1939, when Sir Neville Henderson suggested to Goering that he might use his influence to alter Hitler's mind, Goering had answered that once the Fuehrer had made up his mind, 'all the rest of us are no more than the

ground under his feet'. It was a uni Bormann as of Goering, as true in 1945 says Speer, Bormann was to the end in internal affairs; but at any time Hitler direct control had he wished. 'He has old principle, *Divide and rule*. Then who were always ready to do away with words from Hitler, and all Bormann jumped at his throat.' If Bormann in to the end, it was not in his own right of the formidable dictator whose incalculable hypnotic influence, compelled even he obey. 'Was Hitler, as an historic phenomenon years after the first World War? Was Versailles Treaty, the Revolution, and the Weimar Republic? Was he a figure which these events produced?' So Albert Speer reflected in of the rock-perched fortress in which seeking to answer these questions, he was the character of the man whom he saw Germany's downfall; and re-envisaging was more than this. 'It is true that Hitler would never have found the soil on which to bear such rapid and prolific fruit; but the figure of the man can never be explained of these events. They could just as easily be explained in a national leader of mediocre stature those inexplicable historical phenomena intervals among mankind. His personality shaped the nation. He alone placed it, and kept it has led it to this dreadful ending. The character of the man by whom Germany was ruled by him as a people has rarely been in it.

This conception of Hitler as a political phenomenon of centuries, a cosmic phenomenon even was not universally accepted inside the Party. To the generals, those hard-boiled military engines. To them he was never of extraordinary power who fell short "When I was working with him," said

Nevertheless he thought it prudent to place him as an intermediary in his own special position on his side, recognizing this might interfere with the occasional last days of all, the actions of the symbolic of this practical combining high-priests of Nazism. Their ambitions were different, different, but in the decisions of the cry of his court, they agreed; his last pagan sacraments of suing their separate courses to

personality limited the empire for himself. Liberal refugees, reactionaries have pretended, Hitler was himself only a pawn among other politicians, or some such. It is a fundamental delusion. He may have used, whatever he borrowed, Hitler remained to the movement which he had himself. He was himself, by his personal charm nor Himmler, neither the high finance nor heavy industry, and disastrous genius, whatever he given or received, with what they have solaced their occasional appointments. And certainly, we gained over Goering, Hess, controlled the uncontrollable alone he held office. His last was for Obersalzberg in April—to retain power after Hitler's death when Sir Neville Henderson might use his influence to alter answered that once the Fuehrer rest of us are no more than the

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ground under his feet'. It was a universal truth, as true of Bormann as of Goering, as true in 1945 as in 1939. Admittedly, says Speer, Bormann was to the end in complete control of all internal affairs; but at any time Hitler could have resumed direct control had he wished. 'He had always carried out the old principle, *Divide and rule*. There were political groups who were always ready to do away with others. A few critical words from Hitler, and all Bormann's enemies would have jumped at his throat.' If Bormann in fact exercised his power to the end, it was not in his own right, but by the sufferance of the formidable dictator whose incredible willpower whose hypnotic influence, compelled even his critics to worship and obey. 'Was Hitler, as an historic phenomenon, a product of the years after the first World War? Was he a sequel of the Versailles Treaty, the Revolution, and the events that followed? Was he a figure which these events would inevitably have produced?' So Albert Speer reflected in the philosophic leisure of the rock-perched fortress in which he was interned. But seeking to answer these questions, he was forced to re-envisage the character of the man whom he held responsible for Germany's downfall; and re-envisaging it, he replied that he was more than this. 'It is true that without these events Hitler would never have found the soil on which his activities could bear such rapid and prolific fruit; but the whole demonic figure of the man can never be explained simply as the product of these events. They could just as easily have found expression in a national leader of mediocre stature. For Hitler was one of those inexplicable historical phenomena which emerge at rare intervals among mankind. His person determined the fate of the nation. He alone placed it, and kept it, upon the path which has led it to this dreadful ending. The nation was spellbound by him as a people has rarely been in the whole of history.'

This conception of Hitler as a phoenix, rare in human centuries, a cosmic phenomenon exempt from ordinary laws, was not universally accepted inside Germany. It was not accepted by the generals, those hard-headed, unmythical, military engines. To them he was never more than a vulgarian of extraordinary power who fell short of their idea of genius. "When I was working with him," says Halder, the ablest of

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that class, "I was always looking for signs of genius in him. I tried hard to be honest and impartial, and not to be blinded by my antipathy to the man. I never found genius in him, only the diabolical." But one man accepted it completely, and his acceptance of it was the basis of its success. 'At long intervals in human history,' he wrote, 'it may occasionally happen that the practical politician and the political philosopher are one. The more intimate the union, the greater his political difficulties. Such a man does not labour to satisfy the demands that are obvious to every philistine; he reaches out towards ends that are comprehensible only to the few. Therefore his life is torn between hatred and love. The protest of the present generation, which does not understand him, wrestles with the recognition of posterity, for whom he also works.'

The author of that description is Hitler himself; and it is a self-portrait.¹ He had written it in prison, long before he had attained the power he contemplated. His own firm belief in his messianic mission was perhaps the most important element in the extraordinary power of his personality, which lasted long after the external reasons for its survival had disappeared; and the acceptance of this myth even by the intelligent Speer is the best evidence of its power.

¹ *Mein Kampf*, p. 231.

HITLER IN I

SUCH WAS the setting of the story, when the Allied breakthrough, August 1944 opened the last act in the drama. The rest of the drama—the pace of relation and concatenation of even external, uncontrollable force: the aftermath. With every new crisis, with the fall of passage of each great river, a fresh flood. Rastenburg, Berlin, or Bad Nauheim stages in the development of the drama in its course. Though strange and politically illiterate court, though I as a new colossus, and Ribbentrop inevitable split between the Allies, remained to which the answer was the end come, and how would the Hitler in particular, face it? For the Generals' Plot, it was he alone who. By that last victory he had gained, even the reprieve of Germany, but it in his own way.

To the first of these questions, he made in Germany, for the answer Germany alone. The Party, of course it would not come at all—at least, for Germany. Never was the prototype!—that cry which had all utterances in 1933¹—raised so freely unconvincingly, or repeated so obediently of the war. Such an answer, had it not have rendered the second question

¹ Rauschning, *Hitler Spe*

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Kampf, p. 231.

CHAPTER TWO

HITLER IN DEFEAT

SUCH WAS the setting of the stage, such the cast of the players, when the Allied breakthrough at Avranches in August 1944 opened the last act in the tragedy of Germany. The rest of the drama—the pace of the catastrophe, the interrelation and concatenation of events—was determined by an external, uncontrollable force: the advance of the Allied armies. With every new crisis, with the fall of each great fortress, the passage of each great river, a fresh fever seemed to break out in Rastenburg, Berlin, or Bad Nauheim; but these were merely stages in the development of the drama not changes, or factors, in its course. Though strange errors still persisted in the politically illiterate court, though Himmler envisaged himself as a new colossus, and Ribbentrop to the last believed in an inevitable split between the Allies, in fact only two questions remained to which the answer was in any doubt: when would the end come, and how would the Nazi Party in general, and Hitler in particular, face it? For since the failure of the Generals' Plot, it was he alone who would decide the matter. By that last victory he had gained, not indeed the salvation or even the reprieve of Germany, but at least the power to ruin it in his own way.

To the first of these questions, no answer could rationally be made in Germany, for the answer no longer depended on Germany alone. The Party, of course, had an official answer: it would not come at all—at least, not in the form of a defeat for Germany. Never was the protest, 'We shall never capitulate!'—that cry which had already punctuated Hitler's utterances in 1933¹—raised so frequently, so shrilly, and so unconvincingly, or repeated so obediently, as in the last winter of the war. Such an answer, had it really been admitted, would have rendered the second question irrelevant; but in fact not

¹ Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, pp. 15, 125.



ders themselves, could really already making their plans. Nevertheless, it was the official allowed; and a curious but With slogans of victory on their or defeat; and since no official a total breakdown of discipline ent, Plans for collective resistance, were rendered impossible, everyone, was individually for surrender, or secret plans for de of an impregnable bastion ubt in the sacred hills of Nazi th legends of Barbarossa and ; but when no one, except Hitler schoolboys, believed in such e was preoccupied with personal disappearance, all such designs crowded realm of German meta-condemned the so-called German the start. In fact, there was never stance movement', as defined by r, is a movement of unconquered ry. But it was the official doctrine at Germany not only would not, Indeed, since it had this implication resistance movement was (enberg has told us how, in these Major-General Gehlen, who had e Polish underground movement, German resistance on similar lines; g forwarded these plans to Him- him tremble for his life. "This is himmler's answer. "If I were to 'enck,' I should be denounced as 'rd Reich. The fact would be iping hot!"; and he went on to German 12th Army, fighting on the ce later in this history.

denounce 'high-class staff officers' who sat safely in evacuation areas nursing post-war plans instead of fighting. Even in February 1945, when the writing on the wall (one would have thought) needed no highly trained interpreters, General Staff officers received a circular reminding them of the severe penalties for defeatism, and naming three General Staff officers who had already been shot for that crime. Like the Roman augurs, who used to wink to each other over the obsolete religious ceremonies which they solemnly celebrated, many German Staff officers, whose secret plans had long ago been completed, must have smiled inwardly as they initialled, and passed on, this now meaningless document.

What then of the Werewolves? someone will ask. The answer is simple. The Werewolves do not contradict, they illustrate these facts. For a long time the facts were incomprehensible, because they seemed to conflict. It was known that an organization for guerrilla warfare, the so-called Undertaking Werewolf, had been secretly set under the authority of the now ubiquitous Himmler; and then the German radio announced the desperate character, the invincible determination, and the expected results of this formidable movement. It was assumed, naturally enough, that this was to be a resistance movement comparable to the underground armies which had fought against the German armies of occupation in Poland and France, in Italy, Denmark, and the Balkans. At the same time it was surprising to find that the leader of the Werewolves, SS Obergruppenfuehrer Hans Pruetzmann, was engaged, together with the Gauleiter of Hamburg and others, in negotiating, or seeking to negotiate, with the British, through the Danish underground movement, for a peaceful surrender. And when the surrender came, and the operations of the Werewolves should have begun, the reverse happened. In a broadcast speech, Admiral Doenitz, the new Fuehrer, ordered all the Werewolves in the West to cease their activity. He was obeyed. Of all the conquered countries of Europe, Germany alone produced no resistance movement.

The explanation of these facts, at first obscure, is now clear. In May 1945 Pruetzmann, the head of the Werewolves, surrendered himself at Flensburg. Unfortunately he succeeded

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Genghiz Khan, the leader of the Golden Horde. 'I have not come into the world,' he declared, in one of these messianic moods, 'to make men better, but to make use of their weaknesses';¹ and in conformity with this nihilistic ideal, this absolute love of destruction, he would destroy, if not his enemies, then Germany and himself and all else that might be involved in the ruins. 'Even if we could not conquer,' he had said in 1934,² 'we should drag half the world into destruction with us, and leave no one to triumph over Germany. There will not be another 1918. We shall not surrender'; and again: 'We shall never capitulate, no, never! We may be destroyed, but if we are, we shall drag a world with us—a world in flames.'³ Now, in his positive hatred of the German people, who had failed him in his megalomaniac designs, he returned to the same theme. The German people was not worthy of his great ideas; therefore let it perish utterly. 'If the German people was to be conquered in the struggle,' he told a meeting of Gauleiters in August 1944, 'then it had been too weak to face the test of history, and was fit only for destruction.'

Such then was Hitler's answer to the challenge of defeat. In part, it was a personal answer, the vindictive gesture of a wounded pride; but in part it derived from another, more deliberate feature of his terrible philosophy. For Hitler believed in the *Myth*, as recommended by the irrationalist philosophers Sorel and Pareto whose precepts he so faithfully followed and so eloquently ratified.⁴ Further, he despised, with an overwhelming contempt, the Kaiser and his ministers, 'the fools of 1914-18' who feature so largely in his limited vocabulary of

¹ Rauschning, *Hitler Speaks*, p. 274.

² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴ Speer.

⁵ Although it is improbable that Hitler had read either of these baleful philosophers, there are many striking similarities between their principles and his. Pareto's statement that the art of government lies in 'taking advantage of sentiments, not wasting energy in a futile effort to destroy them' (*Treatise on General Sociology*) is an exact parallel to the remark of Hitler just quoted; and Hitler's theory (*Mein Kampf*, p. 759) that a people or a class, that has once yielded to one threat, will go on yielding for ever, is exactly foreshadowed by Sorel. The Nazi elaboration of Sorel's theory of the *Myth* was claimed by Goebbels as one of his own decisive contributions to the movement (see Semler, *Goebbels*, pp. 56-8).

abuse. He despised them for mar for many errors into which he al his enemies, and making war or which he avoided, such as being too scrupulous in their methods or in particular for their failure to use the myth and the conditions of it. In 1918 the Kaiser had surrendered thrown in his hand (such was the case waiting for defeat. From such a flourishing myth could grow, when invented. Myths require a dramatic champions are overwhelmed, the that when the winter of defeat is over, return, it may put forth new flows apparent continuity. Therefore on it had long been agreed by the expiations seemed remote and ridiculous apostles would face disaster. In the for the corroboration of this theory as in other dark hours, the prophet more to corroborate it.

All his tricks had now been played their temporary success had contrived last necessary difference. He had tried and failed. He had tried 'true society' tried the New Order, and failed. His crusade against Bolshevism, and failure of Europe against the invading hordes failed too. As the days darkened, he he should have tried) the appeal of But propaganda is subject to the law what had worked in England in Germany in 1944, after the failure promises; and that had failed too Frederickian war. The German people

¹ In *Mein Kampf* (p. 198) Hitler attacked for representing the enemy as contemptible would never be another war on two fronts

x of the Golden Horde. 'I have not declared, in one of these messianic utterances, but to make use of their weakness with this nihilistic ideal, this notion, he would destroy, if not himself and all else that might be even if we could not conquer,' he had 'drag half the world into destruction in order to triumph over Germany. There we shall not surrender'; and again: 'No, no, never! We may be destroyed, but a world with us—a world in flames.'² red of the German people, who had 'maniac designs, he returned to the 'in people was not worthy of his great triumph utterly. 'If the German people the struggle,' he told a meeting of 14, 'then it had been too weak to face was fit only for destruction.'³

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¹ *Ibid.*, p. 274.
² *Ibid.*, p. 125.
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abuse. He despised them for many reasons; he despised them for many errors into which he also fell, such as undervaluing his enemies, and making war on two fronts,¹ and for many which he avoided, such as being too mild in their politics and too scrupulous in their methods of war; and he despised them in particular for their failure to understand the importance of the myth and the conditions of its growth and usefulness. In 1918 the Kaiser had surrendered; weakly despairing, he had thrown in his hand (such was the official Nazi version), without waiting for defeat. From such weakness, such despair, no flourishing myth could grow, whatever useful lies might be invented. Myths require a dramatic, an heroic end. Though its champions are overwhelmed, the idea must continue to live, that when the winter of defeat is over, and the cherishing air returns, it may put forth new flowers and blossom again in apparent continuity. Therefore on form, as the racegoers say, it had long been agreed by the experts (even when such speculations seemed remote and ridiculous) how Hitler and his apostles would face disaster. In the winter of 1944-5 the time for the corroboration of this theory was obviously near; and as in other dark hours, the prophet Goebbels came forth once more to corroborate it.

All his tricks had now been played out, and had failed, or their temporary success had contributed too little to make that last necessary difference. He had tried the glory of militarism, and failed. He had tried 'true socialism', and failed. He had tried the New Order, and failed. He had tried the advancing crusade against Bolshevism, and failed. He had tried the defence of Europe against the invading hordes of Asia, and that had failed too. As the days darkened, he had tried (as Speer said he should have tried) the appeal of blood, sweat, and tears. But propaganda is subject to the law of diminishing returns; what had worked in England in 1940 would not work in Germany in 1944, after the failure of so many incompatible promises; and that had failed too. Then he had tried the Frederician war. The German people were reminded how, in

¹ In *Mein Kampf* (p. 198) Hitler attacks the Kaiser's propagandists for representing the enemy as contemptible. His 'guarantees' that there would never be another war on two fronts needs no specification.

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the eighteenth century, even the great Frederick had seemed doomed, when his allies fell away, and his enemies closed in, when the Russians took Berlin, and he was outnumbered on all sides and alone. Yet he had survived and triumphed in the end, thanks to his oriental endurance, his brilliant strategy, and the certain favour of Providence, which had sown dissension among his enemies. Since the Germans of 1944 were ruled by a leader of no less resource, the greatest strategical genius of all time, no less favoured by Providence (as events had recently shown), might not they too hope, if only they showed the same endurance, for a similar delivery? But even this appeal seemed inadequate in the winter of 1944-5. What then was left for the prophet to prophesy?

Goebbels was equal to the occasion. If all additional appeals had failed, if all supernumerary adherents had fallen away, at least there was still the original slogan of revolutionary Nazism, the slogan which had inspired the *déclassés* and the propertyless, the outcasts and casualties of society who had made Nazism before the Junkers and generals, industrialists and civil servants had joined it, and which might yet inspire them again, now that these fair-weather allies could no longer be counted on. From Radio Berlin, and later from Radio Werewolf, that slogan was heard again: the slogan of destruction; the authentic voice of Nazism uninhibited, unaltered by all the developments of the interim; the same voice which Rauschning had heard, with timid aristocratic dismay, ringing suddenly out among the teacups, the cream buns, the cuckoo-clocks and Bavarian bric-à-brac of the original Berchtesgaden. It was the doctrine of class war, of permanent revolution, of purposeless but gleeful destruction of life and property and all those values of civilization which the German Nazi, though he sometimes tries painfully to imitate them, fundamentally envies and detests. The trials of war, the horrors of bombardment, now acquired a new significance for the exultant Dr Goebbels: they were instruments not of fearful but of sanitary destruction, and he welcomed them. 'The bomb-terror,' he gloated, 'spares the dwellings of neither the rich nor poor; before the labour offices of total war the last class barriers have had to go down.' 'Under the debris of our shattered cities,' echoed the

German Press, 'the last so-called nineteenth century has no end to revolution,' cried only doomed to failure if revolutionaries'; and it too fell nightly with ever more cities of Germany: 'together there crumble also the last revolutionary task. Now it is forced to rebuild Europe. I us to a bourgeois restraint. all Europeans, have only seen them captive. . . . In trying enemy has only succeeded in everything old and outworn lay in his lucidity, the Latin. The German language, especially, is often cloudy and uttered by Hegel or Spengler have been oracular but interpreted. There is no such danger. There is no mistaking his j

Meanwhile, what of Hitler? Plot of July 20th he had withdrawn, so effective or been imprisoned by the dead, or imprisoned by the dead, but silence answered these questions quickly extended their detail which so often journalists described, with eker, the medieval catacomb was now immured; or declares, that the Fuehrer port a double, foisted upon the of their authentic master. of Hitler's life with which details, than the five months February 1945; over which

the great Frederick had seemed away, and his enemies closed in, and he was outnumbered on all sides, arrived and triumphed in the end, his brilliant strategy, and the success, which had sown dissension among the Germans of 1944 were ruled out, the greatest strategical genius dictated by Providence (as events had betrayed too hope, if only they showed similar delivery? But even this in the winter of 1944-5. What then of prophesy?

On this occasion. If all additional appeals to party adherents had fallen away, at the old slogan of revolutionary Nazism, the déclassés and the property-owners of society who had made it; and generals, industrialists and and which might yet inspire them weather allies could no longer be Berlin, and later from Radio Werewolf again: the slogan of destruction; in uninhibited, unaltered by all the same voice which Rauschning's stocratic dismay, ringing suddenly like cream buns, the cuckoo-clocks of the original Berchtesgaden. It was of permanent revolution, of purpose-ful of life and property and all those the German Nazi, though he somewhat them, fundamentally envies and the horrors of bombardment, now the cause for the exultant Dr Goebbels: not of fearful but of sanitary destruction. 'The bomb-terror,' he gloated, either the rich nor poor; before the the last class barriers have had to go of our shattered cities,' echoed the

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German Press, 'the last so-called achievements of the middle-class nineteenth century have been finally buried.' 'There is no end to revolution,' cried Radio Werewolf; 'a revolution is only doomed to failure if those who make it cease to be revolutionaries'; and it too welcomed the bombs which now fell nightly with ever more devastating effect on the industrial cities of Germany: 'together with the monuments of culture there crumble also the last obstacles to the fulfilment of our revolutionary task. Now that everything is in ruins, we are forced to rebuild Europe. In the past, private possessions tied us to a bourgeois restraint. Now the bombs, instead of killing all Europeans, have only smashed the prison walls which held them captive. . . . In trying to destroy Europe's future, the enemy has only succeeded in smashing its past; and with that, everything old and outworn has gone.' The virtue of Goebbels lay in his lucidity, the Latin clarity of his thought and style. The German language, especially in the mouths of its philosophers, is often cloudy and obscure; and such sentiments, uttered by Hegel or Spengler, Rosenberg or Streicher, would have been oracular but ambiguous, and might be misinterpreted. There is no such danger with the language of Goebbels. There is no mistaking his jubilation.

Meanwhile, what of Hitler himself? After the Generals' Plot of July 20th he had withdrawn from publicity—withdrawn, or been withdrawn, so effectively that many believed him dead, or imprisoned by the all-powerful Himmler. As nothing but silence answered these suggestions, rumour and exaggeration quickly extended their scope, and supplied the circumstantial detail which so often passes for evidence. Resourceful journalists described, with the exact relish of Dante or Baedeker, the medieval catacombs in which the deposed Fuehrer was now immured; or demonstrated, from the folds of his ears, that the Fuehrer portrayed in German photographs was a double, foisted upon the German people to conceal the death of their authentic master. In fact there is perhaps no period of Hitler's life with which we are more familiar, in its daily details, than the five months from October 1944 till the end of February 1945; over which period we possess the diary kept

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for him by his personal servant, Heinz Linge. This diary, picked up in September 1945 in the ruins of the Chancellery by a British officer, is in the form of a manuscript engagement-diary; but the reference to such unpredictable interruptions as air-raid alarms shows that the entries were made after, not before, the events they summarize. These are inscribed, hour by hour, on the left-hand page. The right-hand page, besides the regular signature of Linge, contains only the address of the Fuehrer's headquarters at the time—until November 20th 'Wolfschanze',¹ at Rastenburg, where the Plot had occurred; thence till December 10th at Berlin; from December 11th till January 15th 'Adlershorst',² at Bad Nauheim in the Taunus hills, whence Hitler directed the Ardennes offensive; and finally, from January 16th till the end at Berlin, in the Reich Chancellery, which he never left.

This diary, though its entries are concise and factual, consisting only of interviews and meals and engagements, is nevertheless of value to the historian of Hitler. It shows the routine of his daily life, the nature of his court and visitors, the deviations of his health, and the increasing regularity of his engagements. Awakened daily at about noon, all his appointments have a corresponding eccentricity, and every day consists of a series of interviews with politicians and generals, adjutants and liaison officers, doctors and secretaries, punctuated only by belated meals, an occasional half hour stroll in the garden, and an evening nap, until his last reception, a non-political tea party between 2 and 3.30 in the morning, followed, some two hours later, by his retreat to bed. The strain which these eccentric hours put upon others can be imagined; for the interviews sometimes go on till 3.30 in the morning, and the other parties may not always have been able, like Hitler, to sleep through the following morning. In the last months they became even more eccentric; for by that time Hitler had reduced his hours of sleep to three.³ But one man at least was equal to all such demands. The persistent Bormann determined never to lose sight of the master upon whom his whole power depended, or to allow another to monopolize that profitable

¹ Literally, 'Fort Wolf'.

² Literally, 'Eagle's nest'.

³ Speer. Cf. Himmler's statement below, p. 132.

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Apart from this diary there is no evidence on Hitler's personal life. One is again the indispensable gradual change which came during the war, and, in part, in 1944. It was not only the old Hitler who resented criticism, but the new Hitler who tormented himself with spineless toadyism, the conviction that he alone had the right, the mission, while all others must capitulate; it was a fundamental change which these secondary deviations intensified. For Hitler (Speer) was averse from those methodical arrangements which are so clearly reflected in the days of peace he had for himself, the filmgoing and fantasies, the parties and picnics, the tours of the Reich, the tea parties and the relief which the intolerance of politics demanded. Speer's a life almost idyllic; for Speer had the past. After all, he had survived the war, he had not been completely forgotten, he had bought the cruelties and cowardices, and the sanguinary but which, to him, the happy distractions. Nostalgically, the carefree days in which Hitler gossiped with his associates in regular politics became a

¹ The servility of Hitler's court, the ideals of *Mein Kampf* (p. 259), in the face of the monarchy, the flatterers, the honest man would 'seriously admire the Majesty, the wearer of the Crown

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: * Literally, 'Eagle's nest'.
 & below, p. 132.

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¹ The servility of Hitler's court makes a melancholy contrast to the ideals of *Mein Kampf* (p. 259), in which he denounces as 'gravediggers of the monarchy' the flatterers who surrounded the Kaiser, when an honest man would 'seriously admonish and seek to persuade even His Majesty, the wearer of the Crown himself'.

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Obersalzberg with unpolitical friends and Eva Braun. There he would make up his mind on problems too vast to be considered in the hubbub of the Reich Chancellery, walking up and down in the Alpine summer, visiting small inns where he found (he said) 'the inner calm and assurance necessary to his world-shattering decisions'; there he occupied 'himself more intensively with artistic things, with architecture, and continual films; there he would recover from the exhaustion of politics: his eyes would brighten again, his reactions would quicken, his enthusiasm for making decisions would revive; there his conception of life would become almost bourgeois: he would behave as a hospitable Austrian paterfamilias, good-natured and jocular, friendly and affable with all. While Goering and others would cover themselves with 'tin-shops' of medals, he would exhibit a simplicity of manner and dress that brought him credit among his people and reconciled them to unpopular political decisions. "I suspect," says Speer "that he was not happy with his 'mission'; that he would rather have been an architect than a politician. He often clearly expressed his aversion from politics, and even more from military matters. He disclosed his intention of withdrawing after the war from state affairs, to build himself a large house in Linz,' and there to end his days. He insisted that he would then completely retire. He did not wish to embarrass his successor in any way. He would then be soon forgotten and left to himself. Possibly some of his former colleagues would visit him occasionally, but he would not count on that. Apart from Fraeulein Braun he would take no one with him; nor would anyone stand living with him of his own free will for any length of time. . . ." Such were Hitler's daydreams in 1939; and they are not reported by Speer only. On August 25th, 1939, Sir Neville Henderson had an interview with Hitler in Berlin. 'Among various points mentioned by Herr Hitler,' reported the ambassador, 'were, that he was by nature an artist, not a politician, and that once the Polish question was settled, he would end his life as an artist and not as a war-monger.'²

A naïve judgment, pathetically naïve. It is surprising that

¹ Hitler always regarded Linz as his home town. Cf. below, pp. 104, 213.

² Documents concerning German-Polish relations (Cmd. 6106), p. 128.

the otherwise sagacious psychologist, and suppose of absolute, and not merely a not infrequent error. How to it, who have defended cold and bloodthirsty tyrants by their artistic tastes, the art lives! It is the error common to politics irrelevant, and, in so far as by unpolitical standards. In more judgment than Speer artist, he at least was not deaf. Above the crunch of the cal heard, if not the cry of the least the bloodcurdling pain drew the consequences.

Though Speer's account only partial validity, it is not of its incidence; and the story. But during the war, he became the great warlord, at the time, Hitler's company commander monotonously regular, the release, he had no relaxation less discharge of his pent-up process. If the German people he must sympathetically cultivate pleasures but the necessities. Then came distrust and its of power reinforced by the more films, no more visits to himself not with artists and whom, in the height of his not merely socially and conversation, instead of being tedious trivialities of the bar any compensating advantage of the German Army to all officers. As the Party increased

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the otherwise sagacious Speer could be so elementary a
 psychologist, and suppose that this aesthetic *cri-de-cœur* was
 of absolute, and not merely of relative significance. But it is
 a not infrequent error. How many historians have been subject
 to it, who have defended corrupt politicians, weak governors,
 and bloodthirsty tyrants by appealing to their domestic virtues,
 their artistic tastes, the amiable simplicity of their personal
 lives! It is the error common to those who, like Speer, suppose
 politics irrelevant, and, in so doing, insensibly judge politicians
 by unpolitical standards. In this at least Rauschning showed
 more judgment than Speer. Less interested in art and the
 artist, he at least was not deceived by this bourgeois *bonhomie*.
 Above the crunch of the cakes and the tinkle of the teacups he
 heard, if not the cry of the tortured in the prison camps, at
 least the bloodcurdling paean of universal destruction; and
 drew the consequences.

Though Speer's account of Hitler's life before the war is of
 only partial validity, it is nevertheless valid within the limits
 of its incidence; and the statements of fact are certainly true.
 But during the war, he explains, all this changed. When he
 became the great warlord, the greatest strategical genius of all
 time, Hitler's company changed, his hours of work became
 monotonously regular, the pressure of events gave him no
 release, he had no relaxations, no safety valves, for the harm-
 less discharge of his pent-up dynamism. Defeat intensified the
 process. If the German people must cut down their pleasures,
 he must sympathetically cut down his; and his were not only
 pleasures but the necessary conditions of his political life.
 Then came distrust and its attendant neuroses; the corruption
 of power reinforced by the fear of treachery. There were no
 more films, no more visits to Obersalzberg. Hitler surrounded
 himself not with artists and friends, but with illiterate soldiers,
 whom, in the height of his vainglorious disdain, he despised
 not merely socially and politically, but militarily, too. Con-
 versation, instead of being a relief, became confined to the
 tedious trivialities of the barracks and the mess. Nor were there
 any compensating advantages. It had once been the tradition
of the German Army to allow free criticism from subordinate
officers. As the Party increased its control, this criticism was

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steadily reduced; after July 20th, 1944, it ceased altogether. A universal suspicion suppressed all healthy conversation and multiplied the effects of every setback. More and more the once sociable Fuehrer became an isolated hermit, with all the psychological repressions inherent in that dismal condition. He was isolated from persons, isolated from events. Convinced that only he could lead the German people out of defeat to victory, and that his life was therefore of cardinal importance; and yet convinced that every man's hand was against him, and assassination awaited him around every corner; by a logical consequence, he seldom left the protection of his underground headquarters, or the banal society of his quack doctor, his secretaries, and the few spiritless generals who still pandered to his inspiration. He seldom visited the front, never knew the true extent of the disasters to his armies, his towns, his industries; never in the entire war did he visit a bombed city. He remained a frustrated recluse, restless and miserable. More and more he dreamed of an elegant retirement in Linz. While Germany was crumbling in ruins, he occupied himself with ever more elaborate architectural plans. He was not (as his enemies said) redesigning Buckingham Palace for his own use; he was envisaging a new opera house and a new picture gallery for Linz.¹ And as his contempt and distrust grew for the rest of mankind, so he thought more and more of Eva Braun, who was exempt from the otherwise universal vice of treachery. Only Eva Braun, he said, and his Alsatian dog Blondi, were faithful to him. He had only one friend, he repeated, who would remain loyal to him in the last decisive hour, and that was Eva Braun. "We would never believe it," says Speer; "but this time his intuition had not failed him."

The effects of such a life on Hitler's physical condition can easily be imagined. "Up till 1940," says Dr von Hasselbach, the most critical and reliable of his doctors, "Hitler appeared to be much younger than he actually was. From that date he

¹ When I visited the Bunker in September 1945, Goebbels' room was still full of illustrated books on opera-house architecture.

² Von Hasselbach is thus described by his interrogators, and by Drs Giesing and Brandt (see below, pp. 106 foll., 110), who add that von Hasselbach was 'probably one of the few people associated with Hitler who did not fall under his spell'.

aged rapidly. From 1940 to 1944 he appeared to have grown old positively senile; and the last days of April 1945, him as a physical wreck. His health has often been attributed to the explosion of the July 20th, 1944, which Hitler received on that day. The real damage to his health proceeded from two causes: I described, and his doctors.

Whatever Hitler's psychology—and on such a subject, and be imprudent to speculate—physical stamina was except been otherwise, to have endured violent personality. Before that was of the throat. In 1935, at the Naval Treaty, Hitler became hoarse, and sent for a special Charité Hospital in the Luftwaffe. He previously attended one of his doctors, a polyp on the vocal cords, a recovered, and apart from a in consequence of general stomach cramps, continued believed indeed that he had avoided all forms of exercise. In 1940, he had built a gazebo overlooking the fabulous Bavarian Alps, and the beautiful lake of Königssee, would take the train to the mountain, would take the train; but Hitler soon ceased his observation post. In that rare case, he felt a tightening of the weakness of his heart; but such a condition, and satisfied

¹ The adjutant was Brueckner, who was appointed to the appointment of Brandt.

it ceased altogether. lthy conversation and More and more the d hermit, with all the hat dismal condition. om events. Convinced eople out of defeat to f cardinal importance; and was against him, ery corner; by a logical on of his underground his quack doctor, his als who still pandered the front, never knew armies, his towns, his he visit a bombed city. ss and miserable. More rement in Linz. While occupied himself with is. He was not (as his m Palace for his own ouse and a new picture und distrust grew for the nd more of Eva Braun, iversal vice of treachery. sation dog Blondi, were end, he repeated, who c decisive hour, and that ve it," says Speer; "but rim."

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aged rapidly. From 1940 to 1943 he looked his age. After 1943 ~~he appeared to have grown old.~~ In his last days, says Speer, he was positively senile; and those were not yet the last days of all, the last days of April 1945, when all who saw him described him as a physical wreck. This rapid deterioration in Hitler's health has often been attributed to the effects of the bomb explosion of the July 20th, 1944; but this is wrong. The wounds which Hitler received on that occasion were trivial and temporary. The real damage to his health in the last months of his life proceeded from two causes: his manner of life, which has been described, and his doctors.

Whatever Hitler's psychological condition may have been—and on such a subject, and in so unique a character, it would be imprudent to speculate—there can be no doubt that his physical stamina was exceptionally strong. It could not have been otherwise, to have endured for so long, the tenancy of that violent personality. Before the war, his only recorded distemper was of the throat. In 1935, at the time of the Anglo-German Naval Treaty, Hitler became alarmed at the condition of his voice, and sent for a specialist, Professor von Eicken, of the Charité Hospital in the Luisenstrasse in Berlin, who had previously attended one of his adjutants.¹ Von Eicken diagnosed a polyp on the vocal cords, and removed it; after which Hitler recovered, and apart from an occasional tingling in the ears, in consequence of general overstrain, and a tendency to stomach cramps, continued in good health until 1943. He believed indeed that he had a weak heart, and after 1938 avoided all forms of exercise. On a mountaintop above Berchtesgaden he had built a gazebo, the Kehlstein, whence he could overlook the fabulous Bavarian Alps, and conquered Austria, and the beautiful lake of Koenigsee. A lift, built in the entrails of the mountain, would take him and his visitors up to this eyrie; but Hitler soon ceased to make use of this expensive observation post. In that rarefied atmosphere, 5400 feet above sea-level, he felt a tightening of his chest, which he ascribed to the weakness of his heart; but his doctors found no evidence of such a condition, and satisfied themselves that these symptoms,

¹ The adjutant was Brueckner, and the incident the same which led to the appointment of Brandt.

cramps, were of hysterical origin. attended, in the main, by three bachelors, Hasselbach, and Morell. Professor Karl Brandt, a surgeon, and had been with him since he had made the career of Brandt, and he belonged to the circle of notoriety surrounded by Professor Magnus and had been at the clinic in the Ziegelstrasse. In 1929, twenty-nine years old, was spending his time in the sanatorium at Marienbad, when Hitler's niece and his physician were injured in a serious motor accident. Morell was one of the doctors summoned to the clinic. His opinion he made was favourable, and he recommended by Brueckner to travel to Venice as a physician. This was the beginning of a long career. He became official surgeon to Hitler, and he immobilized him for long periods, his practice of surgery (for in fact Hitler was immobilized by Brandt) introduced in turn two other physicians into his circle to deputise for him at Marienbad, who retired soon afterwards for reasons of health and will appear in the narrative, and secondly, as successor to Karl von Hasselbach. Brandt and Morell with Hitler until the great internment in 1944 which will shortly be related, promoted to the post of Reich Commissioner; and their evidence is included in the report on Hitler's health.

Morell was Hitler's physician. If Brandt was technically, among the first flight of his success to that element of chance which makes the majority of personal appointments, nevertheless not altogether disreputable. At the internment, Brueckner recovered from his position. Hitler had been similarly injured, he received competent attention. But of course in the measured terms and discreetness of his profession. He was a quack. Those

who saw him, after his internment by the American forces, a gross but deflated old man, of cringing manners, inarticulate speech, and the hygienic habits of a pig, could not conceive how a man so utterly devoid of self-respect could ever have been selected as a personal physician by anyone who had even a limited possibility of choice. But Hitler not only chose him; he kept him for nine years, in constant attendance, preferring him above all other doctors, and, in the end, surrendering his person, against unanimous advice, to the disastrous experiments of a charlatan. From 1936 to 1945, Morell, in his own words, was Hitler's 'constant companion'; and yet the health of his patient was to him only a secondary consideration. From all the evidence, it is perfectly clear that Morell's god was mammon. He was totally indifferent to science or truth. Rather than study the slow methods of patient research, he preferred to play with quick drugs and fancy nostrums; and when critics hinted at the inadequacy of his qualifications, he merely extended his claims in the empire of lies. He was, he maintained, the true discoverer of penicillin; but after he had devoted long years of singleminded research to its discovery, the ubiquitous British Secret Service had stolen the secret, and a British doctor had claimed the credit. Actually it was not necessary for Morell to make such defensive claims; for his position with Hitler depended upon his weaknesses, not his skill. Hitler liked magic, as he liked astrology and the assurances of somnambulism. "He had little respect for physicians," says one of that profession,¹ "and believed in a kind of mystic, medicine, which was akin to Christian Science." And so, when this ship's doctor, who had set up as a specialist in venereal disease among the artistic demi-monde of Berlin, came to Berchtesgaden as a necessary attendant on Hitler's photographer, Hoffmann, his fortune was soon made. And fortune does not mean the modest opulence of a successful practitioner. Morell's financial ambitions were far larger than that. He built factories and manufactured patent remedies. As court physician, he secured lucrative approval of his manufactures. Sometimes he had their purchase made compulsory throughout Germany; sometimes he secured a monopoly for his own brands. His vitamin chocolates

¹ Professor Gebhardt.

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were a particularly successful venture. By an order from Hitler, Morell's 'Russia' lice-powder was made compulsory throughout the armed forces, and no priorities were allowed to interfere with the construction of factories for this important manufacture. 'Ultraseptyl', the sulphonamide produced by Morell's company in Budapest, was condemned by the pharmacological faculty of Leipzig University as harmful to the nerves, and worse than the corresponding German product. The report of the faculty was shown to Hitler, but without effect. Morell's proprietary product obtained the necessary political sanction, and priorities were granted to enable him to increase still further its production.

These drugs were not so lucratively dispersed among the German people without preliminary trial. The experiments were made on Hitler. An *almost* complete list of the drugs used by Morell upon Hitler, compiled from his own account (which is unlikely to exaggerate on such a topic) and excluding the morphia and hypnotics which were also used, contains the names of twenty-eight different mixtures of drugs, including the proprietary 'Ultraseptyl' condemned by the pharmacologists, various fake medicines, narcotics, stimulants, and aphrodisiacs. The way in which Morell made use of these drugs is thus described by Dr Brandt:

"Morell took more and more to treatment by injections, until in the end he was doing all his work by this method. For instance, he would give large doses of sulphonamides for slight colds, and gave them to everyone at Hitler's headquarters. Morell and I had many disputes about this. Morell then took to giving injections that had dextrose, hormones, vitamins, etc., so that the patient immediately felt better; and this type of treatment seemed to impress Hitler. Whenever he felt a cold coming on, he would have three to six injections daily, and thus prevent any real development of the infection. Therapeutically this was satisfactory. Then Morell used it as a prophylactic. If Hitler had to deliver a speech on a cold or rainy day, he would have injections the day before, the day of the speech, and the day after. The normal resistance of the body was thus gradually replaced by an artificial medium. When the war began, Hitler thought himself indispensable, and throughout

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¹ This account given by Spe
with another account by Heinz
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the war received almost continual injections. During the last
two years he was injected daily. When I asked Morell to name
the drugs employed, he refused. Hitler came to depend more
and more on these injections; his dependence became very
obvious during the last year. With the exception of General
Jodl, all the members of Hitler's staff were treated from time
to time by Morell."

By the time Brandt was interned, he had good reason to hate
Morell, and his opinion might therefore seem at first to be
biased against him; but there can be no doubt of its accuracy.
It is supported by every other doctor who had opportunities
of knowing the facts; and the professional verdict of the faculty
is supported by intelligent lay observers. Speaking of the mental
overstrain to which Hitler subjected himself, Speer says: "I
believe that anyone who does a great deal of intellectual work
can understand this condition of mental over-exertion; but
there can hardly be another person who has endured such an
ever-increasing strain over so many years, and who has further
found himself a physician who tried out completely new drugs
on him, in order to keep him capable of work, and, at the same
time, to carry out a unique medical experiment. It would be
interesting to analyse Hitler's handwriting during the last
months; it had the uncertainty of an old man. By his stubborn
ways, his sustained outbursts of anger, he often reminded me
of a senile man. This condition became permanent after 1944,
and was only seldom interrupted." "For purely physical
reasons," says the same authority elsewhere, "most other men
would have broken down under the strain of such a life, and
after an enforced relaxation would have regained the capacity
for work; or else nature would have come to the rescue with an
illness. But Hitler's physician, Morell, managed to cover up his
exhaustion by means of artificial stimulants, a method which,
ends by completely ruining the patient. Hitler became accus-
tomed to these means of keeping up his endurance, and kept on
demanding them. He admired Morell and his methods, and
was in some sense dependent on him and his remedies."¹

¹ This account given by Speer is almost identical, in its main points,
with another account by Heinz Lorenz. Hitler's signature may be seen
in his will (p. 252).

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ave inspired Himmler and Geb-
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new Gebhardt could not believe

that he lacked a selfish purpose—they certainly gained nothing
thereby. Possibly they sought nothing; for Himmler at least
was too naïve to conceive of any elaborate plans. At all events,
Stumpfegger had no intention of continuing to serve those
whose usefulness was over; and once arrived at the Fuehrer's
headquarters, he became conspicuous for his unconditional and
apparently genuine loyalty to Hitler. A faithful giant (for he
was of huge stature), he bowed in unfeigned adoration before
the god into whose presence he had at last been admitted, and
frequently spoke with contempt of the sponsor who had shown
him the way thither. It was on October 31st that Stumpfegger
first appeared at Hitler's headquarters. After that, his visits
gradually became frequent. In the diary there is recorded,
almost daily, the word *Spaziergang*—Hitler's single form of
ventilation, his stroll round the garden of his headquarters.
Rarely is anyone recorded as accompanying him on these
occasions; the only companions ever mentioned are Himmler,
Goering, Albert Bormann (an adjutant of Hitler, brother of
Martin Bormann), and Stumpfegger. In the last days Stump-
fegger moved to Berlin with Hitler. When others, including
Morell, left or were dismissed, he remained. Asked whether
he really supposed that Germany could still win the war, he
answered, with the naïve conviction of the true believer, that
though military ignorant, he did not suppose—he knew. The
intense conviction in the Fuehrer's eyes was his guarantee.
Those walks in the garden were not the walks of a patient with
his doctor—to the end Hitler never needed a surgeon; they
were the communion of the Messiah with his disciple, of the
divinity with his chosen priest.

It goes without saying that Stumpfegger never fell into the
sin of Brandt. He never quarrelled with Morell. He kept to his
surgical duties, which entailed no disputes with the now all-
powerful physician. Morell's control over Hitler's person for
the last six months of his life was unchallenged. He even
succeeded in capping the dismissal of Brandt with the dismissal
of Hitler's photographer Hoffmann, whose convenient malady
had been the beginning of his success, but whose presence now
only served to remind him of the humiliations of patronage. With
all the former doctors removed, his former patron dismissed,

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and the new doctor obedient to his will, Morell could look forward comfortably, if only the war would allow it, to the last and most spectacular of his medical monopolies.

Thus, in his last days, though he suffered from no organic disease, Hitler had become, according to universal testimony, a physical wreck. Ceaseless work, the loss of all freedom, the frustration of all his hopes. Morell's drugs, and perhaps more than all these, the violence of his temperament when bitterness and disappointment had multiplied around him, had reduced that once powerful conqueror to a trembling spectre. All witnesses of the final days agree when they describe his emaciated face, his grey complexion, his stooping body, his shaking hands and foot, his hoarse and quavering voice, and the film of exhaustion that covered his eyes. They agree about certain less clearly physical symptoms too: his universal suspicion, his incessant rages, his alternation of optimism and despair. But two characteristics of his former temper he still possessed. The fascination of those eyes, which had bewitched so many seemingly sober men—which had exhausted Speer, and baffled Rauschning, and seduced Stumpfegger, and convinced an industrialist that he had direct telepathic communication with the Almighty¹—had not deserted them. It was useless for his enemies to complain that they were really repellent. 'They are neither deep nor blue,' protested Rauschning; 'his look is staring or dead, and lacks the brilliance and sparkle of genuine animation';² nevertheless, in spite of his explanations and evasions, Rauschning had to admit, what Speer freely confesses and thousands of less critical Germans (and not only Germans) too eloquently witness, that Hitler had the eyes of a hypnotist which seduced the wits and affections of all who yielded to their power. Even his doctors, and the most critical of them, admit the fascination of those dull, blue-grey eyes which compensated for all coarseness in his other features; 'pictures',

¹ The industrialist was Wilhelm Keppler, mentioned above, p. 72 n.¹. Keppler was sent by Hitler as one of his representatives to the World Economic Conference in London in 1933. Asked about Hitler by an English acquaintance, he replied, "Der Fuehrer hat eine Antenne direkt zum lieben Gott."

² *Hitler Speaks*, p. 23.

they say, 'cannot repress'. This personal magnetism only by reference to obedience which he still life, when all the magic appeared, the failure apparent, and only his

Secondly, Hitler's life even increased, by time afraid of the sight of intoxicated him, just as have appealed to the in conversations (we learn the revolution by which lingered with special destruction of Marxist ceived that historical the spilling of blood.¹ was shed; for it was the of rivers of human blood of victory and its practice too may be cruel,' he said and the Slavs; 'if I can into the hell of war, with of precious German blood millions of an inferior race the smallest pity . . . As perhaps defective; but no improvement.

Throughout the war this lust for blood, this contemplation of slaughter hardened automata, not iron, were shocked at so numerous instances of it maintained that the storm would fall of itself, since

to his will, Morell could look forward to the war would allow it, to the last medical monopolies.

Though he suffered from no organic disorder according to universal testimony, the loss of all freedom, the loss of Morell's drugs, and perhaps more his temperament when bitterness piled around him, had reduced him to a trembling spectre. All agree when they describe his emaciated, his stooping body, his shaking, his quivering voice, and the film of tears. They agree about certain less obvious: his universal suspicion, his mixture of optimism and despair. But whatever temper he still possessed. The man had bewitched so many seemingly exhausted Speer, and baffled Stumpfegger, and convinced an expert in telepathic communication with the dead. It was useless for his enemies were really repellent. "They protested Rauschning; 'his look is brilliant and sparkle of genuine intelligence in spite of his explanations and admissions, what Speer freely confesses to Germans (and not only Germans) Hitler had the eyes of a hypnotist, the affections of all who yielded to him, and the most critical of them, the dull, blue-grey eyes which combine in his other features; 'pictures',

as Keppler, mentioned above, p. 72 as one of his representatives to the London in 1933. Asked about Hitler he replied, "Der Fuehrer hat eine Antenne

¹ *Hitler Speaks*, p. 23.

they say, 'cannot reproduce the suggestive power of his face'. This personal magnetism remained with him to the end; and only by reference to it can we explain the extraordinary obedience which he still commanded in the last week of his life, when all the machinery of force and persuasion had disappeared, the failure and cost of his disastrous rule was apparent, and only his personality remained.

Secondly, Hitler's lust for blood was unabated, perhaps even increased, by time and defeat. Though he was physically afraid of the sight of blood, the thought of it excited and intoxicated him, just as destruction in all its forms seems to have appealed to the inherent nihilism of his spirit. In his early conversations (we learn from Rauschning), when he spoke of the revolution by which the Nazis would attain power, 'he lingered with special interest over the chances of a bloody destruction of Marxist resistance in the streets'; for he conceived that historical greatness was not to be achieved without the spilling of blood.¹ Nor did it matter to him whose blood was shed; for it was the spectacle, the imaginary contemplation of rivers of human blood that inspired him, not the thought of victory and its practical use. 'Nature is cruel, therefore we too may be cruel,' he said in 1934, when discussing the Jews and the Slavs; 'if I can send the flower of the German nation into the hell of war, without the smallest pity for the spilling of precious German blood, then surely I have a right to remove millions of an inferior race that breeds like vermin!'² *Without the smallest pity . . .* As a logical syllogism, the proposition is perhaps defective; but as a psychological illustration it needs no improvement.

Throughout the war Hitler continually gave evidence of this lust for blood, this physical delight in the intellectual contemplation of slaughter for its own sake. The generals, hardened automata, notorious as impersonal men of blood and iron, were shocked at such positive emotions, and have given numerous instances of it. During the Polish campaign, Halder maintained that the storming of Warsaw was unnecessary; it would fall of itself, since the Polish Army no longer existed;

¹ *Hitler Speaks*, p. 26.

² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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but Hitler insisted that Warsaw must be destroyed. His artist's temper aroused, he described the delicious scenes which he demanded—the sky darkened, a million tons of shells raining down on the city, and the people drowned in blood; 'then his eyes popped out of his head, and he became quite a different person. He was suddenly seized by a lust for blood.' Another general¹ has described how Hitler received the news that his personal SS division, the *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler*, had been decimated in Russia. Apologetically, General Reichenau sought to explain that German losses had unfortunately been high. Hitler cut him short. "Losses can never be too high!" he exclaimed triumphantly; "they sow the seeds of future greatness." We have seen how, after the Plot of July 20th, the mere mention of the great Blood Purge of 1934 set him off into one of his famous tantrums. Satisfaction never abated this terrible appetite for blood, which like his appetite for material destruction, seemed rather to grow when the price was to be paid not in inferior currency but in good Aryan coin. In his last days, in the days of Radio Werewolf and suicidal strategy, Hitler seems like some cannibal god, rejoicing in the ruin of his own temples. Almost his last orders were for execution: prisoners were to be slaughtered, his old surgeon was to be murdered, his own brother-in-law was executed, all traitors, without further specification, were to die. Like an ancient hero, Hitler wished to be sent with human sacrifices to his grave; and the burning of his own body, which had never ceased to be the centre and totem of the Nazi state, was the logical and symbolical conclusion of the Revolution of Destruction.

¹ General Heim.

THE COURT

THE PROSPECT of universal c to some aesthetic souls, e intend to survive it and are the acle, the apocalyptic setting o who must live on in the charre less time for such purely spiri not surprising that there were with dismay upon this orgy resolved, as far as they had any One such was Karl Kaufmann, seen his city, the greatest port, prosperous towns in Germany, resolved not to see it still further or by Nazi dynamite. Another perhaps the ablest and most int ment, Albert Speer.

Speer has already been ofte this narrative. He has not been it is easier to quote than to c Nazi politicians have employed finement to compile their j apologies, and to enunciate the dear to the German mind. Spe observations do but give literar to the conclusions already reach personal, and therefore, at first not necessary, for instance, in the careful autobiography of S and opinions of Himmler's exp nothing except the jejunity of of his horizon. And the autobiog von Krosigk, though he had be

for the sagacity, but for the imbecility Speer deserves quotation in his own words: "I am never naïve, never parochial; they are often profound. If he seems somewhat deeply under the spell of the tyrant, he is the only servant whose judgment depends on that dreadful master; at least, the capacity to examine himself, and the capacity to examine his errors and his convictions. In the end, he was not afraid to tell Hitler of his own errors. In Allied captivity he was not afraid to make an analysis of Hitler's character and of the loyalty which he could not altogether

his career of Speer is extraordinary, if not obvious a word to use for any of the. It is strange enough that such a man could be corrupted *entourage* of Hitler; and could have survived, a single, solitary, that ambuscade of vigilant and vindictive: having never held any political or, he should suddenly, at the age of 30, of crisis, be entrusted with the entire production and co-ordination of projects and maintenance of communications, reformation of industry, is perhaps less a new world which we are contemplating; succeed, and succeed regularly, in this almost incredible; and that after such a world he should retain not merely an intellectual outlook on his experience, is a misinterpretation. For Speer began his career in 1934, at the age of twenty-nine, he was the Reich Chancellor, a subordinate under Hitler's architect, Professor Troost. Hitler took an interest in his architects, and among them he included Speer in his intimate circle, and took a close interest in him. Speer's future was assured. Hitler had

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'intuitively' chosen him, as he had chosen Ribbentrop, the champagne salesman, to be an ambassador and foreign minister, and Rosenberg, the Baltic mystagogue, to govern the conquered East. But Speer was a more felicitous choice than these. It is true he succumbed, like all the others, to the mesmeric influence of his employer; like them he could not withstand the mysterious intensity of those dull, glaucous eyes, the messianic egotism of that harsh, oracular voice. "They were all under his spell," he explains, "blindly obedient to him, and with no will of their own—whatever the medical term for this phenomenon may be. I noticed, during my activities as architect, that to be in his presence for any length of time, made me tired exhausted, and void. Capacity for independent work was paralysed." It is true, too, that his architectural achievements were perhaps of questionable elegance—the vast new Reich Chancellery, for instance, which he was ordered to complete in haste, in time for the reception of President Hacha of Czechoslovakia and Prince Paul of Yugoslavia, that these tributary kings might tremble before the geometric magnificence of the new Pharaoh. But at least, unlike the Third Reich, they were structurally sound. Even now, like the ruins of Memphis, the relics of that vainglorious edifice are the most substantial memorial in the great cemetery of central Berlin.

For in truth (and herein probably lies the secret of his survival) Speer was not an artist, not a politician. He had no common interests or ambitions with the rest of the court. He observed their antics, but did not compete in their field; and since he was obviously a personal friend and immediate dependant of Hitler—perhaps the only personal friend he had—they found it safest to leave him alone in his unsympathetic isolation. Speer was a technocrat and nourished a technocrat's philosophy. To the technocrat, as to the Marxist, politics are irrelevant. To him the prosperity, the future of a people depends not upon the personalities who happen to hold political office, nor upon the institutions in which their relations are formalized—these are irrelevant phenomena of no ultimate significance—but upon the technical instruments whereby society is maintained, on the roads and the railways, the canals and bridges, the services and factories wherein a nation invests

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its labour, and whence it draws its wealth. This is a very convenient philosophy; and it is true that in certain times (so long, that is, as they can be taken for granted) politics can be ignored. For nearly two years after he had succeeded Todt as Armaments Minister, Speer found that he could take politics for granted, merely observing the antics of the politicians from his favoured seat in the royal box, while he concentrated his activities and interests upon the communications and factories which he so completely understood. Then he was disillusioned. When Hitler and Goebbels raised the slogan of 'Scorched Earth', and called upon the German people to destroy their towns and factories, to blow up their dams and bridges, to sacrifice their railways and rollingstock for the sake of a myth and a Wagnerian Twilight, then at last the fallacy of his philosophy became apparent to Speer. Politics do matter; politicians can affect the destiny of nations. The crisis of his life occurred.

The choice was not easy. For eleven years, supported by that convenient philosophy, Speer had enjoyed the sunshine of Hitler's favour. He had grown rich and powerful under the shadow of a tyrant whose tyranny (he had convinced himself), since it did not interfere with his own impersonal ambitions, was irrelevant to him. He had been fascinated by the personality and flattered by the attentions of his master; but he remained (if we can forgive his initial error of yielding to the totalitarian embrace) intellectually uncorrupted. His impersonal ideals remained valid; and when Hitler declared himself their enemy, Speer prepared to sacrifice not his ideals, but Hitler, together with all the associations of patronage and friendship and personal influence engendered by this long relationship. Naturally he chose to deceive himself. Having collaborated over so long a period, he could not admit (like the exiled Rauschning) that this nihilism was always implicit, and often explicit, in Nazi philosophy. He preferred to suppose a sudden change, the arbitrary reorientation of a despot corrupted by the exorbitancy of unchallenged power. Hitler's path, he said, had become suddenly random and erratic, and was leading to terrible consequence. "He was deliberately attempting to let the people perish with himself. He no longer

knew any moral boundaries; life meant the end of every thing; he would have realized that Hitler was wrong; after all, he had often

Between his public duty and his private life he did not hesitate. "From the very beginning within my official jurisdiction I had to execute many acts which were against myself." While Hitler demanded the destruction of the Reich, he sought to nullify his order by the preservation of the industrial plants. To every order emanated from the Fuehrer, Speer found a channel, a countermanding order, his continual journeys through the Reich stayed the hand of the destroyer, his subordinates, and his sympathies must be surrendered intact. The northern France, the canals of the Netherlands, the ore of the Balkans, all protected by his authority and the Allied armies penetrated, and his single personal friendship became a bitter struggle over the body of the Reich.

It was in February 1945 that the situation became most acute. The situation but despair only intensified itself. Guderian, Chief of Army Group Centre, himself told Ribbentrop that he reported the words to Hitler: "Guderian and Speer and the others are traitors; in future neither traitors nor traitors from death, or their time Goebbels, maddened by the demands of the repudiation of the massacre of forty thousand

its wealth. This is a very untrue that in certain times (so often for granted) politics can be better after he had succeeded Todt as and that he could take politics the antics of the politicians from the box, while he concentrated his communications and factories good. Then he was disillusioned. He raised the slogan of 'Scorched German people to destroy their up their dams and bridges, to rollstock for the sake of a hit, then at last the fallacy of his to Speer. Politics do matter; my of nations. The crisis of his

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knew any moral boundaries; a man to whom the end of his own life meant the end of everything." A more critical observer would have realized that Hitler never knew any moral boundaries; after all, he had often said so.

Between his public duty and his private relationship, Speer did not hesitate. "From then on," he says, "—and not only within my official jurisdiction—I had to plan, initiate, and execute many acts which were directed against Hitler's policy, or against himself." While Hitler, with increasing radicalism, demanded the destruction of Europe, Speer, with increasing zeal, sought to nullify his orders. He was himself charged with the destruction of industrial installations; he ordered their preservation. To every order of industrial suicide which emanated from the Fuehrer's headquarters, or the Party Chancery, or Radio Berlin, Speer issued, through his own channels, a countermanding order. By his great authority and his continual journeys throughout Germany, he everywhere stayed the hand of the destroyer, and persuaded his agents, his subordinates, and his sympathizers that if communications and factories must be surrendered to the enemy, they should be surrendered intact. The mines and factories of Belgium and northern France, the canals of Holland, the nickel mines of Finland, the ore of the Balkans, the oilfields of Hungary, were all protected by his authority; and when the New Year came, and the Allied armies penetrated into Germany itself, Hitler and his single personal friend continued the same silent but bitter struggle over the body of Germany.

It was in February 1945 that Speer's intellectual dilemma became most acute. The situation was now clearly hopeless; but despair only intensified the nihilism of the Party. General Guderian, Chief of Army General Staff since the July Plot, himself told Ribbentrop that the war was lost. Ribbentrop reported the words to Hitler, and Hitler summoned both Guderian and Speer and told them that such words were treason; in future neither rank nor position would save such traitors from death, or their relatives from arrest. At the same time Goebbels, maddened by the great air raid on Dresden, demanded the repudiation of the Geneva Convention, the massacre of forty thousand Allied airmen, and the use of two

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new and terrible poison gases, *Tabun* and *Sarin*. On his side, Speer walked more openly in the way of treason. He decided at last to intervene even in politics, which he had so long thought it possible to ignore.

Speer's plan was nothing less than the removal by assassination of the entire political directorate of the Reich. Seven months ago such a project would have been inconceivable to him; he had neither known nor approved of the Generals' Plot; but since then his whole world had changed, and the chosen disciple had caught up with the most inveterate enemies of the Fuehrer. Hitler was now in Berlin, in the Reich Chancellery. There it was his custom to discuss policy with his immediate associates—Goebbels, Bormann, Burgdorf and Ley¹—in his underground Bunker, which no one, not even they, could now approach without being searched for hidden explosives. But Speer's plan did not entail the introduction of visible weapons. The Bunker was ventilated by means of an air-conditioning plant, of which the external funnel projected into the Chancellery garden. As an architect Speer was familiar with its construction, and he completed his knowledge by consultation with the chief engineer of the Chancellery. He discovered that if poison gas were introduced into the funnel at the time of one of Hitler's conferences, it would very quickly be distributed throughout the Bunker; and thus, in a few minutes, the whole disastrous coterie would be destroyed. Into this plan Speer initiated a few trusted collaborators, and the preparations for its execution went ahead; but it was never executed. When his preparations were complete, Speer visited the Chancellery garden, only to find that by a recent and personal order of the Fuehrer a protective chimney, some twelve feet high, had been

¹ *Reichsleiter* Robert Ley, chief of the German Labour Front, is chiefly remembered as the sponsor of the 'Strength Through Joy' movement. He seems to have aspired to a millennium of unlimited fun for the proletariat; but his own habitual inebriety rendered the public expression of his views often indistinct. He represented no political interest, being merely a personal sycophant of Hitler, who on March 28th, put him in charge of an abortive partisan group, the *Freikorps Adolf Hitler*. Ley did not stay in Berlin. He was captured in South Germany by American forces and contrived to commit suicide while awaiting trial at Nuremberg.

built round the funnel, and Thus, for the second time assassination.¹

Nevertheless it was not m Hitler from the hand of Spe statements which he has n subject, he has described ar buted to his failure. About t Front on the Rhine, and th German miners in a dugout, relieved by a trench light, l silently to the conversation from it he drew a new polit was convinced, represented worker; and they, it seem Hitler as they believed in n and only he, both understoo had risen, and the mystery o from the rest of the German be able, as no one else, to v from this forlorn predicam heard and seen, Speer rec to remove Hitler, he woul German industry and com deprive the German people, apparently, they still belie habitual abnegation, their they would still, in this penu Speer realized the importan simple technocratic philosop and his court was cancell joined that great and discot conspirators who have failer

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¹ The details of Speer's plot: Dietrich Stahl, head of the *Mä ausschuss Munition*) in Speer's 1

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less than the removal by assassination of the Reich. Seven would have been inconceivable to nor approved of the Generals' whole world had changed, and the up with the most inveterate enemies now in Berlin, in the Reich Chancellery to discuss policy with his immediate men, Burgdorf and Ley¹—in his which no one, not even they, could now search for hidden explosives. But the introduction of visible weapons. led by means of an air-conditioning funnel projected into the Chancellery. He discovered that into the funnel at the time of one it would very quickly be distributed and thus, in a few minutes, the whole be destroyed. Into this plan Speer collaborators, and the preparations for it; but it was never executed. When his complete, Speer visited the Chancellery by a recent and personal order of the money, some twelve feet high, had been

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built round the funnel, and the plan was no longer feasible. Thus, for the second time in seven months, Hitler escaped assassination.¹

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Nevertheless it was not merely a technical hitch which saved Hitler from the hand of Speer; for in one of the few reluctant statements which he has made on this evidently distasteful subject, he has described another incident which also contributed to his failure. About this time Speer visited the German Front on the Rhine, and there, one night, sat with a party of German miners in a dugout. In the darkness, only occasionally relieved by a trench light, he was unrecognized; he listened silently to the conversation of the miners around him, and from it he drew a new political conclusion. These miners, he was convinced, represented the ordinary German soldier or worker; and they, it seemed clear to him, still believed in Hitler as they believed in no one else. They believed that he, and only he, both understood the working class from which he had risen, and the mystery of politics which had been concealed from the rest of the German race, and that he would therefore be able, as no one else, to work the miracle of their salvation from this forlorn predicament. Chastened by what he had heard and seen, Speer reconsidered his design. If he were to remove Hitler, he would remove the grand saboteur of German industry and communications; but he would also deprive the German people of the one political leader in whom, apparently, they still believed; in whom they reposed, by habitual abnegation, their common will; and whose orders they would still, in this penultimate moment, obey. Once again Speer realized the importance of politics, the alternative to his simple technocratic philosophy. His plan for destroying Hitler and his court was cancelled and never revived; and Speer joined that great and discouraging company of Germans, the conspirators who have failed.

Which of these two factors, the technical fault or the political lesson, really determined Speer's failure as an assassin, is a question of little importance, to which he himself has given

¹ The details of Speer's plot have been independently confirmed by Dietrich Stahl, head of the Main Committee for Munitions (*Hauptausschuss Munition*) in Speer's ministry.

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no clear answer;¹ but one fact emerges clearly from this curious history. No intellectual conversion can be entirely without an emotional backwash; and the apparent decisiveness of Speer's breach with Hitler, which at first sight contrasts so strongly with the infinite hesitations of Himmler, must not obscure the difficulty with which he made it, the psychological crisis which it entailed. How serious these were is clear from his subsequent history—the history of a mind still divided between political antagonism and personal allegiance.

On March 18th, in spite of Hitler's explicit veto, Speer wrote to him declaring that militarily and economically the war was lost; if the nation was not to be lost also, it was essential that some material basis be preserved upon which the life of the people, however primitively, might be continued. It was a manifesto against the declared policy of destruction; and Hitler's answer was emphatic. Sending for Speer, he told him: "If the war is to be lost, the nation will also perish. This fate is inevitable. There is no need to consider the basis even of a most primitive existence any longer. On the contrary it is better to destroy even that, and to destroy it ourselves. The nation has proved itself weak, and the future belongs solely to the stronger Eastern nation. Besides, those who remain after the battle are of little value; for the good have fallen." That day new orders of destruction were issued by Hitler and Bormann: the fight was to be continued 'without consideration of the German people'; eight officers who had failed to destroy a bridge were shot by Hitler's order, and the fact was published in the bulletin of the Armed Forces; and Speer's authority over industry was suspended.

Nevertheless Speer continued his activity, which no longer rested upon formal appointments. He ordered the concealment of high explosive and reduced its manufacture, so that existing stocks might be wasted; and he issued machine-pistols to his works managers, to use against Gauleiters who might insist

¹ In his earlier statement, Speer ascribed his failure to his experience on the Western Front; at Nuremberg he referred only to the technical hitch. In general he has given less emphasis to his personal dependence on Hitler in his statements at Nuremberg than in his earlier version; but this does not make them inconsistent, or suggest that one version is untrue.

upon destruction. He sent out combined General Staff; and when used those of the High Command suspension of his authority had March 29th he found himself st

Hitler accused him of public and ordered him publicly to ass "The war is lost." Hitler gave h to consider the matter; and a returned with a letter defendi to receive the letter and ordered leave. Speer refused; it was his post. Thereupon a strange scene between the Angel of Destruction punished disciple. "I declared so he could rely upon me in the lying formula Speer found him he used, as before, to circumvent. The duality of Speer's behavior episodes, will be clear again in will appear in his last visit to confession to Hitler on April 23rd, with which he concludes his orality. "Although inwardly I have time," he says, "it has been difficult this study. I feel it to be my faults, which were the original tragic for Germany as for the times I have had to speak in blue numbered among those who m themselves."

Meanwhile it was not only an intellectual crisis in his although 'intellectual' is perhaps

¹ This letter, in which Speer declared of March 18th, is extant and was used a remarkable document, showing that Speer (and no one else) could use account of that meeting printed ab

act emerges clearly from this curious conversion can be entirely without and the apparent decisiveness of which at first sight contrasts so much with the hesitations of Himmler, must not be taken as the result of which he made it, the psychological how serious these were is clear from the history of a mind still divided between duty and personal allegiance.

In spite of Hitler's explicit veto, Speer continued the war militarily and economically the war was not to be lost also, it was essential to be preserved upon which the life of the nation might be continued. It was a declared policy of destruction; and a fatalistic. Sending for Speer, he told him: "The nation will also perish. This fate I need to consider the basis even of a new start any longer. On the contrary it is my duty, and to destroy it ourselves. The nation is weak, and the future belongs solely to the victors. Besides, those who remain after the war will be few; for the good have fallen." That action was issued by Hitler and Bormann continued "without consideration of the officers who had failed to destroy a German officer's order, and the fact was published in the Armed Forces; and Speer's authority was unshaken.

He continued his activity, which no longer was hindered by restraints. He ordered the concealment of the production of its manufacture, so that existing machine-pistols to his hands; and he issued machine-pistols to his hands against Gauleiters who might insist on it. Speer ascribed his failure to his experience at Nuremberg he referred only to the technical and less emphasis to his personal dependence on it at Nuremberg than in his earlier version; and inconsistent, or suggest that one version

upon destruction. He sent out orders in the name of the Combined General Staff; and where his own channels failed, he used those of the High Command or the Reich railways. The suspension of his authority had made no difference, and on March 29th he found himself summoned by Hitler once again.

Hitler accused him of publicly stating that the war was lost and ordered him publicly to assert the opposite. Speer replied, "The war is lost." Hitler gave him twenty-four hours in which to consider the matter; and at the end of this time Speer returned with a letter defending his views.¹ Hitler refused to receive the letter and ordered Speer to go away on permanent leave. Speer refused; it was his duty, he said, to remain at his post. Thereupon a strange scene of reconciliation took place between the Angel of Destruction and his recalcitrant but unpunished disciple. "I declared to him," said Speer "that even so he could rely upon me in the future"; and by that simple, lying formula Speer found himself restored to authority, which he used, as before, to circumvent the purpose of its bestowal. The duality of Speer's behaviour that is apparent in these episodes, will be clear again in the course of this narrative. It will appear in his last visit to the Bunker and his frank confession to Hitler on April 23rd. It is clear also from the words with which he concludes his own account of Hitler's personality. "Although inwardly I had broken with him by that time," he says, "it has been difficult for me even now to write this study. I feel it to be my duty to help in exploring his faults, which were the origin of his disastrous influence, as tragic for Germany as for the rest of the world. Even if sometimes I have had to speak in blunt terms, I should not like to be numbered among those who malign him in order to exonerate themselves."

Meanwhile it was not only Speer who had passed through an intellectual crisis in his attitude towards the Fuehrer, although 'intellectual' is perhaps not quite the word to use in

¹ This letter, in which Speer describes to Hitler their conversation of March 18th, is extant and was used as evidence at Nuremberg. It is a remarkable document, showing the extraordinary freedom which Speer (and no one else) could use in his relations with Hitler. The account of that meeting printed above is taken from this letter.

of Hitler's declining health. To my
ie still able to exert such influence?,
energy was undiminished, although
life he led, turning night into day
ours, his continuous activity, and his
completely exhausted his *entourage*
atmosphere. I often suggested that
toth had after all injured Hitler's
ead. Himmler thought this possible.
the constant stoop, the pale visage,
Hitler's left arm, and the operation
e in November, obviously a result of
eived."

mmmler, not strictly accurate, as can
ine of argument to the resourceful
inning of April, he applied to his
his, director of the Psychological
ité, for information about Hitler's
one of the doctors who had actually
dical circles he had doubtless heard
se who had. "In my opinion," he
tely crippled movements, which I
s, are the visible signs of Parkinson's
of that exciting name Schellenberg's
meeting between Himmler and de
brought the Reich Health Leader,
pletest charlatan of all the Nazi
nded again his notions of Hitler's
ms of Parkinson's disease; and the
urds reported, 'listened with great
nderstanding.'

April 13th, Himmler summoned
uarters in the old Ziethen castle in
an hour and a half, they walked
oods. "Schellenberg," said Himm-
be done with Hitler. Do you think
enberg replied that he had not seen
from everything I have seen of his
ined to think that the last moment

for you to act has come." They digressed to matters of detail:
the Jewish question; new contacts abroad; new negotiations in
Schellenberg's ever more delicate diplomacy.

"Himmler was in great mental distress. Even openly he had
been almost completely abandoned by the Fuehrer; for Hitler
had ordered the *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* to remove their
armbands as a dishonouring punishment.¹ He said that except
perhaps Standartenfuehrer Dr Brandt,² I was the only man he
could completely trust. What should he do? He could not kill
Hitler, could not poison him or arrest him in the Chancellery,
or the whole military machine would come to a standstill. I
explained that all this was of no importance. There were only
two possibilities. Either he could go to Hitler, tell him openly
of the events of the last two years, and persuade him to resign.
... 'Quite impossible!' retorted Himmler, 'he would fall into
one of his rages, and shoot me out of hand!' 'Then you must
protect yourself against this,' I said. 'You have enough high
SS leaders who can carry out a surprise arrest; or if there is
no other way, the doctors must intervene.'"

To these suggestions Himmler made no answer. He was
prepared to contemplate, in the abstract, such drastic measures;
but Schellenberg had not yet so changed his attitude of mind
that he would actually decide upon a course of action, far less

¹ This refers to one of Hitler's most outrageous acts of spite towards
his army. The *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* was a division of the *Waffen*
SS and at this time was fighting on the upper Danube with the 6th
SS Panzer Army, under the command of Hitler's gangster-favourite
Sepp Dietrich. The *LAH* was ordered to attack according to Hitler's
strategical plans, but owing to an error in the weather forecast the
attack was timed to take place on a day of torrential rain. Hitler's plan
was nevertheless regarded as sacred; the attack was made; and a
disastrous massacre was the consequence. When this failure was
reported to Hitler, he was furious with the *LAH*, and ordered them to
remove their armbands as a punishment. The indignant soldiers tore
off their orders and decorations, and sent them to Hitler, through
Himmler, in a tin chamber pot. They also sent the arm, complete
with armband, of one of their dead comrades. This order of Hitler
was never rescinded, and the soldiers never forgave Himmler and
Sepp Dietrich, who, though equally insulted by the gesture, had been
unable to prevent it.

² ie Dr Rudolf Brandt, Himmler's secretary, not to be confused
with Dr Karl Brandt, formerly Hitler's surgeon.

H

tyrant. Behind his impassioned rages, his enormous ambitions, his gigantic self-confidence, there lay not the indulgent ease of a voluptuary, but the trivial tastes, the conventional domesticity, of the petty-bourgeois. One cannot forget the cream buns. It was to this permanent, if submerged element in his character that Eva Braun appealed; and because she appealed to the triviality not the extravagancy of his nature, she is herself uninteresting. Indeed, the most interesting fact about her is probably the well-kept secrecy of her existence; for their friendship had lasted at least twelve years, and both parties were dead before the knowledge of it was extended beyond their immediate circle. A conspiracy of silence surrounded her life; the servants were forbidden to speak to her; and her picture was expurgated from photographs of the Fuehrer before they could be published or circulated.

Eva Braun's introduction to Hitler had been effected, like Morell's through the photographer Hoffmann, in whose business she worked. Pretty rather than beautiful, with a fresh colour and slightly high cheekbones, unobtrusive, uninterfering, anxious to please, she soon achieved an ascendancy over Hitler, supplying that ideal of restfulness which was so lacking to his political life, but for which his bourgeois soul so hankered. In her company Hitler found the rest which elsewhere he never sought; and she in turn, by providing a domestic retreat, and never seeking to influence him in external, political matters, lubricated the routine of his harsh, distempered life. Good at ski-ing and mountain climbing, fond of dancing (which she had studied professionally), passing for erudite among that ignorant clique, eager to discuss books and pictures, and to help Hitler, in his purchase of *objets d'art* she fitted well into the Alpine, 'artistic' world of Berchtesgaden to which, for the most part, she was confined; for it was only in the last two years of his life that Hitler allowed her to come to Berlin. In his affection for her Hitler never wavered; she had no rival;¹ the blowsy Nordic actresses whom Goebbels

¹ Not even the mysterious Olga, whose name was discovered on the door of the room 'next to Hitler's private apartment' in the temporary headquarters of the OKW at Ohrdruf in Thuringia. When Ohrdruf was captured, imaginative journalists speculated eloquently about Olga,

introduced to the Chancellery interested him. In general indifferently frightened of women; he was politics, and he dreaded 'politics of an absolute court' matter Eva Braun was safe. She intervals of politics, presiding the politicians away during the praised her moderation. In opportunities, she exploited not even duller. Though she disliked influence Hitler against him; and hated it if she had. In his turn Hitler health and her habits and her fly, or to drive a car faster than

Of their more intimate relationship slept in different beds," says the theless, I believe . . ." But the irrelevant. Hitler enjoyed in the considered its idealism; 'many years described it in his will; and in connection on such base but necessary her independence by granting poly of the sale of his photographs undoubtedly inhibitions about referred to her always as 'Eva'. If they mentioned her; and even if merely historical interest, content years she had no admitted status acknowledged mistress; and then induced, or increased, in her the complex, showing itself in the conceit. It was probably from attractive features derived; for her and psychological immaturity, and

her style of beauty, her influence meditations on the balcony of her existed. 'Olga' was simply the code name for Ohrdruf; nor was Ohrdruf ever visited

rages, his enormous ambitions, there lay not the indulgent ease of the conventional domestic life; he cannot forget the cream buns, the merged element in his character because she appealed to the softer side of his nature, she is herself an interesting fact about her life; the very existence of her; for their twelve years, and both parties to it was extended beyond their lives; of silence surrounded her life; she would not speak to her; and her picture was of the Fuehrer before they met.

Hitler had been effected, like a photographer Hoffmann, in whose eyes more than beautiful, with a fresh, unobtrusive, uninterfering presence, achieved an ascendancy over the stiffness which was so lacking in his bourgeois soul so hankering for the rest which elsewhere he found in providing a domestic retreat, to give him in external, political life of his harsh, distempered life. (climbing, fond of dancing occasionally), passing for erudite, eager to discuss books and the purchase of *objets d'art* she was in the stilted world of Berchtesgaden was confined; for it was only at Hitler allowed her to come near Hitler never wavered; she was like actresses whom Goebbels

whose name was discovered on the 'private apartment' in the temporary office in Thuringia. When Ohrdruf speculated eloquently about Olga,

introduced to the Chancellery for the sake of publicity never interested him. In general indeed, Hitler seems to have been frightened of women; he was afraid they would interfere in politics, and he dreaded 'petticoat politics'—although the politics of an absolute court are not very different. In this matter Eva Braun was safe. She confined her attentions to the intervals of politics, presiding over the teacups and keeping the politicians away during the few hours of relaxation. All praised her moderation. In spite of all her temptations and opportunities, she exploited none of them, which makes her even duller. Though she disliked Bormann, she never sought to influence Hitler against him; and Hitler would not have tolerated it if she had. In his turn Hitler fussed over her, over her health and her habits and her safety. She was not allowed to fly, or to drive a car faster than forty miles an hour.

Of their more intimate relations nothing is known. "They slept in different beds," says the odious Dr Morell, "nevertheless, I believe . . ." But the mere beliefs of Dr Morell are irrelevant. Hitler enjoyed in their relationship what he considered its idealism; 'many years of true friendship' was how he described it in his will; and in order not to mar it by conversation on such base but necessary subjects as cash, he established her independence by granting her, with Hoffmann, a monopoly of the sale of his photographs. Nevertheless there were undoubtedly inhibitions about her status. The servants, who referred to her always as 'E. B.', dropped their voices when they mentioned her; and even now, when the whole affair is of merely historical interest, continue to do so. For over twelve years she had no admitted status: she was neither wife nor acknowledged mistress; and this ambiguity of her position induced, or increased, in her the symptoms of an inferiority complex, showing itself in the appearance of haughtiness and conceit. It was probably from this cause, too, that other unattractive features derived; for her letters show signs of mental and psychological immaturity, of schoolgirl melodrama. When

her style of beauty, her influence on Hitler, and the nature of her meditations on the balcony of her room. Unfortunately she never existed. 'Olga' was simply the code name for the signals office at Ohrdruf; nor was Ohrdruf ever visited by Hitler.

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Hitler was absent, or when she did not see him often enough, she would strike rhetorical attitudes and threaten suicide. But these are matters of taste, in which, perhaps, he himself did not set a perfect example.

Since Hitler undoubtedly loved her, one cannot avoid asking why he kept her for so long in this undefined and evidently embarrassing position. Though the details of their relationship will probably always remain an enigma the easiest answer may perhaps be correct. If their relations were, or were meant to be understood as platonic, then the position of either wife or mistress would have been meaningless and compromising. Certainly a platonic relationship would have been most appropriate to the German Messiah, the revolutionary spirit who seemed, and must seem, to transcend all human limitations. If this answer is correct the marriage which ultimately took place on the eve of their death is of purely symbolic significance; without some definition of her status, Eva Braun had no better right to share in the ritual death of the Fuehrer than his secretaries, or Fraeulein Manziyal, the vegetarian cook, who shared Hitler's meals with him in her absence. But that final act Eva Braun was determined not to miss. As the battle approached Berlin, Hitler had sent her away to Munich; but she would not stay there. On April 15th, when the capital was already preparing for a siege, she arrived unbidden at the Reich Chancellery. Hitler ordered her to leave, but she would not go. She had come for her wedding, and her ceremonial death.

Of the political atmosphere in Berlin in these last days we happen to possess a document of unusual and ironical interest. It is the diary of Count Lutz Schwerin von Krosigk, the friend in whom the indefatigable Schellenberg now misplaced his hopes. Schwerin von Krosigk, like Schellenberg, was one of those conscientiously cultured Germans who, by their efforts to identify themselves with western civilization, only show how completely they misunderstand it. Schwerin von Krosigk had used every opportunity of understanding the West; he had even been a Rhodes scholar at Oxford. But he had acquired none of its values. Though he spoke its language, he neither thought its thoughts nor acted its actions. Just as Schellenberg deplored the Nordic nonsense and gaseous metaphysics in

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*Not the cook but the vegetarian
They kept him for a talent*

which the true German felt at Himmler, when talking to educate the Karma between the two people etc," but would himself solemnly to call the cosmic outcome of it Krosigk, for all his careful educative attitudes, and losing rhetoric. Like Schellenberg, he was. Indeed, the two form a perfect Tweedledee of pretentious Germans as some sage philosopher has observed and be undefiled; and both Schwerin von Krosigk were long-standing members. Their belief that they could within it, could influence it for good as themselves anti-Nazi or at least extent of their blindness. All Nazi politics; it was left to the Schellenbergs to misunderstand Nazism perhaps because he misunderstood Schwerin von Krosigk was able to long. Certainly he showed a genius minister before the Nazis came to power minister throughout the Nazi era; succeeded to Doenitz in Hitler's political his name; a place was reserved for him projected by Himmler; and materialized, Schwerin von Krosigk Doenitz set up his administration bound by Hitler's will, and rejected in it, he appointed as his foreign appointment) Count Schwerin von Schwerin von Krosigk kept his long but inconspicuous political career 33, when the Nazis were climbing in 1945, when they were collapsing (stated) not, as might have been expected with the events of those historic times ants may know what kind of a man it

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the Reich cabinet during the years of Germany's greatest rise and deepest decline'. If posterity concludes that Schwerin von Krosigk was a ninny, he has only himself to blame for that deliberate revelation.

The second part of the diary begins on April 15th, 1945, but goes back a few days to describe an important incident. Goebbels told Schwerin von Krosigk how he had recently been reading aloud to the Fuehrer, to solace him in his universal discomfiture. He was reading from his favourite book, Carlyle's History of Frederick the Great; and the chapter he was reading described 'how the great king himself no longer saw any way out of his difficulties, no longer had any plan; how all his generals and ministers were convinced that his downfall was at hand; how the enemy was already counting Prussia as destroyed; how the future hung dark before him, and in his last letter to his minister, Count Finckenstein,¹ he gave himself one last respite: if there was no change by February 15th, he would give it up and take poison. "Brave king!" says Carlyle, "wait yet a little while, and the days of your suffering will be over. Already the sun of your good fortune stands behind the clouds, and soon will rise upon you." On February 12th the Czarina died; the Miracle of the House of Brandenburg had come to pass.' At this touching tale, said Goebbels, "tears stood in the Fuehrer's eyes." They discussed the matter to and fro, and in the course of the discussion sent for two horoscopes that were carefully kept in one of Himmler's research departments: the horoscope of the Fuehrer, drawn up on January 30th, 1933, and the horoscope of the Republic, dated September 9th, 1918. These sacred documents were fetched and examined, and 'an astonishing fact' was discovered, which might well have repaid an earlier scrutiny. 'Both horoscopes had unanimously predicted the outbreak of war in 1939, the victories till 1941, and then the series of defeats culminating in the worst disasters in the early months of 1945, especially the first half of April. Then there was to be an overwhelming victory for us in the second half of April, stagnation till August,

¹ Schwerin von Krosigk has not quoted either Carlyle or the facts correctly. The minister to whom Frederick wrote was in fact Count d'Argenson.

and in August peace. After the time for Germany for three years to greatness again. Next day Goebbels said I could not fathom everything interpretation, newly drawn up eagerly awaiting the second half of April.

Such were the incidents which were waiting in the underground. The horoscopes, which had so were less reliable for the future waited in vain for the resounding the second half of April; but the sequel which deserves to be recorded.

A few days later, after a long wait, Schwerin von Krosigk was sitting in the wine with some friends, when the factory in Germany had been evacuated. The end must now be near. The ammunition even the bravest soldiers really be the end,' asks the rhetorician had so long seen as inevitable, but so hard not to see? At that moment the state secretary wished to speak to the late an hour? He only uttered one word: "dead." We felt the wings of death through the room. Could this be the end of the fortune? Next morning Schwerin von Krosigk on the telephone to congratulate not only to congratulate, but to congratulate Krosigk, like Schellenberg, was seen saw the fine shades, the slight nervous sensitive observers; and he was a somewhat crude German in the opportunity. He suggested to the President should not be abused, but that the differences between judiciously emphasized. Goebbels Ministry had already considered necessary instructions had been

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and in August peace. After the peace there would be a difficult
time for Germany for three years; but from 1948 she would rise
to greatness again. Next day Goebbels sent me the horoscopes.
I could not fathom everything in them; but in the subjoined
interpretation, newly drawn up, I found it all; and now I am
eagerly awaiting the second half of April.'

Such were the incidents which enlivened the dreary hours
of waiting in the underground Bunker of the Reich Chancellery.
The horoscopes, which had so accurately prophesied the past,
were less reliable for the future, and Schwerin von Krosigk
waited in vain for the resounding victory which was to brighten
the second half of April; but the reading from Carlyle had a
sequel which deserves to be recorded.

A few days later, after a long and heavy air raid on Berlin,
Schwerin von Krosigk was sitting up after midnight, drinking
wine with some friends, when he learned that the last powder
factory in Germany had been evacuated by order of the General
Staff. The end must now be near, his friends agreed; 'without
ammunition even the bravest soldiers cannot fight'. 'Would this
really be the end,' asks the rhetorical diarist, 'which my reason
had so long seen as inevitable, but which my spirit had striven
so hard not to see? At that moment the telephone rang; the
state secretary wished to speak to me. What could he want at so
late an hour? He only uttered one short sentence: "Roosevelt is
dead." We felt the wings of the Angel of History rustle
through the room. Could this be the long-desired change of
fortune?' Next morning Schwerin von Krosigk called Goebbels
on the telephone to congratulate him on this signal event—and
not only to congratulate, but to advise. For Schwerin von
Krosigk, like Schellenberg, was a very subtle man; he always
saw the fine shades, the slight nuances, imperceptible to less
sensitive observers; and he was afraid that, unadvised by him,
the somewhat crude German Press might miss its golden
opportunity. He suggested to Goebbels that the new
President should not be abused, nor yet too obviously praised,
but that the differences between him and Roosevelt should be
judiciously emphasized. Goebbels indicated politely that the
Ministry had already considered these points, and that the
necessary instructions had been given. Then Goebbels

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described how yesterday he had been at General Busse's headquarters at Kuestrin, and how in the evening he had sat with the officers of Busse's staff and had developed his thesis that, for reasons of Historical Necessity and Justice, a change of fortune was inevitable, like the Miracle of the House of Brandenburg in the Seven Years War. One of the staff officers had somewhat sceptically and ironically asked, 'What Czarina will die this time?' That, Goebbels had replied, he could not say; but Fate still held many possibilities in her hand. Then he had driven home, and had heard the news of Roosevelt's death. Immediately, he had telephoned to Busse, and said, "The Czarina is dead". Busse had told him that this made a great impression on his soldiers; now they saw another chance. Goebbels believed that this news would awaken a new spirit of hope in the whole German people; they would surely see in it the power of Historical Necessity and Justice. . . . I [says the sententious Count] interrupted, "Say rather, of God". . . .'

Schwerin von Krosigk is so fond of rhetoric and apostrophe, so free with abstract nouns, and so prone to hear the wings of the Angel of History rustling about him, that his account may seem overdrawn; but we happen to have indirect confirmation from another quite independent source: from one of the secretaries in the Propaganda Ministry.¹ 'I well remember Friday, April 13th,' she says. 'Every week Goebbels paid a visit to the Eastern Front to address the troops, taking them supplies of cigarettes, cognac, and books. On this day he had been to Kuestrin. . . . While he was on his way back to Berlin by motorcar, we received the news of the death of President Roosevelt. Goebbels, as usual, returned very late at night. A very heavy bombardment was going on and the Chancellery and the Adlon Hotel were burning. We met Goebbels on the steps of the Propaganda Ministry. A reporter said to him, "Herr Reichsminister, Roosevelt is dead". Goebbels jumped up out of his car and stood for a moment as if transfixed. I shall never forget the look on his face, which we could see in the light of Berlin blazing. "Now," he said, "bring out our best

¹ Frau Inge Haberzettel, who worked in the same room with Goebbels' secretary, Fraulein Hildebrandt. I am indebted to Mr Leslie Randall, correspondent of the *Evening Standard*, for this report.

champagne and let us have a tele-
We went into his study, and chairman
spoke to Hitler on his private line.
I congratulate you! Roosevelt is
that the second half of April will
This is Friday, April the 13th. It
said something to him, and the
receiver. He was in an ecstasy.'¹

To us it seems incredible that the
Third Reich its leaders should have
a stroke of subtlety, could save
evidence is clear that they never
of their ruin. Isolated for twelve years
political and intellectual self-sufficiency
to understand, if they had ever
ideas, the habits of mind of other
German leaders could appreciate
diplomatic differences might be
of the Grand Alliance, all the more
that these should not interfere with
and that no diplomatic or other action
until the Nazi Government was
incredulity of the elaborate unre-
naïve consolations of Schwerin von
assurances of Goebbels and Himmler
armies of East and West had all
Goebbels was still saying that the
Russians and the Anglo-American

¹ Both Steengracht, an official in the
gave evidence for Ribbentrop at Nuremberg
mentioned Goebbels' exhilaration on the
of which another full account, confirmed
be found in Semler's diary (Semler, *Goebbels*).
added that Goebbels himself almost
astrology which he exploited. 'Crazy'
was his comment to Semler on another
Nor was it only the Nazis who relied on
Reich: the opposition also relied on the
the opinions of Senatspräsident Kammer
Hassell (*Vom ändern Deutschlands*, pp.
that the science of astrology should have

DECISION

April

thday; and Germans were dcast speech from Goebbels, in the Fuehrer and the stars t of their present difficulties. eave Berlin for Obersalzberg, tain cave of Barbarossa, to en days ago, he had sent his he house for his reception.¹ had followed disaster. "All in von Krosigk, "there was messengers." Germany was row corridor of land divided e Elbe, from the Russians, und threatening both Dresden itish were in the outskirts of uth, the French were on the ienna. In Italy, the armies of tured Bologna and were pour- id in the heart of the Reich, th through Bavaria, the cradle e Alps, its intended grave.

the Reich Chancellery, the built to house his pride and e rooms, with their vast slabs onderous doors and multiple Bombed out and burnt, they and were only manned as a the old Chancellery and the nd, a bunker had been built ur Kannenberg.

during the war. It could be reached from within the Chancellery, by stairs leading down through the butler's pantry. At the foot of these stairs was a narrow space enclosed by three airtight, watertight bulkheads. One of these bulkheads closed the passage to the butler's pantry, or 'Kannenberg-alley'¹ as it was called (Artur Kannenberg was Hitler's butler); the second led to an outer stair with access to the garden of the Foreign Office; the third led into the Bunker.² The Bunker was in two parts. The first part consisted of twelve rooms, none larger than a large cupboard, six on each side of a central passage. These were lumber rooms and servants' quarters, and included the *Diaetkueche* or vegetarian kitchen where Hitler's meals were prepared. At the end of the central passage, which was now used as a general dining-place for the shelterers, a curved stair led downwards to a still deeper and slightly larger bunker. This was the *Fuehrerbunker*, Hitler's own bunker, the stage on which the last act of the Nazi melodrama was played out. Contracted within these narrow limits, it could at least preserve the essential dramatic unities of Boileau.

The Fuehrerbunker consisted of eighteen rooms, all of them small, cramped, and uncomfortable, and a central passage. There could be no greater contrast than that between the Egyptian vastity of the rooms of the new Chancellery, which trembling ambassadors had taken, as it seemed, a fragment of eternity to cross, and these miserable underground hutches in which the diminished court now paid its less elaborate but still servile homage. The central passage was divided in two by a partition. On the near side of the partition, it was used as a general sitting-room, and the rooms to which it gave access were utilitarian offices, the lavatories and guardroom, the emergency telephone exchange and the powerhouse. Beyond the partition was the holy of holies. There the central passage became the conference room in which Hitler presided over the daily staff conferences. A door on the left led into a suite of six rooms, the private apartments of Hitler and Eva Braun. Eva Braun had a bed-sitting-room, a bathroom, and a dressing-room; Hitler a bedroom and a study. The sixth was an ante-room.

¹ *Kannenberggang*.

² For a plan of the Bunker see page 180.

ie left led into a small 'map room',
es, and a narrow cupboard known as
ow used as a rest room for the personal
the Fuehrer. At the end of this Dog
ess to an unfinished concrete observa-
und. On the right of the passage were
y Hitler's two doctors, Morell and
mpfegger's first-aid room. At the
er had ordered Stumpfegger to set up
Chancellery, for the casualties of the
er had fetched his surgical equipment
t Hohenlychen. This dressing station
but under the new Chancellery; the
unker was his personal store.
age, a door led into a small ante-room,
thence four flights of concrete steps led
ellery garden. This was the emergency

hrerbunker, there were other under-
the complex of the government build-
nker of the Party Chancellery, where
lived, with the service officers and SS
iker which housed SS Brigadefuehrer
ant of the Chancellery, and his staff;
s staff sheltered in the cellars of the
From all these bunkers, officers and
he Fuehrerbunker for the continuous
ace in the narrow central passage. Jodl
ither from their headquarters at Zossen
ew chief of the Army General Staff.
no longer held this post. Like his pre-
unable to acquiesce in the Fuehrer's
n March 30th, after a series of violent
Hitler's 'advice' to resign on account of
ace Hitler had appointed General Hans
g been military attaché in Moscow.
'a smooth, surviving type', as Speer
Hitler and an intimate friend of Bor-

¹ *Hundebunker*.

mann, he professed undeviating national-socialism, and will
last appear as its emissary of surrender to his Russian friends.

To this subterranean bunker, then, on April 20th, came
some usual and some unusual visitors, bringing their formal,
and for the most part insincere congratulations on the Fuehrer's
birthday. From noon onwards they came and went, and the day
was taken up by receptions, speeches, and conferences. In spite
of the catastrophic situation, they found the Fuehrer still con-
fident; the Russians, he still believed, were going to suffer their
bloodiest defeat of all before Berlin. In the Chancellery
garden he received a delegation of boys from the Hitler Youth,
under their leader Artur Axmann, and in the presence of
Himmler, Goering, and Goebbels (but no soldiers were there
to overshadow these young warriors) he thanked and decorated
them for their efforts in this now decisive battle. Then he
withdrew to his small conference room and received, singly,
and in turn, Doenitz, Keitel, Jodl. The rest were then lined
up in his presence, and he shook hands and spoke with all. To
Keitel he was particularly affable. "I will never forget you,"
he said; "I will never forget that you saved me on the occasion
of the Plot, and that you got me out of Rastenburg.¹ Those
were the right decisions, and the right actions, for the times."
Among others present on this last ceremonial occasion were
Bormann, Ribbentrop, and Speer.

After the receptions came the conference. The great question
before the conference concerned the imminent threat to the
geographical unity of the Reich. In a few days, perhaps hours,
the last land route to the south would have been cut. Would
Hitler, or would he not, move his headquarters to the south,
whither all the service headquarters and ministries had gone
or were going? His advisers were unanimous that the Russian
ring around the city would ultimately close; that once caught in
it, there would be no escape; that the only alternative was to
withdraw to the south, to Obersalzberg; and that such a
withdrawal must be made now, while the road remained open,
or perhaps never. Goering and Keitel, Himmler and Bormann,
Goebbels, Krebs, and Burgdorf all entreated Hitler to leave

¹ On July 20th, 1944, Hitler had fallen into Keitel's arms (see
above, p. 79; and cf. p. 111).

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the doomed city; but Hitler would neither agree nor disagree. The most he would do was to implement the decision reached ten days earlier against such a situation as had now arisen. Then it had been decided that if the Allied armies should cut the Reich in half, two separate commands should be set up in the two disconnected areas. In the north, Grand Admiral Doenitz, in the south Field-Marshal Kesselring should command all the German forces, unless Hitler himself chose to move his headquarters to one or other of the two theatres. Now Hitler decided to confer upon Doenitz full military powers in the north; but in regard to the south he still made no appointment. It was not that he distrusted Kesselring, or knew the truth—that even this favourite Field-Marshal had now abandoned hope, and was meditating unconditional surrender.¹ Hitler simply had not yet made up his mind. Sooner or later he would decide—or rather, as he put it, he would leave it to Providence to decide. For Hitler's indecisions were not, like Himmler's, a permanent state of mind; they were a preliminary to decision; and once he had declared his decision, it was as impossible for any other man to alter it, as it would have been futile to have sought to hasten it. How he would decide, no one as yet could tell. When the conference was over, Bormann assured his secretary that in a day, or at most two days, Hitler and the rest of his staff would leave Berlin. Others were less certain. Colonel Nicolaus von Below, Hitler's air force adjutant, who had worked with him for eight years, was convinced that now he would never leave.

After the conference, the visitors left the Bunker, and a long convoy of lorries and airplanes led the general exodus from Berlin to Obersalzberg. Among those to leave were the high commanders of the Luftwaffe. They left with relief. In Obersalzberg at least they would be free from the endless insults, the impossible orders, the violent recriminations with which Hitler had recently received their every failure. "One

¹ The unconditional surrender of all German armies in Italy was actually negotiated by Kesselring's successor in Italy, General Vietinghoff, and SS General Wolff; but the first steps had been taken by Kesselring before his transfer. Kesselring and Schoerner were generally regarded as 'Hitler's field-m Marshals'.

or two Luftwaffe officers should be some self-exculpating general; "the "The entire Luftwaffe staff should scream down the telephone at the and bang the receiver on the hook. I failed utterly; and nothing now could of its failure. With it, there left the Luftwaffe and of its failure, Hermann leave of the Fuehrer on the evening an icy farewell. They never met: left two of his senior officers, to Fuehrer's headquarters: General and General Christian, his chief Christian, a young and successful the new and once favourite service married Hitler's secretary, Fraeul he was now one of the domestic circle was less young, less effective, and fell the accumulated insults, the Fuehrer, which he, being a conscientious fussy old gentleman, would cease. Nevertheless he is of value in complicated story: for he was keen.

Another who left the Bunker on his birthday conference was Albert Speer. Speer had been developing his plan, German plant, and German destructive policy of the Party. The technicians, his industrialists and ordered to let the front roll over and then, when the tide was past what they could under Allied attack Berlin on April 20th, it was not on his birthday. It was to argue

¹ Christian's correct title was *Chief of Staff*. Koller and Christian have supplied which they participated.

² Speer's account of his policy is Kaufmann, Gauleiter of Hamburg.

ould neither agree nor disagree. implement the decision reached situation as had now arisen. Then he Allied armies should cut the commands should be set up in the north, Grand Admiral Doenitz, Kesselring should command all Hitler himself chose to move his of the two theatres. Now Hitler nitz full military powers in the th he still made no appointment. Kesselring, or knew the truth— d-Marshal had now abandoned unconditional surrender.¹ Hitler p his mind. Sooner or later he he put it, he would leave it to Hitler's indecisions were not, like e of mind; they were a prelin— ad declared his decision, it was as to alter it, as it would have been i it. How he would decide, no one conference was over, Bormann a day, or at most two days, Hitler ld leave Berlin. Others were less von Below, Hitler's air force with him for eight years, was i never leave.

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or two Luftwaffe officers should be shot!" he would shout at some self-exculpating general; "then we would have a change!" "The entire Luftwaffe staff should be hanged!" he would scream down the telephone at the trembling General Koller, and bang the receiver on the hook. For the Luftwaffe had failed, failed utterly; and nothing now could reverse the consequences of its failure. With it, there left Berlin the author both of the Luftwaffe and of its failure, Hermann Goering. He took his leave of the Fuehrer on the evening of April 20th. It was an icy farewell. They never met again. Behind him Goering left two of his senior officers, to maintain contact with the Fuehrer's headquarters: General Koller, his chief of staff, and General Christian, his chief of operations.¹ General Christian, a young and successful officer, had risen rapidly in the new and once favourite service; as his second wife, he had married Hitler's secretary, Fraeulein Gerda Daranowski; and he was now one of the domestic circle at court. General Koller was less young, less effective, and less favoured. On him would fall the accumulated insults, the continuous threats of the Fuehrer, which he, being a conscientious, nervous, and rather fussy old gentleman, would ceaselessly but fruitlessly deplore. Nevertheless he is of value in the reconstruction of this complicated story: for he was keeping a diary.

Another who left the Bunker on the night following Hitler's birthday conference was Albert Speer. For many weeks now Speer had been developing his plans for saving German industry, German plant, and German communications from the destructive policy of the Party. Everywhere his most trusted technicians, his industrialists and works managers, had been ordered to let the front roll over them; to stay at their posts and then, when the tide was past, to preserve and reconstruct what they could under Allied control.² When Speer came to Berlin on April 20th, it was not solely to congratulate Hitler on his birthday. It was to argue his cause, the sole cause that

¹ Christian's correct title was *Chef Luftwaffenfuhrungsstab*. Both Koller and Christian have supplied information on the events in which they participated.

² Speer's account of his policy is confirmed by Koller and by Karl Kaufmann, Gauleiter of Hamburg.

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Himmler would admit the logical consequence of his behaviour; would break the invisible chain of loyalty that still bound him to Hitler and interfered with his freedom to follow the advice of Schellenberg; would accept the opportunity, the last opportunity, that had thus spontaneously presented itself; and would speak to Bernadotte not, as in his two previous interviews, as a subordinate official, limited by his instructions, but as *de facto* Fuehrer of Germany, prepared to offer terms to the West. But Himmler did none of these things. He merely discussed certain technical details—the release of certain Polish women from Ravensbrueck concentration camp; and even to this he had insisted on securing Hitler's approval by representing it as an anti-Russian gesture. After half an hour Bernadotte took his leave, and the opportunity had been missed for the third and perhaps last time. Schellenberg accompanied Bernadotte for part of the way. He piqued himself on reading the secret thoughts of others, and always found that they coincided with his own wishes. "Himmler secretly hoped," he says, "that I would again request the Count to fly to General Eisenhower on his own initiative and thus prepare the way for direct negotiations between Eisenhower and Himmler." But Bernadotte saw the facts and possibilities more clearly than Schellenberg. Nothing but a direct and explicit mandate from Himmler would cause him to interfere in these high matters. "The Reichsfuehrer is no longer in touch with reality," he said, "as they motored together on the road to Waren. 'I can help him no more. He should have taken the affairs of the Reich into his own hands after my first visit.' When Schellenberg returned to Hohenlychen, he found Himmler paralysed with indecision, tormented by doubt. "Schellenberg," he said, "I dread the future"; and the irrepressible Schellenberg at once retorted that that should encourage him to act. Himmler made no reply. He was 'a torn soul'.

It was not in this cloud-cuckoo-land that the affairs of Germany were being, or would be, decided. All this time the evacuation of ministries from Berlin was continuing; but Hitler remained in his bunker, undecided, at least until he had made one further effort to throw the Russians back from the city.

On April 21st, Hitler, who in all the the movements of every battalion attack by the troops in Berlin. It was the command of an SS general, Ob it was to be launched in the south; every man, every tank, every aircraft take part in it. "Any commanding of Hitler shouted, "will forfeit his life will guarantee with your head," he to every man is employed."

So Hitler ordered; but his order any reality. He was moving in academic plans, disposing non-Steiner attack was the last, most personal strategy; it never took place.

The facts emerged at the staff. All through the morning, a series of Fuehrerbunker had never ceased attack had been launched. At one from Himmler reported that it had the Luftwaffe stated that it had no afternoon, there was still no news. Bormann, Burgdorf, Keitel, Jodl, Herrgesell and Hagen, the two not; during the night he had moved headquarters at Ploen in Schleswig liaison officer, Admiral Voss, in the other liaison officers, Hewel and others, remained on the profane side join the conference on demand. Chief of staff, was not there. He was mand work; 'and anyway', he recorded have been able to tolerate being in; therefore arranged for General Christ

The conference opened with the military situation by Krebs and Jodl favourable, but not hopeless. The Steiner attack. It had not materialized. In spite of elaborate plans, in spite

logical consequence of his behaviour; the chain of loyalty that still bound him with his freedom to follow the advice; accept the opportunity, the last opportunity presented itself; and would, as in his two previous interviews, as a duty by his instructions, but as *de facto* prepared to offer terms to the West of these things. He merely discussed the release of certain Polish women concentration camp; and even to this he got Hitler's approval by representing it as a duty. After half an hour Bernadotte's opportunity had been missed for the time. Schellenberg accompanied Bernadotte. He piqued himself on reading the papers, and always found that they coincided. "Himmler secretly hoped," he says, "to request the Count to fly to General Eisenhower's initiative and thus prepare the way between Eisenhower and Himmler." He facts and possibilities more clearly than by a direct and explicit mandate cause him to interfere in these high matters is no longer in touch with reality," he continued together on the road to Waren. "I think he should have taken the affairs of his own hands after my first visit." When he went to Hohenlychen, he found Himmler's position, tormented by doubt. "Schellenberg read the future"; and the irrepressible retorted that that should encourage him no reply. He was 'a torn soul'.

cloud-cuckoo-land that the affairs of Germany would be decided. All this time the news from Berlin was continuing; but Hitler was undecided, at least until he had made his throw the Russians back from the city.

On April 21st, Hitler, who in all these days personally directed the movements of every battalion, ordered a final, all-out attack by the troops in Berlin. It was the Steiner attack, under the command of an SS general, Obergruppenfuhrer Steiner; it was to be launched in the southern suburbs of the city; and every man, every tank, every airplane was to be diverted to take part in it. "Any commanding officer who keeps men back," Hitler shouted, "will forfeit his life within five hours." "You will guarantee with your head," he told Koller, "that absolutely every man is employed."

So Hitler ordered; but his orders bore no relation now to any reality. He was moving imaginary battalions, making academic plans, disposing non-existent formations. The Steiner attack was the last, most symbolic instance of Hitler's personal strategy; it never took place.

The facts emerged at the staff conference of April 22nd. All through the morning, a series of telephone calls from the Fuehrerbunker had never ceased to demand whether the attack had been launched. At one time a telephone message from Himmler reported that it had; at another a report from the Luftwaffe stated that it had not. At three o'clock in the afternoon, there was still no news. Then the conference began. Bormann, Burgdorf, Keitel, Jodl, and Krebs were there, and Herrgesell and Hagen, the two stenographers. Doenitz was not; during the night he had moved, with his staff, to his new headquarters at Ploen in Schleswig-Holstein, leaving only a liaison officer, Admiral Voss, in the Bunker. Voss, with the other liaison officers, Hewel and Fegelein, and adjutants and others, remained on the profane side of the partition, ready to join the conference on demand. General Koller, Goering's chief of staff, was not there. He was preoccupied with command work; 'and anyway', he records plaintively, 'I should never have been able to tolerate being insulted all day long.' He had therefore arranged for General Christian to deputize for him.

The conference opened with the usual expositions of the military situation by Krebs and Jodl. As usual they were unfavourable, but not hopeless. Then came the news of the Steiner attack. It had not materialized. Nothing had happened. In spite of elaborate plans, in spite of ferocious threats, the

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Luftwaffe had not gone into action. No orders had been received from Steiner. And then, following on these negative tidings came reports of positive calamities. While troops had been withdrawn to support Steiner in the south, the Russians had broken into the suburbs in the north, and their armoured spearheads were now within the city of Berlin.

Then came the storm, which made the conference of April 22nd famous and decisive in the history of Hitler's last days. It has been variously described, both by the principals who witnessed it, and by the trembling adjutants and secretaries who waited on the far side of the partition and pumped the participants when they emerged, exhausted, after a three-hour session. Their narratives are confused and fragmentary, for emotion, on this notable occasion, interfered with the memories of all; but on the main points there is agreement.¹ Hitler flew into a rage. He shrieked that he had been deserted; he railed at the Army; he denounced all traitors; he spoke of universal treason, failure, corruption, and lies; and then, exhausted, he declared that the end had come. At last, and for the first time, he despaired of his mission. All was over; the Third Reich was a failure, and its author had nothing left to do but to die. His doubts were now resolved. He would not go to the south. Anyone else who wished might go, but he would stay in Berlin and there meet the end when it came.

The generals, the politicians, everyone protested. They reminded him of the sacrifices of the past, which had not been in vain. They pointed out that the Army Groups of Schoerner and Kesselring were still intact. They assured him that there was no reason for despair; and again they urged him to leave for Obersalzberg now, before it was too late. Fegelein telephoned Himmler, Voss telephoned Doenitz; and Himmler and Doenitz entreated him to think again, promising to send all naval and SS troops at their disposal to the relief of Berlin. Ribbentrop called the Bunker and sent a message to the

¹ The principal sources for the conference of April 22nd are: Keitel, Jodl (reported by Koller), Christian, Freytag von Loringhoven, Lorenz, Hergesell, von Below, and Fraulein Krueger. Their opportunities of knowledge vary, and their accounts are not always consistent; but I am satisfied that the relevant points, as given in the above account, are correct.

Fuehrer; he had great hopes, he said, which would set all aright; but Hitler Even the second Bismarck was now, to vince. Hitler repeated that he would st personally take over the defence of the an announcement to be made to the pt them that the Fuehrer was in Berlin, tl not leave Berlin, and that the Fuehrer to the very last. Next day the news was Berlin and Prague, said the German violable twin citadels of the Reich, an Goebbels, the Fuehrer and the Gaule the end.

With that the full conference ended participants withdrew to the outer bu tants and secretaries were waiting. Th their emotions of indignation and glo to have lost his bearings. 'When they ence-room,' says one of the secretarie traught, saying that the end had come. up within me,' exclaimed General Ct nessed the scene, 'that I still cannot gr in the Bunker has made a deep impress ion I cannot begin to explain.'² Ever tiously to his adjutant that the Fuehrer excited and had thrown unworthy r command.³

Meanwhile the drama was not ov private quarters it was continuing be of witnesses. Hitler sent for Goebbe Goebbels and the children. Hitherto C had lived in their own house, or in the henceforth their home was to be in the Goebbels and the six children would li two bunkers, Goebbels himself woul

¹ Fraulein Krueger.

² Christian, quoted by Koller. Christian's interrogation some months later, was still c

³ Freytag von Loringhoven.

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private part of the Fuehrerbunker. They all sat together and discussed the future. Goebbels said that he too would stay in Berlin and commit suicide there; his wife, resisting the remonstrances of Hitler, declared that she would do the same; and they would give poison to the children. After this, Hitler sent for his papers and sorted them out, personally selecting the documents which must be destroyed. The selected papers were then taken out into the garden by one of his adjutants, Julius Schaub, and burned.

After this scene, as if he had not sufficiently emphasized his decision, Hitler called Keitel and Bormann back to him and said, simply, "I will never leave Berlin—*never!*" Again there were protestations, again expressions of astonishment; but Hitler was unmoved. He sent for someone from the Press Division and asked whether his announcement had yet been made in the streets of Berlin. Then he pointed his finger at Keitel and said, "You are ordered by me to leave tomorrow for Berchtesgaden." Keitel protested that he would not go except in the Fuehrer's company. Hitler sent for Jodl and told him that he too must go to the south; and he told Bormann to leave the room.

The scene which followed was the climax among the extraordinary events of that day; for it was a scene which entailed dramatic consequences. Only Jodl and Keitel witnessed it; but though the words in which they describe it differ, the sense, in all important particulars, is the same, and there is no reason to doubt their circumstantial versions. Hitler repeated his resolve to take over the defence of Berlin which others had failed to secure; when it fell, he said, he would shoot himself at the last moment. He could not fight, he explained; for physically he was a broken man; and neither alive nor dead would he fall into enemy hands. Jodl and Keitel sought vainly to dissuade him; they offered to divert troops from the west, to abandon western Germany to the British and Americans, and thus at least to save Berlin from the Russians. They protested that three-quarters of the armed forces were in the south, and if the Combined General Staff, with its operational command, were to go south too, how could he possibly direct it from Berlin? If negotiations were

necessary,¹ it was thence it would not listen. "I have 1
"I cannot change it." The
for the whole Reich was
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After these pregnant words
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ordered food to be brought
while Keitel ate. He was no

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contains the same explicit state
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Lehrerbunker. They all sat together and Goebbels said that he too would stay in suicide there; his wife, resisting the order, declared that she would do the same; poison to the children. After this, Hitler had sorted them out, personally selecting what must be destroyed. The selected papers went into the garden by one of his adjutants, burned.

As if he had not sufficiently emphasized allied Keitel and Bormann back to him will never leave Berlin—*never!* Again and again expressions of astonishment; indeed. He sent for someone from the Press whether his announcement had yet been in Berlin. Then he pointed his finger at them and ordered by me to leave tomorrow. Keitel protested that he would not go to the company. Hitler sent for Jodl and ordered him to go to the south; and he told Bormann

What followed was the climax among the extra-ordinary day; for it was a scene which entailed great losses. Only Jodl and Keitel witnessed it; in which they describe it differ, the different particulars, is the same, and there is no doubt in their circumstantial versions. Hitler ordered to take over the defence of Berlin which was secure; when it fell, he said, he would die at the last moment. He could not fight, he said; really he was a broken man; and neither could he fall into enemy hands. Jodl and Keitel tried to dissuade him; they offered to divert the army, to abandon western Germany to the Russians, and thus at least to save Berlin from being destroyed; he protested that three-quarters of the armed forces, and if the Combined General Staff, the command, were to go south too, how could he get it from Berlin? If negotiations were

necessary,¹ it was thence that they must be made. Still Hitler would not listen. "I have taken up a fixed position," he said; "I cannot change it." There was no need of further orders, for the whole Reich was falling apart. There was nothing further to be done. It was the end. They begged him for orders; at least if he had himself abandoned hope, let him remember that he was Supreme Commander of the armed forces. His generals awaited his commands; what were they to do? "It is simply impossible, after you have been directing and leading us for so long, that you should suddenly send your staff away and expect them to lead themselves!" Hitler repeated that he had no orders to give; and then, in the words which had such far-reaching consequences, he added that if they wished for orders, let them apply to the Reich Marshal. "There isn't a single German soldier," they protested, "who would fight under the Reich Marshal!" "There is no question of fighting now," Hitler replied; "there's nothing left to fight with. If it's a question of negotiating, Goering can do that better than I."²

After these pregnant words, Hitler discussed with Keitel the manner in which Berlin might yet be relieved. The 12th Army, commanded by General Wenck, Hitler's personal creation, was now on the Elbe, south-west of Berlin; it must disengage itself and fight its way in the direction of Potsdam to rescue Berlin, the Chancellery, and the Fuehrer. Keitel offered to go at once to Wenck with this message, but Hitler insisted that he must stay and take a meal first; for it was now eight o'clock in the evening. He sent for his servants and ordered food to be brought, and himself sat by and watched while Keitel ate. He was now perfectly quiet again; his nervous

¹ There seems no doubt that at this time Hitler spoke of the possibility of negotiation. The versions of Jodl (given verbatim to Koller within a few hours of the incident) and of Keitel (given under interrogation several months later) both explicitly refer to the possible necessity of negotiation, and Goering's qualifications for such a task; and cf. Hitler's remarks to Speer on April 23rd (quoted below, p. 177).

² These words are quoted from Jodl's account. Keitel's version contains the same explicit statement that orders should be sought from Goering, adding later: 'I think he also said, "Well, Goering is much better at these things: he can deal much better with the other side"—or words to that effect.'

t, and he became once more the ersalzberg, taking personal care to put up for the Field-Marshal's f cognac, and chocolate, and all the

orders to remain in the Bunker as iser, Keitel and Jodl left together, ll to the new headquarters of the t Krampnitz.¹ Keitel was the com-driven brain, through which Hitler ver the armed forces. Now appar-t. They went for part of the way ne thing I can say to Wenck," said ar, "and that is, the fight for Berlin : Fuehrer is at stake." What Jodl se, if he replied at all, we do not st were different. He at least shared thodox, more independent generals, ed by the melodrama than by the liler's behaviour. Toadies though rump of a thrice-purged institution, them who remembered that Hitler lier; that a soldier's duty is to give nsibilities; and that in this their failed, preferring to act like an over- e threatened suicide, the gestures of a cowardly dereliction; it made no : those cold, practical hearts; and ew headquarters filled with secret tegy which their self-appointed war-resigned.

this dramatic conference was having ce departments had been and were being departments would have gone thither had Hitler's refusal compelled Keitel and Jodl OKW in the north, where it could be in erters of this staff were first at Krampnitz, lin, then at Fuerstenberg, near Mecklen- enitz's staff in Ploen, and moved with it rg.

other repercussions elsewhere. At Hohenlychen, whither he had moved his headquarters at midday, Himmler had received the astonishing news from Fegelein. With him at the time were two of his subordinates: Professor Gebhardt, his 'evil genius', whom yesterday he had proposed as head of the German Red Cross,¹ and Obergruppenfuehrer Gottlob Berger, head of the SS Head Office,² and Himmler's Prisoner of War Administration,³ already about to leave for Bavaria (it was one of Schellenberg's schemes) to counteract the influence of the sinister Kaltenbrunner.

"Everyone is mad in Berlin!" Himmler exclaimed to Berger when he had heard Fegelein's news. "The Fuehrer is raging, saying that the armed forces have deceived him all along and that now the SS is leaving him in the lurch. I still have my Escort Battalion here, six hundred men, mostly wounded or convalescent; what am I to do?"

Berger was a Swabian, a simple, elementary character, full of honest good nature, indefinite garrulity, and unsophisticated emotion. The political subtleties, the psychological refinements of Schellenberg meant nothing to him. He had no sympathy with a soul in doubt, no understanding of the conflicting pressures, the divergent loyalties, to which Himmler had so long been subjected. To him it was an uncomplicated moral matter, and he spoke with the clear, unhesitant voice of the undivided man. "You go straight to Berlin, Herr Reichsfuehrer, and your Escort Battalion with you, of course. You have no right to an Escort Battalion here, at a time when the Fuehrer intends to stay in the Reich Chancellery. . . ." "The words failed me," he says, "to voice my disgust; I was at the end of my tether. I said, 'I am going to Berlin, and it is your duty to go too.'"⁴

¹ In place of Professor Grawitz, who had committed suicide in Berlin.

² *SS Hauptamt*. The office was in the Douglasstrasse.

³ *Kriegsgefangenenwesen*.

⁴ A reference to the failure of Steiner and Sepp Dietrich, both SS generals.

⁵ Berger's accounts of his activities in these days are all characterized by indistinct and sometimes inconsistent loquacity. They have been carefully checked against statements of Gebhardt and Grothmann; but the accounts of his conversations with Himmler and Hitler, which rest on his testimony alone, are given with some reservations.

agreed—and yet he remembered Schellenberg say if he went Schellenberg most dreaded and the reawakening, in that wholly exorcised spirit of Himmler from visiting Berlin time he was not there to dis- behind, alone with Himmler, gave delight to his optimistic llenberg, that you are right," ict in one way or another." It nement, but it was enough for leave to pay one more visit to Danish frontier, and to inform o begin negotiations; and full into his car and driven to the urs Fegelein was telephoning aler to come and persuade the as assuring him, in unhesitant, is duty to go. Himmler could once more a torn soul. to the Bunker. He spoke to to leave; but in vain. He spoke d to his entreaties. In the end Himmler would drive half way lein would drive out to Nauen, the matter. At dusk he left anied by his adjutant, Groth- nother car; for he had reasons He wished to be confirmed by ; and that afternoon he had had s former pupil, Dr Stumpfegger. ssroads at Nauen, and there He waited for an hour, nearly ad not come. Then Gebhardt o the Bunker. Himmler agreed, ived to take it, and he himself he entrusted to Gebhardt the end to the Fuehrer: the offer

of his Escort Battalion to fight in defence of the Chancellery.

It was about eleven o'clock that night when Gebhardt arrived in the Bunker. He learned from Stumpfegger the details of the momentous conference, and then was admitted to the Fuehrer's presence and delivered his messages. First, as agreed with Stumpfegger, he offered to evacuate the women and children from the Chancellery—Eva Braun, the secretaries, Frau Goebbels and her children. Hitler replied that all these had decided, of their own free will, to stay with him. Then Gebhardt delivered Himmler's offer of his Escort Battalion. Hitler accepted it, and showed on the map the position which he wished it to hold in the Tiergarten. Finally Hitler confirmed Gebhardt's appointment as head of the German Red Cross. The interview lasted twenty minutes; then Gebhardt turned to go. Before leaving, he asked whether Hitler wished to send any message to Himmler. "Give him my regards," said Hitler; and Gebhardt withdrew.

Scarcely had Gebhardt left Hitler's presence when another visitor arrived. It was Berger, who had been summoned by telephone to report to Hitler before leaving for the south. He had immediately motored to Berlin. When he arrived, Russian shells were falling near the Chancellery. Berger reported to the Bunker, but Hitler was in conference and he had to wait. Now he was admitted. He found a few Army officers still there. Hitler, he says, was finished, a broken man. They spoke about Berger's mission, about the disloyalty that was universally springing up in the south, and which would have to be investigated and suppressed. Then they spoke of Hitler's decision to remain in Berlin. Hitler explained that Himmler had made a long speech to him on the telephone, seeking to dissuade him; it was senseless, he had said, to remain; why would he not go to the south, to the still defensible Alpine Redoubt? But Berger, if his own account is to be believed, encouraged Hitler to stay. To the simple all things are simple; and to his elementary, boy-scout nature the duty of the Fuehrer was as clear as the duty of the Reichsfuehrer had been. "I told him," he says, "that it was out of the question; he couldn't betray the German people. It was quite simple to put a bullet through one's head, or to take one of

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those pills or tubes that are issued, which work instantaneously. One couldn't desert the people, after they had held out so loyally and so long. . . ." *Loyally and long* . . . that was not what Hitler thought of the German people in this hour. "All this time," says Berger, "the Fuehrer had never uttered a word; then suddenly he shrieked, 'Everyone has deceived me! no one has told me the truth! the armed forces have lied to me!'—all in that vein. He went on and on in a loud voice. Then his face went bluish-purple. I thought he was going to have a stroke any minute. I had the impression that he had had a stroke already, on his left side—but of course they kept one in the dark. His arm, which a fortnight before used to jerk, was suddenly still, and he never put his left foot to the ground properly. He didn't rest his left hand properly, either, as he used to do; he only rested his right hand on the table."

At the end of the interview they discussed the *Prominenten*, the well-connected British and American prisoners of war who were being held as hostages. These prisoners had been in camp in western Germany; but as the Allied armies moved forward, they had been separated from their fellow prisoners and removed to Bavaria, where they would come under Berger's control. They also discussed the outbreak of separatism in Austria and Bavaria. When Berger left, Hitler, who had been sitting at the table, rose to his feet. His whole body was trembling. "His hand was shaking, his leg was shaking and his head was shaking; and all that he kept saying was 'Shoot them all! shoot them all!' or something like that." But whether it was the prisoners or the separatists that were to be shot does not transpire from the incoherent narrative of Berger.

It was one o'clock in the morning when Berger left Berlin, under the fire of the Russian batteries, to fly to Bavaria in Himmler's four-engined plane. Others were leaving too. "Any man who wants may go!" Hitler had said; "I stay here." All that night, parties were leaving Berlin for Obersalzberg; it was the last stage of the great exodus. Hitler's adjutant Schaub, his naval adjutant Admiral von Puttkamer, his two stenographers, Herrgesell and Hagen, two of his four secretaries,

Fraeulein Schroeder and Fraeu Among them was the odious "I don't need drugs to see me words to him, and he too went the Party Chancellery too, three taking, the fugitives. Only Mart assistant SS Standartenfuehrer Fraeulein Krueger. He had not political ambitions; to his undr a glorious *Goetterdaemmerung* n joined his voice to those of the g to leave. But since Hitler had c not even now leave the sole sourc and he stayed.

Another who left the Chancel Koller. Koller had been sitting the telephone had rung, and Ger voice, had told him that 'events o taking place in the Bunker; but himself to amplify this bald sum emotional and confused, and Kol Jodl for a more explicit version o found him at Krampnitz. Jodl tol his hands in dismay over the de Mayor of Leipzig shot himself a said it was 'senseless, a cowardly now he's doing exactly the same l there any chance that the Fuehre asked Koller. "None at all," ref most significant to Koller, as Jo Hitler's phrase about leaving every The Reich Marshal was now in O his representative in Berlin. It w once to Obersalzberg and inform C developments; "he would be ju severely if I failed to do this, and radiogram at all". Jodl agreed. morning of April 23rd, Koller fle and a new sub-plot in the drama t

sued, which work instantaneously, after they had held out *yally and long* . . . that was not man people in this hour. "All Fuehrer had never uttered a word, 'Everyone has deceived me! The armed forces have lied to me on and on in a loud voice. I thought he was going to leave the impression that he had left side—but of course they kept lying a fortnight before used to me never put his left foot to the ground, his left hand properly, either, he rested his right hand on the

they discussed the *Prominenten*, and American prisoners of war. These prisoners had been in contact as the Allied armies moved forward from their fellow prisoners where they would come under discussion the outbreak of separatism. When Berger left, Hitler, who rose to his feet. His whole body was shaking, his leg was shaking and all that he kept saying was 'all!' or something like that." Others or the separatists that were from the incoherent narrative of

morning when Berger left Berlin, batteries, to fly to Bavaria in . Others were leaving too. "Any der had said; "I stay here." All going Berlin for Obersalzberg; it was the order. Hitler's adjutant Schaub, von Puttkamer, his two stenographers, two of his four secretaries,

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Fraulein Schroeder and Fraulein Wolf, and many others. Among them was the odious physician, Professor Morell. "I don't need drugs to see me through," were Hitler's last words to him, and he too went out to the aerodrome. From the Party Chancellery too, three omnibuses had taken, or were taking, the fugitives. Only Martin Bormann stayed, with his assistant SS Standartenfuhrer Zander, and his secretary Fraulein Krueger. He had not wished to stay; he still had political ambitions; to his undramatic spirit the prospect of a glorious *Goetterdaemmerung* made no appeal, and he had joined his voice to those of the generals who had urged Hitler to leave. But since Hitler had decided otherwise, he would not even now leave the sole source and centre of his authority; and he stayed.

Another who left the Chancellery that night was General Koller. Koller had been sitting at his command post when the telephone had rung, and General Christian, in an excited voice, had told him that 'events of historical importance' were taking place in the Bunker; but when Christian had arrived himself to amplify this bald summary, his account had been emotional and confused, and Koller went at once in search of Jodl for a more explicit version of this important episode. He found him at Krampnitz. Jodl told him all, and Koller wrung his hands in dismay over the deplorable details. "When the Mayor of Leipzig shot himself and his family, the Fuehrer said it was 'senseless, a cowardly evasion of responsibility'; now he's doing exactly the same himself." Jodl agreed. "Was there any chance that the Fuehrer might change his mind?" asked Koller. "None at all," replied Jodl. But the incident most significant to Koller, as Jodl told him the story, was Hitler's phrase about leaving everything to the Reich Marshal. The Reich Marshal was now in Obersalzberg, and Koller was his representative in Berlin. It was plainly his duty to fly at once to Obersalzberg and inform Goering of these tremendous developments; "he would be justified in reprimanding me severely if I failed to do this, and it cannot be explained in a radiogram at all". Jodl agreed. At half past three on the morning of April 23rd, Koller flew from Gatow to Munich, and a new sub-plot in the drama began.

with only a few shots in the
fighter planes had been lost.
telephone to the Chancellery,
training plane on the aero-
into the city, and land on the
of the Chancellery. The re-
planes engaged the Russians
field. He was now himself at
th him as a passenger. They
Brandenburger Tor.

d, street fighting was in pro-
y Russian fire tore the bottom
Greim's right foot. Reitsch
the controls, and by dodging
nd, brought the plane to rest
g car was commandeered and
lery, receiving first-aid on the
en to Stumpfegger's surgery,
ired foot. It was now between
ing of April 26th.

nd welcomed Greim. His face,
or his coming. Even a soldier,
rds which seemed futile and
knew why he had been sum-
because Hermann Goering has
land," Hitler explained. "Be-
l connections with the enemy.
rdice! And against my orders
telegram, saying that I once
nd that now, since I can no
ready to rule from Berchtes-
e telegram by saying that if he
that night,¹ he would take my

tears in his eyes. His head
d when he handed Goering's
it fluttered with the trembling
ad, Hitler watched, breathing

7 10 pm.

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hard, in short, convulsive puffs. The muscles in his face
twitched. Suddenly he screamed:

"An ultimatum! a crass ultimatum! Nothing now remains!
nothing is spared me! no loyalty is kept, no honour observed;
there is no bitterness, no betrayal that has not been heaped
upon me; and now this! It is the end. No injury has been left
undone!"²

After a pause, Hitler recovered his composure, and told
Greim that he had summoned him to declare him Commander-
in-Chief of the Luftwaffe, with the rank of Field-Marshal, in
succession to Goering. It was for this formality alone that the
lives of German airmen, and badly needed machines, had been
sacrificed to bring Greim into the Bunker. A telegram would
have been sufficient; but Hitler preferred this dramatic, if
expensive method, which incidentally imprisoned Greim for
three days, bedridden and useless in the Bunker. Day after
day planes were sent from Rechlin to bring him out to his new
headquarters, now that he had received his commission—for
although Greim and Reitsch begged to be allowed to stay in
Berlin and atone with their lives for the honour of the Luft-
waffe (whatever that may mean), Hitler insisted that they must
return; but every plane in turn was shot down by the Russians
before it reached Berlin.³

That night, Hitler summoned Hanna Reitsch to his own
room. His face was lined, and his eyes were glazed by a con-
stant film of moisture. He told her that the cause now seemed
hopeless, unless, as he still hoped (and his confidence grew as
he mentioned the hope), Wenck's army could advance to relieve
the city from the south-west. But if not—if the Russians took

¹ The more vivid passages of this narrative have since been dis-
owned by Frl. Reitsch, but she confirms the general sense. So does
Koller, quoting Greim.

² The fact that every plane was shot down emerges from a careful
reading of Reitsch's narrative, and is explicitly stated by General
Christian. Reitsch's statement that a plane which succeeded in landing
in Berlin on April 27th was sent back empty since Greim and Reitsch
wished to stay in Berlin is inconsistent with the statements of both
Christian and Koller, who were responsible for sending such planes.
Koller quotes a telephone conversation with Greim on April 27th in
which Greim asked for planes to be sent to fetch him away.

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horsemanship had excited the admiration of Christian Weber,¹ 'the uncrowned king of Bavaria', who had himself been a groom in a fashionable stable before the favour of the Nazis had raised him to magnificence and the vast increase of his girth had incapacitated him for the saddle. Through the good graces of Weber, Fegelein's promotion had been rapid. He had joined the Waffen SS, and soon had the command of a cavalry division. Lucky in all his enterprises except the last, he attracted Hitler's notice by fortunate successes on the Eastern Front; and in 1944 he succeeded Wolff as Himmler's liaison officer with Hitler. In the same year he achieved what seemed to many his most brilliant success. Observing, with the keen eye of the opportunist, that the centre of power in the Nazi hierarchy had left the cabinet and the ministries for the court and the levée, he married Gretl, the sister of Eva Braun. Thus, at what seemed the most favourable moment, he detached himself from sole dependence on the fortunes of Himmler, now beginning to wane, and secured his position in the family circle of the Fuehrer. At the same time he did not omit to protect his rear by a judicious alliance with Bormann. From that time onwards, in the words of one who was well qualified to judge,² 'he thoroughly betrayed Himmler to the Fuehrer', whose side he rarely left.³ It was he, says Schellenberg, who advised Hitler publicly to dishonour the SS division which had been massacred in a hopeless effort to conform to the Fuehrer's strategy—an insult which the soldiers never forgave to Himmler, who had been powerless to prevent it.⁴ He was, says Speer, "a very unpleasant type," and exercised "a pernicious and radical influence" at court; and the loyal subordinates of

¹ Weber, one of the most corrupt and fraudulent of the Nazi bosses, was President of the municipal council of Munich. He amassed a colossal fortune by various forms of privileged speculation. The stables which he built for his ten racehorses (some of them looted from French racing stables) have been described as 'a horses' paradise'. He was murdered during the Bavarian rising of April-May 1945.

² Ohlendorf.

³ According to Berger, 'Bormann, Fegelein, and Burgdorf formed a very close circle round Hitler, and it was hardly possible for an outsider to penetrate it, especially after the attempt on his life.' Speer has said the same.

⁴ See above, p. 133, n.1.

Himmler—men not unfan human depravity—are unavices of Fegelein.

Nevertheless, if Fegelein least not such a fool as R loyalties, his betrayals, harelated, almost intellectual se principles or scruples. If h that was not because he, li been bewitched by that h Himmler was losing his val promised more advantage allegiance, his alliances, l based upon expediency: t hoped to share the privileg 25th, when Fegelein return to the outside world,¹ it w privileges of the family cir able; for the declarations subject had been painfully He had not secured his ad in order to burn on the fami tants of the Bunker to clus and beg participation in the seized a favourable opportu Bunker, and disappeared.

From the timeless recor lugubrious secrecy in whic it is impossible now to ex stages of this last, uncha Fegelein: his failure. His or was not in the Fuehrerbui

¹ Fegelein had left Berlin by SS Begleitkommando to visit Og hauptamt, at Fuerstenberg. Or sible, and Fegelein had flown b (Statement by Bornholdt.) Feg 'I certainly don't intend to die

² At least this is the picture a rhetorical witnesses have not r

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arrive and overrun the ruins. During the night (if we are to believe the report of Hanna Reitsch), Hitler called his court around him, and in this macabre conclave all rehearsed their plans for suicide and considered, in maudlin detail, the various methods in which their corpses might be destroyed. The first appearance of Russian soldiers, they agreed, would be the signal for the execution of this ritual self-sacrifice. Then everyone made a short speech, swearing perpetual allegiance to the Fuehrer and Germany. If such was really the climate of the Bunker, few sensible people will blame the prudent decision of Fegelein.

In fact, of course, it was mostly humbug: the artificial emotion and corresponding verbiage so easily generated, and once generated so easily accepted as both true and moving, by the immature Teutonic mind. The competitive servility of a court is always odious; combined with eloquent humbug, it is nauseating. In fact, as will appear, very few of those who thus professed a desire for communal death gave effect to their heroic resolutions. Ritter von Greim, it is true, when a month had passed and his untended wound made further movement impossible, swallowed his poison in captivity; and one or two others may possibly have done the same in Russian hands. But it is interesting to reflect how many whose resolve to die has been recorded have since been found in continued health and restored sanity, eagerly explaining to their British and American captors that they never really owed any allegiance to Nazi Germany.

Of Hitler at least it can be said that his emotions were genuine. He at least intended to die if Berlin fell. And yet—such was the extraordinary confidence which still alternated with his despair—even now he still believed that the city might be saved. Though he was prepared to die if it fell, nevertheless it seemed impossible that the capital of the Reich really could fall with the Fuehrer inside it. He regarded himself, it seems, as a kind of palladium, a totem whose presence rendered any citadel impregnable, so long as he stayed. "If I leave East Prussia," he had told Keitel at Rastenburg, "then East Prussia will fall; if I stay, it will be held." Keitel had persuaded him to leave East Prussia, and East Prussia had

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duly fallen; but he did not therefore could not fall. So in an ever-contracting pocket of Wenck's army, for which holding the bridgeheads on fact already a defeated force to be, from underground of non-existent armies, to dispose their forces, calculate the treachery of their failure to correspond with his days he would expound to relieve the city. Pacing up and to the dramatic report of H road map, fast decomposing explain to any casual visitor the conditions whereby they would a shout orders, as if himself die he would spread the map on with trembling hands he would buttons, as consolatory sympathy tropical climate of a court, in their direction. No one except army, but no one disagreed moment of time the chorus with the dirge of despair and such *allegro vivace*, with a triumphant Wenck.²

The most obstinate illusion: On April 28th the Russians centre of Berlin, and still

¹ Hanna Reitsch is now much
² Hans Fritzsche, head of the Ministry, described at Nuremberg when Berlin was surrounded by Berlin ... and leaflets were prominently this text: "Soldiers of the you have reached Potsdam. Hu scattered in Berlin, as if by mistake

Now
D.T.
is
gone.

"I could not last any longer."

During the night (if we are to
Reitsch), Hitler called his court
cabre conclave all rehearsed their
sidered, in maudlin detail, the
their corpses might be destroyed.
ian soldiers, they agreed, would
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v he still believed that the city
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isible that the capital of the Reich
ehrer inside it. He regarded him-
alladium, a totem whose presence
noble, so long as he stayed. "If I
told Keitel at Rastenburg, "then
stay, it will be held." Keitel had
st Prussia, and East Prussia had

in any longer.⁴

Handwritten mark: a square with a diagonal line from top-left to bottom-right.

duly fallen; but he did not intend to leave Berlin, and Berlin
therefore could not fall. So he deluded himself as he held out,
in an ever-contracting pocket of the city, awaiting the arrival
of Wenck's army, for which the Hitler Youth were desperately
holding the bridgeheads on the Havel. Wenck's army was in
fact already a defeated force; but Hitler had long been accus-
tomed, from underground bunkers, to direct the operations
of non-existent armies, to dictate their strategy and tactics,
dispose their forces, calculate their gains, and then to de-
nounce the treachery of their generals when the actual results
failed to correspond with his private conclusions. So in these
days he would expound the tactics whereby Wenck would
relieve the city. Pacing up and down in the Bunker (according
to the dramatic report of Hanna Reitsch¹) he would wave a
road map, fast decomposing with the sweat of his hands, and
explain to any casual visitor the complicated military opera-
tions whereby they would all be saved. Sometimes he would
shout orders, as if himself directing the defenders; sometimes
he would spread the map on the table, and stooping over it,
with trembling hands he would arrange and rearrange a set of
buttons, as consolatory symbols of relieving armies. In the
tropical climate of a court, emotions and beliefs quickly change
their direction. No one except Hitler still believed in Wenck's
army, but no one disagreed with his assurances; and in a
moment of time the chorus which had been chanting *lamentoso*,
the dirge of despair and suicide, would suddenly break out
allegro vivace, with a triumphant welcome for the army of
Wenck.²

The most obstinate illusions are ultimately broken by facts.
On April 28th the Russians were already fighting near the
centre of Berlin, and still there were no signs of Wenck.

¹ Hanna Reitsch is now much less dramatic on this point.

² Hans Fritzsche, head of the radio department of the Propaganda
Ministry, described at Nuremberg (June 27th, 1946) how 'in the days
when Berlin was surrounded by the Russian Army, the people of
Berlin was told that a relief army, the Wenck army, was marching on
Berlin . . . and leaflets were printed in Berlin containing approxi-
mately this text: "Soldiers of the Wenck army, we Berliners know that
you have reached Potsdam. Hurry! Help us!"' These leaflets were
scattered in Berlin, as if by mistake, to raise the morale of the citizens.

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and that in certain circumstances I must expect to be liquidated, I hit on the idea of sending for an astrologer from Hamburg, personally known to Himmler, whom I took with me, in order that an astrological session might absorb some of the bitterness of disappointment; for I knew that Himmler had a great opinion of this particular gentleman.¹ By such ingenious expedients did the high politicians of the Third Reich lubricate their personal diplomacy. It is agreeable to record that when Schellenberg faced Himmler, in the early hours of April 29th, he was not liquidated, although his situation had now become even worse, since the news of the negotiations had by this time become public. Himmler was not unnaturally irritated, and expressed bitter disappointment. He saw that nothing but ill could come of the whole business; he feared that his letter to the Swedish Foreign Minister would now be published; he pointed to the consequences which this affair would have in his relations with Hitler; and he blamed Schellenberg as the moving spirit in the whole matter. 'Nevertheless,' records the complacent Schellenberg, 'I managed, with the help of the aforementioned astrologer, to put forward the proposals for a more limited solution so convincingly that he withdrew for an hour to think it over.' Ultimately Himmler agreed to pursue this more limited solution, which entailed a cessation of hostilities in Norway and Denmark, and instructed Schellenberg accordingly. He did this the more confidently because he still felt sure of the future. Hitler was taking a long time to die, but the end must come soon; and then, as the new Fuehrer, Himmler would have power to make all necessary decisions.

For all this time it had never occurred to Himmler to doubt that he was the heir-apparent to Hitler's throne. He was Reichsfuehrer; he had his private army; his numerous offices, his long record, his hitherto undisputed loyalty all emphasized his claims; and one reason why he would never conspire to seize power lay in his confidence that it would automatically devolve upon him. He even had a programme prepared for the occasion—though not of course by himself; such origin-

¹ The astrologer was of course Wulf. Cf. above, p. 129.

ality was not within his new party, for which Schellenberg's name—the Party of National Government composed of like Schellenberg, believed Himmler could both survive under the favour of the Wehrmacht and we must include the military. Schwerin von Krosigk; not an intellect of the other, political office under the criminal of the Nazi system.

Such illusions may seem only Himmler's subordination every Nazi recognized in Hitler, once Goering had relations with Bernadotte to one of his followers his authority, adding that he Doenitz, who equally regarded had volunteered to work day, Schwerin von Krosigk two of Doenitz's supporters were out of the question, bilities. Either Hitler would 'will',⁴ in which case only of inheritance; or Hitler agreed, he could name or decision would be left to constitution—but when entail, they found that in two days later, when Hitler throughout the world,

¹ *Nationale Sammlungspar*

² This shadow government well as by Schellenberg.

³ Ohlendorf.

⁴ This does not of course refer was not known in Ploen, but

retence and cowardice of the high
had insulted its officers, demanded
tened savage revenge. Now that
atment seemed to have evaporated
the Luftwaffe with particular and
ad fought best of all the Armed
beginning to the end. Even the
rybody, even the ground personnel,
bravery. For its technical inferi-
y, were to blame. He even, in the
able, threw a dewdrop to poor old
often wrung his hands unavail-
inspired abuse that had formerly
universal scapegoat, the Chief of

reim and Reitsch can be shortly
of Berlin, as they had entered it,
and experiences of danger which
property in the narrative of Hanna
the plane to and fro like a feather,
height of 20,000 feet, and, looking
a sea of flame beneath them. From
orders for all available aircraft to
Thence they flew on to Ploen, to
we are favoured with a graphic
account of an interview between
ler, in which the loyal denuncia-
glanced ineffectually away from the
ze villain, until a dramatic air raid
After a few days at Ploen, Greim
hero and the devoted heroine, set
flying to Koeniggratz, to Graz, to
messages for Schoerner and Kessel-
met the plodding General Koller;
rian pen we have a last glimpse of
im, now a total wreck, his skin

(May 8th, 1945). Part of the foregoing
y on the statements of Greim (to Koller)
l by von Below.

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yellow, hobbling on two crutches; Reitsch tenacious and tear-
ful; and both singing their tedious duet, now a ferocious
denunciation of Goering, now a devout litany about the
Fuehrer and the Fatherland. "In these circumstances," com-
plained Koller, "it is very difficult to discuss practical matters."

After the dismissal of Ritter von Greim,¹ Hitler turned to
the next item of business. He married Eva Braun. For this
symbolic ceremony, Goebbels had introduced into the Bunker
a certain Walter Wagner, a Gau Inspector who worked under
him in his capacity of Gauleiter of Berlin, and who, having an
honorary position as an official of the city administration, was
therefore considered a proper person to officiate at this civil
ceremony. He appeared in the Bunker, where he was com-
pletely unknown except to Goebbels, in the uniform of the
Nazi Party and the armband of the Volkssturm. The ceremony
took place in the small conference room or 'map room' in the
private part of the Bunker.² Besides Hitler, Eva Braun, and
Walter Wagner, Goebbels and Bormann were present as
witnesses. The formalities were brief. The two parties declared
that they were of pure Aryan descent and were free from
hereditary disease. In consequence of the military situation
and other extraordinary circumstances, they proposed a war-
time wedding, by simple word of mouth, and without any
delay. In a few minutes the parties had given assent, the
register had been signed, and the ceremony was over. When
the bride came to sign her name she began to write 'Eva
Braun', but was checked before completing it. Striking out the
initial letter B, she corrected it to 'Eva Hitler, née Braun'.
The ceremony over, the bride and bridegroom walked out

¹ Both Greim and Reitsch disowned any knowledge of the marriage,
which I have therefore placed after their departure. Since they were
actually in the Fuehrerbunker, it is inconceivable that it could have
taken place without their knowledge; and it seems certain from several
sources that they left soon after midnight. Zander and Lorenz both
say that the marriage took place between 0100 and 0300 in the morning;
and the marriage certificate itself is clearly dated April 29th (i.e. after
midnight). In these circumstances I have rejected the statements of
von Below, Fraeulein Krueger, and Frau Christian that the ceremony
took place before midnight.

² Room 21 in the diagram (p. 150).

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into the conference passage. There a few generals and secretaries were waiting. They shook hands with all in turn, and then withdrew into their private apartments for a wedding breakfast. Shortly afterwards, Bormann, Goebbels, Frau Goebbels, and Hitler's two secretaries, Frau Christian and Frau Junge, were invited into the private suite. There they sat for some hours, drinking champagne and talking. The conversation was of old times and old comrades, of Goebbels' marriage which Hitler had witnessed, in happier days; now the position of the parties was reversed, and the happiness was reversed too. Hitler spoke again of his plans of suicide. National Socialism was finished, he said, and would never revive; death would be a relief to him now that he had been deceived and betrayed by his best friends. A temporary gloom overcame the party; and one of the secretaries left the room. There was a good deal of coming and going, for it was a long session, and there was other business to be done. For part of the time Krebs and Burgdorf and von Below came in and joined the party, and Guensche, the SS adjutant, and Fraulein Manzily, the vegetarian cook; and for some time Hitler was absent with Frau Junge in an adjoining room, to which other members of the party were also occasionally summoned. He was dictating his will.¹

Thus, after many years, Eva Braun's position was at last defined. The ambiguity of her status was at last terminated; and when a servant, in a moment of crisis next day, broke the ban on speech with 'E. B.', and addressed her as 'Gnaediges Fraulein', she could at last answer, "You may safely call me Frau Hitler."²

The reasons which impelled Hitler to this belated ceremony are unknown; but they may be conjectured without great fear of error. It was clearly Eva Braun's wish to be married. She had long been embarrassed by her undefined position at court, and would have welcomed such a solution long ago had Hitler been prepared to countenance it. But Hitler was unwilling.

¹ This account of the wedding ceremony is taken from the statements of Fraulein Krueger, Frau Christian, Frau Junge, Zander, Lorenz, von Below; and from the evidence of the certificate.

² Karnau.

Presumably he wished to avoid which the acknowledgment of. At the end, he had not wished arrived in Berlin for the last time ineffectually, to send her away was entitled to her reward. claims to consideration. Hitler remain faithful to him at the justify his intuition. As all became more conspicuous and with his personal adjutants, He the gross treachery of Goering trusted.¹ Signal devotion there is no doubt what reason, status which would separate him court and would entitle her most affected, of sharing in it. It was an easy request; at this of misinterpretation; and it was.

Meanwhile, in the intervals followed the wedding, Hitler's business which preoccupied him. He had sent for his secretary, two documents: his personal which should be his final app basis of the Nazi myth.

Since this was clearly their extraordinarily interesting; for the Nazi movement, designed world and a message to later generations the old hollow claptrap, the militarism, of the Revolution of innocence, and the reprimand.

The political testament is the second particular. 'It is Germany, wanted war in 1933 exclusively by those international of Jewish stock, or worked for

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l from the evidence of the certificate.

Presumably he wished to avoid the imputation of humanity
which the acknowledgment of wife or mistress would entail.
At the end, he had not wished for her presence, and when she
arrived in Berlin for the last time on April 15th, he had tried,
ineffectually, to send her away. But since she had stayed, she
was entitled to her reward. Her loyalty had increased her
claims to consideration. Hitler had said that only she would
remain faithful to him at the end, and she had not failed to
justify his intuition. As all others fell away, her devotion
became more conspicuous and more regarded. In conversation
with his personal adjutants, Hitler contrasted her fidelity with
the gross treachery of Goering and Himmler in whom he had
trusted.¹ Signal devotion deserves signal recognition; and
there is no doubt what recognition she most desired—the
status which would separate her from all other women of the
court and would entitle her to that honour which she now
most affected, of sharing in the ritual death of the Fuehrer.
It was an easy request; at this last hour there was little danger
of misinterpretation; and it was granted.

Meanwhile, in the intervals of the social gathering which
followed the wedding, Hitler was continuing the succession of
business which preoccupied him throughout this active night.
He had sent for his secretary, Frau Junge, and was dictating
two documents: his personal and his political testaments,
which should be his final appeal to posterity and the textual
basis of the Nazi myth.

Since this was clearly their purpose, these documents are
extraordinarily interesting; for in this last advertisement of
the Nazi movement, designed as a dignified valediction to the
world and a message to later generations, there is nothing but
the old hollow claptrap, the negative appeal, the purposeless
militarism, of the Revolution of Destruction; the protestations
of innocence, and the recriminations of failure.

The political testament is in two parts; the first general,
the second particular. 'It is untrue that I, or anybody else in
Germany, wanted war in 1939. It was wanted and provoked
exclusively by those international politicians who either came
of Jewish stock, or worked for Jewish interests. After all my

¹ von Below.

209
D.T. I would never understand
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offers of disarmament, posterity cannot place the responsibility for this war on me. . . . The mind goes back from the testament to *Mein Kampf*, from the epitaph to the prospectus of the Nazi Party, from the disclaimer of responsibility for defeat to the promise of glorious victory. Then comes the cry of despair. 'After a six-years' war, which in spite of all setbacks will one day go down in history as the most glorious and heroic manifestation of a people's will to live, I cannot forsake the city which is the capital of this state. Since our forces are too small to withstand any longer the enemy's attack on this place, and since our own resistance will be gradually worn down by an army of blind automata, I wish to share the fate that millions of others have accepted and to remain here in the city. Further, I will not fall into the hands of an enemy who requires a new spectacle, exhibited by the Jews, to divert his hysterical masses. I have therefore decided to remain in Berlin, and there to choose death voluntarily at the moment when I believe that the residence of the Fuehrer and Chancellor can no longer be held. . . . Then the valediction to those forces on which the Nazi Party had relied is coupled with a sidelong stab at the force which he charged with failure: 'In future may it be a point of honour with German Army officers, as it already is in our Navy, that the surrender of territory and towns is impossible, and that, above all else, commanders must set a shining example of faithful devotion to duty until death.' In the first World War, Hitler was a soldier; and when it failed, he blamed the politicians for betraying the soldiers. In those days he could not praise the German General Staff highly enough. 'The organization and leadership of the German Army was the mightiest thing that the world has ever yet seen.' In the second World War he was a politician; when it failed, he blamed the soldiers for betraying the politicians, and all for betraying him.

After the generalities, the particulars. The second part of the political testament, like the first, is stronger in recrimination and negation than in positive statement. 'Before my death,' it begins, 'I expel from the Party the former Reich Marshal, Hermann Goering, and withdraw from him all the rights conferred upon him by the Decree of June 29th 1941,

and by my Reichstag speech place I appoint Grand Admiral and Supreme Commander of

It was now clear what had doors of the Fuehrerbunker treachery had been brought, was at last resolved. Since the Army had betrayed him, a sailor should succeed, not always been spectacular, future may it be a point of horror as it already is in our Navy found the solution to the problem insoluble.

The next paragraph is it concerns the other arch-traitor the Party and from all his SS and Reich Minister of the Interior in his stead I appoint Gauleiter and Chief of the German Police Reich Minister of the Interior

'Goering and Himmler, but the enemy, without my knowledge, illegal attempts to seize power on their treachery to my person on the country and the whole

Having disposed of the traitors their successors, Hitler then they should accept. 'In order to have a government of honour by all methods', he usurped and appointed his own nominal Apart from Deonitz, who was Commander of the Armed Commander-in-Chief of the appointments are those of Bormann as Party Chancellor, Goebbels as quisling and oppressor of the Ribbentrop, the second Bischoff

the position he had so unskilfully occupied. Another who was silently omitted was Albert Speer. He was succeeded as Armaments Minister by his deputy, Saur. To the end a certain favour was accorded to the erring Benjamin of the court; his transgressions were passed over in silence, and he was displaced not in anger but in pain. Field-Marshal Schoerner, on whose unbroken Army Group the defence of Bohemia might yet depend, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army. In the general change, one name at least remains constant—the Minister of Finance, Count Schwerin von Krosigk. In the great crises of his time he could boast of the achievement of the abbé Sieyès: *J'ai survécu.*

To this new government, imposed by testament, Hitler then dictated his orders. Though some of them, such as Bormann and Goebbels, had come to Berlin of their own will, wishing not to desert the capital but to fall there with their Fuehrer, nevertheless they must obey his orders and survive to carry on the Nazi administration, the Nazi war, the Nazi myth. Finally (so this strange document ends) they must 'above all else, uphold the racial laws in all their severity, and mercilessly resist the universal poisoner of all nations, international Jewry'.

Hitler's personal will is a shorter, less grandiose document; it is the testament not of the revolutionary genius, the angel of destruction, but of the Austrian petty-bourgeois, the picture-going host of Obersalzberg, the husband of Eva Braun. It explained his marriage, disposed of his property, and announced his impending death.

‘Although during the years of struggle I believed that I could not undertake the responsibility of marriage, now, before the end of my life, I have decided to take as my wife the woman who, after many years of true friendship, came to this town, already almost besieged, of her own free will, in order to share my fate. She will go to her death with me at her own wish, as my wife. This will compensate us for what we both lost through my work in the service of my people.

'My possessions, in so far as they are worth anything, belong to the Party, or if this no longer exists, to the State.'

If the State too is destroy
instructions on my part.

'The paintings in the course of the years were not but solely for the establishment of the home town of Linz on the

'It is my most heartfelt
executed.

'As executor, I appoint Martin Bormann. He is given all decisions. He is permitted to do anything which is of worth as to maintain a petty-bourgeois order to my wife's mother and to the sexes who are well known to me. I have former secretaries, Frau W. and others for 10 years by their work.

'My wife and I choose of overthrow or capitulat be burnt immediately in the greater part of my d twelve years' service to m

At four o'clock in the afternoon, the document was ready for signature. There was still much to be said, uncertain, and such important questions were left for posterity. After Hitler had signed, the document was witnessed by Goebbels. B

¹ The German phrase is 'z
Lebens'.

² At the time of their discovery of Hitler's testaments was done by *Telegraph*, and others, who received a typescript. These characterizations were introduced into the public newspapers by sub-editors who were not Hitler's intimates. The argument therefore had to be made that the documents had been edited by a mass of internal and circular signatures, and the testimony of one of the signatories of the Pöhl secretary who typed both documents.

□

personal will was witnessed by Goebbels, Bormann, and Colonel Nicolaus von Below, Hitler's Luftwaffe adjutant, who was summoned for this purpose as one who had been a member of his personal *entourage* for the last eight years.

After the signature, Hitler retired to rest. But for Bormann and Goebbels there was still work to do. Both had been present at that secret conclave which had met after the announcement of Himmler's treachery, and at which, we must presume, the question of the succession and its attendant problems had been faced and resolved. Both, according to Hitler, had wished, or stated a wish, to remain and die in Berlin. Both had been ordered by Hitler to survive and carry on the Nazi administration. Each now had a decision to make: which of these two voices to obey.

Martin Bormann was an unromantic man. Neither statesman nor soldier, neither prophet nor priest, neither champion nor devotee, he loved one thing only, power; and the power that he loved consisted not in its outward semblance, its trappings and deference, nor in its material rewards, but in its reality, in the quiet assurance of its exercise. Under Hitler he had enjoyed that assurance; now that Hitler had resolved to die, what hope had he of continuance? He did not really wish to die, he had always given his voice for survival and escape; but if he were to survive, how could he retain the power he loved? He was himself a cipher, dependent entirely on his master. There were only two possibilities of his survival as the 'Brown Eminence' behind the Throne. Either he must himself succeed, or the successor must be one who would still make use of his indispensable services. Whether Bormann ever hoped personally to succeed, we cannot say; but it is improbable. His gifts were those of the secretary, not of the ruler: of Father Joseph, not of Cardinal Richelieu; and Hitler doubtless considered him, like Himmler, 'too inartistic' to be the Fuehrer of Germany. If then he was to be not successor, but adviser to the successor, it was essential to him that the appointed successor should be a man who would make use of his services. This Goering would certainly never do, and Goering had therefore been displaced. To make doubly sure, Bormann had recently taken, or now took, an additional pre-

caution. He sent to his trusty telegram of unmistakable sign Berlin,' it read,¹ 'is more tense the traitors of April 23rd mu your duty! Your life and he telegram was duly delivered to where Goering was imprisoned to recognize the authority of Bo from that form of death.

It was equally certain that Bormann as his adviser; Himmler competitors for that office. But cession had also been averted this eventful and decisive nig now Doenitz. Doenitz was no was also a Nazi. He had no devoted to Hitler and the ideal need a good Nazi adviser, who was experienced in the habits of the Party. What advice Bormann had if he was consulted, we do not doubt that the nomination of and Hitler's testamentary con but live fell, in such circumstances. Under Doenitz, Bormann obedience; obeying, he might survive which life would hold no sweet

Goebbels was a very different of the Party, the substance and in the power that he wielded, not from it, but in the myth of which he alone could lucidly survival meant the survival not and with his clear understand

¹ The text of this telegram is given as having been received 'yesterday' (ie April 24) and was vouched for by Zander, who left Berlin on April 23. It is possible that it have been sent earlier. Frau Christa Goebbels does not know whether Hitler had auth

THE DEATH OF HITLER

WHEN VON BELOW left the Bunker, Hitler was already preparing for the end. During the day the last news from the outside world had been brought in. Mussolini was dead. Hitler's partner in crime, the herald of Fascism, who had first shown to Hitler the possibilities of dictatorship in modern Europe, and had preceded him in the stages of disillusion and defeat, had now illustrated in a signal manner the fate which fallen tyrants must expect. Captured by partisans during the general uprising of northern Italy, Mussolini and his mistress Clara Petacci had been executed, and their bodies suspended by the feet in the market place of Milan to be beaten and pelted by the vindictive crowd. If the full details were ever known to them, Hitler and Eva Braun could only have repeated the orders they had already given: their bodies were to be destroyed 'so that nothing remains'; 'I will not fall into the hands of an enemy who requires a new spectacle to divert his hysterical masses'. In fact it is improbable that these details were reported, or could have strengthened an already firm decision. The fate of defeated despots has generally been the same; and Hitler, who had himself exhibited the body of a field-marshal on a meathook, had no need of remote historical examples or of a new and dramatic instance, to know the probable fate of his own corpse, if it should be found.¹

¹ It has often been stated, by those whose imagination is stronger than their memory, that Hitler's decision was affected by the fate of Mussolini. An account of the table-talk of the prisoners at Nuremberg, ascribed to the chief psychiatrist at the Trial and printed in the *Sunday Express*, August 25th, 1946, even quotes Goering as saying, 'You remember the Mussolini incident? We had pictures of Mussolini dead in the gutter with his mistress, and hanging in the air upside-down. They were awful! Hitler went into a frenzy, shouting: "This will never happen to me!"' A glance at the dates disposes of this romance.

In the afternoon, Hitler and Blondi, destroyed. Professor was now tending the wounded who came round to the Bunker and other dogs belonging to the sergeant who looked after the poison capsules to his two. He was sorry, he said, to give praising them for their courage, that he wished his general.

In the evening, while the bunkers were dining in the Fuehrerbunker, they were visited and informed them that the Fuehrer and the ladies and that no one had been received. At about half-past eight orders came. They were to go to the Bunker, and gathered again for a passage, officers and women. When they were assembled in a part of the Bunker, accompanied by abstracted, his eyes glazed, which Hanna Reitsch had. He even suggested that he needed an explanation is needed of a case. The observers had often commented on the passage and shook hands. Some spoke to him, but he did not audibly. Ceremonies of silence were customary in the course of the day.

When he had left, the Fuehrer remained for a while to discuss that it could have one more. The Fuehrer was about to take

¹ Frau Junge

Goering saw Hitler for the last time. Goering may have seen Hitler; Hitler never. Such is the irony of which, however, much of the

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In the afternoon, Hitler had had his favourite Alsatian dog, Blondi, destroyed. Professor Haase, his former surgeon, who was now tending the wounded in his clinic in Berlin, had come round to the Bunker and killed it with poison. The two other dogs belonging to the household had been shot by the sergeant who looked after them. After this, Hitler had given poison capsules to his two secretaries, for use in extremity. He was sorry, he said, to give them no better parting gift; and praising them for their courage, he had added, characteristically, that he wished his generals were as reliable as they.¹

In the evening, while the inhabitants of the two outer bunkers were dining in the general dining-passage of the Fuehrerbunker, they were visited by one of the SS guard, who informed them that the Fuehrer wished to say goodbye to the ladies and that no one was to go to bed till orders had been received. At about half past two in the morning the orders came. They were summoned by telephone to the Bunker, and gathered again in the same general dining-passage, officers and women, about twenty persons in all. When they were assembled, Hitler came in from the private part of the Bunker, accompanied by Bormann. His look was abstracted, his eyes glazed over with that film of moisture which Hanna Reitsch had noticed. Some of those who saw him even suggested that he had been drugged; but no such explanation is needed of a condition upon which more familiar observers had often commented. He walked in silence down the passage and shook hands with all the women in turn. Some spoke to him, but he said nothing, or mumbled inaudibly. Ceremonies of silent handshaking had become quite customary in the course of that day.²

When he had left, the participants in this strange scene remained for a while to discuss its significance. They agreed that it could have one meaning only. The suicide of the Fuehrer was about to take place. Thereupon an unexpected

¹ Frau Junge. ² Von Varo.

Goering saw Hitler for the last time eight days before Mussolini's death. Goering may have seen pictures of Mussolini's body in captivity; Hitler never. Such is the value of unchecked human testimony, on which, however, much of written history is based.

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Chancellery garden. Kempka protested that it would be difficult to find so large a quantity at once, but he was told that it must be found. Ultimately he found about 180 litres and sent it round to the garden. Four men carried it in jerricans¹ and placed it at the emergency exit of the Bunker. There they met one of the police guards, who demanded an explanation. They told him that it was for the ventilating plant. The guard told them not to be silly, for the plant was oil-driven. At this moment Hitler's personal servant, Heinz Linge, appeared. He reassured the guard, terminated the argument, and dismissed the men. Soon afterwards all the guards except those on duty were ordered to leave the Chancellery, and to stay away. It was not intended that any casual observer should witness the final scene.

Meanwhile Hitler had finished lunch, and his guests had been dismissed. For a time he remained behind; then he emerged from his suite, accompanied by Eva Braun, and another farewell ceremony took place. Bormann and Goebbels were there, with Burgdorf, Krebs, Hewel, Naumann, Voss, Rattenhuber, Hoegl, Guensche, Linge, and the four women, Frau Christian, Frau Junge, Fraulein Krueger, and Fraulein Manziarly. Frau Goebbels was not present; unnerved by the approaching death of her children, she remained all day in her own room. Hitler and Eva Braun shook hands with them all, and then returned to their suite. The others were dismissed, all but the high-priests and those few others whose services would be necessary. These waited in the passage. A single shot was heard. After an interval they entered the suite. Hitler was lying on the sofa, which was soaked with blood. He had shot himself through the mouth. Eva Braun was also on the sofa, also dead. A revolver was by her side, but she had not used it; she had swallowed poison. The time was half past three.²

¹ A jerrican is a German petrol can containing 4½ gallons.

² The method of death chosen by Hitler and Eva Braun has been reported identically by Fraulein Krueger and Frau Junge (who had it from Guensche) and Frau Christian (from Linge), and by others who heard it from the same sources. It is also described by Axmann, who personally inspected the bodies. Kempka, who carried out the body of Eva Braun, unblanketed, observed no signs of blood.

*Goebbels: You always desert
me when I need you most.*

Shortly afterwards, Artur Youth, arrived at the Bunker ceremony, but he was admitted dead bodies. He examined them some minutes, talking with Axmann and Axmann remained for a bodies. Outside, in the Bunker prepared: the Viking funeral

After sending the petrol to across to the Bunker by the sected his office in the Hen Chancellery buildings. He was words, 'The Chief is dead'. Hitler's suite was opened, and pant in the funeral scene.

While Axmann was meditating, one of them Hitler's secret. They wrapped Hitler's body in bloodstained and shattered his passage, where the other of the familiar black trousers. They the body up the four flights and so out into the garden. A room and took up the body of tidier, and no blanket was needed. Bormann carried the body into it to Kempka, who took it to was taken from him by Guensche gave it to a third SS officer, the garden. As an additional the Bunker, which led into the doors leading from the Chancellery hastily locked against possible

Unfortunately, the most casual unavailing; and it was as a result that two unauthorized persons from which it was intended

¹ 'Der Chef ist tot.' Hitler's phrase 'der Chef'.

*A smelly like
the pants of the
the dormitory.*

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Kempka protested that it would be a quantity at once, but he was told that he found about 180 litres of petrol. Four men carried it in jerri-cans to the emergency exit of the Bunker. There were guards, who demanded an explanation for the ventilating plant. The plant, for the Bunker was oil-driven. Kempka's personal servant, Heinz Linge, a guard, terminated the argument, and afterwards all the guards except one to leave the Chancellery, and to inform that any casual observer should

finished lunch, and his guests had to remain behind; then he was accompanied by Eva Braun, and took place. Bormann and Goebbels, Krebs, Hewel, Naumann, Voss, Linge, and the four women, Fraulein Krueger, and Fraulein as not present; unnerved by the children, she remained all day in the garden. Eva Braun shook hands with them in her suite. The others were distressed and those few others whose These waited in the passage. A few minutes later they entered the suite, which was soaked with blood. In the mouth. Eva Braun was also a soldier was by her side, but she swallowed poison. The time was

oil can containing 4½ gallons. It was by Hitler and Eva Braun been taken by Krueger and Frau Junge (who had it from Linge), and by others who It is also described by Axmann, who Kempka, who carried out the body of and no signs of blood.

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Shortly afterwards, Artur Axmann, head of the Hitler Youth, arrived at the Bunker. He was too late for the farewell ceremony, but he was admitted to the private suite to see the dead bodies. He examined them, and stayed in the room for some minutes, talking with Goebbels. Then Goebbels left, and Axmann remained for a short while alone with the dead bodies. Outside, in the Bunker, another ceremony was being prepared: the Viking funeral.

After sending the petrol to the garden, Kempka had walked across to the Bunker by the subterranean passage which connected his office in the Hermann Goering Strasse with the Chancellery buildings. He was greeted by Guensche with the words, 'The Chief is dead'.¹ At that moment the door of Hitler's suite was opened, and Kempka too became a participant in the funeral scene.

While Axmann was meditating among the corpses, two SS men, one of them Hitler's servant Linge, entered the room. They wrapped Hitler's body in a blanket, concealing the bloodstained and shattered head, and carried it out into the passage, where the other observers easily recognized it by the familiar black trousers. Then two other SS officers carried the body up the four flights of stairs to the emergency exit, and so out into the garden. After this, Bormann entered the room and took up the body of Eva Braun. Her death had been tidier, and no blanket was needed to conceal the evidence of it. Bormann carried the body into the passage, and then handed it to Kempka, who took it to the foot of the stairs. There it was taken from him by Guensche; and Guensche in turn gave it to a third SS officer, who carried it too upstairs to the garden. As an additional precaution, the other door of the Bunker, which led into the Chancellery, and some of the doors leading from the Chancellery to the garden, had been hastily locked against possible intruders.

Unfortunately, the most careful precautions are sometimes unavailing; and it was as a direct result of this precaution that two unauthorized persons in fact witnessed the scene from which it was intended to exclude them. One of the

¹ 'Der Chef ist tot.' Hitler's personal servants referred to him as 'der Chef'.

*231
A smelly black trousers like
the pants of the homeless at
the dormitories in Vienna.*

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police guards, one Erich Mansfeld, happened to be on duty in the concrete observation tower at the corner of the Bunker, and noticing through the opaque, sulphurous air a sudden, suspicious scurrying of men and shutting of doors, he felt it his duty to investigate. He climbed down from his tower into the garden and walked round to the emergency exit to see what was afoot. In the porch he collided with the emerging funeral procession. First there were two SS officers carrying a body wrapped in a blanket, with black-trousered legs protruding from it. Then there was another SS officer carrying the unmistakable corpse of Eva Braun. Behind them were the mourners—Bormann, Burgdorf, Goebbels, Guensche, Linge, and Kempka. Guensche shouted at Mansfeld to get out of the way quickly; and Mansfeld, having seen the forbidden but interesting spectacle, returned to his tower.¹

After this interruption, the ritual was continued. The two corpses were placed side by side, a few feet from the porch, and petrol from the can was poured over them. A Russian bombardment added to the strangeness and danger of the ceremony, and the mourners withdrew for some protection under the shelter of the porch. There Guensche dipped a rag in petrol, set it alight, and flung it out upon the corpses. They were at once enveloped in a sheet of flame. The mourners stood to attention, gave the Hitler salute, and withdrew again into the Bunker, where they dispersed. Guensche afterwards described the spectacle to those who had missed it. The burning of Hitler's body, he said, was the most terrible experience in his life.²

Meanwhile yet another witness had observed the spectacle. He was another of the police guards, and he too came accidentally upon the scene in consequence of the precautions which should have excluded him. His name was Hermann Karnau. Karnau, like others of the guard who were not on duty, had been ordered away from the bunker by an officer of the SS

¹ This account is given independently by Kempka and Mansfeld, who agree. Kempka mentions the incident when a guard (*ie* Mansfeld) collided with the procession in the porch and was dismissed by Guensche. Some of the details were accidentally noticed by Schwaegermann.

² Fraeulein Krueger, Frau Junge.

Escort, and had gone to the Cha while, in spite of his orders, he l Bunker. On arrival at the door of locked. He had therefore made l in order to enter the Bunker by turned the corner by the tower w he was surprised to see two bodie the door of the Bunker. Almost a spontaneously it seemed, into flan this sudden combustion. He saw be the result of enemy fire, for l "Possibly someone threw a mai suggested; and his suggestion is c

Karnau watched the burning c were easily recognizable, though The sight, he says, was 'repulsive' went down into the Bunker by Bunker, he met Sturmbannfuhrer commanding the SS Escort. Schee in the foot by a bomb. He was Fuehrer is dead," he said; "he Karnau helped him to limp away.

Mansfeld, on duty in the towe of the bodies. As he had climbed had ordered him away, he had see column of black smoke rising from diminished, he saw the same two being brought up the stairs. The mourners had withdrawn, he cont he saw SS men come out of the B on the bodies to keep them alight. t relieved by Karnau, and when Kar out of the tower, the two went to again. By now the lower parts of b away and the shinbones of Hitler'. later, Mansfeld visited the bodi burning, but the flame was low.

In the course of the afternoon a guard sought to watch the spect:

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Mansfeld, happened to be on duty in the tower at the corner of the Bunker, in the opaque, sulphurous air a sudden, in the shutting of doors, he felt it. He climbed down from his tower into the garden to the emergency exit to see what he collided with the emerging bodies. There were two SS officers carrying a body, with black-trousered legs protruding. There was another SS officer carrying a body. Behind them were the bodies of Goebbels, Guensche, Linge, and others. Mansfeld to get out of the garden, having seen the forbidden but he did not go to his tower.¹

The ritual was continued. The two bodies, one on each side, a few feet from the porch, were poured over them. A Russian soldier, the strangeness and danger of the situation, withdrew for some protection. There Guensche dipped a rag and flung it out upon the corpses. They were covered by a sheet of flame. The mourners saw Hitler salute, and withdrew again. They were dispersed. Guensche afterwards told those who had missed it. The burning, the most terrible experience

which a witness had observed the spectacle. The guards, and he too came accidentally in the sequence of the precautions which were taken. His name was Hermann Karnau. He was a guard who was not on duty, had been in the bunker by an officer of the SS. He was independently by Kempka and Mansfeld, the incident when a guard (i.e. Mansfeld) was in the porch and was dismissed by the guards who were accidentally noticed by Schwaeger-

Junge.

Escort, and had gone to the Chancellery canteen; but after a while, in spite of his orders, he had decided to return to the Bunker. On arrival at the door of the Bunker, he had found it locked. He had therefore made his way out into the garden, in order to enter the Bunker by the emergency exit. As he turned the corner by the tower where Mansfeld was on duty, he was surprised to see two bodies lying side by side, close to the door of the Bunker. Almost at the same instant they burst, spontaneously it seemed, into flame. Karnau could not explain this sudden combustion. He saw no one, and yet it could not be the result of enemy fire, for he was only three feet away. "Possibly someone threw a match from the doorway," he suggested; and his suggestion is essentially correct.

Karnau watched the burning corpses for a moment. They were easily recognizable, though Hitler's head was smashed. The sight, he says, was 'repulsive in the extreme'. Then he went down into the Bunker by the emergency exit. In the Bunker, he met Sturmbannfuhrer Franz Schedle, the officer commanding the SS Escort. Schedle had recently been injured in the foot by a bomb. He was distracted with grief. "The Fuehrer is dead," he said; "he is burning outside"; and Karnau helped him to limp away.

Mansfeld, on duty in the tower, also watched the burning of the bodies. As he had climbed the tower, after Guensche had ordered him away, he had seen through a loophole a great column of black smoke rising from the garden. As the smoke diminished, he saw the same two bodies which he had seen being brought up the stairs. They were burning. After the mourners had withdrawn, he continued to watch. At intervals he saw SS men come out of the Bunker and pour more petrol on the bodies to keep them alight. Some time afterwards he was relieved by Karnau, and when Karnau had helped him to climb out of the tower, the two went together to look at the bodies again. By now the lower parts of both bodies had been burned away and the shinbones of Hitler's legs were visible. An hour later, Mansfeld visited the bodies again. They were still burning, but the flame was low.

In the course of the afternoon a third member of the police guard sought to watch the spectacle of the burning bodies.

□

His name was Hans Hofbeck. He went up the stairs from the Bunker and stood in the porch; but he did not stay there. The stench of burning flesh was intolerable and drove him away.

Late that night Brigadefuehrer Rattenhuber, the head of the police guard, entered the Dog-bunker where the guards were spending their leisure, and spoke to a sergeant of the SS Escort. He told him to report to his commanding officer, Schedle, and to pick three trustworthy men to bury the corpses. Soon afterwards Rattenhuber returned to the Dog-bunker and addressed the men there. He made them promise to keep the events of the day a holy secret. Anyone talking about them would be shot. Shortly before midnight Mansfeld returned to duty in the tower. Russian shells were still falling, and the sky was illuminated by flares. He noticed that a bomb crater in front of the emergency exit had been newly worked upon, and that the bodies had disappeared. He did not doubt that the crater had been converted into a grave for them; for no shell could have piled the earth around it in so neat a rectangle. About the same time, Karnau was on parade with the other guards in the Vossstrasse, and one of his comrades said to him: 'It is sad that none of the officers seems to worry about the Fuehrer's body. I am proud that I alone know where he is.'¹

That is all that is known about the disposal of the remnants of Hitler's and Eva Braun's bodies. Linge afterwards told one of the secretaries that they had been burned as Hitler had ordered, 'till nothing remained'; but it is doubtful whether such total combustion could have taken place; 180 litres of petrol, burning slowly on a sandy bed, would char the flesh and dissipate the moisture of the bodies, leaving only an unrecognizable and fragile remainder; but the bones would withstand the heat. These bones have never been found. Perhaps they were broken up and mixed with the other bodies, the bodies of soldiers killed in the defence of the Chancellery,

¹ In their narratives of the burning of the bodies, Karnau and Mansfeld agree on facts, but differ on dates and times. Both mistake the date. Mansfeld's times are correct where they can be checked, while Karnau's are hopelessly erratic. If Mansfeld is reliable throughout, the bodies were set alight at about 4 pm (this is almost certainly correct), and were still burning at 6.30; Rattenhuber's orders for burial were given 'late at night'; and the bodies had been buried by 11 pm.

and the body of Fegelein, which garden. The Russians have occasion many such bodies have been un Guensche is said to have stated, t box and conveyed out of the C elaborate explanation is necessary. as have been made have been some tors who left Hitler's engagement c for five months may easily have o were more deliberately concealed. Hitler achieved his last ambition, under the riverbed of Busento, the kind is now immune from discove

While these last rites and piet guards and sentries, the regents of more practical matters. Having se their last summary respects, they t ground, there to contemplate the Hitler's first leavetaking, a great lifted from their spirits. The nigh sion was over, and if the prospect and dubious, at least they were i businesslike manner. From this have bothered about the past or i in the garden. That episode was o time remaining they had their o tragically-minded guard observed so indifferent to the Fuehrer's bo

The first evidence of the chang was noticed by the secretaries, wh the ceremony, but who now ret arrival they learned the details fr it was not from such secondhand knew that Hitler was dead. Ev smoking in the Bunker. During f absolutely forbidden; but now ti the boys could break the rules. I of nicotine, whose absence must tension of the past week, they

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He went up the stairs from the bunker; but he did not stay there. The intolerable and drove him away. Rattenhuber, the head of the bunker where the guards were spoke to a sergeant of the SS port to his commanding officer, worthy men to bury the corpses. returned to the Dog-bunker and made them promise to keep the secret. Anyone talking about them at midnight Mansfeld returned to the bunker. The sky was still falling, and the sky was noticed that a bomb crater in had been newly worked upon, appeared. He did not doubt that it had been put into a grave for them; for no one would do it in so neat a rectangle. He was on parade with the other officers and one of his comrades said to him: 'The officers seems to worry about the fact that I alone know where he is.'¹¹ About the disposal of the remnants of the bodies. Linge afterwards told one of the guards: 'The bodies had not been burned as Hitler had ordered'; but it is doubtful whether the cremations have taken place; 180 litres of kerosene, which would char the flesh of the bodies, leaving only an ash-remainder; but the bones would not have been found. Per- haps mixed with the other bodies, in the defence of the Chancellery, the burning of the bodies, Karnau and the dates and times. Both mistake and incorrect where they can be checked, stated. If Mansfeld is reliable through- out about 4 pm (this is almost certainly 6.30; Rattenhuber's orders for burial of the bodies had been buried by 11 pm.

and the body of Fegelein, which were also buried in the garden. The Russians have occasionally dug in that garden, and many such bodies have been unearthed there. Perhaps, as Guensche is said to have stated, the ashes were collected in a box and conveyed out of the Chancellery. Or perhaps no elaborate explanation is necessary. Perhaps such investigations as have been made have been somewhat perfunctory. Investigators who left Hitler's engagement diary unobserved in his chair for five months may easily have overlooked other relics which were more deliberately concealed. Whatever the explanation, Hitler achieved his last ambition. Like Alaric, buried secretly under the riverbed of Busento, the modern destroyer of man- kind is now immune from discovery.

While these last rites and pieties were being observed by guards and sentries, the regents of the Bunker were busy with more practical matters. Having set the bodies alight and paid their last summary respects, they had returned to safety under- ground, there to contemplate the future. Once again, as after Hitler's first leavetaking, a great cloud seemed to have been lifted from their spirits. The nightmare of ideological repres- sion was over, and if the prospect before them remained dark and dubious, at least they were now free to consider it in a businesslike manner. From this moment nobody seems to have bothered about the past or the two corpses still sizzling in the garden. That episode was over, and in the short space of time remaining they had their own problems to face. As the tragically-minded guard observed, it was sad to see everyone so indifferent to the Fuehrer's body.

The first evidence of the changed atmosphere in the Bunker was noticed by the secretaries, who had been dismissed during the ceremony, but who now returned to their stations. On arrival they learned the details from Guensche and Linge; but it was not from such secondhand information only that they knew that Hitler was dead. Everyone, they observed, was smoking in the Bunker. During Hitler's lifetime that had been absolutely forbidden; but now the headmaster had gone and the boys could break the rules. Under the soothing influence of nicotine, whose absence must have increased the nervous tension of the past week, they were able to consider the

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administrative problems which the Fuehrer had left them to face.

First, there was the succession. With Hitler's death, the centre of power had moved automatically from the Bunker to the distant headquarters of the new Fuehrer in Schleswig-Holstein. It was mortifying to Bormann, who for so long had given orders and exercised authority in the name of Hitler, to admit that now he had no position at all, unless Doenitz should confirm his appointment as Party Minister in the new government. On the other hand it was improbable that any copy of Hitler's will had yet reached Doenitz, who was therefore unaware not only of Hitler's death, but also of his own right of succession. It was clearly Bormann's duty to inform the new Fuehrer of these facts by telegram; and it is interesting to notice the ambiguous manner in which this was done.

After Hitler's death, Bormann sent the following telegram to Doenitz:

GRAND ADMIRAL DOENITZ,—In place of the former Reich-Marshal Goering the Fuehrer appoints you, Herr Grand Admiral, as his successor. Written authority is on its way. You will immediately take all such measures as the situation requires.—BORMANN.

The important and relevant fact that Hitler was already dead was not mentioned. It seems as if Bormann wished to prolong yet a little longer the authority which he loved, but could no longer legally exercise.

The arrival of this document caused something like consternation at Ploen. The appointment was entirely unexpected. Only two days before, Doenitz had gone to Himmler and offered his support to him as Hitler's most obvious successor, and Himmler was even now preparing his government. Now the position was suddenly reversed. "Not Himmler but Doenitz!" exclaimed the astonished Schwerin von Krosigk, who as usual had backed the wrong horse, though his genius for survival guaranteed his own appointment in either events. Doenitz himself was not only surprised but mortified. Almost alone among the Nazi leaders, he had entertained no ambitions of the succession, and now the succession had been thrust

upon him. Ever since his appointment in the northern area, Doenitz had been the subject of this telegram, says one of the officers who became obviously worse. Nevertheless, on the Fuehrer's order, no one thought of a coup, no question. Himmler seemed to dominate the whole. Himmler, reluctantly abandoning his position, offered to serve under Doenitz, summing his new responsibility, and the Fuehrer whom he supposed still

MY FUEHRER!—My loyalty I shall do everything possible. Fate nevertheless compels me to be your appointed successor, I shall do my duty worthy of the unique, heroic situation.—GRAND ADMIRAL DOENITZ.

What was Bormann's purpose in this telegram? Of Hitler's death, while covering up Doenitz to assume responsibility, the human motives is an unprofitable question. In any instance one thing at least is certain: Doenitz, one way or another, to reach Ploen by alternative means of making the appointment probable that he intended, if possible, to be the bearer of the news. Thus, having been in the period of his temporary eclipse, his presence at the decisive moment was a continued authority.

Bormann's first plan for such an escape through the Russian line was that the court were told to be prepared for the darkness of the coming night. It was certainly dangerous and in the end declared it impossible on the grounds that it was less desperate than now—and

¹ Julius Weitmann, Press Reference

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succession had been thrust

upon him. Ever since his appointment to the command of the
northern area, Doenitz had been in a nervous state; on receipt
of this telegram, says one of his *entourage*,¹ his condition
became obviously worse. Nevertheless, since it was the
Fuehrer's order, no one thought of disobeying it. There was
no coup, no question. Himmler's cumbrous bodyguard, which
seemed to dominate the whole headquarters, stood idle, while
Himmler, reluctantly abandoning his hopes of supreme power,
offered to serve under Doenitz; and Doenitz, reluctantly as-
suming his new responsibility, replied thus by telegram to the
Fuehrer whom he supposed still alive:

MY FUEHRER!—My loyalty to you will be unconditional.
I shall do everything possible to relieve you in Berlin. If
Fate nevertheless compels me to rule the Reich as your
appointed successor, I shall continue this war to an end
worthy of the unique, heroic struggle of the German people.
—GRAND ADMIRAL DOENITZ.

What was Bormann's purpose in thus concealing the fact
of Hitler's death, while covering himself by authorizing
Doenitz to assume responsibility? To speculate deeply on
human motives is an unprofitable undertaking; but in this
instance one thing at least is certain. Bormann was determined,
one way or another, to reach Ploen. He was already considering
alternative means of making that journey. It therefore seems
probable that he intended, if possible, himself to be the first
bearer of the news. Thus, having reduced to a minimum the
period of his temporary eclipse, he might hope, by his personal
presence at the decisive moment, to reinforce his claim to
continued authority.

Bormann's first plan for such a journey consisted of a mass
escape through the Russian lines; and at first the survivors
of the court were told to be prepared for such an attempt in
the darkness of the coming night. But such a mass escape would
certainly be dangerous and might fail—Hitler had already
declared it impossible on the previous day, when the situation
was less desperate than now—and in the course of the afternoon

¹ Julius Weitmann, Press Referent at Doenitz's headquarters.

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another, less hazardous possibility suggested itself. Since Goebbels and Bormann were, by virtue of Hitler's will members of the new government, might not the Russian military authorities recognize their status, and, if they offered surrender, send Bormann to Ploen to have it ratified by Doenitz? Bormann would thus be sent to Ploen by the Russians as a privileged envoy, would join the new government, and would take up his position as one of the rulers of the new Reich. Such a hope seems ridiculous to us; but in the fools' paradise of Nazism nothing seemed ridiculous. It was certainly no more ridiculous than the political plans of Himmler, or of Schellenberg, or of Ribbentrop, or of Schwerin von Krosigk, all of whom assumed the possible survival of a Nazi, or at least a semi-Nazi Government; and it did not seem ridiculous to Bormann.

This project of a treaty with the Russians was worked out in the course of a long conference in the evening of April 30th. Bormann and Goebbels were there, with Krebs, Burgdorf, and Axmann; possibly also Mohnke. Contact was made with the Russian headquarters by wireless, and a messenger was then sent to inquire whether Marshal Zhukov would receive a representative of the German Government. The reply was favourable; and at midnight Krebs himself set out from the Bunker carrying a letter from Goebbels and Bormann. He was a suitable emissary. From his long experience as military attaché in Moscow, he knew the Russians, and spoke their language; he was reputed a strong advocate of Russo-German friendship; and Bormann and Goebbels might reasonably expect a civil reception at Russian headquarters for a man who had once been publicly embraced by Stalin.¹ In their letter they informed Zhukov of Hitler's death, and quoted, as their authority for writing, the positions to which they had been appointed by Hitler's will. They authorized the bearer, General

¹ This was in March 1941, when Matsuoka, the Japanese foreign minister, was leaving Moscow for Berlin. The incident has been described to me by General Heim, who had it from Krebs. It is also described in Semler's diary (*Goebbels*, p. 26). According to Semler, Stalin 'embraced him [Krebs] in Russian fashion and said: "If we stand together like brothers, then nothing can happen to us in the future. You see to it that we remain good friends".'

Krebs, to negotiate an armistice or to of the new President Admiral Doen

For the rest of the night, and morning, Goebbels and Bormann awaited a mission to Zhukov. At eleven o'clock received no satisfaction²; and now or agreed to inform Doenitz that his he still avoided an explicit admission. A laconic telegram was more concerned it ran:

GRAND ADMIRAL DOENITZ,—They will join you as soon as possible. The publication be held up.—BORMANN

With this brief and not entirely satisfactory Doenitz had, for the time, to be content.

At noon, or soon afterwards, Krel from Marshal Zhukov's headquarters brought was not satisfactory. It demanded, and the delivery of all personnel. There was clearly no question of the probability of an accredited journey to St. Petersburg. A meeting was held in the Bunker, and a message to the Russian headquarters closed. There was now no alternative attempted.

At quarter past three, a third and Doenitz to supplement the meagre was signed by Goebbels. Having no Goebbels, unlike Bormann, had no and reticences of policy; he could only telegram was as follows:

¹ Frau Christian, Fraulein Krueger.

² [Author's note, 1956: According to a respondent of the Russian Army newspaper, Gen. Chuikov, insisted on an armistice. He then returned to the Bunker and was sent by Bormann with an offer of surrender provided it was recognized by the Russians. This provision was finally to the Bunker.]

DOENITZ—

nt—officer only.

yesterday at 15.30 hours. Testament of you as Reich President, Reich Minister of the Interior, Reich Chancellor, Reichsleiter Bormann as Reich Minister Seyss-Inquart as Foreign Minister, the Testament has been read to you, to Field-Marshal Schoerner, and to the press. Reichsleiter Bormann today and to inform you of the situation. Announcement to the Press and to the Reichstag. Confirm receipt.—GOEBBELS.¹

telegram, Doenitz assumed the burdens, which it conferred. These included the right to give advice from the ministers of his preference to choose his own government. He was not the ministers imposed upon him by the press, but received, and never did receive, the testament), and not to wait for Bormann making an announcement. At half past five Hamburg Radio warned the German people that 'important announcement' would be accompanied by strains from Wagner's 'Die Walkure'. Movements of Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. News of Hitler's death, fighting to the death. At 10.20 Doenitz himself announced his own succession. The Fuehrer, he said, had died fighting 'at the front'. His statements were untrue, for Hitler had died yesterday, and since Doenitz had never been

This telegram as received by Doenitz was signed by Goebbels only, but possibly this is an error. Edmund Kraft, afterwards deposed on oath, admitted to transcribe the signature of Bormann. Walter Ludde-Neurath, in his book (London, 1950), while quoting only the signature of Goebbels, cannot be certain that the telegram was not

informed of the manner of his death, any account of it was necessarily speculation. The former inaccuracy was probably a mere error; the latter was probably designed. Had Doenitz known, and said, that Hitler had committed suicide, how would the troops have received such a statement? Might they not have felt that they had been betrayed, that the Fuehrer had deserted his post, and that their oaths of loyalty to him had been dissolved by his desertion? Such had been the attitude of Koller and of Jodl on April 22nd, when Hitler had announced his intention of suicide, and such, on this same day, was the attitude of General Weidling. Weidling had arrived as usual in the Bunker and had been told that 'the Fuehrer had committed hara-kiri'; he had returned to his command-post in disgust and released his soldiers from their oaths. As the new Fuehrer, who regarded the soldiers' oaths to his predecessor as still binding them to him,¹ Doenitz could not afford such consequences. If he was to negotiate a successful peace with the West, the support of the Armed Forces must strengthen him in negotiation; and therefore, though he had no knowledge, he had no doubt thought it most prudent to suppose that the Fuehrer had died a soldier's death.

Meanwhile, in the Bunker, Bormann and his colleagues were planning the details of the mass escape which was to bring them to deliverance and himself to power. Not all of them, for there were some who had by now given up all hope of life, or all interest in it, and who preferred, as Zander would have preferred, to meet their end now in the ruined Chancellery. Among these was Goebbels. His decision had long been taken; he had published it in his Appendix to the Fuehrer's testament; his wife had received a last decoration from the Fuehrer; and now the time of fulfilment had arrived. After sending his last telegram, Goebbels returned to his own apartments in the Bunker, with his wife and family. A few friends visited them to take their leave, among them Axmann and Kempka. Then they prepared themselves for the end.

¹ This was the argument adopted by Doenitz in his broadcast to the German people on the evening of May 1st. Owing to the interruption of communications it was physically impossible for him to exact a new oath of loyalty from the Army.

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without assurance of acceptance. Between him and Doenitz there was no common idiom, except political insufficiency. As Himmler's secretary explained, "in the Grand Admiral's purely military circles, Himmler's political approach to the Western Powers was not understood". That night Himmler contemplated resignation—he did not know that Hitler had already dismissed him, and did not dream that Doenitz might dismiss him; he even contemplated suicide.

Himmler did not commit suicide—at least not yet. To the unrealist everything is possible, and that night an absent spirit returned from the north to reawaken his sleeping fantasies. It was Schellenberg. To Schellenberg the situation presented no difficulty at all; everything would turn out well if only it were left to him. Wherever he went, he saw only evidence of the importance attributed to himself and to his political opinions. Had not Doenitz 'on the strength of my original suggestion' dismissed Ribbentrop and appointed the good Schwerin von Krosigk as his successor? Did not Schwerin von Krosigk ask Schellenberg for his collaboration? Did not everyone seem to listen attentively to his large and subtle views on the Northern Question and the Czech Problem? Did not Keitel and Jodl plainly regard him as 'the most experienced in foreign affairs'? Schellenberg offered himself as an envoy to Sweden, or to General Eisenhower. Everything now seemed possible to him; why then should Himmler despair? Himmler agreed not to despair. Indeed, if Schellenberg is to be believed, he joined in the universal admiration of Schellenberg's genius. Within a few days (we learn from this partial source) they had 'a short but significant talk together, the gist of which was, "If only I had listened to you sooner", and "Perhaps you are the first German to be permitted to do something for his poor country again"'. As Samuel Butler says, "the advantage of doing one's praising for one's self is that one can lay it on so thick, and exactly in the right places."

Nor were Schellenberg and Himmler alone in their strange and irresponsible optimism. The air of Schleswig-Holstein was after all still the gaseous air of Nazi Germany, which had generated so many fantastic notions in the heads of those who

had become acclimatized to it. Doenitz, who wielded authority under Doenitz, missed, did not despair of future. After his dismissal, he drafted a government in Schleswig-Holstein which he suggested should be the nucleus of a socialist Germany.¹

Narrow-minded and fanatical Doenitz at least had some of the ordinary common sense of a man. If he was politically ignorant and silly. When he surveyed the legation in Schleswig-Holstein, at first he trembled to contemplate the proofs to be made of the legitimacy of his own authority; he ordered all the clerks responsible for the last telegrams from the Bunker, and while these measures of justice were being prepared to modify the accepted. Like all conservatives Doenitz took a critical posture of defeat, on the one hand, and on the other, he was a specialist. Hitler's will, or rather the will he had received by telegram, including Bormann, Goebbels, and Himmler, knew nothing of the fate of Goenitz. Even Hitler's will could force upon Doenitz. The telegram informing him of his appointment required him to take at once 'all such measures as may be required'; on the assurance of his appointment Schwerin von Krosigk now, on the same assurance, he was more inconvenient order. At the same time, he was to disburden himself of the burden of the surrounded him, and in particular

On May 2nd, Doenitz moved to Flensburg, on the Danish front. As member of the new government Doenitz was dead, Speer was able

¹ This draft was among documents

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d not know. Sometimes he con-
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Should he go to ground? Perhaps
als would protect him—Busch,
le went to Busch; but after a few
and Schoerner was now out of
nderstand that the respect which
power would not extend to his
peared again, quite silently; but
to Field-Marshal Montgomery,
a reply had come; but no reply
en Schellenberg to comfort him
llenberg was away in Sweden.
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in the outskirts of the Flensburg
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e. Undecided to the end, he did
s going. In fact he walked into a
there, revealed, stripped, and
fingers reached his mouth, and
the manner of his death would
de a decision. He bit the poison

ier abandoned his army and fled to
May 9th. He was handed over to the
ristmas 1954.]

capsule which was concealed behind his teeth, and was dead
in a few seconds.

It was an appropriate death, as appropriate as the barbaric
funeral of Hitler and the silent, secondary death of Goebbels;
appropriate to his character—for it was squalid and delayed—
and appropriate to the functions which he could no longer
exercise. The terrible high-priest of Hitler, who had once
served the altar, expounded the mysteries, and presided over
the human sacrifices with such undeviating devotion, having
once yielded to doubt, had become a mere wandering shadow,
a ghostly sacristan, fitfully haunting the shrine he could no
longer tend. Now the god himself had perished; the temple
~~had been~~ utterly destroyed; the faithful had been scattered,
or converted; and the suicide of the exiled priest is the natural
end of a chapter in history: the history, it seems, of a savage
tribe and a primitive superstition.

*This ghost of previous
high and sustained efforts
is common, perhaps, to
all who have made
such a commitment
whether in art, politics,
love, war or sustained
mental or physical endeavor.*

living. The Germans have long been without the former; and they are unlikely, for some time, to enjoy the latter.

Nevertheless, I believe that the facts given in this book do belong to the category of the undeniable minimum, of which even the most extravagant myths must take account. Nazism may revive; the ancient froth of Nibelung nonsense, whose exhalations had poisoned German political thought even before Hitler, may well find another vent; a new party may appeal to a myth of Hitler; but if so, it will be to a myth of Hitler dead, not of Hitler living. This is perhaps small comfort; but it is as much as mere truth is capable of supplying. To prevent political myths from arising is the function not of historical inquiry but of practical politics.

Turning aside, therefore, from the inappropriate task of seeking to control the future, we may here consider what further lessons are to be derived from this extraordinary chapter of history. Some of these lessons will already have been apparent in the course of the narrative, but in this epilogue it will perhaps be of value to resume and summarize them; for no one, I think, can have read this account of life in a monkey-house without asking at least two questions to which he may expect an answer: firstly, how did such monkeys succeed in seizing and retaining power; and secondly, how did they so nearly win the war? The first of these questions involves us in a consideration of the nature of dictatorial power.

Thomas Carlyle supposed that power should be entrusted unconditionally to great men, heroes who were laws to themselves, not responsible to the institutions or prejudices of inferior men. When a nation is so fortunate as to breed a great man (he thought), it should not seek to limit the expression of his greatness; it should be happy to forward his design. This doctrine rang musically in German ears, in a time of gloom and defeat, when Germans despaired of political institutions and their own capacity to use them. It was acceptable to Hitler, whom we have seen listening with egotistical relish to readings from Carlyle's *History of Frederick the Great* in the Bunker in Berlin. Hitler, like Carlyle, believed in 'historical greatness', which to him was more important than the happiness or survival of a people; and he conceived of

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* To be read

himself as a great man—in which for it is absurd to suggest that the world was of ordinary stature as the Messiah for whom they yearned. Of his apparent success they saw the signs; but of his true intentions to them; for they believed:

Now this doctrine of Carlyle, so aptly illustrates, depends upon validity: firstly, that 'greatness of conception, is desirable; second is constant—for a great man absolute power only if his conception is constant. The opposite doctrine to this is the Acton in his famous aphorism, absolute power corrupts absolute virtue is not merely the effective expression of a general principle that can affect and alter the character of a man. The history of Nazism suggests that

In the early days of Naziism, genius which we are in danger of losing, it is very important that we should not deceive ourselves: he aimed at the creation of a civilization by a barbarian method, the terrible hegemony of a new, modern 'new Dark Age', as Mr Chamberlain called it, sinister, and perhaps more productive than the 'perverted science'. But when we look at his ambition, we must admit that it was not with political genius. He detected the impulses, the irrational beliefs, the memories and fears of a frustrated people, and a new technique of exploitation; he was daring in the direction of his use of force, clear, his policy consistent, his methods simple and effective. If the Germans had followed and if Carlyle's theory were correct, we should suppose (as too many of them do) that they had found the secret of political genius.

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that the facts given in this book do the undeniable minimum, of which myths must take account. Nazism froth of Nibelung nonsense, whose German political thought even before the war; a new party may appeal to it, it will be to a myth of Hitler dead, is perhaps small comfort; but it is capable of supplying. To prevent this is the function not of historical politics.

re, from the inappropriate task of culture, we may here consider what is derived from this extraordinary of these lessons will already have of the narrative, but in this episode of value to resume and summarize, can have read this account of life without asking at least two questions to answer: firstly, how did such monkeys retain power; and secondly, how did the war? The first of these questions is on of the nature of dictatorial power. I suspect that power should be entrusted to men, heroes who were laws to themselves, to the institutions or prejudices of a nation is so fortunate as to breed a man should not seek to limit the expression; he should be happy to forward his own musicality in German ears, in a time when Germans despaired of political capacity to use them. It was accepted to have seen listening with egotistical Carlyle's *History of Frederick the Great*. Hitler, like Carlyle, believed in which to him was more important than the life of a people; and he conceived of

himself as a great man—in which he was surely not mistaken; for it is absurd to suggest that one who made such a stir in the world was of ordinary stature. The Germans accepted him as the Messiah for whom they were waiting, and in the hours of his apparent success they sacrificed their political institutions to him; for they believed not in them, but in the man.

Now this doctrine of Carlyle, which the history of Nazism so aptly illustrates, depends upon two premisses of doubtful validity: firstly, that 'greatness', or any other merely abstract conception, is desirable; secondly, that the human character is constant—for a great man can clearly be trusted with absolute power only if his qualities remain 'great'. The opposite doctrine to this is the doctrine summarized by Lord Acton in his famous aphorism, 'Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely': the doctrine that power is not merely the effective expression of a fixed character, but can affect and alter the character which exercises it. The history of Nazism suggests that this doctrine is true.

In the early days of Nazism, Hitler showed a political genius which we are in danger now of forgetting, but which it is very important that we should remember. His ultimate purpose was indeed clear to those who did not willingly deceive themselves: he aimed at the destruction of European civilization by a barbarian empire in central Europe—the terrible hegemony of a new, more permanent Genghis Khan: 'a new Dark Age', as Mr Churchill called it, 'made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science'. But when we have admitted the bestiality of his ambition, we must admit that he set himself to realize it with political genius. He detected and exploited all the cruel impulses, the irrational beliefs, the atavistic prejudices, the memories and fears of a frustrated people; he discovered a new technique of exploitation; and he used it with skill and daring in the direction of his ultimate aims. His purpose was clear, his policy consistent, his methods various, adaptable, and effective. If the Germans wanted the same results as he, and if Carlyle's theory were correct, they might reasonably suppose (as too many of them did suppose) that the Fuehrer had found the secret of politics, and that institutions which

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limited or constrained the infallible power of the new Leviathan, the mortal god, were but the idols of a discarded faith, only fit for sacrifice.

In the years 1938-41 Hitler enjoyed his most spectacular successes; and with each success the German people burnt a new sacrifice before him, until, in 1941, he took his own infallibility for granted. With his armies a few miles from Moscow, and himself hailed as the greatest military genius of all time, he no longer felt the need of political skill, of that patience and flexibility which is, after all, merely a recognition of the possibility of weakness or error. In the autumn of 1941, when he demobilized 40 divisions and ordered industry to revert to the production of consumer-goods; in December 1941, when he wantonly declared war on America, that another victim might add splendour to his inevitable triumph; it was clear that he was no longer prepared to make such recognition. Political skill was judged unnecessary and had been discarded; and the institutions which might have corrected him, if he were wrong, had been discarded too.

It is with the recollection of this past history that we should now look at the last days described in this book. In them we see the last, the logical consequences of Carlyle's dream. After July 20th, 1944, the opposition of the Army, the last and only opposition in Germany, had been crushed. The power of the Nazis was now so absolute, its institutional channels so utterly destroyed, its divorce from political skill so complete, that we find ourselves examining a new spectacle: a situation in which politics, instead of being a skilful calculation of forces, have become the direct expression of irresponsible power.

The consequences of such irresponsibility are obvious. It is not only that the personal extravagances of a single corrupted man have unchallenged political effect: that Hitler's formula of *World Power or Ruin* could become a real policy, and his destroying spirit, when the outer world remained firm, could spend itself upon Germany. There are consequences independent of personality. Though dictatorship is sometimes defended as efficient, and under certain conditions may be efficient, real dictatorship is by definition unconditional, and inherently inefficient. Irresponsible power, without elaborate

institutions, cannot be central; it must tend to fall apart into hands of his equally irresponsible such a god, since he is mortal, the problem of the succession will inevitably be the moment of his death, to reserve portion of power. Even those must equip themselves to survive the façade of unanimity, all centrifugal: the rule of a court which jealous feudatories, reservations of public resource may openly fight, for the reverse. In fact, neither courts nor feudatories fail of their ambitions: a brief struggle, sold out to a Hitler's Bonzen plotted absurd could be no possible successor dictatorship—its careful self-isolation—reduce still further intelligence within it: they are intellectual fools' paradise in and Goebbels and Himmler, their nihilism and mysticism, could determine policy, and Schellenberg, and Schwerin as experts in foreign affairs, parasites of the Roman Empire bad jokes of Fortune—village life and death today, tomorrow.

Nor is it only political intelligence lack of criticism inherent in progress, however unpolitical upon the free opposition of a uniform patronage of a dictator. German secrets have been disclosed under the Nazis has

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Such irresponsibility are obvious. It is the extravagances of a single corrupted political effect: that Hitler's formula could become a real policy, and his the outer world remained firm, could any. There are consequences indeed. Though dictatorship is sometimes under certain conditions may be is by definition unconditional, and responsible power, without elaborate

institutions, cannot be centrally exercised, even by a mortal god; it must tend to fall apart into manageable empires in the hands of his equally irresponsible subordinates. Furthermore, such a god, since he is mortal, must die; and there is therefore the problem of the succession. The candidates for the succession will inevitably be those who have contrived, at the moment of his death, to reserve the largest or most effective portion of power. Even those who cannot hope to succeed, must equip themselves to survive under the successor. Behind the façade of unanimity, all dictatorships are to a large extent centrifugal: the rule of a court conceals a political anarchy in which jealous feudatories, with their private armies and reservations of public resources, are secretly bargaining, and may openly fight, for the reversion or preservation of power. In fact, neither courts nor feudalism are nurseries of political intelligence; and therefore the ambitious sometimes ludicrously fail of their ambitions. The satraps of Cromwell, after a brief struggle, sold out to a more traditional authority; and Hitler's Bonzen plotted absurdly for a throne to which there could be no possible succession. The characteristics of modern dictatorship—its careful self-sufficiency, its deliberate intellectual isolation—reduce still further the likelihood of political intelligence within it: they lead directly to the political and intellectual fools' paradise in which such figures as Goering and Goebbels and Himmler, with their drugs and perfumes, their nihilism and mysticism, their flatterers and astrologers, could determine policy, and such ninnies as Ribbentrop, Schellenberg, and Schwerin von Krosigk could be regarded as experts in foreign affairs. We are reminded of the court-parasites of the Roman Empire, of whom Juvenal wrote: the bad jokes of Fortune—village pierrots yesterday, arbiters of life and death today, tomorrow keepers of the public latrines.

Nor is it only political intelligence which is killed by the lack of criticism inherent in absolute power; for technical progress, however unpolitical in its aim, is equally dependent upon the free opposition of minds and methods which the uniform patronage of a dictatorship must deny. Now that all German secrets have been disclosed, the decline of German science under the Nazis has become apparent. This book

or how could medicine advance, the allocation of resources, the promotion of merit depended. Morell and Conti and the crack-ven in military science the same gan the war with a group of ciency in the greatest military ed it with a handful of obedient military historians of the future out Beck and Halder, Manstein that they will waste much time on Kesselring and Schoerner. nself?

Hitler's strategical genius, which Germany; but here again it is ly the final issue, but the stages tary snobism of the professional okescreen of official servility, it der's military talents were not tent of his knowledge, and his been universally, if sometimes power, which ultimately doomed results which the professional grounds, thought impossible;¹ e at least the honour of contro- and method were erratic. The ler's intervention in the first Russian t from greater disaster, and that this belief that all his generals were inept. extraordinary, and his confidence in posing that faith can move mountains g the decisive impetus to the spade. strategical successes, such as the battle made possible by the judicious mis- mand, and that his tactical successes, t and the Ardennes offensive in 1944, it competent to give any judgment in ns of Halder and Keitel on Hitler's Since Halder hated Hitler personally t militarily (Halder is a military snob, ver understand the mysteries of war), e respected.

intuition which, in politics, chose both Speer and Ribbentrop, in military matters chose both Guderian and Keitel. The correction of criticism, the opposition of both minds and facts, is essential to such a random genius; and it is the disappearance of criticism, not the inherent errors of his thought which made Hitler's strategy in the end as calamitous as his politics. Those who attended his staff conferences in the first two years of the war have described his earlier, more patient methods: how he would sit in silence, only now and then asking questions or eliciting opinions, feeling his way warily, and learning what he could from the experts whom he wished to despise but secretly feared. But gradually success bred confidence; the propaganda of Goebbels, the sycophancy of Keitel, nourished the self-delusions of unchallenged power; no mind, no fact was allowed to contest the dogmas of strategic genius;¹ and at the end, how different had the conference table become! Hitler was still there, still the central figure, still the ultimate authority; but a Chinese wall separated him from the outer world of reality. He listened not to other voices, but to echoes of his own; for none of the surviving courtiers dared speak, or even know the truth. He still interested himself in every detail, still moved armies by battalions and regiments; but it was on an imaginary battlefield. He was mounting the impossible Steiner attack, or marshalling the phantom army of Wenck.

Thus, in reading of the last days of Hitler's empire, we must remember that they were the last days, and were different from the first; otherwise we may forget the political lesson that they illustrate. Nevertheless, we should remember that the last days were implicit in the first. Most historical dictators have passed through similar stages of development. Starting with revolutionary power, based on a revolutionary idea which happens to symbolize the mood of a people, they convert it into military power based on success; when the revolutionary promise is betrayed, and the success runs dry, they resort to

¹ Hitler's repudiation of inconvenient facts would be incredible, were it not so well attested. According to Halder, Hitler often complained of the 'damned objective views' of the Army General Staff.

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Reagan

political expedients and secret police; quite in the long run, the system. In theory, of course, revolutionary stable and traditional, and developed in the Roman Empire; but in dictators—Cromwell, Napoleon, the other way; and the reason is, efficiency of dictatorial power, which try.¹

perhaps answer the first question, hands of such a set of monkeys; poses upon us another question. If sequences of the separation of power should contain it, what forces, in world, allowed these merely logical? Why was there no effective revolt? The inevitability of their emergence due the institutions of resistance had in the modern world the advantages are evident; it is true Goebbels sustained the promise of miracles and millennia, of fantastic somersaults; it is true dictatorship in the governed as well as in the ruler not blind automata; there is still common sense; men are after all the products of governments; and the submission to a clique which was plainly and disastrously calls for some attempt at

that the Allied insistence on 'unconditional' rendered the Germans into continued victims that they would otherwise have

been somewhat controversial. His personality very different from Hitler's, and he was sought to convert his power from revolutionary to such a change both logically and ethically, the basis and nature of his power to Hitler's (more similar than that of the Kaiser in spite of all differences of circumstance,

revolted, I do not think it is true. Of those Germans who preferred the rule of the Nazis to unconditional surrender, how many would have been inspired to rebellion by an Allied assurance of moderation? Conditions can only be made with power-holders, or alternative power-holders, otherwise they are not conditions but promises; and what German was influenced by promises after twelve years of Dr Goebbels? Of alternative power-holders, the Army leaders might perhaps have been ready to bargain; but conditions which included the destruction of the German Army would have seemed no conditions to them; and anyway, even the Army failed in its politics. As for the 'democratic opposition', invented by virtuous journalists—it is a creature as fabulous as the centaur and the hippogriff. No doubt many Germans quietly grumbled about the Nazis and have since claimed to have been their enemies; but in time of war, bargains can be struck only with real political forces, not with whimpering shadows. Who of these 'democrats' ever concerted a programme or approached the Allies with concrete proposals? A few high-minded aristocrats, a few disappointed officials and dismayed parsons—were these really more promising than the Schellenbergs and the Schwerin von Krosigks? If we wish to explain the docility of the German people, we must look for some other explanation, and find it, perhaps, in that most discouraging German characteristic: the despair of politics.

In thus isolating German characteristics, we must not, of course, fall into the error of racialism. German characteristics do not spring from German blood or climate, but from the habits of thought and traditions of government to which Germans happen to have become accustomed. Now German history is characterized by a record of political failure so continuous as to have become a tradition—a tradition which in turn perpetuates the record by the appearance of inevitability. Who has succeeded among German politicians? a German may ask himself; and he will answer, Frederick the Great, and Bismarck—the men of blood and iron. On the other hand, what liberal or popular movements have ever succeeded in Germany? The romantic liberals of 1815-30,

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vapouring immaturity in provincial universities? the lawyers and businessmen of 1848, theorizing solemnly in Frankfurt? the Weimar Republic, silently destroyed from within by Bruening, and then ordered away by the Nazis, without even the show of a revolution? With these and such memories the Germans are easily persuaded that however reason will do for others, only force will succeed with them. The Kaiser indeed failed, but at least he had a run of success, unlike the Weimar Republic; and perhaps he failed for purely technical reasons—his personal policy, not his cardinal principles were at fault. That at least was Hitler's view, when he spoke of 'the fools of 1914-18', and promised to be more successful. Now he has failed even more catastrophically. But at one time he nearly succeeded; and if later 'liberal' governments are obvious failures, it may well be that the Germans will look back not to the disastrous failure of Hitler, but to the temporary prosperity and the nearly attained success.

This consistent tradition of political failure in Germany has other consequences besides a despair of reason and a reliance on force; and one of them is the elevation of politics into a mystery. If so few Germans have ever succeeded in politics, a German may say, it is clear that politics are beyond the reach of ordinary men, who will be more profitably and more happily employed in those tasks of commerce and agriculture, of manufacture and industry and military organization, in which their skill is acknowledged. Thus the political arena is left vacant, and any charlatan who professes to understand the mystery of politics is allowed to enter and to try his hand. Politics in Germany have long taken place in such a vacuum; the real ability of the people has been concentrated on industry or the army; and the direction of industry and the army, for peace or war, has been left to the adventurers who have occupied the neglected political stage. To salve their consciences, the Germans have invented comforting philosophies: the philosophy of Marxism, that all politics are but an immaterial reflection of social relations, and the philosophy of the technocrats, that politics are quite irrelevant. How fatally untrue those philosophies are has been shown by German history in this war, in which the crazy politics of a

fully-developed and there not only controlled Germany but have misdirected and to the question, why did it then, that they did not win the war was Germany which, in its early days, dictatorship did indeed find the unchecked development German people acquiesced political tradition.

How fatal that tradition history which is described describe and illustrate so much and human lunacy, one of isolation. Whatever the err conscience, which enabled personal friendship of the history, it is quite clear that was morally and intellectually understand the forces of the master whom all other administrator, he was underest of the court with dignity peaceful and constructive: Nuremberg, and had planned two months' war-expenditure dock at Nuremberg) to the world. Nevertheless, in a criminal of Nazi Germany represented that fatal philosophy Germany and nearly shipwrecked at the very centre of politics diagnosed the nature and government and policy; he around him; he heard their their fantastic ambitions; politics to be irrelevant, he bridges and factories, with

universities? the lawyers solemnly in Frankfurt? destroyed from within by the Nazis, without even such memories the however reason will do with them. The Kaiser in of success, unlike the filed for purely technical cardinal principles were view, when he spoke of to be more successful. phically. But at one time 'liberal' governments are the Germans will look der, but to the temporary cess. cal failure in Germany despair of reason and a the elevation of politics have ever succeeded in that politics are beyond be more profitably and s of commerce and agri- y and military organiza- dged. Thus the political who professes to under- ed to enter and to try his g taken place in such a le has been concentrated ction of industry and the t to the adventurers who al stage. To salve their nted comforting philoso- hat all politics are but an ions, and the philosophy e quite irrelevant. How are has been shown by ch the crazy politics of a

fully-developed and therefore calamitous dictatorship have not only controlled German industry and the German army, but have misdirected and ultimately ruined them. The answer to the question, why did the Nazis so nearly win the war? is then, that they did not win the war, or nearly. What nearly won the war was German industry and the German army which, in its early days, the days of its political skill, the dictatorship did indeed foster and serve; what lost it was the unchecked development of the dictatorship, in which the German people acquiesced, even to the end, through a fatal political tradition.

How fatal that tradition was, is clear from one personal history which is described in this book. In these pages, which describe and illustrate so many varieties of human corruption and human lunacy, one figure stands out in extraordinary isolation. Whatever the errors of judgment, and neutrality of conscience, which enabled him to acquire and retain the personal friendship of the most bloodthirsty tyrant in modern history, it is quite clear that in Hitler's court Albert Speer was morally and intellectually alone. He had the capacity to understand the forces of politics, and the courage to resist the master whom all others have declared irresistible. As an administrator, he was undoubtedly a genius. He regarded the rest of the court with dignified contempt. His ambitions were peaceful and constructive: he wished to rebuild Berlin and Nuremberg, and had planned 'at the cost of no more than two months' war-expenditure' (as he sadly protested in the dock at Nuremberg) to make them the greatest cities in the world. Nevertheless, in a political sense, Speer is the real criminal of Nazi Germany; for he, more than any other, represented that fatal philosophy which has made havoc of Germany and nearly shipwrecked the world. For ten years he sat at the very centre of political power; his keen intelligence diagnosed the nature and observed the mutations of Nazi government and policy; he saw and despised the personalities around him; he heard their outrageous orders and understood their fantastic ambitions; but he did nothing. Supposing politics to be irrelevant, he turned aside, and built roads and bridges and factories, while the logical consequences of

Surgeon to Hitler's staff (Begleitarzt)
condemned and executed 1947.

—Ear, nose, and throat specialist.
again, after July 20th, 1944.

—Ear, nose, and throat specialist.
both 1944.

HANS KARL.—Surgeon, deputy to
October 1944.

THEODOR.—Personal physician (Leib-
arzt) on April 22nd 1945. Died 1948.

Goering and his Entourage

19. —SS Brigadefuehrer, Head of
Intelligence). Though nominally
in Berlin, Schellenberg had direct personal
contact with Goering which make him a valuable source.
End of hostilities and his surrender
required a careful diary of the events
which is very important. He has
been interrogated. Condemned to 6 years
imprisonment.

KARL.—SS Obergruppenfuehrer.
Condemned and executed 1947.

—SS Standartenfuehrer. Himmler's
deputy. Executed 1947.

—Himmler's military adjutant.
SS Obergruppenfuehrer. Chief of SS
Personnel Service. Condemned to 25 years
imprisonment.

—SS Obergruppenfuehrer. Head of
Personnel Service (Personalhauptamt), and Ministerialdirektor in
Berlin. Condemned and executed 1948.
—SS Obergruppenfuehrer and
deputy.

—SS Obergruppenfuehrer and
deputy of Personalhauptamt.

—SS Obergruppenfuehrer. Head of SS

—SS Obergruppenfuehrer. Head
of SS in south Germany at the end, and
has information for this subject; but he has been
interrogated. His reports shed incidental light on

many matters. Condemned by International Military Tribunal
and executed 1946.

Of the above, Nos 10, 14, 15, and 16 were with Himmler in
Schleswig-Holstein during the last days; Nos 11 and 12 were
with him when he was captured. Count Folke Bernadotte's book,
The Fall of the Curtain, contains some useful information about
the personal part played by the author in the last days. See also
Felix Kersten, *Memoirs* (1956) and Norbert Masur, *En Jude
tatar med Himmler* (Stockholm, 1945).

E. The Dismissal of Goering

19. GOERING, HERMANN.—Reichsmarschall. Condemned by
International Military Tribunal and committed suicide 1946.

20. KOLLER, KARL.—General der Luftwaffe. Chief of Staff of
Luftwaffe. Koller's diary, covering the period April 16th to May
9th, 1945, is a detailed record of great value, not only for these
events (in which he was the principal intermediary), but also for
many other incidents during the period. Koller was with the
OKW at Fuerstenberg, and in regular telephone communication
with the Bunker. He also, on May 8th, received, and recorded, a
first-hand account of events in the Bunker (April 26th-29th)
from Ritter von Greim. He has since published a version of his
diary under the title *Der letzte Monat* (Mannheim, 1949).

21. LAMMERS, HANS HEINRICH.—Head of Reichskanzlei.
Lammers was present at Goering's conference on April 23rd,
1945, and has made a statement and produced documents
relevant to this episode. Condemned to 20 years imprisonment
1949.

In addition to these, Speer (No 1 above) was an eyewitness of
certain events in this connection, and Kaltenbrunner (No 18
above) has reported a conversation with SS Obersturmbann-
fuehrer Frank, who both took part in Goering's conference and
was responsible for his arrest.

F. Events in the Bunker (April 22nd to May 1st, 1945)

22. AXMANN, ARTUR.—Reichsjugendfuehrer. Axmann visited
the Bunker on several occasions. He was there on April 30th
1945, and examined the dead bodies of Hitler and Eva Braun.
He took part in the escape of May 1st, and claims to have seen
the corpses of Bormann and Stumpfegger.

23. VON BELOW, NICOLAUS.—Oberst der Luftwaffe. Wehr-
macht-attaché (Luftwaffe) at Fuehrer's headquarters. Was in